

The five-by-six rows of empty boxes stared at me in the eye, so innocuously simple yet so irritatingly tempting, urging me to fill in the first 5-letter word that crossed my mind. “Foray?” That didn’t seem to be a common word. “Plant?” There’re not enough vowels to give me a head start. “Movie?” Hmm... this one looked fair. I input my final decision, pressed the enter button, and waited anxiously for each box to turn green or yellow or grey.

And they all turned green.

Did I just guess the right word in one try? I gazed at the five green boxes in disbelief as my face was lit up by both the glaring green light and the excitement that I could hardly obscure. After all the screaming and jumping up and down, I couldn’t wait to upload my record to Instagram, celebrating the triumph of my entire Wordle player career.

“Hey, what game is this?” A friend I hadn’t spoken to for a while replied to what I had just posted. A bit shocked, I still responded with a smiley emoji, “it’s Wordle. You should definitely try it!”

Yes, it’s Wordle, the word puzzle that unites us all. In the midst of a pandemic, guessing the mysterious word of the day has become our common goal, and top priority. We have formed a community by sharing our daily victories in pride, or alternatively, helping others share theirs in pride. Linguists would create online guides using their expertise, and families and friends would devise strategies together at the dinner table. As the game is renewed with another word every day, the world is presented with the same challenge almost simultaneously. Be it “tough” or “light,” we are all trying to guess the same word. Additionally, the game welcomes players of all ages, creating an intergenerational bond with only our existing connection with words. When neighbours that look out for each other and sports teams that value camaraderie are often perceived as the epitome of community, however, Wordle differs profoundly from them by relying on the “culprit” of casting an uncaring filter on society — the Internet.

Is the Internet blocking us from real connections? Perhaps Wordle has already proven such conventional belief wrong. People’s connections come in all forms as we are not

merely connected by physical contact, but by things that we share, which can be as simple as words we use every day. Who could have imagined that conversations on a word puzzle would connect us with our aged parents, relatives overseas, and even estranged friends? Once we note that a common purpose is the basis of a community, we can always look for similarities in ourselves even without Wordle. By asking more questions before making judgments — and actually listening to the answers — we will discover that we are not so different after all.

We are connected by what we have in common, and for now, that will surely be the 5-letter word that dominates the Internet tomorrow.