

1.1.1 Group 1 : #A4Waist

Step 1: Read the article and watch the video to learn about #A4Waist .

Chinese women compete to be as thin* as an A4 piece of paper

A new craze* in China that led to women posing with A4 pieces of paper to demonstrate how thin they are has been criticised and mocked on social media.

The hashtag #A4Waist has had more than 110 million views and more than 100,000 comments on Weibo, China's equivalent of Twitter.

In several posts, women triumphantly posted images of themselves behind a vertical piece of A4 - their waist not visible on either side.

Even government organisations joined in, with verified police forces' accounts posting photos of female employees holding A4 sheets bearing information on how to prevent* identity theft, or admonitions* against drink-driving.

The craze was termed a "fitness challenge" by the official People's Daily newspaper on its Twitter account.

However, social media users around the world were quick to criticise the trend.

Users on Instagram and Twitter mocked it by posing behind multiple pieces of paper taped together, holding A4 sheets with body-positive messages written on them, or using university diplomas and asking: "Does this degree make me look fat?" Others simply used a horizontal A4 sheet instead.

"You're very beautiful irrespective of A4 waists or breasts that can hold up pens – your beauty is unique, so don't apply weird standards to yourself," said one user.

Such contests* became popular due to of a lack of knowledge about gender issues in China and because "standards of beauty are very, very, very uniform*", Xiao Meili, a women's rights activist said.

"Everyone's very superstitious, talking about what angle cheekbones should be at, how high a nose should be, or how many centimetres there should be between people's eyes," she said. "People think that beauty can be measured."

Adapted from an article of The Guardian, 23 March 2016. (UK)

Source : <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/mar/23/chinese-women-compete-to-be-as-thin-as-an-a4-piece-of-paper>

Wordbank :

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|----------------------------|---|
| - thin(adj): slim | - an admonition (n):warning |
| - a craze (n): fashion | - no steadfast cure : no sure treatment |
| - prevent (v): block, stop | - a contest (n): competition |
| | - uniform (adj): homogenized |

Video on elyco or scan the QR code.



Step 2: Be ready to present BDD to your classmates! You can prepare some notes or a mindmap to help you. You can also use an A4 piece of paper and write a message on it!