

Box 4. A selection of most creative responses across countries for the 2983 item.

- **Toutes les 2983 minutes, Monsieur Dheure oublie tout. Sa memoire recommence a zero [...]** // *Every 2983 minutes, Mr Dheure* [Mr Time] forgets everything. His memory resets to zero [...]* (Belgium)
- **No livro, teríamos como local principal um corredor com diversas salas, salas aparentemente infinitas [...]** Em cada porta, teríamos um número, ao qual remeteria alguma memória sua. Então, nosso personagem passaria por uma aventura pelas suas próprias lembranças, tentando entender como e o porque chegou nesse corredor [...] // *In the book, the main location would be a corridor with several rooms, seemingly infinite rooms [...] each door, we would have a number, which would refer to some memory of his. Our character would then go on an adventure through his own memories, trying to understand how and why he arrived in this corridor [...]* (Brazil)
- **In dem Buch geht es um einen Jungen, der in einer Welt lebt, in der alle Kinder in einem Bergwerk arbeiten und erst zu ihrem 18 Geburtstag heraus dürfen. Die Kinder bekommen alle eine Nummer und keinen Namen. Die Nummer des Jungens ist 2983. Die Kinder denken alle, das das Leben welches sie führen normal ist. Doch 2983 ist anderer Meinung und versucht mit seiner besten Freundin auszubrechen... Doch was sie an der Oberfläche erwartet hätten sie nicht gedacht.** // *The book is about a boy who lives in a world where all children work in a mine and are only allowed out on their 18th birthday. The children are all given a number and no name. The boy's number is 2983. The children all think that the life they lead is normal. But 2983 disagrees and tries to escape with his best friend... But they didn't expect what awaited them on the surface.* (Germany)
- **九加二的和跟八加三的和相同,而八和二的差跟九和三的差相同,这是一本关于命运的书,看似许多毫无关系的数字当中却包含许多巧合,就像每人的人生一样,总会遇到许多与自己看似无关的人,最后却发现他们为自己带来的意义远远超乎想象...** // *The sum of nine plus two is the same as the sum of eight plus three, and the difference between eight and two is the same as the difference between nine and three. This is a book about destiny. It seems that there are many coincidences among many seemingly unrelated numbers, just as in everyone's life, there are always many people who seem unrelated to you, but in the end, you realise that they have brought you meaning far beyond your imagination...* (Hong Kong)
- **Un hombre cae accidentalmente en un glitch llegando a un lugar de pasillos infinitos, para poder salir tiene que encontrar la salida pasando un total de 2983 niveles de abajo hacia arriba [...]** Este seria un diario de la persona documentando cada cosa que encontro en cada nivel, desde el nivel uno hasta el nivel 2983. // *A man accidentally falls into a glitch and arrives in a place of infinite corridors, in order to get out he has to find the exit by passing a total of 2983 levels from bottom to top [...]* This would be a diary of the person documenting every single thing they encountered in each level, from level one to level 2983. (Chile)

* The name Mr Dheure can be interpreted as a play on words in French (original language), best translated as Mr Time.

- **Il a fallut 2 ans de préparation, 9 mois et 8 jours pour tout mettre en place et précisément 3 secondes pour exécuter la vengeance [...] Mei ne voulait qu'une chose : vengeance. Mais il fallait que le meurtre soit absolument parfait, intraçable jusqu'à elle. Cette fois-ci, personne ne va l'arrêter. Elle va assassiner le président.** // *It took 2 years of preparation, 9 months and 8 days to set everything up and precisely 3 seconds to carry out the revenge [...] Mei wanted only one thing: revenge. But the murder had to be absolutely perfect, untraceable to her. This time, no one is going to stop her. She is going to assassinate the president.* (France)
- **2983. The number of people this simple book has killed. The book has a strange glow to it that is visible at night. The book almost calls out to you, longing for you to just take a peek at what it has to offer [...] and, that's exactly what would happen, the reader of the book would seem to simply disappear, leaving the book on the ground, this time with one extra number on the cover.** (Canada)
- **Η Ελīs μια νεαρή γυναίκα έχει θυσιάσει την ζωή της για να μείνει για πάντα νέα. Μια συμφωνία που δεν έπρεπε να δεχτεί ποτέ. Χαρακωμένο στο χέρι της είναι η ημερομηνία στην οποία θυσίασε την ψυχή της για την αθανασία, 2 Σεπτεμβρίου 1783. Άραγε είναι ηδονή ή οδυνηρό να χρειαστεί να ζησεις για παντοτε.** // *Ellis a young woman has sacrificed her life to stay young forever. A deal she should never have taken. Engraved on her hand is the date on which she sacrificed her soul for immortality, September 2, 1783. I wonder if it's a pleasure or a pain to have to ask for forever.* (Greece)
- **2983. Potrebbe sembrare un semplice banalissimo numero, ma dietro c'è una storia ben più complessa. [...] Abbiamo un 2, che sembra quasi un L e un 3, che assomiglia alla E. Vediamo poi l'8 e un 9. [...] Ma esattamente per cosa stanno? Beh, le due lettere sono le iniziali di due ragazze scomparse, mentre 8 e 9 sta per gli anni che avevano quando sono sparite. Il libro parla quindi di queste due bambine scomparse nel nulla che non verranno più ritrovate, o meglio sì, ma senza vita.** // *2983. It might seem like a simple, very banal number, but there's a much more complex story behind it [...] We have a 2, which almost looks like an L, and a 3, which looks like an E. Then we see an 8 and a 9. [...] But what exactly do they stand for? Well, the two letters are the initials of two missing girls, while 8 and 9 stand for the ages they were when they disappeared. So the book is about these two little girls who vanished into thin air and were never found again, or rather they were, but lifeless.* (Italy)
- **Este es un libro que contiene solo 2983 palabras. No hay una biografía del autor, no hay una editorial, no hay una edición, no hay un índice, solo 2983 palabras. Parece una historia común y corriente con la extraña constancia en la que aparece el número 2983. Se sitúa en el año 2983. ¿Cómo se hará una historia compleja y completa en solo 2983 palabras?** // *This is a book that contains only 2983 words. There is no biography of the author, there is no publisher, there is no edition, there is no index, just 2983 words. It seems like an ordinary story with the strange consistency in which the number 2983 appears. It is set in the year 2983. How can a complex and complete story be told in just 2983 words?* (Colombia)

- **numa ilha no meio do atlântico, viviam exatamente 2983 pessoas. Corria por lá a lenda de que naquela ilha só poderiam estar 2983 pessoas, sem tirar nem por, por isso sempre que chegava alguém sabiam que alguém iria partir, sempre que nascia alguém sabiam que alguém iria morrer, e vice-versa. Foi então que um dia chegou à ilha um náufrago. Todos os habitantes acharam aquilo um preságio da morte de alguém, mas estranhamente ninguém morreu por várias semanas. Os habitantes, que acharam que era um sinal de que a maldição estaria quebrada, fizeram uma grandefesta para celebrar e o aclamar líder. Mas acontece que, na manhã seguinte, morreram todos exceto o náufrago, que na verdade era responsável pela sua morte, uma vez que tinha como missão conquistar aquela ilha e repovoá-la [...]** // *On an island in the middle of the Atlantic, there lived exactly 2983 people. There was a legend that there could only be 2983 people on that island, so whenever someone arrived, they knew that someone would leave, whenever someone was born, they knew that someone would die, and vice versa. Then one day a castaway arrived on the island. All the inhabitants thought it was an omen of someone's death, but strangely no one dies for several weeks. The inhabitants, who thought it was a sign that the curse would be broken, threw a big party to celebrate and acclaimed him leader. But the next morning, everyone died except the castaway, who was actually responsible for his death, since his mission was to conquer the island and repopulate it [...]* (Portugal)
- **socialni eksperiment v katerem so ljudje prepričani da jih po celem svetu sodeluje 2983. znanstveniki ki so se za ta eksperiment odločili jih za velikim steklom opazujejo in na njih delajo razne poskuse (jim zastrupljajo hrano, spuščajo pline, umejujejo čas za spanje) da bi videli posledice. v eksperimentu v resnici sodeluje samo ena oseba, vsi ostali so halucinacija te osebe zaradi eksperimentov** // *a social experiment in which people are convinced that 2983 people around the world are taking part. the scientists who decided to do this experiment observe them behind a big glass and do various experiments on them (poisoning their food, releasing gases, limiting their sleeping time) in order to see the consequences. only one person is actually taking part in the experiment, all the others are hallucinations of that person because of the experiments* (Slovenia)

Note: Student responses are shown as they were submitted in the PISA 2022 creative thinking test, including creative spelling and grammar. The notation [...] indicates where student responses have been shortened for brevity.

What were common themes or features across creative responses?

In general, many responses to this item associated the number 2983 to a year and described stories focused on what life will be like in the future. In many stories, themes of war, conflict, life and death, and power struggles between groups were central to the story context. A common narrative explored the dangers of concentrated power and efforts to save the world in a dystopian future, potentially reflecting broader contemporary anxieties about authority, governance, and the future of humanity.

Other students similarly depicted a dystopian future but where 2983 became a symbol of the controlling system, rather than the year itself. For example, one creative story idea from a student in Germany imagined that children were assigned numbers instead of names, and one boy, known as number 2983, embarks on a journey to escape this forced labour. In Chile and Slovenia, in particular, existential anxiety was a common theme across responses, and in Brazil and Colombia, story ideas explored themes of survival, tragedy, violence, and inequality, focusing on the resilience of individuals and communities under extreme circumstances.

What sets apart the most creative answers across countries from the rest, in general, was their emotional depth and ability to connect to the human experience. For instance, the story of a man who forgets everything every 2983 minutes conveyed a sense of sadness and anxiety and reminds us of the passage of time and fleeting nature of memory. A similar idea from a student in another