

Far from home We're finally on Galapagos!

Hi Mum! Hi Dad!

Thanks for yours – always love news from home.



So, at last, the **Galapagos Islands!** A dream come true! We've been travelling for two months now – **Chile, Argentina, Bolivia, Peru.** It's been **a-maze-ing!!** Can't believe I've seen Machu Picchu and camped in the mountains of Torres del Paine! Ma – you'd go mad for the views! But the Galapagos are a different planet!



We flew to **Santa Cruz** last Friday – it's one of the biggest islands. And get this! This morning we snorkelled with sea turtles! Probably the best experience of my life! **Kiri** and I actually swam alongside them! Also saw sea lions and their pups relaxing on the rocks – so cute! Oh – and some sharks! Don't freak, Mum! They were just babies.

Tomorrow we're taking the ferry to **San Cristóbal** – time to start work! Kiri's worried because she always gets seasick and it'll be a hot, cramped ride. Our work at the volunteer centre is just for one week – it's going to be mainly farm work. After that, it's on to **Isabela island.** It's wildlife heaven – penguins, flamingos, pelicans, and ... coolest of all, the mega-famous giant tortoises! Can't wait to see them!

Missing you loads – but I'll be sad to leave this paradise. Definitely going to come back one day!

Love and hugs,

Nancy XXX
(**Kiri** sends love, too.)



D000903

Tyler's Tweets

Tuesday, September 4, 1:42 p.m.

Still sitting in the airport in NYC. Been waiting three hours, but seems like FOREVER!



Tuesday, September 4, 3:20 p.m.

Just boarded the plane for London. My first trip abroad except for a week in Mexico last year. I'm going to stay with my buddy Dave for a few days in north London before I meet my host family. Dave lives in a place called '**Chalk Farm**'. I don't get it – a farm in London?



Thursday, September 6, 4:35 p.m.

It's fun here, but kind of weird. Dave doesn't live on a farm. His folks have a large apartment in a big old house. They call it a 'flat'. I asked for the 'bathroom' – they thought I wanted a bath. I'm learning fast.

Friday, September 7, 10.30 a.m.

Dave and I are hanging out together today. We're on a bus! Upstairs! Amazing! Just drove past Buckingham Palace. But they drive on the WRONG side of the road here. Crazy! Also, people say 'cheers' all the time. Isn't that for making toasts? A guy just said it to me when I'd let him pass.

Saturday, September 8, 7:19 p.m.

First night with my host family, the Wilsons. They seem very nice, but their house is a million-mile walk to the subway! (They call it 'The Tube' here!)

Saturday, September 8, 11:10 p.m.

Big day tomorrow. We're visiting Shakespeare's hometown. He wrote plays and stuff hundreds of years ago. He's mega famous.

Lost and Found

Lost Indian boy finds his mother after 25 years – using Google Earth

Saroo Brierley was only five years old when he got lost. He was working with his older brother as a sweeper on India's trains. Together, they travelled hundreds of miles up and down the vast network.

“It was late at night. We got off the train, and I was so tired that I just sat down at the train station, and I ended up falling asleep.”

That fateful **nap** would determine the rest of his life. He thought his brother would come back for him, but when he woke up the brother was nowhere to be seen. There was a train in front of him. Perhaps his brother was on board. He got on it to look for him. However, Saroo did not meet his brother on the train. Instead, he fell asleep again and when he woke up 14 hours later, he had a terrible shock. There were **hordes** of people, pushing, rushing, speaking in an unfamiliar tongue. He had arrived in Calcutta (Kolkata), India's third biggest city and notorious for its slums. He was nearly 1,500 kilometres (930 miles) from his home. Soon, he was **sleeping rough**.

“It was a very scary place to be. I do not think any mother or father would like to have their five-year-old wandering alone in the slums and train stations of Calcutta. I was scared. I didn't know where I was.”

The little boy learned to **fend for himself**. He became a beggar, one of the many children begging on the streets of the city. Once he was approached by a man who promised him food and shelter. But Saroo was suspicious and ran away. In the end, Saroo was taken in by an orphanage and put up for adoption. He was adopted by the Brierleys, a couple from Tasmania.



“I accepted that I was lost and that I could not find my way back home, so I thought it was great that I was going to Australia.”

Saroo **settled down well in** his new home. But, as he got older, the desire to find his birth family became increasingly strong. The problem was that as an illiterate five-year-old he had not known the name of his hometown. All he had to go on were his vivid memories. So, he began using Google Earth to search for where he might have been born.

It was difficult, but eventually Saroo hit on an effective strategy.

“I multiplied the time I was on the train, about 14 hours, with the speed of Indian trains and I came up with a rough distance, about 1,200 km.”

He drew a circle on a map with its centre in Calcutta, with its radius about the distance he thought he had travelled. Incredibly, he soon discovered what he was looking for: the town of Khandwa.

“When I found it, I zoomed down and bang – the waterfall where I used to play.”

He journeyed to Khandwa. He found his way around the town with his childhood memories. Eventually, he found his home. But it was not what he had hoped for. It looked old and shabby, as if nobody had lived there for a long time. A neighbour said that his family had moved. Then he **struck gold**, another neighbour said he knew where his mother lived now. The man guided Saroo to where three women stood waiting. He stared at them blankly. Only the woman in the middle seemed remotely familiar. The man gestured towards her. ‘This is your mother,’ he said.

She had been young, in her 30s, the last time he saw her. She looked so much older now. But behind the weathered face, there was something unmistakable, unforgettable, his mother, **Fatima**.



“The last time I saw her she was 34 years old and a pretty lady. I had forgotten that age would get the better of her. But then I recognised her and I said, ‘Yes, you are my mother.’ She grabbed my hand and took me into her house. She could not say anything to me. She had a bit of trouble **grasping** that her son, after 25 years, had returned. She had long feared I was dead.”

Fatima had searched the train stations for her missing son, but she had never ventured as far as Calcutta. She couldn't imagine he had gone so far. However, she had never lost hope – a fortune teller had told her that one day she would see her son again.

And what of the brother with whom Saroo had originally gone travelling? Unfortunately, the news was not good.

“A month after I had disappeared, my brother was found in two pieces on a railway track. We were extremely close. When I left my mother to return to Tasmania, I was heartbroken knowing that my older brother had passed away.”

His mother had never known whether **foul play** was involved or whether the boy had simply slipped and fallen under a train.

Saroo Brierley's lifelong wish had been to see his birth mother again. He feels incredibly grateful that this wish was granted. He has kept in touch with his newly found family. And now Hollywood studios have made a **star-studded**, award-winning film about his amazing story.



Fatima and Saroo reunited

Informal writing – Correcting mistakes

From: Fernando <fernando367@fsnet.com>
To: James <jsnelling@jonmail.com>

Dear James,

Thank you ^lyour email. I receive ^Tit ^{Gr}the last week. Sorry I ^Tno
reply you before, but I've been very busy. It's Christmas soon,
and everyone are very exciting!

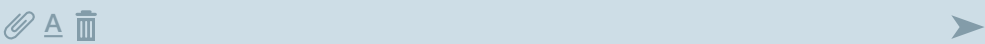
In two weeks I am with you in England. I can no belief it!
I looking forward meet you and your family very much.
I'm sure we will like us very well.

My city, São Paulo, is biggest and noisyyest city in Brasil. Is not
really for tourist. Is a centre commercial. Also it have very
much pollution and traffic. But there is lot of things to do.
I like very much listen music. There are bars who stay open
all night!

My friend went in London last year, and he has seen a football
match at Arsenal. He said me was wonderfull. I like to do that
also.

My plane arrive to Heathrow 3 Janury. Is very early morning.
I hope very much improve during I am with you! and happy
New Year!

Fernando





TripAdvisor – the traveller’s friend

Student A

TripAdvisor was founded in a small office above a pizza shop in Massachusetts, US.



Steve Kaufer

The CEO is Steve Kaufer, and he’s been running the company ... **(How long?)**. He started it **because he couldn’t find reliable hotel reviews** when planning a trip to Mexico – they were all by hotel owners and travel agents, saying how wonderful the hotels were. ... **(Who?)** suggested starting a website with reviews written by real hotel guests. She told him to ‘keep it easy to use’, and **TripAdvisor** has always tried to **follow that advice**. It has become ... **(How big?)**, reviewing hotels, restaurants and tourist attractions, and is now worth \$3 billion. It has **over 3,000** employees, and has received reviews from ... **(Where?)**.

TripAdvisor has shown **that success can come by accident**. The original site had only professional reviews, and it was ... **(How long?)** before reviews from users appeared. Someone thought it might be fun to have a button on each page saying ‘Add your own review’, and it’s this **user-generated content** that has attracted 450 million users.

Success has brought ... **(What?)**, however. Hotel owners have become anxious about **TripAdvisor** feedback, **because it can make or break their business**, and some have offered discounts to guests ... **(Which?)**. One senior executive of a big hotel group posted fake negative reviews of his rivals’ hotels. **TripAdvisor** has been trying to solve these problems **by screening all its reviews**, and stresses that fake ones are a tiny minority.



TripAdvisor Trivia

- Have you noticed that the TripAdvisor owl logo has different colour eyes? One eye is green, for 'GO!', and the other is red, for 'DONT GO!'.
- Steve Kaufer still runs the company from a modest office block in Massachusetts, where his own office doesn't even have a window.
- The most TripAdvisor reviews have been written by an American expat, Brad Reynolds. He's been writing reviews since 2010 and has posted nearly 6,000, with 68,000 photos.



A planet poisoned by plastic

‘From Hawaiian beaches to the coast of Britain, we’re paying a **lethal** price for our throw-away society,’ says TV adventurer, **Simon Reeve**.

Hawaii is generally considered to be one place in the world where you should be able to guarantee finding paradise. The beautiful tropical islands have been used as the setting for countless TV series and films, ranging from **Lost** to **Jurassic Park**. Isolated in the middle of the vast Pacific Ocean, distance alone should protect Hawaii’s spectacular landscapes and turquoise sea from the environmental problems facing the rest of the planet.

So when I arrived in Hawaii, I was **staggered** to discover beaches covered in plastic rubbish washed up from around the world. **Pristine** sand was covered by old plastic toothbrushes, combs, shoes, belts and mouldings. Sam Gon, a Hawaiian conservationist, took me to one beach where 70 local volunteers were doing their best to remove tons of garbage. But as soon as it was cleaned, the waves **dumped** another mountain of rubbish.

The larger pieces of waste can be collected by hand. But when Sam and I dropped to our knees, I could see the surface of the beach was covered with millions of small plastic pellets, known as ‘nurdles’. These are the raw material that factories use to form the infinite number of plastic products that fill our lives. These are dumped out of factories into our seas in their trillions.



Yet the big shock came when Sam told me to dig in the sand. Plastic doesn't biodegrade. Instead it breaks down into even smaller pieces. Among the grains of sand were billions of tiny plastic **flecks**, which the pounding of the sea was reducing in size. As I dug through the plastic, I realized the sandy beach was being transformed into a plastic beach. A chill went down my spine.

From the beaches of Hawaii, to the seas around Britain, we are **soiling** our own nest. It was a shock to realize how much British beaches have changed since I was a child playing on beautiful coastlines in Dorset and south Wales. Just like those in Hawaii, they are now covered in more litter than ever before.

Since 1994, plastic litter has increased by an extraordinary 140%. The plastic we see on our beaches is just a fraction of the plastic waste that is **clogging** our oceans. Incredibly, all the plastic ever created – totalling hundreds of millions of tons – is still out there in the environment in some form.

There are an estimated 600,000 plastic containers dumped overboard by ships every single day.

Nine million tons of plastic enter our seas every year, which means that by 2025, there will be around 150 million tons of it sloshing around. And even more unbelievably, by 2050 the oceans will contain more plastic by weight than fish. The scale of the problem is extraordinary. The beaches in Hawaii are being **swamped** by rubbish from the 'Great Pacific Garbage Patch', a vast accumulation of the world's plastic debris floating in the Pacific Ocean. Twice the size of France, the Garbage Patch is like a plastic soup in the sea and is doubling in size each decade.

And this is not the only such 'patch'. Scientists believe that sea currents have created five vast **swirling** garbage patches in our oceans, including a huge one in the North Atlantic with up to 520,000 bits of rubbish per square mile. This is an international scandal and a global problem, for which we are all responsible.



‘Factories produced more plastic in the first decade of this 21st century than in the entire 20th century.’

From bicycle helmets to food packaging, from water bottles to toothbrushes, plastic makes our lives easier. But its production and use are completely out of control. Factories produced more plastic in the first decade of this 21st century than in the entire 20th century.

Because tiny fragments of plastic in our oceans are so small and look like food, they are being **gobbled** up by small fish, which in turn are eaten by larger fish – which in turn are eaten by us.

Plastic is ruining our beaches, choking the oceans, and poisoning our food chain. The consequences are still not fully understood, but they are likely to be devastating. We need to spurn and reject the main culprits: plastic bags, packaging and single-use water bottles – a wasteful obscenity. These make up the bulk of plastic garbage.

In Bangladesh and Kenya, they have done away with plastic bags completely, and replaced them with natural jute bags. The UK has joined the growing number of countries which **impose** a tax on plastic bags, and the small town of Modbury has banned them completely. Supermarkets around the world are beginning to introduce plastic-free aisles, where none of the goods on sale are packaged in plastic.

At stake is the future of beaches, our seas, and the food chain. It is nothing short of an environmental emergency.



TripAdvisor – the traveller’s friend

Student B

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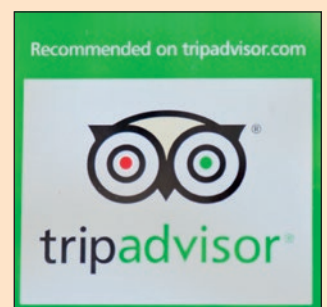
TripAdvisor was founded in a small office above a pizza shop in Massachusetts, US. The CEO is Steve Kaufer, and he’s been running the company **since its birth, in 2000**. He started it ... **(Why?)** when planning a trip to Mexico – they were all by hotel owners and travel agents, saying how wonderful the hotels were. **His wife** suggested starting a website with reviews written by real hotel guests. She told him to ‘keep it easy to use’, and **TripAdvisor** has always tried to ... **(What?)**. It has become **the biggest tourism website in the world**, reviewing hotels, restaurants, and tourist attractions, and is now worth \$3 billion. It has ... **(How many?)** employees, and has received reviews from **every country in the world**.

TripAdvisor has shown ... **(What?)**. The original site had only professional reviews, and it was **a year** before reviews from users appeared. Someone thought it might be fun to have a button on each page saying ‘Add your own review’, and it’s ... **(What?)** that has attracted 450 million users.

Success has brought problems, however. Hotel owners have become anxious about **TripAdvisor** feedback, ... **(Why?)**, and some have offered discounts to guests **who leave positive reviews**. One senior executive of a big hotel group posted fake negative reviews of his rivals’ hotels. **TripAdvisor** has been trying to solve these problems ... **(How?)**, and stresses that fake ones are a tiny minority.



Steve Kaufer



D000903

A formal email – An email of complaint

Date: Sat, March 3 07:50:28 -0700 (PDT)
From: “Benjamin Potts” <bjam.potts@ymail.com>
To: customers@QFlyair.com
Subject: Services complaint

Dear Sir or Madam,

BOOKING REFERENCE: 4YFHTT (Benjamin and Susan Potts)

I am writing to complain about a most upsetting travel experience, which we believe was the result of the poor judgement of your airline.

Our family group of six were due to return from the holiday of a lifetime, departing Antigua for London, Gatwick, on flight QF 5612 at 19.40 on February 26th. Our son, Tom (14), was feeling a little unwell, having spent too long in the sun. None of the adults present were overly concerned. We boarded the aircraft and a member of the crew asked if our son was all right. We explained the situation and took our seats. The same crew member returned with a thermometer and took my son’s temperature. She said that it was 100.2° (the normal range is between 97° and 100°) and she left. A few minutes later, she returned to say that she had contacted paramedics and as the temperature was above normal, we would have to leave the aircraft. We were shocked to hear this, pointing out that our son now felt fine. However, we were told it was too late, and the aircraft would not depart until we disembarked. This news caused great distress to my entire family, especially my son, and his ten-year-old sister. However, we were assured that we would have guaranteed seats on the flight the following evening. In the end we disembarked, leaving our distraught daughter with her grandparents.

We were taken to a hospital, where we spent four hours and \$550 dollars to get a letter saying that my son was safe to fly. We were dismayed to hear the doctor’s disbelief that our son had been asked to leave the flight.

The next day, we were appalled to learn that there were no available seats. Fortunately, Delta Airlines came to our rescue, offering us flights to London, Heathrow that day via New York, JFK. Flights that cost US\$3300.



In conclusion, I ask for an explanation of your airline's actions, and that you not only refund the expenses incurred, but also pay us compensation for the distress caused. I enclose a detailed breakdown of all our expenses with receipts. I look forward to your swift reply.

Yours faithfully,

Benjamin Potts

Mob: 07947 433445



Bees, Cheese and Refugees!



Dr Ryad Alsous knows a lot about bees. Back home in his country, Syria, he worked in the Agriculture Department at the University of Damascus, where he was known as the ‘Professor of Bees’. He had 500 beehives and had been researching bees for many years when civil war broke out and all his hives were destroyed.

Dr Alsous’ daughter, Razan, had already left Syria. She had moved to England with her husband and three children. They were living in Huddersfield, in the north-west, where Razan was setting up **The Yorkshire Dama Cheese Company**, producing ‘squeaky’, Syrian-style cheese, using Yorkshire milk. This has since become extremely successful and won many awards. Dr Alsous says: “Razan told us it was a friendly place and the people had been good to her, so my wife and I came here.”

Dr Alsous needed work – he had left Syria with just the jacket he was wearing. He posted on Facebook to find a job as a beekeeper, but he was overqualified. Then a lady from Manchester gave him one of her hives, and from this he started a business. He built two more out of recycled wood – now he has 17. In 2017, he launched the ‘**Buzz Project**’, a beekeeping training course which aims to help refugees and the unemployed – making money from honey!

Dr Alsous was interviewed about the project on BBC Radio’s ‘On Your Farm’ programme. He believes that ‘bees are good for the soul’.



Dr Ryad Alsous – the university professor and beekeeper who arrived in England with only the jacket he was wearing.



Razan’s award-winning Yorkshire Dama Cheese Company

The Clinging Woman



Part 1

The girl was hanging by her hands from the railings of a balcony. The balcony was on the twelfth floor of the high-rise block next to his. His flat was on the sixth floor and he had to look up to see her. It was half-past six in the morning. He had been **awakened** by the sound of an aircraft flying dangerously low overhead, and he had got out of bed to look. His sleepy **gaze**, descending from the blue sky which was empty of clouds, empty of anything but the bright **vanishing** arrow of the aircraft, alighted – at first with disbelief – on the hanging figure.

Part 2

He really thought he must be dreaming, for this sunrise time was the hour for dreams. Then, when he knew he wasn't, he decided it must be **a stunt**. This was to be a scene in a film. There were cameramen down there, a whole film unit, and all the correct safety precautions had been taken. Probably the girl wasn't even a real girl, but **a dummy**. He opened the window and looked down. The car park, paved courts, grass spaces between the blocks, all were **deserted**. On the balcony rail one of the dummy's hands moved, **clutching** its anchorage more tightly, more desperately. He had to believe then what was obviously happening – unbelievable only because melodrama, though a frequent constituent of real life, always is. The girl was trying to kill herself. She had lost her **nerve** and now was trying to stay alive. All these thoughts and conclusions of his occupied about thirty seconds. Then he acted. He picked up the phone and dialled the emergency number for the police.



The arrival of the police cars and the rescue of the girl became the focus of **gossip** and speculation for the tenants of the two blocks. Someone found out that it was he who had **alerted** the police and he became an unwilling hero. He was a modest, quiet young man, and, disliking this **limelight**, was relieved when the talk began to die away, when the novelty of it **wore off**, and he was able to enter and leave his flat without being pointed at as a kind of St. George and sometimes even congratulated.

About a fortnight after that morning of melodrama, he was getting ready to go to the theatre, just putting on his overcoat, when the doorbell rang. He didn't recognize the girl who stood outside. He had never seen her face.

She said, 'I'm Lydia Simpson. You saved my life. I've come to thank you.'



The Clinging Woman

A man (whose name we never learn) wakes up early one morning, to see a woman hanging from her balcony. He calls the police, who come to rescue her. His neighbours treat him as a hero. He thinks he did nothing that was brave and wants to forget the whole episode. Two weeks later the woman comes to his door to thank him. She introduces herself as Lydia Simpson.

They get to know each other and have meals together. One evening he asks her why she tried to kill herself. She replies that she had been engaged to be married, but the man had left her for someone else.

He is attracted to her because she is neat, feminine, and self-reliant. In time they get married. She is the perfect wife and homemaker. They have a close, intense relationship, with very few outside people coming into their lives.

The man is promoted at work. He needs to find a secretary. Lydia proposes herself. He tries to explain that it wouldn't be a good idea for his wife to be his secretary as well, but she takes this as a rebuff of his love. The next day she tries to commit suicide again by gassing herself in the oven. She is rushed to the hospital, where she confesses to him that she had also tried to kill herself when she was 17 because a boy had let her down.

The man is determined to devote the rest of his life to looking after his wife. He refuses to go on a business trip to Canada in order to stay with her. They decide not to have children. Their own company is enough for them. He gets sick and does some work from home with Lydia acting as his secretary. He becomes depressed and even contemplates suicide himself. As he approaches 40, he sees himself trapped.



His company is opening an office in Australia, and he is offered the opportunity of going there for three months. He is worried because this will take him away from home. He tries to put off telling Lydia, but eventually she finds out. She reacts very badly, but helps him prepare for the trip. He knows that she will probably try to kill herself again. He also thinks about suicide as a way out of this suffocating relationship.

He discovers Lydia has taken an overdose of sleeping pills. She is still alive. He is about to call for an ambulance when he makes a big decision. He goes out of the house and doesn't come back until several hours later when he knows his wife will have died.



Narrative writing (1) – Using adverbs in narratives

Texting to the rescue

On a mid-September day, British climbers **Rachel Kelsey** and **Jeremy Colenso** were climbing in the Swiss Alps.

several years ago
high / with great confidence

They were both experienced climbers. They left their base and the weather was good. They reached the summit, but as they started the climb down, an electric storm struck the mountain. Snow began to fall, making it difficult to see where they could put their hands and feet on the rock. After several frightening minutes, they found a narrow ledge and climbed onto it, hoping the snow would stop and they could continue their descent.

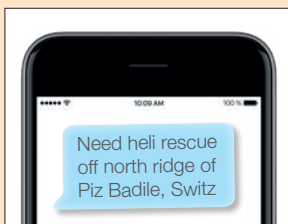
relatively
easily
suddenly / heavily / extremely
safely
gratefully / desperately

The snow did not stop and the temperature dropped to -10°C . 'We had to stay awake,' said Rachel, 'because it was so cold that we would have died. So we told stories, and rubbed our fingers and toes to keep them warm.'

however / dangerously
afterwards / undoubtedly
continuously

They decided that they had to get help. But what could they do? Rachel had brought her mobile phone with her, but the only number contacts she had were in London. She sent a text message at 1.30 a.m. to get help. She sent the same text to five friends in the UK. It read: 'Need heli rescue off north ridge of Piz Badile, Switz'. They were all asleep, so nothing happened. At 5.00 a.m., one friend, Avery Cunliffe, got the message. He jumped into action, called the rescue services in Switzerland, and called Rachel to tell her that help was coming.

eventually / possibly / fortunately
unfortunately
in fact
urgently
for hours / then
immediately / then



The weather was too bad for the helicopters to operate, but Avery kept sending text messages to the climbers. At about 10.00 p.m. they were lifted off the mountain. 'We owe our lives to Avery,' they said when they were back at base.

for the next 24 hours
finally
safely
exhaustedly

Fake news

In 2017, 'fake news' was Collins Dictionary's Word of the Year. The previous year Oxford Dictionaries' chose 'post-truth' as theirs. Jeff Broadbent gives us the facts on the increasing unreliability of our news media (or at least we think he does).

As an investigative journalist, I spend my days checking facts and making sure I have evidence for the stories I'm writing. So it's not surprising that the idea of being in a post-truth age keeps me awake at night. It's a terrifying thought, that many people no longer care whether a news story is actually true, and are simply content to read something that feels true.

The good old days?

Now, I'm not pretending that everything in the media was 100% reliable in the past. We sometimes got things very wrong, and separating fact from fiction became more challenging as soon as the Internet provided every amateur journalist with an audience. So what's different now?

Well, in the past, we usually knew which articles had left reality behind – conspiracy theories telling us that men didn't really land on the moon, or that the British Royal Family ordered the murder of Princess Diana. This stuff was on fringe websites that looked like they were written by fantasists, and was read by a small minority. Most of us went to mainstream news outlets to find out what was really happening in the world, and although we know that newspapers and news stations have their own political bias, we felt safe in assuming that the basic facts were accurate.

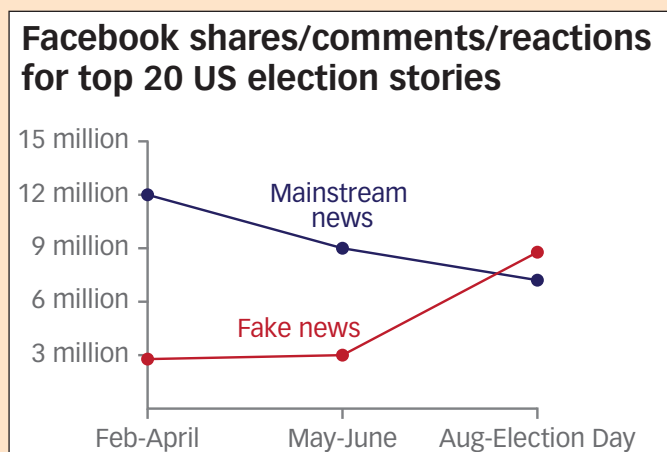


Spreading lies



The big difference nowadays is that most people don't go to news outlets for their news stories – the stories come to them, via social media sites such as Facebook. Articles appear in people's newsfeed, or are shared and forwarded by friends. And this is why millions now read stories that may appear to be from credible news sources, but are in fact not merely biased, but total fabrication.

And it matters. One of the first instances where fake news may have influenced an election was in the US in 2016. There have always been exaggerations and untruths during election campaigns, but in this one there was an organized strategy of targeting key voters with fake news stories via social media. An analysis of how millions of Facebook users engaged with these fake stories showed that in the last three months of the campaign, they got more shares, likes, and comments than all the real stories from traditional news outlets. And is it just coincidence that most of the fake stories were in favour of the eventual winner, Donald Trump?



Choosing what to believe

President Trump was also one of the first politicians to take advantage of the fake news phenomenon. When reporters confronted him with negative news stories, his answer was simple: 'Fake news ... next question'. Other world leaders have done the same, and their supporters are quick to believe them. Many people are happy to view all facts as doubtful – it makes it easy for them to choose what to believe and stick to their prejudices.

Bogus is business

Now there are whole fake news sites out there, producing bogus stories that people share unthinkingly. It's big business, because the most sensational stories get thousands of clicks, and advertisers will pay huge sums to make use of this traffic. And so we end up with a very worrying question in a democracy – how do we know who or what to vote for if we can't be sure what's true? But then I'll leave you with an even bigger question: how many of us really want to know the truth, if it challenges our deeply-held beliefs and lifestyles?

Spot the fake!

Group A

1 Irma – first Category 6 Hurricane on record!

A Facebook live video of passengers trapped in an overturned bus on Saint Martin has shown the havoc Hurricane Irma is causing in the Caribbean. Many news reports predicted Irma could become the first Category 6 storm on record, and a Tweet from website journalist Alex Jones has confirmed this. Another Tweet included a photo of the flooding in Texas, showing a shark swimming along a flooded highway!



2 Man with piercings dies going through airport metal detectors

Gerard M. Rogers, who was the Guinness Book of Records' 'most pierced person', was killed as he attempted to go through a new high-strength metal detector in Los Angeles' LAX airport.

LAX spokesman Joey Goldsmith said 'We'd warned him not to go through, but he said he'd been through one of these before with no problem. Maybe he was lying'. When Mr Rogers walked through the detector, he suffered multiple fatal wounds as it ripped out his piercings. Airports will now be screening which people can use the new machines.



3 Passenger's peacock not allowed on flight

A passenger on a United Airlines flight from Newark Airport in New Jersey was told she wouldn't be allowed on the plane with her peacock. The woman had tried several times to get the bird on board, and even offered to buy a separate ticket for it – she claimed it was her 'emotional support peacock', and wouldn't be able to fly without it. A United spokesman said passengers needed to provide a doctor's letter before bringing an emotional support animal onto a flight.



Spot the fake!

Group B

4 Man fined after implanting travel card chip under skin

An Australian man says the law needs to catch up with technology, after being fined A\$220 for failing to produce his travel card on a train in Sydney. 34-year-old **Mr Meow-Meow** (full name Meow-Ludo Disco Gamma Meow-Meow), had had the chip from his travel card inserted into his hand by a piercing expert, so he could pass his hand over the card scanner. He had done this before boarding the train, but was convicted of travelling without a valid ticket.



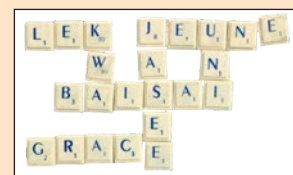
5 Flash flood destroys Kentucky Noah's Ark Exhibit

A new Noah's Ark Christian theme park set to open in Kentucky has been destroyed by a flash flood. 1½ inches (40 mm) of rain fell on the area in just one hour yesterday. The founder of the recently built visitor attraction, Ken Ham, is set to lose hundreds of thousands of dollars. Although the park is insured, insurance companies are not obliged to pay out for flash floods because they are something for which no person can be held responsible, and are therefore legally known as an 'Act of God'.



6 Winner of French Scrabble Championship speaks no French

Nigel Richards from New Zealand has won the French-language Scrabble tournament in Belgium, despite not speaking any French. In the nine weeks before the championship, Mr Richards memorized the French Scrabble Dictionary. He has no idea what the words mean, but this didn't stop him winning the final match easily, against a French speaker from Gabon. The mainly French-speaking audience stood and applauded his victory.



Spot the fake!

- 1 Fake.** When Hurricane Irma hit America in 2017, the news that it was the strongest ever hurricane, a Category 6, was posted on Facebook by Alex Jones, and was shared more than 2 million times. It was fake news because there is no such thing as a Category 6 hurricane – the categories only go up to 5. The ‘live’ Facebook video of the bus drama was in fact a recording of an earlier hurricane incident, replaying on a loop. And while it’s true that there was a lot of flooding in Texas, the photo of the shark swimming along the flooded highway was a photoshopped image.
- 2 Fake.** A typically gruesome fake news story, of the kind people immediately want to share. It was posted on the parody website Empire News in 2017. Almost everything in the story is false, and of course, airport metal detectors don’t attract metal objects, they simply detect them. Only MRI scanners could cause a problem with magnetic attraction, though not enough to pull a piercing out of the body. Patients are advised to take piercings out before an MRI scan in case the piercings move or heat up.
- 3 True.** The woman tried to board a United Airlines flight from New Jersey several times with her peacock, claiming that she needed it with her for emotional support. She even offered to pay for a separate ticket for it, but airline staff refused because of its weight and size. A United spokesperson told journalists later that passengers wishing to take emotional support animals on flights needed to provide a doctor’s letter at least 48 hours before the flight, to prove that it really was necessary.



- 4 True.** Even the 34-year-old man's name is true, as he has had it changed and officially registered, as Meow-Ludo Disco Gamma Meow-Meow. Mr Meow-Meow had the chip from his travel card coated in bio-compatible plastic before having it inserted into his hand. He said he was very disappointed to receive the fine, as it simply showed that he was 'ahead of the law'. He complains that society is behind in applying the potential benefits of new technology, and ran as a candidate for the Science Party in Australian elections in 2017.
- 5 Fake.** There really is a Christian theme park, called Ark Encounter, based on Noah's Ark in Kentucky. It was opened in 2016, but the story about it being flooded shortly before its opening was a satirical fake news story. Of course, it's also true that insurers often don't pay out for damage caused by severe episodes of bad weather, and rather bizarrely in our largely secular society, still refer to them as 'Acts of God'.
- 6 True.** When it comes to actually speaking French, Nigel Richards can do little more than say 'Bonjour!' and count. He played Scrabble in French by processing in his head all the options for different combinations of letters to make words in the French Scrabble Dictionary, without knowing anything about the meaning of them. He first played the game when he was 28, but is now considered the greatest Scrabble player in history.

Linking ideas – Conjunctions

Marilyn Monroe The death of a star



It is over 40 years (1) **since/after** Marilyn Monroe died, (2) **however/but** theories concerning her death still fascinate the world. (3) **Whenever/While** her name is mentioned, people recall the mystery of her final hours and (4) **although/despite** the official verdict was suicide, many believe that she was murdered by the Mafia or the FBI.

Marilyn had a reputation as a dumb blonde who had (5) **so/such** a problem with drink, drugs, and depression that she could never remember her lines. (6) **However/But**, her beauty and fame brought her into contact with some of the biggest names of the day. She dated Frank Sinatra, (7) **even though/despite** he had connections with the Mafia, and she also had affairs with President John Kennedy and his brother Bobby.

(8) **When/Until** Marilyn was found dead in bed at her home in Los Angeles in the early hours of Sunday, August 5, 1962, police assumed it was suicide (9) **but/as** there was an empty bottle of sleeping pills on the table beside her. (10) **Despite/However**, witnesses, including her psychiatrist and some of her friends, insisted she was not suicidal at the time. Other witnesses said they saw Bobby Kennedy visit her house that night, (11) **as long as/even though** he claimed to be in San Francisco. There were other suspicious events. Marilyn's housekeeper disappeared immediately (12) **after/since** she was found, only to reappear a year later as an employee of the Kennedys. Why would they employ her (13) **unless/if** they wanted her to keep silent? Marilyn's diaries also disappeared. Were they (14) **so/such** revealing that they had to be destroyed?



Marilyn's ex-husband Joe DiMaggio was convinced the Kennedys had her killed. He never spoke about it **(15) while/during** he was alive **(16) in case/unless** he also met an untimely death, but he did in his memoirs, which were published **(17) as soon as/since** he died.



This is your captain speaking ...

“Good afternoon ladies and gentlemen. Welcome aboard this Virgin Atlantic flight to Boston. In a short time, we (1) (**take off**). Our flight time today (2) (**be**) approximately six and a half hours and we (3) (**fly**) at 37,000 feet, at a cruising speed of 575 miles per hour. We (4) (**come in**) over the coast of Newfoundland before heading down to Boston. We (5) (**arrive**) in Boston at 20.45 US time. The cabin crew (6) (**serve**) an evening meal during the flight. If you need any assistance, just press the call button and a flight attendant (7) (**come**) to help you. In case of turbulence, (8) you please (**keep**) your seatbelt fastened when in your seat?”

(Near the end of flight)

“In a few moments time, the crew (9) (**give out**) landing cards for those who (10) (**need**) them. In 20 minutes, we (11) (**land**) at Boston Logan airport where the temperature is a chilly 5°C. Please put your seats in the upright position and remain seated until the plane (12) (**come**) to a complete standstill. We hope you have enjoyed your flight with Virgin Atlantic.”

Meet the 'Boomerang' Kids and their parents

Who are they? They're the children who just CAN'T or WON'T leave home. Or, to put it another way, they are 'kidults', in their 20s or 30s, who 'boomerang' back home, having previously fled the nest. In the UK, more than 3 million 20-somethings still live in the family home. It is a trend echoed throughout the world.

A

Julian Hanlon, (25)

back living with parents, Alan and Barbara.

"I didn't expect to return home. I studied music at Cambridge and after graduating, I went travelling with some guys – round Europe, singing in bars to pay our way – it was great! But it had to end. I'd got a place to do Opera Studies at the Guildhall School of Music, but I came back with a load more debt – so here I am, back in my old bedroom. It feels weird, but thanks to mum and dad, I'm rent free. We get on well most of the time – but my elder brother, Tim, has joined us now. He's just separated from his wife. I think it's tough on mum and dad – both their big sons back. My brother's depressed, but he's going to try and put things right with Annie. My girlfriend calls us 'mummy's boys' because mum still cooks and washes for us! That's a real bonus – I'll miss that when I move out. Anyway, I'm singing in Don Giovanni next month. I hope my family will be proud of me in the end."



Alan Hanlon, (61)

“In some ways it’s nice having the boys back. Family is important to us and we’re happy to help Julian while he’s training, and, of course, we’re sorry for poor Tim. But we had got over the ‘empty nest’ syndrome, or at least I had. We’ll both be retiring soon, and I was looking forward to having the freedom that brings. Now it’s like we’ve gone back in time – the mess and the noise. But Barbara seems to love it! I think she does far too much for them and I take issue with that. The boys seem to take it for granted that they live rent free, and their mum will cook and clean for them.

One thing I do like is having their friends round again – we have some good times together. Julian’s girlfriend is great fun and this takes Tim’s mind off his problems for a while. We’re all hoping he’ll get back with his wife. And, of course Barbara and I take great pride in Julian’s singing. I suppose we’ll put up with it for the time being.”

B**Amy Butcher, (22)**

left home at 18 but now back with mum, Faye.

“I loved my independence. I work in the make-up section in a city department store, and I was sharing a flat with two girlfriends. But then the landlord put up the rent and that was that. So, I’m back with mum. It’s not easy. It’s not that I don’t get on with her – I do. And I know the bit of rent I pay her, helps. But she gets on my nerves sometimes – she’s obsessively tidy. She’s always tidying away my things and I can’t find them. Also she worries when I’m out late with friends. But I worry about her, too. The thing is, I’m not sure about her new boyfriend. I know he doesn’t like me.

I love when it’s just mum and me and we stretch out on the sofa and watch a film together. We’ll be doing that tonight. I’m saving like mad – but the store is going to close. I don’t know what I’ll do then. I think I’ll look for work in a beauty parlour.”



Faye Butcher, (57)

“I missed Amy a lot when she moved out. You see, I’ve been a single mum since Amy’s dad left when she was ten, so we’re very close and I love having her around again. She helps me with my make-up and keeps me in touch with the world of music, films and phone apps. But it’s not all fun. Amy’s as untidy today as she was as a teenager. The house is littered with her stuff. It’s my house and I like it tidy – I’m always putting her things away. I’m going to make her a list of house rules. I know she’ll take offence and say I’m treating her like a kid. She’s right.

But a bigger problem is Rob – he’s an old friend. He helps me with household chores from time to time. Amy won’t speak to him – she thinks he’s my boyfriend. He’s not – well, not yet. Anyway, it’s an awkward situation for me. I’m going to have to say something to her. I’m always kind to her boyfriends.”



Elon Musk

“I would like to die on Mars. Just not on impact.”

“I think that’s the single best piece of advice: constantly think about how you could be doing things better and questioning yourself.” Elon Musk

Elon Musk was born in 1971, in South Africa. **Little information is** known about his early life, but it clearly wasn’t happy. His parents divorced when he was ten, and Elon lived with his father. It seems there was **a great deal of** harsh discipline around, and **not a lot of** love, and he was also bullied at school. He thinks **all** these difficulties made him strong, however, and worries that his children **have too few** struggles in life!

Elon left South Africa in 1989, to avoid doing military service for the apartheid government. He graduated in Physics and Economics in the US, and started a PhD in Physics, but dropped out after only **two** days. The Internet was booming, and Elon wanted to seize the **countless** opportunities it offered. In **a short time**, he made \$187m from founding and selling **Zip2**, which produced online city guides, and **PayPal**. He used the money to fund the ventures closest to his heart – alternative technology, and space travel.



Musk's car company, Tesla, makes electric cars that **every car fanatic** would desire – the Roadster sports model can accelerate from 0 to 60mph in 3.7 seconds. His company **SpaceX** successfully launched its Falcon 9 rocket in 2012. There are **plenty of** private rocket enthusiasts (Amazon's Jeff Bezos is another famous one), but Musk's rockets were the first to dock with the International Space Station. In 2018, a bigger rocket, the Falcon Heavy, took a Tesla Roadster into space! **Both** types of Falcon rocket are reusable – **each** rocket booster can land and be used again.

Musk currently has **several** companies on the go, and **a great number of** projects, including artificial intelligence, solar energy, and a new tunnel-boring machine (that idea came while he was stuck in traffic). His tunnelling company is called **The Boring Company**.



The Story of LEGO

Success in stats

There are more LEGO figures on Earth than people, and 86 Lego bricks for every person alive. LEGO is actually the world's biggest tyre manufacturer – they make 400 million a year!

In 1932, in Billund, Denmark, **Ole Kirk Christiansen** had an idea. He'd had a woodworking workshop since 1916, but the Great Depression had come, and the locals couldn't afford to buy much. Ole saw that people often spent what little money they had on toys for their children, and decided to make some, using **spare** bits of wood. He was helped by his grandson, Godtfred, who joined the business aged 12.

An early story demonstrates how seriously Ole took his motto: **Only the best is good enough**. Godtfred came home looking pleased one evening, and told Ole he'd saved the business money by putting only two layers of varnish on a toy duck, instead of three. Ole gave him a good **telling-off**, and made him go back to the workshop immediately to add a third layer, in order to achieve the quality required.

Success – brick by brick

The LEGO toy company was established in 1934. The name comes from the Swedish **leg godt**, meaning 'to play well'. Only much later, after the company began making its connecting bricks, was it discovered that lego in Latin means 'I put together'! The idea for plastic self-locking building bricks actually came from a British company, Kiddicraft. LEGO started making them in 1949, but it wasn't until 1958, when the locking design was much improved, that sales took off. That was also the year Ole died, and Godtfred took over the company.



LEGO's enormous success is due to its quality, and the endless creativity it allows children. A mathematician recently calculated that six LEGO bricks could be combined in 915,103,765 ways! And it's not just children who love it; AFOLs – Adult Fans Of LEGO – include David Beckham and Ed Sheeran, and are a valuable market. Less enthusiastic adults are those who spend hours on Christmas morning assembling complicated LEGO sets for their children (and also discover that standing on a LEGO brick in bare feet can be very painful)!

Surviving difficult times

In the new millennium, children began to spend a lot more time playing digital games. By 2003, LEGO sales were down by 30%, and the company was \$800 million in debt. **Business consultants** said the brick was dead, and told LEGO **to diversify** into clothes and jewellery, video games, and Legoland parks. All of these lost money, and LEGO nearly **went bust**. In 2015, however, it became the world's most powerful brand, having **quadrupled** its profits since 2008. This was done by selling off its Legoland and video games arms, and focusing again on its key product, the bricks and sets. The Internet was used to build a strong community of LEGO fans, and the huge amount of love they have for the physical bricks and figures is shown by the thousands of YouTube videos they share of their collections.



The Story of IKEA



Success in stats

IKEA has over 300 stores in 41 countries. On some Sundays in Britain, almost twice as many people visit an IKEA branch as attend church.

All children ask their grandparents for things, but 5-year-old **Ingvar Kamprad's** request to his grandmother was unusual. He asked her to buy boxes of matches for him **in bulk**, which he then sold to people for a profit. At the age of ten, he was cycling around Småland, Sweden selling seeds, fish and pencils!

In 1943, when he was 17, Ingvar's father gave him some money for doing well at school despite his dyslexia. Ingvar used it to start a mail-order company selling household **goods**, and called it IKEA – it stands for Ingvar Kamprad from Elmtaryd, Agunnyard (his boyhood address). An early story shows how **driven** he was. When his father said he slept too late, Ingvar set his alarm clock for 6.00 a.m. and removed the 'off' button!

Fast furniture

Ingvar's main competitor sold furniture, and it gave him an idea. At the time, stylish furniture was a luxury few could afford, and only after saving up for years. What if he could make it affordable for all, sooner? He did it by buying and selling in bulk as cheaply as possible – his motto was: **It's better to sell 600 chairs at a lower price than sell 60 chairs at a high price.** He bought an old factory and manufactured even cheaper furniture himself, keeping quality high.

Other furniture manufacturers were horrified at IKEA's low prices, and persuaded all the wood suppliers in Sweden **to boycott** the company. Ingvar's entire business was threatened, and he was forced to find suppliers from abroad. In fact, the Polish wood he bought made his products even cheaper.



Flatpack fans?

He opened his first big showroom in 1958, with the familiar IKEA sign (but in red and white – the yellow and blue of the Swedish flag came later). As more Swedes bought cars, Kamprad cut rental costs by opening stores out of town. The real **lightbulb moment** came when a colleague couldn't get an IKEA table into his car, and unscrewed the legs and taped them underneath the table to make it go in. Introducing flatpack furniture, which customers took home and assembled themselves, brought huge savings in **storage** and delivery costs.

Not everyone was a fan of self-assembly furniture. Many people got frustrated with the text-free diagrams, and with each other, when putting the furniture together. One of the biggest self-assembly items became known as 'the Divorce Maker'! IKEA also hit cultural problems when expanding abroad – in America customers thought the glass vases were expensive drinking glasses – the actual drinking glasses were way too small for them!

IKEA's global success has continued, however, and Ingvar played a major role in it right up until his death. In 2014, he said, 'I have so much work to do and no time to die', but in 2018, aged 91, he finally found enough time, and left his three sons in charge of the company.



Report writing – A survey

The Organic Burger Company

FAO: Managing Director, Organic Burger Company

Title: Survey into Potential Market Share Increase

Background and objectives

(1) [] is the recent drop in customers at traditional fast-food outlets. The Organic Burger Company is seeking to fill the growing gap in the market.

(2) [] is to survey customer attitudes by carrying out preliminary research among 500 young people in Nottingham, a medium-sized English city.

(3) [] what customers would want from the experience of buying and eating a high-quality organic burger.

Research

Participants (4) [] to statements 1–5:

SA = Strongly Agree **A** = Agree **DK** = Don't know
D = Disagree **SD** = Strongly Disagree

- 1 I prefer to eat burgers made with organic meat.
- 2 I prefer fast-food restaurants with tasteful and modern interiors.
- 3 I prefer my food to be grown in an environmentally-friendly way.
- 4 I prefer all ingredients to be fresh and organic.
- 5 I am prepared to pay more for these preferences to be met.



Findings

(5) [] agreeing or strongly agreeing with each question were:

1 46% 2 47% 3 77% 4 39% 5 22%

The (6) [] are:

- 1: there is a significant demand for organic food.
- 2: (7) [] of the financial viability of meeting this demand.

Summary and recommendations

(8) [], our survey showed that:

- environmental awareness and health concerns are an increasingly important factor for young people.
- there is already a growing preference for more stylish fast-food outlets.

(9) [] to prepare for an expansion into this market, as and when it develops further.

Action

(10) [] further research is carried out on a larger scale in other localities around the UK. This should be completed (11) [].



“I cycled from India to Europe for love!”

It was December 1975, and in New Delhi, India, a street artist, known as PK, met a Swedish tourist. They fell in love. It was love at first sight. But she had to return home. He refused to give up. Months later, he set off on a 7,000 km bike trip to join her.

Short-lived married bliss!

Pradyumna Kumar Mahanandia, (PK), was a street artist from what was known as the ‘untouchable’ caste. He was drawing portraits of tourists, when he met a young Swedish student, **Charlotte von Schedvin (Lotta)**. She was travelling round India in a VW camper van with friends, and she had asked him to draw her. Now, after more than 40 years of marriage and two children, they can still remember every detail of their meeting.



PK holds up a palm leaf inscribed by an astrologer and given to his parents on the day he was born. ‘It says that I would marry a foreign lady with white skin who was musical,’ he tells me. ‘I knew it was Lotta as soon as I saw her.’

In January, 1976, just a few days after they met, the couple made the journey to PK’s home village in Orissa, in the east of India, to meet his family and get married. PK’s father gave them his blessing, but their married bliss was short-lived. Lotta had to get back to Sweden to continue her studies, but she made PK promise that he would follow her. So, with her companions in the camper van, she began the long trek back, overland through Asia and Europe.



An impossible journey made possible



For some young lovers, this might have marked the end. Not so for PK and Lotta. Letters flew between the two. Still sketching tourists, PK started planning the seemingly impossible – an overland journey of 7,000 km to rejoin Lotta in Sweden.

‘Flying was out of the question,’ he says. Eventually, he realized a pushbike might offer him salvation and bought a ladies’ Raleigh – it was half the price of the men’s model. He set off with his passport, a spare pair of trousers, a sleeping bag – and \$80 sewn into his clothes.

The route was tough, through Pakistan, Afghanistan, Iran, but PK recalls it fondly. He says he became part of a ‘family’ on the hippy trail. ‘We helped each other. We looked after each other,’ he says. He talks of how he helped a German girl, after a car accident in Afghanistan left her badly injured; and of how a Belgian traveller pointed out to him that Sweden was, in fact, a different country from Switzerland!

His talent as an artist attracted attention along the way. He managed to get past the border guards into Pakistan by drawing their portraits. He earned enough money to eat and travel – Lotta says being an artist was a kind of currency for him. ‘He could get very close to people quickly. When you draw them, they trust you.’

PK ditched the old bike and bought a slightly less shaky one. He was getting there, slowly but surely. Were there any doubts at all? ‘On the journey, I had doubts that I would die and wouldn’t be able to fulfil my meeting with Lotta,’ he says. ‘But I knew in the next life I would find her,’ he says. Lotta adds that she had no doubts. ‘It was just a matter of time that you would turn up,’ she says. ‘His journey was a test for us being separated.’



PK's journey was accelerated when Linnea – the German girl he had helped – sent him a train ticket to Vienna, and again when a gallery owner in the city, impressed with both his story and talent as an artist, handed over the means to the final leg of his journey – tickets to Copenhagen and Gothenburg.

Together again

About 16 months after their parting as newlyweds, PK and Lotta got together again. It was a moment of intense emotion. PK, overcome with excitement and tiredness, started to cry. Lotta took him for a walk in the local park, where they sat among the flowers, drinking coffee.

'It was a great step for my parents to embrace our lives together,' says Lotta. 'My mother had been initially cautious, but I had my willpower and strong belief that this would work.'

They never seriously considered returning to India to live. But they set up a scholarship for children in PK's village. Their children, Emilie and Karl Siddhartha – known as Kid Sid – are now 31 and 29. 'I love that they know that as soon as we met, we wanted to be with each other,' says Lotta. 'We will never be separated.'

PK says, 'Bumping along on my bike, my goal was just to get to Lotta.'

Arguing your case – For and against

Subject: Email – has it really improved our lives?

Email is an important means of communication. However, in my opinion, like most things it has both advantages and disadvantages.

+ On the plus side:

- First of all, email is easy. All you need is the appropriate software on your computer. There are no stamps to stick and no trips to postboxes.
- A second point is that email is fast. No matter where you're sending your message, whether it's to the next street or to the other side of the planet, it takes only seconds to reach its destination. Nowadays, whenever I send regular mail (or 'snail mail', as email users call it), I can't believe that it's actually going to take days to reach its destination. How primitive!
- Email is not only fast, it is also cheap. Unlike long distance telephone calls, you pay no more for messages sent from the US to London, Ohio, London, Ontario, or London, England.
- Also, email messages are easily stored. Because they're electronic, saving an email message you've received (and calling it back up again later) is a breeze.
- In addition to this, email is environmentally friendly because, being electronic, it saves natural resources such as paper.
- Last but not least, email is practically universal. Even my great aunt in Galashiels, Scotland, is using it these days.



– On the minus side:

- Firstly, email is impersonal. Unlike when face to face or in telephone conversations, it's difficult to get across subtle meanings in email prose with no visual or voice clues.
- Secondly, it can be argued that email is in fact too easy. You can write a message in a few seconds and send it off with one click. And once sent, you can't get back a message that may have been written in a fit of irritation or anger.
- Another point is that email security is lax. As your email message makes its way to its destination, it has to pass through other, public systems. Anyone with the right technical know-how can intercept it without you knowing.
- Although, as stated earlier, it is an advantage that email messages are easily stored, this can also be a disadvantage. If you say nasty things about your boss in a message, a saved copy can come back to haunt you in the future.
- A final and very important point is that email can take over your life. Because it is so easy, you start getting more and more correspondence, and you end up spending most of your day reading and responding to floods of message.

Overall, however, to my mind the pros of email easily outweigh the cons. It has transformed the world of communication in largely beneficial ways, and alongside text messaging and social media, it is now a major way of keeping in touch.



The African Iceman

Feb 15th 2018 (1) was the day when 32-year-old Akwasi Frimpong from Ghana entered history. Sprinting alongside a tiny sled, jumping onto it face first, and hurtling down an ice track at 100 km an hour, he became the first African to compete in the Olympic Skeleton.

From Africa to Europe

Born in 1986, Akwasi was brought up by his grandmother in Kumasi, Ghana, in a 4 m² room (2) .
Aged eight, he joined his mother, (3) .

He loved sport and was a talented sprinter, becoming the Dutch junior 200 metre champion at the age of 17. However, he never travelled to competitions abroad. Akwasi, (4) , had a secret! His paperwork hadn't been processed, so he was an illegal immigrant, and wouldn't have been allowed back into The Netherlands.



From sprinting to ‘Skeleton’!

In 2008, he finally got his Dutch passport and trained for the 2012 London Olympics, but injury ended his sprinting ambitions. He changed sport, and trained in bobsled, an event (5) _____, but after failing to get into the 2014 Winter Olympic team, he decided to give up competitive sport altogether. However, his wife, Erica, told him she didn’t want him forever moaning about his lost Olympic dreams, so Akwasi changed sport again – this time to Skeleton racing. He loved it, and set his heart on competing in the 2018 Olympics in South Korea, but not for The Netherlands ... for his birth country, Ghana.

“I have to push, dive on the sled, and navigate a mile of ice track at 80–90 mph with my chin three inches from the ice.”

Back to Africa

Aged 31, for the first time in 23 years, Akwasi returned to Ghana, (6) _____ **Bobsled and Skeleton Federation Ghana**. In a country with no snow or ice, he introduced fellow Ghanains to winter sports (7) _____! Back in The Netherlands, he trained for the Olympics with money (8) _____ door-to-door, and just managed to qualify for South Korea, entering the top 60 in the world.

Success of a sort

In a Hollywood movie, Akwasi would have won Olympic gold, but of course he had no chance against his competitors, (9) _____. He came last. ‘That is OK,’ he said. ‘For me, being at the Winter Olympics is about breaking barriers ... to show black people from warm countries can do this as well.’ But he now hopes to win the first Olympic gold medal for Ghana in the 2022 Winter Games, (10) _____.

Tarzan of Central Park

Anyone visiting New York for the first time should try to get a room high up in one of the hotels at the southern end of Central Park. The view is extraordinary. The park extends northwards until it is lost from sight in a sea of treetops, with enormous cliffs of stone and cement on each side.

Life among the treetops

For many years, legends grew among people who lived near the park, legends of life among the treetops. One story was of a young handsome man who had been **spotted** from time to time among the branches. In this case, the rumour turned out to be true. There was a young, handsome man who had been living in the treetops for eight years, until discovered by the city authorities.

‘I like the solitude.’

It’s a **touching** tale. Bob Redman, brought up by his mother in a tiny Manhattan apartment, had always been addicted to trees. When he was 14, he went into the park and built himself a tree house. It was the first of 13 houses, each one more elaborate than the last. ‘I like to be in trees,’ Redman explained to a reporter from The New York Times. ‘I like to be up, away from everything. I like the solitude. I love most of all to look at the stars. The view at night of the city lights and stars is beyond description.’



A five-room split-level home

His final house was the grandest of them all. Constructed at the top of a huge beech tree, it was what an estate agent would describe as a ‘five-room, split-level home, commanding spectacular views of the city skyline and Central Park’. It included ladders and rope bridges leading to an **adjacent** tree, as well as wooden benches and tables. Who can imagine what the rent might be for such a house?

Friends come to visit

Redman **went to great pains** to hide his tree houses, building them in neglected corners of the park and camouflaging them with branches and green paint. Friends used to come to visit him, sometimes as many as 12 people at a time, bringing sandwiches and radios and books and torches. Certain rules had to be obeyed: no breaking branches, no litter, no fires, and no loud music – except his brother Bill, who sometimes brought a set of conga drums and played them very late at night, giving rise to the rumours of a tree-dwelling tribe.

The party's over!

Although the park authorities quickly became aware of his activities, the houses would often go **undetected** for long periods of time. Some lasted as long as a whole year before they were found and destroyed by officials, with a **mournful** Bob Redman watching from a distance. His magnificent final house went unnoticed for four months before Bob was awoken one morning with the word: ‘Come down! The party's over!’



He climbed down and was met by Frank Serpe, Park Director, and ten officers of the Parks Enforcement Patrol. Mr Serpe had been hunting Redman for years. But he was generous in his praise for the houses. ‘We **marvelled at** the spectacular workmanship,’ he said. ‘The floors were strong enough to hold a truck, and not one nail was driven into the tree.’ And when Bob offered to help **dismantle** the tree house, ‘Well, he walked up the tree’ an officer said. ‘It was amazing!’

The perfect job!

Mr Serpe concluded that rather than lock him up, they should offer Redman a job. He is now a professional pruner and tree climber for the Central Park Conservancy. However, he has had to promise not to build any more tree houses. He says he cannot believe that a job so perfect for him could possibly exist.

This story just goes to prove that America is still a land of opportunity, where dreams can become reality. And, in the hectic, competitive world of New York, it is comforting to know that a man like Bob Redman exists.

Postscript

When a New York writer called Shira Boss needed her tiny Japanese maple tree pruning, someone suggested a man called ... Bob Redman. They are now married, with two sons, and Shira has written a children’s book telling Bob’s story, *Up In The Leaves*, which was published in 2018.



Describing places – My favourite part of town

I'm a Greenwich Villager and proud of it!

I live in Greenwich Village, New York, which is in the 'downtown' (southern) part of Manhattan and includes Washington Square Park, New York University, and a maze of picturesque little streets. It's my favourite part of town. So why do I like it so much? It's an artistic and intellectual neighbourhood with people playing chess in the park, artists selling paintings on the sidewalk, and students discussing life in coffee shops. Life in 'the Village' is never dull. There's a surprise around every corner – maybe a brand-new restaurant that wasn't there last week, a snoring down-and-out sleeping in the doorway, or a celebrity being pursued by paparazzi and fans. A sense of history pervades Greenwich Village. It was first inhabited by Native Americans, then Dutch settlers, and then the British, who in 1713 named it 'Greenwich' after a town in England. The Village really was a small, rural village until the 1800s, when people escaping outbreaks of disease began moving there. Ever since, the Village has been a haven for artists, writers, poets, and musicians. Many famous people have lived in Greenwich Village, including the writer Jack Kerouac, the singer Bob Dylan, and the actress Uma Thurman. The popular sitcom Friends was set here, and busloads of tourists looking for places mentioned in the show come here every weekend. The heart of the Village is an area of pretty, twisting streets west of Sixth Avenue, where there are endless theatres, used bookstores, coffee shops, trendy boutiques, and of course, restaurants. A large part of the Village experience has to do with food.



The Village is packed with food shops and restaurants from every region of the world. Mouth-watering aromas are everywhere from first thing in the morning until late at night. The Village is a genuine 24/7 part of the town. Washington Square Park is like a magnet for young people. They flock from every corner of the world to sit on the benches or beside the fountain, talking, playing musical instruments, and celebrating the freedom of friendship and youth. My mother, who grew up in New York City, used to say that Times Square is for tourists, but the Village is the real New York.



Friends forever!



To: anastasia.peabody@smalltalk.co.uk

Subject: Memories of Ash House School

Hi Tazy! (Anastasia!)

It's great to be in touch again. The wonder of social media – sometimes! How could anybody forget a name like yours? Crazy Tazy Jones! And now you're a 'Peabody'!

You and I were friends from the start. We (1) _____ next to each other in class, but then the teachers made us sit apart, because we (2) _____ and whispering.

Do you remember how we (3) _____ back to your house after school and listen to music for hours on end? CDs in those days! We both (4) _____ **Oasis**, but we (5) _____ endlessly about who was better – Liam or Noel. Oh, and we also (6) _____ to the **Spice Girls** – but 'in secret', because they were so 'uncool'.

Then there was that time we (7) _____ your bike bright pink. Then we (8) _____ round town on it, and we (9) _____ our helmets. Your dad was furious – but we didn't care!

I (10) _____ with Polly and Tina from time to time. They're both married with kids, and, like us, balancing work and home life. Polly's the same as ever, a rotten timekeeper – she (11) _____ late and rush in, full of apologies.

It'd be so great if you could join us – in the meantime keep on keeping in touch! It's great to catch up.

Love,
Nicky

PS I can't (12) _____ you Anastasia Peabody! To me, you'll always be Crazy Tazy Jones.



The 21st century man who lives in Victorian times

Peter Saunders is a council worker from Nottingham. He's just 35 years old, but he is a huge fan of all things Victorian. He has spent £1,000s turning his house into a late 1800s haven.

Peter takes Victorian life very seriously, even down to wearing a **waistcoat** and flat cap. Every item in his cottage is 100 per cent authentic. There is no factory-produced furniture, everything from the toilet to the tins in his **pantry** have been lovingly hand-picked from car boot sales, antique fairs and eBay auctions. A portrait of Queen Victoria hangs proudly above the sitting room fireplace.

Peter's four-bedroom house now looks much like it used to look when a real-life Victorian family lived there and Peter is considering opening its doors to the public.

He says: 'I've gone to a lot of trouble and I would like to share it with people who will appreciate it. The Victorian period was a fascinating time. Both my mum and my sister are interested in it, too, so I guess my passion for it started from them. My mum is always picking things up for me from car boot sales. I like the idea of the lifestyle that the Victorians had. They would entertain themselves. They used to love a sing-song round the piano. And they were less wasteful than we are today. Things were built to last. I can't stand all that modern stuff made of plastic that all looks the same. Most of my friends are very supportive and they love coming round for dinner parties when all the old glasses and cutlery comes out.'



Peter uses all the original cooking features in his kitchen, but admits to having a microwave oven. He also has a television, central heating and a fridge freezer, but he says: 'All my **mod cons** are cleverly hidden around the house in cupboards or behind curtains. And I have running water, as most Victorians had, but they didn't have hot water like I do.'

The house has an outside **loo**, which Peter is restoring. 'But I also have a Victorian-style indoor bathroom with antique fittings, so I suppose I have the best of both worlds – all the modern conveniences but with the romantic and **quaint** feel of the Victorian period, and it's very **cosy** – the Victorians were all about comfort.'

Experts agree with Peter that the house genuinely reflects Victorian times. Hilary Silvester, chairman of Nottingham Civic Society, said: 'Peter's done it extremely well. It's not **twee** in any way and has been restored in such a genuine fashion.'

The 21st century woman who lives in the 1950s

Joanne Massey, 40, lives in a re-creation of a 1950s home in Stafford with her husband Kevin, 47, who is a graphic designer.

Joanne is a housewife. She says:

'I love nothing better than fastening my **pinny** round my waist and baking a cake for Kevin in my 1950s kitchen. I put on some lovely Frank Sinatra music and am completely lost in my own little fantasy world. In our marriage, I am very much a lady and Kevin is the **breadwinner**. We've been married for 13 years and we're extremely happy because we both know our roles. I make sure our home is **immaculate**, there is dinner on the table, and I look pretty to welcome my husband home.'

Joanne doesn't even put petrol in their Ford Anglia car, which is 43 years old, because she thinks that is unladylike. She asks Kevin to do it. She only ever wears 1950s clothing, such as tight pencil skirts, a white blouse and a wide belt. Her furniture is all from the 50s. The kitchen is an original 'English Rose' design, which used to be very much the 'in thing'. They advertised for it in an antiques magazine and bought it from a family in Scotland who had it in their garage to keep tools in.

Joanne thinks modern life is too **hectic**. Shopping in supermarkets is an ordeal, and she doesn't read newspapers – they are just too distressing. She says: 'We do have a television set, but we hide it in a retro cabinet. Neither of us drinks and our social life revolves around visiting **like-minded** friends for tea and cakes.'



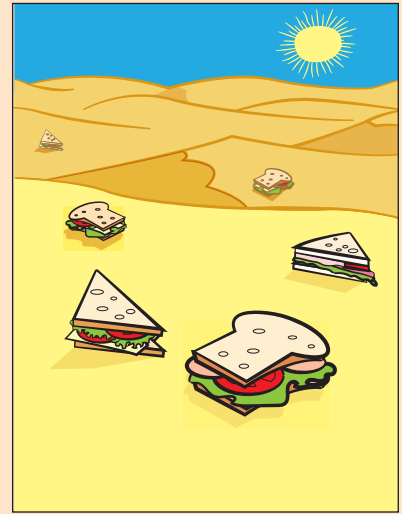
Her obsession began as a teenager. She loved old movies because they seemed to represent a **halcyon** time, when women were more feminine and men more protective. She could have gone to university, but chose to work in a bank.

She says: 'I was marking time until I met the right man. Kevin and I met at a Fifties Convention, and we had an old-fashioned **courtship** before he proposed. I was ecstatic, because I had found someone with the same passion. Some women I meet ask me if I feel patronized by spending all my time caring for Kevin, but I never would.'

At work, Kevin gets teased because he's the only one with home-made cakes and even home-made jam in his sandwiches. Joanne thinks his colleagues are jealous that he has a wife who devotes herself **solely** to his happiness. How many men these days can really say that?

Children's jokes

- 1 Why will you never starve in the desert?
... Because of the sand which is there.
- 2 Why is Sunday the strongest day?
... Because the others are weak days.
- 3 A Your battery's flat. That's why your car won't start.
B Oh dear! What shape should it be?
- 4 A Waiter! What's wrong with this egg?
B Don't ask me, sir. I only laid the table.
- 5 A What do you get when 5,000 strawberries try to go through a door at the same time?
B I don't know. What do you get?
A Strawberry jam!
- 6 A Waiter, this food tastes funny?
B So, why aren't you laughing?
- 7 What do you give to a sick lemon?
... Lemon aid!
- 8 What did one toilet say to the other?
... You look a bit flushed.
- 9 Why can't Cinderella play soccer?
... Because she's always running away from the ball.



Writing for talking – An early memory

An early memory of school

Some of my clearest and earliest memories are of my first school. So I'd like to share a memory about that. A memory that still upsets me after all these years.

I was five years old and had just started school. It was quite a long way from my house and there were no school buses, so I had to walk. My sister, who's 11 years older than me, went to the 'big' school, which was next to mine, so my mum sometimes asked her to take me to school. She was not keen to do this. She had no time for a small, irritating sister dragging along behind her. She liked to meet up with her 'cool' friends. What's more, because her school day started later than mine she was happy to dawdle and chat. She refused to hurry to get me there on time. I was always an anxious child and I would tug at her sleeve and fret about being late. She'd just shake me off.

Anyway, one day was particularly bad. It was pouring with rain and we splashed through puddles as we walked. My sister was moaning all the time about how the rain was ruining her hair because she was hoping to meet a certain boy on the way. On that day he didn't materialize, and this put her in a very bad mood. I was wearing my new red 'welly' boots and they were really difficult to pull on and off. I was full of fear, Miss Marks, my teacher, would kill me if I was late again. Finally, we got there and my sister ran off, leaving me to cope with the wellies. The cloakroom was empty, and I sat tearfully on the bench, tugging at the wretched boots. I put on my indoor shoes and crept into the back of the classroom. I was very late and very scared. The other kids were making mosaic pictures with lots of different-coloured bits of sticky paper. I'd been so looking forward to doing this. Art was my best subject.



I'd planned to do a beautiful portrait of my black-and-white cat. Miss Marks called across the room, 'Elizabeth, late again!' I hung my head. 'You'll just have to sit in the corner and do a jigsaw.' So, I did, silently weeping and cursing my sister. I never did make that mosaic picture of my cat.

To this day my sister insists she can't remember anything about this. However, I believe it's the reason I have such a problem with lateness. I always arrive on time.



One of the greatest mysteries of English history

Richard III

The Princes in the Tower

Richard III was born in 1452. He became king in 1483 after the death of his elder brother, Edward IV, having seized the throne from Edward's two young sons. He imprisoned the boys in the Tower of London, where he allegedly had them murdered. The scandal of 'The Princes in the Tower' caused Henry Tudor to challenge him for the throne. Richard amassed an army of 12,000 men near the town of Leicester. Henry marched towards him with his army of 5,000. They met and fought in the Battle of Bosworth Field. The year was 1485, the last time any English King actually fought in battle with his men. Richard, aged just 32, was killed, and Henry Tudor took the throne as Henry VII. He was the father of Henry VIII and grandfather of Elizabeth I.



Richard's first burial

According to historical records, Richard's body was taken to Leicester and buried without a coffin in a friary graveyard. This was subsequently destroyed in the 16th century. It wasn't until 500 years after his death that a team from Leicester University set out to find the site of Richard's burial. In August 2012 they began excavating in a car park in the city centre, and soon discovered a skeleton, which was found in good condition but with its feet missing. It also had a badly curved spine and ten battle-related injuries. It was subjected to months of DNA tests which linked it not only to the English actor, Benedict Cumberbatch, but also to descendants in Canada, who are genealogically linked to Richard's sister, Anne of York. This was final confirmation that the body was Richard III. A facial reconstruction of the skull was made, which looks remarkably like portraits of the King.

Shakespeare's Richard

Richard III was portrayed by Shakespeare as a hunchbacked tyrant with a withered arm, who murdered two innocent princes. However, modern historians argue that Richard was the victim of Henry VII's propaganda because archaeologists found no evidence of a withered arm.

His second burial

In 2014, the king was finally given a royal burial and his remains were laid to rest in Leicester Cathedral.

The Vikings

Raiders, traders and intrepid explorers

“From the Fury of the Northmen, O Lord, Deliver Us!”

The year is **793 AD** and this was the petrified cry of the ancient Anglo-Saxons pleading with God to save them from the Vikings (or Norsemen). For nearly **300** years, from the **8th** to the **11th** century AD, this warrior race set out from Scandinavia on raids and voyages of discovery and colonization across the northern world. They struck fear in the hearts of the peoples of Europe, but the archaeology of their settlements and the literature of their sagas reveal a complex and fascinating culture. They were not only violent raiders and pillagers, they were a lot else besides.

- 1** This striking-looking race with their blond hair and blue eyes were descended from Germanic tribes that settled in what is now Scandinavia. Most Vikings were at heart farmers and fishermen, not warriors. They grew vegetables and cereal crops and tended their livestock. Skilled Viking craftsmen included blacksmiths, leather-workers and jewellers.
- 2** They worshipped a variety of gods. Chief among them were Odin, Thor, and Frey. Today we recall them as Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It is said that Odin created the Runes, the **24** letters of the old Norse alphabet. These were carved on stone tablets with scenes of Norse myths.
- 3** Above all, the Vikings were skilful shipbuilders and navigators. With their magnificent longships they embarked on voyages of exploration far and wide, from Britain to Baghdad, trading their iron, furs and grindstones for goods which they could not get at home, such as silk, glass and silver.



- 4 However, in the late **8th** century, trading was replaced by raiding. Having the fastest ships of the day they sprang surprise attacks on European monasteries, thereafter extorting protection money, as a price of peace. This was known as Danegeld. This reign of terror began in **793**, with a ferocious attack on England's Lindisfarne monastery.
- 5 By the **mid-9th** century, the Vikings were seeking to increase their wealth and power even further. They struck out across the unwelcoming Atlantic and, in **870**, reached Iceland. As many as **12,000** Viking immigrants ultimately settled there, setting up the Althing, the oldest parliament in the world.
- 6 In **982**, one of these immigrants, the hot-tempered Erik the Red, banished from his homeland for killing two men in a violent feud, sailed westward again. Finally settling down in a grey, desolate land of fjords and glaciers. Cunningly, he named it 'Greenland' so as to attract more settlers to join him and his family.
- 7 Erik's eldest son, Leif Erikson, became intrigued by tales of yet more lands and, in **1003**, he mounted an expedition further west. He finally landed in a place which he named Vinland, today known as Newfoundland, thereby discovering North America nearly **500** years before Christopher Columbus.



“You Are Old, Father William!”

by Lewis Carroll

“You are old, Father William,” the young man
said,

“And your hair has become very white;

And yet you incessantly stand on your

(1) _____.

(1) head/hands/bed

Do you think, at your age, it is (2) _____?”

(2) smart/right/good

“In my youth,” Father William replied to his son,

“I feared it might injure the (3) _____;

(3) wit/mind/brain

But, now that I’m perfectly sure I have

(4) _____,

(4) none/one/gone

Why, I do it again and again.”

“You are old,” said the youth, “as I (5) _____
before,

(5) stated/mentioned/said

And have grown most (6) _____ fat,

(6) hugely/uncommonly/
awfully

Yet you turned a back somersault in at the door,

Pray what is the reason of that?”

“In my youth,” said the sage, as he shook his grey

(7) _____,

(7) curls/beard/locks

“I kept all my limbs very (8) _____

(8) supple/fit/nimble

By the use of this ointment – one shilling the box –

Allow me to sell you a couple?”

“You are old,” said the youth, “and your jaws are
too weak

For anything tougher than (9) _____;

(9) cake/suet/jelly

Yet you finished the goose, with the bones and

the (10) _____.

(10) body/feathers/beak

Pray, how did you manage to do it?”



“In my youth,” said his father, “I took to the law,
And argued each (11) _____ with my wife;
And the muscular strength which it gave to my
(12) _____,
Has lasted the rest of my life.”

(11) case/day/night

(12) tongue/jaw/chin

“You are old,” said the youth,” one would
hardly suppose
That your eye was as (13) _____ as ever;
Yet you balanced an eel on the end of your
nose –
What made you so awfully (14) _____?”

(13) steady/true/focused

(14) skilful/clever/able

“I have answered three questions and that is
enough,”
Said his father. “Don’t give yourself
(15) _____!
Do you think I can listen all day to such
(16) _____?
Be off, or I’ll kick you downstairs!”

(15) airs/manners/away

(16) rubbish/stuff/
nonsense



The end of the Viking Age

The Vikings reigned supreme in Europe for over 300 years. Indeed, fear of the Vikings played a pivotal role in reshaping that continent, but by 1100 AD, Viking power began to weaken. Back in their Scandinavian homeland, the Vikings' descendants had divided into separate kingdoms led by rival kings, which ultimately became Norway, Sweden, and Denmark. Not only in Scandinavia, but throughout Europe, the people had begun to form themselves into powerful kingdoms, and the Norse raiders ran out of easy victims. In England, the victory in 1066 of William the Conqueror, a descendant of Norsemen from Normandy, marked the end of Viking terror.

As their power collapsed, the lifestyles of Viking settlers changed and beliefs disappeared. They became part of new, mixed communities. They intermarried with the locals and forgot many of their old ways. They were converted to Christianity, and warriors no longer went on raids. However, Viking civilization has never completely disappeared. Many places in northern Europe still have Viking names and Viking ideas, such as the creation of parliaments and the right to free speech. These are still very much a part of many modern societies. And of course Viking stories, myths, and legends continue to be enjoyed worldwide. Unlike Columbus, the Vikings may not have established a permanent presence in North America, but their genes have spread widely throughout the Western world. Millions of Americans and Europeans carry at least a bit of Viking blood.



Adding emphasis – People of influence

Michelangelo

Text A

- 1 Michelangelo had a great influence on the world of art. He was a sculptor, an architect, a painter and a poet.
- 2 He was born near Arezzo, but he considered Florence to be his home town. He loved the city's art, architecture and culture.
- 3 He concentrated on sculpture initially. He began to carve a figure of David from a huge block of marble in 1501. He finished it in 1504, when he was 29.
- 4 Pope Julius II asked him to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel later. He worked at this every day for four years from 1508 till 1512. He lay on his back at the top of high scaffolding.
- 5 He designed many buildings. His greatest achievement as an architect was his work at St Peter's Basilica. Its revolutionary design is difficult to appreciate nowadays.
- 6 Michelangelo belongs to a small group of artists such as Shakespeare and Beethoven, who have been able to express humanity's deepest experiences through their work.

Text B

- 1 Michelangelo, sculptor, architect, painter and poet, had a tremendous influence on the world of art.
- 2 Although he was born near Arezzo, it was Florence that he considered to be his home town. What he loved above all about the city was its art, architecture and culture.
- 3 Initially, he concentrated on sculpture. In 1501, he began to carve a figure of David from a huge block of marble. This he finished in 1504, when he was 29.
- 4 Later, he was asked by Pope Julius II to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel. To do this, every day for four years, from 1508 till 1512, he worked lying on his back at the top of high scaffolding.
- 5 He designed many buildings, but it was his work at St Peter's Basilica that was his greatest achievement as an architect. What is difficult to appreciate nowadays is its revolutionary design.
- 6 There is a small group of artists such as Shakespeare and Beethoven, who, through their work, have been able to express the deepest experiences of humanity. Michelangelo belongs to this group.

Australian boy grounded after 1,800-mile flight to Bali

12-year-old *Drew from Sydney, Australia decided to run away from home after an argument with his mother. Running away is not that unusual for young children, however, Drew ran away in spectacular fashion. He found his parents' credit cards and booked himself a 1,800-mile flight from Sydney to the Indonesian island of Bali, where he spent four days in a hotel!

Two airlines refused to let him fly without written permission from his parents, but the third didn't ask and sold him a ticket. Drew then booked the hotel online. He tricked his grandmother into telling him where his passport was kept, and headed off. His parents thought he'd gone to school.

He used self-service check-in at Sydney airport, and it was only when he changed planes at Perth airport that staff asked why he was travelling alone, but they allowed him to continue after checking he was over 12. Drew got through Indonesian immigration by telling them his mother was waiting for him in arrivals. After checking into his hotel, telling staff there that he was waiting for his older sister to arrive, he spent four days relaxing on the beach and exploring the surrounding area on a rented scooter!

The school had contacted Drew's parents to ask where he was, and he was reported missing to the police. His foreign hideout was eventually discovered when he boasted about his holiday on social media, posting a video which was geotagged.

* not his real name, which wasn't made public



'It was great, because I wanted to go on an adventure', Drew said. 'He doesn't like the word no', said his mother. Drew is now grounded until further notice, and the airline Drew flew with have since changed their policy on children flying unattended.



Have you ever wondered ... ?

Answers to some of the puzzling questions in life

1 Why is it so difficult to swat a fly?

That buzzing fly is really getting on your nerves. So, you get your fly swatter and watch silently until the fly is resting. You get as close as you can, **tense** your muscles, and then ... thwack! But the fly is happily buzzing around on the other side of the room. And yet you moved so fast – how could it have got away?

The fly's ability to escape has nothing to do with sensitivity to wind or noise; it's all to do with its eyesight and the speed of its brain signals. Flies have around 6,000 tiny lenses in each eye, and their brains and nervous systems can receive and process information seven times faster than humans.

(1) High-speed digital cameras show that from the fly's viewpoint, your hand is moving towards it very slowly. Within 30 thousandths of a second of seeing the swatter, the fly has worked out where it's coming from and how to jump away from it. Your hand takes about two hundredths of a second to reach it, 150 times longer, so unless the fly is feeling very **groggy**, you stand no chance. If you still want to try, the best strategy is to aim your swatter towards where you think the fly is going to jump, rather than where it is now.



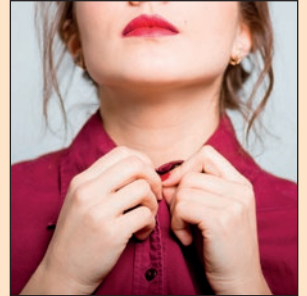
2 Why are buttons on different sides on men's and women's clothing?

Have you ever borrowed a boyfriend's or girlfriend's coat and found that doing up the buttons feels weird?

(2)

The reasons for this strange **inconsistency** lie in the distant past. When men carried swords, they were worn on the left, so they could draw them using the usually dominant right hand. If their jackets had had buttons on the left, the handle of the sword could have easily got caught in their clothing as they pulled it across their body. It was also easier to **slip** the hand inside to pull out a hidden weapon if clothing was buttoned this way.

So how come women's buttons are different? Well, in the 17th and 18th centuries all buttons were made by hand, and because they were expensive, they were only used on the clothes of the wealthy. It wasn't considered proper for wealthy women to dress themselves, they had servants do it for them, and the servants found it easier to **do up** the buttons on someone facing them if they were on the left. In the late 19th century, when buttons became cheaper with mass-production, all women wanted to copy the style of the wealthy, and the tradition has remained to this day.



3 How many species live in or on the human body?

There are about 200 species, including 80 in the mouth alone, which inhabit the human body. However, alongside these, our bodies are also host to a **mindboggling** number of bacteria. The total excreted by the body every day ranges from 100 billion to 100 trillion. (3) . The most densely populated areas of the human body are the teeth, throat, and digestive tract, which overflows with 'friendly' bacteria that are essential to our health. Their numbers may be vast, but their scale is microscopic. If you put the billions of bacteria on your skin together, it would only be the size of a pea.



Another life form that keeps us company is the common parasite, for example, the follicle mite. It's found on every individual in huge numbers, and it's a good thing, too, as they spend their days harmlessly **munching** dead skin cells, acting as invisible refuse recyclers. A less welcome guest is the human itch mite, which lays its eggs on or under our skin, causing the intensely itchy condition known as scabies.

4 Why do we dream?

Some scientists think dreaming is just a **random** by-product of the fact that the brain can't switch off completely during sleep. Others think it may be the brain tidying up its filing system during the night, processing memories and their associations.



Psychologists see more meaning in our dreams.

(4) , and think we are practising facing them again, in different situations. A need to rehearse the most extreme **worst-case scenarios** would explain **recurring** nightmares – suppose you really did absolutely no revision for that exam? What if you got to work or college and had forgotten to put your trousers on? But our dreams can also show us important truths, and they sometimes seem to decide it's time we practised having the experiences we wish for – so you can even fly!

But is there any danger we'll get out of bed and jump out of the window? Well in 1951, physiologist Eugene Aserinsky connected his 8-year-old son to an early brainwave machine, and watched the results through the night. They showed that every 90 minutes we enter a different state in order to dream, called REM (because we display **Rapid Eye Movement**). However, most of our muscles switch off during this period, meaning that the flying and running away from monsters only happens in our heads.



5 What is the origin of the @ symbol?

History suggests that the @ in email addresses, commonly referred to as the ‘at sign’, stemmed from the tired hands of medieval monks. During the Middle Ages, before the invention of the printing press, every letter of a word had to be **painstakingly** transcribed by hand for each copy of a book. The monks who performed these **tedious** copying duties, usually in Latin, looked for ways to reduce the number of individual **strokes** for common words. Although the word for ‘at’ in Latin, ‘ad’, is also short, it was so common that the monks wished it were even shorter. (5) making it much quicker to write.



The @ symbol, would have been largely forgotten in modern times if it hadn’t been for a computer scientist called Ray Tomlinson. In 1971, he wanted a symbol to separate a person’s name from that of their computer, and now all email addresses follow the format joe@myserveraddress.com.

The symbol has different and often charming names in different languages, many of which see the shape as a kind of animal.

These include:

Klammeraffe is **German** for ‘hanging monkey’

apenstaartje is **Dutch** for ‘monkey’s tail’

kissanhäntä is **Finnish** for ‘cat’s tail’

dalphaengi is **Korean** for ‘snail’

papaki is **Greek** for ‘little duck’

kukac is **Hungarian** for ‘worm’

grisehal is **Norwegian** for ‘pig’s tail’

snabel is **Danish** for ‘elephant’s trunk’

sobachka is **Russian** for ‘little dog’

Narrative writing (2) – Linking words and expressions

Larry follows his dream

- 1 Larry Walters was a truck driver, but his lifetime dream was to fly aeroplanes. (1) _____, he would watch the fighter jets criss-crossing the skies above his back garden and dream about the magic of flying. (2) _____, he had an idea. He drove to the nearest hardware shop and bought 20 large balloons and five tanks of helium. (3) _____, they were not normal brightly-coloured party balloons, but heavy one-metre weather balloons used by meteorologists.
- 2 Back in his garden, (4) _____, Larry used a rope to tie a chair to his car door. (5) _____, he tied the balloons to the chair and inflated them, one by one. (6) _____, he packed a few sandwiches and a bottle of Coke, loaded an air pistol and climbed on to the chair. His plan was to float up lazily into the sky to about 60 metres, and then to pop a few balloons (7) _____ descend to earth again.
- 3 His preparations complete, Larry cut the rope. (8) _____, he didn't float up, he shot up, as if he had been fired from a cannon! Not to 60 metres, but up and up and up, (9) _____ about 3,500 metres. If he had popped any balloons at this height, he would have plummeted to earth, (10) _____ he just had to stay up there, floating around and wondering what to do.



- 4 (11) _____, night was falling and things were getting serious. Winds were blowing Larry out to sea. (12) _____ an amazed British Airways pilot spotted him and radioed the airport saying he'd just seen a man with a gun, sitting on a garden chair at 3,500 metres. (13) _____ a helicopter was sent to rescue him, but it wasn't easy (14) _____ the wind from their rotor blades kept pushing the home-made airship further away. (15) _____, they managed to drop a line down from above, and pulled him to safety.
- 5 (16) _____ he was on the ground, he was arrested. A TV reporter shouted, 'Hey mate, why did you do it?' Larry looked him in the eye and said, 'A man's got to follow his dreams.'



How well do you use your time?

1 How would you describe your pace of life?

- a I'm easy-going. I just take life as it comes.
- b Quite fast, but I leave **enough** time for relaxation.
- c At times frantic, at times relaxed.
- d Non-stop **the whole** time, but I like it that way.

2 How do you tackle all the things you have to do each day?

- a I do those things I feel like doing.
- b I prioritize. I do the important things and put off **all** the rest.
- c There's either not **enough** time to do everything or too much time with nothing to do. I find this difficult.
- d I have a daily 'to do' list that I tick off after **each** item is completed.

3 How many things have you begun and not finished in the last few years?

- a **Plenty** of things. I begin with **a great deal** of enthusiasm, but then I get bored.
- b **Hardly any**, just one or two minor things.
- c **Several** things. Sometimes I get distracted and move from one thing to another.
- d **None**. There are **no** uncompleted projects in my life. I see **each** of my projects through before I start the next.



4 When do you switch off your mobile phone?

- a Unlike **most people** these days, my problem is forgetting to switch it on!
- b In some public places and when I need some peace and quiet.
- c Not as often as I should.
- d Only if I have to.

5 What is your attitude to punctuality?

- a I don't waste time worrying about it.
- b Being late is impolite and inefficient, so I try to be punctual.
- c I like to be on time in theory, but in practice I'm often late.
- d I'm always on time. I have **no** patience with people who are late.

6 How do you spend your leisure time?

- a Doing a bit of this and that. I don't know where the time goes.
- b I recharge my batteries with **a few** hobbies and being with friends.
- c I keep trying different things that people suggest, but nothing really grabs me.
- d I have **few** hobbies and **little** leisure time. I try to put **the whole** of my life to good use.

7 How do you keep in touch with friends?

- a I wait for them to get in touch with me.
- b In **several** ways – emails, Facebook, texting, but also I like to phone them for a proper chat.
- c In any way I can – but it can be difficult. I think 'I must contact X', but time passes and I find I haven't.
- d **Most** of the time I text. It's quick and efficient.



8 Which of these is closest to your philosophy on life?

- a Whatever will be will be.
- b Life is not a dress rehearsal.
- c There is a reason for everything.
- d Grasp **every** moment.



The body clock

It's long been known that like much of the natural world, human biological processes follow regular patterns throughout the day. We may follow clock time in modern life, but these *circadian rhythms have always acted as our inner body clocks, telling us when to eat and sleep, whether we know the time of day or not. As more research is carried out into our body clocks, it's now becoming apparent how much we could benefit from taking their workings into account more. For example, scientists have discovered that the flu vaccine is four times more effective taken between 9–11 a.m. than between 3–5 p.m.! Heart surgery, on the other hand, is much safer in the afternoon.



So what does a typical day look like from the point of view of our body clocks?

*circadian is Latin for 'around the day'

6.00–8.00 a.m. Up and at it

For most people it's time to rise and shine with the sun – but some body clocks disagree! From puberty until around 20, the body clock shifts forward, so most adolescents aren't ready to sleep until late at night, despite needing more sleep than adults. That's why groggy-eyed teenagers emerge from the bedroom at lunchtime at weekends. On school days, getting up for school at 7.00 feels like getting up at 4.00 for an older person, and students and teachers suffer as a result. Studies show that when schools start lessons at 10.00, 11.00, or even 12.00, students perform better and achieve higher grades.



8.00–10.00 a.m. Getting going

Many of us find it difficult to get going in the morning, so is vigorous exercise a good kick-start? It can be, but it's not the ideal time for it. Our blood thickens as our blood pressure drops during sleep, and a sudden increase of activity can send it soaring, making this the most likely time to suffer a stroke or heart attack. Gently moving into the day is what the doctor orders.

10.00–12.00 p.m. Good thinking!

Teenagers apart, mental performance is at its peak during this time due to a rise in cortisol, a stress hormone which can be a useful stimulant in the morning, making us feel awake and alert. Levels of cortisol fall during the afternoon, and drop off completely in the evening.

12.00–4.00 p.m. Time to pause

The brain slows a little and is better suited to more reflective work as the day progresses, but it's still performing well, ... until after lunch! As the body digests food it produces insulin, which triggers the release of serotonin and melatonin. These bring feelings of pleasure, and sleepiness, and a nap is a good idea. It's certainly not a good time to drive – there are more motorway crashes at this time of day.

4.00–6.00 p.m. Go for it!

This is the time to hit the gym! The sleepiness has gone, the body is nicely warmed up by this time, and lung function is at its peak, providing the opportunity for our best physical performance. A study of Olympic swimmers found that they swam three seconds faster during this time than in the morning, and most athletics records are broken in the early evening.



6.00–8.00 p.m. Light refreshment

Our body temperature is still high, so things are running smoothly and, if you fancy a drink, alcohol won't cloud your mind as much now. Our minds also turn to food, but as evening advances, your liver needs a rest from breaking down fatty foods. It means we'll put on more weight if we eat too much food after 7.00, and run a higher risk of developing diabetes. Big meals are best taken at lunchtime.

8.00–10.00 p.m. Sleepytime

We feel sleepy as bedtime approaches, but it's not only teenagers who may not feel tired – older people can become night owls, too. To bring sleepiness on earlier, the trick is to avoid too much light later in the day, as the more light you get then, the longer your body will stay awake. Wearing sunglasses in the late afternoon and evening make getting to sleep easier for old people.

10.00 p.m.–12.00 a.m. Dropping off

It's definitely time for sleep, but allergy sufferers and anyone with a cold will struggle. Our immune system is particularly reactive at this time, knowing that as we begin to rest and withdraw from the outside world, it's a good time to fight those internal enemies!

12.00–2.00 a.m. Sleep tight!

Not everyone stays fast asleep, unfortunately. As their eyesight becomes weaker, old people take in less light, and suffer from interrupted sleep as their body clocks function less reliably. They should try and get as much light as possible earlier in the day, as this will help with both insomnia and dementia.

2.00–6.00 a.m. Out of it and into it

As body temperature and blood pressure drop, our energy goes into lighter biological activity, such as skin repair.

4.00 a.m. is the absolute low point, and another bad time to drive – it's about as dangerous at this time as when we are over the alcohol limit. A new day is about to dawn, and so the cycle begins again – or for the first time for some.

Because the body is so relaxed, the most common time for babies to be born naturally is between 3.00 and 5.00 a.m.!

Improving style and cohesion – A famous female architect

Zaha Hadid (1950–2016) Trailblazing architect of our time

A

- a** Zaha Hadid was a very important modern architect. She was the first woman architect to win the important Pritzker Prize for Architecture.
- b** Hadid was born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1950. She lived in London for many years. She came to London as a student in 1972. She had a design practice in London.
- c** She studied mathematics at the University of Beirut. She graduated and she moved to London. She studied architecture. She graduated in 1977. Then she worked in Rotterdam and London.
- d** Hadid became successful in 1994. She won a competition to design Cardiff Bay Opera House. The people said that the building was too modern. The building was never built.

B

- a** Zaha Hadid, a hugely important figure in the world of modern architecture, was the first woman to win the prestigious Pritzker Prize.
- b** Born in Baghdad, Iraq, in 1950, Hadid came to London as a student in 1972. The city became her home, and where she established her design practice.
- c** Having first graduated in mathematics from the University of Beirut, she moved to London to study architecture. Completing her degree in 1977, she worked in architectural practices in Rotterdam and London.
- d** However, it wasn't until 1994 that her career really took off. She won a competition to design Cardiff Bay Opera House, but her design was considered too modern and daring for the town. It was never built.



- e In 2003, Hadid designed the Centre for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati. It was her first big achievement. She designed buildings all over the world. She designed an Opera House in Dubai. She also designed the Aquatics Centre for the 2012 Olympics in London.
- f Zaha Hadid designed a lot of nice buildings and she was very famous, but she died suddenly in 2016. She died in Miami, USA. She did not complete a lot of buildings. She did not complete the One Thousand Museum in Miami. They completed the museum in 2018. She did not complete her first building in Iraq. It was the Central Bank of Iraq. The Iraqi government had commissioned the building in 2010. She was a good modern architect.
- e Her first major achievement was the Centre for Contemporary Art in Cincinnati in 2003. She went on to design buildings all over the world, including an Opera House in Dubai and the Aquatics Centre for the 2012 Olympics in London.
- f Zaha Hadid designed many exciting and extraordinary buildings. However, in 2016, at the height of her fame, while working on the One Thousand Museum in Miami, USA, she died suddenly of a heart attack. She was 65. The Museum was finally completed in 2018. Sadly, another incomplete project was the Central Bank of Iraq, the first for her native country, commissioned by the Iraqi government in 2010. Zaha Hadid will be remembered as one of the most influential modern architects.

