

How to use this book

1 Preparation

Books

My professor insisted us to read Shakespeare's major work as a requirement. I felt that it was pointless. Because, first, Mr Shakespeare writes so obscurely that it takes away the interest of reading.

2 Comprehension

1. According to the paragraph, how is Shakespeare evaluated at present?
2. Who is mentioned as a contemporary writer?
3. What does anachronism mean?

3 Questions

1. Do you like to read books? Why or why not?
2. What is the best book you've read so far?
3. Tell me about the best story you've read

4 Vocabulary & Expressions

requirement: something that is needed or asked for in order to advance

obscurely: difficult to understand

relevant: directly connected with the subject or problem being discussed or considered

5 Review

1. This poet is too _____ to understand.
2. You'd better refer to the _____ chapters in this book for your research paper.

① Preparation

上课之前,自己练习说一说话题,检查对paragraph的理解程度,看网络教材并听三遍MP3录音,听完后模仿正确的发音和语气,慢慢读三遍再快速读三遍并背诵。

② Comprehension

利用paragraph,检查学生有没有正确地理解课文,学生应该提前准备paragraph相关内容,才能正常上课。

③ Questions

这个阶段, Topic多样的问题和老师互相交流意见,听问题,用英语思考,再用英语表达出来的主题对话的训练过程。对Topic的提问,本人用自己思考后的方式回答的这种努力过程,可以激发学生以前积累的词汇,英语写作等能力。

LEVEL 5-A



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Books

My professor insisted us to read Shakespeare's major work as a requirement. I felt that it was pointless. Because, first, Mr. Shakespeare writes so obscurely that it takes away the interest of reading. Second, I suppose he isn't that relevant anymore in this century. Shakespeare is an anachronism. I suggested to my professor that instead of old tedious Shakespeare's work, we should read the contemporary writers, like Stephen King or some such popular writers who speak modern language and present the same themes of love and death in more interesting and familiar manner.

Then, all of a sudden, my professor quipped that if angels could speak, they all would speak like Shakespeare. As I countered that literature was supposed to be appealing without torture, he got steamed and doubled my homework. It is necessary for the professors to revise the curriculum so as to include more of the modern writers and less of the ancient authors whom my ancestors labored over to pass their literature classes.

* Comprehension

1. According to the paragraph, how is Shakespeare evaluated at present?
2. Who is mentioned as a contemporary writer?
3. What does anachronism mean?

* Questions

1. Do you like to read books? Why or why not?
2. What is the best book you've read so far?
3. Tell me about the best story you've read.
4. Who is your favorite writer? Why do you like this writer?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

requirement: something that is needed or asked for in order to advance

obscurely: difficult to understand

relevant: directly connected with the subject or problem being discussed or considered

anachronism: someone or something that seems to belong to the past, not the present

tedious: boring, tiring, and continuing for a long time

all of a sudden: suddenly, unexpectedly, abruptly

quip: to say something clever and amusing

counter: to say or act against something to prove what someone said was not true

torture

: a deliberate act to hurt someone by either punishing them or being cruel to get information

get steamed (= be steamed) spoken to be very angry

curriculum: the subjects that are taught by school, college etc, or the things that are studied in a particular subject

so as to: in order to

labor over: to try very hard to do something (= struggle)

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

revise	tedious	obscure	appealing	relevant
quipped	got steamed	countered	contemporary	labored over

1. This poet is too _____ to understand.
2. You'd better refer to the _____ chapters in this book for your research paper.
3. I've _____ this report since last week.
4. You need to _____ these lectures for publication.
5. I don't like his _____ lecture.
6. I'd like to visit National Art Gallery that exhibits _____ French prints.
7. "That's not what I heard," Nick _____.
8. Mary _____ because her boyfriend didn't show up yesterday.
9. I find the salary of 1 million dollars a year very _____.
10. "Practice makes perfect," _____ Tony when he saw Jane trying to skate.

* Answers

- | | | | | |
|-----------------|--------------|-----------------|--------------|-------------|
| 1, obscure | 2, relevant | 3, labored over | 4, revise | 5, tedious |
| 6, contemporary | 7, countered | 8, got steamed | 9, appealing | 10, quipped |

Travel

It always gets on my nerves whenever I hear of people going on a tour to an exotic place and being so busy snapping pictures with their cameras that they fail to enjoy the experience of just "taking in the scene." This is a proverbial story of a couple whom I knew. When I asked what they have felt with what they saw on their trip to Paris, they didn't say much about the sightseeing, except they said "Oh, we were so busy taking pictures to show friends back home that we didn't have time to look around." How pathetic is that!

When people are on a tour, they should never bring any kind of capture device, except their naked eyes. They must immerse themselves in the experience of the moment and capture the scenery with their senses: to breathe in the air, to feel the mood, and to sense the place with all its history and its promises. Flashbulbs flashing, people crowding in for a shot, and artificial smiling with or without saying, "Cheese!" can spoil the spirit of a spot.

* Comprehension

1. What does "taking in the scene" mean?
2. According to the paragraph, what does "capture device" refer to?
3. Does the writer of the paragraph seem sympathetic towards people who take pictures at a tourist spot? Why do you say so?

* Questions

1. Do you like to travel? Why or why not?
2. What places have you visited? Which place impressed you the most?
3. Which places in the world and which tourist spots would you like to see?
4. Tell me one of the famous tourist spots in your country.

* Vocabulary & Expressions

get on one's nerves : to annoy someone, especially by repeatedly doing something

proverbial : well-known by a lot of people

immerse oneself in : to become completely involved in an activity

sympathetic towards : willing to give approval and support to an aim or plan

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

scenery

immerse

exotic

sightseeing

proverbial

spoil

1. Your name is very _____. Where are you from?
2. I'm a stranger here. Could you recommend me some places for _____?
3. Don't _____ your sister's birthday by crying at her party.
4. Did you hear that _____ story about Professor John?
5. Jane decided to _____ herself in the African way of life.
6. The best part of the trip was the _____. It was really fantastic.

* Answers

1, exotic

2, sightseeing

3, spoil

4, proverbial

5, immerse

6, scenery

Songs

I'm all for downloading MP3 files, video games, and movies from illegal servers on the Internet. If I can get it for free, why do I need to waste money on the original copy? Piracy may be a crime, and it may cripple the music and entertainment industries, but you can bet your bottom dollar that the music, the game and the movie industries will not have the direct loss.

In fact, without the threat of piracy, the Internet would never evolve to be more secure. It's like a game of cops and robbers: the hackers and the crackers are pitted against the anti-hackers and the cyber cops. In the meantime, the network is free for all. Grab what you can have today because it may be gone tomorrow.

* Comprehension

1. What does "piracy" mean?
2. According to the paragraph, why does the writer of the paragraph download music?
3. Who suffers from the illegal servers on the Internet?

* Questions

1. Do you like to sing? Why or why not?
2. What kind of music do you like?
3. What is your favorite song? Can you sing it?
4. Who is your favorite musician?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

piracy: the illegal copying and sale of books, tapes, videos, etc

cripple: to seriously damage or weaken something

you can bet your bottom dollar

: used when you are sure that you know what someone will do or what will happen (= you can bet your life)

pit against: to compete with someone or something in a situation

grab: to take something for yourself, especially in an unfair way

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

secure

evolved

loss

for free

piracy

crippled

1. If you buy this shirt, you can get one more _____.
2. There is no such thing as a _____ job these days.
3. You have to consider the software _____ when you install it in your computer.
4. The bankruptcy of the company _____ his financial state.
5. The company made a _____ of \$300,000 in its first year.
6. Darwin believed that all human beings _____ from apes.

* Answers

1. for free

2. secure

3. piracy

4. crippled

5. loss

6. evolved

Exercise

Nowadays, people worship and dedicate their time and money in the temple of the body. People are excessively engrossed with toning their muscles in pursuit of the perfect body, but they have neglected what really defines humans: intelligence. Whenever I see a muscle bound guy or well-sculptured gal sweating it out in the gym, I couldn't help exclaiming, "There goes one more brainless dinosaur on the verge of extinction." I just can't change myself of the stereotype that a beautiful body houses an empty head.

As this health mania spreading like a cold virus, I don't feel so prejudiced. A healthy body and a functioning brain can coexist. However, with all narcissistic preoccupation with health, people no longer have the time to develop grey matter between their ears. It's a reverse of the past; people were too busy making a living or couldn't afford the time and money to workout. But when it swung the opposite way, it went to an absurd extreme. Take this test to determine your mental health.

* Comprehension

1. What does "grey matter" mean?
2. What are two elements needed for people to exercise?
3. Why did the writer mention "the brainless dinosaur"?

* Questions

1. What kind of exercises do you do?
2. How often do you work out?
3. What do you think of yoga?
4. What are the popular forms of exercise in your country?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

engrossed with : so interested in something that you do not notice anything else

in pursuit of : while trying to get

gal : a girl or woman

be on the verge of : to be about to do something

stereotype : a fixed idea or image of what a particular type of person or thing is like

house : to keep

prejudiced

: having an unreasonable dislike of a particular group of people who are different from you in some ways

narcissistic : having a tendency to admire your own physical appearance or abilities

preoccupation : a strong interest in something

grey matter : your intelligence

work out : to do exercise

absurd : completely stupid or unreasonable

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

reverse	excessively	afford	engrossed with	preoccupation
dedicated	in pursuit of	narcissistic	absurd	on the verge of

1. Susan _____ herself to a life of religion.
2. Brad's wife left him at home because he was _____drunken.
3. Tony tried to attract Lisa's attention but she was _____ reading a newspaper
4. Julie looked _____ tears.
5. The movie is about people living _____ real love.
6. Due to people's _____ with well-being life, they try to eat organic food as much as possible.
7. We can't _____ to go on vacation this year.
8. It seems quite _____ to drive for 2 hours just for a 10 minute meeting.
9. Put on the _____ gear and back up slowly.
10. As far as I know, Chris has a _____ personality.

* Answers

1, dedicated	2, excessively	3, engrossed with	4, on the verge of	5, in pursuit of
6, preoccupation	7, afford	8, absurd	9, reverse	10, narcissistic

Music and Musical Instruments

I'm totally cool sharing bed space with Tommy at the university dormitory, but he gets into my nerves with his music. It's not that he beats drums or twirls my brains with his electric guitar- that's fine with me. Personally, I enjoy listening to a variety of different music so noise is my source of peace. It's just that he loves to play this particular music with totally vulgar lyrics and themes. I'm not a prude, but I have taste in music, and I don't happen to believe that a song spitting out the four-letter words from start to finish is "soulful" music. I talked about this issue over with Tommy, but he was extremely adamant in his belief that music is an expression of the soul.

Tommy insisted that soul of music defines the spirit of free music whether it is repressed and chooses to express only clean music, or liberated and chooses to express all sorts of wild sentiments. I told Tommy that I understood his point, but I just feel uncomfortable about having to put up with this situation. While we were searching for an answer to this problem, Tommy even offered to move out and look for another place if I wish. But I felt it in my bones that if I accept his offer to move out of the dorm, our relationship will drift apart as well. I really don't know what to do. Is there any other possible solution to this dilemma?

* Comprehension

1. According to the paragraph, what is the problem between Tommy and the writer?
2. What makes the writer uncomfortable?
3. Do you agree with Tommy? Why or why not?

* Questions

1. Do you play any musical instrument?
2. What kind of music do you like?
3. Do you like classical music from the great musicians as Mozart, Beethoven or Bach? Why or why not?
4. When you listen to the music, do you listen to the melody or the lyrics? Why?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

twirl : to turn around

vulgar : remarks, jokes, etc. that are spoken in a very rude and offensive way

lyrics : the words of a song, especially a modern popular song

prude : someone who is too easily shocked by anything connected with sex

happen to believe: to believe by chance

adamant : a firm determined mind not changing the opinion, decision, etc.

repressed : having feelings or desires that you do not allow yourself to express

liberated

: free to behave in the way you want and not restricted by old rules of social and sexual behavior

sentiment : an opinion or feeling you have about something

put up with : to accept an unpleasant situation or person without complaining
(= endure, bear, tolerate, stand)

drift apart : to grow apart or be estranged

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

repress	define	vulgar	twirl	put up with
prude	adamant	liberate	drift apart	beat

1. Waves _____ against the cliffs.
2. Each of us may _____ the concept of love in different ways.
3. He tried to _____ the tray round in his hand.
4. As time goes by, my high school friends and I will _____.
5. Nowadays, teenagers are interested in _____ songs and movies.
6. We tried to negotiate, but they were _____.
7. Michelle is such a _____. She can't stand anyone who swears.
8. I can't _____ this noise anymore.
9. It's hard to _____ a desire to smoke.
10. They planned to _____ the slavery.

* Answers

1. beat	2. define	3. twirl	4. drift apart	5. vulgar
6. adamant	7. prude	8. put up with	9. repress	10. liberate

Swimming

1. You are boarding on a boat with your spouse and your mom. Suddenly, the boat capsizes, and you all sink into the water. Unfortunately, your mom and your spouse flounder since they swim like a stone. Soon they will drown unless you save them. You can manage to save just one or the other, but not both. Who would it be?
2. You go diving in a deep sea. Something goes wrong with your scuba, and you are running out of oxygen fast. Either you resurface quickly and risk dying in the sea, or share the air from a buddy's oxygen tank. Of the two choices, you choose the latter, but she is inexperienced with buddy breathing and she may panic; not only you but she will die as well. What will you do?

* Comprehension

1. What would you do if you are in situation 1?
2. What does "flounder" mean?
3. What would you do if you are in situation 2?

* Questions

1. Do you like to swim? Why or why not?
2. What kind of water sports have you done? Tell me about an experience if you have any.
3. Which do you prefer, swimming or exercising in the gym? Why?
4. Have you experienced any dangerous situations when you were swimming? If yes, describe what happened.

* Vocabulary & Expressions

capsize : a boat being tipped over or turned over in the water

flounder : to move with difficulty, especially in water, mud, etc.

resurface : to come back up to the surface of the water

buddy : a friend

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

spouse	panic	running out of
capsize	flounder	inexperienced

1. How far is the gas station? We're _____ gas.
2. Lisa is too young and _____ to go abroad alone.
3. I saw your _____ shopping at the mall.
4. When the elevator stops, please don't _____. Just press the red button.
5. Be careful! Our boat is about to _____!
6. If she can't swim, she might _____ in the mud as well.

* Answers

1, running out of	2, inexperienced	3, spouse	4, panic	5, capsize
6, flounder				

Theater

1. You bring your date to the theater. You search for a seat but all are occupied except the two seats. The problem is both the vacant seats are on either side of the man. What do you say to him so you and your date can sit side by side? What do you do if he refuses to yield?

2. You are intently listening to a strained part of the movie dialogue, when a couple behind you start to chat. You are distracted by the noise, and irritated by their bad manners. What do you say to them so they stop interrupting others? If they refuse to stop despite your polite request, what do you do?

* Comprehension

1. What would you do if you are in situation 1?
2. What would you do if you are in situation 2?
3. What bad manners are there in the theater except for making noises?

* Questions

1. Do you like to go to the movies?
2. What kind of movies do you like?
3. How often do you go to the movies? Who do you go with?
4. Could you tell me about the movie you've seen recently?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

intent : giving careful attention to something so that you think about nothing else (adv. intently)

strained : a tense situation or behavior that people feel nervous and uncomfortable

be distracted by: to be disturbed or to be interrupted by something or someone

be irritated by: to be annoyed and impatient by something or someone

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

side by side

manners

vacant

intently

refuse

distracted

1. I was _____ from my work by the noise outside.
2. Do you have any _____ rooms for tomorrow?
3. Two glasses stood _____ on the cupboard.
4. We were _____ watching a soccer game in the living room.
5. Pointing at people is one of the bad _____ in some countries.
6. If you ask her to help you, she won't _____.

* Answers

1, distracted

2, vacant

3, side by side

4, intently

5, manners

6, refuse

Sleeping Habits

I haven't had a good night sleep since I married my husband, Ted. He plagues me with a plethora of sleeping disorder. He snores like a tractor, sleepwalks like a zombie, gnashes his teeth like a cannibal, and talks in his sleep like hyena. It is driving me nuts! He has consulted a horde of specialists but it was ineffective. I suggested that we sleep in separate rooms, but he intensely refused, saying that it's just not right for married couples to take separate bunkers. He left me no choice but to bear with it. I read in a journal that many couples divorce legitimately due to one's sleeping disorder. Should I be another one of these many?

* Comprehension

1. What is "sleeping disorder"?
2. What kind of sleeping habits does Ted have?
3. What does Ted's wife suggest to him?

* Questions

1. What kind of sleeping habits do you have?
2. How many hours do you sleep?
3. Do you think sleep helps relieve your stress?
4. How do you feel when you sleep about three or four hours a day? Tell me what some changes are when you have less sleeping hours.

* Vocabulary & Expressions

plague somebody with something

: to annoy someone, especially by continually asking them for something

a plethora of

: an amount of something that is larger than is needed or more than you can deal with

gnash: to move one's teeth against each other so that they make a noise

horde: a large crowd moving in a noisy uncontrolled way

bunker: a strongly built shelter for soldiers, usually underground

legitimate: lawful, legal or operating according to the law (adv. legitimately)

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

plague

bear with

a plethora of

disorder

driving me nuts

cannibal

1. I can't stop coughing because of cold, please _____ me.
2. Continuous sound of water dropping is _____.
3. The kids _____ me with questions.
4. I don't want to do _____ paper work anymore.
5. Do you think there was a _____ tribe a long time ago?
6. Nick has a rare nerve _____ in his left arm.

* Answers

1, bear with

2, driving me nuts

3, plague

4, a plethora of

5, cannibal

6, disorder

Smoking

I love my girlfriend, but I'm sick and tired of her having to hide her smoking habit from me. Hundreds of times, I pleaded with her to quit smoking, and she begged me for tolerance hundreds of times. She says that since she had been smoking long before she met me, it's not a piece of cake to just kick the habit. She said she would cut down, and would not smoke in my presence.

Most of the time, she keeps her word, but sometimes she would smoke secretly, on the pretext that she was going to powder her face in the bathroom. Not wanting to upset her, I pretend not to notice but it's getting under my nerves how she could be so sneaky when she needs a puff. I brought the issue up one time and it blew up into a big argument. She said that I'm picking on her because I couldn't stand women smoking. I don't know what to say now. I do smoke myself, so now I'm confused whether I have the right to bug her about her habit. I don't know what else to do.

* Comprehension

1. What is the problem between the man and the woman?
2. Why does the woman have difficulty to quit smoking?
3. What would you do if you are the writer?

* Questions

1. Do you smoke? If yes, when did you start smoking?
2. What do you think of people smoking in a public space?
3. What is the best way to quit smoking?
4. What are the bad effects of smoking?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

plead with somebody to do something

: to ask for something that you want very much, in a sincere and emotional way

tolerance

: willingness to allow people to do, say or believe what they want without criticizing them

be a piece of cake : to be very easy to do

cut down : to reduce the amount of something that you eat, use, do, etc.

on the pretext that(of doing something)

: a reason given for an action in order to hide the real intention

sneaky: doing things in a secret and dishonest or unfair way

bring something up : to mention a subject or start to talk about it

pick on somebody : to blame someone for something, especially unfairly

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

sneaky

a piece of cake

bring up

tolerance

pretend

pick on

on the pretext of

stand

confused

cut down

- Learning to drive was _____ for me.
- You drink too much. You should try to _____.
- Tom called Susan _____ asking for a dictionary.
- That was really _____, hiding his wallet!
- You should _____ this question at the next meeting.
- Why does the boss always _____ me?
- I really appreciate my parents' _____ and support toward my choice of music.
- You have to _____ you know nothing about it.
- I cannot _____ this hot weather.
- Nick _____ me with his sudden questions.

* Answers

1, a piece of cake

2, cut down

3, on the pretext of

4, sneaky

5, bring up

6, pick on

7, tolerance

8, pretend

9, stand

10, confused

Alcohol

My sister Beth just started drinking, but my mom and dad know nothing about it. She says that drinking isn't that bad if one has come of age. Drinking is her way of saying that she is old enough to do what she wants with her life, and expressing independence and freedom. My sister just turned 16 and has just entered high school. She says that many girls of her age drink, so there is nothing unusual about it. In the west, she states, teenagers drink, and there is no law against it. Beth argues that there is nothing bad about drinking as long as one knows how to control oneself.

Being her younger brother, I feel I have no right to tell her what to do, but I'm sure that my parents do have the right to know. What should I do? Should I go behind her back and squeal on her (my sister pleaded me not to rat on her, or she would squash me like a bug) or should I respect her decision and turn a blind eye?

* Comprehension

1. According to the paragraph, what does the writer think about Beth's drinking?
2. What is Beth's point of view about her drinking?
3. What would you do if you are Beth's brother?

* Questions

1. Do you like drinking? Why or why not?
2. Do you have any habit after drinking?
3. Why do you think people drink?
4. Could you tell me about Korean traditional alcohol?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

squeal on somebody

: to tell the police or someone in authority about someone you know who has done something wrong

rat on somebody

: to be disloyal to someone, especially by telling someone in authority about something wrong that person has done

squash: to press something into a flat shape, often breaking or damaging it

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

squashed

squeal on

tuned

unusual

right

as long as

1. Stay here _____ you want to.
2. You have a _____ to demand after service.
3. I decided to _____ him because he cheated on his wife.
4. I don't want my hat getting _____ in your bag.
5. This dish has a very _____ flavor.
6. My boss just _____ 30 this year.

* Answers

1. as long as

2. right

3. squeal on

4. squashed

5. unusual

6. tuned

Diaries

"What you don't know can't hurt you." "Curiosity killed the cat." I know what these maxims mean, but I never really understood them until the day I sneaked a peak into my boyfriend's diary. I don't know what got into me, but there I was uncovering secrets best kept hidden. Tears streamed down on my face, and gnawed at my heart as revelations of his secret history flowed on the pages: his wild escapades with his ex-girlfriends, his fantasies, and his skepticism about love and life.

When I was done reading, I felt betrayed for his dishonesty, guilty for invading his privacy, and contemptible for knowing how much I was worthless to him. My head is so confused, but can't stop thinking why he is with me if I'm not so special to him. I'm torn between having to confront him and ask for explanation to ease my pain, and fear that if I do so, he may never trust me again for intruding his privacy. I'm paying the price now, but it's too much to bear. What should I do?

* Comprehension

1. Who kept a diary?
2. What did the writer find out?
3. If you are the writer, what would you do?

* Questions

1. Do you keep a diary?
2. What do you think of keeping a diary?
3. When was the last time you wrote a diary?
4. Have you ever told your secret to your best friend? If yes, how did you feel after that?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

maxim: a well-known phrase or saying, especially one that gives a rule for sensible behavior

sneak

: to look at something quickly and secretly, especially something that you are not supposed to see

stream: to flow quickly and in great amounts or to make something flow in this way

gnaw at: to make someone feel worried or frightened

escapade: an adventure or series of events that are exciting or containing some risk

skepticism

: a skeptical attitude (*skeptical: tending to doubt or not believe what other people tell you)

invade somebody's privacy: to affect someone in an unwanted and annoying way

contemptible: so unacceptable that you have no respect for the person involved

intrude: to interrupt someone or become involved in their private affairs in an annoying

and unwanted way, especially with the result that you upset or offend them

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

invade	gnawed at	maxim	curiosity	contemptible
revelations	streamed	skepticism	escapades	sneak

1. Water _____ out of the pipe.
2. They were described as _____ cowards.
3. Just out of _____, how old are you?
4. I believe in the _____, "If it isn't broken, don't fix it."
5. The _____ in the newspaper were about celebrities' scandals.
6. Does that letter give you an excuse to _____ my privacy?
7. Parents always worry about children's _____ outside.
8. Her mistakes _____ her conscience.
9. Have you ever fallen in _____ about your life?
10. I tried to _____ into my sister's room.

* Answers

1. streamed	2. contemptible	3. curiosity	4. maxim	5. revelations
6. invade	7. escapades	8. gnawed at	9. skepticism	10. sneak

Shopping

For the life of me I could neither make heads nor tails of my wife's shopping habits. She is reasonable in other respects. However, when it comes to shopping, she becomes absolutely fanatical. She would literally shop until she drops. I told her she splurges like a shopaholic, but she demands that to shop in bulk is more cost effective than buying piecemeal on the street. When the sale season comes, she scents it like a bloodhound on a hot trail and off she goes stuffing baskets and carts. Sometimes I go along with her as a body guard and baggage carrier at the same time. If you have seen this manic animation on her face, you would have thought tomorrow is the end of the world.

In normal circumstances, she is a bit passive, so this sudden hyperactivity puzzles me to no end. Occasionally she harasses the clerks and haggling even over items with fixed prices but ends buying nothing at all unless the price is right or the clerks have the perfect manners. I get embarrassed by her hideous act, but she demands that I should stay with her for emotional support through the whole process. She just wants me there to provide intimidation effect to boost her purchasing power. I could find this all amusing if only somebody could give me a rational explanation why women in general and my wife in particular act like this. Am I being chauvinistic?

* Comprehension

1. What does "shopaholic" mean?
2. How is the wife's attitude towards the clerks?
3. What do you think of wife's shopping habit?

* Questions

1. Do you like shopping? Why or why not?
2. How often do you go shopping?
3. What item do you usually buy?
4. Do you think women love shopping more than men do? Why do you think so?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

fanatical : excessively enthusiastic about something

splurge : to spend more money than you can usually afford

piecemeal : a bit at a time

animation: liveliness and excitement

puzzle: to confuse someone or make them feel slightly anxious because they do not understand something

harass: to treat someone unfairly by threatening them or being continuously unpleasant to them

haggle: to argue, especially when trying to agree about the price of something

hideous: extremely unpleasant or ugly

intimidation : frightening someone by behaving in a threatening way, especially in order to make them do what you want

chauvinistic: having the attitude that your own sex is better, more intelligent or more important than the other sex, especially that men are more important than women

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

haggle

splurge

harass

hideous

intimidation

fanatical

puzzle

chauvinistic

animation

rational

1. You have to look at both sides to make a _____ decision.
2. When I meet my high school friends, we talk with _____.
3. I had to _____ with the taxi driver over the fare.
4. My sister's notes _____ me with endless questions.
5. We tried not to _____ on souvenirs when we were in Italy.
6. Tony's parents received an _____ from the blackmailer.
7. Teenagers sometimes are too _____ about PC games.
8. The debts _____ me these days.
9. She saw a _____ face at the window and screamed.
10. My ex-boyfriend Michael was very _____.

* Answers

1. rational

2. animation

3. haggle

4. puzzle

5. splurge

6. intimidation

7. fanatical

8. harass

9. hideous

10. chauvinistic

Talking

I'm a 24 year old introspective male who is taciturn as a clam. Having an introverted personality can be a burden in a relationship. However, I prefer the silence of my own thoughts over the sound of my voice while other's prattle. I think a garrulous person is deep-down insecure. He hides his inadequacy behind his motor of a mouth. An empty can makes a loud noise, right! I could tell right off the bat which of these couples sitting on the park bench are newbie and which ones are old-timers with stable relationships. The new couples are uncomfortable with silence, so they fill up all the space with endless gab. Blah blah here, blah blah there, blah blah everywhere! Their chatter hides their insecurity.

On the other hand, the stable ones enjoy moments of silence, secure in each other's presence. I would like to make a remark: Silence is golden, but talk is cheap! My girl dumped me because she pesters me to speak up and share my thoughts with her, but I'm not built like a chatterbox. Can't she just take me for what I am?

* Comprehension

1. Describe the writer.
2. What does the writer think of silence?
3. Why did the writer break up with his girlfriend?

* Questions

1. Do you like talking with people?
2. What do you think of silent people and talkative people?
3. Do you think 'talking' or 'having conversations' in a relationship is important?
Why or why not?
4. Are you an introverted person or extroverted person?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

introspective: tending to think deeply about your own thoughts, feelings, etc

taciturn: speaking very little so that you seem unfriendly

clam: someone who does not say what they are thinking or feeling

introverted: a shy person who spends a lot of time thinking about their own problems and interests and finds it difficult to talk to other people

prattle: continuous talking about silly and unimportant things

garrulous: very talkative

insecure: not feeling at all confident about yourself, your abilities, your relationships, etc.

inadequacy: a feeling that you are unable to deal with situations because you are not as good as other people

newbie: someone is new to an activity, especially in computing or on the Internet

pester: to annoy someone repetitively, especially by asking them to do something

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

pester	garrulous	introverted	insecure	taciturn
prattle	inadequacy	stable	uncomfortable	clam

1. Unemployment can often cause feelings of _____.
2. Anthony is a lonely, _____ child.
3. Women's _____ is really boring to me.
4. He became angry and _____ during the interview.
5. I wanted to change my seat because of a _____ old woman.
6. My parents always _____ me to be married.
7. I really envy your _____ marriage.
8. I felt _____ when Michael stopped by without calling me yesterday.
9. I decided to break up with him because of his _____ attitude.
10. I've never seen such a _____! It was really hard for me to be with him

* Answers

- | | | | | |
|---------------|----------------|------------------|-------------|--------------|
| 1, inadequacy | 2, introverted | 3, prattle | 4, taciturn | 5, garrulous |
| 6, pester | 7, stable | 8, uncomfortable | 9, insecure | 10, clam |

Alms

It's hard to distinguish who needs the support of alms nowadays. There are thousands of families who need financial aid, but some people scam for personal usage. It's pity that there are immoral people who would disguise themselves as poor citizens to take away the funds from those people in need.

I don't even know if I should really believe the beggars on the street anymore. Some beggars who are asking for alms take this for granted and constantly beg for money even if they don't need the support. To make it worse, some people get trained to ask for alms. Who would want to donate or support the real people in need? Who would want to take away the money from the poor? People should be conscientiously fair.

* Comprehension

1. What does "alms" mean?
2. What is the main issue?
3. According to the paragraph, what makes it worse?

* Questions

1. Do you give money to beggars? Why or why not?
2. Where do you usually see beggars in your country?
3. What do you think of people who get trained to ask for alms?
4. Who should be allowed to ask for alms? Why?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

alms: money, food, clothes, etc. that are given to poor people

scam: a clever but dishonest plan, usually to get money

immoral: morally wrong

disguise

: to change someone's appearance so that they look like someone else and people cannot recognize them

conscientious: showing a lot of care and attention (adv. conscientiously)

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

scam

immoral

disguise

alms

constantly

aid

1. The direction of the wind is _____ changing.
2. You have to _____ yourself as a man to go to that party.
3. Don't _____ me. I'm a private detective.
4. Many people donate _____ for poor citizen.
5. I want to live independently without financial _____.
6. Some people think abortion is _____.

* Answers

1. constantly

2. disguise

3. scam

4. alms

5. aid

6. immoral

Meat Lovers and Vegetarians

A YOUNG GIRL'S DIARY

Today, I had broccolis for dinner. Yuck! I just can't stand the smell and the texture of them. From all the vegetables, why does she have to force me to eat my least favorite vegetable? She says that if I don't eat it, I'm not going to have anything else. I hate vegetables especially broccoli. I think the dinosaurs ate too much of it so they died. I told mom if she puts a little meat in it, it wouldn't taste as bad. My mom told me she cooked it with meat to taste like meat, but it tasted like broccoli when I tasted it. Next time, I'm going to close my eyes and pinch my nose first before I can eat any more of it even if my mom gets mad when I do that. She said that if I don't eat broccoli the way I should, she is going to give me more of it. More punishment on top of punishment! The truth is I wouldn't hate broccoli this much if my mom doesn't bug me about it. When my mom says to eat everything and don't leave anything on my plate, she makes it sound like eating is a punishment, even when the food is delicious. I don't really understand my mom sometimes. I think she didn't eat enough broccolis herself when she was young.

* Comprehension

1. When do you say "Yuck!"?
2. How does the girl eat broccoli?
3. What does the girl think about broccoli?

* Questions

1. Which one do you prefer, meat or vegetables?
2. What do you think of vegetarians and meat-lovers?
3. Do you like junk food? Why or why not?
4. What is your favorite vegetable and least favorite vegetable?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

texture : the way a surface, substance or material feels when you touch it

pinch : to press a part of someone's flesh very tightly between your finger and thumb

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

texture pinched stand punishment bug force

1. This artificial fabric has the _____ of silk.
2. I can't _____ this continuous noise anymore.
3. She _____ his arm as hard as she could.
4. I tease and _____ my sister all the time.
5. I have no doubt that the man is guilty and he deserves severe _____.
6. They always _____ me into doing this work.

* Answers

1, texture 2, stand 3, pinched 4, bug 5, punishment
6, force

Fugu

Fugu is an exotic fish valued for its delicate taste. It is a high-priced Japanese delicacy. Many people from the west travel all the way to Japan to feel its taste which as one epicure said "Fugu is just a doorstep away from heaven". This is a very apt description because Fugu is poisonous, and if taken inordinately or when not set right, it will kill you.

Fugu is a Japanese term for Blowfish or Globefish. It's called such because when it is provoked, it blows its belly up to look enormous as if it's about to explode. The Chinese character portrays Fugu as the sea pig, probably because of its similitude to a chubby pig.

A famous expression in Japan captures the diners' sentiments toward the fugu: "I want to eat fugu, but I don't want to die"

* Comprehension

1. What is "Fugu"?
2. Why is Fugu called 'sea pig' in Chinese character?
3. Is Fugu dangerous? Why or why not?

* Questions

1. Do you like raw food? Why or why not?
2. Have you ever eaten sushi? What kind of sushi do you like?
3. Which one do you prefer, fish or meat? Why?
4. Have you ever eaten Globefish before? If yes, how was it?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

delicacy : something good to eat that is expensive or rare

epicure : someone who enjoys good food and drink

apt : exactly right for a particular situation or purpose

inordinate : far more than you would reasonably or normally expect (adv. inordinately)

provoke : to cause a sudden reaction that is often very extreme or unpleasant

portray : to describe or represent something or someone

sentiment : an opinion or feeling you have about something

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

enormous	portrayed	inordinately
sentiment	delicacy	epicure

1. Snails are considered a _____ in France.
2. Jamie is _____ fond of her parrot.
3. His most famous painting _____ the death of Nelson.
4. Tom gave me an _____ bouquet of flowers yesterday.
5. Sarah might know a famous restaurant because as far as I know she is an _____.
6. What is your _____ about this music?

* Answers

1. delicacy 2. inordinately 3. portrayed 4. enormous 5. epicure
6. sentiment

Money

I am not only heart broken, but I'm also completely broke. I don't even have a cent to buy a smoke. I just have these two measly coins in my pocket. Perhaps if I rub them together, they would mate and multiply so I can buy cigarettes. What kind of life is this? I have to make a living to have a life in this Godforsaken world. "I'm in a tight spot", I told my best buddy Bert, "Lend me a hand". He said sadly, "Why do I always have to bail you out, my friend. But here's ten bucks. Forget about paying me back. That's for friendship." After hearing the scolding, my pride considerably wounded.

Then I asked my brother if I could borrow some cash from him. Guess what he said. "Alms are for the poor. Go get it yourself!" I don't want to receive pitiable sympathy from my brother too, but he is being harsh on me. I definitely need a job.

* Comprehension

1. What did the writer expect with two coins?
2. What did Bert do to the writer?
3. What does "Alms are for the poor. Go get it yourself!" mean?

* Questions

1. Do you like money? Why or why not?
2. Do you want to be rich? Why or why not?
3. What do you think of beggars on the street?
4. If you had a million dollars, what would you do with it?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

measly: very small and disappointing in size, quantity or value

bail somebody out: to leave a large sum of money with a court so that someone can be let out of prison while waiting for their trial

scold: to angrily criticize someone, especially a child, about something they have done

considerable: fairly large, especially large enough to have an effect or be important
(adv. considerably)

harsh: criticizing, punishing or treating people in a very cruel or strict way

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

scold

considerably

measly

rub

bail

harsh

definitely

broke

1. David's family paid \$700 to _____ him out.
2. It's _____ warmer this morning than yesterday.
3. Yes, you're _____ right!
4. My parents always _____ me when I play computer games.
5. Why don't you _____ your palms to get warmer?
6. Unless I succeed in this project, I'll be _____.
7. John suffers from a _____ master.
8. Why are you so late to the party? There are only _____ foods left.

* Answers

1. bail

2. considerably

3. definitely

4. scold

5. rub

6. broke

7. harsh

8. measly

Jobs

I'm a full time working mom who had to manage the demands of my career and my duty as a mom and wife. My work has been a constant source of friction between my husband and me. He insists that since he is able to afford a fairly decent lifestyle for both our two children and me, I have no need for a career anymore. Instead, he wants me to either cut down my work time in half and spend more time doing the house chores, or quit my job and devote my time fully to bringing up two of our kids, 9 and 12. I find the first option unsatisfactory and the second one repugnant and unacceptable.

Since the time I gave birth to my kids, I have spent half of my remaining lifetime caring for them. Within a decade or less, my children will be independent enough to move out and I assume that I will be entitled to having my own life. At present, my kids are well provided for, having a competent nanny and several private tutors. I'm neither a negligent nor an absentee mom. My kids never complained of loneliness. I think it's my husband who is lonely.

* Comprehension

1. What are two options that the husband offers his wife?
2. According to the paragraph, what does the writer want to do?
3. What does "negligent" mean?

* Questions

1. Do you like your current job? Why or why not?
2. What is the most important aspect when making a decision about your job?
3. What do you think is the perfect job?
4. Which one do you prefer, interesting job or high-salaried job?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

friction : disagreement, angry feelings or unfriendliness between people

decent : acceptable and good enough

chore : a job that you have to do regularly, especially work that you do to keep a house clean

repugnant : very unpleasant and offensive

negligent : not taking enough care over something that you are responsible for

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

negligent

friction

decent

devote

chores

repugnant

1. Restriction on trade caused _____ between these two countries.
2. Don't you have a _____ pair of shoes?
3. John, if you do these _____ by 4 p.m., I'll give you an allowance as much as you want.
4. I found his political opinions quite _____.
5. According to the report, Dr. Brown had been _____ in not giving the patient a full examination.
6. I decided to _____ my time and energy to being a mom.

* Answers

1, friction

2, decent

3, chores

4, repugnant

5, negligent

6, devote

Sports

You've got to know the rules to enjoy watching soccer or you would be wondering why those twenty two players are running around the field. As you know you need eleven players from each team to play. There are two sets of 45 minute match. Within this time, the players kick and pass around the balls with their feet and other body parts except their arms. Using their arms accidentally or intentionally, penalty kick will be given by the referee. For your information, your hands can be used in the throw-in. However, you'd better watch out for any fouls during the match so that you don't receive any yellow or red cards. It can be perilous to your team!

Sometimes long distance shoot can be the shot of the moment, but the corner kick can have a superior outcome without knowing where the ball would bounce off. So never close your eyes when you are heading!

It would be too undemanding if there wasn't 'offside rule'. In order not to be in offside, you have to be in your own half of the field (your half is the half your goalkeeper is on). Next, you have to be either even with or behind the ball and never go past the defender. Most importantly, the players need to pass the ball directly with the perfect timing to other players. Soccer is definitely a team sport!

* Comprehension

1. What is the writer talking about?
2. According to the paragraph, when do you get a penalty kick?
3. What is "offside rule"?

* Questions

1. What kind of sports do you like? Why?
2. Do you prefer watching a soccer game on TV or at a stadium? Why or why not?
3. Who is your favorite soccer player? Why?
4. What sports are you good at?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

accidentally : without intending to

intentional : done deliberately and usually intended to cause harm (adv. intentionally)

perilous : very dangerous

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

intentionally

accidentally

importantly

perilous

wondering

outcome

1. I _____ locked myself out of the car.
2. I'm sorry for hitting your cheek, but I didn't do it _____.
3. I've heard that John started a _____ journey across the mountains.
4. I'm just _____ if Susan called me yesterday.
5. My boss is anxiously waiting the _____ of the negotiations.
6. Most _____, you must keep a record of everything you do.

* Answers

1. accidentally

2. intentionally

3. perilous

4. wondering

5. outcome

6. importantly

PC Hardware

I have a desktop PC. It has been rigged primarily as a game machine. It has a 21-inch LCD monitor I got from a throwaway sale. It runs on a dual boot system, a Windows 2000 on drive C for Internet surfing and Windows XP on drive D for games. It has got a Pentium 4, 3.2 megahertz CPU, an Asus motherboard, 60 gigabyte hard disk drive (big enough to contain the 10 games I installed), graphic card GeForce FX 5200 128 Megabytes DDR Ram, a 32 bit sound card, and two 256 DDR memory sticks.

I love to over clock my PC, push it to its smoking limits. For this purpose, I installed three system fans and the latest CPU cooler for my steaming CPU. Of course, for a total gaming experience, I hooked up a cool set of speaker, (6 satellites and one humungous subwoofer that goes boom-boom-boom and threatens to collapse the ceiling).

* Comprehension

1. Describe the writer's PC.
2. What is "throwaway sale"?
3. According to the paragraph, what did the writer install for steaming CPU?

* Questions

1. Do you have your own PC? If yes, what are its specifications?
2. What do you usually use your PC for?
3. Which one do you prefer, desktop or laptop? Why?
4. How many hours do you use the Internet?

* Vocabulary & Expressions

rig : to provide a ship with ropes, sails, etc.

humungous : enormous; immense

primarily : mainly

* Review

Fill in the each blank with one of the proper words in the box.

threatens

collapse

rigged

install

latest

primarily

1. I saw a fully _____ vessel at port.
2. This research is concerned _____ with usage of the cell-phone.
3. Every time they fight, Jane _____ to leave.
4. You have to leave right now because the roof is about to _____.
5. What is the _____ news you've heard about Tony?
6. You have to check the virus before you _____ this program.

* Answers

1. rigged

2. primarily

3. threatens

4. collapse

5. latest

6. install