

# Q&A

Every week the British newspaper The Guardian chooses people who have been in the news and publishes a short interview with them called 'Q&A'.

**Marie Kondo** was born in Tokyo. She was 19 and studying sociology at university when she launched a consulting business to help people organize their homes. In 2014, she published her first book, *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up*; it has been translated into 44 languages and has sold more than 13 million copies worldwide. She is married with three children and lives in Los Angeles.

1 **What is your earliest memory?**

C

2 **What would your superpower be?**

Helping people to find joy in their lives.

3 **Which words or phrases do you most overuse?**

4 **What do you owe your parents?**

The many items I threw out without them knowing.

5 **If not yourself, who would you most like to be?**

A farmer. I love growing organic vegetables, especially carrots.

6 **What is the most important lesson life has taught you?**

7 **What do you consider your greatest achievement?**

It's still a work in progress, but I would have to say organizing the world. With all the KonMari consultants around the world, and those that read my books or watched the Netflix shows, we are definitely making a difference.

8 **What has been your biggest disappointment?**



**Edward Enninful** was born in Ghana, and came to the UK as a refugee. After working as a model, he became fashion director of i-D magazine at just 18, and went on to work for W magazine and US Vogue. In 2016, he was awarded an OBE for services to diversity in the fashion industry, and the following year he became editor-in-chief of British Vogue. In 2020, he was also made European editorial director of Vogue. He lives in London with his husband.

**1 What makes you unhappy?**

I'm a positive person, but I get twitchy when the clothes aren't perfect in a shot.

**2 What is the quality you most dislike about yourself?**

**3 What is your guiltiest pleasure?**

Reality TV. I adore it. Love Island, Real Housewives, Drag Race...

**4 What scares you about getting older?**

**5 What did you want to be when you were growing up?**

In my family, you can be one of three things: a doctor, a lawyer, or a failure. I wanted to be an Egyptologist, but things worked out in the end.

**6 Would you choose fame or anonymity?**

**7 What is your most treasured possession?**

Despite what people might imagine, I'm not that big on possessions. My London home is very minimalist.

**8 Have you ever said 'I love you' without meaning it?**

Adapted from The Guardian



# The mystery of the lighthouse keepers

The mystery of the Flannan Islands lighthouse keepers is one of the greatest puzzles in history – a case that has baffled real and amateur detectives for more than a century.

The Flannan Islands are seven uninhabited rocks that rise out of the sea. They form part of the Outer Hebrides, a chain of remote islands off the west coast of Scotland. For centuries, they were a danger for ships, so in 1899, a 75-foot lighthouse was built on the largest of the islands, and three lighthouse keepers were employed.

On 26th December 1900, a steamship sailed to the island carrying three new lighthouse keepers, to relieve the men who had spent three months alone in the Atlantic. But when they arrived at the lighthouse, they made an extraordinary discovery – there was nobody there! The lighthouse door was unlocked, and inside, everything was tidy, but one of the chairs was knocked over. One rain jacket was hanging on its hook, but the other two had disappeared. The clocks had stopped. The last entry in the log book was 9 a.m. on 15th December. But of the three keepers, Ducat, Marshall, and MacArthur, there was not a trace.

When the news of the keepers' disappearance reached the mainland, there was a huge amount of media speculation. Some suggested that the men had argued about a woman, and that one had murdered the other two before throwing himself into the sea. Others wondered whether perhaps they had been kidnapped by German agents who were planning an invasion of Britain, using submarines. Some thought they might have been carried away by a sea serpent, or a giant sea bird, or even by a boat full of ghosts. Robert Muirhead, a Northern Lighthouse Board superintendent who had originally employed the three missing men, was sent to the island from Edinburgh to solve the mystery.

Adapted from The Times



# Confessions of a cyberchondriac

I'm sure that's what I've got...

- 1 A few weeks ago, I was feeling **under the weather**. After days of intensive internet diagnosis, I finally went to see my doctor. After examining me, she told me that my **heart rate** was a bit fast and sent me off to the hospital for some tests. Did I go straight there? Of course not. First I took out my phone, logged on to Google, and found out that the technical term for a fast heart rate is supraventricular tachycardia. Then I typed these two words into Google. Sadly, the problem with Dr Google is that he isn't exactly a comfort in times of crisis. One website immediately scared me with a list of 407 possible causes.
- 2 I raced to the hospital, convinced that I probably needed **open-heart surgery**. Four hours later, I got a diagnosis. I had a chest infection...and a bad case of cyberchondria. The only consolation for the latter condition is that I'm in good company. A Microsoft survey of one million internet users last year found that 2% of all searches – a not-insignificant number – were health-related.
- 3 Unfortunately, once you have it, cyberchondria can be hard to cure. Since my trip to hospital, I have been obsessively checking my pulse, swapping symptoms in chat rooms, and reading all about **worst-case scenarios**. What if the doctors got it wrong? What if the ECG machine was faulty? It's exhausting trying to convince yourself that you might have a **life-threatening illness**.



- 4 The Microsoft study also revealed another serious problem – that online information often doesn't discriminate between common and very rare conditions. One in four of all articles thrown up by an internet search for headache suggested a brain tumour as a possible cause. Although it is true that this may be the cause, in fact, brain tumours develop in fewer than one in 50,000 people. People also assume that the first answers that come up in searches refer to the most common causes, so if you type in mouth ulcer and see that mouth cancer has several mentions near the top, you think that it must be very common. However, this is not the case at all.
- 5 Another problem for cyberchondriacs is that online medical information may be from an unreliable source, or out of date. A recent American study showed that 75% of the people who use the internet to look up information about their health do not check where that information came from, or the date it was created. 'Once something has been put up on the internet, even if it's wrong, it's difficult to remove,' says Sarah Jarvis, a doctor. 'This is a problem, especially with **scare stories**, and also with some alternative remedies which claim to be **miracle cures**, but which may actually do you harm.' Check the information? Sorry, I don't have time – I'm off to buy a heart-rate monitor!

Adapted from The Sunday Times

**ECG machine** (noun) – electrocardiogram machine, used to test people's heart rate

# Never past your prime!

## Peaks we reach later in life – from running to self-esteem

It's easy to think that everything gets worse as you age. But are there things even someone as ancient as me (I'm 48) can still get better at? The assumption that ageing is inevitably a process of cognitive and physical decline is challenged by Daniel Levitin, professor of neuroscience at McGill University, in his book *The Changing Mind*. 'Contrary to popular myth, we never stop learning or growing new brain connections,' he says. So could your prime still be ahead of you? Here are some peaks that we hit in later life.

### Forties –

This merciless world involves anything longer than a standard marathon, often 50 or 100 km, and includes multi-day races of many hundreds of kilometres. A 2020 study of people who had finished 100 km runs found that women peaked at between 40 and 44, and men at 45 to 49. This isn't a fluke: research consistently confirms that ultrarunners peak far later than other athletes. Even more interestingly, the longer the race, duration, or distance, the older peak performance seems to come. Dr Beat Knechtle has conducted much of the research on age and ultramarathons; the 59-year-old Swiss GP is also an ultra-athlete himself. 'It's a lot to do with experience and mindset,' he says. 'Experience, starting slow, going slow...Younger athletes always tend to want to push themselves to achieve a place, a podium, a time. The older ones like me say the first aim is to finish.'

Other things you are better at in your 40s: chess



## **Fifties –**

Healthy self-esteem is a key component of good mental health, and a long-term data analysis has found it climbs from adolescence onwards, peaking somewhere between 50 and 70. Interestingly, research from Japan found that self-esteem continued to rise through people's lives, even past 80 or 90, without the drop that studies of other areas had found. The researchers speculated this might be because people in Japan have 'more humble and balanced attitudes towards themselves, not just in old age', making peaks and steep declines less likely.

Other things you are better at in your 50s: arithmetic

## **Sixties –**

Research suggests older adults are more emotionally stable and less impulsive; they are better able to maintain positive relationships, and 'agreeableness' increases substantially with age. Do we just become nicer? 'Not everyone over 60 becomes nicer,' says Levitin. 'But generally, yes. There are both structural changes in the brain and neurochemical ones. The amygdala, the brain's fear centre, shrinks with age, causing older adults to become more trusting, compassionate, and empathetic. Also, older adults tend to recall more positive memories and fewer negative memories. They become more tolerant and accepting – what we call 'grandparent syndrome'. One of the reasons is that, after a certain age, you realize, 'I've had it pretty good. I've made it this far. I'm grateful.'

Other things you are better at in your 60s: vocabulary

## **Seventies –**

In a poll of 80,000 Americans, satisfaction with body image peaked for women at 74. For men, it came even later, at about 80. A poll is hardly definitive evidence, but other studies also found that older people in western countries were less concerned about their body image than younger people.



## Eighties –

‘Happiness may seem like a young person thing,’ says Levitin. ‘But the surprising thing is, when older people are asked to pinpoint the happiest time of their lives, the most common response is not an age in childhood, teens, or early adulthood – it’s 82.’ (That emerged from a telephone survey of Americans’ wellbeing.)

When you look at everything we can excel at in later life, perhaps that is not so surprising after all.

Adapted from The Guardian

# Astronaut returns from space younger than his twin



**American astronaut Scott Kelly**, and his identical twin **Mark**, also a retired astronaut, may be the most studied siblings in the history of science. Each time one of them went into space while the other remained on Earth, both men would carry out dozens of experiments, including cognitive exercises, genetic sequencing, and testing for bacteria on their bodies. When Scott landed in Kazakhstan, after 340 days in space, he came back two inches taller, fifteen pounds lighter, and with a strong desire to jump into a swimming pool. Changes like these were predictable and temporary. Now, however, scientists have found the first signs of a change that no one expected – during his year on board the International Space Station, Scott's body had become younger.

One of the genetic indicators of human ageing is the length of our telomeres. Telomeres are the caps at the end of each strand of DNA that protect our chromosomes, like the plastic tips at the end of shoelaces. Normally, telomeres get shorter as we age; they are about 11,000 molecules long when we are born and only about 4,000 long in old age, and this means that our DNA is increasingly vulnerable to damage as we get older. However, an analysis of Scott Kelly's cells, led by Susan Bailey, professor of radiation cancer biology at Colorado State University, showed that the 52-year-old astronaut's telomeres got longer while he was in space, before shrinking back again after returning to Earth.



In theory, expanding telomeres indicate the reversal of part of the ageing process. However, they are also strongly linked to cancer. NASA is aiming to send humans to Mars and beyond, but many scientists worry that long-haul trips into space could cause astronauts to suffer from chronic and severe health problems. So this is definitely not good news, and it could have serious implications for the future of space travel.

Christopher Mason, assistant professor of physiology and biophysics at Cornell Weill Medicine in New York, takes a different view. Professor Mason's team also found changes in Scott Kelly's genes while he was in space. But he thinks this may be less a result of simply being in space, and more due to the intense NASA fitness regime. 'On Earth, you might go to the gym on Tuesday and then decide you can't be bothered on Thursday and go to the pub, but on the space station, the astronauts exercise extremely regularly, and all food and exercise are very controlled.'

Adapted from The Times

**15 pounds** – almost 7 kilos

# How to get the best seat

Every time you fly, and have to choose a seat, you ask yourself, 'Which is the best seat to choose?' The answer is that it depends entirely on your priorities as a passenger. Telegraph Travel has sifted through the research to reveal the top spots.

If you want a speedy exit **4C**

You're on a city break to Europe and you're travelling light with just a small carry-on case in the **(1)** .

You want to maximize the amount of time you spend at your destination and minimize the time spent on the plane. Verdict? You need to grab an aisle seat towards the front of the plane on the left, which is where the main exit is located and where passengers leave the aircraft from.

If you want to sleep

Sleep is hard to come by at an **(2)** of 35,000 feet. There are so many things conspiring against you that it's hard to nod off: the hum of the engines, the passenger next to you needing to get out, the lack of neck support in your seat. Some places, however, are better than others; for example, some areas of the **(3)** are less noisy. Window seats give you control of the window blind and a place to rest your head; they also mean you don't need to be woken up every time the passenger next to you needs the toilet. Verdict? A window seat at the front of the plane, where it is also quieter.

If you don't like turbulence

Turbulence does, of course, shake the entire aircraft, but experts claim there are some seats on a plane where bumps will feel less intense. Verdict? Sit in the middle of the plane, ideally in an aisle seat, above the wings, which help keep the plane steady when the going gets tough.



If you need more legroom

Seats in exit rows have more legroom than most. These seats are, however, in such high demand that some airlines, especially (4) ones, charge more for them. They also come with restrictions: passengers in exit rows, for instance, must be willing to assist in the (5) of the aircraft during an emergency, so they are not available for children or people needing (6). Verdict? If you're travelling without children, if you're fit and you can afford it, choose a seat in an exit row.

If you want a better dining experience

According to Professor Charles Spence – author of *Gastrophysics: The New Science of Eating* – plane food tastes better at the front of the aircraft, where it is quieter and the air is more humid. 'Dry cabin air and the loud (7) noise all contribute to our inability to taste and smell food and drink,' he told *Telegraph Travel*. Verdict? Sit as close to the cockpit as possible if you want to make plane food taste better. More often than not, you'll also get served first.

If you're safety-conscious

Airlines and plane manufacturers will tell you that all seats are equal when it comes to matters of safety. However, some seats are more equal than others. A 2007 study by the magazine *Popular Mechanics* found that passengers sitting near the (8) of a plane were 40 per cent more likely to survive a crash than those sitting in the first few rows. Verdict? Sit as far back as possible.

If you want to have an empty seat next to you

If you are flying with a companion, try booking both the aisle and the window seat. You will often find that the middle seat – as it is the least favoured by passengers travelling solo – has been left empty. Relax and enjoy it.

Adapted from *The Telegraph*

# The Necklace

by Guy de Maupassant

## Part 1

Mathilde Loisel was a pretty and charming girl, but born into a poor family. She was ambitious, and thought she deserved to be part of the highest level of French society. As she grew up, she was increasingly ashamed of her circumstances, but there was little she could do about it. Eventually, she married a clerk at the Ministry of Education.

They led a simple life, and Mathilde suffered. She felt that she deserved a life of luxury, and their poor house and ugly furniture, and just one young servant, made her miserable. She had no dresses, no jewellery, nothing. She never visited her one rich schoolfriend, Madame Forestier, because she could not bear to see the life that she herself would never have.

One evening, her husband came home, proudly holding in his hand a large envelope.

‘Here,’ he said, ‘here’s something for you.’

She quickly opened it. It was an invitation from the Minister of Education to a party at the palace of the Ministry. But instead of being delighted, as her husband had hoped, she threw the invitation on the table.

‘What do you want me to do with this?’

‘My dear, I thought you would be pleased. You never go out, and this is a great occasion. I went to a lot of trouble to get the invitation. Everybody wants one and not many are given to the clerks. You will meet all kinds of important people there.’

She looked at him impatiently and said, ‘What do you want me to wear to the party?’

He had not thought of that; he hesitated.



‘The dress you wear to the theatre—’ He stopped, as he saw that his wife was crying.

‘What’s the matter? What’s the matter?’

Mathilde wiped her eyes and replied calmly, ‘Nothing. Only I have no dress, so I cannot go to this party. Give your invitation to some colleague whose wife has better clothes than I.’

Her husband was heartbroken.

‘Look here, Mathilde, how much would this cost, a proper dress?’

She thought for a few seconds, and answered,  
‘I don’t know exactly, but I think I could do it with four hundred francs.’

He grew a little pale. He had saved exactly this amount for a short trip the following summer with his friends. But he said, ‘All right. I will give you four hundred francs. But make sure you get a pretty dress.’

But as the day of the party drew near, Mathilde was still not happy. Although she now had her dress, she had no jewellery to go with it. When she told her husband, he suggested that she ask her friend Jeanne Forestier to lend her something.

Pleased with the idea, she went to her friend’s house, and told her about her distress. Madame Forestier agreed to lend her something. She tried on several pieces, but nothing was right, until she suddenly saw a magnificent diamond necklace. To her joy, her friend let her borrow it.

### Part 3

Mathilde now learned the terrible life of the really poor. Heroically, she made the best of it. The debt must be paid. She would pay it. They dismissed their servant; they left their house and rented a small attic under the roof.



She learned how to do housework, and how to cook. She washed the dishes, wearing out her pink nails on the greasy pots and the bottoms of the pans. She washed their dirty sheets and clothes. She took their rubbish down to the street every morning, and she carried up the water, pausing for breath on every floor. Wearing old, worn-out clothes, she went out to the greengrocer, the grocer, the butcher, with a basket on her arm, bargaining, insulted, fighting to save a sou here or there.

Every month, they had to pay back part of the money they had borrowed. Her husband worked in the evening, doing the accounts for a shopkeeper, and at night, often, he did copying at five sous the page.

This life lasted ten years. At the end of ten years, they had paid everything back – everything, with all the accumulation of interest.

With her badly combed hair, and her red hands, Mathilde now looked like an old woman. But sometimes, when her husband was at the office, she sat down by the window, and she thought of that evening long ago, of that party, where she had been so beautiful and so admired.

What would have happened if she had not lost that necklace?  
Who knows? Who knows?

**franc** (noun) – French currency, until the euro was introduced in 2002

**sou** (noun) – an old French coin worth very little  
(100 sous = 1 franc)

# Climate Stories Project

Today, more and more of us are feeling the effects of climate change on a personal and community level. The Climate Stories Project allows people from around the world to share their stories about climate change and explain the impact that it is having on our lives.



**Diana Maciaga from** [redacted]

We don't have major hurricanes or wildfires, but you can see that the weather patterns have been changing. For example, the winters are much milder than they used to be 20 years ago, and in the summers, we often have a huge heatwave. We used to have a special name for a period that is between winter and spring: we call it przedwiośnie, and now it doesn't really happen. So for me, this is one of the most significant examples of the changes in climate.



**Umberto Crespo Palmarito from** [redacted]

Here, the rainy season used to start in March and the rain stopped in November. Now, the heavy rain only starts in June. Years ago, it would be pouring with rain every day. And now there can be a week, 15 days, without any rain. My grandfather and my father lived their life according to the weather because it was like a clock: it was never wrong. We used to say that 21st September was the day the weather changed. And now people don't say it. It's completely different from before.



**Nadine Lefort from** [redacted]

For many years, we had less snow in the winter, and then this past year we had an extreme winter – freezing, with terrible blizzards – so weather patterns are changing and it's less predictable. Another thing I notice is that the coasts seem to be eroding much more quickly than they were in the past. It's sad, because so many beautiful properties and parks are right on the coast and it will be a shame to see them gone. People are saying that they'd never buy or build in those places because they'll be gone in the future.

**Harou Abass Hadiza from** [redacted]

When I was at primary school, my friends and I used to go to the river. It was green, and the air was cool and fresh. Some of us were afraid to go far from the riverbank when we were swimming, because the river was deep and had a strong current. However, in the last few years, we are experiencing increasingly hot weather – extreme heat. Now the river isn't so deep, and it's dusty and dirty. Air quality in my city has also declined. There is more dust, due to desertification.

**Efleda Bautista from** [redacted]

I come from Tacloban City, the city that was hit by Typhoon Haiyan, and this is really a prime example of what climate change can do to destroy a community. We had a long drought, and then rainfall equivalent to one month's rainfall falling in one or two days in the city, and everywhere was flooded. That never happened before, and it's closely connected with climate change.

**Jordan Hamada from** [redacted]

There hasn't been a big snowstorm here for over ten years. This area is known for its rain, and there hasn't been much for the past few months, and I'm pretty surprised, because it's been so dry this winter. It's definitely not something I think about all the time, but I've seen some articles recently talking about how Los Angeles and Manhattan will eventually be under water, possibly in our lifetime, or the next generation's lifetime, and that makes it seem very real – that's definitely a scary thought.



# ‘Are you crazy?!’

## Why we like thrills, and the science behind adventure sports

I was at a waterfall recently. From the top to the bottom was seven metres minimum. The water temperature was a maximum of 15°C (that’s cold). There were two guys standing at the top wearing wetsuits. As the thought of, ‘Are you crazy? No, you won’t!’ passed through my head, the first one jumped and the second followed. I thought (and still think) they were crazy. I spoke to them after they finished seven more jumps, climbing back up each time. They were adventure sport athletes. Their reasoning was simple: ‘It’s exciting and it never gets old.’ The explanation is logical – but it does not cover everything.

### 1 Is it only brain chemistry?

Almost all extreme sports have some element of danger to life. In such situations, there is a ‘spike’: that is, a sudden increase of adrenaline and a big boost of dopamine in the body. Both of these give a moment of clarity and utter focus. That’s one reason why people do it – to ‘feel the rush’. But the rush is never enough; such people will always seek stronger emotions.

However, it is not just about brain chemistry. There is a social element as well. By definition, extreme sports are ‘extreme’ because there is an active risk of dying. Most extreme sports require other people – usually a group of people whom we trust. Think about a scenario where you are about to jump out of an aeroplane. Would you jump if you did not trust your partner who packed the parachute?

We also see this type of bonding in careers that require decisions under high pressure and a natural trust in the ability of another. Think about military personnel, media fieldwork, pilots, lawyers, or emergency-room doctors. What makes these kinds of jobs different is that every member is key to the success of the project.



## **2 Can anyone be attracted to extreme sports?**

Participation in extreme sports requires people to score highly in two personality traits – ‘agreeableness’ and ‘openness to experience’ – and to score highly in something called ‘sensation-seeking’. Simply put, they are agreeable to new things; always open to novel experiences that give them a sensation that daily life does not. Coincidentally, sensation-seeking is also seen in addictive behaviours such as alcohol, smoking, and gambling. So, it’s not always a good thing, and fortunately not everyone has it. Essentially, these people’s psychological make-up does not perceive risk as a direct threat. Rather, it looks at the risk as a necessary process to gain the ‘thrill’ at the end.

## **3 Are we all sensation-seekers in different ways?**

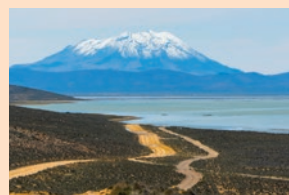
Adventure sport athletes and others with a similar personality often have a difficult time in day-to-day life. To put it simply, it is too boring for them. There is no spike to satisfy their craving. But there are other ways of being a sensation-seeker, whether it is to try out a new restaurant, or take on a new project at work, or leave a salaried job to start a business. Fundamentally, all these come from a desire to seek new and complex experiences. With the rise of social media culture and travel vlogs, there has also been a dedicated marketing push towards advertising sensation-seeking. But it is not for everyone. If your personality make-up is generally at the non-extreme end, engaging in thrill-seeking behaviours may trigger your anxiety and harm your mental health. So while the two cliff-divers were perfectly happy and chasing the positive emotion, someone else in their position could have had a panic attack on top of the waterfall.

A key part of being an adventure sport athlete is being comfortable dealing in absolute uncertainty. They are perfectly fine with negative consequences. Most people have an acceptable risk margin (10%, 20%, 30%, but anything beyond that and they pause). Adventure sport athletes are okay with 90% risk. Why? Because all they see is the 10% chance of the thrill.

Adapted from The Telegraph Online – Telegraph India

# Incredible volcanoes to climb

**Mount Misti** is Peru's most famous volcano. It is also its most active, so climbers must be aware of any eruption threats before attempting the exhilarating two-day hike to the summit. Due to the challenging environmental conditions, few people reach the top of the volcano. Ice picks and crampons are often a necessity, making this a difficult hike for a climbing novice, but a welcome challenge for anyone wanting to test their limits. You will need a guide, who will provide you with safe overnight accommodation. Along the way, look for hot gases hissing through volcanic cracks. From the summit, at 5,821 metres, you can look down at the city of Arequipa and see neighbouring volcanoes Chachani and Pikchu Pikchu.



**Mount Ngauruhoe** has become one of New Zealand's most popular climbing locations since its star turn as Mount Doom in Peter Jackson's *The Lord of the Rings* trilogy. After its last eruption in 1975, Mount Ngauruhoe's Volcanic Alert Level has dramatically reduced, although it is still listed as an active volcano. Ngauruhoe is 2,291 metres high, and a 90-minute walk takes you to the foot of the volcano. The hike takes about eight hours altogether. The first 45 minutes are suitable for children and the elderly, but the climb then becomes more dramatic, with a steep slope and few opportunities to rest. It's a challenging hike across loose rock surfaces, ice caps and at times sub-zero temperatures, even in summer. This is one for adrenaline seekers. You will also need a guide.



**Mount Teide** is Europe's highest volcano. It lies 3,718 metres above sea level on Tenerife, the largest island in the Canaries. Last erupting in 1909, it is now a dormant volcano that attracts eager climbers each year. Hikers can attempt to reach Teide's summit throughout the year, but due to the scorching summer heat, it is best to climb it during the spring (April–May) and autumn (September–October) when the weather is mildest. The terrain is not too treacherous, and the low altitude trails are accessible to climbers of all abilities. The five- to seven-hour trek to the summit is a challenging expedition, but when you reach the top and gaze down at Tenerife and its neighbouring islands, all your efforts will be worthwhile.



Adapted from a travel website

# Ali Brookes

A 29-year-old doctor, was a participant in series five, in the 'high earners' group.

## Why did you decide to apply?

I'd always really enjoyed watching The Island with Bear Grylls. And I think it's really the ultimate (1) \_\_\_\_\_, being stranded on a desert island, having to survive there with no help at all. I love being outdoors and going on adventures, (2) \_\_\_\_\_ that side of it really appealed to me as well. So I sent off my application form, and the next thing I knew, I had a couple of interviews, and then I got a phone call saying they wanted me to go on The Island! Never in a million years, when I applied, did I think I'd (3) \_\_\_\_\_ get to go. So I was absolutely stunned when they told me they wanted me to go on the programme, but at the same time, I was thrilled! And two weeks later, we were off on a plane to the island.



## What survival techniques did you learn?

So we learnt a whole range of survival techniques. We learnt how to make fire, which was actually quite complicated. You had to get the right wood from a particular type of tree on the beach, and then use pieces of that wood, and a shoelace to make fire. In our training, they made it look very (4) [redacted], they had the fire lit within a few minutes. But in reality, it took us a couple of days before we made fire, but we did get it, which was amazing. Once we had fire, we could then boil water for drinking. The water we found was brown and green and had bits floating in it, so we would filter it (5) [redacted] a pair of trousers or a shirt to get rid of the big clumps of dirt, and then we would boil it to kill off any bacteria or parasites. Amazingly, nobody got (6) [redacted] from drinking the water during our whole five weeks on the island. They also taught us how to build shelters to protect ourselves from the bad weather. In practice, the shelters were not that waterproof and we had a lot of very wet, cold nights. They taught us how to navigate by the sun and how to build up a map of the island as we explored it. It didn't stop us getting lost though.

## Who or what did you miss most?

Before I went on the show, I said I'd miss my husband the most. But in fact, the thing I missed the most was most definitely food. It was all I could think about, and (7) [redacted] I couldn't sleep, I would go through a list of different pizza toppings in my head to try and get to sleep. I really missed having a good night's sleep. (8) [redacted] we did build shelters off the ground to stop us getting bitten by the insects and other creepy-crawlies, it was really uncomfortable. Having clean clothes, I missed that (9) [redacted]. Putting on dirty, wet socks every morning is one of the worst feelings. Of course, I missed my friends and family too, but actually what I realised was that I didn't miss many things. I (10) [redacted] didn't miss having a phone, or a computer, or the internet. Though as I said, I did miss clean, dry socks.

# Lost in the jungle

**Four young men went into the amazon jungle on the adventure of a lifetime. Only two of them would come out alive...**



**In 1981**, three friends went backpacking in the Amazon rainforest in a remote area of Bolivia: Yossi Ghinsberg, 22, and his two friends Kevin Gale, 29, and Marcus Stamm, 29. They hired an experienced guide, an Austrian called Karl Rupprechter, who promised that he could take them deep into the rainforest to an undiscovered indigenous village. Then they would raft nearly 200 kilometres back downriver. Karl said that the journey to the village would take them about seven days. Before they entered the jungle, the three friends made a promise that they would ‘go in together and come out together’.

**The four men set off** from the town of Apolo and soon they were deep in the jungle. But after walking for more than a week, there was no sign of the village, and tensions began to appear in the group. The three friends started to suspect that Karl, the guide, didn’t really know where the indigenous village was. Yossi and Kevin began to get fed up with their friend Marcus because he was complaining about everything, especially his feet, which had become infected and were hurting.

**Eventually**, they decided to abandon the search for the village and just hike (instead of rafting) back to Apolo, the way they had come. But Kevin was furious because he thought that it was Marcus’s fault that they had had to cut short their adventure. So, he decided that he would raft down the river, and he persuaded Yossi to join him, but he didn’t want Marcus to come with them. Marcus and Karl decided to go back to Apolo on foot. The three friends agreed to meet in a hotel in the capital La Paz in a week’s time.

**Early next morning**, the two pairs of travellers said goodbye and set off on their different journeys...

# How to live with your regrets

In 1981, a young American man named Bruce was on a train journey through northern France when a dark-haired young woman called Sandra boarded at Paris and sat next to him. Conversation came easily, and they were soon laughing and holding hands. When they reached her destination – a station in Belgium – they kissed, and on an impulse, Bruce considered jumping off the train with her to see where life may lead him. Instead, he quickly scribbled his name and parents' address on a scrap of paper.

Almost as soon as the doors had closed, Bruce regretted not having gone with his gut feeling. After his return to the US, he received a letter from Sandra. 'Maybe it's crazy, but when I think about you, I'm smiling,' it said. But – mysteriously – it contained no return address. In the decades since that encounter, Bruce has never stopped wondering what might have happened if he'd stepped down onto that platform.

The anecdote is just one of 16,000 accounts the author Daniel Pink has collected in his World Regret Survey. Analysing this data and drawing on the latest scientific experiments, he has been able to identify four different types of regret and the kinds of events that are most likely to lead to each one. This research, outlined in Pink's new book, *The Power of Regret*, helps us to understand the crucial role that regret plays in our lives.

## The four types of regret

Regret is of central importance in the way we understand the world. Pink points to one study that examined recorded conversations between students and between married couples. Regret was the second most discussed emotion after love.

Pink found that most people's biggest regrets fall into one of four different types:



Foundation regrets are about **(1)** . This would include regrets about skipping school, overspending, or neglecting your health – bad habits that had negative long-term consequences for life.

Boldness regrets come from **(2)** . As Bruce found on that train through France and Belgium, we are sometimes presented with potentially life-changing opportunities.

Moral regrets are centred on other people, who **(3)** . Cheating on a partner is one of the most obvious and common examples.

Connection regrets concern lost relationships with family members, friends, or colleagues, **(4)** .

## How to avoid future regrets

One general strategy to avoid moral and foundation regrets is to anticipate problems: that is you deliberately imagine **(5)**  before making a decision, suggests Pink.

However, connection regrets turned out to be the most common experience in Pink's survey. In his opinion, we should always reconnect with people we love when we sense **(6)** . 'If you're wondering whether or not to reach out to someone, simply being at that point in your thought process has answered the question,' he says.

Similarly, the frequency of boldness regrets shows us the danger of being too risk-averse; sometimes it's right to be impulsive. In many cases 'people see more peril than actually exists,' Pink says. This may be particularly true for cases where a lack of confidence stops us from **(7)**  or approaching a potential love interest. We may hope to escape disappointment or embarrassment, but in return, we will be forever wondering 'what if?'

Bruce is trying to make peace with his biggest regret. More than 40 years since he and Sandra lost touch, he's recently posted a message online in the hope that they may finally see each other again. He cannot change the past, but he can try to make up for all that lost time.

Adapted from BBC Worklife

# Life time

## How the way we sleep affects our whole lives

In his book *Life Time*, Professor Russell Foster, head of Oxford University's Sleep Institute, explains how the way we sleep influences almost everything we do. When we work against our natural body rhythms, Foster warns, every aspect of our life is compromised.

- A**  More than three million British workers now do night shifts, a figure that has increased significantly in the past ten years. However, most night workers' bodies never adapt to the sleep disruption and lack of daylight. The consequences are shocking. Men working nights are up to six times more likely to separate in the first five years of marriage, while night-shift workers have significantly higher rates of many kinds of cancer. Not getting enough sleep has been linked to the Bhopal, Exxon Valdez, and Chernobyl disasters and hundreds of thousands of accidents on the roads.
- B**  People who live in care homes often have to put up with very low levels of lighting which makes it hard for their bodies to distinguish between day and night. This can have terrible consequences for their sleep patterns and as a result, their mental health. Teenagers naturally wake up and go to sleep later than others, which means that their body clock is at odds with the rest of society. It's not surprising that both of these groups struggle so much with sleep and tiredness.



- C**  Foster tells us that a doctor on a nightshift who is awake between 4 a.m. and 6 a.m. is about as good a decision-maker as someone who is legally drunk, and doing this night after night makes the problem worse. Most of us are aware of this. However, the impact of the time we take drugs on their effectiveness is far less widely understood. For example, aspirin and blood-pressure pills apparently work much better if they are taken in the evening, although many doctors still recommend taking them in the morning. One flu vaccine was found to be three times more effective when given in the morning compared with the afternoon. Scientists are discovering that this is true for many other drugs, too.
- D**  One particularly well-known myth is that using electronic devices before bedtime encourages poor sleep because of the blue light in the screen. Manufacturers even advertise blue light-filtering apps. Yet the real reason to avoid using screens at bedtime, Foster says, is because what you read or watch stimulates the brain – it wakes you up. This is also the reason why you shouldn't turn your phone on if you wake up in the night. It seems that 'biphasic' sleep – where you sleep for a few hours, wake up for a while, and then sleep again – used to be very common centuries ago, and sleep will come again as long as you don't do anything to stop it.
- E**  It is readable, full of surprising and useful facts, and based on rigorous evidence. Unlike many science books with similar subtitles, it really might revolutionize your life. Yet I think it should have tried to do more. It should revolutionize the whole way healthcare, education, and employment work. We can't go on knowing what Foster and other scientists have discovered and do next to nothing about it.

Adapted from The Times

**Bhopal, Exxon Valdez, Chernobyl** – very serious industrial accidents (in India, Alaska, Ukraine)

# Music that helps you revise better

**Bobby Seagull talks to Blanca Schofield**



‘Can you send me your revision playlist?’ Sitting in the university library, I would often hear that question whispered by students who were tired of their own music and needed something new to improve their concentration. My own playlists were varied and often unexpected. I am an avid pop fan – Taylor Swift has been my most-listened-to Spotify artist for several years – but at uni, I preferred rock and blues or indie-electronic music as I tried to finish a difficult essay. But wouldn’t it be wonderful to find the perfect music for studying? Does it exist?

Bobby Seagull, an English maths teacher, broadcaster, and writer, who became a household name on the TV quiz show University Challenge, seems to think so. In a new radio show, he presents a ‘perfect playlist’ to help students study. The secret? Classical music, of course. Speaking to me from his home in east London, Seagull explains that his playlist is based on a 1997 book called *The Mozart Effect* by Don Campbell. ‘Campbell was trying to link music with memory,’ Seagull says. ‘He found that if you listened to classical music, it could relieve stress, improve communication, and increase efficiency.’

The ‘Mozart effect’ – the theory that classical music makes you smarter – has been repeatedly shown to be false. But Seagull argues that classical music can in fact help with revision. The key, he says, is the music’s soothing effect. ‘Listening to Mozart can reduce your blood pressure and heart rate, which makes it easier to learn because your learning faculty is heightened when you’re relaxed.’ Music with lyrics doesn’t work either, he says, because it distracts you. Seagull quotes research showing that listening to works with 60 beats per minute results in a dramatic reduction in stress. This means that composers such as Vivaldi, Handel, and Bach are the most appropriate.



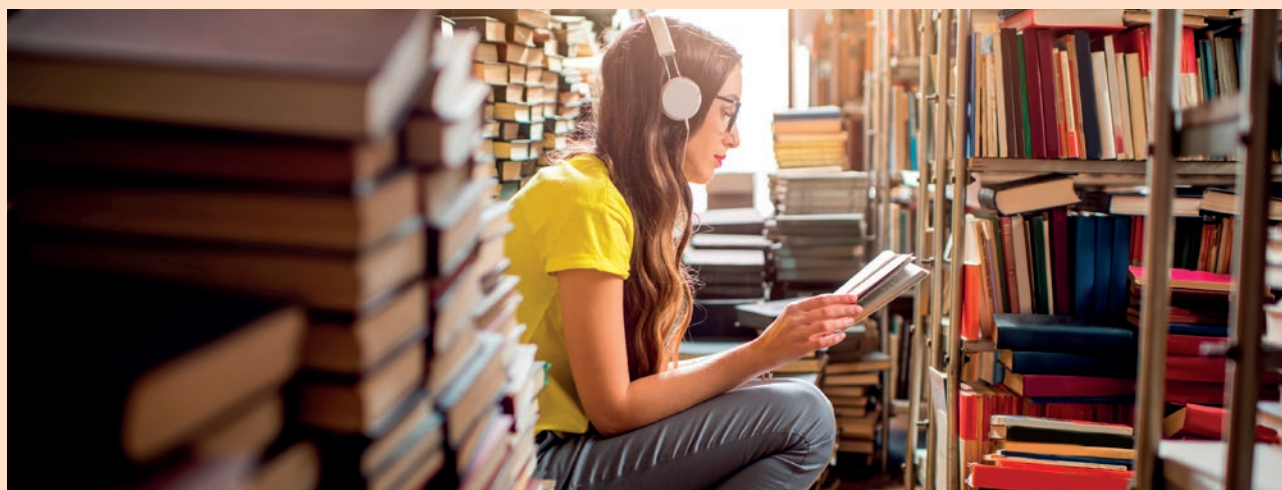
Yet even such a simple project as finding the perfect playlist for students to revise to has caused arguments. When Seagull posted on social media to ask what classical music people found best for studying, well-known author Philip Pullman responded saying that was not what classical music was for and that it should be treated with respect. The post sparked a debate that Seagull remembers fondly. ‘It ended up getting lots of feedback and hundreds of people engaging, including celebrities and composers.’

And what about people who think revision is a time for silence; that any melody is distracting? Seagull disagrees. ‘I personally am not a big fan of silent revision unless it’s something that requires absolute concentration and exam conditions, like doing a past paper for practice. But if you’re revising, you want to make it an enjoyable process and not a miserable experience.’ He thinks classical music is a way to help people set the right environment for revision. ‘I’m not saying it’s the be-all and end-all, but if it helps, then why not have this additional tool?’

So I guess it’s time to ditch the indie electronic and listen to my dad, who says there is no composer better than Bach – I’ll start by downloading the Goldberg Variations.

Adapted from The Guardian

**University Challenge** – a long-running British TV quiz show, where teams from different universities compete to answer difficult general knowledge questions



# How you can use music to sleep better

by Dr Michael Breus

Music is a regular fixture in my daily life. I listen to music to keep motivated (1) [ ] I exercise or work, to relax me when I travel, and to unwind before bed. It's especially (2) [ ] on nights when I'm feeling tense.

**Slow beats are best.** The body and brain are highly responsive to music, including its rhythm and tempo. Use up-tempo songs to get you moving in the morning, or to keep you (3) [ ] on a long drive. To move your body into sleep mode, use songs that have a rhythm of about 60–80 beats per minute – you can find lots of examples on YouTube. Your heart rate will (4) [ ] to match these slower beats, and your breathing will slow down, putting you closer to a sleeping state.

**Avoid emotional triggers.** Don't listen to music that makes you feel strong emotions, whether sadness or (5) [ ]. These are not the songs you want to listen to at bedtime.

**Go lyric-free.** Lyrics can be mentally stimulating. I (6) [ ] my patients to choose music without words at bedtime. Give the cognitive centres of your brain a rest, rather than lighting them up.

**Be consistent.** Research suggests that the beneficial effects of music for sleep get stronger over time. If you're stressed out in the evenings, your new music routine might not make an immediate difference in the (7) [ ] few nights. Stick with it for a few weeks, and you'll find the soothing effects become stronger.



**Don't ignore the rest of your sleep environment.** If you're playing a Bach sonata in a room blazing with lights, or looking at a computer screen, you're not **(8)** [redacted] to benefit from the sleep-inducing effects of the background music. Make sure your nightly routine and environment is soothing, calm, and dimly lit.

**Don't fall asleep with earphones.** If you want to listen to music as you fall asleep, that's fine. But don't use earphones, which can make sleep **(9)** [redacted] and damage your ear canal.

**Pay attention to how you feel.** We all react differently to songs and find different meaning within them. Classical music is often used in studies, and is a popular choice for bedtime listening. But **(10)** [redacted] it's not your thing, that's fine. Try jazz, or new age, or folk music. Whatever makes you feel calm and puts your body and mind in a restful mode is the right choice for you.

From Michael J Breus, founder [www.thesleepdoctor.com](http://www.thesleepdoctor.com)

# You be the judge

## Should my flatmate keep his bicycle outside?

**Kojo is determined to keep his bike in the flat. Anaïs says she keeps bumping into it and wants it out. You decide who's right!**

### The prosecution: Anaïs

Kojo and I met at university and moved in together after graduating. It's been a good partnership – he's like a brother to me. Kojo has often had bikes stolen in London. Then he got Nelson, a really good bike, and decided to keep it inside. (I don't know why it's called Nelson.) Having a bike constantly in the corridor is quite annoying. I didn't have anything against this at first because **(1) I didn't want Nelson to get stolen right after Kojo had bought 'him'.** But now, maybe because I'm working from home more, I feel differently. I often hit my elbow or catch my bag on Nelson when I leave the flat in a hurry. **(2) I have suggested that Kojo keep him in the bike storage shed at the end of our road, 30 seconds from our house.** It costs £60 a year – it's a small price to pay to have more space in our tiny flat – but Kojo says he can't afford it. **(3) And he says Nelson will be lonely outside in a bike store!** Kojo and I get on well and this flat has been our home for a while, but it seems there are three of us living here and I didn't sign up to share my space with the extra housemate.



## The defence: Kojo

In London, bikes often get stolen. A couple of years ago, I got a new, quite expensive bike after my old one was stolen. I was cycling every day, so I got into the habit of bringing Nelson into the flat because it was safer. Also, he was new and I wanted to keep him in the house to protect his lovely blue paint. Anaïs was cool with it for a long time, but she's now asking me to put poor Nelson into one of those bike storage sheds nearby. She thinks Nelson will be safe there, and she's probably right, but **(4) I just don't want to do it.** I would have to walk three minutes to get to the shed every time I needed my bike. I don't want to pay the monthly storage fee and leaving Nelson so far away from me at night makes me a little bit sad. **(5) Anaïs keeps five giant suitcases in our shared storage space and kitchen, so why can't I keep Nelson in the corridor?** He doesn't take up too much space – less than her suitcases, in fact. Summer is here now so I'll be taking Nelson out most evenings and weekends. Anaïs won't even notice when he's here.

## The jury

### Readers say:

Nelson may be beautiful, but he's in the way when he's in the flat. However, if Anaïs really wants the bike in storage, she should pay half the fees. Space is important in a home, but so is compromise. Stephanie, 35

Bike theft is a real worry, and it's reasonable to want to keep a treasured possession in the home. Ignore it, Anaïs. A 'brotherly' housemate is far more valuable. Gautham, 37

The secure bike shed just three minutes away sounds ideal for Kojo's bike. Why create an obstacle in the hallway if you don't need to? That said, Anaïs should store her suitcases in her own room. Mary, 37

Shared areas must be respected, especially the kitchen. So it's time for Nelson to become an adult bike and move in with his roommates three minutes away. Joey, 25



If bike storage was an issue, Anaïs should have mentioned it when Nelson first arrived. But Kojo needs to ask himself if he is willing to put friendship above his bike. Sarah, 50

Adapted from The Guardian

# How to win an online argument

When it comes to arguing face-to-face, many people use persuasive intonation or facial expressions to help win the argument. However, these are no use when you want to argue your case online. A recent study of comment threads on online forums has found that some words are more effective than others and that using numbers makes you more persuasive. Lillian Lee and her PhD students at Cornell University analysed almost two years of posts made on the forum site ChangeMyView, a website where users invite others to challenge their views and present alternative opinions.

## The best ways to win an argument

**Get your timing right** Typically, the first person to reply to the thread has a greater chance of changing the view of the original poster (OP) than someone who joins the debate later on.

**Use alternative terminology** Use words that are different from those used in the post. For example, if discussing climate change, describing it as global warming in a reply makes more of an impact than using the same terminology as the OP.

**Be polite** The study suggests that swearing or using aggressive terms instantly makes your argument less effective.

**Think about length** Longer replies in general tend to be seen as more persuasive.

**Use evidence** Using numbers, statistics, and examples to back up opinions makes people sound more convincing. The same is true of links to examples and outside sources.



**Show consideration for others' opinions** Phrases like 'It could be the case that...' or 'It may be true that...' show that you are open to other points of view. Although this sounds like it might signal a weaker argument, the researchers said it may make your argument easier to accept, by softening its tone.

**Check the language in the original post** Personal pronouns, such as I, suggest that a person is more open-minded to persuasion, whereas we and us suggest they are more stubborn. Stubborn people also use more emotive language and use decisive words such as certain, nothing, and best.

**Know when to give up** Finally, the researchers found that after four or five 'back-and-forth' posts have been made, the chances of changing someone's opinion significantly drops.

Adapted from The Daily Mail

**thread** (noun) – a series of connected messages on a message board on the internet which have been sent by different people, e.g. a forum

# How to improve your acting skills

If you want to be a good actor, you should take every opportunity to improve your acting technique. There are plenty of different exercises you can try, which develop useful skills such as observation and communication. Some you can do alone, whenever you have a spare moment, but generally they are more enjoyable to do in a group. Many of these ideas are available for free on acting websites, but they are all activities created and used regularly by drama teachers.

## Exercise 1 Developing your imagination

When you are acting a role, your audience won't believe your character is real if you don't believe it yourself. This exercise is designed to help you develop your imagination. It shows you how to start to create a detailed life for your character, to explain why your character is who they are, what they are like, and why they behave in a particular way. For an experienced actor, this becomes automatic.

The exercise is best done in a group. Look at an image of a person showing an emotion, e.g. smiling. Then between you, try to think of all the possible reasons why the person might be smiling; for example, he looks as if he might be remembering a funny film, or he might have just booked a holiday abroad, or he might be embarrassed about something.

## Exercise 2

- 1 Think of an [ ] that you [ ].
- 2 Imagine [ ] [ ].
- 3 [ ] the action to the rest of the group for them to [ ].



## Exercise 3

- 1 Sit in a [redacted].
- 2 Choose one person to be the [redacted].
- 3 Focus on what everyone [redacted]  
[redacted].
- 4 After three minutes, all [redacted] your  
[redacted], except for the [redacted].
- 5 The host will [redacted] you all  
[redacted].

# The best way to spot a liar...or is it?

How easy is it to know whether someone is telling the truth or lying? Some people aren't very good at pretending, whilst others are far more expert. Most of us are familiar with the kind of body language which tends to indicate deception, such as avoiding eye contact, blushing, fidgeting, or laughing nervously; and identifying whether somebody is telling the truth can be fairly straightforward with people we know well, our children, family, or friends. However, research shows that relying only on body language to spot a liar is in fact very unreliable, especially when you are not familiar with how a person usually behaves. In fact, according to one study, just one in 400 people manage to make a correct judgement based on non-verbal indicators with more than 80% accuracy. Just because someone looks nervous does not mean they are guilty, and in more formal contexts, such as interviewing crime suspects or in security screening at airports, the consequences of getting it wrong can be very serious. So, my research team and I devised an experiment to develop a more reliable method of lie detection, which relies not on how people behave, but on what they say.

We tested out our method on passengers at airport security. Firstly, we recruited a selection of 'fake' passengers of different nationalities, such as American, German, Swiss, and Canadian, and offered them an extra fee if they managed to pass through a security interview without being spotted. Each person prepared a convincing cover story about their life and work history and the purpose of their plane journey. They were all given valid tickets and passports, and were asked to dress appropriately and carry suitable luggage. A team of trained officers then selected some of the passengers who were passing through security, and carried out specially constructed interviews in order to try to spot the 'fakes'.



## So, what kinds of things did the officers ask in these interviews?

These are the key principles we used to increase the chance of finding out if someone was lying:

- 1  Officers were asked to give the impression that this was a fairly casual conversation, and to put passengers at their ease with general, friendly questions such as ‘How are you today?’ and ‘Did you have a good trip to the airport?’
- 2  We told officers to use questions such as ‘Can you tell me about...?’, ‘Can you explain to me who...?’ and so on, which required passengers to give more information, rather than just answering ‘yes’ or ‘no’.
- 3  Passengers were asked, for example, for extra information about a family member or about the company that they worked for; handling unexpected questions is more difficult for a liar than for a truthful person.
- 4  Officers were encouraged to ask follow-up questions to test passengers’ statements. For example, if the passenger claimed to work in Oxford, the officer might ask them about their journey to work, to check if they could report that accurately, and to try to spot any gaps in expected knowledge.
- 5  Liars are often more confident when they feel in control of a conversation, but if they start to feel undermined or challenged, they begin to limit their responses. We told officers to watch out for people who started to reply with much shorter answers, or who showed a tendency to become evasive in their answers, not replying directly to the questions.



The aim was to put all passengers under gentle pressure, which would increase the chance that something a 'fake' passenger might reveal during a conversation would give them away. The officers were also told not to pick up a lie immediately – rather, to encourage the liar to continue to talk, and then to challenge them when they were sure they were lying. And the results were striking. The security officers using our interview technique were over 20 times more likely to detect the lying passengers than officers using traditional behaviour observation methods.

## Trolling

**What is it?** Trolling is when somebody posts or comments online to deliberately upset other people. Trolls want to provoke an argument or emotional reaction; when they disagree with the views of another person or group online, they try to discredit or humiliate them. They may also encourage others to join in the attack so it can become overwhelming. Trolls tend to post under a fake name or anonymously so they can say things without being held responsible. This can make them feel more powerful and less cautious than they would be if they were talking to someone in person. Trolls also often try to downplay the impact of their behaviour, claiming anyone who's upset by their posts or comments is overreacting. This can make the person who was trolled feel even worse.

### What should you do?

**Resist the urge to respond** Don't get involved in an online argument. This just gives the troll the reaction they want.



## Porch piracy

**What is it?** Porch piracy is an amusing name for a serious offence: that is, when somebody steals a package that's been delivered to your doorstep. The rise in popularity of online shopping, especially since the Covid 19 pandemic, has created an epidemic of such thefts. Somebody appears just moments after a delivery driver has left an address, picks up the parcels, and drives away. Items may be low value – typical examples include cleaning materials, light bulbs, or books – but package theft feels deeply personal because it happens at people's homes, sometimes when residents are just feet away. Apparently, people are often less angry about losing the item itself than about the fact that a thief came on to their property and took something. And of course, some items are really important or valuable, such as medication or electronic products.



## What should you do?

**Use a package-receiving service** Google where you live and see what's available. It's a little bit of a hassle to pick your package up somewhere else, but it's worth it for your peace of mind.



## Catfishing

**What is it?** A catfish is someone who sets up a fake online profile to trick people who are looking for love, usually to get money out of them. Conversations may get personal very quickly, even though you've only been talking for a couple of days or weeks. They find ways to get information like your full name and address, or bank details. However, they may only tell you vague details about themselves, and nothing that can be fact-checked. Catfishers may ask you to keep the relationship secret or try to isolate you from your friends or family. They often ask for money using emotional stories, for example, claiming that they've fallen on hard times or that a relative is ill. Watch out for an inconsistency in their story, and if something doesn't make sense, ask about it.

## What should you do?

**Keep details private** Don't share too much personal information, such as your full name, date of birth, or bank details.



# Skydiver does high jump

An amateur skydiver who failed to listen to the instructor had a shock when she jumped out of the plane on her first skydive. Despite attending the morning's mandatory training course, first-time solo jumper Alice Kempton leapt from the plane over the drop zone and immediately shot upwards. 'It doesn't matter how many times I say it, there's one in every group who fails to pay attention to the single most important thing I tell them,' said local skydiving instructor Marnie Jacobs. 'They assume they know everything and it's easy, but she didn't even know which direction to go. We watched her getting smaller and smaller as she rose into the stratosphere.' Reports confirmed Kempton had finally released her parachute as she left Earth's atmosphere.

Adapted from The Onion



# 8 tips on how to spot fake news



Fake content has become a daily reality of life online, with hundreds of sites creating false or exaggerated stories for political or personal gain. In spite of the efforts of big tech companies to limit the spread of fake news, some stories fall through the cracks. The expert advice is that it's always useful to have a critical eye and to be on the lookout for misleading stories. There are several telltale signs to look for. Fake news experts Will Moy, director of British fact-checking charity Full Fact, and Cambridge University researcher Sander van der Linden offer their tips.

## 1 Beware of stories that don't make

One of the key signs of fake news is that the stories are highly improbable. During Hurricane Irma, a hugely popular viral story claimed that it was a Category Six hurricane that would 'wipe cities off the map'. Category Six hurricanes do not exist. Moy says, 'Extraordinary claims need extraordinary evidence. If somebody says Elvis is alive, ask for a song before you believe it.'

## 2 Check the of the news site that published it

Unfamiliar sites built to sound like news organizations are behind many fake news stories, but the names of the sites are often a hint that stories may be fake. When the Denver Guardian made claims about Hillary Clinton's emails during her presidential election campaign, there was one small problem – there is no such publication as the Denver Guardian. It sounds real, but it is completely fake. 'Be careful of websites that you haven't heard of before,' says Moy.



### 3 Beware faked website

Some sites may try to impersonate real news outlets with URLs which seem similar but have slight differences. For instance, one fake news site impersonated ABC news using a URL which read ABC.com.co, rather than abcnews.go.com.

### 4 Check the

False news stories often include timelines which make no sense or contain the wrong dates. For instance, images purporting to be of a terror attack in Brussels were actually from an attack on Moscow's Domodedovo Airport five years earlier.

### 5 Look for unusual and mistakes

Often, the sign that news is fake is that the writing is of low quality, with spelling errors and an over-use of capital letters. Real news sources will employ editors to remove these errors and ensure accuracy.

### 6 Look out for celebrity accounts

'Sometimes stories can spread online after being shared by a social media account designed to impersonate a real person,' says Sander van der Linden. 'Think about the fake tweets that were supposedly sent out by billionaire Warren Buffett. Someone was impersonating him, and millions of people did not notice that the Twitter handle read 'WarrenBuffet', while his real name is Warren Buffett.'

### 7 Google the

Fake news sites will often use unrelated or doctored photos. Google them to see where they came from and check how accurate they are against other legitimate news sites. Other hoaxers will use deliberately disturbing imagery in an attempt to hook in readers, van der Linden says. 'Emotional content is more likely to go viral; for example, imagine the effect of a fake story containing disturbing images about the effects of a fake disease.'



## 8 If you're unsure, double check with a source you

Fake news stories will often appear on just one site, so if you're unsure, check against a reliable news source. 'When it matters, double check,' says Moy, 'particularly when it comes to health or other life decisions. Always use a trustworthy source.'

Adapted from The Telegraph

# Solving crimes from home



**It seems that people are starting to take the law into their own hands. Is it time for the police to take web sleuths seriously?**

Ella Hamilton, a 23-year-old from Scotland, is part of a not-so-small community of citizen-detectives who (1) . They look through all the clues, police reports and online tips to uncover what the police may have missed. Ella discovered the world of sleuthing after watching a documentary about unsolved mysteries. She was keen to discuss it with other people, and after finding an online forum, (2) . Ella says that most citizen detectives are valuable assets, providing the police with ideas they might not have thought of. 'I've watched hundreds of videos, trying to spot people in the background. It feels good to help.'

Tricia Arrington-Griffith owns the website WebSleuths. She can recall many times that (3) . 'In 2014, a detective came to us with a piece of evidence, a particular T-shirt, from an unsolved murder. Within 36 hours, one of our members had found out exactly where the T-shirt was made, how much it cost, and where it was sold.' Tricia says that the police were incredibly grateful on this occasion, but she admits that (4) . She believes that the police mainly view citizen-detectives as troublemakers. 'And we have had other problems,' she admits. 'WebSleuths was my first introduction to unpleasant behaviour online.'



So what do the police really think? Stewart Smith, an ex-Crime Prevention Officer, says, 'I personally feel that the work many of these sleuths do is fantastic. Police resources are limited, so (5) .' But sleuths must be 'careful and considerate in their investigations, especially towards family members'. Family members just like Karen Downes. Her daughter, Charlene, disappeared over 14 years ago in Blackpool, and there's been no trace of her since, but hundreds of people are still trying to solve the mystery online. Karen is delighted with the helpful and respectful amateur sleuths, but her husband Bob disagrees. Claims that he killed his own daughter were posted all over the internet by citizen-detectives; he was even physically attacked on the street, and this is not unusual behaviour. So (6) . It's clearly a fascinating hobby, but all citizen-detectives need to make sure they are familiar with the law and behave appropriately.

Adapted from a university website

# Razors & blades

## Part 1

In 1894, a book was written by a man who had a vision. The book argues that ‘our present system of competition’ breeds ‘extravagance, poverty, and crime’. It advocates a new system of ‘equality, virtue, and happiness’, in which just one corporation – the United Company – will make all of life’s necessities as cost-effectively as possible. These, by the way, are ‘food, clothing, and habitation’. Industries which ‘do not contribute’ to life’s necessities will be destroyed. The book’s author had a vision that has ended up shaping the economy. But, as you may have guessed, it wasn’t this particular vision. No, it was another idea, which he had a year later. His name was King Camp Gillette, and he invented the disposable razor blade.

If you’ve ever bought replacement cartridges for an inkjet printer, you are likely to have been annoyed to discover that they cost almost as much as you paid for the printer itself. That seems to make no sense. The printer’s a reasonably large and complicated piece of technology. But how can it possibly cost almost as much to supply a bit of ink in tiny plastic pots? The answer, of course, is that it doesn’t. But for a manufacturer, selling the printer cheaply and the ink expensively is a business model that makes sense, and is known as two-part pricing. It’s also known as the razor-and-blades model, because that’s where it first drew attention – suck people in with an attractively priced razor, then repeatedly fleece them for extortionately priced replacement blades.



King Camp Gillette invented the blades that made it possible. Before this, razors were bigger, and when the blade got dull, you'd sharpen it, not throw it away and buy another. He didn't immediately hit upon the two-part pricing model, though: initially, he made both parts expensive. The model of cheap razors and expensive blades evolved only later. Nowadays, two-part pricing is everywhere. Consider the PlayStation 4. Whenever Sony sells one, it loses money: the retail price is less than it costs to manufacture and distribute. But that's okay, because Sony coins it in whenever a PlayStation owner buys a game. Or how about Nespresso? Nestle makes its money not from the machine, but the coffee pods.

## Part 2

Obviously, for this model to work you need some way to (1) [redacted] customers putting cheap, generic blades in your razor. One solution is legal: patent-protect your blades. But patents don't last forever. Patents on coffee pods have started expiring, so brands like Nespresso now face competitors selling (2) [redacted], compatible alternatives. Some are looking for another kind of solution: technological. Just as other people's games don't work on the PlayStation, some coffee companies have put chip readers in their machines to stop you trying to brew a generic cup of coffee.

Two-part pricing models work by imposing what economists call 'switching costs'. They're especially prevalent with digital goods. If you have a huge library of games for your PlayStation, or books for your Kindle, it's a big thing to switch to another platform. Switching costs don't have to be (3) [redacted]. They can come in the form of time, or hassle. Say I'm already familiar with Photoshop; I might prefer to pay for an expensive upgrade (4) [redacted] buy a cheaper alternative, which I'd then have to learn how to use. Switching costs can be psychological, too – a result of brand loyalty. If the Gillette company's marketing department persuades me that generic blades give (5) [redacted] shave, then I'll happily keep paying extra for Gillette-branded blades.



Economists have puzzled over why consumers

(6) [ ] the two-part pricing model. The most plausible explanation is that they get confused by the two-part pricing. Either they don't realize that they'll be exploited later, or they do realize, but find it hard to pick the best deal out of a (7) [ ] menu of options. The irony is that the cynical razors-and-blades model – charging customers a premium for basics like ink and coffee – is about as far as you can get from King Camp Gillette's vision of a single United Company producing life's necessities as cheaply as possible.

From Fifty Things that Made the Modern Economy

**suck sb in** (phr. verb) – to involve somebody in an activity or a situation, especially one they do not want to be involved in

**fleece** (verb, informal) – to take a lot of money from somebody by charging them too much

**hit upon** (phr. verb) – think of a good idea suddenly or by chance

**coin it (in)** (idiom) – make a lot of money

**patent** (noun) – an official right to be the only person to make, use, or sell a product or invention

**chip reader** (noun) – a device to get information from a microchip

**switching costs** (noun phrase, idiom) – how much it will cost you to change from one brand to another

**hassle** (noun, informal) – a situation that is annoying because it involves doing something difficult or complicated that needs a lot of effort

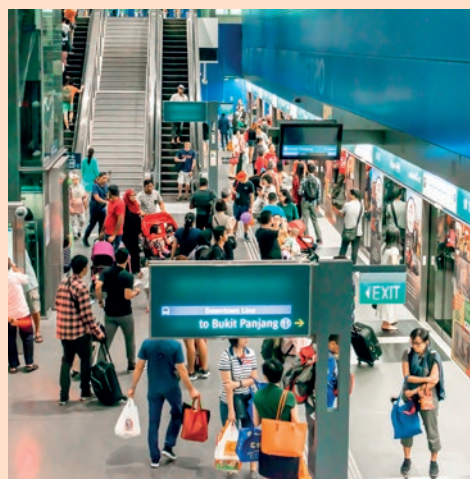
**puzzle over** (phr. verb) – to think hard about something in order to understand or explain it  
**suck sb in** – to involve somebody in an activity or a situation, especially one they do not want to be involved in

# What's it like to live in the world's 'smartest cities'?

**By Lindsey Galloway** With global temperatures rising and environmental changes putting pressure on every country, cities are facing new challenges in their plans for a sustainable future. Some, however, have moved aggressively to implement smart solutions that aim to build a higher long-term quality of life, providing guidance for the rest of the world to follow.

According to the Smart Cities Index 2024, the world's ten smartest cities are:

- 1 Zurich
- 2 Oslo
- 3 Canberra
- 4 Geneva
- 5 Singapore
- 6 Copenhagen
- 7 Lausanne
- 8 London
- 9 Helsinki
- 10 Abu Dhabi



To better understand what exactly made these cities feel ‘smart’, we spoke to residents in three of the top-ranked places to understand which features are making the most impact on their lives.

**Singapore** jumped two places in the rankings, thanks to high scores in safety (enabled by CCTV), high connectivity that makes it easier to monitor traffic, and the ability to submit information and process documents online, which makes dealing with government bureaucracy much smoother. Kirk Westaway, executive chef at a Michelin-starred restaurant, points to the small touches that make a big difference in day-to-day life, especially in public transportation. ‘[Quick] contactless payments and real-time data mean you’re not left waiting wondering if you’ll get to your destination on time,’ he said. In addition, Westaway highlights Singapore’s focus on sustainability. ‘Urban farming is becoming a way of life here,’ he said. The Aquaponics Farm at Swissôtel The Stamford, which optimizes growing space without soil and minimises water usage for fresh produce, provides one example of how smart cities can integrate innovative solutions for food production in urban environments.

**London** continues to rank well for its ease of online services, including booking transportation and easy-to-access wi-fi. ‘With great transportation, both with the Tube, buses, boats, and active travel schemes such as bikes and scooters, London is a fun place to be, with lots going on every day of the week, including restaurants, pubs, night life, concerts and more,’ said Emma Orr of Winning Business UK Ltd. ‘London is committed to becoming a clean city in terms of both EV infrastructure but also the commitment to green space and active travel plans. Transport for London has targets that 80% of journeys should be completed by Active Travel [walking, cycling and public transport] by 2041.’ The city’s commitment to sustainability is also evident in its push for electric vehicle infrastructure. ‘EV infrastructure is a huge technological change, which we see more so in London than any other UK city,’ Orr said, adding that this initiative is closely tied to the city’s Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ) policy, which makes it less expensive to drive EVs than gas-emitting cars (which must pay a fee to drive through).’



**Abu Dhabi** moved up three places in the ratings this year. The city scored extremely well for its ease of transportation and online booking, high sanitation even in the poorest areas of the city, digital skills taught well in schools and as a multicultural place where people of different ethnicities feel welcome. For residents, the smart features of the city's transportation system are unmatched. 'The city's integration of vehicle charging infrastructures and autonomous driving solutions has made commuting smooth and efficient,' said resident Dhanvin Sriram. He also points to the newly planned neighbourhood, Masdar City, as a model for sustainable urban development. '[Its] design blends traditional Arab architecture with modern technology, providing a naturally cool environment even during the scorching summer months,' he said. 'The extensive use of solar panels on rooftops harnesses the sun's energy, making it one of the largest photovoltaic installations in the Middle East.' The buildings have all been designed to reduce energy and water consumption by at least 40%. 'Abu Dhabi is a place where technology and sustainability come together, making life easier and more enjoyable for residents like me,' said Sriram.

# Future technology: eight ideas about to change our world

Technology moves at a fast pace in the modern world. The future is coming, and sooner than you think. These developing technologies will change the way we live, how we look after our bodies, and help us prevent a climate disaster. Here are some of the most exciting future technologies being developed.

## Living concrete

Scientists have developed a material made from sand, gel, and **bacteria**. It is strong enough to build with, it is more environmentally friendly than concrete (the second most-consumed material on Earth after water), and remarkably, it is capable of repairing itself when damaged. The team from the University of Colorado Boulder believe their work paves the way for future building structures that could ‘heal their own cracks, suck up dangerous **toxins** from the air, or even glow on command’.



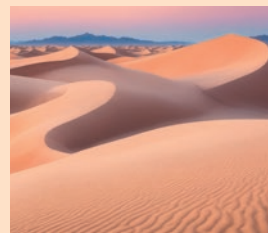
## E-skin

A wireless e-skin developed by engineers at the City University of Hong Kong could one day make giving and receiving hugs over the internet a reality. The e-skin is covered with **sensors** that convert the wearer’s movements into electrical signals. These signals can then be sent to another e-skin system via Bluetooth, where the sensors mimic the original movements. The system could eventually allow friends and family to touch each other over long distances.



## Sand batteries

One simple, but extremely effective, energy technology has come from some Finnish engineers who found a way to turn sand into a giant battery. They put 100 tons of sand into a 4 x 7 metre steel container. This sand was then heated up using wind and **solar** energy. Energy can be stored this way for long periods of time and can warm homes in winter when green energy is normally more expensive. The heat is commercially distributed by a local energy company and provides warmth to buildings in the nearby area.



## Xenotransplantation

Xenotransplantation – the procedure of transplanting cells, tissues or organs from an animal into a human – has the potential to revolutionize surgery. An organ like the heart cannot be instantly put into a human – certain **genes** need to be taken out and human genes added – and right now, these surgeries are risky. However, in the near future, we could see xenotransplants happening on a regular basis.



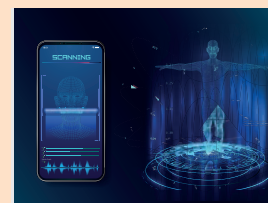
## 3D-printed food

Researchers at Columbia University School of Engineering have created a device that can construct a seven-ingredient cheesecake using food inks and then cook it to perfection using a **laser**. Their creation contained banana, jam, peanut butter, and Nutella. The technology could one day be used to create personalized meals for everyone from professional athletes to patients with dietary conditions, or could be useful for those who are simply short on time.



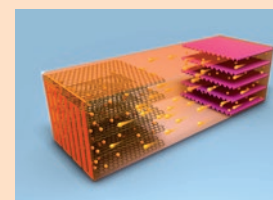
## Digital twins

A US company has built a scanner that will measure a patient's body in detail in around an hour. It intends to use this data to produce a 3D digital **avatar** – known as a digital twin – that can be tracked and also updated with new scans. CEO Jeff Kaditz hopes this will lead to a new era of preventive personalized medicine. It will help doctors prioritize which patients need to be seen most urgently, and develop more sophisticated ways of diagnosing illness.



## Fast-charging car batteries

Fast-charging of electric vehicles is seen as key to the transition from petrol to the more environmentally friendly EVs, so that motorists can stop at a service station and fully charge their car in the time it takes to get a coffee and use the toilet. Scientists have now found a way to heat up and then rapidly cool **lithium** batteries so that they are not damaged during fast-charging. The early study showed that it should be possible at some point in the future to fully charge an electric vehicle in 10 minutes.



## Artificial bones

A company called Ossiform can create bone-like structures from tricalcium phosphate – a material with similar properties to human bones. The use of tricalcium phosphate means that the body's cells are able to attach to the **implants** and reform real bone. They are working on creating patient-specific bone implants. Their idea is that a hospital performs an MRI or CT scan, which is then sent to Ossiform. They create a 3D model of the bone implant, the surgeon checks the design, and then it is printed and used in surgery.

Adapted from BBC Science Focus



# The best speeches of all time

Using **(1) sound bites** and having **(2) the gift of the gab** – the secrets of some of the world’s greatest orators.

The perfect speaker, says Cicero, the Roman statesman considered the greatest **(3) orator** of all time, must be well read in the history of his country and the politics of the day. He (it was always ‘he’ in those days) must command the language with humour, **(4) wit**, and psychological insight. The main point, though, says Cicero, is that you need to know the main point. If you cannot describe your main point, you probably haven’t got one. By this standard, who is or was a great speaker? Who gave the finest speeches?

- 1 [redacted] to her troops before the invasion of the Spanish Armada Tilbury (port on the River Thames), August 9, 1588

## The sound bite [redacted]

**Why is it so good?** This is a speech all about character, and it is a defiant speech about gender. With the Spanish Armada gathering in the North Sea, about to attack, Elizabeth knew the nation was in peril and that she faced her sternest test. She would have known, as she spoke at Tilbury, that at court, people were saying that a woman could not command the armed forces. A failure by a king would be attributed to one of many factors. A failure by a queen would be put down to her gender. Rather than ignore the question, Elizabeth chooses, brilliantly, to confront it.



- 2 [redacted] to soldiers during the American Civil War Gettysburg, Pennsylvania, November 19, 1863

**The sound bite** [redacted]

**Why is it so good?** Lincoln describes the ideal of democratic government in a single sentence. He gets so much into those ten words that it is surprising he needs all 272 for the whole speech. Lincoln is saying that the Civil War has to be waged for the principles of the founding fathers, who drafted the Declaration of Independence, particularly the principle of all people being equal, and at this moment, they are being betrayed. What he means, in a word he never actually uses, is slavery. Almost every American president since Lincoln has gone to Gettysburg, usually on Memorial Day, to pay homage to Lincoln and to the American constitution. One who did not was John F Kennedy, who, in 1963, had to ask ex-president Eisenhower to stand in for him. Kennedy had to go down to Dallas on urgent political business. He never came back.

- 3 [redacted] campaigning for votes for women  
Portman Rooms, London, March 24, 1908

**The sound bite** [redacted]

**Why is it so good?** Some of the finest speakers in the history of rhetoric got into trouble because of their speeches. Pankhurst was in prison several times, and gave this speech after being released from one of them. The audience was not expecting her to appear, and the ovation when she did was prolonged. Over and above the injustice of women being excluded from the vote, she is making the practical case that the law would be improved and democracy would be enriched if it opened the door to women. Tragically, Pankhurst died three weeks before her case was accepted by the British government in 1928.



4 [redacted] at his trial Supreme Court of South Africa, Pretoria, April 20, 1964

### The sound bite [redacted]

**Why is it so good?** The greatest speeches are the words said at the most momentous occasions, as here, where a political prisoner pleads for his life against an unjust apartheid state. Mandela speaks for more than three hours. Throughout, he is extremely reasonable, like the lawyer he once was, taking pains to reassure the white population he means them no harm. He had learned the last words by heart, and delivered them from memory, looking directly at Judge De Wet. When he finished, there was a 30-second pause – an eternity. In the gallery, a woman burst into tears.

Adapted from The Times



# The voice of reason

## Why Stephen Hawking's voice computer spoke with an American accent



Stephen Hawking, the legendary English cosmologist, author of *A Brief History of Time*, was regarded as a brilliant theoretical physicist, and for the British people, a national treasure. However, his famous computer-generated voice left many people puzzled.

Hawking died in 2018 at the age of 76. In 1963, while studying at Oxford, he was diagnosed with amyotrophic lateral sclerosis (ALS), a rare form of motor neurone disease. Incredibly, despite a poor prognosis, he lived with the disease for 55 years until his death. After catching pneumonia in 1985, Hawking had to have a tracheotomy to allow him to breathe. This left him unable to speak. After that, the professor's primary means of communication was a computer voice synthesizer which he controlled first with a hand-held clicker, and later with a sensor attached to his cheek. This computer-generated voice, known by its US developers as 'Perfect Paul', became Hawking's iconic voice, recognized around the world.

One thing that puzzled many people, however, was why his computer spoke with an apparent American accent, in spite of the fact that he was born in Oxford, in the UK. The Queen even quizzed him on the matter, asking him, 'Have you still got that American voice?' when meeting him at an event at St James' Palace. He joked back, 'Yes, it is copyrighted actually.'

Hawking had previously answered the question on his own website. Explaining how his speech worked, he wrote: 'When I have built up a sentence, I can send it to my speech synthesizer. I use a separate hardware synthesizer, made by Speech Plus. It is the best I have heard, although it gives me an accent that has been described variously as Scandinavian, American, or Scottish.'



He also explained that he would have been able to change the accent of his computer when the technology advanced, but had decided against it. Hawking added: 'My old system worked well and I wrote five books with it, including A Brief History of Time. It has become my trademark and I wouldn't change it for a more natural voice with a British accent. I am told that children who need a computer voice want one like mine.'

Adapted from The Sun

# 1 An email job application

Subject: Application for Store Manager position

From: Eric Lim

To: recruitment@newopenings.com

Dear Ms Tan

I am writing in response to your recent advertisement on The Local website. I would like to apply for the position of Store Manager.

My qualifications include a Diploma in Fashion Retail Management from Raffles College of Higher Education in Singapore. During the course, I learned the fundamental aspects of retail management and developed the professional skills necessary to run a retail business and make a profit.

I believe I am suitable for the role because I have considerable experience of the retail industry. During my studies, I worked part-time in my parent's clothes boutique. After graduating, I worked in a large store in the centre of Singapore. My duties involved ordering stock and managing deliveries, as well as dealing with customers face to face.

I also have a personal interest in sport. In my free time, I play basketball for my local club and I am currently the captain of my team. In this role, I have to use my communication skills to encourage each of the players to do their best. I also coach a junior team, who finished last season at the top of their league.

I am confident that I would be a great asset to your company and I very much hope that you will consider my application.

Thank you for your time.

Kind regards

Eric Lim

## 2 An email to a friend

Subject: News!

From: Anna Power

To: johnstons586@gmail.com

Hi Sue,

Sorry that I **havent** been in touch for a while, but I've been ill. I got Covid last week and had a temperature of 39°C, so I've been in bed **since** four days. I'm feeling a bit better today, so I've been **catching out** on my emails. Luckily my classes at university don't start till next week.

How are you? What have you been doing? **Anything exciting**. Here everyone is fine (except for me of course – **be ill** is **definitely** not fun). My brother Ian has just started his new job with a **software-company** – I think I told you about it when I last wrote – anyway, so far, he's really been enjoying it. How are your family? I hope they're well.

I have **a good news** – I'm going to a conference in Manchester in **may**, from 16th to 20th. Could you **recomend** a hotel where I could stay, in the centre of town? It needs to be somewhere not too expensive because the university is paying. And the great thing is that I'll have a free half-day for **siteseeing**. Do you think you'll have time to show me around? That would be great.

Well, that's all for now. Please give my regards to your parents.

Hope to hear from you soon.

Take care,

Anna

PS Please use this email address when you **anwser**. I've stopped using the old Yahoo one.

### 3 A short story

It was a small mistake, but it caused a big problem!

I had been living in London, but last year, I bought a

(1) tiny [ ] cottage in the middle of a village.

It needed a lot of work, so the owners wanted to sell it

(2) [ ], and one month later, it was mine.

On my first day in the village, I introduced myself

(3) [ ] to my neighbours. 'I'm Daisy,' I said.

'Lovely to meet you.' 'I'm Henry Watson,' said the man, smiling,

'and this is my wife, Dan.' I thought her name was a bit unusual, but I assumed it was short for Danielle.

In the beginning, the Watsons were really

(4) [ ] and they introduced me to other people

in the village. Everyone was (5) [ ] kind and

even offered to help with the renovations. I always said hello

to Dan when I met her in the street, but after a while, I realized

that she was becoming rather (6) [ ] towards me. I didn't know what I had done wrong.

Ten (7) [ ] months later, the work on

my cottage was finished. I invited the whole village to a

(8) [ ] party, including the Watsons. Some people brought gifts and I thanked everyone for their kindness.

Then I started opening the presents. The first one was from

Dan and Henry. It was an (9) [ ] mug with

the name 'Maisie' on it. I was a bit confused. 'Thank you very much for this,' I said. 'But my name isn't Maisie.' Dan smiled

(10) [ ]. 'Well,' she said, 'it's my little joke.

You always call me Dan, but my name is actually Ann.' I was incredibly embarrassed!



## 4 A 'for and against' post

Everything has two sides to it, a positive one and a negative one. Post your opinions on our blog...

### Adventure sports – fun or too risky?

Every year, more and more people are tempted by the idea of going on an adventure sports holiday, especially during the summer months.



Spending your holiday being active and enjoying the outdoors has a lot of advantages. **(1)** The main advantage is that adventure sports, like many other physical activities, offer health benefits and help keep your mood positive, **(2)** , when you practise extreme sports your brain releases endorphins because of the adrenalin rush and that makes you feel happy. **(3)** is the self-confidence that you gain from doing these activities. **(4)** , the lessons learnt from facing the difficulties and the risks of these extreme sports may be very valuable in everyday life.



(5) \_\_\_\_\_, there are also some important disadvantages. (6) \_\_\_\_\_ they make you feel good, risky sports can be extremely dangerous. The possibility of getting seriously injured while performing these activities is quite high, and some adventure sports, (7) \_\_\_\_\_, skydiving or cliff jumping, can even have fatal consequences. (8) \_\_\_\_\_ these risks, you need to be extremely fit to practise these sports during a holiday, which means that they are not for everyone. (9) \_\_\_\_\_, they are likely to be expensive because they require a lot of equipment, safety measures, and well-trained and qualified instructors. (10) \_\_\_\_\_, adventure sports holidays have both advantages and disadvantages. Whether they suit you or not depends on your level of fitness, your personality, and how much you can afford.

# 5 A 'how to' advice post

## How to keep children safe in your home

You probably think that your home is a very safe place. But this may not be true if you have children coming to stay. Here are some tips to prevent accidents. / First, look at the bedroom where the children are going to sleep. Make sure there isn't any furniture under a window, in case a child tries to climb out. If a very small child is going to sleep in the bed, you could put some pillows on the floor next to the bed, in case the child falls out. The next place to check is the bathroom. Many people put medicines in a drawer or on a shelf above the washbasin. But this can be dangerous, as children may find them and think they are sweets. You should keep them in a locked cupboard. Finally, have a look at the kitchen, which is the most dangerous room in the house for children. Knives should be kept in drawers which children can't reach, and make sure that all cleaning liquids are in high or locked cupboards. If you follow this simple advice, children who come to stay are likely to be much safer in your home.



# 6 A review of a music festival

## Tomavistas: the perfect music festival

- 1 Last week I spent an amazing day at the Tomavistas music festival in Madrid. It's an **open-air** event that takes place over a weekend in May or June, at a different venue each year. This year it was held at a huge exhibition complex called IFEMA, in the northeast of the city.
- 2 One of the best things about the festival was the line-up. I saw a variety of acts that ranged from a **little-known** independent band called Goat Girl to the **crowd-pleasing** local band, Biznaga. The highlight for me, however, was my **all-time** favourite band, Suede, who were the headliners that day. The band gave a **mind-blowing** performance to close the festival.
- 3 What made things even better was the fabulous organization of the event. The venue was ideal for the number of people there, and it didn't feel crowded at any point. There were plenty of stalls where you could buy **ice-cold** drinks without having to queue, and we could also fill up our water bottles for free. The only downside was that there weren't enough grassy areas to sit down and chill for a moment.
- 4 All in all, it was a great day. The festival was really **well-organized**, and the music was almost **non-stop**. If you like seeing bands play live, but don't fancy the crowds at **world-famous** festivals like Glastonbury, go to Tomavista next year!

**headliner** – the main performer or act in a show

**line-up** – the people who are going to take part in an event

# 7 A detailed description of a photo



I think this is a photo of a family in their house. However, they are not posing. None of the people are looking at the camera.

(1) In the foreground , we can see the inside of a room with glass doors leading into a garden. (2) of the photo, there is a girl sitting at the table, resting her head on one hand, with an open book (3) her. There are two other empty chairs around the table. The girl is smiling; she looks as if she's daydreaming, maybe about something she's read in the book. (4) of the photo, there is a woman, who looks older than the girl, perhaps her mother. She's standing with her arms folded, looking out of the glass doors into the garden. She seems to be watching what's happening (5) , and she looks a bit worried.

(6) , we can see a terrace, and (7) that, a beautiful garden. Outside the glass doors on the right, we can see a boy and a man, who may be father and son. The boy is standing, facing the man, who is crouching down (8) him. It looks as though they're having a serious conversation. Maybe the boy has been naughty, because it seems as if he's looking at the ground.

This photo reminds me of a David Hockney or Edward Hopper painting – it makes you speculate about who the people are and what they are thinking.

# 8 An article expressing your opinion

## Crime Forum

**Do punishments usually fit the crime? What do you think? Write a short article and post it here.**

**Community service is the best punishment for young people who commit a minor offence.**

(1) Nowadays in the UK, when a young person commits a minor offence, they are normally given community service, given a fine, or sometimes, sentenced to a few months in prison.

(2) I believe that community service is the best option.

(3), community service often persuades a young person not to re-offend. (4) working with sick children or old people makes young offenders realize that there are people who have more difficult lives than they do. So community service can be an educational experience,

(5) other punishments are not.

(6), I do not think that a fine is a suitable punishment for young people. They do not usually have much money themselves, (7) it is often their parents who pay the fine for them.

(8), spending time in prison results in young people meeting other criminals and learning more about the criminal world, which may tempt them into committing more crimes.

(9), in prisons many of the inmates take drugs, and this is a terrible example for young offenders.

(10), I believe that community service has important advantages both for minor offenders and for the community.

# 9 A report on a town

## Living in Milton Keynes

### Introduction

**This report describes the town of Milton Keynes. It gives some information about the history of the town and some of its features and facilities, and includes a personal view of what it is like to live there.**

1

In the 1960s, town planners wanted to encourage people to move out of London. Their idea was to create a modern, efficient town with good facilities that would be easy to travel around and healthy to live in. So, the 'new town' of Milton Keynes was built in the south-east of England.

2

The town now has a population of around 20,000. Wide, straight roads join the different living districts, with many lakes and green spaces between them. The centre is a business and shopping district. In terms of transport, Milton Keynes is particularly well-connected; it is near the M1 motorway and is midway between London, Birmingham, Oxford, and Cambridge.

3

In general, it is a town that is easy to walk or cycle around. For those who enjoy more challenging sports, there are some superb facilities. These include Treetop Extreme, the biggest 'high rope' adventure course in the UK, and Snozone, an indoor real snow slope where you can learn to ski and snowboard.



Milton Keynes was the first place in the UK to have a multiscreen cinema, and there is also a large concert venue called The Bowl. It has an international orchestra and over 200 works of public art – it is particularly famous for the sculpture of concrete cows.

### Conclusion

To sum up, it seems that [REDACTED]. Some people feel that new towns lack atmosphere and a sense of community, but the majority of residents here are proud of their town. 'Things tend to be more modern and spectacular in Milton Keynes than anywhere else,' says Simon Clawson, who has lived there since he was four years old. On balance, the planners of the 1960s have achieved their aims.



# 10 A profile of a public figure

## Wangari Maathai: a force for positive change



- 1 Born in Kenya in 1940, Wangari Maathai grew up to become an internationally respected environmentalist activist. She succeeded not only in bringing about practical changes that made her country a better place, but also contributed to global ideas on ecology, gender, and African culture.
- 2 Wangari was brought up in a village in the central highlands of Kenya. As a child, she managed to persuade her parents to let her go to school, although girls weren't expected to get an education at the time. When she finished school, she went to university in the USA and Germany, and became the first woman in East Africa to get a doctorate.
- 3 Wangari was a confident public speaker, and her campaigning work in many organizations led to improvements in both the management of the environment and in working conditions for women. She is best known for founding the Green Belt Movement, an organisation that paid rural women to plant trees throughout Kenya. The aim was to reduce deforestation, but also to give women more control over their lives by earning a small salary. Wangari went on to play an important role in bringing democracy to her country, and in 2004, she became the first African woman to win the Nobel Peace Prize.
- 4 What I admire most about Wangari Maathai is her **determination** to get what she wanted. She was **passionate** about the environment and remained **committed** to protecting it all her life, despite opposition from the government. Her **courage** in standing up for her ideas should be an inspiration to us all.