

Reading text: "AN EMAIL FROM A FRIEND"

Hi!

I hope this finds you well. Since we last saw each other I've unpacked my bags in four different cities. This job is like a whirlwind, but it's all good!

I was on a three-month mission to oversee the set-up of the office in New York.

Loved, loved, loved New York!

It's like being in one big TV show, as everywhere looks just a little bit familiar. It was really hard to leave for the next job, especially as I kind of met someone (!)

Time flew by and then I was off again, to Frankfurt, which is where I am now. And ... so is Michael! We're getting married!!

And... I can't get married without my oldest friend there! The wedding's going to be at home in London in September and I hope you can come!

Lots of love,

Kath

Discussion: "What form of communication would you use to tell old friends important news?"

Reading text: "A PLASTIC OCEAN: FILM REVIEW"

The film "A Plastic Ocean" makes you think and take action on our dependence on plastic, a material we've been producing in huge quantities since the 1940s. Bottles, shopping bags, toiletries are made with plastic; only a small proportion is recycled.

This documentary looks at the impact that plastic waste has on the environment. Spoiler alert: the impact is devastating.

Following the blue whale the filmmakers make the shocking discovery of a huge, thick layer of plastic floating in the middle of the Indian Ocean.

Over 300 million tons of plastic are produced every year, and at least 8 million are dumped into the oceans.

However the filmmakers also look at what we can do to reverse the tide of plastic flowing around the world: reuse plastic bags and recycle as much as you can. The time is now and we all have a role to play!

Discussion: "What documentary films would you recommend?"

Reading text: "A SHORT STORY EXTRACT"

Sam waited. Mr Carter didn't come out here unless he had to, which was just fine by Sam. The more he kept out of his boss's way, the longer he'd have a job. Carter came by later while Sam was chopping wood. Sam waited for Carter to say why he was here [...]

'Don't you ever want to take a holiday?'

'And go where?'

A holiday meant being back out in the real world, a place even people like Carter travelled to escape from. Sam's escape was his reality and he wasn't going back. [...]

'I've brought my son with me on this trip. He's had some trouble at school.' Mr Carter's eyes flicked up, blinked rapidly and then shifted back to the hat occupying his hands.

Discussion: "Why do you think Mr Carter has brought his son to the farm?"

Reading text: "MILLENNIALS IN THE WORKPLACE"

Millennials (those born between the early 1980s and the early 1990s) make up a huge part of our workforce but they seem to lack loyalty to the companies they work for. Multinational companies are noticing larger turnover rates of millennials as employee retention rates fall.

Research

In a global survey conducted by Pricewaterhouse Coopers (PwC), more than 40,000 millennial and non-millennial responses were collected on the topics of workplace culture, communication and working styles, pay structure, career development, work-life balance, etc.

Key findings

- Millennials want to feel supported and appreciated by their company.
- Millennials want more opportunities to develop their skills: technological, teamwork and interpersonal skills.
- Millennials are more likely to be loyal to a company with strong ethics.

Discussion: "What's most important for you to be happy at work?"

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Reading text: "ASTEROIDS"

In 2010, NASA had identified 90 per cent of the asteroids near Earth measuring 1km wide. These 'near-Earth objects', or NEOs, are the size of mountains and include anything within 50 million kilometres of Earth's orbit.

Now NASA is working towards logging some of the smaller asteroids, those measuring 140 metres wide or more. Considering that a 19-metre asteroid that exploded above Russia in 2013 injured 1,200 people, these middle-sized asteroids would be a serious danger if they enter Earth's orbit.

'Potentially Hazardous Asteroids' are rocks close enough to pass within 7.5 million kilometres of Earth's orbit.

A suggested defence against a PHA is to blow it up using a nuclear weapon. It may sound like a plot from a film (as *Armageddon*) but the Hypervelocity Asteroid Mitigation Mission for Emergency Response (HAMMER) is actually a genuine NASA proposal!

Discussion: "What would you do if you heard that an asteroid was approaching Earth?"

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Reading text: "CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS AND LEADERSHIP"

Gabriela worked for a multinational company as a successful project manager in Brazil and was transferred to manage a team in Sweden, unaware that managing her new team would be a challenge.

Gabriela didn't feel respected as a leader. Her new staff would question her proposals openly in meetings, and when she announced her decisions on the project, they would continue giving their opinions as if it was still up for discussion.

After weeks of frustration, Gabriela emailed her Swedish manager but found his reply vague and didn't feel as if he was managing the situation satisfactorily: rather than stepping in with directions about what to do, her manager took on the role of coach and focused on getting her to come up with her own solutions instead.

Discussion: "What do you think the role of a manager should be?"

Handwritten initials and marks: a circled 'D', 'a', 'G', 'H', and a signature.

Reading text: "INSTANT MESSAGES"

You there, Beatriz?

Hang on, Andrew. ... OK. What's up?

It's Caroline's birthday tomorrow.

Oh yeah, that's right!

You thought about what to get her?

You mean a present? Weren't you buying one from both of us?

I'm sorry! It totally slipped my mind!

Could you pick up a gift today?

I guess. What sort of thing were you thinking of?

Dunno. Got any ideas?

Not really...

New headphones?

Nah. She has headphones.

OK. What then?

Have you seen those gift certificates for a spa? Maybe one of those?

She'd love that!

I'll pick it up today then.

Thanks a million. I appreciate it.

No worries. See you tomorrow then?

Yep.

What time was it again? 4?

4.30. I can pick you up if you like.

Ok!

CU then.

Bye for now.

Discussion: What do you prefer – sending messages to your friends or calling them on the phone?
Why?

Reading text: "STAR WARS AND THE HERO MYTH"

Critics of the 2015 film "Star Wars - The Force Awakens" called the film unoriginal and predictable because the story so closely mirrors the very first Star Wars film in 1977. But, in fact, both films follow the structure of the 'hero myth', a pattern that has been used for thousands of years, from the Ancient Greeks with The Odyssey to JK Rowling's Harry Potter books.

Typically, the hero starts the story living an ordinary life, but 'the call to adventure' happens and, supported by a mentor, he starts a journey into a 'special world' where the adventures happen. He overcomes obstacles on the way to facing his greatest challenge. Finally he succeeds and returns home, changed by those experiences forever.

Discussion: "What are your favourite hero stories?"

Reading text: "THE OVER-BUYING TREND"

Social media, magazines and shop windows bombard people daily with things to buy, and British consumers are buying more clothes and shoes than ever before. Online shopping means it is easy for customers to buy without thinking, while major brands offer such cheap clothes that they can be treated like disposable items – worn two or three times and then thrown away.

In Britain, the average person spends more than £1,000 on new clothes a year, which is around 4% of their income. That figure hides two worrying trends for society and for the environment.

First, British people currently owe approximately £670 per adult to credit card companies.

Second, not only are people spending money they don't have, they're using it to buy things they don't need. Britain throws away 300,000 tons of clothing a year, mostly into landfill sites.

Discussion: "Do you think the same trend is spreading in Italy too?"

Reading text: "THE SHARING ECONOMY"

If we look around us at the things we have purchased at some point in our lives, we would no doubt notice that not everything we own is being put to good use: the smartphone that got put away when we bought ourselves the newest model, or even the guest room in our house that somehow got turned into a storeroom.

Those underutilised items may seem useless to some, but could be an asset to others. Online communities have figured out a way to generate profit from the sharing of those underused assets.

Using websites and social media groups that facilitate the buying and selling of second-hand goods, it is now easier than ever for peer-to-peer sharing activities to take place.

And this is known as the sharing economy.

Discussion: "Do you participate in the sharing economy?"

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Reading text: "WHY BRIDEGS COLLAPSE"

Some of the biggest and most expensive transportation projects in the world have involved building bridges. They are one of the most important aspects of civil engineering and are subject to intense scrutiny, especially when they collapse.

Bridge collapses can be tragic events, leading to loss of life and serious property damage. That's why bridge engineers, designers and builders must always take their jobs very seriously.

The best way for them to prevent these accidents is to understand why bridges collapse in the first place.

The following are main reasons why bridges fall: fire, during construction by engineers miscalculations, earthquake, poor maintainance.

Luckily, modern technologies, safer working environments and better designs can help to reduce these terrible accidents.

Discussion: "What are some of the most famous bridges you know? Have you ever visited them?"

Reading text: "WORK-LIFE BALANCE"

Ronan

I work in a fairly traditional office environment doing a typical nine-to-five job. I like my job, but it's annoying that my commute to work takes an hour and a half each way and most of my work could really be done online from home.

But my boss doesn't seem to trust that we will get any work done if left to our own devices, and everyone in the company has to clock in and out every day.

It's frustrating that they feel the need to monitor what we do so closely instead of judging us based on our task performance, like most companies do these days.

Discussion: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of your working situation? What would you change if you could?"

A. d f H st

Reading text: "WORKING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES"

Company cultures vary worldwide, and it is important to recognise how company culture abroad might be different from our own.

Russia

Until recently, people and businesses were oppressed by the state and this has affected people's attitudes. In some cases, only contracts between close personal friends are acknowledged. Therefore, networking is vital for successful business. Indeed most agreements are made on a trust basis.

The management style is centralised and directive. Subordinates take orders from the 'big boss'.

However, things are changing in Russia. The old regime is gradually being replaced by western business style, and younger managers will have a much more modern approach than their older counterparts.

Discussion: "Have you ever worked with abroad or with a foreign company?"

Reading text: "BUSINESSES WITH OTHER COUNTRIES"

Company cultures vary worldwide, and it is important to recognise how company culture abroad might be different from our own.

South Korea

South Korea is one of the world's most successful economies, having seen five consecutive decades of high economic growth.

Despite that, South Korean society is still very conservative and conformist due to the influence of Confucian values. Companies are hierarchical and regimented and 'face' is very much valued.

Managers are paternalistic, authoritative figures who expect their instructions to be carried out obediently and respectfully. In return, they give their subordinates support and help, in work as well as in personal issues.

Group harmony is important, so South Koreans avoid confrontation and blame. The Korean saying 'make a friend first and a client second' sums up the whole approach.

Discussion: "What is your opinion about the closing sentence?"

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D. d G H A

Reading text: "HANDOUT REGARDING WORKING WITH OTHER COUNTRIES"

Company cultures vary worldwide, and it is important to recognise how company culture abroad might be different from our own.

Australia

Australia's small population, geographic isolation and small domestic market mean that international trade is essential to guarantee future prosperity.

Australian managers are not considered to have superior status to other workers. Their jobs are just different. Managers adopt a consultative and inclusive style which encourages open debate.

Challenging superiors is acceptable, indeed it is a sign of commitment and professionalism. Outsiders may consider such dialogues confrontational, but Australians regard them as effective ways to communicate ideas. Australian managers like to be seen as 'one of the boys' and they are more likely to socialise with their team than just mix with other managers.

Discussion: "What is your opinion about friendly relationships between junior employees and managers?"

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Reading text: "WORKING WITH BUSINESSES IN OTHER COUNTRIES"

Company cultures vary worldwide, and it is important to recognise how company culture abroad might be different from our own.

UK

In the last half century, Britain, like many industrialised countries, had a major shift in management style. Hierarchical systems have been swept aside and replaced by modern business models, heavily influenced by the US. The 'job for life' is rare.

Neither managers nor junior workers expect to climb the corporate ladder within one company; rather, they manage their own career paths by progressing from company to company.

British managers are not necessarily the most technically competent person in the team. Instead, they are expected to cultivate a close and humorous relationship with subordinates, which may be considered too soft.

Discussion: "Could you compare the UK situation to the Italian one?"

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B. S JS 4.

Reading text: "DESCRIBING PLACES"

She knew the street backwards, of course. How many times had she been dragged up it as a child by the wrist, whining and snivelling, always wishing she were somewhere else?

Now she had no desire to be anywhere but here. This bustling traffic, these fuming buses, these chipped paving stones and boarded-up shop fronts, they were hers. Here, she would grow from defiant teenager to independent woman.

When she was an old woman, she would gaze out over the lawns and say 'Ah, Knox Road, that's where I really came into my own'.

Number 126 was only a short walk from the bus stop, and she heaved her multiple bags onto her shoulders and trudged off.

Discussion: "Describe the place of your childhood you remember best"

Reading text: "THE WORLD OF PARKOUR"

In 1902, a volcano on Martinique island blew up. A French naval officer on the scene, Lt. George Hébert managed to coordinate the rescue of over 700 people, both indigenous and European.

He noticed how people moved around the obstacles in their path, and how this affected their chances of survival. Hébert was well aware of skills many indigenous people exhibited in being able to traverse the natural environment.

From these experiences, Hébert developed a training discipline in which climbing, jumping and running techniques were used to negotiate obstacles.

Parkour involves a range of 'moves', although none are official. They involve vaulting, jumping and landing accurately on small and narrow features, catching ledges, traversing high wall and landing with a rolling impact to absorb impacts.

Discussion: "Have you ever practised Parkour or any other extreme sports?"

a f d e
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Reading text: "PROPOSAL TO BUILD A SOLAR FARM NEAR A BRITISH VILLAGE"

The Barnley Village Committee is opposed to plans to build a 6,890 panel solar farm on a 15-acre site adjacent to the village recreation ground, currently used for agriculture. The area will be surrounded by an 8ft-high fence. The panels themselves will be about 7 feet high.

The committee has already lodged an appeal to the local authority against construction of the solar farm. The councillors are due to meet on 13th March to vote whether or not plans will go ahead. Local residents are invited to attend. Some of our objections are listed below:

1. The extensive views from the village and recreation ground across the open country will be blocked by the panels and high fencing.
3. Noise from inverters and cooling fans will affect local residents.
4. Additional run-off of rainwater will cause drainage problems.

Discussion: "What would you argue against the panel farm?"

Handwritten initials and marks: A, S, H, Q, and a large 'A'.

Reading text: "A GOVERNMENT SCHEME TO KEEP PEOPLE
HEALTHY"

The Birmingham Council has been encouraging local residents to enrol on the "Be active scheme", which allows them to use local leisure services completely free of charge.

Since it was launched in 2008, a third of the local population, a total of 360,000 people, has signed up for the scheme. 60% of these are from minority groups, and the average age is 49, as opposed to 29, the figure for private gyms.

The majority were not previously members of a sports club of any kind, half were overweight or obese, and 1/5 considered themselves to be in poor health, indicating that the scheme is reaching the people who need it most.

Research also shows that there has been a decrease of alcohol intake and smoking addiction.

Discussion: "How do you keep yourself healthy?"

Q. G. H. F.
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Reading text: "A TOUR OF ICELAND"

Highlights of Iceland

In this exciting tour, you will discover glaciers, waterfalls and geysers and relax in the warm waters of the Blue Lagoon. You will also have the opportunity to ride snowmobiles across the ice, or take a tour in a jeep across the lava fields. In summer months you will have the chance to go on a boat tour and search for whales, and in the winter, you may see the northern lights.

Useful Information

All rooms are twin-bed.

The local currency is the Icelandic Krona (ISK). Credit cards are widely accepted. The optional tours on day 3 cost extra, and a minimum of 4 people is required for both the jeep and snowmobiling tours.

Tipping is voluntary, but is expected in this part of the world for workers in the tourism industry, such as your bus driver and restaurant staff.

You must have travel insurance to travel on our tours.

Discussion: "Have you ever travelled with an organized trip abroad or in Italy?"

Reading Text: "A FIRST TIME FOR EVERYBODY"

Joe stepped onto the aeroplane, flight DL 447 to ATL departing at 6.35 a.m., and was met by one of the cabin crew who showed him to his seat. This was his first flight and he was feeling quite nervous. His hands were shaking and he was breathing deeply.

He walked along the aisle of the plane and found his seat. Sitting next to him was an 8 year-old-boy who also appeared to be quite nervous.

The man and the boy they chatted for the whole flight. Joe discovered that they were on the same return flight. When they disembarked at the terminal, Joe commented about what a very good flight he'd had. The young boy agreed, saying that he was looking forward to catching up with Joe again on the return flight.

Discussion: "Tell me about a chat with a person you met on a plane or train"

Q. S. D. G.

Reading text: "CUSTOMER SERVICE IN BANKS"

The banking profession doesn't have a very good reputation for customer service at the moment. Staff at the desks are increasingly under-qualified. Astonishingly, however, 86% of the customers at one bank are 'very satisfied' with the service they receive.

First National bank is run entirely through the telephone and the internet. The primary concern of the bank is recruiting the right people.

They only recruit people with good communication skills, so to establish a connection with their customers and recognize their needs. The member of staff has to pick up on the caller's mood and react accordingly.

The idea that customer service can be improved without an actual contact with a member staff may seem strange at first.

In the future, online systems may pre-empt customers' needs in even more sophisticated ways.

Discussion: "What is your opinion on online banks?"

Handwritten notes in blue ink: a large 'G', a 'D.', and some illegible scribbles.

Reading text: "THE GIRL SCOUTS SELLING STRATEGY"

In the girl scouts' annual cookie drive, two hundred million units are sold per year, and their revenues exceed \$700 million. And these figures are achieved only in a three-month period in the spring.

No longer relying on neighbourhood door-to-door sales to obtain a meagre revenue, the organisation now utilises a wide range of savvy, modern methods which businesses worldwide can learn from.

Firstly, the girl scouts organization focuses on providing the girls with communication skills. But they are also changing their tactics. They sell to large organisations and businesses, where cookies can be offered as sales incentives or part of corporate gift baskets. This way, girls are able to shift a greater number of cookies and maximise their sales time.

Discussion: "Have you ever had an idea about a promising new business?"

Handwritten notes in blue ink: a large stylized 'G', 'SS', and 'a'.

Reading text: "THE GIRL SCOUTS SELLING STRATEGY"

The idea that a sales team can learn something from Girl Scouts will come as a surprise to many. What has this out-dated organisation got to do with the fast-moving, corporate world of today? But in the girl scouts' annual cookie drive, 200,000,000 units are sold per year, and their revenues exceed \$700 million.

True, the organization has changed greatly in latter years, ever since the appointment of CEO Kathy Cloninger in 2003. She has worked on instilling leadership qualities in the girls, developing new funding opportunities, and creating an efficient organisational structure and brand.

They now sell to large organisations and businesses, where cookies can be offered as sales incentives or part of corporate gift baskets. This way, girls are able to maximise their sales time.

Discussion: "Have you ever had an idea about a promising new business?"

a *S* *JS* *Q.*

Reading text: "STRESS AT WORK"

Excessive pressure at work can lead to stress, and this in turn can result in bad performance. 75% of the times, stressed staff are more likely to misuse their work hours or quit their job.

Ensuring that a company has a calm, productive atmosphere is the role of the HR department. The human resources department can play a critical role in managing behaviour within the workplace. HR can implement programmes that encourage positive attitudes, build good working relationships and promote healthy lifestyles.

One common problem is that managers are so overworked that they neglect their staff, which become underutilized or inefficient. The HR department steps in and teach managers how to delegate work to staff, while staff can be advised about when it is appropriate to take the initiative.

Discussion: "As a HR manager, how would you relieve stress in your work environment?"

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Reading text: "THE BUY NOTHING MOVEMENT"

A different trend is springing up in opposition to consumerism – the 'buy nothing' trend. On Buy Nothing Day people organise various types of protests and cut up their credit cards. Throughout the year, Buy Nothing groups organise the exchange and repair of items they already own.

Some YouTube stars now encourage their viewers not to buy anything at all for periods as long as a year. Two friends in Canada spent a year working towards buying only food: they gave up services, for example haircuts, eating out at restaurants or buying petrol for their cars. In one year, they'd saved \$55,000. The changes they made meant two fewer cars on the roads, a reduction in plastic and paper packaging and a positive impact on the environment from all the energy saved.

If everyone followed a similar plan, the results would be impressive.

Discussion: "What do you think about the buy nothing trend?"

Reading text: "THE SHARING ECONOMY"

Peer-to-peer online platforms are providing a chance for people to make a quick buck or two. To give an example, busy parents previously might not have bothered with setting up a stall at the local market or car boot sale to sell their children's old equipment, but with online marketplaces, parents are now able to sell on those hardly worn baby clothes that their children have outgrown and the expensive pushchairs and baby equipment they have invested in, so as to put some cash back into their pockets.

Unlike businesses, unregulated individuals do not have to follow certain regulations and this can lead to inconsistent quality of goods and services and a higher risk of fraud. Nevertheless, the increased opportunities to sell on our unwanted and underused goods can lead to a lesser impact on our environment.

Discussion: "Have you ever sold or bought any second-hand items? Where?"

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Reading text: "WORK-LIFE BALANCE"

Jo

I used to do a typical five-day week, but after I came out of my maternity leave, I decided that I wanted to spend more time with my children. After negotiating with my boss, we decided to cut my working week down to a three-day work week. This of course meant a significant cut in my pay too.

I've since noticed, though, that my workload hasn't decreased in the slightest! I'm now doing five days' worth of work in three days, but getting paid much less for it! I find myself having to take work home just so that I can meet the deadlines.

It's wearing me out trying to juggle work with looking after my children and my family, but I don't dare stepping back to where I was.

Discussion: "What other deal could Jo propose to her boss instead?"

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Reading text: "GATEWAY ACADEMY PRE-SESSIONAL COURSES"

Our pre-sessional courses are ideal for students who have a conditional place at a British university, but who need to achieve a certain level of English in order to be accepted.

The course aims to provide students with the English language and study skills that they need in order to be successful at university or another academic establishment. I

It is important to note that completion of the course does not guarantee students entrance into a university.

It is necessary for students to show during the course that they have understood the information and skills that they have been taught, and can incorporate it into their work.

The course offers a holistic approach to learning, and covers reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. There is no final examination.

Discussion: "Have you ever attended an English course?"



Reading text: "GATEWAY ACADEMY COURSES"

Pre-sessional students at Gateway Academy will benefit from:

- Small class sizes (no more than 10 students per class)
- Twenty three hours of tuition per week
- Individual support and tutorials
- Regular guest lecturers
- The use of the Academy's study and recreational facilities, including the Language Library, the computer suite, and the academy's sports facilities.
- A varied social programme including evening entertainments and weekend excursions to popular tourist attractions and cities such as Stonehenge, Oxford and Stratford-on-Avon.

The course offers a holistic approach to learning, and covers reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. During the course, students will receive instruction on important techniques such as summary-writing, analysing essay titles, organising writing, note-taking in lectures, giving seminars and making presentations.

There is no final examination.

Discussion: "Have you ever attended a summer school abroad?"

Q. S. H. A.

Reading text: "GATEWAY ACADEMY PRE-SESSIONAL COURSES"

The course offers a holistic approach to learning, and covers reading, writing, speaking and listening skills. During the course, students will receive instruction on important techniques such as summary-writing, analysing essay titles, organising writing, note-taking in lectures, giving seminars and making presentations.

Students will gain experience in working both individually and in groups. As part of the course, all students will work towards a 5000 word project in their own field of study.

There is no final examination. Students will be given a full report on their progress at the end of the course.

Gateway Academy offers three pre-sessional courses. A five-week course beginning in August is available for advanced level students; a ten-week course beginning in July is available for upper-intermediate students. Intermediate level students get a two-week break in July.

Discussion: "What University do you think the courses are preparing the students for?"

Q. S. H. K.
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Reading text: "LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS DOWNSIDES"

Long-haul flights have just got longer, with a non-stop flight from Singapore to New York now in operation. But 18 hours in the air creates its own challenges.

A lot of preparation goes into the ultra long haul flight. The aircraft is specifically designed for the journey with more space and extensive entertainment services. The flight crew are also specially trained.

The seasoned traveller is also more aware of the health risks associated with a flight that covers as much as 16,600-kilometers (10,310-miles) in distance. Exposure to lower oxygen levels for up to 18, maybe 20, hours is abnormal for the human body.

With deep vein thrombosis (DVT) the problem really starts occurring after 12 hours (in-flight). This could lead to an increase in heart attacks.

Discussion: "Have you ever travelled on a long-haul flight?"

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D. J. B. P.

Reading text: "LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS ARE UNHEALTHY"

18 hours in the air creates its own challenges. There are health risks associated with a flight that covers as much as 16,600-kilometers (10,310-miles) in distance. Exposure to lower oxygen levels for up to 18, maybe 20, hours is abnormal for the human body.

Doctors believe prevention is better than cure when it comes to in-flight health. Passengers on ultra long range flights need to be provided with flight socks and, if necessary, tablets for thinning the blood.

It is not just the health and vitality of the passenger that is at stake on a flight of this length, but also that of the flight crew, who is trained on fatigue management, jet-lag adjustment, and exercise.

Discussion: "What are the advantages for working on long-haul flights?"

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Reading text: "LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS"

An extra-long flight means passengers do not need to break up their journey and change planes. "They like to board once, de-plane once. It is saving time," says James Williams from Singapore Airlines.

"From Los Angeles to Singapore, passengers are saving two and a half hours. And to New York passengers are saving up to 4 hours in flying time."

Thai Airways is also launching a non-stop service to New York from Bangkok next June to compete with Singapore Airlines. It is planning a similar service to Chicago. Cathay Pacific, Continental, Qantas and Emirates Airlines also offer flights that are more than 14 hours in duration.

However, there is still a question of whether longer non-stop flights will become popular.

Discussion: "What is the longest flight you've ever taken?"

Q. S. J. P.

Reading text: "ARE LONG-HAUL FLIGHTS THE FUTURE OF AVIATION?"

"An extra-long flight means passengers only board once, de-plane once. It is saving time," says James Williams from Singapore Airlines.

"They will certainly have a role in the future of aviation, there is no doubt about it. People will prefer to fly non-stop if it is available," says Chris Johnson, an airline analyst.

"But we are reaching the limits. These markets are at the very margin of aviation. Most airlines still fly in the eight to 12-hour sector. This is still where the biggest volume in traffic is."

"Asia is where the demand is for the ultra long-haul flight. They are connecting Asian cities to the U.S. East Coast, which is the big market," he explains.

Discussion: "In your opinion, are long-haul flights convenient enough for passengers?"



Reading text: "A SOLAR FARM NEAR A BRITISH VILLAGE"

The Barnley Village Committee is opposed to plans to build a 6,890 panel solar farm on a 15-acre site adjacent to the village recreation ground, currently used for agriculture. Under the proposed scheme, the area will be surrounded by an 8ft-high fence. The panels themselves will be about 7 feet high.

Some of the committee objections are listed below:

1. The recreation ground has recently undergone major improvements including a perimeter running track, new playground equipment and seating. It is heavily used by families, sports teams and dog walkers, and is regularly used for village events
2. Noise from inverters and cooling fans will affect local residents.
3. The lighting and security systems have not been outlined, it is not clear how the area will be made safe for children

Discussion: "What would you argue in defense of the panel farm?"

A G J. F.
D.

Reading text: "THE PHILOSOPHY OF PARKOUR"

Parkour involves a range of 'moves' like vaulting, jumping and landing accurately on small and narrow features, catching ledges, and traversing high walls.

Belle, its founder, formed a group of traceurs called the Yamikasi, meaning 'strong man, strong spirit'.

From the late 1990s, the art and sport of parkour spread worldwide. The arrival of YouTube in 2005 really brought it to a global audience. People around the world began to post their videos online, making parkour a mainstream sport, and in 2007, the first major competition was held in Vienna.

Practitioners argue that injuries are rare, because they rely on their own hands and feet rather than things out of their immediate control, such as ice and wheels, as is the case with skiing and race-driving.

Discussion: Comment on the philosophy of "rely on one own's hands"

Reading text: "A NEW NEIGHBOUR"

There was no reply. Holly peered through gap in curtains in the downstairs window, but there was nothing but gloom within. She rapped more firmly, and was searching for a pebble to throw to the upstairs window when the door opened. A shirtless, overweight twenty-something, with bleary eyes and greasy hair stood in the doorway wearing boxer shorts and mismatched socks.

"I've come for the upstairs room, I'm the new tenant," said Holly brightly.

The man grunted slightly and moved aside. He gestured up the dim, uncarpeted stairway and began to shuffle along the dark hallway to the rear of the house.

Not to worry, he must be the quiet moody type, thought Holly, too caught up in his own profound thoughts for neighbour chit-chat. One day she would penetrate his hard outer shell.

Discussion: "Describe the ideal relationship with a neighbour"

§ § - Text number 39 - § §

al S JF

Reading text: "MILLENNIALS AT WORK"

Millennials (those born between the early 1980s and the early 1990s) make up a huge part of our workforce but they seem to lack loyalty to the companies and the leaders they work for. Multinational companies are noticing larger turnover rates of millennials as employee retention rates fall. This report looks at the findings of two large-scale surveys on the mindset of the millennial generation and explores how organisations can strive to address these needs, increase employee engagement and encourage retention.

Organisations and managers wanting to retain millennials should consider:

- monitoring their work–life balance
- creating a flexible work culture
- providing meaningful work
- changing the organisation's goals from being mainly about profit-making to motives that address social concerns and solve wider societal problems.

Discussion: "What's most important for you to be happy at work?"

Handwritten signatures:
A S H P.
D.

Reading text: "MILLENNIAL EMPLOYEES RETENTION STRATEGY"

Millennials (those born between the early 1980s and the early 1990s) make up a huge part of our workforce but they seem to lack loyalty to the companies they work for. Multinational companies are noticing larger turnover rates of millennials. This report looks at the findings of two large-scale surveys on the mindset of the millennial generation and explores how organisations can strive to address these needs, increase employee engagement and encourage retention.

In a global survey conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (PwC), more than 40,000 millennial responses were collected on the topics of workplace culture, communication and working styles, pay structure, career development, work-life balance, etc.

In a separate global survey conducted by Deloitte, more than 10,000 millennials participated in a study about their perceptions of the threats and opportunities in the complex world of work.

Discussion: "Have you ever worked with a millennial colleague?"

a S H P.
D.

Reading text: "WORKING FROM HOME"

Lily

I'm a freelancer and work for myself. At first, I was working from home, but I found it really hard to concentrate. There were just too many distractions around: housework that needed doing, another cup of tea, my family members wanting my attention for various things.

So I started to go to a nearby café to work, but the Wi-Fi connection wasn't ideal and I found myself drinking too much coffee. In the end, I decided to rent a desk in a co-working space with five other freelancers like myself.

I liked getting dressed to go to work in the morning and being able to focus in an office environment with other freelancers to bounce ideas off with.

Discussion: "In your opinion, is concentration better or worse while working from home?"

a S H F
A.

Reading text: "THE SHARING ECONOMY BUSINESS"

Using websites and social media groups for peer-to-peer selling second-hand goods and services is now easier than ever. And this is known as the sharing economy.

Businesses have also caught on to the profitability of the sharing economy and are seeking to gain from making use of those underutilised resources.

Companies are providing online platforms that puts customers in contact with those who can provide a particular product or service. Companies like Airbnb act as a middleman for people to cash in on their unused rooms and houses.

Another example is Uber, which encourages people to use their own personal cars as taxis to make some extra cash.

We might criticize that, unlike businesses, unregulated individuals do not follow regulations and this can lead to poorer and inconsistent quality of goods and services and a higher risk of fraud.

Discussion "Have you ever used Airbnb or Uber yourself? Have you been satisfied with the services they provided?"

U J JS ef.
D.

Reading text: "BRIDGES COLLAPSE CAUSES"

Bridge collapses can be tragic events, leading to loss of life and serious property damage. That's why bridge engineers, designers and builders must always take their jobs very seriously. The best way for them to prevent these accidents is to understand why bridges collapse in the first place.

The following are main reasons why bridges fall.

During construction – These accidents are often due to an error made by the engineers.

By defect – Some bridge collapses are mysteries, and engineers only realise why after they conduct a complete investigation (inferior-quality material, defect in a key piece, too much weight...).

Boat or train crash – Rarely boats and trains can cause a bridge to collapse; with trains, it's the velocity of the impact; with boats, it's the very large mass.

Discussion: "What other causes of bridge collapse can you think of?"

u G H q.
D.

Reading text: "WORKING FROM HOME"

Marcus

I work for a global IT company, but because their headquarters is in the States, I do all my work online from home. That means that I don't waste time commuting or making idle chitchat with colleagues.

I work on a project basis, and this flexibility is very valuable to me because it means that I can easily take some time off when my children need me to go to their school performances or if I need to schedule an appointment with the dentist.

The downside is that without clear office hours, I tend to work well into the evening, sometimes skipping dinner to finish a task. It can also get quite lonely working on my own, and I sometimes miss sharing ideas with colleagues.

Discussion: "What are the advantages and disadvantages of working from home?"

Handwritten signatures and initials in blue ink, including a large stylized signature, the initials 'JS', and other smaller marks.

Reading text: "THE WORLD OF PARKOUR"

In 1902, Lt. George Hébert developed a training discipline in which climbing, jumping and running techniques were used to negotiate obstacles. His method was adopted by the French military and became known as *parcours du combattant* – the path of the warrior.

Raymond Belle was a practitioner of *parcours* in Vietnam in the 1950s. He had great athletic ability, and a reputation as an agile and elite soldier.

Later on his son, David combined what he had learnt from his father with his own knowledge of martial arts and gymnastics, and the sport of parkour was born.

Parkour involves a range of 'moves', although none are official. They involve vaulting, jumping and landing accurately on small and narrow features, catching ledges, traversing high wall and landing with a rolling impact to absorb impacts.

Discussion: "Have you ever practised Parkour or any other extreme sports?"



Reading text: "A SHORT STORY EXTRACT"

Sam waited. Mr Carter didn't come out here unless he had to, which was just fine by Sam. The more he kept out of his boss's way, the longer he'd have a job. Carter came by later while Sam was chopping wood. Sam waited for Carter to say why he was here [...]

'I've brought my son with me on this trip. He's had some trouble at school.'

'Not much trouble out here for a young boy.'

He attempted a laugh but it came out like a dog's bark. The two men looked towards the northern end of the property. It stretched as far as the eye could see.

Could the boy ride? He wondered. There was a whole load of trouble a good rider could get into out here, miles away from anyone.

Discussion: "In your opinion, what kind of relationship is there between Sam and his boss Mr. Carter?"

Reading text: "MILLENNIALS IN THE WORKPLACE"

Millennials (those born between the early 1980s and the early 1990s) make up a huge part of our workforce but they seem to lack loyalty to the companies they work for. Multinational companies are noticing larger turnover rates of millennials as employee retention rates fall.

Research

In a global survey conducted by Deloitte, more than 10,000 millennials participated in a study about their perceptions of the threats and opportunities in the complex world of work.

Key findings

- Millennials are as committed to their work as their more senior colleagues.
- Millennials value interesting work and a good work–life balance. They do not believe that excessive work demands are worth sacrifices in their personal lives.
- Millennials want flexibility in their working hours. They believe that success should be measured by productivity and not by the number of hours they are seen in an office.

Discussion: "What's most important for you to be happy at work?"

Handwritten notes in blue ink: a large 'a', a large 'f', and some illegible scribbles.

Reading text: "CULTURAL EXPECTATIONS AND LEADERSHIP"

In Brazil, Gabriela was used to a culture where leaders make the big decisions and are not often challenged. In Sweden however, teams were used to a culture where subordinates often work together with their bosses to find solutions and make decisions.

When Gabriela became aware of that, she had an open conversation with them about their feelings about her leadership. Pleased to be asked for their thoughts, Gabriela's team openly expressed that they enjoyed having more room for initiative and creative freedom. When she told her team exactly what she needed them to do, they felt that she didn't trust them to do their job well.

With a better understanding of the underlying reasons behind each other's behaviour, Gabriela and her team were able to adapt their way of working to each other.

Discussion: "What do you think the image of a manager should be?"

Q S H G
D.

Reading text: "THE HERO MYTH"

Typically, at the beginning is living an ordinary life, but something happens, 'the call to adventure' that changes everything and starts the journey.

According to Campbell, the hero at first refuses the call to adventure, but a mentor appears who helps them and they decide to 'cross the threshold' and travel into the 'special world' where the adventure happens. Next, the hero overcomes obstacles on the way to facing their greatest challenge.

In Star Wars, for instance, Luke's mentor is Obi-Wan, his friends are Han Solo and the robots R2D2 and C3PO and the enemy is Darth Vader inside the special world of the Death Star.

When heroes succeed, they return from the special world, changed by their experiences forever.

Discussion: "Describe a hero movie that comes to your mind"