

1. Family Relations

Listening Comprehension



School Kids Skipping Breakfast are Missing Healthy Brain Fuel

A national Healthwatch survey in Australia has revealed that a disturbing number of children 'wag' breakfast claiming there is 'no time' to eat, they are 'too tired' or 'can't be bothered' having a meal before going to school.

The survey found that 22% of parents interviewed said their children skip breakfast on three to five school days of each week, and a further 20% skip breakfast on one or two school days.

The remaining 58% of parents said their school aged children always ate breakfast before school. Chief Medical Officer Dr Christine Bennett said, "It is disturbing to find that 42% of children are sent to school on one or more days on an empty stomach because it sends a clear message at an early age that breakfast isn't important. Wagging breakfast is the healthy lifestyle equivalent of driving your car on an empty petrol tank – it inevitably runs out when you most need it. Research shows that skipping breakfast results in reduced learning, reduced attention and poor food choices for the rest of the day. Children who skip breakfast are more likely to be overweight which in the long term can lead to the development of chronic health problems. Children who miss out on breakfast are also less likely to get the recommended intake of dairy, fruit and vegetables," she said.

Asked why their children missed out on breakfast before school, just over half of parents said there was no time because of the pressure of being late for school or work or because of sleeping in.

"Parents should encourage their children to eat breakfast. Storing a few simple ingredients in the cupboard or fridge or organising breakfast the night before can help in the morning rush. Healthy shakes and cereal bars are great for eating on the way to school. Toast, yoghurt and fruit are also quick, easy options," Dr Bennett said.

Viewed nationally, the Healthwatch survey showed that children missed breakfast at an average rate of 1.2 days a week – Tasmanian children were least likely to miss breakfast at 0.6 while Queensland and Western Australia had the worst record for breakfast 'wagging' at 1.4 and 1.5 days respectively.

"With many competing demands, we know that Australian families live in a 'time poor' society but the importance of making time for children to enjoy a healthy breakfast before going to school cannot be overstated," Dr Bennett said. "It can be the start of a lifetime of healthy eating habits," she said.

(www.sciencedaily.com)

2. Human Relationships

Listening Comprehension



Relationships

1 We got married 15 years ago but I will never forget that day. It wasn't the best day of my life as it was a small celebration without my parents and unluckily the most memorable sight was the look on my mother-in-law's face. She hated me and totally disapproved of our marriage. As I mentioned, my parents also disapproved and didn't even come to the wedding and have not spoken to us since then. That was 15 years ago and we are still married and very happy.

2 I'm convinced that the happiness of a family depends on the wife: she can save or destroy a marriage. At least that was the case with me. Our secret is that we have always treated each other with love and respect. There is no competition between us; neither of us wants to win. We had a very terrible time when I was downsized from my job. She handled the financial burdens of the family and always offered a smile, a kiss and words of encouragement while I rediscovered my skills, went on countless interviews and found a new job. I can't tell you how good it makes me feel and how glad I am to have a wife who is strong enough and independent enough to own her power.

3 There was no communication in my family; my father was grumpy and showed little or no emotions at all. I never received the love, attention, and nurturing a young boy needs. As I grew older, things that were more important to me were not interesting to my father and he routinely ignored me. I could never share my feelings or show any emotions – my father called emotions a sign of weakness. I never learned how to stand up for myself, so I mastered the art of running away from every conflict.

4 My husband and I had a very happy life for about 10 years, but then we felt we would be happier apart, so decided to divorce. We have two children and did not want to ruin their lives, so tried to divorce amicably. Instead of litigation we chose mediation, which means we did not go to the court but had 6 sessions in a safe and confidential environment, discussed and resolved all the issues including parenting arrangements (custody, visitation, and decision making). Although we failed concerning our marriage, at least we can call our divorce a success.

5 I'm 21 and there's this girl that has been in my group of friends ever since we came here. I really liked her but I never told anyone that. About 9 months ago we were together in the library and our other friends had left and she told me how much she liked being together with me and that sort of stuff. We've been dating since then but our friends don't know anything about this. I doubt our friends would get mad at us for not telling them if they found out, but it would seem awkward that we didn't tell them because we were embarrassed to tell them. But now our relationship has reached a point where we pretty much have to tell our friends or they will suspect because I think it's completely obvious that there's something going on between us.

3. Celebrations

Listening Comprehension



Pancake Day

Many people love to eat warm pancakes covered with butter and syrup in the morning. But did you know that there is actually a holiday where people celebrate and eat pancakes with their families and friends? It is a tradition that started many years ago in England.

Pancake Day is celebrated on Shrove Tuesday which is the day before Lent. Lent is a Christian holiday that was established in the 4th century as 40 days and is generally a period of fasting or other forms of self-denial. People generally eat a lot and have fun the day before Lent begins. Shrove Tuesday is often referred to as Pancake Day because fats, which were generally prohibited during Lent, had to be used up. People would take all the eggs and dairy products they had left in their kitchens and use them to make delicious pancakes.

In the United Kingdom of Great Britain, Northern Ireland and several other countries around the world, Pancake Day is celebrated with fun, games, and of course a lot of eating. However, the most well known activity on this day is the Pancake Race at Olney in Buckinghamshire, England which has been held since 1445. It all began when a woman was cooking pancakes on Shrove Tuesday to use up all her perishables before Lent. While she was still cooking she heard the chiming of the bells summoning her to church. Not wanting to be late, the woman ran to church with her apron on and the frying pan still in her hand. Little did she know that this would start a tradition that would be around for over 500 years!

Only women are allowed to participate in this race. They must run a designated path with a frying pan and end up at the church. They must have a hot pancake in the frying pan which they must flip at least three times before they complete the race. The first woman to complete the race and arrive at church with the pancake is declared the winner. She then serves the pancake to the bellringer and is rewarded with a kiss from the bellringer called the “Kiss of peace”. This race still occurs in England and in several other cities.

(www.chevroncars.com/learn/holidays-seasons/pancake-day)

4. Consumer Society

Listening Comprehension



ID Safety

Identity fraud takes place when criminals get hold of enough sensitive data to impersonate you, clear your accounts, borrow money and run up debts in your name – and it’s a booming business, according to Experian’s Victims of Fraud service, which saw a 66 per cent rise in reported cases during 2007.

Some surveys indicate that as many as six million Britons have been victims, although the government estimates that the crime affects closer to 120,000 people each year. Either way it's one of the fastest-growing crimes of the 21st century.

Eight ways to keep your ID safe:

Shred sensitive information. Shred financial statements, offers of loans and credit cards, catalogue account details or anything else that could be used to impersonate you before binning them. Thieves go through rubbish to see if there is anything useful – a practice known as bin raiding.

Check your statements carefully. Go through your credit card and bank statements every month. Unexpected entries can be the first indication that somebody is stealing your money.

Learn to love your credit report. Your credit report is such an effective tool in the fight against ID fraud that the government recommends regular checks to protect yourself. It gives you a snapshot of your borrowing and repayment record, so you can easily spot unfamiliar accounts and suspicious balances.

Limit your social networking. It's tempting to include basic information such as your full name and date of birth in your profile, then add interesting details such as your pets' or children's names and nicknames. Don't – these are the kind of details that you probably use for passwords and PINs, so leave them out. Your cyber-friends might be fraudsters looking for enough data to steal your ID.

Don't risk important documents. Don't carry your passport, driving licence or even credit cards unless you know you'll need them and never write down your PINs and passwords. If your bag or wallet is stolen, you could be handing the thieves your identity as well as your cash.

Report thefts. Always tell the police, your bank, credit card issuers and anybody else who might be affected if you suffer a theft. That way, your loss is on record and organisations who might be approached by the thieves will be forewarned.

Register to vote at your current address. Lenders use the electoral roll to check that you live where you say you do. If you're not registered, a criminal could register you at another address. When you move home, always deregister at your old address and re-register at the new one. That way, the people who move into your previous home can't offer apparent proof that they are you.

Don't respond to cold calls and e-mails. Never reply to e-mails and cold-callers asking for details such as PINs, passwords and account numbers – and don't fill in your details on any unfamiliar e-mail or website. Telephone the organisation that is allegedly behind the approach, using the number in the phone book or in previous correspondence – and warn them what is happening.

(www.joincreditexpert.co.uk/telegraph/article3.asp)

5. Fashion

Listening Comprehension



What is Beauty?

Everyday we are bombarded with beauty contests like Miss Universe and shows like Extreme Makeover, as well as People Magazine featuring the most beautiful people in the world, all trying

to answer the question “What is beauty?”. Furthermore, there are plenty of advertisements that offer the definition of beauty, selling products by selling hope of either making oneself more beautiful or maintaining one’s beauty. We have taken for granted what the definition of beauty is according to society, but have you really stopped to think what beauty is, really? It might surprise you. Anyone in the street can tell you their personal definition of beauty: who they think is beautiful and who isn’t. And the surprising thing is that despite the common saying that beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, people will come to roughly the same conclusions of what beauty is. Suffice to say, there are common definitions of what beauty is, which is much determined by society as a form of survival of the fittest. A recent paper entitled “What is beauty anyway?” came to the following conclusions: when asked what is beauty, men would say that a beautiful woman must have two essential characteristics, happiness and health. Notice in the characteristics’ description, there is no specific reference to bums or boobs; perhaps they fall somewhere in the healthy category! Is this answer to “What is beauty” too simplistic? If we take a close look, there is more to the definition of beauty than what meets the eye.

Babies are naturally attracted to happy faces. This is why when you smile they smile too. They are natural reflectors of how you feel, and they help define what beauty is. When we are happy, our brain lets off adrenalin, there is light in our eyes and we walk vigorously. When we are down, however, our eyes are naturally downcast, our face tenses up, we slouch and our mind is somewhere else. We tend to wear darker colours too, so as not to draw attention to ourselves. Happy people attract others, while sad people tend to keep others away.

Being healthy doesn’t mean that we have to have the body of Tomb Raider to meet the definition of beauty. Looking healthy means having good skin, being energetic and having no obvious disability or disfigurement. We all know the ways to achieve healthiness to various degrees – eating right, sleeping well, exercising regularly and learning to manage stress in an appropriate way. Multiple studies carried out by researchers independent of one another show that an overwhelming amount of what is considered beautiful also correlates to how symmetric the face and body are. Humans seem to have a natural averaging selection when determining the definition of beauty. Most of us are born more symmetric than we are right now. As we grow older, we pick up bad habits unknowingly, like tilting our head to our side, holding tension on one side of the shoulder, which causes imbalances with our bodies. However, the good news is we can change our bodies by being more aware and through stretching and strengthening exercises. What is more is that for these characteristics of beauty we can make positive changes. True, all of us might wish we had the eyes of Milla Jovovich and the body of Madonna; however, there are a lot of things that we can do to be happy and healthy and to offer the answer to what beauty is for ourselves. The major obstacle to becoming beautiful is the poor self image that we have of ourselves. When we think of ourselves poorly, we wish to be somebody else and are looking for a quick fix when really we have the capability within ourselves to change for the better. You are beautiful, you only need to bring it to the surface for everybody to see.

(www.buzzle.com/editorial/6-16-2006-99486.asp)

6. Housing

 Listening Comprehension

Galvin Cooks up a Fresh Start for Troubled Youths

Teenagers from some of London's most crime-ridden housing estates are to be offered the chance to train and work in leading five-star hotels.

Galvin's Chance, a project spearheaded by Michelin-starred chef Chris Galvin, will see youths from neighbourhoods blighted by gun and knife crime trained to work at the highest level of the tourism and hospitality industry. Le Gavroche, the Hilton on Park Lane, The Dorchester and the Jumeirah Carlton Tower have already made a commitment to provide work experience and job opportunities to up to 20 young apprentices and it is hoped more will follow.

The initiative is the brainchild of Fred Sirieix, the general manager of the Galvin at Windows restaurant at the Hilton. The magnitude of London's gun and knife problem was brought home to Mr Sirieix when he was jogging through Peckham. He said: "I love running in my spare time and on my route I kept seeing the police signs after there had been a murder. It was shocking. There are children in gangs and getting into trouble. It is horrible and we can't stop it, but we can help show them there is an alternative."

He said Galvin's Chance will involve trainees working at different hotels or restaurants while receiving training at Westminster Kingsway College as waiters, sommeliers and bar tenders.

The scheme will begin once £30,000 in funding has been raised. It will be run in association with Stop (Solve This Ongoing Problem), a campaign set up by graphic design student Alexander Rose after his friend was stabbed to death aged 16 in 2006.

Mr Rose, 20, from Mitcham, said: "I've been running the Stop campaign for two years and when Fred got in touch I saw that there was a real opportunity. We have the ability here to really do some good. The way to combat criminal culture is through opportunities."

In a bid to raise the £30,000 needed Galvin's Chance is holding a 4.5 km race around the Serpentine in Hyde Park and under Park Lane culminating in a gruelling ascent of the 28 floors of the London Hilton on 17 June.

Galvin said: "The race will be fun but the intent is serious. Galvin's Chance is there to help real people at risk change their lives. We hope it will grow over the years and make a real difference."

(www.thisislondon.co.uk/standard/article-23684342-galvin-cooks-up-a-fresh-start-for-troubled-youths.do)

7. Global Issues

 Listening Comprehension

Climate Change is Moving the Start of Seasons

Spring is coming earlier to areas of the Northern hemisphere. Earlier seasons influence the behaviour in plant and animal species and may lead to ecological changes.

Crocuses, lilacs, warmer days and bird song... all are lovely signs of spring. Spring arrives when the Earth tilts towards the sun. As the planet tilts, it gets warmer. The Earth tends to take about a month to heat up.

According to satellite reports, over the last fifty years spring has been arriving an average of eight hours earlier every year. What is eight hours? Not much, but add the time together over a period of decades and there is a distinct change in the beginning of the season. In Washington DC, the city's cherry trees are blooming a week earlier than they did thirty years ago. The lilacs are blooming an average of two days earlier every decade. Scientists point to climate change as a possible culprit. Like a pot simmering on a stove, the Earth is getting a little too warm, too quickly.

Early planting and harvest and shorter winters sound good. However, a problem arises because plants and animals are tied in complex ecological webs. When the timing goes off in part of the web, certain plants and animals pay the price. For example, if a crop begins to create flowers but the pollinators are not around to spread the pollen, the crop could fail. Also, while the season is shifting overall, surprise snowstorms and cold snaps could kill plants that have started to grow too early.

If spring is getting here earlier, why aren't all of the species shifting at the same time? This is because different animals and plants use different cues to decide when spring is coming. Some of them use temperature. Other plants or animals use day length to decide when to sprout or migrate.

In the new age of early spring, those who rely on day length will keep their old patterns. The days keep on gradually getting longer, just like they always have. However, those species who rely on temperature will wake up or begin growing a bit earlier every year. They may arrive at their breeding grounds only to discover that a key plant hasn't grown yet, and they will go hungry.

The change in the seasons is a wonderful event. It's something that people look forward to, as winter changes into the new life of spring. However, as the climate shifts, spring is becoming more challenging for some of the world's species.

(climate-change.suite101.com/article.cfm/spring_coming_earlier)

8. Environmental Issues

Listening Comprehension



Earth Day

Have you ever been to an Earth Day Celebration? Earth Day began on April 22nd, 1970 and has been celebrated every year since. The original purpose of Earth Day was to bring different groups together to raise awareness about environmental issues.

Before Earth Day, there were different groups of people who focused on certain environmental issues. Some groups focused on protecting wildlife, regulating pesticides or recycling. Earth Day brought everyone together to show the world how important it was to care for the environment. Gaylord Nelson, a Wisconsin Senator, came up with the idea of an Earth Day Rally that would force politicians and civilians to pay attention to the different issues affecting the planet. He recognized that everyone would have to work together to help the environment.

The first Earth Day was the beginning of a chain of events that would result in the creation of the United States Environmental Protection Agency, a government supported agency that makes sure people follow rules that care for the environment. Earth Day also paved the way for the Clean Air, Clean Water and Endangered Species Acts.

Two big Earth Day celebrations happened in 1990 and 2000. Earth Day 1990 marked the 20th Anniversary of Earth Day and involved 200 million people in 141 countries, making environmental protection a global issue. Earth Day 2000 utilized the internet to help organize people across 184 countries. What began with 20 million Americans in 1970 grew to include hundreds of millions of people in 2000.

This year, Earth Day will again be celebrated on April 22nd. The celebration kicks off on April 19th in Washington DC with performances from famous musicians. There will be dance performances and environmental activists will speak to motivate people to contribute to environmental protection efforts in their cities.

How will *you* celebrate Earth Day?

(www.chevroncars.com/learn/holidays-seasonsarth-day-2)

9. School

Listening Comprehension



A Master's Degree in Forensic Science

Good evening, everybody. Our topic today is how to get a Master's degree in forensic science. If you're of a scientific bent and want a job that involves a bit of chemistry, a bit of biology, a bit of legal stuff and a heavy dose of intrigue, forensic science is for you. Basically, forensic science provides scientific evidence for use in a court of law. Fire investigation, explosions, genetic fingerprinting, DNA profiling and multinuclear magnetic resonance spectroscopy – oh yes, forensic science has got it all going on. Our guests are today Dr Barbara Daniel, senior lecturer and programme director for the MSc in forensic science at King's College London and Elle Diniz, MSc forensic science student from the University of Strathclyde. Perhaps these expert witnesses can help you decide whether this is the career for you.

Presenter: What will undergraduates study at your university, Dr Daniel?

Dr Daniel: Our course looks at the principles of forensic science and the forensic process, from crime scene all the way through to going to court. The chemistry students then do drugs and toxicology, and the biology students do mock casework and new techniques. They launch into their research projects over the summer.

Presenter: What do you study, Elle?

Elle Diniz: In the introduction, we did glass, paint, presumptive tests, fibres and some microscopy work. We also learned different methods of investigation, the hierarchy of who's in charge at the scene and the reasoning you use. We learnt different techniques such as mass spectroscopy, ICT and nuclear magnetic resonance. The MSc was more focused on analytical chemistry than forensic chemistry, but as my first degree was in forensic science and I did the master's to increase my

chemistry, that was fine for me. I'm going back to Canada, where I'm from, to do a work placement at the Toronto Centre for Forensic Science.

Presenter: Why is forensic science so popular, Dr Daniel?

Dr Daniel: Of course, there is "the CSI effect", where forensic science is glamorised by an unreal television series. But a lot of students are looking for a career in science and also want it to be a practical profession, which is why they eventually choose forensic science.

Presenter: Is it easy to get a job?

Dr Daniel: The Forensic Science Service is a private company owned by the government. What they and the other forensic providers do is put in a tender for forensic provision for, say, all the police forces in the north-west. The number of jobs available really does oscillate. Between 60% and 70% of our students get jobs within forensic science, 5% go on to do PhDs, and some decide that they really don't want to do forensic science after all.

Presenter: Where do you work, Elle?

Elle Diniz: I am working as an analyst in the British Pharmacopoeia, a government regulatory body that does testing on medicines and formulations. Other pharmaceutical companies have to use the standards we develop so it's a very strict method of working, as you would have in forensics. I went for an interview while I was doing my master's and had a two-week break before I started the job. Having my master's definitely helped.

Presenter: Is it possible to get funding for your studies?

Dr Daniel: The university has scholarships but, on the whole, there is very little funding. Most people fund themselves.

Elle Diniz: I received funding from my government but it was only partial, so I took out a student loan. The majority of people I know are self-funding.

Presenter: Now, our time is up. Thank you very much for your participation. In next week's programme...

(www.guardian.co.uk/2009/feb21/masters-forensic-science-higher-education)

10. Language Learning

Listening Comprehension



Kató Lomb

Her most important keyword of all was interest. The word, coming from the Latin *interesse*, has a double meaning referring to the material profit or the mental attraction, that is together: motivation. This means that I can answer these questions: "How much am I interested in it? What do I want with it? What does it mean for me? How good is it for me?" She didn't believe in so-called language aptitude. She tended to express the language skill as a fraction, with motivation in the numerator (through which we can pinch off some ten minutes a day even with the busiest job), and inhibition in the denominator (the fear of starting to speak, of being clumsy, of being laughed at). According to her conviction, the stronger the motivation is within us, and the more we can push aside inhibition, the sooner we can take possession of the language being studied.

As she was bored with the artificial dialogues of coursebooks, her favourite method was to obtain an original novel in a language completely unfamiliar to her, whose topic she personally found interesting (a detective story, a love story, or even a technical description would do), and that was how she deciphered, unravelled the basics of the language: the essence of the grammar and the most important words. She didn't let herself be set back by rare or complicated expressions: she skipped them, saying what is important will sooner or later emerge again and will explain itself if necessary ("it's all the same if the criminal springs forth from behind a gorse-bush or a hawthorn-bush"). So we don't really need a dictionary either: it only spoils our mood in the joy of reading and discovering the texts. In any case, what we can remember is what we have figured out ourselves. For this purpose, she always bought her own copies of books, since while reading she could write on the edge of the pages what she had understood from the text by herself. In this way you cannot avoid picking up something of a language – as you can't rest until you have found out who the murderer is, or whether the girl says yes in the end. This method had, incidentally, been applied successfully even before her, by a Hungarian writer, Dezső Kosztolányi, as well: according to his account, he studied Portuguese virtually in the same way during a holiday.

Another keyword of hers was context (she was playfully called Kati Kontext): on the one hand to understand a text (be it a book or a text you hear) the context is relevant, it can help us several times if we don't understand something. On the other hand, she never studied words separately, isolated, but they either remained in her mind based on the text she had read or the context she had encountered (which is perhaps the best possible way of learning), or she memorized them embedded in phrases (eg. high wind, keen wind), so if you happen to forget one of them, the other word often used together with it will trigger the former. From adjective phrases we can even recall the gender in many cases. Kató Lomb recommended using patterns, "shoemaker's lasts" or "cookie-cutters" elsewhere as well: these are simple, skeletonized sample sentences for a structure or an idiom, elements which can be inserted into speech like prefabricated slabs (generally in the first person singular), by applying them we can more easily construct even fairly complicated structures.

She didn't let herself be put off from her set objective by mistakes, failures or the ceaseless demand for perfection, but she always clung to the joyful, enjoyable side of her language studies – maybe that's where her success lay. She besieged the fortress of language again and again in a thousand ways. Her saying may be useful for those less confident of themselves: "Language is the only thing worth knowing even poorly."

(www.nyelvtanulo.hu)

11. The World of Work

Listening Comprehension



"Best Job" Winner Says Goodbye to Island Paradise

34-year-old Briton Ben Southall, winner of Queensland Tourist Board's "Best Job in the World" competition has now completed his six-month stint looking after Hamilton Island on Australia's Great Barrier Reef.

Having to cope with turquoise waters, miles of white sandy beaches and more sunshine than most Brits see in a decade of summers must have given him sleepless nights? Surprisingly, they didn't, but the job was more strenuous than at first it might appear. Southall points out that the competition advertised in the world's press said the winner would have to "feed the fish, clean the pool, deliver the mail and watch the whales."

But during the interview process he says it became clear to him and other applicants that it was going to be a full-on job with lots of interviews and writing.

"Every day I've gone to a new island and explored what's on offer there. Then I've sat down in the evenings and usually worked quite late putting videos and photos together and writing blogs. That's the key part of it," Southall told CNN.

And with 300 islands in his section of Great Barrier Reef he was clearly kept busy. But as he readily admits being paid nearly \$140,000 to look after an island has been an amazing experience.

"I think I've done more in these six months than I've done in the previous 34 years of my life. To be able to do this sort of thing, in this location, and report on it can't really be classed as work," he said.

So now that his work is done on the island, where does he intend to go on holiday?

"It's a difficult one that," he says, "but the white Christmas that the UK enjoyed almost made me a bit jealous." Despite the allure of distant snow Southall says he will probably take a holiday in the southern hemisphere.

He says the hardest part of leaving the island has been moving out of his \$4 million villa.

"I lived on top of a Land Rover as I drove round Africa on a charity expedition in 2008. So I went from living in a tent to living in this amazing house. Closing the door on the Blue Pearl (the villa) was probably the toughest bit."

(www.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/asiapcf/01/06/best.job.southall.australia/index.ht)

12. Lifestyle

Listening Comprehension



Interview with Trudie Styler

Trudie Styler is showcasing her Ashtanga Yoga training on Warrior Yoga, which she hopes will inspire people to practice yoga and find their inner strength.

Interviewer: How long have you been practicing yoga?

Styler: Nineteen years ago, I was looking for a way to get rid of the pounds added during pregnancy. Dominic Miller, Sting's guitarist, had a friend named Danny Paradise in town. Dominic described Danny as a "freaky-deaky" yoga guy. He demonstrated the first Ashtanga Yoga practice that I had ever seen. It was quite challenging, but bit by bit we came to really appreciate it. That's how it began.

Interviewer: What does your practice consist of today?

Styler: I practice two or three times a week. But I meditate every day; upon waking up and before going to sleep. The morning meditation sets me up for the day and gives me a great sense of calm. I can go into my meetings feeling calm and empowered. One of the most wonderful things about yoga is that it's a practice for every day of your life.

Interviewer: What was the inspiration behind your DVD Warrior Yoga, and what do you want people to get from it?

Styler: Warrior Yoga was created for everyone, but especially for women, who are on the battlefield of life. We multitask and are asked to perform well in all aspects – career, mother, wife, friend, taking care of our bodies to look and feel beautiful. Gaiam asked me to do some DVDs, so I worked with my teacher James D'Silva. We came up with the idea of Warrior Yoga, which is Ashtanga based. I want people to understand that the body is the one precious vehicle we've been given in our life to take us through our journey. It needs to be nourished and nurtured and replenished.

Interviewer: How has yoga changed your life?

Styler: I am a high-energy person and tend toward being quite impatient. Yoga reminds me that impatience and intolerance are obstacles. Fiery energy is great; my can-do mentality gets me a long way. But better things are done through being patient; more things open up if we take more time.

(www.sting.com/news/interview.php?uid=6398)

13. Eating

Listening Comprehension



Finnish Chef Jaakko Sorsa

- What is behind your success?
- You really have to love what you do. That brings natural motivation to cope with the environment. The rest is hard work; I have come a long way from fast food restaurant Carrols in 1988 to Hong Kong 20 years later.
- What is your job description like?
- The image of a choppy chef hidden behind the stove has come a long way during my 16 years in high-class professional kitchens. There's plenty of PR, endless photo shootings and interviews and providing ideas for marketing. The most challenging part is to train the chefs and brainwash them to be your 'ghost writers', so all the dishes coming out from the kitchen will taste and look just like you made every dish yourself. 'Every team needs a chef and every chef needs a team'.
- Tell us a bit about the Scandinavian Restaurant 'FINDS'.
- FINDS is an acronym of Finland, Iceland, Norway, Denmark, Sweden. We represent modern Scandinavian festive traditions with an urbanite twist.
- What is the business idea behind FINDS?
- We are serving modern and traditional Scandinavian food in a cool setting. Night life is a big part of Scandinavian and Hongkongaise lifestyle, so after 11 p.m. we take out the white table

clothes and the DJ plays groovy tunes and lots of happy people come and drink freshly shaken cocktails and champagne.

– Place, furniture, staff at FINDS?

– The design is inspired by Scandinavian nature; walls of sparkling white stone like ice, ceiling like a night sky with ‘Aalto’-clouds, some aqua-marine and light wood-colour sofas.

– Where do you get the food materials for FINDS?

– We get a lot of Finnish seasonal seafood from my trusted supplier flown in by Finnair. Basically you can get anything from around the world in 24hours.

– Kitchen slang? What is it like? Do you use the word “cremate” when something is burnt badly? I think this vocabulary is very rich.

– ‘Cremation’... well once a Polish chef in a UN kitchen in South Lebanon turned the oven with ham inside into a crematorium... luckily I had a spare ham as it was Christmas. Kitchen slang is rich indeed. In a professional kitchen every moment is an opportunity to train and learn. There’s no room for thank yous and apologies. It’s hot and busy and noisy, so clear commands, instructions, demands are needed. Guests do not know that we might have 50 orders coming in simultaneously, and as they pay the same price for each dish – no matter if they are office ladies or tycoons – it has to be consistently the same high quality for everybody, in any situation. For a ‘civilian’ bystander the kitchen environment might look like bullying. It’s about challenge and pleasure; to make your kitchen work smoothly and I think it’s extremely important that the whole team enjoys the process resulting in guest satisfaction.

(finland.org.hk/public)

14. Illnesses

Listening Comprehension



Salt Cave Offers Saline Solution to Sinus Problems

Inside a former church of a suburban London street, a room has been designed to recreate the conditions found in Siberian salt mines. The floor and walls are covered with a thick layer of natural sea salt while particles of dry rock salt are pumped into the room. This Eastern European style salt cave claims to rid asthma and allergy sufferers of their breathing problems through “salt therapy,” also known as halotherapy.

With the sound of waves playing in the background and the sand-like mound of salt underfoot, the place could easily be mistaken for an exotic snow beach. Before entering the salt chamber, visitors are required to wear a shower cap to cover their hair and shoes to preserve the salt’s purity. During each hour-long session they simply sit back, relax and put their feet up while soaking up the saturated air and tranquil atmosphere.

The benefits of salt therapy were first discovered in the late 1800s when workers in Siberian salt mines were found to suffer from a surprisingly small number of respiratory problems.

Familiar with such treatments in her hometown, Sofia Benke from Hungary was therefore surprised when she moved to the UK two years ago and discovered there were no salt caves in the country.

“I was suffering from sinus problems and antibiotics didn’t work. I had heard so many stories of how salt caves had treated friends’ problems, so I decided to open one in London,” the 30-year-old told CNN.

The salt, which has no additives, is shipped in from Lithuania.

Benke’s patients vary from six-month-olds to 65-year-olds and most are asthmatic children who come in with their parents. Ideally, treatment lasts one to two weeks and patients need to be in the cave for one to two hours every day. The room’s temperature and salt concentration depends on the patients’ condition. The benefits are then said to last for up to 12 months. Each session costs around \$56 and the first one is free, Benke says.

Many of the patients have reported positive results. Despite the positive testimonials, the therapy has not yet been recognized by the UK’s National Health Service (NHS) and at least one study suggests the therapy should be used as a complementary therapy, not as an alternative. Dr Elaine Vickers of Asthma UK, said: “It’s currently impossible for us to say whether or not salt caves are beneficial for people with asthma. However, some people say they find them helpful. Our advice to people with asthma is to follow the recommendations of your doctor or asthma nurse, and to keep them informed if you decide to try a complementary treatment such as halotherapy.” Other health practitioners say stopping medication like steroids for asthma and only opting for alternative care can be dangerous and counter-productive. But, according to Benke, some of her patients have stopped medication, not because she urged them to. “I would never do that,” she said. “The reason for this is because their symptoms were no longer present after undergoing salt therapy,” she said.

(www.cnn.com/2009/HEALTH/06/23/salt.cave.uk/index.html)

15. Leisure Time Activities

Listening Comprehension



From Bamboo to Chocolate

Dr. Val Kolpakov currently holds the Guinness World Record for the largest toothpaste collection.

About a fourth of his collection is displayed in the waiting room at the Denture Care Clinic, where he works as a denture specialist.

Kolpakov, known to patients as “Dr. Val,” said his interest in collecting tubes of toothpaste started when he read about Carsten Gutzeit, a German who collected 500 tubes.

“I thought that collecting toothpaste was a nice hobby for a dental professional. It allows you to learn more about your profession,” he said. “I had friends all over the world, so I asked them to mail me toothpaste from the countries where they lived.” He began buying toothpastes on eBay and contemporary versions in stores.

“After I started my Web site, toothpasteworld.com, people were able to find me on the Internet. Several people donated me their small collections,” he said. “Some companies donated me their old and recent products. Now I have about 1,800 toothpastes and tooth powders, but only 1,481 are sorted and catalogued.”

One of the items Kolpakov considers to be the oldest, rarer and most expensive is an English antique Georgian 1801 silver tooth powder box. Toothpaste was not invented at that time, and tooth powders were used instead. He paid more than \$1,500 for the box.

Among his favourite toothpastes there are whiskey, scotch, rye, bourbon, red wines, amaretto, champagne and other alcohol-flavoured ones.

“I have recently acquired a nice set of five booze-flavoured toothpastes from the 1960s. My other passion would be the chocolate-flavoured toothpastes. I have a set of pure chocolate cream packed into a toothpaste tube with a toothbrush for chocolate lovers. It’s more like a gag gift, though, and is not intended for brushing teeth regularly,” Kolpakov said.

Kolpakov also has a toothpaste tube that served as a movie prop from “Primary Colours” and another from “Prison Break.” He has tubes that have misspellings – “Cet” instead of “Crest” – and samples from all over the world, including one that is bamboo-flavoured.

“I have several toothpaste tubes that were dug out of World War II trenches, including Doramad toothpaste that had an active radioactive compound,” Kolpakov said. “During those times, some people believed that radiation can revive dead tissues and that radioactive toothpaste can revive your gums.”

(www.mlive.com/news/saginaw/index.ssf/2010/03/from_bamboo_to_chocolate_sagin.html)

16. Cultural Events

Listening Comprehension



Picasso’s Largest Work Finally Goes on Show

Ben Hoyle, Arts Correspondent

Picasso’s largest work is to go on show nearly half a century after the Victoria & Albert Museum acquired it despite lacking the space to display it.

The 10m x 10m (33ft x 33ft) stage front cloth will form the centrepiece of a major autumn exhibition exploring the world of Serge Diaghilev, the Russian impresario who made ballet one of the most dynamic art forms of the early 20th century. A recent biography begins with the claim that Serge Diaghilev “transformed the world of dance, theatre, music and the visual arts as no one had ever done before (or has done since)”. Perhaps his most notorious work was the ballet *The Rite of Spring* with music by Stravinsky and radical choreography by Nijinsky. The Paris premiere in 1913 triggered a riot.

Picasso became an integral member of the company during the First World War and was involved in creating the designs for nine of its ballets. He was one of the many artistic geniuses who collaborated with Diaghilev and whose work will be on show in the exhibition. Others include Vaslav Nijinsky, Igor Stravinsky, Coco Chanel and Henri Matisse.

The ballet *Le Train Bleu*, a light-hearted piece about the fashion world, was first staged in Paris in 1924 with costumes by Chanel, libretto by Jean Cocteau, choreography by Bronislava Nijinska, Nijinsky's sister, and the huge curtain by Picasso which greeted the audience while the overture played at the start of the evening.

Picasso's frontcloth shows two fat women running across a beach. Scene painters enlarged it from the original painting "Deux Femmes Courant" and the artist himself was so delighted with the result that he signed the bottom of the canvas and dedicated it to Diaghilev.

Its working life came to an end in 1968 when a group calling themselves the Friends of the National Museum for the Performing Arts bought it for £69,000 from a Mr Tony Diamantidi, the president of the Diaghilev and De Basil Ballets Foundation. Their hope was that the front cloth would become the focal point of a performing arts museum attached to the V&A. However, the organisation that they envisaged, which came into being as the Theatre Museum in Covent Garden in 1987, never had the space to show it off. When the museum closed in 2007 its collections were brought back under the V&A's wing.

The V&A has the largest collection of Ballet Russes costumes in the world, including those designed by Matisse, Picasso and Chanel. The exhibition will also feature set designs, props, musical scores, notes on choreography and posters. Picasso's stage cloth will not be the largest in the show, however. Natalia Goncharova's stage backcloth for the final scene of *The Firebird* (1926) is 10 metres high and 16 metres long.

The exhibition runs at the V&A in London from September 25 to January 9, 2011.

(entertainment.timesonline.co.uk/tol/arts_and_entertainment/visual_arts)

17. Sports

Listening Comprehension



Why Do People Do Extreme Sports?

Many people sit safely on their couches and wonder why people do extreme sports. The answer may vary from person to person, but the word thrill seems to keep appearing.

There is something in the nature of human beings that seems to push them to go a bit faster or a bit higher. There is always a lot of talk about an adrenaline rush when you speak of the motivation for why people do extreme sports. There is the medical evidence that suggests that the high risk factor in extreme sports tends to cause the body to release several substances including dopamine, endorphins, and serotonin. These substances tend to have the effect of producing pleasurable feelings and may have more to do with the "rush" associated with extreme sports than adrenaline which is more a reaction to fear.

It is not really necessary to look at chemical and hormone output in the body to understand the attraction of extreme sports. Throughout history, man has pushed the envelope in physical activity and adventure. Mountains were climbed simply for the reason that they were there. This is the idea behind extreme sports. They are done simply to prove that they can be done.

Many of the sports considered extreme sports are non-competitive. At least, they are non-competitive from the idea of competing against other players. However, they are competitive from the point of view of pitting yourself against a sometimes hostile environment or seemingly impossible obstacle. There are some who have converted their skill at extreme sports into money through media exposure and the increased attention given to events such as the X games. Yet, it is certainly not a search for money or fame that motivates the majority of extreme sports participants.

If you look at some of the extreme sports, or with activities that closely resemble them, you will see that they are really just activities that have been around for a long time taken to a higher level. Examples of extreme sports of the past include surfing (which was invented by the ancient inhabitants of Hawaii) and mountain climbing. These activities were done just for the joy and the thrill that was provided and not for fame or fortune.

The Olympic ideal of higher, faster, and stronger is part of human nature. It is the fact that humans not only welcome challenge, but will sometimes deliberately seek it out, that explains why people do extreme sports. While it is true that not everyone sees the thrill of jumping out of a plane or hurtling off the side of a mountain in exactly the same way, there are always those willing to step up and give it a try.

(www.extremesportscompanies.com)

18. Travelling

Listening Comprehension



5 Romantic Travel Resolutions

A new year always means a chance for a new start. You and yours can begin this new year by making some travel resolutions together, regardless of your time or budget constraints. Put aside those old travel habits and make some new ones! Let this be the year that your travel plans focus on fun, fantasy, and festivities!

1 We're going to plan a real vacation. No, it doesn't have to be an around the world cruise or first class getaway (but if you can afford it, what are you waiting for?). It does have to be an honest-to-goodness vacation, though. No cell phones, no laptops. Mark the dates on the calendar and keep it just like you'd keep any business appointment. The business of romantic travel, though, is a fun one and an activity that the two of you can plan for months.

2 We're going to involve each other in the trip planning. All too often, one partner gets the job for planning a trip... and that task quickly becomes a bore. Plan your trips together! Anticipation is half the fun. Visit a travel agent. Collect brochures. Buy a guidebook. Rent a video about your destination. Search the internet for information.

3 We're going to do something we've never done before. Here you can be as mild – or as wild – as you dare. Go white-water rafting. Rent a houseboat. Take a hot air balloon ride. Spend the night in a local bed and breakfast. Learn to scuba dive. Dance the whole night away under the stars. The choice is yours.

4 We're going to take one mini-vacation every month. Whether it's for the night or just for the night out, plan one tiny slice of a vacation every single month. The only rule: you must pretend you're on vacation. Book a night at a local bed and breakfast. Call your local hotel and find out their non-peak nights (in business-oriented cities, it's usually Friday and Saturday) then plan a short romantic getaway.

5 We're going to go to at least one festival. Special events take place in just about every community around the world. Whatever your interests – from square dancing to sandcastle building – you'll find a festival celebrating with a day or two of fun and food. If you don't have the time or the budget to go far, contact your area chamber of commerce or tourism offices within a day's drive of your home for their calendar of events. If you can, extend your trip into a long weekend. If you've got the time and resources, check out some of the major fun festivals: Carnival, Mardi Gras, Rio's Carnival. Don't forget your costume!

(www.articlessearches.com/travel/5_Romantic_Travel_Resolutions.html)

19. Communication

Listening Comprehension



Mobile Phones and Cancer

So far there is no good scientific evidence that using mobile phones can cause any type of cancer. The vast majority of studies have found that mobile phones do not increase the risk of brain tumours, or any other type of cancer.

The largest study so far on mobile phones and cancer is a Danish study, which looked at over 420,000 people. It found no link between mobile phones and any type of cancer including brain cancers and leukaemia. Reports from the Interphone study, which included over 6,000 people with brain cancer from 13 countries, have also found that brain cancer is not more common among mobile phone users.

Some studies have suggested that people with brain cancer are more likely to have tumours on the side of their head that they say they hold their phone to. But in these studies, their overall risk of brain cancer is usually not any higher. And in some cases, they were less likely to develop a tumour on the opposite side of their head.

This strange "side-of-head effect" is probably due to problems with the way the research studies were designed. These studies ask people with cancer to remember how they used their phones, often many years ago.

But they may not be able to accurately remember the details about their phone use. And, more importantly, some people's answers may be biased if they had previously heard about a connection between phones and cancer in the media. Their tumours could also affect their memory.

Research in this field is still ongoing and Cancer Research UK will continue to look for any new evidence.

The use of mobile phones has skyrocketed since the 1980s. If mobile phones increase the risk of brain cancer, more and more people should now be developing this disease.

But studies in the USA, New Zealand, Denmark, Norway, Sweden and Finland have found that the numbers of people with brain cancer have not changed very much.

So far, the only health issue firmly associated with mobile phones is an increased risk of car accidents! People who use mobile phones while driving, even with a hands-free kit, are easily distracted and are four times more likely to be involved in an accident.

Mobile phones are a recent invention. So far, studies have indicated that using these phones for about 10 years is safe. But we cannot be completely sure about their long-term effects. There have not been enough studies looking at how mobile phones could affect the health of children.

Research is underway to fill both of these gaps in our knowledge. Until we get a conclusive answer, scientists recommend that people take precautions.

It says that if adults want to use a mobile phone, they could choose to minimise their exposure by keeping calls short. And children under the age of 16 should only use mobile phones for essential calls, because their head and nervous systems may still be developing.

(info.cancerresearch.org/healthyliving/cancercontroversies/mobilephones)

20. Scientific Progress

Listening Comprehension



Near-death Experiences: In or out of the Body?

What is it like to die? Although most of us fear death to a greater or lesser extent, there are now more and more people who have “come back” from states close to death and have told stories of usually very pleasant and even joyful experiences at death’s door.

For many experiencers, their adventures seem unquestionably to provide evidence for life after death, and the profound effects the experience can have on them is just added confirmation. By contrast, for many scientists these experiences are just hallucinations produced by the dying brain and of no more interest than an especially vivid dream.

So which is right? Are near-death experiences the prelude to our life after death or the very last experience we have before passing away? I shall argue that neither is quite right: near-death experiences provide no evidence for life after death, and we can best understand them by looking at neurochemistry, physiology, and psychology; but they are much more interesting than any dream. They seem completely real and can transform people’s lives.

Towards the end of the last century the physical sciences and the new theory of evolution were making great progress, but many people felt that science was forcing out the traditional ideas of the spirit and soul. Spiritualism began to flourish, and people visited mediums to get in contact with their dead friends and relatives “on the other side.” Spiritualists claimed, and indeed still claim, to have found proof of survival.

In 1882 serious research on the phenomena began; but convincing evidence for survival is still lacking over one hundred years later. In 1926, a psychical researcher, Sir William Barrett, published a little book on deathbed visions. The dying apparently saw other worlds before they died and even

saw and spoke to the dead. There were cases of music heard at the time of death and reports of attendants actually seeing the spirit leave the body.

With modern medical techniques, deathbed visions like these have become far less common. In those days people died at home with little or no medication and surrounded by their family and friends. Today most people die in hospital and all too often alone. Paradoxically it is also improved medicine that has led to an increase in quite a different kind of report – that of the near-death experience.

(www.susanblackmore.co.uk/si91nde.html)