



4000 Essential English Words

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Paul Nation

The History of Chocolate

Many people believe that chocolate originally came from Europe. However, chocolate, called the “food of the gods,” was first made in the Americas. The first chocolate was very different from **contemporary** chocolate.

Wild chocolate trees can grow easily in the **humid** Amazon rainforest. **Clusters** of flowers growing on these trees turn to seeds. About 20 to 60 cacao beans can be found in the seeds. Cacao beans are the ingredient needed to create sweet, **soothing**, and delicious chocolate treats.

The Mayan and Aztec cultures both thought that chocolate trees were brought from **paradise** by gods. The Mayans and Aztecs used the beans from this **divine** tree to create a special **beverage** with a very pleasant **odor**. Surprisingly, the Aztecs believed that it would be **toxic** to women and children.

In the 1500s, the Spanish explorer Cortes met the Aztecs. Cortes became quite interested in the **plantations** where the Aztecs **cultivated** chocolate trees. When he returned to Europe, he took cacao beans with him. He introduced the people of Spain to the Aztecs’ chocolate beverage.

Over the next 100 years or so, kings, queens, and members of the upper class enjoyed drinking chocolate. They enjoyed it even more once they learned to add sugar to the beverage! Soon, chocolate had spread all across Europe. New machines allowed chocolate makers to perfect their products and produce them at a very **rapid rate**. Preparing the beans in special ways brought out the **aroma** of chocolate. The beans were **combined** with **condensed** milk to give the chocolate a smooth **texture**.

Today, contemporary chocolates with **subtle** flavors fill the shelves of expensive chocolate shops. The different types of chocolate available today **vary** widely. True chocolate lovers can tell which is best, though. They will tell you that the flavor of high quality chocolate stays on the **palate** long after you finish it.



Monkey Island

In the middle of the ocean, there is a small island shaped like an **arc**. Here, monkeys play on the beach and in the trees. But how did the monkeys get there?

Once, an English **admiral** was exploring Africa when he found hundreds of monkeys. The admiral's **character** was mean. He thought, "I could sell these monkeys and become very rich! I'm going to take them to England."

So the admiral set traps to catch the monkeys. He put **stakes** in the ground, tied **string** around them and made **loops** in the string. When the monkeys ran through the forest, their feet got caught in the loops, and they couldn't escape. Then the admiral put the monkeys in cages on his ship and sailed away.

The cages were small and uncomfortable. There was no soft **hay** for the monkeys to sleep on. Instead, they slept on branches with sharp **thorns** that cut into the monkeys' **flesh**. For dinner, he gave them tiny pieces of **sour grapefruit** to eat. The monkeys grew hungry and weak.

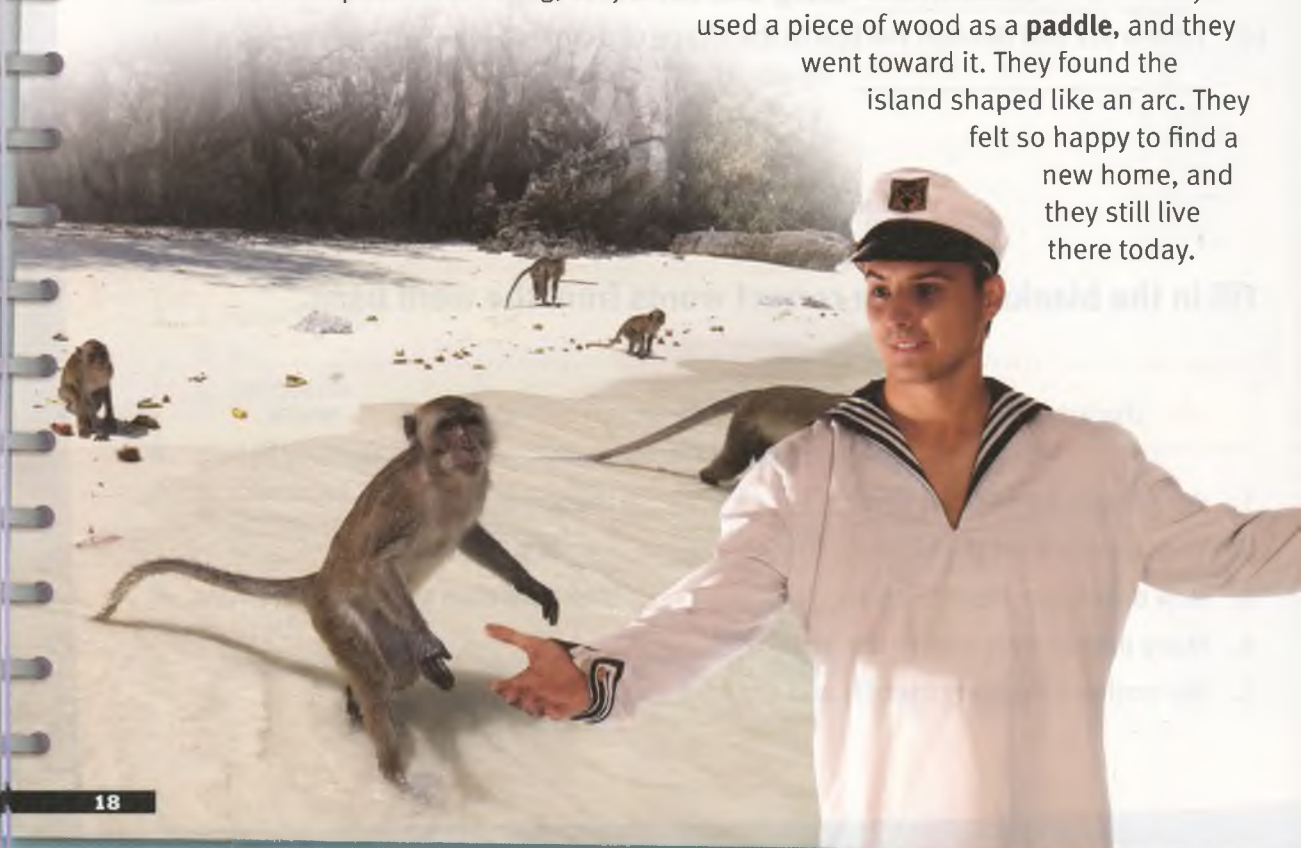
But one day, the admiral hired a new **steward**. He was a kind man with a good **conscience**. He was **horrified** to see the thin monkeys in the cages. So one night he let them out.

The monkeys ran and played all over the ship! They attacked the admiral and the steward and ate their food. They completely **wrecked** the ship. One monkey ran into a **kerosene** lamp, and it fell over. The ship caught fire and began to sink! The whole crew was lost except for the monkeys.

After the **accident**, the monkeys jumped onto a **raft**. They floated away from the **fiery** blaze of the ship. In the morning, they saw a little island in the distance. The monkeys

used a piece of wood as a **paddle**, and they went toward it. They found the

island shaped like an arc. They felt so happy to find a new home, and they still live there today.



The Young Man and the Old Man

A proud young man was looking for a new **pastime**. He heard about people hiking in the national parks and decided to try it for himself. As he started his stroll, an old man walked up to him.

“Don’t go this way,” the old man said. “**Beware**. The paths are not clear. It’s easy to become lost.”

But the young man **disagreed** with the old man and **bragged** that he had a **perfect** understanding of the park. “I studied maps of this area,” he told him. “I believe I have a **thorough** knowledge of these trails. I won’t become lost.”

The old man listened to the young man and then **admonished** him for his pride.

“I have walked these trails my entire life,” he said. “If you think you will be safe, then go ahead.”

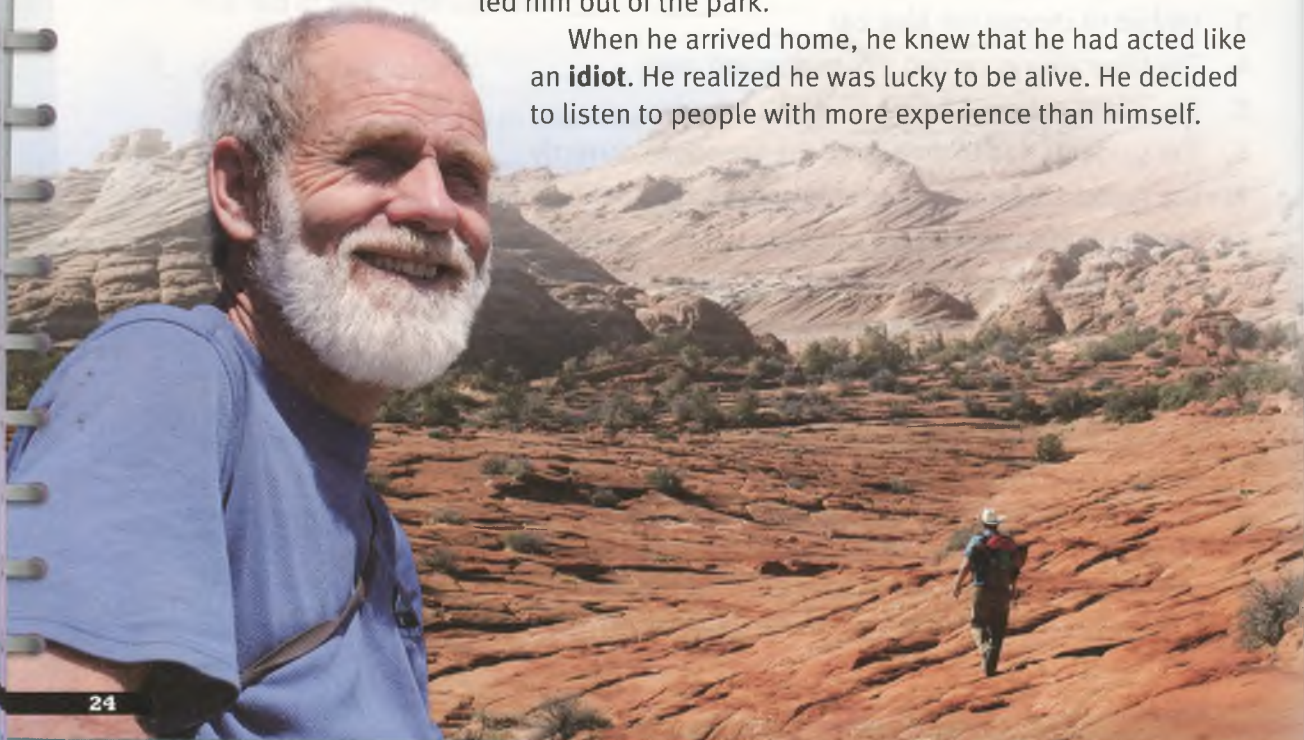
The young man ignored the old man and started along the trail.

Whenever he had to choose between an easy or difficult route, he always chose the more difficult **option**. In addition, he was not **conscious** of which direction he was going. After a while, he decided to return home. Because his course through the wilderness was so **indirect**, he had no idea where he was.

He looked at his map but could not **pinpoint** his location. He walked one path after another but soon realized he was lost.

The sun was going down, and sudden strong winds gave a **hint** that it might rain. **Immense** clouds filled the sky. **Awesome** sounds of thunder were **audible** from all directions. It **echoed** off the mountains. The thought of the **eventual** storm **tormented** the young man. He hurried in one direction, but soon **switched** out of confusion. Luckily, it led him out of the park.

When he arrived home, he knew that he had acted like an **idiot**. He realized he was lucky to be alive. He decided to listen to people with more experience than himself.



The Tricky Fox

There was a fox that lived in the forest. Fox loved to play mean tricks on the other animals. One day, he used the sharp **rim** of a bottle to dig a **pit** in the ground. He hid in a tree until Rabbit came to the pit's edge. Then, he jumped out and pushed Rabbit into the pit. Fox laughed and ran away. The angry Rabbit climbed out and told the other animals what happened.

The others said, "That is **typical** behavior for Fox. He does mean things all the time. Sometimes, he is completely **immoral**. We all **disapprove** of his actions, so we should teach him a lesson. Tomorrow, we'll push Fox into that pit."

The next day, all of the animals hid near the pit and waited for Fox. Fox was **oblivious** to the hidden animals. He walked up to the pit to see if Rabbit was still trapped. Just then, the other animals ran up to Fox and pushed him in. All the animals laughed and cheered, **except** Fox, of course.

Fox couldn't get out! The walls of the pit were covered in **damp ivy**. It was too **slippery** for him to climb out. He was **utterly** helpless. He **moaned** and began to **weep**.

At last, he saw Eagle watching him from her **roost**. He yelled, "Eagle, please help me! If I don't get out of here, I will **perish!**"

Eagle said, "You may think your tricks are **trivial**, but you hurt others when you do mean things. I'll help you if you promise to be nice."

Fox said, "I promise!"

Eagle began her **flight** to the bottom of the pit. She picked up Fox with her **beak** and **soared** out of the pit. She dropped Fox safely on the ground.

Fox thanked Eagle and kept his promise. He was nice to the other animals. The animals even became **fond** of Fox, and the forest was a happy place.



The Magic Computer

I had a difficult geography project to finish by the end of the **semester**. My teacher wanted it to be **typewritten**, so I went to the school computer room. But when I got there, all the computers were turned off. Apparently there was a **recent** problem, and technicians were fixing it.

I knew of some **private** study rooms downstairs. They were small and dark, and the computers were very old, but I had no choice. At least the computers were **operating** correctly. I typed and **highlighted** the assignment's title: "**Evaluate** the Government's Response to **Global Warming**." But I didn't know what to write in my **essay**. Finally I decided to find a book to help me. I went to the library, checked the book **indexes** and eventually found a useful book. Then I returned to the computer.

When I looked at the screen, I saw something so **weird** that I nearly **fainted!** The essay was complete! Had somebody in **cyberspace** written it? I didn't know, but I was very happy. I printed it out and handed it in. I got an "A."

After that, I used the computer for all my assignments. I'd type the title, wait **awhile**, and the computer would do it. Every assignment was perfect; I never had to **edit** anything. I stopped paying attention to my teacher's **lectures** and spent my extra time in the **gymnasium**. And my grades got better and better.

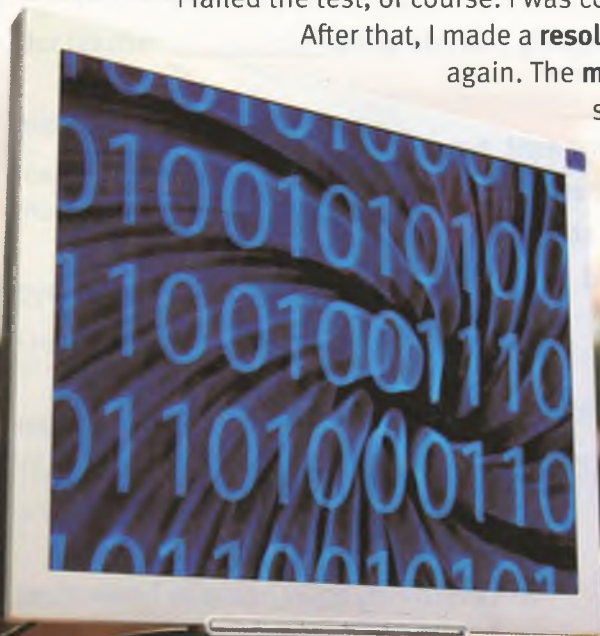
A month later, I was walking into class when my friend said, "Are you prepared for the test?"

"What test?" I asked.

"The geography test!" he replied. "I hope you studied. It's worth seventy percent of our final grade!"

I failed the test, of course. I was completely **ignorant** about the subject.

After that, I made a **resolution** never to use the magic computer again. The **moral** of this story is that if you cheat at school, you won't learn anything.



Jack Frost and the Pudding

Every winter, a magical boy with a wild **spirit** named Jack Frost arrives in town. He wears a white **cape**, and his **role** is to cover everything with frost and ice. But Jack Frost also gets **pleasure** from playing tricks on common **folks**.

One dark winter evening, he was sitting on the **rail** of a fence near a river, pointing at some trees. When he did so, there was a **pop**, and the trees were **evenly** covered in frost.

Then old Tom Muggins came along the path. He was carrying a basket of ingredients for his wife's cake **recipe**. "I'll have some fun with him!" said Jack Frost. He pointed, and suddenly there was a **patch** of ice on the path. Poor Tom slipped and fell into the river. The bags of flour, fruit and sugar fell open and got wet. A couple of eggs broke, and a stick of butter **shrank** in the water. Tom gathered the ingredients and climbed out of the river. The food made an **absolute** mess of the path. "**Alas!**" he cried. "There'll be no cake for me!"

Jack Frost laughed at poor Tom because his nice **suit** got **soaked** as well. "Are you cold?" he said. "Don't worry, I'll make you warm!" He pointed at the mess in Tom's basket. Suddenly, there was a **spark**. What was left of the food caught fire! Jack Frost ran off laughing.

Poor Tom sat by the fire. He could only **envision** how angry his wife would be. He wished he had been more **attentive** and noticed that Jack was around.

Suddenly, a pleasant smell came from the basket. Tom looked inside. The butter was **melting** and the eggs were starting to cook! Even the fruit began to simmer. Soon there was a fat, brown

pudding in the basket! Tom tasted it. It was delicious! He happily took it home for dessert. Although Jack Frost had tried to make Tom's life difficult, Jack had actually made Tom a wonderful pudding!



The Architect's Plan

An **architect** wanted to build a new office building. He selected some land that seemed perfect. He planned to cut down the trees to make room for the building. But there was a problem . . . a big problem.

The land was actually the **habitat** of several types of birds. Some nature lovers were very upset with the architect. First, they held a **rally** and told others about the issue. Then, they decided to take **legal** action because the architect didn't respect the animals' rights.

To **resolve** the problem, they asked a judge to **intervene**.

The judge could not call any **witnesses** for the nature lovers, so he first asked the architect to tell his side of the story.

"Why are you going to destroy the birds' habitat?" the judge asked.

The architect replied, "I have the **deed** to the land. I want to make a great building there. As you may know, all my buildings become **memorable landmarks**."

Then one of the nature lovers spoke. "We believe that there's no reason to destroy all the trees. We just want to protect the birds."

Then the judge made his decision. "I **proclaim** that the office building should be built," he said. "It is not a **crime** to remove those trees. I cannot give you a **sentence** for any **offenses**, but I feel **obliged** to make one request. I will only allow you to use half of the land. The other half will remain free, so the birds have a place to live.

The nature lovers could not **conceal** their **gratitude**. All of the people cheered.

The architect said, "I have an idea. I will **volunteer** my time and efforts to design a new type of building. It will provide bushes on the roof where birds can live. There are enough **resources** in my company's bank **account** to create the best building ever made."

The architect did exactly as he promised. He built this new type of building, which was loved by everyone.



Janie and the Music Player

Janie had **constant** thoughts about getting a music player. One day, she was late to class. She hurried down the hall but **halted** when she saw a backpack on the floor. She looked inside and found nothing but some books. She reached inside the bag and felt a small object at the bottom. It was a music player **enclosed** in a black case! Janie **tended** to be honest, and she had no **valid** reason to take the device. However, her desire for the player **influenced** her decision. Janie was being **sly**. She put the **device** into her own backpack. When she arrived at class, she gave her teacher the bag. "I found this," she said.

Ms. Johnson asked, "Does this backpack belong to anyone?" A girl named Linda claimed the bag. Linda looked inside and yelled, "My music player is missing! Janie took it!" Janie answered, "I did not." Linda responded, "You were the only one that had **access** to it! If your **version** of the story is true, you'll let Ms. Johnson check your bag." Janie started to **perspire** as she realized the **impending** trouble she was in. She **gripped** her bag tightly.

Ms. Johnson took the bag from Janie. Inside she found the player. "Janie, I never expected this kind of **conduct** from you," she said. "You've always been such a good student."

Ms. Johnson gave Linda the player. Linda said, "Ms. Johnson, look!" There was a **crack** along one side. She turned it to the "on" **mode**, but it wouldn't work. It must've **snapped** while Janie was holding onto the bag so tightly.

Ms. Johnson called Janie's parents. They were very upset. "Stealing is illegal. You have no respect for the **law whatsoever**," they said. "We bought you a music player, but we're giving it to Linda. It will **replace** the one you broke." In the end, Janie's bad behavior left her with nothing at all.



Growing to be Great

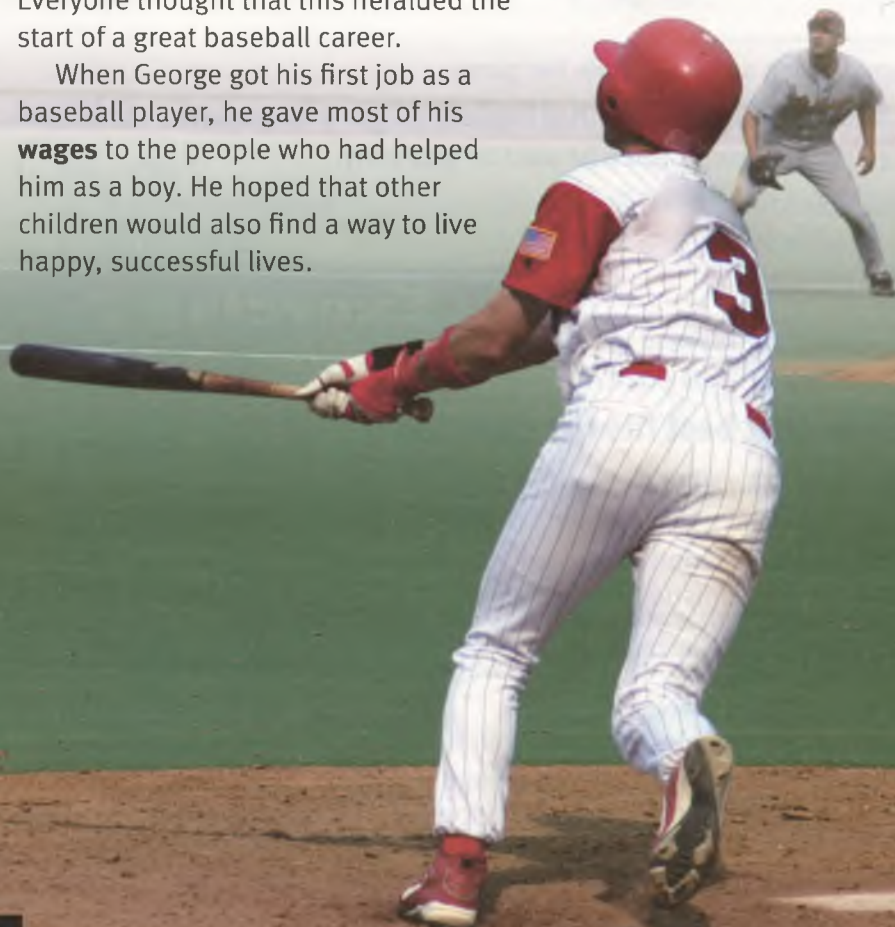
When George was just a boy, he didn't have any parents. The **rumor** was that they died in a car accident. Many bad things could have happened to George, but he was lucky. He was sent to live **alongside** other children without parents. There were kind people to **assist** George and help him go forward with his life. However, he was a **pessimistic** and mean little boy.

George was often **outraged**. He told mean rumors about the other kids. He **smashed** furniture and even **slapped** other boys. He **defied** anyone who tried to help him, and soon it was difficult for them to **forgive** him. But George did **display** a love for one thing. He loved to play baseball. **Whereas** he was lazy in school and liked neither the **subjects** **nor** the teachers, he was **lively** and happy when he played baseball.

One of George's teachers noticed his talent. He began to work with the boy. At first they only talked about baseball. The teacher watched George play. He was a very **efficient** hitter. He almost never missed the ball. The teacher thought that George looked **majestic** when he played. When George hit the ball, it flew through the **breeze** as if it would never come down. In time, they began to talk about other things. They talked about George's family and his dreams for the future. They developed a very good relationship.

As George got older, he began to grow. His **appetite** was huge. He ate and ate. He got stronger. Soon the other boys and even the teachers looked small and **feeble** next to him. Everyone thought that this heralded the start of a great baseball career.

When George got his first job as a baseball player, he gave most of his **wages** to the people who had helped him as a boy. He hoped that other children would also find a way to live happy, successful lives.



Anton's Great Discovery

Anton Van Leeuwenhoek was a Dutch cloth merchant. His life began to change after he got his first microscope in 1653. It was a very simple microscope. It had a lens in an **upright** stand. It could make small things look large. It was **handy** for looking closely at cloth.

Soon, Anton felt a **longing** to build a more powerful microscope. He dreamed of using it to make an important scientific discovery. He wanted to become famous. Three **decades** later, he did.

For many years, Anton experimented with microscopes and lenses. Eventually he **constructed** a very powerful microscope. If he had sold the **concept** to others, it would have made him very rich. However, Anton **refrained** from **surrendering** his secret to anyone. Instead, he wanted to use it to become famous. So he used his secret microscope to study the natural world.

One day he was looking at saliva from his mouth with the microscope. In the saliva, he saw **numerous** tiny **particles**. Some of them were moving! He thought that the particles were tiny organisms. So he **isolated** them from each other and studied each one carefully. Then he **classified** them into different categories. Some were round. Others were long and had tails. All were alive.

Anton was so excited. He knew he could become famous now. He was the first person to see these tiny organisms. So he drew **diagrams** of the organisms and sent them to a group of scientists in London. The scientists were **sophisticated** men who did not believe tiny, **animate** organisms could live in our mouths. Anton made a **plea** for them to come to Holland to see the organisms with their own eyes. The men took a **ferry** to Holland and met Anton. They performed a careful **review** of his work, and they **conceded** that he had made a **worthwhile** discovery. Anton Van Leeuwenhoek had discovered bacteria. After decades of hard work, he had become famous.



How a Singer Helped Win the War

Sometimes famous people are **vain**. They only care about themselves. But Josephine Baker was an **exception**. In the 1930s and 1940s, Baker was one of the most famous women in France. She was a big part of the new jazz **genre** and **culture** and had a **diverse** group of fans. The French people especially loved her. And she loved France. So when World War II started, she wanted to help the nation that had given her so much.

In 1940, **armed** German troops entered Paris. When this happened, some French people formed a secret **alliance**. It was called the *French Resistance*. The group worked for the **defense** of France. It helped the European and American armies fight the Germans.

Baker was an important member of the Resistance. She had three jobs. The first was to carry messages to and from other members. The messages were written in code on her sheets of music. The second was to provide **shelter** and **supply** goods to Resistance members. It would have been dangerous if the Germans found them.

Baker's third job was the most important. Baker held concerts for European politicians and army members. She **lured** them in, promising an entertaining show. She **enchanted** them with her singing and dancing and got lots of **applause**.

But Baker was always **equipped** with a small notebook at these concerts. She listened for **details** about the war and wrote them down. Baker **sorted** the details and gave **authoritative** reports to the Resistance.

Some thought Baker's fame would be an **obstacle**. The Germans knew who she was, but they didn't think she was smart enough to work for the Resistance. So she could get information from the Germans easily. This helped the Resistance and the French army save lives and win the war.

Baker had a big **impact** on the Resistance's work. She got many awards for her help. When she died, the army had a special **ceremony** to thank her again for her bravery.



The Sun and the North Wind

The Sun and the North Wind were talking to each other in the sky. The North Wind was saying that he was better than everyone else. The Sun listened as the North Wind talked with **enthusiasm** about how powerful he was and how he could push something from one **continent** to another with one breath. He said, "I am the strongest thing in the sky."

"Really?" asked the Sun. "How do you know that you are more powerful than the stars, or the rain, or even me?"

The North Wind laughed with **disrespect**. He yelled, "You? That's a joke!"

This hurt the Sun. He was usually **timid** and did not want to cause **conflict**. Today he decided that he should teach the North Wind a lesson.

In the **meantime**, a man began walking along the **avenue** down on Earth. When the Sun looked down on the **terrain** below, he saw the man. He pointed down to the Earth and said, "Do you see that man walking below? I bet I can get his jacket off of him. Can you?"

"Of course!" the North Wind replied as he took a deep breath and filled his lungs with air. He used all of his **muscles** in his face and **belly** to **blow** winds at his target in **succession**.

The **harsh** air **currents** made the man cold. The man pulled his jacket more tightly around him. It did not come off. The Sun decided to **rescue** the man from the **mischief** of the North Wind. He said, "May I try?" Then he sent down sunlight that made the man warm. The man **leaned** against a tree. He took off his jacket and enjoyed the nice weather.

"You are very powerful," the Sun said to the North Wind, "but you use **violence** in your **bid** to appear strong. You should think of an **alternative**. The strongest people don't use force to get what they want."



The Big Race

Alex woke up scared because of a **nightmare**. In it, he was running a race. Just before he reached the finish line, he fell. Alex thought that it was a **subconscious** way that his brain was trying to **warn** him about something. He was going to run in a race that day. Did the dream mean he was going to lose? He became **irritable**.

“Good morning,” said Alex’s mother. “I **brewed** some coffee and made you a special breakfast.” Alex didn’t want it. It had too much sugar. He needed something **nutritious**. So he prepared a meal that contained a lot of **protein** to **maximize** his energy for the race. Then his father asked, “Do you want help packing your **stuff**?” “No,” replied Alex. He wanted to make sure that he had all of his equipment for the race.

Alex’s family got in their **van** and drove to the track. When they arrived, a boy ran toward Alex. “Can I have your **autograph**?” asked the boy. Alex had many fans. He usually **charmed** everybody he spoke to. However, today Alex refused to give the boy his **signature**. He needed to think about his race.

He took his jump rope from his **bag** and started his usual **workout**. Maybe exercising would help him forget about the nightmare. “The race is about to start,” said the coach. **Beads** of sweat formed out of Alex’s sweat glands. All he could think about was his terrible dream. He thought it might be his **destiny** to become a loser. While he was thinking, he didn’t hear the **horn** that meant the race had started.

The runners **zoomed** toward the finish line. By the time Alex started, he **lagged** far behind everyone. He couldn’t run fast enough to catch up to the others. He had lost the race! He shouldn’t have let the nightmare **affect** him. He should have stayed focused on the race.



The Brothers and the Bread

Two brothers wanted to go outside and play. However, because the only bread in the house was **stale**, their mother told them they needed to bake fresh bread.

"I have to have the car repaired," she said. "When I return, if the bread is ready, you can play."

The brothers hurried to prepare the bread, but not carefully. They didn't **sift** the flour. They were careless and **sprinkled** too much salt into the **mixture**. The **dough** needed to be soft and **flexible**, but the salt made it into a **lump** that was as hard as a **brick**.

The younger brother **uttered** a sigh. "Now we have to start again," he said.

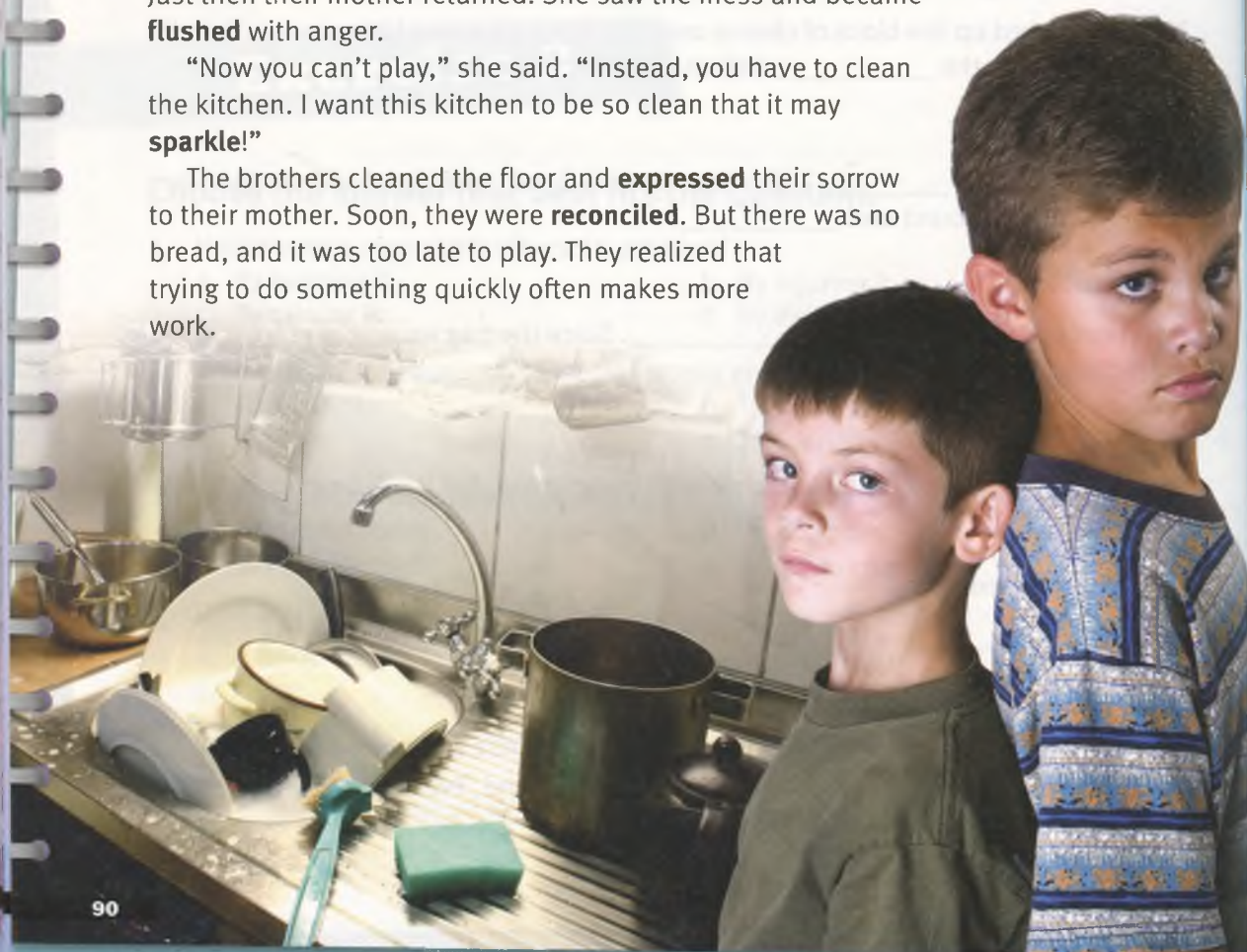
"No, we don't," the older brother replied. "I'll fix it. I just need to make the dough flat again and add water to it."

He decided to hit the ball of dough with his **fist** to make it flat. But he hit it so hard that it flew right off of the table and knocked over a glass, which **shattered**. The dough then crashed into the kitchen window's **shutters** and **crumbled**. Luckily, the brothers were not **injured**, but they did make a huge mess.

A **slight** mistake now became a major problem. The brothers had **ruined** the kitchen. Just then their mother returned. She saw the mess and became **flushed** with anger.

"Now you can't play," she said. "Instead, you have to clean the kitchen. I want this kitchen to be so clean that it may **sparkle!**"

The brothers cleaned the floor and **expressed** their sorrow to their mother. Soon, they were **reconciled**. But there was no bread, and it was too late to play. They realized that trying to do something quickly often makes more work.



Laika, the Space Dog

One of the world's most **beloved** space travelers was also the furriest. Laika was a little dog living on the streets of Moscow, Russia. She **matured** on the streets because no one would give her a home. She had to learn how to live without eating much. She found ways to keep warm in a very cold **climate**. Scientists thought a tough dog like Laika would do well in a project they were putting together.

In a **prior** launch, Russia had put the first man-made object into space. Now, scientists wanted to see if a living thing

could go to space. **Although** many facts about space had been learned, they weren't enough to help send humans to space safely.

Laika and two other dogs were chosen to help scientists with their **research**. The animals were used in a **variety** of tests. In the end, though, only Laika would go to space. On November 3, 1957 the Sputnik 2 spaceship was **due** to leave Earth.

Scientists carefully **applied** wires to Laika's skin to **measure** her body's reactions once she got into space. Laika also wore a special **leash**. Without it, she would float around in the spaceship. Soon after, Laika left the planet. Scientists on Earth **awaited** information from the ship.

But in the **midst** of so much excitement, something very sad happened. Scientists were able to tell that Laika was under a lot of stress. The trip **confused** and scared her. Laika's **entire** ship had become as hot as a **furnace**. Scientists were powerless to help the dog in her **misery**. After about five hours, Laika died.

Some have **complained** that the little dog should never have been used in the mission. Scientists knew that she would not survive the trip. Laika was never **buried**, but a memorial has been **established** in Moscow. There are many songs and books about her, too. It seems that Laika became a hero to many people.



Gwen's New Friends

Gwen walked into the gym for her next class. Coach Peeves said, "Today, we're playing basketball. The **custom** is to let you choose your own teams. However, we're going to do things differently."

The coach assigned each girl to a team. There were six girls **per** team. Gwen **glimpsed** at her teammates. She didn't know any of them. All of her friends were on the other teams. She couldn't believe her **misfortune**.

"I feel sick. May I go to the nurse?" asked Gwen.

The coach could **foresee** Gwen's excuses. It wasn't the first time Gwen tried to leave class. With a **stern** voice, the coach said, "No."

Gwen was **vehement**. "I don't know any of these girls! Let me play on another team. Please!" she **pleaded**.

"Gwen, don't be **disobedient**. I don't want to hear any more **negative** comments from you."

Gwen had no choice. Then a girl smiled at her. "Hi, I'm Stephanie. I was in your English class last year," she said. Gwen remembered her. "For the **sake** of the team, please try your best. I know you're a good player," said Stephanie.

When the game started, Gwen played as best as she could. She took a long shot. The ball sailed through the air and went right through the **hoop**!

"That was awesome!" said one of her teammates. Later, Gwen fell with a loud **thump**.

"Are you OK?" asked her teammates. They were worried. She had **ripped** her jeans. She had **scraped** her knee and had a small **bruise**.

Gwen told her teammates, "My knee is fine, and I can **stitch** my pants later. Let's keep playing!"

By the end of the game, Gwen forgot **altogether** that she hadn't wanted to play, and her team won! The victory **bound** Gwen's team together. She had made a lot of new friends, and they were a **source** of happiness for her for many years.



Kara Goes Camping

“Kara, would you like to go camping with my family?” asked Tracy. Kara had never been camping before, but she decided to go anyway. That weekend, they drove to Estes Park. When they arrived, Kara looked around. She felt so far from **civilization**.

After they set up the camp, they went for a walk. Tracy’s father, Mr. Grieves, showed them the **native** plants and animals. “Look,” he said, “that’s a fox’s **den**. Do you see that bunch of **mushrooms** next to it. Don’t touch them. They contain **poison**.” Kara was bored. She didn’t care about nature.

As the day went on, **mighty** clouds soon **loomed** in the distance. “It looks like **stormy** weather,” said Tracy. “We should go back.” It suddenly began to rain. They used an umbrella to **shield** them from the rain. Back at the camp, they ate cold sandwiches for dinner and went to sleep.

By morning, the rain had stopped. It was a **drastic** change from the previous day’s weather. They **folded** their sleeping bags and put them in a box. Tracy closed the **lid** and told Kara, “Today will be fun, I promise!” Kara didn’t believe her. She missed her **convenient** life in the city. She was used to an **urban** lifestyle.

After breakfast, they went for a walk. The grass was covered with **dew**, and it gleamed in the sunlight. Finally, they reached a lake. Kara and Tracy **waded** into the water. The **reeds swayed** in the wind, and a **flock** of birds flew above. Kara felt very peaceful.

That night, they made a fire. They sat around it while Mr. Grieves told scary stories. Kara had a lot of fun. Camping was a good way for friends to spend time together, she realized.

The next day, it was time for them to leave. She felt sad while they **exited** the park. She didn’t like camping at first, but she learned how fun it could be over the weekend.

The School Play

Peter was excited. Next week he was going to audition for the school play. Everybody knew he was a great actor. He was sure he would get the lead role.

Later, his friend Robby asked him, “Have you seen the **script** for the play?”

“Yes. The title is *The Lost **Glove***—it’s a **comic** play,” replied Peter.

Robby said, “I want to play the part of the **hermit** because the hermit gets to talk with an **accent!**”

“I want the lead role of the **barber**. I didn’t know you liked acting. I thought you liked **choir** better,” said Peter.

“Acting is also a hobby of mine. Do you want to practice with me? The **basement** at my house is quiet. It’s perfect!” Robby replied.

“I don’t like practicing with others. It **complicates** the process for me,” said Peter.

Actually, Peter didn’t want to practice at all. The teacher would surely **reserve** the lead part for him. A few days later, Robby came to his house.

Robby said, “Do you want to practice the scene on the **staircase**? It’s the part where the migrant **searches** for a new job.”

Peter **declined** the invitation. “I can’t today. I need to do some **errands**.” Then he **slammed** the door. It was just an excuse. Peter didn’t want to help Robby.

On the day of auditions, Peter wore his lucky **leather** jacket. He always got the best part when he wore it. The teacher told him to begin, but his mind was **blank**. He couldn’t remember the lines!

A week later, the teacher put a list of the parts on the wall. Peter read the list, looking for his name. He was shocked by what he saw. He **blinked** his eyes and looked again. He didn’t get the lead part—Robby did! Peter **pondered** the situation and came to the idea that Robby **justly** received the part. He earned it by practicing. Next time, Peter would practice, too.



Isaac's First Plane Trip

Isaac's family was going on vacation. He was excited about the trip except for one thing. He had never been on a plane before. He was scared that his plane would have a **breakdown**.

Isaac got onto the plane. He walked down the **aisle** until he found his seat. He sat down and **connected** the ends of his seat belt. After being **idle** for a few minutes, the pilot announced that they were ready to leave.

He looked out the window at the **vivid** colors of the sky. He began to feel scared. The girl sitting next to him said, "Hi, I'm Rachel! You look nervous, but you don't need to be. Flying is fun!"

"I'm still a bit nervous," Isaac said, "and I'm getting hungry."

"The food service will begin soon. Just lower the **tray** on the seat in front of you, and **flip** this switch. Then they'll bring your dinner! Last time, they served chicken, **peas**, and a box of **raisins**," Rachel explained.

Then the pilot **notified** the passengers of bad conditions in the **atmosphere**. "We're tracking the weather: lightning, clouds, **etc**. The ride might get a bit rough," he **stated**.

Suddenly, the plane started to shake. Isaac was badly **afflicted** by his fear. His stomach hurt, and he thought he might **vomit**. He couldn't believe that he was in such an **unfortunate** place. Finally, the shaking stopped. Isaac was still scared, but he tried to **retain** a good attitude.

"The first time I flew, the plane shook so bad that **cargo** started falling. My parents told me to listen to music and read a **chapter** in my book. It calmed me," Rachel said.

Suddenly, the plane shook again. This time, Isaac followed Rachel's advice. He put on headphones and took out a book by his favorite **author**. The book and the music helped Isaac feel better. After a while, he didn't even notice the bad weather. The bad situation didn't feel so bad after someone helped him.



The Betrayal

A king lived in a **fort** with his daughter, Clara. The king had **founded** a great empire, but his land was **rife** with enemies who wanted to take over the kingdom. Because there was so much **civil** unrest, the king told Clara not to trust anyone.

One day, Clara was walking outside when she saw a girl **sweeping** the path. Clara **crossed** the garden, and they started talking. The girl's name was Susie. Clara felt sorry for Susie because she was very poor, and Clara gave her a **bracelet**. After that, Susie and Clara met every day.

Once, the King saw them talking. He told Clara, "Don't talk to that girl. She could be an enemy."

"You can't **distrust** everyone," **commented** Clara. "She is my **sole** friend. It's OK to be friendly to people."

The King said, "Don't argue with me. Stay inside from now on, and talk to no one."

Clara felt lonely in the fort. But one day she saw Susie outside. She wrote her a note with a map showing a secret entrance to the fort. Clara wrote: "Come at night, and we can talk together. Don't show anybody this note." She threw the note to Susie, and Susie **tucked** it in the **lining** of her dress.

That night Clara waited for Susie. But she heard something ticking, and then a loud **blast**. She ran into the hall, and it was full of smoke, which made her **choke**. A **mass** of soldiers were there, fighting. Clara realized that Susie had **betrayed** her and given the map to her father's enemies. Clara **prayed** that everyone in the castle would be safe from her friend's **treachery**.

At last, the fighting **ceased**. Clara found her father in the hall with his soldiers. They had defeated their enemies, but there were **dents** in their armor from the heavy fighting. Clara told her father what she had done and promised never to disobey him again.



The Teller and the Thieves

A **teller** at a bank suspected some of her fellow employees of not being very **trustworthy**. She thought they were stealing. In order to catch them, though, she needed some way to link them to the crime.

She had a **background** in **religion** and **folklore**. She remembered that one religion's **literature** had a **myth** that **chronicled** how a group of thieves was captured.

In the **millennium**-old story, coins of **copper** were covered with **venom** taken from a poisonous snake. The coins were left as **bait** for the robbers. When they touched the coins, the venom **infected** their bodies through their skin. The venom ran through their **veins**, and they all became very sick as if they had a **disease**. It made their skin purple. The police arrested whoever had purple skin.

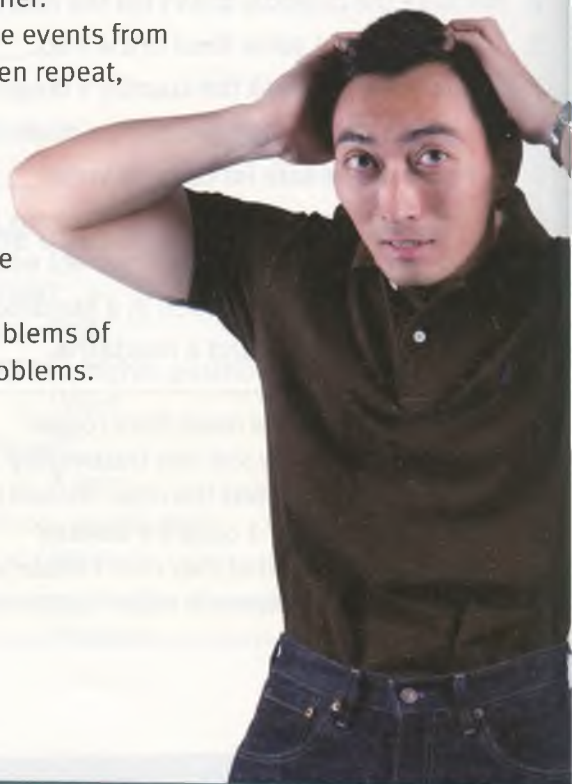


She knew she couldn't use venom because it might hurt someone. However, she thought of a way to **update** the old story. She decided to cover a **sum** of money with a special powder. If people touched the money, the powder would cause their skin to **itch**. She placed the stack of money in the bank's safe. No one was supposed to take money from the safe. If somebody did, then they had to be stealing.

Within a few hours, three of her coworkers were scratching their hands and arms. They itched so badly that they couldn't even work. She checked the money, and it was gone. She told her boss what she had done, and he had the thieves arrested. He thanked her and **promoted** her.

Because events from history often repeat, ancient literature had helped

the teller solve a crime. She proved that stories from the past still **relate** with the problems of today, and they can be helpful in solving problems.



The Scribe's Warning

A great and powerful **empire** needed the wood from its western areas to build palaces and homes for the emperor and his friends. However, the empire had **depleted** many of the forests. The trees were important to the western areas' **economy**. With no trees to sell, the **commerce** in that area was **reduced**. Citizens could no longer purchase the **goods** that they needed to survive. Their life became difficult.

A poor **scribe** from the area wanted to help. He **hitchhiked** to the capital to ask the emperor for **charity**. He was invited to the palace. It was large and **cozy**. Tables were loaded with food, and fires burned warmly in every fireplace.

The emperor sat up upon his **throne**, and the scribe stood in front of him.

"I've come to ask for help," the scribe said. "We're all very poor and hungry. You've used up all of the forests, and now we have nothing to sell." Then he added a warning. "If we don't receive help, I'm afraid that the entire empire will suffer. We must establish some **unity**."

Upon hearing the scribe's request, the emperor's bad **temper** surfaced. He **mocked** the scribe. "You think I should help," he said and laughed. "You should just be happy to belong to this great empire. You will get nothing from me."

The emperor felt no **pity** for the citizens of the western area. They were **condemned** to starve. The scribe returned home with nothing.

Not long after, an enemy invaded the empire from the west. They were marching to the capital. Because the citizens felt **persecuted** by the emperor, they remained **neutral**. They didn't fight the invaders but allowed them to march freely to the capital.

The emperor was defeated. If he had **heeded** the words of the scribe, then the citizens might have been the **victors**. But because he had treated them badly, they treated him badly in return.



How the Dinosaurs Really Died

Many scientists and **intellectuals** think that dinosaurs died when an **asteroid** smashed into the Earth millions of years ago. However, recently, there has been some **controversy** over this theory. Some scientists think that it isn't **accurate**. They think that a tiny insect may have been the biggest **factor** in the death of these huge creatures. That insect was the mosquito.



These scientists do think that an asteroid hit the Earth in the time of the dinosaurs. But that wasn't what killed all of them. At that time, insects, including the mosquito, were beginning to **evolve**. Today, we can **regulate** the number of mosquitoes with **pesticides**. But that was impossible millions of years ago. The mosquitoes **multiplied** quickly. And they were certainly not idle. Since there were so many mosquitoes, it was easy for them to bite many of the dinosaurs. When they bit another living thing, the mosquitoes passed along a deadly disease. So the dinosaurs were **stricken** with the disease. A **vast majority** of them, from the **vegetarians** to the meat eaters, died.

To **reinforce** this idea, scientists stress how gradually the dinosaurs died. If an asteroid killed them, they would have died very quickly. But the number of dinosaurs decreased slowly. In addition, scientists have found **genetic** material of mosquitoes in fossils. This material proves that mosquitoes existed back then. Although there may have been other factors, the dinosaurs died mainly because of disease, the scientists say.

No matter how it happened, the dinosaurs' death had a major impact on other living things. Many dinosaurs ate **mammals**. After the dinosaurs died, mammals were able to evolve and produce **offspring**. Birds also evolved. Scientists have **analyzed** the **genomes** of birds, and they discovered that birds have **identical** genetic material to some dinosaurs. So there may still be dinosaurs among us after all.



The Traveler and the Innkeeper

A traveler stopped at an inn. He sat and watched people closely, like a **predator**. He heard the old innkeeper talking to a young man in the **core** of the inn.

"I just need to borrow some money. I swear that I'll spend it in **moderation**, and my friend will pay you back tomorrow," the man said. The innkeeper gave his **consent** and pulled out some money.

The traveler knew that this was a trick. The man was going to leave with the poor innkeeper's money and never return. He felt **compassion** for the nice innkeeper and did not want him to be tricked. The **cunning** traveler decided to teach the innkeeper a lesson.

The traveler walked over to the innkeeper and sat down. The innkeeper had started to **grind** coffee beans to make coffee. He made the coffee and handed the traveler a **saucer** and a cup. The two started talking. After a while the traveler yawned and then **growled** like a wolf.

"Are you not **sane**? I thought I just heard you growl," said the innkeeper.

"I did. I am cursed. Every time I yawn three times in a row, I turn into a wolf and attack people."

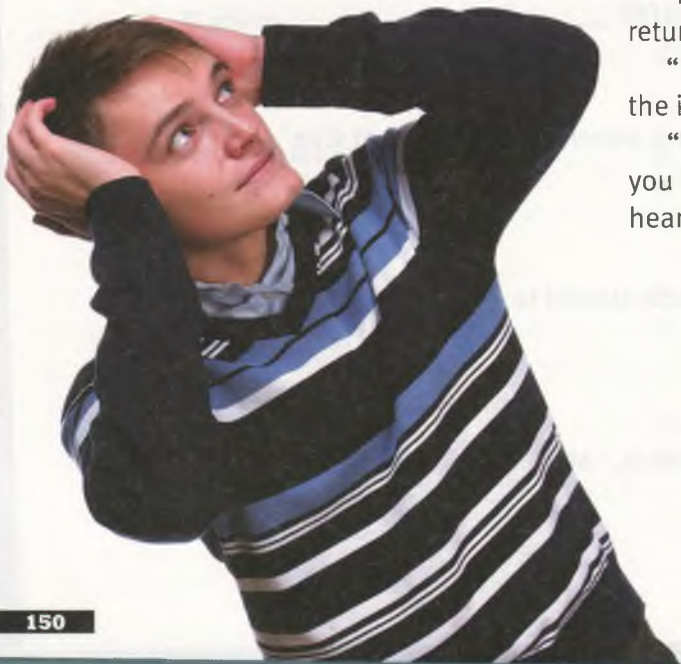
The innkeeper became **tense**. Then the traveler yawned again. As the traveler started to yawn a third time, the innkeeper turned to run outside. As he ran, the traveler **snatched** his coat. The scared innkeeper **staggered** outside and **tumbled** into the street.

The traveler followed him out because he did not want to **withhold** the truth any longer. He just wanted to **foster** happiness and restore the innkeeper's emotional **equilibrium**. The innkeeper was **dizzy**, and he **stumbled**. The traveler helped him stand up.

"That was a trick," the traveler said as he returned the coat.

"Oh, good. I **cherish** this coat," responded the innkeeper.

"Well, hopefully this will teach you that you shouldn't believe every story that you hear."



Gilbert and the Lizard

Eliza disliked Australia. Firstly, she'd had to spend twenty uncomfortable hours on an **aircraft** getting here. She wanted to go to the beach, but her husband was a **zoology** professor and wanted to look for some interesting animals. So now she was **traversing** a **swamp** in the midday heat.

"Let me sit down, Gilbert. I'm not **hardy** like you," she said, eventually.

They sat under a tree. There were lots of birds in that **secluded, rural** place, and they watched them flying **overhead**.

Then suddenly Gilbert saw something on a rock. "That's strange," said Gilbert. "That looks like a Red Swamp Lizard, but I thought that **species** was **extinct**." He carefully picked it up. "Yes, it is! I'm going to take it back to the Zoology **Institute**. They will be filled with so much **jealousy** when they see what I have found!"

"Are you sure we should take it from its home?" asked Eliza.

"Nonsense, many animals **migrate**. They're used to changes," said Gilbert.

"Hmm, I don't agree with the **principle** of it," said Eliza. "It isn't **ethical**." But Gilbert was **decisive** and took the lizard back to the hotel in the city. He thought that this find would make him a highly **esteemed celebrity** at the Zoology Institute.

For the next few days, Gilbert fed and **nurtured** the lizard. But the lizard wasn't happy. It lost its beautiful red color and began to look ordinary. In fact, Gilbert started to wonder whether it was special at all. He went outside and found a common lizard on a piece of **concrete**. When he compared them, they looked exactly alike. The lizard was only red in the swamp!

Gilbert said to Eliza, "I'm going to return this lizard to the swamp. I've learned an important lesson. Home is where we are happiest. At home, we are special like the red lizard. We can never be so happy when we are away."

"Good," said Eliza. "So, can we go home now?"



The Forest People

Colonel Wilbur and his wife **Mary** were flying over the **tropics** in their private plane. But suddenly the engine caught fire. It was impossible to **extinguish** the fire, so they were forced to land in the forest.

“What are we going to do?” said **Mary**. “Can you fix the plane?”

Wilbur said, “That’s impossible. I am not a **technician**, and the plane is out of gasoline. We’ll have to find help.”

Wilbur and **Mary** walked through the forest. It was difficult to find a path through the trees. **Mary** even tore her dress on sharp thorns. Suddenly, they saw some huts and lots of **miniature** people, cooking and making weapons with **flint**.

“I’ll ask them for help,” said Wilbur.

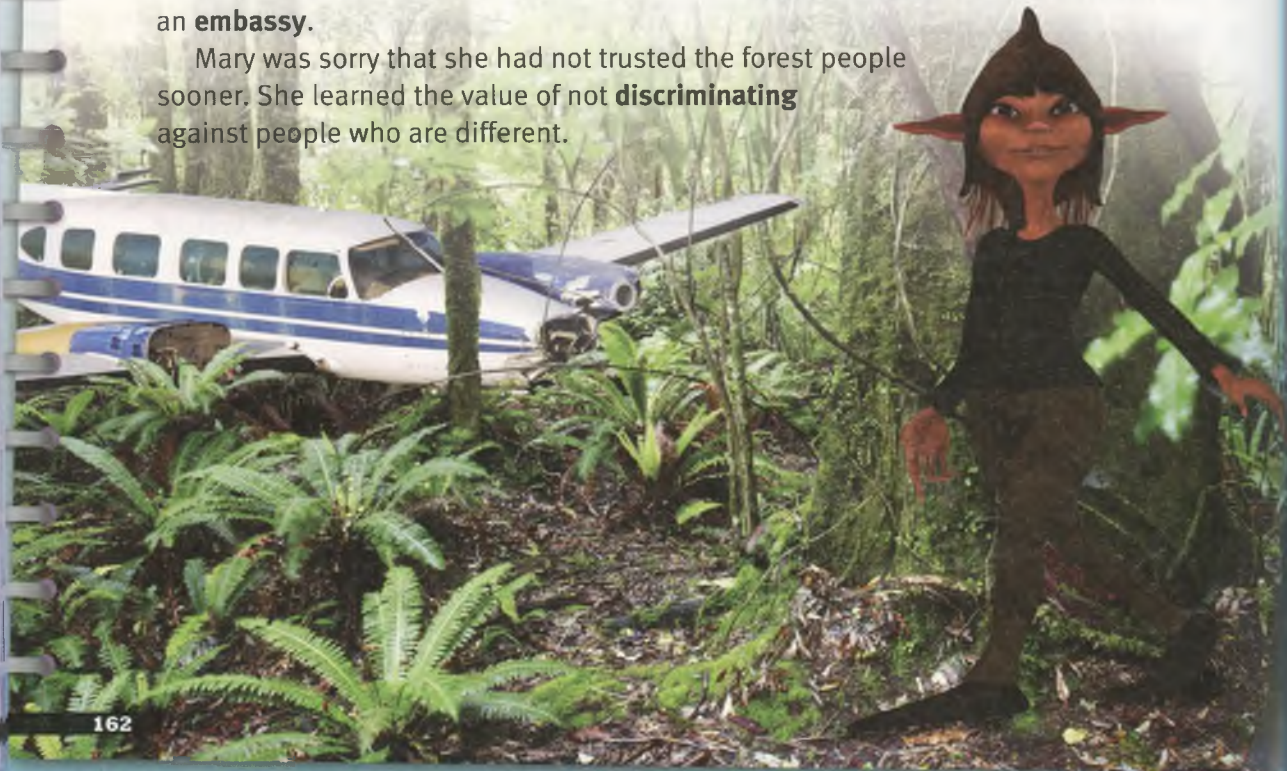
“No! Don’t go! They are **deformed!**” said **Mary**. “They’ll **harass** us! They may have a **contagious** virus that will make us sick! We won’t know how to **cure** it. We’ll surely end up as **corpses!**”

Wilbur tried to persuade **Mary** to go to the forest people, but she refused to **integrate** with them. She had the **assumption** that the small people were dangerous. “Let’s keep walking. We’re sure to find someone sooner or later.”

For three days, the couple searched, but they found no one who could help them in their **crisis**. It was uncomfortable, and they were hungry without any source of **nutrition**. Plus, the forest was filled with dangerous **beasts**. Finally, **Mary** agreed to return to the forest people.

When Wilbur and **Mary** arrived at the village, the forest people immediately welcomed them. They gave them bread made from **barely** to eat and a place to sleep. The next day, the forest people led Wilbur and **Mary** through the trees, and they **promptly** arrived at a small town. From there, they took a bus to the city where they found an **embassy**.

Mary was sorry that she had not trusted the forest people sooner. She learned the value of not **discriminating** against people who are different.



A Dying Forest

Rainforests provide much of the world's **oxygen** supply. But the forests' **exotic** trees and animals are being killed to make room for farmers and roads. People have been trying to **conserve** rainforests for years. But another type of forest—the cloud forest—is just as **beneficial** to humans. Cloud forests are also in danger of disappearing, but little is being done to save them.

These forests are located at the tops of mountains, generally near the **equator**. These humid, **wooded** mountaintops are mainly in African and Central and South American countries. They are called “cloud forests” because their height allows for the **formation** of clouds among the trees.

Rainforests produce large amounts of oxygen. Cloud forests produce **comparative** amounts of water. The trees in these forests pull water out of the clouds. The moisture gathers on the leaves. When it drips, it is **deposited** into streams. The streams flow into towns at the bottom of the mountain. Then, it's **distributed** to people. The yearly **cumulative** rainfall in these areas is 173–198 centimeters. Cloud forests can pull in up to 60 percent of that. This water is **crucial** to the plants and the people in the area. It helps them survive.

Cloud forests are also the **birthplace** of countless species of plants that can't be found anywhere else. One small cloud forest has the **capacity** for as many types of plants as there are in all of Europe. There are so many, in fact, that scientists haven't made a **comprehensive** list of them yet.

These forests are being destroyed with increasing **frequency**. Trees are being cut down, and roads are being built in their place. Some people have an **objective** to get **federal** money to protect the forests. But they have had little success. Another **strategy** is to replace the destroyed plants. That, too, has been difficult because the plants are so unique. There's plenty of work to be done, but saving the cloud forests is still a possibility.



Thucydides and the Plague of Athens

Thucydides was the world's first historian. **Presently**, we get most of our knowledge about ancient Greece from his writing. But Thucydides didn't just write about history, he lived through it. However, he almost didn't survive one historical event: the **Plague** of Athens.

In 430 BCE, an army attacked the city of Athens, where Thucydides lived. Thousands of people hid from the army behind Athens' large walls. The city became very crowded as the population **expanded**. Then a **horrifying** disease broke out. People **summoned** doctors. But it was to no **avail** because no one understood how the disease spread. It seemed **random**. They didn't know that it was an **organism**. Instead, they **defined** disease as a punishment from their gods. Thucydides was **incredulous** that gods caused the plague, but he explained why others believed it. There was an old, long verse which predicted the disease. To **paraphrase** it, the verse said the gods would send a disease during a war. As a result, large crowds gathered at **shrines** to ask the gods to stop the plague. But the situation only **worsened** because these people were so close to each other they became sick. That's how they learned a **fundamental** lesson about the plague: it spread from person to person.

People wanted to leave the crowded city, but they **dreaded** what the army outside would do to them. At this time, Thucydides got sick, too. He quickly **scribbled** down notes because he thought he would soon die. His writing shows a **stark** contrast between people's behavior before and during the plague. There were **riots**, and people ignored laws. They didn't think they'd live long enough to be punished. Many sick people were left to die in **solitude** because no one wanted to be near them. The plague **lingered** for two years. But luckily, Thucydides survived. Without his writing, we would know much less about ancient Greece and the Plague of Athens.



The Solar Car Race

We live in a **mobile** society. But the cars we drive require too much gas, plus they **pollute** the air. Eventually, the natural resources used to make gas will run out. So what happens then? Many people think **solar**-powered **automobiles** are the answer. To learn more about this type of **transportation**, teams from universities and **corporate** organizations gather in Australia every two years for a solar car race.

The race is called the *World Solar Challenge*. **Candidates** for this **tournament** must design their own cars. The teams keep all their plans **confidential**. They don't **interact** with other teams because the race is very competitive. And these cars aren't just **enhanced** and **modified** versions of normal cars. They are completely different.

The cars only have room for one person and are very simple inside—they don't even have a cushion for the driver to sit on. These cars are shorter and much more flat than normal cars. Most importantly, the cars **incorporate** solar panels onto the outside that lie **parallel** to each other. These panels are made from materials that take in light from the sun and turn it into electric energy. That's how they move.

These cars race over 3,000 kilometers across the Australian **territories**. The drivers have to heed strict **guidelines**. They must stop at certain **intervals** to charge their batteries. And unlike normal race cars, they can't go very fast. They have to drive at the normal speed limits. Although the drivers want to finish the race quickly, that is not the main goal. The objective is to see how well the cars work under normal driving conditions.

Because of the World Solar Challenge, a new **era** in car making and in driving is beginning. People may **ridicule** the solar cars because they look strange, but this is a **phenomenon** that isn't going away. Using the technology from the vehicles, car makers will eventually create solar cars for the rest of us.



The Heirs

Martin, Paul and Tom were brothers. They were very different, but they were **consistent** about two things. They couldn't succeed in business, and they never agreed about anything. Martin was a hardworking farmer, growing **organic** vegetables and raising **poultry**. But he was disorganized and forgot to pay his **bills**. Paul owned a **textile** factory that produced clothes. He was organized, but he was greedy and took too much clothing. His **wardrobe** was filled with his own products. Tom was once a **sergeant** in the army. He ran a **martial** arts school, but his **stance** on discipline was too strong. He had almost no students.

One day, they received a **telegraph** saying that their father had died. They were **heirs** to his old farm. They planned to sell it as soon as possible, so they went to see it even though there was a terrible storm. The house didn't look great, but there was a lot of land. There was so much, in fact, that they could barely see its **boundary**.

Suddenly, the storm got worse. The **sheer** force of the wind almost knocked them over. Martin said, "Look, it's a **typhoon!**" Paul said, "No, it's a **cyclone.**" Tom said, "No, it's a **tornado!**" They argued until Paul began to **wail** and said, "Whatever it is, it's coming right at us! We're **doomed!**" The three brothers **scrambled** inside the old house. Martin said, "If we survive, we must stop fighting. This farm could be great if we fixed it up. With my hard work, Paul's organization and Tom's discipline, we could run a great business together!" The storm finally ended. And luckily, it didn't wreck the farm.

"Just think," Martin said, "it took the **chaos** of a typhoon to bring us together." Paul replied, "You mean a cyclone brought us together." Tom said, "Didn't I tell you both that it was a tornado?" The brothers never agreed on what kind of storm it was, but by combining their skills, they started a successful farm.



