

U1 Active reading (1)

•In the fall of our final year, our mood changed. The relaxed atmosphere had disappeared, and the peer group pressure to work hard was strong. Meanwhile, at the back of everyone's mind was what we would do next after graduation. As for me, I wanted to travel, and I wanted to be a writer. I braced myself for some resistance to the idea from my father, who wanted me to go to law school, and follow his path through life.

•However, he supported what I wanted but he made me think about it by watching the crabs. The cage was full of crabs. One of them was trying to escape, but each time it reached the top the other crabs pulled it back. In the end it gave up lengthy struggle to escape and started to prevent other crabs from escaping. By watching crabs, my father told me not to be pulled back by others, and to get to know oneself better.

U1 Active reading (2)

•Life is short. We never quite know when we become 1) coffin dwellers or 2) trampled ash in the rose garden of some local cemetery. So there's no point in putting our dreams 3) on the back burner until 4) the right time arrives. Now is the time to do what we want to do. 5) Make the best of our short stay and 6) fill our life with the riches on offer so that when the reaper arrives, we've achieved much instead of 7) regrets.

U2 Active reading (1)

•The author's family never believed in Santa myth, as her parents could not afford expensive gifts. In her mother's view, the children have been brainwashed into believing the silly myth. So their family celebrated Christmas about a week after Dec. 25 and the kids got their gifts from after-Christmas sale.

•On that year, the father lost his job and they had no money for Christmas. On Christmas Eve, the father took each of the kids out into the desert night one by one and asked them to pick out a star as their Christmas gift. The author claimed Venus and when the sun starts to burn out and Earth turns cold, every one here might want to move to Venus to get warm. And they'll have to get permission from your descendants first. The father's imagination lead to a unique Christmas.

U2 Active reading (2)

•Historically, childhood has undergone enormous transformations in terms of children's responsibilities and parental expectations. Culturally, childhood is socially constructed. The interplay of history and culture leads to different understanding of childhood, consequently, it is advisable not to impose ideas from one culture to understand childhood in another culture.

U3 Active reading (1)

•For the sake of clarity, we 1) split up the process of listening to music into three hypothetical planes. Firstly,

2) the sensuous plane. It is a kind of 3) brainless but attractive state of mind engendered by the mere 4) sound appeal of the music. Secondly, 5) the expressive plane. It is when we believe each piece of music has a theme, which 6) mirrors a different world of feeling, such as gaiety, sadness. Thirdly, 7) the musical plane. It is the ability to experience different 8) musical elements, such as melodies, the rhythms, the harmonies, the tone colors etc. We usually listen to music on all three planes.

U3 Active reading (2)

• V-J Day in Times Square is a photograph by a 1) prominent photographer that portrays an American sailor kissing a woman in a white dress on 2) Victory over Japan Day in Times Square in New York City, on August 14. Since its publication, it has 3) commanded the world's attention. It brims with perceived uncontrolled 4) passion and sexual 5) tension. Also, it 6) ignites the imagination of people, who 7) devised story lines about what ever happened to the couple.

Most important of all, it sketches for people a beautiful 8) vision of life after the Second World War, with a sprint towards a more 9) prosperous standard of living and inventive ideal family life. Though the years pass, the photo will never fade and remind people of the 10) fond memory they have had.

U4 Active reading (1)

I can still remember the men who built the house. The master from the manor house found a clearing in the huge orchard which ran up and down the hills. I only see my neighbour side-on. I've never seen him from the front. Apart from the autumn, the groundsman brought a young woman home. I was filled with the sound of conversation and laughter. The woman looked after the garden around me, there was a riot of colours. With time going by, they had children and then grew up. But one day, I saw a postman arrive with a bundle of letters, the woman cried out and fainted. Years later, they left without saying goodbye to me.

Two middle-aged women spent several years here. I like them because they kept everything spick and span. The last person lived with me working at home assembling furniture. We just kept each other company. He walked very slowly using his hands to steady himself.

As time passed, there are traces of everyone who has lived with me. However, there are my golden memories. But in fact, I look and feel my age.

U4 Active reading (2)

• Homesickness was traditionally experienced by American children during the long summer vacation when they received convenient childcare which was idealized by the parents as being great "fun", while British children experienced homesickness at an even earlier age, when sons of the aristocracy were sent to boarding school at the age of seven. Nowadays, homesickness is usually first experienced by teenagers who leave home and go to college.

• Then, what is homesickness? Is homesickness just associated with a lack of maturity? Actually, the

modern term “homesickness” was coined in the 17th century to describe the feelings of Swiss mercenaries who missed their homeland while fighting elsewhere in Europe. In the 18th and 19th century, people especially women who missed their home were even considered virtuous.

- British actors in Hollywood, sportsmen on long tours abroad, soldiers serving in foreign wars, business travellers and as well as the author all admit how they suffer from and deal with extreme homesickness. In the recent years, people are more willing to talk about homesickness and it is believed that acknowledging homesickness may help avoid the risk of anxiety and depression. Therefore, instead of being immature or something to be ashamed of, homesickness is both a painful longing to be back home, and an extremely common occurrence.

U5 Active reading (1)

- When a young black man arrives in a crowded and expensive restaurant, the head waiter makes him sit in the least comfortable place, even though a table has been booked for him and a “Ms Rogers”.

- When Ms Rogers arrives, the waiter realizes that she is a well-known Senator; and Ms Rogers realizes that her friend has been treated badly because of the colour of his skin. The waiter realizes his mistake too, and tries to make up for it, but it is too late.

U5 Active reading (2)

- The writer uses stories about doing business between Swedes and Saudis to illustrate the differences between an individualist and a collectivist approach to business. They have different concepts of the role of personal relationships in business. The Swedes believe the business is done with a company while the Saudis think it should be done with a person they know and trust. Then the writer compares the characteristics of the collectivist and those of the individualist.

- In most collectivist societies, the families are usually extended families while in the individualist societies, nuclear families are prevalent. People consider themselves as part of a “we” group or in-group in the collectivist societies. In contrast, the individualists think of themselves as “I”, their personal identity which is distinct from other peoples’. A practical and psychological dependence relationship develops between the person and the in-group in the collectivist societies. However, rarely do people depend on a group in the individualist societies.

U6 Active reading (1)

- As a young boy, the writer (1) overheard his parents talking about helping his father do the milking early every morning. He realized that he had (2) taken his father’s love for granted so on Christmas morning he (3) rose very early and (4) crept downstairs and did the milking all alone. When his father discovered what he had done, he (5) clutched the boy in his arms. Now, as an older man, he decides to (6) trim the Christmas tree and tie his present and letter to his (7) beloved wife before she gets up.

U6 Active reading (2)

•There is concern among the Chinese scholars and students that Christmas has an increasing impact on the Chinese culture. Due to the changes in the past two decades, we Chinese do seem to attach a lot more attention to Christmas today than we did in the past.

•In fact, be it in China or in the West, a festival carries the same meaning featured by celebrations, a feast or humble meal, relaxation and a break from the skulduggery or the mundane affairs.

•However, no one can be left untouched by the festivals in the Gregorian calendar though we follow the lunar calendar. The festive spirit of the West has influenced us.

•The fear of the impact of the decadence of the West on the Chinese culture is not well grounded, as no culture in the world is free of decadence. Consequently, we Chinese should not follow the West blindly, but accept the goodness the Western festivals offer and practice what they stand for.