

10 Short Texts for Elementary



Are We Too Attached to Our Pets?

Over 85 million families in the United States own a pet. That's 68% of households, according to a recent survey. The survey found dogs are the most popular pets, followed by cats. Thirty years ago, when the survey was first done, 56% of households owned a pet.

"Pets are becoming so important," says Nicki Dobson, who works for Three Dog Bakery. The bakery makes food that looks like human food, but is only for pets to eat. She said cakes are the most popular item.

And it's not just food. There are also pet hotels, pet spas, pet parties and other ways to spoil a furry friend. Younger Americans in particular seem to be choosing pets over having children, and they're making big life decisions, such as buying a bigger home or a house with a yard.

In order to attract employees, some companies are offering pet benefits such as veterinary insurance and flexible working hours. This gives workers more free time to spend with their pets. Dobson also said that taking dogs to work is now common. Some Americans are even changing their travel plans because of their pets. A recent survey found that 49% of pet owners never left the country since owning their pet. Many said it was because they feel guilty leaving their pets alone.

In the *National Review*, Clay Routledge has suggested that increases in loneliness among young people may be causing pet ownership to become more common. He may be right, as there is a lot of evidence that pets improve our lives and health in many different ways.

Breakfast: Not As Important As You Think

We're often told that breakfast is the most important meal of the day. But what does the science say? The answer may not be that simple.

A study by the University of Bath looked at people's breakfast habits. It found very little difference between those who ate breakfast and those who did not. People who ate breakfast were more active in the morning and used about 500 extra calories a day compared to people who didn't eat breakfast. However, people who ate breakfast consumed about 500 more calories a day than those who didn't, so there was little difference between the two groups.

"I seldom have breakfast," said Dr. Betts, one of the researchers, adding that this was his main reason for doing this research. He says he is not going to start eating breakfast after seeing the results.

The study lasted only six weeks, so more research is needed. But it seems likely that breakfast may not be any more important than lunch or dinner.

Some suggest that the reason many people believe breakfast is so important is because of advertising, especially by companies which sell breakfast food. An example of this is the work of Edward Bernays, who was hired in the 1920s by the Beech-Nut Packing Company to improve bacon sales. He asked 5,000 doctors to sign a letter saying that a good breakfast was an important part of good health. The letter suggested that a "heavy breakfast" of bacon and eggs was healthier than a light breakfast.

Signs You May Be Dehydrated

Everyone knows that drinking water is important to our health, especially during hot summer days. Still, many people don't drink enough of it. On average, men need about 3 liters of water every day, while women need about 2.2 liters. However, there are many factors that influence how much water a person needs, including the amount of exercise, coffee and alcohol consumption and eating habits.

People may go through their days dehydrated and not even know it. According to experts, these are the most common signs of dehydration.

Tiredness

If you feel tired during the day, your body may be telling you to drink some water. When you are dehydrated, your blood pressure decreases and your heart rate increases, which can make you feel tired.

Overeating

When you exercise while dehydrated, your body uses carbohydrates faster than it would if you were fully hydrated. Once you finish exercising, your body will want those carbohydrates back. This may lead to overeating.

Concentration Problems

When our bodies do not get enough water, blood flow to the brain slows down. This can make us moody and we might have a difficult time focusing. Dehydration can also cause headaches.

Muscle Cramps

When your body does not get enough water, it sends out a signal to protect the most important organs. This can lead to fluids being sent away from muscles, leading to painful cramps.

Today's Teens Are Smarter Than Their Parents Were

Even though American teenagers are heavier, eat fewer vegetables, sleep less, and spend a lot more time playing video games than their parents did, these future adults are also less likely to be addicted to drugs and alcohol when they grow up, according to new data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

"As a parent I am glad at how much better things are than when I grew up", says Natalia Pane, director of Child Trends.

The latest survey from 2017 shows that fewer American high school students report smoking cigarettes, drinking alcohol, or taking drugs than high schoolers 25 years ago.

America's young people are safer on the road, too. 25 years ago, a quarter of teens didn't wear a seat belt. By 2017, that number decreased to just 6%.

But there are also some worrying trends. More than 17% of teens surveyed by the CDC say they have seriously considered attempting suicide. Pane says that the reason for this is still not known.

Then there's the problem of screen time. While teens are spending half as much time watching TV as high schoolers in 1999, the percentage of those who say they play video games or use computers at least three hours each day has almost doubled since 2003.

And while many high schoolers are using electronic cigarettes instead of smoking, the report found that they are already becoming less popular among teens. 13% of teens were using them in 2017, compared to 24% in 2015.

The Man Behind the Karaoke Machine

Before his world-famous invention, Daisuke Inoue made a living playing the keyboard at bars around his hometown – Kobe, Japan. Customers would ask him to play their favorite songs while they sang.

One night, a businessman asked Inoue for a favor. He said that he was meeting clients at a bar in another town. He knew that he would have to sing, so he asked Inoue to record some instrumental music.

“At that moment, I had the idea for the Juke 8,” the first karaoke machine, Inoue told *The Atlantic*. “You would put money into a machine with a microphone ... and it would play the music people wanted to sing.”

That was in 1969. By the 1970s, the karaoke machine had spread from Kobe to Osaka, and then Tokyo. Today, karaoke bars can be found in almost every city around the world.

In-home karaoke machines became available in 1987 and were popular in Japan. In the west, however, they did not find success until companies started selling them as home theater systems, which are now common in American households.

Inoue hasn't made much money from the karaoke machine because he never patented it. Most of his income has come from another invention: a chemical that stops insects and rats from destroying the electronics inside karaoke machines.

Inoue still lives with his family in his hometown, Kobe. He told *The Atlantic* that about once a week, he and his three grandchildren have a karaoke contest. “It is a time we all look forward to, and it is my way to honor karaoke and pass it on to the next generation”.

Who Owns the Moon?

Dennis Hope started selling land on the moon in 1980. By 2009 he said he had sold \$2 million of lunar property. There are many organizations that will sell you land on the moon, Mars, or even Venus. But any document that claims a person owns land on the moon – or anywhere in space – means nothing because no government would support it. This is thanks to the United Nations' Outer Space Treaty.

Space law started to expand in the 1950s when humans first started exploring space. It was around this time that the UN started to think about writing laws for space. In 1958 the United Nations created the Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. Today this committee includes Japan, China, the US, Russia, and many other nations.

In 1960, nine years before humans first got to the moon, the International Institute of Space Law was launched to make sure that nations worked together on laws about space. This led to the creation of the United Nations' Outer Space Treaty. The Treaty was approved in 1967 and says that space cannot be owned by any nation on earth. So even if a country colonizes Mars, they won't own the planet.

The Treaty makes sure that space is free for all nations to explore. However, NASA and other organizations plan to travel to Mars within the next few decades. This raises interesting questions for space law: will countries and organizations really follow the Outer Space Treaty, and how can the laws be imposed from Earth?

How Old Is Too Old to Work?

Almost one in five Americans over the age of 65 are working or looking for work, according to the American Association of Retired Persons (AARP), a group that supports older Americans. But while two-thirds of older people say they plan to work during their retirement years, only about 20% actually do. There are numerous reasons for this, says labor expert Teresa Ghilarducci.

Ghilarducci says that older people are less likely to move to other parts of the country for a job, because it will mean leaving their family and home. Also, some jobs may be too physical for older workers. And older people may not have as much experience with computers as younger workers.

Another issue is age discrimination, according to Ghilarducci. Even if older people are able to keep up with younger workers, many employers still avoid hiring them. This is often because they are worried that older people will not stay with the company for as long as younger workers.

A new AARP survey found that more than 90 percent of workers over the age of 45 think age discrimination is a common problem. Most of those surveyed said that they have experienced it. Government data also shows that nearly one third of workers over the age of 55 who lose their jobs stay unemployed for six months or longer.

Foods for a Better Night's Sleep

It is well known that not getting enough sleep can increase your risk of developing serious health problems such as heart disease, diabetes, and even obesity. But improving the quality of your sleep might be as easy as changing your diet, as some foods have been found to contain chemicals that help us sleep. So if you have trouble sleeping at night, don't forget to put these items on your supermarket list!

Bananas

Bananas are rich in magnesium and potassium, and both of them help our muscles relax. They are also a good source of vitamin B6 – sometimes called an anti-stress vitamin – which might be just what you need right before you go to bed.

Oatmeal

Though more popular as a breakfast food around the world, having a small bowl of oatmeal before bed can make you sleepy. This is because it contains melatonin, a hormone that relaxes your body and helps you fall asleep faster.

Turkey

Turkey is as delicious as it is healthy. But more importantly, it contains tryptophan, a chemical that acts as a sedative. Besides, turkey has a lot of protein, which has also been found to improve sleep quality.

Milk

A glass of warm milk is perhaps the best known natural "remedy" for many sleep problems. But this may not have anything to do with the chemicals it contains. Actually, drinking a cup of warm milk before bedtime may bring back memories of childhood which can help us relax and fall asleep more easily.

Americans Get Ready for Halloween

Americans are expected to spend about \$9 billion on Halloween this year as they buy costumes, decorations, and candy for the annual October 31 event. The National Market Federation expects more than 175 million Americans to take part in Halloween activities this year, spending about \$3.2 billion on costumes, \$2.7 billion on decorations, and \$2.6 billion on candy.

CandyStore.com examined 11 years of data to come up with the favorite Halloween candy in each US state. The website found that, overall, Skittles, M&M's and Snickers top the list. They also came up with a list of the worst Halloween candy. Those include Candy corn, Tootsie Rolls and Smarties.

Americans who plan on buying candy for trick-or-treat are expected to spend an average of \$27 on it. Besides getting candy, children in the US are also looking forward to dressing up in costumes. The most popular costumes for kids this year include princess, superhero and Batman, the National Market Federation reports.

But Halloween isn't just for kids. Many adults also plan to dress up for the day, and they are most likely to choose witches, vampires and zombie costumes. And even America's pets are getting into the action. Pet owners plan to dress their animal friends as pumpkins, hotdogs and skeletons, according to the National Market Federation.

Inventors Win Award for Making Water From Air

A couple from California has built a machine that can make water from air. Their invention won the \$1.5 million XPrize For Water Abundance, an international award for ideas that could help solve the world's water crisis.

David Hertz owns a business that creates eco-friendly homes. But he decided to begin water experiments when he learned that water can be made from air. Together with his wife and another partner, Hertz first started working to build a small machine that was able to produce about 570 liters of water a day. Then, he heard about the XPrize. He and his team decided to create a larger machine to try to win the award.

The competition had three main requirements. Devices had to produce at least 2,000 liters of water per day from the air and cost no more than two cents per liter. The devices also had to use 100 percent renewable energy. Hertz's device heats up wood pieces or other materials inside a shipping container to warm the air and produce humidity. Water is then collected at the end of the process.

Hertz and his wife said that bringing the machines to people who need them is now one of their main goals. They plan on using the money they won to make this happen. The United Nations says that about 3.6 billion people currently live in areas that experience lack of water at least once a month. Officials expect this number to keep increasing because of population growth, economic development, and climate change.