

Lesson 5 The facts

What was the consequence of the editor's insistence on facts and statistics?

Editors of newspapers and magazines often go to extremes to provide their reader with unimportant facts and statistics. Last year a journalist had been instructed by a well-known magazine to write an article on the president's palace in a new African republic. When the article arrived, the editor read the first sentence and then refused to publish it. The article began: 'Hundreds of steps lead to the high wall which surrounds the president's palace'. The editor at once sent the journalist a fax instructing him to find out the exact number of steps and the height of the wall.

The journalist immediately set out to obtain these important facts, but he took a long time to send them. Meanwhile, the editor was getting impatient, for the magazine would soon go to press. He sent the journalist two more faxes, but received no reply. He sent yet another fax informing the journalist that if he did not reply soon he would be fired. When the journalist again failed to reply, the editor reluctantly published the article as it had originally been written. A week later, the editor at last received a fax from the journalist. Not only had the poor man been arrested, but he had been sent to prison as well. However, he had at last been allowed to send a fax in which he informed the editor that he had been arrested while counting the 1,084 steps leading to the fifteen-foot wall which surrounded the president's palace.

New words and expressions 生词和短语

editor

n. 编辑

extreme

n. 极端

statistics

n. 统计数字

journalist

n. 新闻记者

president

n. 总统

palace

n. 王宫;宏伟的住宅

publish

v. 出版

fax
n. 传真

impatient
adj. 不耐烦的

fire
v. 解雇

originally
adv. 起初, 原先, 从前

参考译文

报刊杂志的编辑常常为了向读者提供成立一些关系紧要的事实和统计数字而走向极端。去年, 一位记者受一家有名的杂志的委托写一篇关于非洲某个新成立共和国总统府的文章。稿子寄来后, 编辑看第一句话就拒绝予以发表。文章的开头是这样的: “几百级台阶通向环绕总统的高墙。”编辑立即给那位记者发去传真, 要求他核实一下台阶的确切数字和围墙的高度。

记者立即出发去核实这些重要的事实, 但过了好长时间不见他把数字寄来, 在此期间, 编辑等得不耐烦了, 因为杂志马上要付印。他给记者先后发去两份传真, 但对方毫无反应。于是他又发了一份传真, 通知那位记者说, 若再不迅速答复, 将被解雇。但记者还是没有回复。编辑无奈, 勉强按原样发稿了。一周之后, 编辑终于接到记者的传真。那个可怜的新闻记者不仅被捕了, 而且还被送进了监狱。不过, 他终于获准发回了一份传真。在传真中他告诉编辑, 就在他数通向 15 英尺高的总统府围墙的 1, 084 级台阶时, 被抓了起来。

Lesson 85 Never too old to learn
How long has Mr. Page been teaching?

I have just received a letter from my old school, informing me that my former headmaster, Mr. Stuart Page, will be retiring next week. Pupils of the school, old and new, will be sending him a present to mark the occasion. All those who have contributed towards the gift will sign their names in a large album which will be sent to the headmaster's home. We shall all remember Mr. Page for his patience and understanding and for the kindly encouragement he gave us when we went so unwillingly to school. A great many former pupils will be attending a farewell dinner in his honour next Thursday. It is a curious coincidence that the day before his retirement, Mr. Page will have been teaching for a total of forty years. After he has retired, he will devote himself to gardening. For him, this will be an entirely new hobby. But this does not matter, for, as he has often remarked, one is never too old to learn.

New words and expressions 生词和短语

inform v. 告诉, 通知
headmaster n. 校长

contribute v. 捐助, 援助
gift n. 礼物, 赠品
album n. 签名簿, 相册
patience n. 耐心
encouragement n. 鼓励
farewell n. 告别
honour n. 敬意
coincidence n. 巧合
total n. 总
devote v. 致力于
gardening n. 园艺
hobby n. 爱好, 嗜好

我刚刚收到母校的一封信, 通知我说以前的校长斯图亚特·佩奇先生下星期就退休了。为了纪念这个日子, 学校的学生——无论老同学还是新同学——将送他一件礼物。所有凑钱买此礼品的人都将自己的名字签在一大本签名簿上, 签名簿将被送到校长的家里。我们不会忘记佩奇先生对我们既有耐心又充满理解, 也不会忘记在我们不愿去上学时他给予我们的亲切鼓励。很多老同学都准备参加下星期四为他举行的告别宴会。佩奇先生退休的前一天正好是他执教满 40 年的日子, 这真是奇妙的巧合。他退休后, 将致力于园艺。对于他来说, 这将是一种全新的爱好。但这没有关系, 因为正如他常说的那样, 人要活到老学到老