

Extreme interviews

This reading talking about a new type of interview that comes from Silicon Valley in California where the purpose of the interviewers is to see how quickly people can respond and to see how smart they are and if they get agitated easily.

Hard to believe

Three different horror stories are told in this reading. The first story is titled "Noises in the night" and stars a couple who have just moved into a country house. The second story is set in a hill and is about a strange object that was on top of it. The third story is entitled "The coffee cup reading" and is about two friends who go to work in Turkey and find an old friend of theirs who asks if she can read their coffee cups.

Cyberchondria

This passage describes a girl experiencing health issues who consults her family doctor. The doctor notes her rapid heartbeat and recommends further testing. Worried, she searches online for possible causes and finds 407 options, which frightens her. Eventually, it's revealed that she suffers from cyberchondria, a condition where people anxiously search for medical information online. The story underscores the prevalence of misleading information on the internet and emphasizes the importance of consulting professionals for health concerns, rather than relying on internet searches.

Trading ages

In an experiment, two men aged 29 and 32 are made to look elderly with wigs and makeup for a month. At the end of the experiment, they are surprised by others' attitudes towards the elderly and understand the importance of human relationships at any age. They also realize that the elderly are simply young people facing the challenges of old age.

The truth about air travel. This reading discusses key aspects of air travel, including the usefulness of life jackets in sea crashes, the vigilance of customs officers, the danger of birds to planes during landing, and the misuse of wheelchairs by some passengers.

Nightmare over the Atlantic!

The story recounts an incident where a pre-recorded message was mistakenly played on a plane, informing passengers that the aircraft was about to crash into the sea. This caused widespread fear among the passengers. Fortunately, it turned out that the message had been sent in error, and the plane was not actually crashing.

Incredibly short stories

This collection showcases a variety of short stories from fiftywordstories.com, featuring diverse narratives. It includes a tale about thieves in a shopping mall, a dramatic story of a woman who stabs her husband and then flees in a brakeless car, an account of a father who, since his wife's death, waits late into the night for his daughter to come home, increasingly later each time, and concludes with a girl's story about her monotonous diet.

Lazy Susan

This reading tells the story of Susan, who was called by her friends "Lazy Susan" because she was very lazy. One evening, while she was leaving the cinema, Susan had her purse stolen by a thief. So she asked Stan, or her husband, to teach her how to use the gun so that she could defend herself in case it happened again, despite the fact that she had always hated guns. After taking self-defense lessons she went back to the movie theater where she had been robbed last time even though Stan didn't want her to go. As she walked back to her car she saw a man standing behind her she grabbed the gun in order to defend herself.

How we will be living in 20 years' time... (or will we?)

In this reading we talk about what the world will be like in 20 years. Most likely 100% of waste will be recycled, cars will almost certainly be all electric, low cost airlines will disappear, paper books will no longer be produced, temperatures will be higher and higher and many ski resorts will be closed due to lack of snow.

Don't know what to say? Talk about the weather!

Dr. Johnson noted in 1758 that Englishmen often start conversations with weather talk. A recent survey found that Britons mention the weather every six hours and 70% check the forecast daily. There was a mix of delight and concern during a recent 29°C heatwave in late September, with discussions about whether it constituted an Indian summer. The term varies globally; in Britain, similar late heatwaves used to be called 'St Martin's summers.' British people use weather talk as a social tool and to avoid personal topics, as explained by Sir John Mortimer.

I'm John, I'm a speedaholic

John Earl, a 25-year-old speed addict, enrolled in a rehabilitation program aimed at people aged 18 to 45 who have excessively broken speed limits. This program is designed to help participants understand and mitigate the dangers of high-speed driving. It appears to be effective, as motorcyclists and other participants report an increased awareness of the risks.

How to eat an Elephant

This text explores human responses in survival scenarios. It mentions that at air survival schools, learners are taught how to handle such situations. Statistically, 80% of individuals freeze, 10% panic, but the remaining 10% stay calm and think logically, significantly increasing their survival chances.

Lost in the Jungle

The story describes the journey of four boys into the jungle with the guide, Karl, to find an uncharted Indian village. After a week, doubts and tensions arise about Karl's knowledge of the village's location. This leads to two boys giving up and returning home.

Regrets, we've had a few

This text discusses the theme of regrets, highlighting common areas such as love, family, career, health, and finances. It notes that while some people live with regrets, others believe their mistakes have shaped them positively. The second part features interviews with four individuals discussing their personal regrets.

What music would you play to an alien?

In Austin, a boy born deaf, never understood the allure of music until he tried a hearing aid. He then discovered a passion for music, spending hours each day listening, starting with 14th-century pieces. Yet, he still cherishes silence, calling it his favourite sound due to the peace it brings when he turns off his hearing aid.

Three things you (probably) didn't know about

A Canadian psychologist suggests that video gamers are more adept at controlling their dreams, with a greater tendency to experience lucid dreams and fewer nightmares. Unlike non-gamers, when faced with nightmares, gamers are more likely to confront their fears rather than fleeing.

The chef who cooks in the middle of the night

The text describes Robert Wood, a 55-year-old retired chef and long-term sleepwalker. At night, he often cooks various dishes or engages in other activities like turning on the TV loudly or flooding the bathroom. His sleepwalking causes him and his partner to lose sleep and raises concerns about potential accidents, like starting a fire.

How men and women argue

This article explores the dynamics of arguments between men and women, drawing on an example provided by linguist Deborah Cameron. It highlights a situation where a wife falls through a rotten floor and blames her husband, reacting with strong insults. The article generalizes that men usually prefer silence to avoid arguments, whereas women are more likely to engage in discussions to improve the situation.

What every body is saying

This passage describes an interrogation by Agent Joe Navarro, where he uses body language to identify a murder suspect. When the ice pick, the murder weapon, is mentioned, the suspect's strong eyelid reaction singles him out as the main suspect.

How not to get robbed in the street

This text offers tips to prevent robbery. It suggests not displaying valuables, keeping electronics hidden, especially for tourists. Caution is advised around children and it's recommended to heed local advice for a positive experience. Always use regulated taxis and avoid cars with someone in the front passenger seat.

Crime online

The text addresses online crime and parallels between the internet and the real world, with the main distinction being free online downloads. This has drastically affected the music industry, leading to a 40% reduction since 2000 and the shutdown of famous music magazines like Melody Maker and The Face.

Chicken fight

The reading describes a conflict between chefs Andrew Palmer and Geoff Lewis over a stolen recipe. When Andrew accused Geoff of theft and publication in a newspaper, they were both invited to prepare the dish for a verdict. The newspaper staff tasted both dishes and unanimously favored Andrew's as the original.

Four of the most misleading adverts of all time

This text highlights four particularly deceptive advertisements. The first, from Lucky Strike, features a doctor claiming their cigarettes are less harmful. Ralph Lauren's 2009 ad, criticized for extreme airbrushing, made a model's waist look smaller than her head. Another ad falsely claimed vitamins could prevent prostate cancer. The final ad falsely promoted dietary supplements as a way to lose weight without exercising.

Would you pass the bagel test?

Paul Feldman, who worked at a Washington research institute analysing U.S. Navy weapons expenditures, began rewarding his team with bagels for their achievements. This habit led to him being known more for bringing bagels than for his research role. Eventually, Paul left his job to sell bagels to Washington offices. Despite initial doubts from others, this career change proved financially successful.

Andrew Marr's Megacities

Andrew Marr's 'Megacities' contrasts Tokyo and Mexico City, two of the world's largest cities. Tokyo is highlighted for its technological advancement, efficient subway, and low crime, but suffers from high property prices and cramped living conditions. Conversely, Mexico City is known for its lively street culture and social gathering spots, yet faces challenges with pollution and social inequality, leading to a higher crime rate.

Suffering scientists

This text recounts the stories of four scientists who suffered due to their own experiments. Sir Humphry Davy became disabled after inhaling gases, including nitrous oxide. Alexander Bogdanov died from a transfusion with infected blood. Thomas Midgley contracted polio after demonstrating the safety of leaded petrol by inhaling its vapor. Louis Slotin died from a critical reaction caused by an accident during a nuclear experiment.

The power of words

This text discusses the power of words through the lens of notable speeches by key figures who advocated for rights and their communities. It covers Emmeline Pankhurst's address following the imprisonment of suffragettes, Winston Churchill's speech during the threat of a German invasion in 1940, Nelson Mandela's 1990 speech after his release from a 27-year imprisonment, and Barack Obama's 2008 presidential campaign speech that contributed to his historic election.

Presentation disasters!

The text recounts an anecdote about a presentation mishap where the speaker, in an effort to avoid being a typical English-speaking Brit, prepared their presentation in French for a Belgian IT company's management team. However, during a break, they were requested to switch to English, as the audience was from the Dutch-speaking part of Belgium. The text also offers ten tips for public speaking, emphasizing the importance of preparation, audience awareness, clarity, and engaging delivery.