English 102A

Winter 2022

**Diagnostic Exercises**

Read the sheet all the way through and follow the instructions. Please turn this sheet in via Lea before you leave.

**Part A: Reading**

Read the following text and answer the two comprehension questions at the end. Then, use this text to complete the Language Identification chart below

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| AITA for “perpetuating ethnic stereotypes” about Jorts?  **ORIGINAL POST**  We have two workplace cats in one area of our worksite. They add value to the worksite, we all love the cats and the worksite cat presence is not the issue. One of the cats (Jean) is a tortoiseshell cat we have had for years. The other cat (Jorts) is a large orange cat and a recent addition.  Jorts is just… kind of a simple guy. For example, Jorts can’t open a door even when it’s ajar— he shoves it whether he is going in or out, so often he closes the door he is trying to go through. This means he is often trapped inside the place he was trying to exit and meows until he is rescued.  My colleague Pam (not her real name) has been spending a lot of time trying to teach Jorts things. The doors thing is the main example — it’s a real issue because the cats are fed in a closet and Jorts keeps pushing the door closed. Jean can actually open all the other interior doors since they are a lever type knob, but she can’t open this particular door if she is trapped INSIDE the closet.  Tortie Jean is very nice to poor orange Jorts, and she is kept busy letting him out of rooms he has trapped himself in, so this seems easy to resolve. I put down a door stop.  Pam then said I was depriving Jorts of the “chance to learn” and kept removing the doorstop. She set up a series of special learning activities for Jorts, and tried to put these tasks on the whiteboard of daily team tasks (I erased them). She thinks we need to teach him how to clean himself better and how to get out of minor barriers like when he gets a cup stuck on his head, etc. I love Jorts but he’s just dumb af and we can’t change that.  Don’t get me wrong— watching her try to teach Jorts how to walk through a door is hilarious, but Jean got locked in the closet twice last week. Yesterday I installed a cat cutout thing in the door and Pam started getting really huffy. I made a gentle joke about “you can’t expect Jean’s tortoiseshell smarts from orange cat Jorts” which made Pam FURIOUS. She started crying and left the hallway, then sent an email to the group (including volunteers) and went home early.  In her email Pam said I was “perpetuating ethnic stereotypes by saying orange cats are dumb” and is demanding a racial sensitivity training before she will return. I don’t think it’s relevant but just in case, Pam is a white person in a mostly minority staff (and no she is not ginger/does not have red hair).  **UPDATE**  Thanks for responding to my query which had truly upset me. I work to have a good relationship with my team and the situation had gotten weird so gradually that I lost perspective.  I just met with HR [Human Resources], she had already met with Pam. HR was concerned about Pam’s comparing ethnic stereotypes with giving a cat a doorstop and they addressed that which went well. HR will follow up to make sure Pam understands. (The replies to my query were helpful to me for this discussion.)  HR also addressed Pam assigning other staff Jorts-related tutoring, as it is not appropriate for Pam to assign others work. This also went well.  We both think Pam had a hard time with the transition from volunteer to staff, and may have “new kid” sensitivity projected to Jorts. Pam got emotional about her perception that I favor Jean over Jorts and gave specific examples. Some of these things are fair. Jorts deserves respect as a member of our team.  There are 3 buildings in our workplace. Jean and Jorts are limited to one. HR told me there were 5 holdouts about vaccines, and restricting unvaccinated people from entering the building (to protect Jean and Jorts) was enough to win over 4 of them. That’s CRAZY, but great.  More importantly: the cats’ presence greatly enhances our work with our clients, and Jorts’ friendly nature has been so great. Both cats truly are doing important work. Truly Jorts deserves to be treated with respect.  We all deserve to be treated with dignity at work, so I will apologize to Jorts about some things that were insensitive or disrespectful.   * Jean has a nice cat bed with her name on it, while Jorts has chosen an old boot tray in my office with a towel in it. Recently a visitor put wet boots in the boot tray and Pam saw Jorts sleeping on the wet boots. I bought a bed for Jorts today and a name tag has been ordered. * I will apologize to Jorts and remove the sign saying “DAYS SINCE JORTS HAD A TRASH CAN MISHAP: 0” Jorts likes to fish dirty paper cups out and he often falls into the bin or gets a cup stuck on his head, etc. (He is able to get out of the bin by tipping it over so it isn’t a safety issue.) * Jean’s “staff bio” has a photo of Jean, while Jorts’ bio has a photo of a sweet potato. I did not actually know either cat had a staff bio, but we will use a photo of Jorts instead of a sweet potato.   HR also suggested changing Pam’s duties so she is “in charge” of the cats. This I refused, the cats are my staff, not Pam’s. I think Pam was well-intended but actually not meeting the needs of either Jean or Jorts so they remain under my supervision. (Pam is also not to put cups on Jorts’ head or intentionally put him into frustrating situations given his unique needs.)  Lastly, and this made us both laugh so hard we can’t deal with it in person and will be said via email: Pam admits that she has been putting margarine on Jorts in an attempt to teach him to groom himself better. This may explain the diarrhea problem Jean developed (which required a vet visit).  Pam is NOT to apply margarine to any of her coworkers. Jean has shown she is willing to be in charge of helping Jorts stay clean. If this task becomes onerous for Jean, we can have a groomer help. I am crying laughing typing this.  Throwawayorangecat. “AITA for ‘perpetuating ethnic stereotypes’ about Jorts?” *Reddit,* December 21, <https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/rfwgmc/aita_for_perpetuating_ethnic_stereotypes_about/>. Accessed: January 7, 2022.  Throwawayorangecat. “UPDATE: aita for perpetuating stereotypes about Jorts?” *Reddit,* December 23, <https://www.reddit.com/r/AmItheAsshole/comments/rfwgmc/aita_for_perpetuating_ethnic_stereotypes_about/>. Accessed: January 7, 2022. |

* How does Jorts contribute at his workplace?

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| Jorts contribute at his workplace by having a nice relationship with clients, which helps the workers. |

* In two or three sentences, summarize the main problem the OP (original poster) is having.

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| The main problem described in the post is that the original poster have two cats (Jorts and Jean) at his workplace, and one of them (Jort) is "a simple guy", which are kind words to say that he finds him stupid. But his coworker named Pam thinks that it is all stereotypes about orange cats being stupid, and that Jort only have to learn things. |

**Part B: Language Identification**

Read through the text again and find examples of the grammar element described in the first column. Look at the example

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| **Grammar element** | **Example from “AITA for ‘perpetuating ethnic stereotypes’ about Jorts?”** | **Grammatical Name**  **(optional! Only if you know them!)** |
| * Two different verbs that express the present | * We have two workplace cats | Simple present |
| * she is willing to be in charge | Present progressive |
| * Two different verbs that express the past | HR also suggested changing Pam’s duties |  |
| HR was concerned about Pam’s |  |
| * Two different verbs that express the future | so I will apologize to Jorts |  |
| we will use a photo of Jorts |  |
| * At least 2 verbs with some form of “have” (will have, had, has) + a past participle (watched, swam, etc) | HR was concerned about Pam’s |  |
| we have had for years |  |
| the situation had gotten weird |  |
| he has trapped himself |  |
| * A sentence with a comma (,) | Jean’s “staff bio” has a photo of Jean, while Jorts’ bio has a photo of a sweet potato. | |
| * A sentence with a colon (:) | More importantly: the cats’ presence greatly enhances our work with our clients | |
| * A sentence with an em-dash (—) | Jorts can’t open a door even when it’s ajar— he shoves it whether he is going in or out | |
| * A sentence with a transition word (‘marqueur de relation’), like “nevertheless” | Jean’s “staff bio” has a photo of Jean, while Jorts’ bio has a photo of a sweet potato. | |
| * Two or three words that are new to you | ajar | |
| tortoiseshell | |
| Tortie | |

**Part C: Writing**

Choose **one** of the topics below and write a short paragraph (@150-200 words). If you can reuse new vocabulary, do so!

* If you had to choose, would you say you are more like: Jean, Jorts, Pam, HR, or OP (original poster)? Why?
* Alternately, is there a Jorts-type figure in your life? Describe them.
* If your student photo had to be replaced by an object (like Jorts’ sweet potato) what would it be and why?
* Describe an unusual experience you have had at work.

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| Because i never had a real job, i only know smart people and i don't think any object would describe me well, i will chose the first topic. If i would chose a character in this story, it would be the HR because Jean and Jorts are cats and i am not, Pam is the kind of person that i have difficulties to like and the OP made some mistakes that i am not likely to do even if i find them funny (like replacing the picture of Jorts). The HR is really serious about the situation and is trying really hard to reconciliate Pam and the OP, and i think thats the kind of thing i would do in this situation. Because often, i don't want to take sides in a conflict because i think it is not the solution to resolve it. |