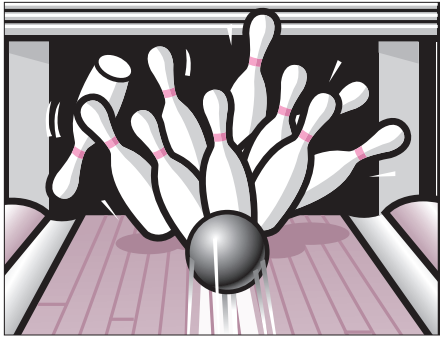


Readers' Stories



Joan Acosta

bestofthereader.ca

Best of the Reader series of books by Joan Acosta is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 2.5 Canada Licence.














joan@joanacosta.ca

Copyright 2013



The image is a Creative Commons license card for Attribution-NonCommercial-No Derivative Works 2.5 Canada. It features a yellow header with the Creative Commons logo and the text 'creative commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 2.5 Canada'. Below the header, there is a section titled 'You are free:' with a Canadian flag icon, followed by an icon of a document and the text 'to Share — to copy, distribute and transmit the work'. Below this is a section titled 'Under the following conditions:' with three icons: a person (Attribution), a crossed-out dollar sign (Noncommercial), and an equals sign (No Derivative Works). Each icon is followed by a brief explanation of the condition. At the bottom, there are three bullet points: 'For any reuse or distribution, you must make clear to others the licence terms of this work.', 'Any of the above conditions can be waived if you get permission from the copyright holder.', and 'The author's moral rights are retained in this licence.'

Contents

Welcome	4
 Johnny is a smart parrot	5
 We planted tulips.	8
 Let's go bowling	11
 A funny adventure on a farm.	13
 A wonderful visit from a school friend.	13
 Save our planet	15
 Honeymoon in Paris	17
 New Year's in Thailand	17
 Legend of the dancing goats	19
 Gabi's hiccups.	21
 Proverbs from around the world	23
 Bees cause car crash	26
 The kind man and the snake.	26
Find it.	29
Answers for exercises	30

Welcome

This e-book is part of a series called Best of The Reader. The stories in the e-books are from *The Westcoast Reader*. It is a newspaper for adults who are improving their English reading skills.


Students wrote all the stories in this e-book. They were published in *The Westcoast Reader* between 1982 and 2009.


To the reader


- ✓ You can use this book in a classroom, with a tutor, or on your own.
- ✓ Each story has exercises to go with it. These exercises can help you improve your English and reading skills.
- ✓ You can check your answers at the end of the book.

Three reading levels

There are three reading levels in this book. Here are the symbols for each level:

Level 1 

Level 2 

Level 3 

To the teacher

Learners can read the articles and do the exercises individually, in pairs, or in groups.

The topics can be explored further through discussion or follow-up activities.

Teachers' Guide

There is a Teachers' Guide on this website. The guide has ideas and suggestions on how to use the e-books with students.

Acknowledgements

The author gratefully acknowledges the financial support of Capilano University for this project.

A special thank you to the learners and teachers who helped choose the articles for this book.

All of the material in this book first appeared in *The Westcoast Reader* (1982 to 2009). Some of the articles have been updated. Most of the exercises and activities for learners are based on material from *The Westcoast Reader Teachers' Notes* (1982 to 2009).

Credits

Photos

Front cover—goats: Guy Parsons; tulips, gargoyle: iStockphoto; spider: Nola Johnston

Pages 8 and 9: iStockphoto; Page 13: Canada Post (Niagara Falls); Page 17: iStockphoto (Paris), Thailangr (Songkran); Page 18: iStockphoto; Page 19: Fair Trade Coffee (coffee beans)

Illustrations

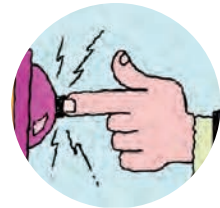
Page 5: clip art; Page 7: Craig Freeman; Page 8 (tulips: top), 10, 11, 15 (top), 19, 23, 26 (farmer): Guy Parsons; Page 8, 9, 15, 16, 19 (cup), 21, 26 (bees): Nola Johnston



Johnny is a smart parrot



I have an African grey parrot.
His name is Johnny.



Johnny is very smart.
He can say about 100 words.



He can also make
the sound of a doorbell,
a telephone,
and an alarm clock.



— Musa Roberts

The Westcoast Reader 03/2008

Unscramble the words

Put the words in the right order to make sentences.

1. have African I parrot an grey

I have an African grey parrot.

2. Johnny His is name

3. smart Johnny very is

4. say 100 He words can about

Categories

Add two more words to each category.

1. **pets:** parrot _____

2. **colours:** grey _____

3. **names:** Johnny _____

4. **numbers:** 100 _____

5. **continents:** Africa _____

What's the sound?

The sounds that go with the pictures are mixed up. Write the correct sound next to each picture.



BABOOM
BABOOM
BABOOM

1. GLUG GLUG GLUG GLUG

GLUG
GLUG
GLUG
GLUG



2. _____

BIPPITA
BOPPITA
BIPPITA
BOPPITA



3. _____

CRUNCH
CRUNCH
CRUNCH



4. _____



We planted tulips



fall



spring

Our ESL class planted tulip bulbs in the fall. The flowers bloomed in the spring. It's easy to plant tulips.

You will need

■ a good place to plant tulips

■ tulip bulbs



■ trowel

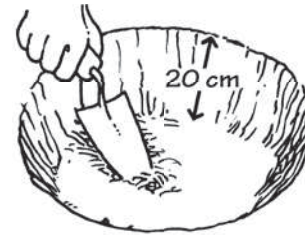


■ ruler



How to plant bulbs

1 Use a trowel to dig a hole 20 centimetres (cm) deep.



2 Place the bulbs in the hole.



3 Cover the bulbs with soil.



4 Water the soil.

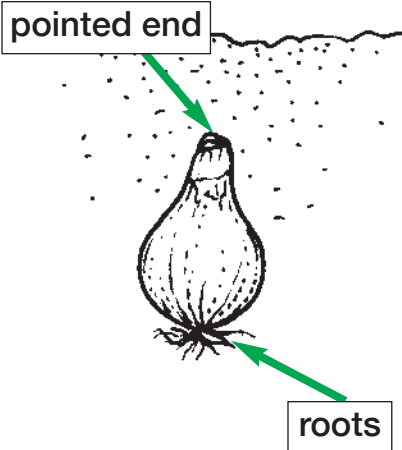


Tips for planting

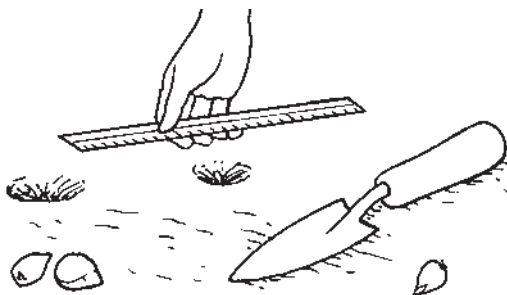
✓ Plant tulip bulbs in a sunny spot.



✓ Plant the pointed end of the bulb up.



✓ Plant the bulbs about 10 centimetres (cm) apart.



The Westcoast Reader 09/2007



Plant tulip bulbs in the fall. They will bloom in the spring.

Flower quiz

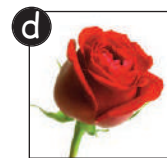
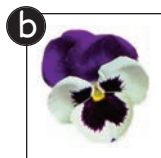
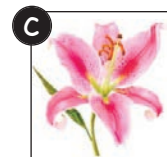
Unscramble the letters to make a word. Write the word on the lines. Then match the word with the correct flower.

1. (d) oser r o s e

2. () lupit _____

3. () yill _____

4. () spyan _____



Planting tulips

Here are six steps for planting tulips. Put them in the correct order.

___ Cover the bulbs with soil.

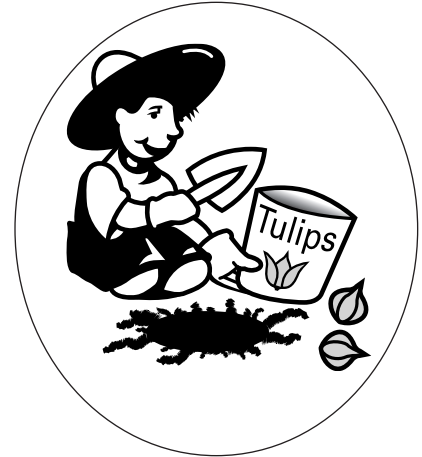
___ Water the soil.

1 Find a good place to plant tulips.

___ Dig a hole 20 centimetres deep.

___ Wait until spring for the tulips to bloom.

___ Place the bulbs in the hole.



Find the words

Find these words in the puzzle.
Some words go across and some go down.

bloom	ruler
bulb	soil
fall	spring
hole	trowel
plant	tulips
roots	water

s	r	b	l	o	o	m	z	t
p	o	u	r	o	o	t	s	u
r	u	l	e	r	o	v	x	l
i	i	b	p	l	a	n	t	i
n	j	y	n	p	h	e	z	p
g	i	z	b	q	o	o	f	s
i	s	o	i	l	l	x	a	c
c	l	w	a	t	e	r	l	q
t	r	o	w	e	l	x	l	t

Let's go bowling

 Our class went bowling for a field trip.

When we got to the bowling alley we took off our street shoes. We put on bowling shoes.

We chose our bowling balls. Then we entered our names on the computer screen. We were ready to bowl.

It's a strike!

Some students in our class had bowled before. They were good bowlers. On our first turn, some students got a strike, some students got a spare, and some got a gutter ball.

We liked getting a strike. Everyone cheered. We didn't like getting a gutter ball.

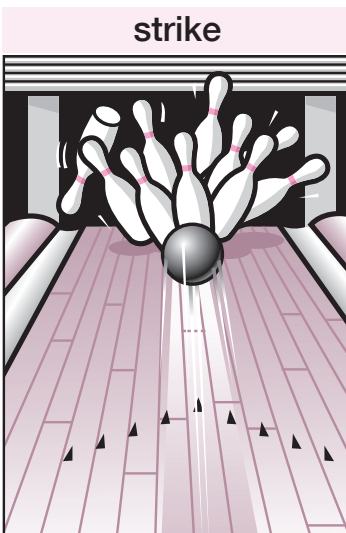


bowling ball

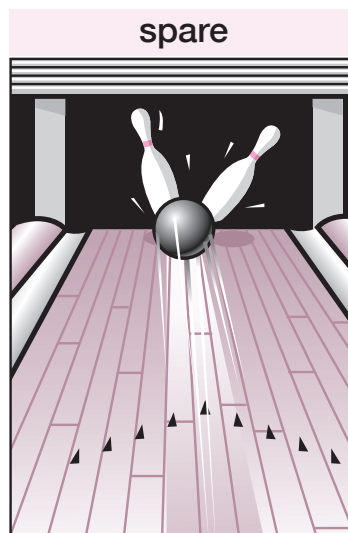


bowling shoes

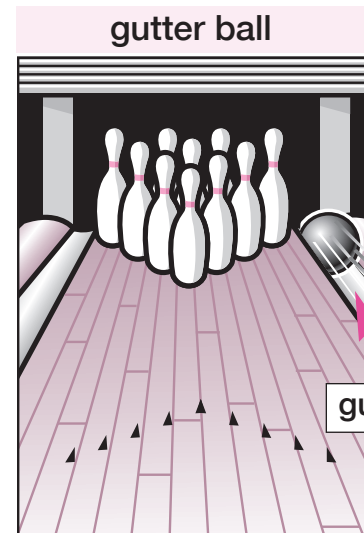
Bowling words



All 10 pins fall down on the first ball.



All 10 pins fall down with the first two balls.



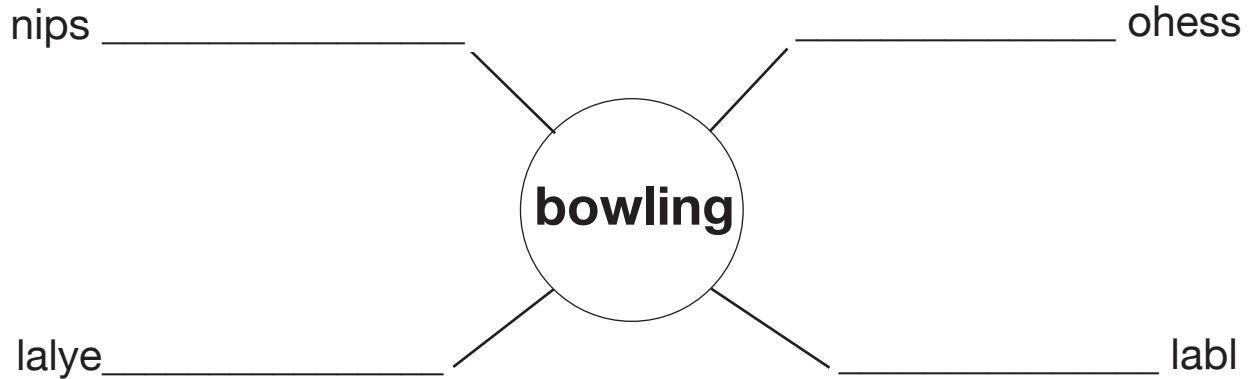
gutter

The ball rolls into the gutter.

The Westcoast Reader 11/2005

What's the word?

Unscramble the letters and write the words on the lines. All the words go with the word "bowling."



Finish the sentences

Use the words in the boxes to finish the sentences.

1. Take _____ your street shoes.
2. Did you talk _____ me after I left the party?
3. I will look _____ her address on the Internet.
4. My brother will pay _____ the money I lent him.
5. Put _____ your bowling shoes.
6. Let's eat _____ tonight. I don't feel like cooking.
7. I'm looking _____ my car keys.
8. Mario gave _____ all his old clothes.

out

for

off

away


up

back

on

about

A funny adventure on a farm

 I like to travel with my friends. I have been on trips to the Rocky Mountains and Niagara Falls.



Small adventures

I also like to go on small adventures. This past summer, I visited a farm in Abbotsford. It has cows, pigs, goats, and sheep.

Two baby goats liked my hat. They tried to bite it. My friend took a photo of me and the goats.

— Pauline Heung




The Westcoast Reader 03/2008



Butchart Gardens in Victoria

A wonderful visit from a school friend

 Last summer my friend Nobuko came to visit me. We had not seen each other for 30 years.

After high school, I got married and came to Canada with my husband. Nobuko stayed in Japan. She is married and has a son and two daughters.

I decided to show my friend some beautiful areas of British Columbia.

Her favourite place was Butchart Gardens near Victoria.

— Haruka Shimizu

The Westcoast Reader 01/2009

Finish the postcard

Fill in the blanks with words from the box.

Dear Magda,

I'm having a _____ time here in Victoria.

The weather is _____ and _____.

Tomorrow we are going to _____ Butchart Gardens.

Haruka says the _____ there are beautiful.

See you on _____.

Love,
Yumi

warm roses Sunday wonderful visit sunny

Write a postcard to a friend





Save our planet

 We made a list of 10 things to do to help the environment.

— Adult Literacy Class

■ Recycle all your glass and plastic bottles, pop cans, newspapers, and paper.

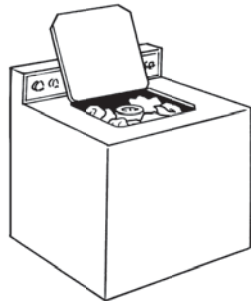


■ Turn off the lights, TV, and computer when you leave a room.



■ Use cloth bags instead of plastic bags when you go shopping.

■ Wash only full loads of clothes. Use cold water.

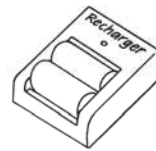


■ Use your own coffee mug instead of disposable cups.



■ Use compact fluorescent light (CFL) bulbs.

■ Use rechargeable batteries.



■ Take a quick shower instead of a bath. Showers use less hot water.



■ In the winter, turn down the heat when you go to bed.

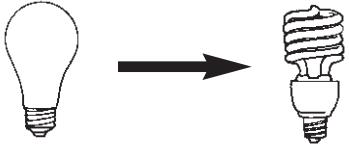
■ Leave your car at home. Ride your bike more often.



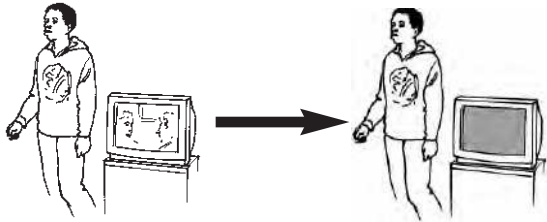
The Westcoast Reader 06/2007

Instead of this . . . do this

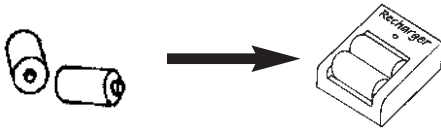
How can you save energy? Write a sentence using the phrase “instead of.”
For example: *Instead of having a bath, take a 5-minute shower.*



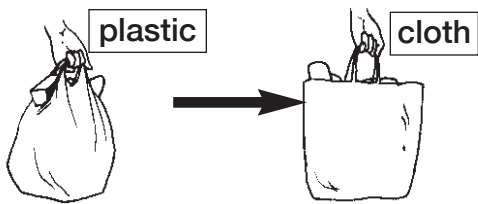
1. _____



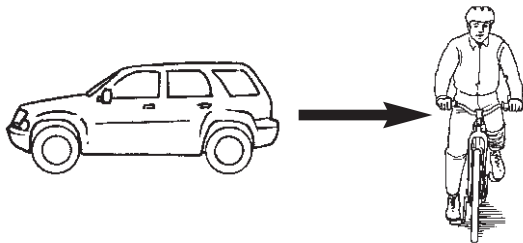
2. _____



3. _____



4. _____



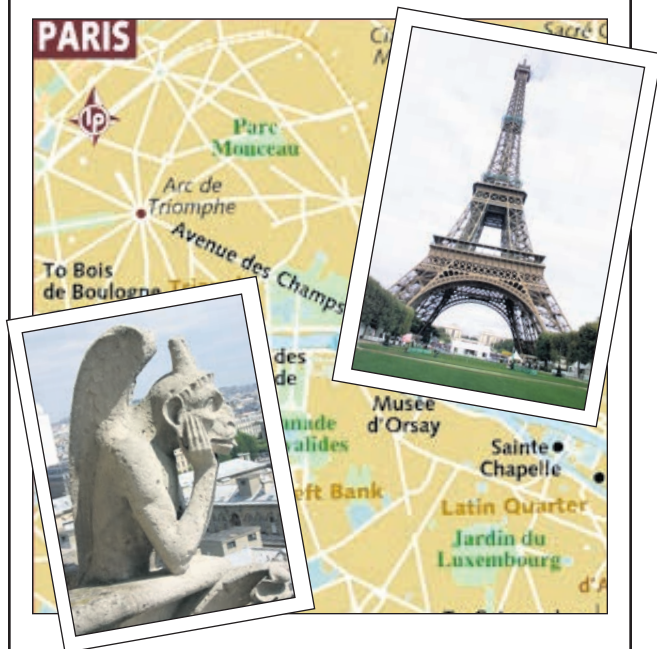
5. _____

Honeymoon in Paris

☞ My husband and I spent our honeymoon in Paris. We prepared for the trip for almost a month. I even began to learn some simple French.

Lost in Paris

On our first day in Paris, we spent all day sightseeing. Unfortunately, at the end of the day, we could not remember how to get back to our hotel.



I don't speak French

We went up to a man on the street. In my poor French, I asked him for directions. He put his hand in his pocket, took out a piece of paper, looked up, and slowly said: “*Je ne parle pas français.*” (I don't speak French.)

— Cherry Tan

The Westcoast Reader 03/2008



Splashing water on people is part of New Year's celebrations in Thailand.

New Year's in Thailand

☞ New Year's in Thailand is called Songkran. It is on April 13.

Older people in Thailand use the moon to count the months. They believe that April is the first month of the new year.

On Songkran, families get together and take food to the temples to give to the monks.

A huge water fight

Another custom is to pour scented water on the hands of monks, seniors, and parents to say thank you. Then people splash water on each other, and everyone enjoys a huge water fight.

— Neritsara Pimsen

The Westcoast Reader 04/2002

Where in the world?

Match the tourist attraction on the left with the city on the right.

- | | |
|------------------------------|------------------|
| ___ 1. Eiffel Tower | a. Victoria |
| ___ 2. Parthenon | b. New York City |
| ___ 3. Buckingham Palace | c. Istanbul |
| ___ 4. Blue Mosque | d. Paris |
| ___ 5. Butchart Gardens | e. Athens |
| ___ 6. Empire State Building | f. London |




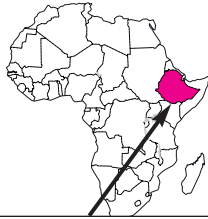
All about the moon

Draw a circle around the correct answer.

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1. If something happens <i>once in a blue moon</i> , it happens ____.
a. often
b. rarely | 4. A person who <i>moonlights</i> , works ____.
a. overtime
b. two jobs |
| 2. When can you see a <i>harvest moon</i> ?
a. In the fall
b. In the summer | 5. If you are <i>over the moon</i> , you are very ____.
a. athletic
b. happy |
| 3. It's a holiday a couple takes after they are married.
a. honeymoon
b. moon dance | 6. The symbol for Islam is a moon and a ____.
a. star
b. sun |

Legend of the dancing goats

 Many years ago, a goat herder named Kaldi lived in the land we now call Ethiopia.



Ethiopia is in Africa.

Kaldi loses his goats

One morning, Kaldi took his goats to a field to eat grass. When he returned in the afternoon, the goats were not there. He looked everywhere. Finally, he found them.

Kaldi's goats dance and play

When Kaldi saw the goats, he was surprised. The animals were not acting in a normal way. They were dancing and playing. Then Kaldi noticed that the goats were eating the shiny red berries of a small tree.



Kaldi eats the red berries

Kaldi said, "What are these red berries that make my goats so happy? Maybe I should try them too."

Kaldi took some berries home. The next morning, he ate the berries. After that, he felt very awake and happy.

This is the legend of how coffee was discovered.

— Fikirte Worku

Coffee



■ Workers pick ripe red coffee berries by hand.

■ Coffee beans are brown after they are roasted.

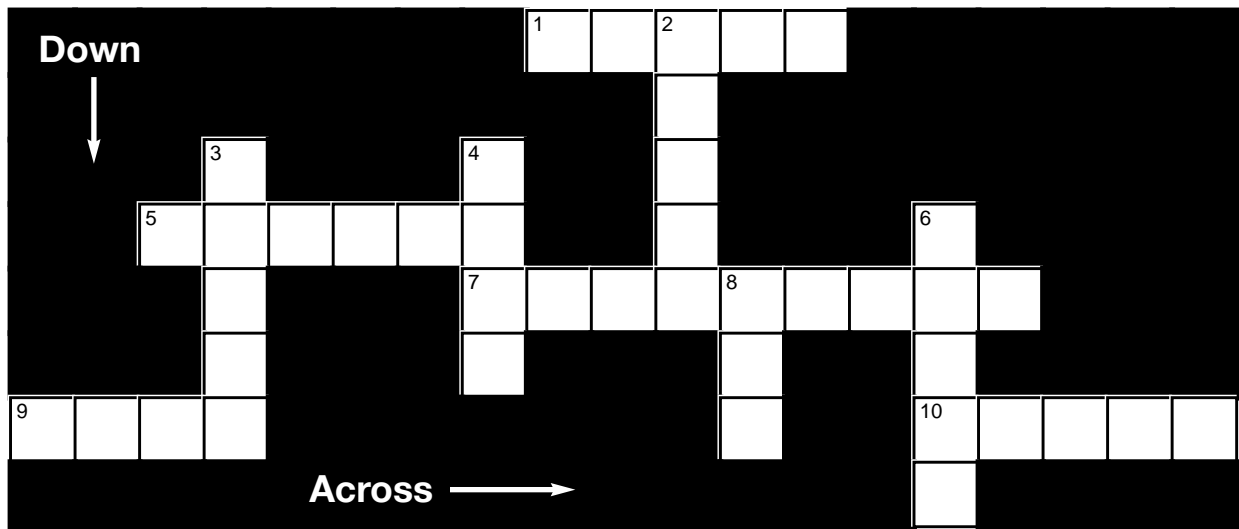


■ More than 60 percent of Canadians drink coffee every day.



The Westcoast Reader 03/2008

Crossword



Across

1. Another word for little
5. ____ beans are brown.
7. Morning, _____, evening
9. A group of goats
10. Opposite of dull is _ h _ _ y .

Down

2. Not asleep
3. Past tense of find
4. Twelve months
6. Cook with dry heat
8. The colour of blood

Which words do not belong?

Cross out the words in each box that do not belong.


1

green	pink	dirty	awake
crimson	colours	brown	
shiny	beige	grass	

2

land	happy	angry
ate	feelings	red
surprised	coffee	afraid

Gabi's hiccups

 One day, when my cousin Gabi was 17 years old, she got the hiccups. She thought the hiccups would go away as usual. But her hiccups did not stop. After an entire day of hiccups, Gabi became worried.

What did Gabi do?

Gabi tried many things to cure the hiccups.

- ✓ She held her breath.



- ✓ She drank ice water.



- ✓ She pulled her tongue.



- ✓ She ate some sugar.



- ✓ She asked her parents to scare her.



Hiccups lasted four months

Nothing worked. Gabi went to the doctor and got medicine. The medicine did not help.

One day, four months after Gabi's hiccups started, they suddenly stopped.

Gabi told me those four months were the worst time of her life. It was difficult to eat and sleep. She was embarrassed to go to school. Gabi said, "Life is beautiful without hiccups."

Javier Pineda

Hiccups

How do you say it?

hiccups (say: HICK-ups)

What can cause hiccups?

- eating or drinking too quickly or too much
- feeling nervous or excited
- an irritation in your throat

How long do hiccups last?

Hiccups usually last only a few minutes. In some cases, hiccups can last for many days or weeks. This is usually a sign of a medical problem.

The Westcoast Reader 03/2009

True or false?

Circle T if the sentence is true. Circle F if the sentence is false (not true).

- | | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Gabi is Javier Pineda's sister. | T | F |
| 2. Gabi got the hiccups when she was 17 years old. | T | F |
| 3. She tried many things to cure her hiccups. | T | F |
| 4. Gabi drank hot water to try to cure her hiccups. | T | F |
| 5. She ate a spoonful of sugar to try to cure her hiccups. | T | F |
| 6. Gabi went to the dentist and got medicine for her hiccups. | T | F |
| 7. She had the hiccups for four months. | T | F |
| 8. Gabi told Javier that life was boring without hiccups. | T | F |

What about you?

Write your answers on the lines.

1. What do you do when you get the hiccups?

2. What scares you?

3. How would you finish this sentence?

Life is beautiful without _____



Proverbs from around the world

Japanese proverb



Even monkeys fall from trees.

Meaning: Anyone can make a mistake.

— Kimiko Sato

Italian proverb

A closed mouth catches no flies.

Meaning: Don't talk too much, and you will stay out of trouble.

— Carmela Costa

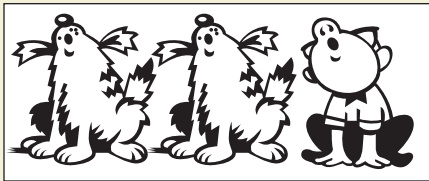


Spanish proverb

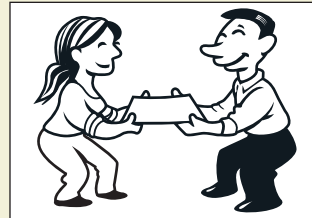
Live with wolves and you learn to howl.

Meaning: You become like the people you spend time with.

— Gael Ortiz



Korean proverb



Even a sheet of paper seems lighter when two people lift it.

Meaning: Any task is easier if people work together.

— Hyeon Sook Park

Afghani proverb

Don't stop a donkey that isn't yours.

Meaning: Mind your own business.

— Khaled and Aziz



What about you?

Do you know a proverb?
Write it on the lines.

The Westcoast Reader 03/2008

Proverbs

A Here are eight English proverbs. Use words from Lists A, B, and C to complete the proverbs. Write the proverbs on the lines.

List A

1. ~~A bird~~
2. The apple
3. Absence
4. A stitch
5. Don't put
6. Blood
7. When the cat
8. Two heads

List B

- in time
- all your eggs
- ~~in the hand~~
- is away
- makes the heart
- are better
- doesn't fall
- is thicker

List C

- than water.
- in one basket.
- grow fonder.
- ~~is worth two in the bush.~~
- far from the tree.
- the mice will play.
- than one.
- saves nine.

1. A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush.
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____
7. _____
8. _____

B Do you know the meaning of the proverbs? Talk about the meanings with a partner.

Finish the chart

Write the singular or plural for each word.

Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
1. wolf	wolves	7. mosquito	
2.	flies	8.	deer
3. monkey		9. spider	
4.	mice	10.	oxen
5.	lions	11.	calves
6. goose		12. snake	

Is it a, b, or c?

Circle the correct answer.

- Please hand me a ___ of paper.
a. stalk
b. slice
c. sheet
- This ___ of cereal is empty.
a. can
b. box
c. loaf
- There is one ___ of bread left.
a. slice
b. sheet
c. can
- He bought a ___ of wine for dinner.
a. tube
b. loaf
c. bottle
- Buy a ___ of milk on your way home.
a. box
b. sheet
c. carton
- She drank two ___ of pop yesterday.
a. tubes
b. slices
c. cans

Bees cause car crash

I grew up in Guadalajara, Mexico. Every weekend my father drove my family to see my grandmother. She lived two hours from our house.



We had a car crash

On one of our trips we had an accident. My father crashed our car into a tree. My father broke his arm. My sister's head hit the windshield. She cut her head on the glass.



A swarm of bees



Do you know the reason for the accident? A swarm of bees came in my father's window. He began to hit the bees. He did not keep his hands on the steering wheel.

I will never forget this experience. Now I am very afraid of bees!

— Veronica Saldaña Perez

The Westcoast Reader 11/2001



The kind man and the snake

Once upon a time there was a farmer who was very kind. One cold winter day the farmer was walking back to his village when he found a snake on the road. The snake was stiff and frozen with cold.

The farmer picked up the snake and put it inside his clothes to keep it warm. The snake warmed up inside the clothing. After the snake recovered, it bit the farmer and the man died.

The snake, feeling strong, came out of the farmer's clothes. As soon as the snake was outside again, it froze to death.

— Young-Ju (Becca) Ko



The Westcoast Reader 03/2003

How much do you remember?

Draw a line under the correct word to finish each sentence.

1. Veronica grew up in Guatemala / Guadalajara.
2. Her family visited her grandmother every weekend / summer.
3. They went to visit her grandmother by car / train.
4. On one trip, a swarm of bats / bees flew into the family's car.
5. Her father took his hands off the steering wheel and tried to hit / catch the bees.
6. He crashed the car into a house / tree.
7. Veronica's father broke his arm / leg in the crash.
8. Her mother / sister hit her head on the windshield of the car.

A collection of animals

Use the words in the boxes to complete this exercise.

1. A swarm of _____
2. A herd of _____
3. A school of _____
4. A flock of _____
5. A pack of _____
6. A colony of _____

elephants

ants

geese

fish

bees

wolves

Retell the story: The kind man and the snake

Read the story on the left and the phrases on the right. The phrases are from the story. Where do they fit? Write the correct letters on the blanks.

Once upon a time there was a farmer
(1) _____. One cold winter day the farmer was
walking back to his village when he found (2) _____.

The snake (3) _____ with cold.

The farmer picked up the snake (4) _____ his
clothes to keep it warm. (5) _____ inside the clothing.

After the snake recovered, (6) _____ and the man
died.

The snake, (7) _____, came out of the farmer's
clothing. As soon as the snake was outside again,
(8) _____.

a. and put it inside

b. it froze to death

c. The snake warmed up

d. feeling strong

e. who was very kind

f. was stiff and frozen

g. it bit the farmer

h. a snake on the road

Finish the sentences

Use the words in the box to finish the sentences.

freeze

1. Last winter the pipes in my house _____.

froze

2. Ali was _____ by a dog when he was a child.

frozen

3. Some people _____ their nails when they are nervous.

bite

4. The children like to skate on the _____ pond.

bit

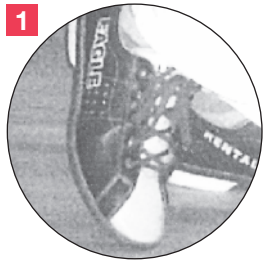
5. A snake _____ my sister when we were on holiday.

bitten

6. Turn up the heat before I _____ to death!

Find it

Look through this e-book to find these. Each one is part of a larger picture. Write the title of the story that goes with each one.



1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

Answers for exercises

Unscramble the words (p 6)

2. His name is Johnny.
3. Johnny is very smart.
4. He can say about 100 words.

Categories (p 6)

Answers will vary.

What's the sound? (p 7)

2. bippita boppita bippita boppita
3. crunch crunch crunch
4. baboom baboom baboom

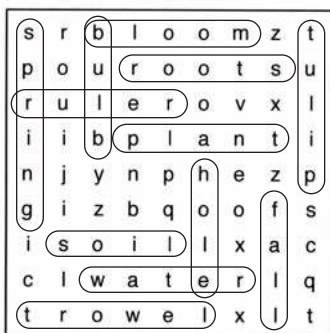
Flower quiz (p 9)

1. rose—d
2. tulip—a
3. lily—c
4. pansy—b

Planting tulips (p 10)

4 5 1 2 6 3

Find the words (p 10)



What's the word? (p 12)

Clockwise: shoes, ball, alley, pins

Finish the sentences (p 12)

1. off
2. about
3. up
4. back
5. on
6. out
7. for
8. away

Finish the postcard (p 14)

I'm having a *wonderful* time here in Victoria. The weather is *sunny* (or *warm*) and *warm* (or *sunny*). Tomorrow we are going to *visit* Butchart Gardens. Haruka says the *roses* are beautiful. See you on *Sunday*.

Instead of this...do this (p 16)

Wording may vary.

1. Instead of using regular light bulbs, use CFL bulbs.
2. Instead of leaving the TV on when you leave a room, turn off the TV.
3. Instead of using regular batteries, use rechargeable batteries.
4. Instead of using plastic shopping bags, use cloth bags when you go shopping.
5. Instead of driving your car, ride your bicycle.

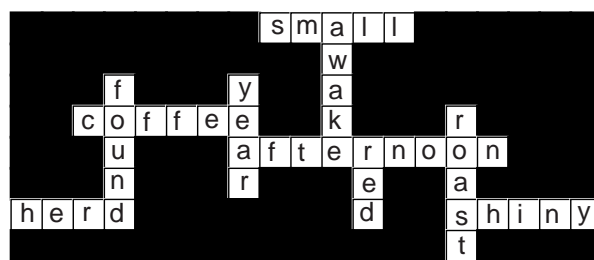
Where in the world? (p 18)

1d, 2e, 3f, 4c, 5a, 6b

All about the moon (p 18)

1b, 2a, 3a, 4b, 5b, 6a

Crossword (p 20)



Which words do not belong? (p 20)

1. dirty, awake, grass, shiny
2. land, red, coffee, ate

Answers for exercises

True or false? (p 22)

1F 2T 3T 4F
5T 6F 7T 8F

Proverbs (p 24)

2. The apple doesn't fall far from the tree.
3. Absence makes the heart grow fonder.
4. A stitch in time saves nine.
5. Don't put all your eggs in one basket.
6. Blood is thicker than water.
7. When the cat is away the mice will play.
8. Two heads are better than one.

Finish the chart (p 25)

2. fly
3. monkeys
4. mouse
5. lion
6. geese
7. mosquitoes
8. deer
9. spiders
10. ox
11. calf
12. snakes

Is it a, b, or c? (p 25)

1c 2b 3a 4c 5c 6c

How much do you remember? (p 27)

1. Guadalajara
2. weekend
3. car
4. bees
5. hit
6. tree
7. arm
8. sister

A collection of animals (p 27)

1. bees
2. elephants
3. fish
4. geese
5. wolves
6. ants

Retell the story (p 28)

1e 2h 3f 4a 5c 6g 7d 8b

Finish the sentences (p 28)

1. froze
2. bitten
3. bite
4. frozen
5. bit
6. freeze

Find it (p 29)

1. Let's go bowling
2. A funny adventure on a farm
3. Legend of the dancing goats
4. Proverbs from around the world
(or Afghani proverb)
5. Johnny is a smart parrot
6. Honeymoon in Paris