Reading 01

**Werther Effect**

A teenage girl stands crying in front of her bathroom mirror. She has a bottle of sleeping pills in her hand. She is getting ready to kill herself by swallowing all the pills. Where and why would a young girl get such an idea? It's from a newspaper article she's just read. The article said that a popular movie actress killed herself by taking a whole bottle of sleeping pills. This is a classic case of the "Werther effect." It was named after Goethe's novel, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*.

In Goethe's novel the hero, Werther, is in love with a young woman named Lotte. When Lotte marries another man, Werther feels so hopeless that he decides to end his life. He dresses himself in a blue coat and yellow vest, sits at his desk with an open book, and shoots himself. The novel was first published in 1774. In the following years, many men throughout Europe did the same as Werther. They dressed up like him and shot themselves at their desks. Some people claimed that Werther's suicide led to more than 2,000 suicides by readers of the novel. As a result, bookstores in some parts of Europe were forced to stop selling the novel.

A similar thing happened in August 1962 when the famous American actress Marilyn Monroe killed herself by taking sleeping pills. There were 197 similar suicides by women across America in the following month. The most recent case happened in 2009 when the famous American singer Michael Jackson died. Though he didn't commit suicide, more than ten fans killed themselves after his death in order to "be with him."

Reading 02

**The Invention of Love**

Did you know that many great inventions were made because of love? Take, for instance, the Band-Aid that you put on your finger when you get a cut. In 1920, a man named Earle Dickson worked for a company that made gauze and tape for surgeries. He had a wife who sometimes cut herself while doing housework. Because he loved her very much, he decided to make special gauze for her. He cut a small bit of gauze and put a larger piece of sticky tape over it. The company thought his idea was brilliant and began to produce his special gauze. That's how the Band-Aid was born!

Another useful invention that was made because of love is the sewing machine. In the 1800s, a man named Elias Howe became ill and could no longer provide money for his family. So his wife decided to sew clothes for a living. As Elias watched his wife working hard, he came up with a bright idea. To help her, he invented the sewing machine. But he was a poor businessman and he could not sell a single machine. Only after his wife died did he make a lot of money. It was too late for his wife to thank him, but many women all over the world could live easier lives thanks to him.

There are many reasons to invent new things. Some things are invented out of curiosity and others for financial reasons. However, many valuable inventions are the result of love.

Reading 03

**Panda, a Wonderful Guide Horse**

You've probably seen a guide dog helping its blind owner. It helps the owner cross the road, get on a bus and so on. But wouldn't you be surprised to see a horse do these things?

Ann Edie has been blind from birth and she has a guide horse. He is called Panda. When people see Ann with Panda, they are often amazed. Panda is only 60 cm high but is very helpful to Ann. This miniature horse "sees" for Ann. He guides her through crowded buildings, across busy streets, into cars, and even onto trains.

Panda came into Ann's life after her loving guide dog died of old age. At first, she was not sure if Panda could do as well as a dog. But as time went by, Ann found that horses can do even better than dogs. In fact, they have a number of advantages over dogs. For instance, they have better memories and wider vision. So they are good at sensing danger. Also, they live much longer than dogs do ― up to 50 years. That can save the owner from the sadness of losing a companion and the expense of finding another guide animal.

Ann and Panda use special signals to tell each other when to go, when to stop, and when to be careful. With Panda's help, Ann can face any situation with confidence. Panda stands near her desk while Ann teaches at a high school. He also guides her when she goes shopping. "Panda and I are partners and friends," says Ann, "and that's a wonderful feeling."

Reading 04

**Who Drew African Borders?**

In most countries in Africa, people speak a number of different languages. Sometimes the players on the same national soccer team can't even understand each other because they speak different languages. They do not share the same language because there are many tribes living together in one country. You can see why this is true if you look at the history of Africa.

For thousands of years, Africans lived in peace. They had lots of land and precious metals and jewels, but no one owned them privately ― people shared and enjoyed them together. However, when Europeans came to Africa in the 19th and 20th centuries, an unexpected thing happened. They wanted to have control over many areas in Africa.

Many European countries wanted to have more land in Africa, but they did not want to fight wars with each other. So they decided to divide Africa for themselves. They made new borders without asking the Africans.

Usually, nature makes the borders of a country. Rivers or mountains divide one country from the next. That was the way borders were made for thousands of years in Africa. But the Europeans did it in a different way. They agreed to draw straight lines to decide many of Africa's borders. Sometimes they just stayed in Europe and divided Africa by looking at a map!

These decisions were very tragic for Africa. People who did not share a common language or culture were forced to live next to each other. This made it very difficult to get along. So the next time you hear in the news about Africans fighting each other, remember how it all started.

Reading 05

**The Guinness Book of Records**

Who was the tallest man that ever lived? What is the largest lake in the world? Thanks to *The Guinness Book of Records*, it's easy to find the answers to such questions. It is the world's best seller, next only to the Bible. But many people don't know how it was born.

In Ireland, there was a man who worked for the Guinness Brewery, a beer company. His name was Sir Hugh Beaver. He enjoyed hunting very much. One day in November 1951, he went hunting with his friends. They tried to shoot a golden plover, but they missed it because the bird was too fast. That evening, the men sat in a bar and talked about the bird. Some of them said that the golden plover was the fastest flying bird in Europe. Others did not agree. They argued with each other, but they could not answer the question.

At that moment, an idea came to Sir Hugh's mind: "What if there was a book about records?" He knew there were many other similar questions that people argued about. However, there was no book that had all the answers. So he decided to create a book that would give answers to all sorts of questions about records. He suggested his idea to a publisher and they began working together.

On August 27, 1955, *the Guinness Book of Records* was born. It was named after the beer company where Hugh worked. Today it is published every year in 37 languages under the new name: *Guinness World Records*. Now anyone can find out who was the tallest man that ever lived. His name was Robert Wadlow, and he was 2.72 meters tall. If you want to know what the largest lake is, maybe you should look in the *Guinness World Records* yourself.

Reading 06

**To Hug or Not to Hug**

Imagine a business meeting between two men. One of them moves forward to hug the other. But instead of hugging back, the second man pulls away. Is this a good start for two people who want to work together? Which one is right, the person who wants to hug or the person who doesn't?

The answer is: It depends on where you come from. In different parts of the world, hugging is seen in different ways. Ross Buck, a professor who studies communication, says, "The closer to the equator you get, the more hugging people do."

Many Muslim countries are near the equator. In these countries, men are likely to hug each other. For them, it is very important to be part of the bigger group of people all around. A hug is a traditional way of welcoming someone into the group.

An interesting example of a country farther from the equator is Britain. For British men, it is less important to show that you belong to the bigger group of people all around. When men in Britain meet, they usually just say hello or shake hands. They are not comfortable hugging business partners. They prefer to hug family members or close friends only.

For this reason, something funny happens when an Arab man talks to a British man. The Arab keeps moving closer, while the British man keeps backing away. As they make their way across the room, the man from Britain is thinking, "What a pushy fellow!" At the same time, the Arab man is thinking, "How rude! This guy isn't greeting me." Each of them is behaving the way they were taught to do. So they are both right and they are both wrong.

Reading 07

**The Famous Secret Message**

Do you want to send a secret message? One way to do it is by using liquids you probably have at home. Use milk or lemon juice to write your secret message on a piece of paper. Then let it dry. Now you will see nothing on the paper. Give it to your friend. When your friend holds the paper close to a hot light bulb, the words will show up like magic.

But sending secret messages isn't something we do just for fun. It is also used for very important reasons. Long ago, an ancient Greek ruler named Histiaeus was at war with the powerful Persian emperor, Darius. Histiaeus wanted to ask another Greek ruler, Aristagoras, to join him in the war. But he knew that Darius had soldiers at the border. They were ready to stop anyone carrying a secret message.

Histiaeus finally came up with an unusual idea to send his message. He shaved the head of a messenger. Then he tattooed the message on the messenger's head. When the messenger grew his hair back, Histiaeus sent him to the border. The soldiers of Darius checked him carefully. But they could not find any secret message. So the soldiers let him go by. When the messenger came to Aristagoras, he shaved his head again. Aristagoras read the tattooed message. He agreed to join the war against Darius.

Despite all their efforts, the Greeks were not able to defeat the powerful Persians in the end. But the secret message became famous. From then on, people have continued to look for new ways to pass secret messages.

Reading 08

**Tiger or Lady**

Once upon a time, there was a king who had a strange way to punish people who committed crimes. Each person would be placed in an [arena](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arena). His only way out would be to go through one of two doors. Behind one door was a beautiful woman picked by the king, and behind the other was a fierce [tiger](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tiger). The criminal was then asked to pick one of the doors without knowing what was behind it. If he picked the door with the woman behind it, then he was innocent. But he also had to marry the woman. If he picked the door with the tiger behind it though, then he was guilty. The tiger would attack him and tear him to pieces.

One day, the king found that his daughter, the princess, had fallen in love with a farmer. The king hated the farmer. He could not allow his daughter to marry someone so common. So he threw the farmer in prison and set a date for his trial in the arena. On the day of his trial, the farmer looked at the princess. He wanted her to tell him which door to pick. The princess did, in fact, know which door hid the woman and which one the tiger. But she had a problem: If she pointed to the door with the tiger, then the man she loved would be killed. However, if she pointed to the door with the lady, the farmer would marry another woman. Finally, she pointed to a door, and the farmer opened it. What do you think happened? Did the tiger come out of that door, or did the lady?

Reading 09

**Let Her Know You’re Interested**

There's a cute new girl in class, and you're just dying to get her attention. Your friends tell you to ask her out. But that's a lot easier said than done! Taking the first step is scary for anyone because nobody likes to get rejected. Don't worry, though. Even if you do get rejected, you won't die. So make your move!

It's hard to smile when you're nervous, but try it. It's easier than talking and it will let her know that you're aware of her. You will also seem more confident, which will help you to make a good impression. Confidence is attractive, so stand tall and keep your head up! Even when your heart is beating hard, glance at her often. If she's across the street from you, make sure that she knows you've seen her. But be careful not to stare too hard, or she'll think you're rude!

If it's hard to have a conversation, laughter can make the mood more pleasant. When she says something funny or cute, laugh and show her you're enjoying the conversation. Then ask her about topics she knows a lot about, so she can talk freely. Don't ask questions that are too hard because it's not an interview.

Even if she's really nice and fun and you want to spend a lot of time with her, be sure to keep your guy friends close to you. Remember guy friends are just as important as a girlfriend. Besides, girls like guys with many friends more than loners. They think that a boy who is popular with other boys must be a good person.

Reading 10

**Hip-Hop: More than Music**

People all over the world love hip-hop. It's fun and easy to follow. Many hip-hop musicians use "rap" instead of traditional singing. In rap, words are chanted to a strong beat or rhythm. And this makes hip-hop very different from other types of music.

The origin of hip-hop dates back more than a few hundred years ago. Hip-hop started as a way for African slaves in America to express their feelings. Because they didn't have musical instruments, they clapped their hands and beat on objects to make rhythms. Then they added their own voices. They sang about life, love, and sometimes sadness.

However, it was not until the 1970s that hip-hop started to take on its modern form. Black DJs in New York began to play their own styles of hip-hop. They added various types of beats and drums to a song and mixed it with exciting rap. Many people came to the clubs in New York to experience the new music. They would listen and dance to the music's cool rhythms. And soon hip-hop spread across the globe.

Now, hip-hop isn't just for African Americans. It has become an international culture. People around the world enjoy not only the music but also the "styles" of hip-hop. Hip-hop clothing brands, clubs, and magazines are just a few examples. Some hip-hoppers write colorful messages on public walls: This is called "graffiti." Others compete in hip-hop dance contests. Although the music is still the central part of hip-hop, today's hip-hop is really a "lifestyle" enjoyed by all cultures and races.

Reading 11

**World of Computer Games**

Computer games are popular everywhere. For older people the games may all look the same, but most players know that there are many different kinds of games, and that they require very different kinds of skills.

A basic kind of video game is called a "first person shooter." In a game like this, the player sees objects on a screen and tries to shoot them. Usually this kind of game has simple controls. It's a good game for beginners.

A bit harder are "platform" games. In this kind of game, a person or creature on the screen runs, jumps, or climbs from one place to another. Mostly, platform games are also simple. But some of them are difficult to become good at and include very realistic sounds and pictures.

Probably the hardest kind of game to succeed at is the role-playing game. Players don't have to be fast, but they do have to think a lot. In this kind of game, the player enters a whole new world, creates new characters such as heroes or monsters, and leads the characters through many adventures. Often these games are played online, where characters controlled by different players meet up. They work together to find treasure or solve a riddle. Other times they fight each other. Role-playing games can take months or years to complete.

Only forty years have passed since the first computer game, called "Pong," came out. It was just a paddle and a ball. Now millions of people play much more exciting games. What kind of computer games do you think we will be playing forty years from now?

Reading 12

**The Eye Travel of Flatfish**

As its name says, a flatfish is a fish that is flat. It lies flat against the bottom of the ocean. Actually it is lying on its side. A flatfish isn't born flat. It is born with its eyes in the normal position, and a young flatfish swims normally, the same way most fish do. But when it grows to be about 13 millimeters long, it swims down to the sea floor to live, and something unusual happens.

One of the fish's eyes begins to move from one side of its head to the other. After this eye has finished its journey, both of the fish's eyes are on the same side of its head. Then, the fish's body begins to flatten out, and soon the fish is swimming on its side.

Some flatfish are left-eyed, and others are right-eyed. This means, some flatfish have both eyes on the left side, and others have both eyes on the right side! Left-eyed flatfish rest on their right side, and right-eyed flatfish rest on their left side.

The bottom side of a flatfish rests on or near the ocean floor. And it becomes white or pale in color. The fish's top side becomes darker and changes color to match the color of the background. The flatfish's shape and color make it easy for it to hide from its enemies and hunt for food. It usually swims close to the bottom. Although a flatfish can change the dark color of its top side, its bottom side always remains white.

Reading 13

**Mad for Garlic**

Garlic has a powerful taste and a strong smell. Maybe that's why all through history, many people thought garlic was special. They believed that garlic could give them extra power. Some people even believed that garlic had magical powers.

In ancient times, people used garlic to drive out evil spirits and witches. They hung garlic over the doors and windows of every home. Parents in some areas used garlic necklaces to protect their children from the evil eye and from witches.

Later, people used garlic for more ordinary reasons. They believed that if they ate garlic, they would be able to work longer and harder. Before a race, Greek Olympic athletes chewed garlic. They believed that garlic helped them stay strong to the end. Both Greek and Roman soldiers ate garlic before and during battles. The Egyptian workers who built the pyramids ate garlic as part of their daily food, too.

Even until more recent times, people believed in the power of garlic. In World War I, doctors from England put garlic juice on the wounds of soldiers to stop infection. Russian doctors also did this, and they made sure the soldiers were fed garlic to keep diseases away.

But not everyone thinks so highly of eating garlic. In the American state of Indiana, it is against the law to go to a movie if you have eaten garlic in the last four hours. But don't worry. If you are ever in Indiana and want to go to the movies, there is one more thing about garlic that you might be glad to know: If you drink water after eating garlic, it hides the strong smell.

Reading 14

**To Be an Astronaut**

Many young people dream of becoming astronauts. But, in reality, it isn't always fun to be an astronaut living in space. Life in a spaceship is quite different from life on Earth; it is full of many challenges.

The first and biggest challenge for astronauts is to live without gravity. Without gravity, everything floats around. This sounds fun at first, but it can become rather dangerous when astronauts have to use tools like nuts and bolts. An astronaut might get hurt if he or she forgets to put them away.

The absence of gravity makes eating and sleeping difficult for astronauts. Imagine drops of juice or milk floating everywhere! This explains why astronauts need to drink from straws. Similarly, astronauts must get inside a sleeping bag and wear a safety belt in order to sleep. This prevents them from floating around and getting hurt while sleeping.

Another challenge to living in space has to do with astronauts' body clock. A spaceship usually goes around the Earth sixteen times every twenty-four hours. So astronauts see the sun go up and down sixteen times every day! This can confuse their body clocks because they are used to one sunrise and sunset a day. For this reason, astronauts sleep with masks over their eyes to shut out distracting light.

Despite these difficulties, most astronauts say they can't wait to go back to space when they're on Earth. It isn't too hard to understand why. Imagine how beautiful it must be to look at the planets and stars from a close distance! More importantly, think how exciting it must be to explore the mysteries of the universe. Surely it must be worth dealing with some inconveniences.

Reading 15

**The Longest Building in the World**

Almost every year, a new building is built that is said to be the highest in the world. But the record for the longest building has been the same for thousands of years, and it is not likely to change soon. The Great Wall of China, which is about 6,400 km long, is one of the greatest wonders of the world, but there are a lot of sad stories behind it.

For years, kings in ancient China built small walls to protect their people from the invasion of neighboring countries. But in the year 221 BC, an emperor named Qin Shi Huang decided to make one large wall, instead of many small ones. The emperor wanted the wall to protect his people against invaders coming from the north. But he did not protect his people from himself very well. He forced 800,000 workers to build the wall. He chose people who did not have much power. He put prisoners and poor farmers to work. He also forced scholars and writers who disagreed with him to work on the wall. Building the Great Wall was very difficult, and many workers died. It was very hard to lift the heavy rocks, and there were no safety protections. Diseases also spread quickly among the workers.

It took more than a thousand years to build all the sections of the Great Wall. During that time, many attacking armies from the north were stopped by the wall. The Chinese people were grateful to have the Great Wall to protect them. But they have never forgotten that more than two million people died building it.

Reading 16

**Midnight Snacks**

Do you feel tired in the morning? There could be many reasons for that. But for some people, the problem may be a bad eating habit: having a midnight snack. Why does eating late at night make you tired? The reason is that growth hormones do not work when food remains in your stomach.

What is a hormone? A hormone is like a messenger. It travels to every part of your body and passes along important messages. For example, when you are hungry, hormones give the message to eat. After you eat, hormones tell your body whether to store the food or to burn it as fuel.

Then what is a growth hormone? It is a hormone that helps your body to grow. It produces new cells. It repairs damaged cells, too. That is how growth hormones keep you young and healthy. Growth hormones are usually produced when we sleep. If new growth hormones are not produced at night, your body cells will not work normally. This means you will feel tired and slow the next day.

So how do midnight snacks affect growth hormones? It is simple. When you eat food, especially high-carbohydrate food like bread or rice, it turns into sugar and enters your blood. The blood sugar blocks the production of growth hormones. The result is obvious. Damaged body cells will not be repaired.

How much time should we wait until we go to bed after eating? You should finish your dinner at least three hours before bedtime. That is the average time it takes to digest food. If you feel really hungry, try drinking some water. That will fill your stomach and take away the hungry feeling.

Reading 17

**The Slave Trade**

In the 1400's, many European countries were growing stronger. People from Spain, England, and other countries wanted to make money from the silver, gold, and food crops found in the Americas, which they called the New World. But they did not have many workers. After looking everywhere for a source of workers, they found that Africans were excellent workers. So they kidnapped them from Africa and made them slaves.

Of course, the Africans did not want to be slaves. But the Europeans hunted them down and caught them. It was a very cruel thing to do. They threw nets over their bodies. They tied their hands and feet. They killed anyone who tried to fight back. Fathers, mothers, and children were taken away and separated from each other.

The Africans were put on ships that were sailing to the New World. It was terribly crowded on the ships. Often, there were diseases on the ships and not enough food. Usually, half of the slaves died at sea. Only the strongest workers survived. When they got to the Americas, they were sold to people who needed workers. The slaves had to work very hard. Those who tried to run away were beaten or killed. Over a period of 300 years, 10 to 15 million Africans became slaves.

At first, Europeans in the New World were glad to have slaves do most of the hard work. But after many years, some of them began to see how cruel slavery was. They argued more and more about whether slavery was right or wrong. Eventually, the arguments led to the U.S. Civil War, which lasted from 1861 to 1865. Slavery finally ended after the war, but the memory of it will never go away.

Reading 18

**Taking a Siesta in Spain**

For hundreds of years, people in Spain have taken a "siesta" in the middle of the day. A siesta is a nap - a short sleep during the day. Most companies in Spain close between 1 p.m. and 4 p.m. After enjoying a long lunch with family or friends, workers take a siesta. Then they go back to work until 8 p.m. or even later. However, some people in Spain have tried to change this old tradition.

Ignacio Buqueras was one of them. He was the leader of a group of citizens who tried to ban the siesta. The group believed that taking a siesta was harmful for Spain's economy. Buqueras said that as Spain's economy becomes more international, companies must keep the same business hours as other European countries, 9 to 5. The Spanish government agreed to Buqueras' idea. It passed a law saying that government workers could only take a one-hour lunch break.

Yet old traditions die hard. Many people other than government workers still enjoy long afternoon breaks in Spain. And many people are still discussing whether the siesta should be banned for all workers. Interestingly, other countries like Japan are changing in the opposite way. Some Japanese companies are asking their workers to take a nap after lunch. A recent study supports their decision. It showed that workers who nap for 15 to 30 minutes after lunch are generally more healthy and hardworking.

There are many studies and people that still support the idea of a siesta in Spain, so the Spanish might keep their old tradition after all. But at least, they should come up with ways to shorten it. After all, Ignacio Buqueras and his group do have a point.

Reading 19

**Pink Noise**

Why are Mozart, Elvis Presley, and Beyoncé so popular? What do they have in common? According to scientists, all of these musicians’ songs contain pink noise.

What is pink noise? It is the sound that is most pleasing and comfortable to people’s ears. Good examples of pink noise include sounds made by birds, a breeze, a soft rain, and water flowing in a stream. In other words, pink noise is present everywhere in nature.

In the 1970s, two scientists named Richard Voss and John Clarke at the University of California conducted research on the rhythms and sounds of music. When they studied classical and modern popular music, they made an amazing discovery: The more popular the music, the more pink noise it contained.

These days, the pink noise effect is used in several areas. For example, educators use pink noise to improve people’s memories. In fact, it was reported that students who listen to pink noise in music, especially in Mozart’s sonatas, got higher scores on tests. The pink noise effect has its uses in business as well. Manufacturers have developed a new air conditioner that produces pink noise while cooling rooms.

Reading 20

**The View from My Hospital Window**

Ted and I shared one hospital room for almost a year. We were both old and ill and we knew we wouldn't be alive much longer. We couldn't get out of bed, so we spent our time talking. We talked about our former jobs, our former hobbies, and our experiences in the army.

Every afternoon, Ted was allowed to sit up in his bed for an hour. His bed was next to the only window in our room. He would describe what he saw outside. He told me about the playground and children flying colorful kites. In winter, he described a carrot-nosed snowman and children's snowball fights. On July 4th, he described a wonderful parade with horses and a marching band dressed in red, white and blue uniforms. Ted's words were so clear that I could close my eyes and picture the scene. That hour was my favorite part of the day. Unlike our usual conversations, the scenes outside the window weren't from the past. They were lively and exciting. Hearing about them made me feel happy and hopeful.

But I have to admit to another feeling. I envied Ted. Why should he have all the pleasure of looking outside just because his bed was near the window? The envy felt bitter.

Three days after the parade, Ted died in his sleep. I waited two days and then asked a nurse to move my bed next to the window. Then I pushed myself up on one elbow. It was difficult and painful, but I really wanted to see the outside world. When I finally looked through the window, I was completely shocked! All I saw was the blank wall of another building. "I don't understand. Why did Ted describe all those wonderful scenes outside this window?" I asked the nurse. "Ted was blind," she answered. "He couldn't even see that wall. Maybe he was just trying to encourage you."

Reading 21

**Paris’ Patriotic Taxi Drivers**

In August 1914, the First World War had just begun. The German army was moving towards France. And by the beginning of September, the Germans were within only 60 km of Paris. The French army tried to hold back the German army at the Marne River. But it seemed almost certain that the French would fail, and their capital city would be captured.

There were 6,000 soldiers in Paris, but there was no way to get them to the battleground. Then one of the generals realized that if they could use all the taxicabs in Paris to carry the soldiers, they might be able to save the city.

The army asked for help. Patriotic taxi drivers told their passengers to get out of the cabs. They proudly said, "We must go to battle!" At the scheduled time, 600 taxis formed a line. General Gallieni, the military commander of Paris, came out to greet the taxi drivers. He gave them a salute and then sent them off on their mission.

The soldiers were quickly driven to the battleground. Those extra 6,000 men helped the French army to fight hard against the Germans. Finally the French were able to stop the attack. It is known in history as "the miracle of the Marne." Paris was saved, thanks to the bravery of her cab drivers.

Reading 22

**How to Sing Better**

All of us have to sing at some point in our lives, even if it's just a simple "Happy Birthday." Whether you're just singing to the radio or in front of a big audience, you can use the following tips to improve your singing.

First of all, learn to control your breath. Good singers do not sing with their throat but use their stomach to make beautiful sound. To do this, breathe in through your nose and push out your stomach. And then, breathe out slowly and pull your stomach in. Practice this until you can breathe deeper and longer. In this way, you can sing without pausing for air.

Next, stand with your feet about shoulder-width apart - one foot can be a little bit ahead of the other. Make sure your body is balanced and your knees are a little bent. While singing, it's a good idea to sway slightly side to side in tune with the rhythm. This will not only help you relax, but your tone will also sound more natural and you will look better too.

Now comes the most important and fun part: Download a song you like from the Internet and store it on your MP3 player. You can also download the lyrics and print them out. Practice that song every day. As you're singing, make a recording of your voice so you know what you sound like to others. This will allow you to find out any weak parts in your singing, and you'll know what you need to correct.

By following these steps, you will be ready to sing with more confidence. Start singing to your friends and family on special days. It will please you as well as the people for whom you're singing.

Reading 23

**The Plant Telephone**

Everyone knows that insects have their own ways of communicating. Bees do special dances to tell other bees where flowers are. Fireflies use flashes of light to tell other fireflies that they are looking for mates. Now scientists have discovered another method of insect communication: the "plant telephone." It is used by plant-eating insects only.

Some plant-eating insects like caterpillars eat the leaves of plants, and others like ants eat the roots. But neither the root-eating insects nor the leaf-eaters want to share the same plant. So, once an insect starts eating a plant, it needs to send a simple but important message to other insects: "This is my plant! Leave it alone and go find your own plant!" Unfortunately, the root-eating insects are below the ground, and the leaf-eaters are above. They can't see each other dancing or flashing lights. That's why they make use of the plant telephone.

When the root-eating insect starts eating a plant, for example, it sends out chemical signals. The signals travel up through the roots, stem, branches, and into the leaves. They act as a warning: "This plant is mine. Leave here at once!" Leaf-eaters don't like sharing plants either. So, when they receive the warning signals, they leave the plant right away.

Scientists are familiar with chemical messages used by animals, but the "plant telephone" is a brand new discovery. How amazing it is that insects can send warning signals to each other through plants!

Reading 24

**Hemingway’s Unforgettable Love**

Fiction is related to the author's personal experience. Authors very often write about events and people that seem to come from their own lives. *A Farewell to Arms*, a novel by Ernest Hemingway is a good example of this.

Born in 1899, Ernest Hemingway served as an ambulance driver in Italy during the First World War. He was wounded in the war shortly before his nineteenth birthday. In the hospital, Hemingway fell in love with a beautiful 26-year-old nurse, Agnes Hannah von Kurowsky. After the war, Hemingway returned to the U.S. He expected Agnes to join him there. He wanted to marry her. However, she sent him a letter to say goodbye. She was interested in another man and thought Hemingway was too young for her. She didn't care about their relationship very much.

Agnes left Hemingway in real life, but Hemingway loved her too much to let go so easily. That's why he brought her back in his writings. In 1929, Hemingway wrote a novel called *A Farewell to Arms*. It was based mostly on his own experiences. The main character was named Frederic Henry. Hemingway and Henry were both American ambulance drivers for the Italian Army during World War I. They were both shot in a battle. Both of them met nurses in the hospital and fell in love with them. There are differences between Hemingway's life and his book. For example, the nurse in the book agrees to marry the young man though she dies while giving birth.

Hemingway once said, "When something in life hurts you, use it in your writing." In writing *A Farewell to Arms*, Hemingway followed his own advice. By putting the most painful events of his life in his book, he was able to write a very successful novel.