Reading 01

**Computer Wallpaper**

Boy 1: Oh, I like your computer wallpaper! What a cute cat! Is that your pet?

Girl 1: Yeah, that’s my pet, mittens.

Boy 1: You know, having a pet on your computer wallpaper says a lot about your personality.

Girl 1: Really? What does having a pet on my computer wallpaper say about me?

Boy 1: Well, it says you’re optimistic and kind-hearted. And that’s exactly the type of person you seem like to me – optimistic and kind-hearted.

Girl 2: What about me? I have a picture of my family on my monitor.

Boy 1: You have a picture of your family on your computer? Well, let’s see. I think that means you care deeply about your family.

Girl 2: I care deeply about my family? Yeah, I think that describes me well.

Boy 2: What about me? My computer wallpaper is a picture of Seoul.

Boy 1: It’s a picture of Seoul, huh? Well, I think that means you’re a romantic who enjoys travel and adventure.

Boy 2: I’m an adventurer who enjoys travel and adventure. That’s exactly right! How interesting! I had no idea that my computer wallpaper could say so much about me.

Reading 02

**Cloud Advertising**

Girl: Wow! Look at that! Up there in the sky… It says, “Bud.” It’s a big floating beer bottle!

Boy: What!? Oh, yeah, look at that! It’s a big floating beer bottle! I think that’s a Flogo.

Girl: A Flogo? What’s that?

Boy: It’s a floating advertisement. “Flogo” means a “floating logo.” It’s made with this soapy foam mixed with helium so it floats.

Girl: “Flogo” is a floating logo, huh? And they use soapy foam with helium gas to make it float. Interesting!

Boy: Sometimes they float in the air for a while if the weather’s good. I’ve heard they can float in the air for up to an hour on a nice day.

Girl: Really? They can float for up to an hour on a nice day? What a great way to advertise a product! Are they environmentally-friendly?

Boy: Well, I’ve heard the soap they use to make Flogos is natural.

Girl: Well if the soap they use is natural then it must be environmentally-friendly.

Boy: But some people argue that someday there might be more Flogos in the sky than actual clouds. I don’t think that would be good.

Girl: No, I agree. I can’t imagine looking up at the sky and seeing nothing but Flogos. That sounds awful!

Reading 03

**Baseball Superstitions**

Girl: Strike! Nice one! Hey, why does that player keep tapping home plate with his bat?

Boy: Ah, that’s his superstition. He thinks that tapping home plate with his bat will bring him good luck.

Girl: Really? He thinks it will bring him good luck? What a strange superstition! What are some other superstitions in baseball?

Boy: Well, do you see that player over there? Roger Clemens? He touches the head of the Babe Ruth statue out front before every game. He thinks that if he doesn’t touch it, he won’t pitch well.

Girl: Oh, is that right? He touches the Babe Ruth statue before games. Well, he must not have touched it today because he’s pitching terribly!

Boy: And look over there. Do you see that player, Jones? He wears the same baseball cap every day. And that other player, Bonds, he always wears the same shirt.

Girl: Jones wears the same hat every day? And Bonds wears the same shirt? That’s gross! They

must stink!

Boy: I agree. And that player over there – Turk Wendell – he brushes his teeth between every inning. So I guess he doesn’t stink as badly.

Girl: No. If he brushes his teeth between every inning, I guess he wouldn’t stink at all! These superstitions are strange! The most important things in sports are skill, hard work and concentration.

Boy: I agree. These superstitions are strange. Skill, hard work and concentration are the most important things in sports.

Reading 04

**Peer Pressure**

Boy: Hey, Jack and Stephanie want us to leave school early and go with them to the park. What

do you think? I think we should go. I know we really should stay in school today. We have exams next week. But… Ah! I don’t know.

Girl: Frankie, that’s peer pressure. Jack and Stephanie are pressuring you to do something you don’t really want to do.

Boy: Is it peer pressure? Well, I suppose they are pressuring me to do something I don’t want to do…

Girl: Why are you even thinking about cutting class? Is it because you want to be more popular? Or are you worried that they might make fun of you if you don’t go with them?

Boy: No, it’s not that I want to be more popular. And I’m not worried about them making fun of me, either. It’s just that, well, everyone is cutting classes nowadays.

Girl: Everyone is cutting classes nowadays? That’s your excuse? Come on, Frankie, be more self

confident! You need to learn to say “no” once in a while!

Boy: I suppose you’re right. I’m not really that self-confident. Maybe I should say “no” to them more often.

Girl: Absolutely! You know, Frankie, I’m your only real friend. You should do whatever I tell you to do…

Boy: You’re right. Hey! Wait a minute! This is peer pressure!

Reading 05

**The Lipstick Effect**

Woman 1: Wow! We’re selling so much lipstick these days. We have to order some more! What’s going on here?

Woman 2: It’s because of the Lipstick Effect.

Woman 1: “The Lipstick Effect?” What are you talking about?

Woman 2: The Lipstick Effect means when women start buying more lipstick because the economy is bad.

Woman 1: Huh! Interesting! The economy is really bad these days. And women seem to be buying a lot more lipstick.

Woman 2: Right. And when the economy starts getting better, women will probably buy less lipstick.

Woman 1: Oh, yeah? Women will probably buy less lipstick when the economy gets better? That’s good to know. So why do women buy more lipstick when the economy is bad?

Woman 2: Well, when times are tough, women like to spend more money on small, inexpensive things. And lipstick is the most popular item that women buy.

Woman 1: That makes sense. I know I like to spend more money on small, inexpensive things when times are tough. And I do buy more lipstick during those times, too. Well, that explains a lot.

Reading 06

**The Rumba**

Boy: Wow! This is great! What a cool dance! It seems like a Latin-style dance. And even the name sounds Spanish. Rumba.

Girl: Actually, it is a Latin dance. But most Latin dances have their roots in Africa.

Boy: Is that so? Most Latin dances have their roots in Africa? I didn’t know that.

Girl: Sure. You see, the Spanish brought African slaves with them to the New World. They

wanted the slaves to do all of the hard work for them.

Boy: Right. I have heard that the Spanish brought African slaves with them to the new world. I guess they were too lazy to do their own hard work!

Girl: Exactly. Anyway, the slaves worked very hard during the day. But, at night, they would dance. It was a way to relax. One of those dances was the Rumba.

Boy: So the African slaves would dance at night, huh? That sounds very relaxing….

Girl: I think it was probably a good way to relieve stress. But the Spanish slave masters loved

watching these dances. They were impressed with the dance moves and fancy footwork.

Boy: I can see why the slave masters were impressed. There are a lot of fancy moves and footwork in the Rumba.

Girl: Soon, the Spanish slave masters started doing the Rumba, too. Over time, the dance spread all over the world.

Boy: How interesting! I had no idea that the Rumba began with African slaves in America.

Reading 07

**Boxing Day**

Boy: Wow! Look at all of these Boxing Day bargains! I guess the stores are trying to sell all of their Christmas goods. That’s why the mall is so full of people.

Girl 1: Yeah, this is great! Boxing Day is a great way to find bargains on Christmas goods. By the way, I’m from America. We don’t celebrate Boxing Day. I’m curious – how did Boxing Day start? What does the name come from? Do people put things in boxes on this day?

Boy: I’ve heard that, in the Middle Ages, churches had a special collection box where people threw money for the poor. Then, on the day after Christmas, people opened the box and gave the money to the poor people.

Girl 1: Interesting! So they collected money in these boxes for the poor. Then, on Boxing Day, they opened up the boxes and gave out the money. That makes sense.

Girl 2: I’ve heard a different story. I’ve heard that, about 300 years ago, rich people had these big Christmas feasts. The problem was that the servants couldn’t celebrate Christmas with their families because they had to work.

Girl 1: Do you mean the servants couldn’t celebrate Christmas with their families because they had to work during the rich people’s feasts?

Girl 2: Right. So to thank the servants, the rich people put a lot of leftover food in these boxes. The servants took the boxes home to their families.

Girl 1: They put leftover food in boxes and the servants brought those boxes to their families. Those two stories are very different. I wonder which one is the real story.

Girl 2: Anyway, I think the message is the same. Boxing Day is a great day to give small things to people.

Girl 1: I agree. Boxing Day is a great day to give small donations to people. It’s not just a day to go shopping.

Reading 08

**The Surprising Risks of Playing It Safe**

Woman: Honey, why did you leave the child safety cap off of this aspirin bottle? It’s dangerous!

What if little Johnny thought it was candy?

Man: Sorry, dear. I wasn’t thinking. Sometimes I leave those child safety caps off because the bottles are so hard to open! I didn’t realize it could be so dangerous.

Woman: It’s not only that. Look where you put this other medicine bottle! Johnny can reach it easily!

Man: You’re right. Johnny can reach it easily! What was I thinking? I guess I thought that, because it had the child safety cap on, it didn’t matter if Johnny can reach it.

Woman: But it does matter! It’s hard for Johnny to get those bottles open. But he can! He’s

very smart. Those child safety caps are not very good at all!

Man: I guess this is a really good example of the Peltzman Effect, huh?

Woman: The Peltzman Effect? What are you talking about?

Man: Well, some people believe we take more risks and act more dangerously when we feel safest. That’s the Peltzman Effect.

Woman: Hmm…. Interesting! Some people believe we act more dangerously when we feel

safest. That makes sense. I think that describes your behavior pretty well.

Reading 09

**Pablo Picasso**

Boy: Wow! Look at these paintings! Ah, these are all Picasso’s.

Girl: That’s right. Pablo Picasso made all of these paintings.

Boy: But why are they so different? These paintings are all blue and gray. And those ones over there are all pink and red.

Girl: That’s right. Picasso’s paintings are all grouped according to periods. During his “Blue Period,” he painted everything in blue and gray. During his “Rose Period,” he painted everything in pink and red and similar colors.

Boy: I didn’t realize he had a Rose Period and a Blue Period. How interesting!

Girl: Sure. Look at this picture here. This is from his Blue Period. This is a painting of Picasso’s friend, Carlos. Carlos killed himself in 1901. Picasso became very sad. So he painted everything in blue and gray like this.

Boy: Really? So this guy killed himself, huh? And Picasso became sad and started painting everything in blue and gray. This is the first time I’ve heard this.

Girl: Right. And look over here. This is from his Rose Period. Do you see this woman here? She was Picasso’s girlfriend. When he met her, in 1904, he became very happy. So he stopped painting in blue and gray and started painting in bright colors.

Boy: I see. So he painted in blue and gray when he was sad. And then, when he became happier, he started painting in bright colors. And this was his girlfriend, huh? And you say she made him really happy?

Girl: That’s right. Now that you’ve met me, maybe you should start painting in bright colors, too!

Reading 10

**Panda Poop**

Man: Hello. Welcome to the Chengdu Tourism Center. How can I help you? Are you looking for

some gifts? How about some panda bear gifts?

Girl: Some panda bear gifts? That sounds interesting. What do you have?

Man: Well, here are some panda bear dolls. We have some panda posters here. And this is

some Panda Poop Paper.

Girl: Panda Poop Paper? What are you talking about?

Man: Panda Poop Paper. It’s paper that’s made from panda poop.

Girl: Paper that’s made from panda poop? You must be joking me!

Man: No, really! Think about it. Pandas eat nothing but bamboo, right? And the pandas’ bodies

only use 20% of the bamboo that they eat. The other 80% comes out as poop which is perfect for paper.

Girl: Let me get this straight. Pandas’ bodies only use 20% of the bamboo that they eat. The other 80% comes out as poop. And you can use that poop to make paper.

Man: That’s right. The poop is collected, cleaned, crushed and then poured into big frames to

dry. When it dries you have really strong, quality paper.

Girl: So you collect the poop, then you clean it, crush it and pour it into frames. When it dries,

you have paper. Wow! I would never have imagined that people make paper from panda

poop!

Reading 11

**A Gift of Love**

Man: That Mike and Sally sure are a nice couple, aren’t they?

Woman: Yeah, I know what you mean! Did you know that Mike watches Sally every day when

she goes to work?

Man: Yes, I’ve heard that. I’ve heard that he watches over her as she gets on the bus. Then he drives to her work and watches her get off the bus. He makes sure she gets to her office safely since she is blind.

Woman: That’s right. He watches over her as she gets on the bus. Then he watches over her as she gets off the bus and walks into her office building. Mike is training Sally to go to work by herself.

Man: Right. Traveling on the bus must be frightening to Sally. Imagine! She can’t see anything. She could fall and hurt herself easily.

Woman: That’s right. She could fall and hurt herself very easily. I’ve heard that Mike taught her to use her other senses. He also taught her to count the number of steps from her house to the bus stop and from the bus stop to her office.

Man: Exactly. He taught her to use her other senses. He also taught her to count the number of steps to and from the bus stop.

Woman: And Mike is always encouraging her. He always says nice things and even tells little jokes to make her feel better.

Man: I know! What a great guy! He’s always saying nice, encouraging things and he tells her jokes to make her feel better.

Woman: Life must be really hard for blind people. But what a nice, loving husband Sally has. She’s had some bad luck in her life. But she married a really nice guy. So, in that way, she’s really lucky.

Reading 12

**Learning Zones**

Woman: Okay, students. Everyone stand up! We’re going to move our desks now. I want you to

make a big U-shape with your desks.

Boy: You want us to make a big U-shape with our desks? Why?

Woman: Well, because I’ve learned about “Learning Zones.”

Girl: “Learning Zones?” I’m confused. What do you mean, Mrs. Jenkins?

Woman: “Learning Zones.” Some psychologists have learned that where students sit impacts learning. If you sit right here in front of me you’re more likely to learn a lot.

Boy: Let me get this straight. You’ve read some reports that say students’ seating choices affect how they learn. Is that right? So, what’s wrong with that? I sit in the front and I feel that I learn a lot.

Woman: Sure. Students that sit in the front don’t seem to have any problem, Randy. The

problem is when students sit in the back and at the sides. You guys don’t pay attention

as much. You ask fewer questions. Some of you even fall asleep.

Girl: That’s right. Mindy hardly talks in class at all. David never pays attention. And Tony even falls asleep! And they all sit at the back and sides.

Woman: That’s right. That’s why I’m moving you students. If I make a U-shape, there are no back and side areas. So you students and I can interact more.

Boy: Ah, I see what you mean. If we make a U-shape, there will be no back and sides. That’s true. I think that’s a good idea.

Woman: Sure. Okay, everyone, stand up! Let’s go!

Reading 13

**Crop Circles**

Girl: Wow! This is unbelievable! So this is what you mean by a “crop circle,” huh?

Boy: Yeah, I just noticed this last night. I looked it up on the Internet. This is what’s called a “crop circle.” Look at this big, complex design.

Girl: Yeah, it’s really big and complex. It’s so strange! Why is it here in the middle of this wheat field?

Boy: I don’t know. Apparently, there are a lot of them around the world. People have seen crop circles in more than 70 countries. And they find them in fields of wheat, corn, barley, even rice fields in Asia.

Girl: Really? They’ve found them in more than 70 countries, huh? And they find them in wheat,

corn, barley and rice fields. Look! The wheat stems are bent, but they’re not broken.

Boy: Yeah, I read that that’s common in crop circles. The plant stems are bent but not broken. Also, the soil inside the crop circle usually has more iron than the soil outside of the crop circle.

Girl: Oh, yeah? There’s usually more iron inside of the circle than outside, huh? Interesting. Why would that be? I bet these crop circles are made by UFOs landing in the fields.

Boy: I think the circles are made by aliens, too. But I don’t think it’s because UFOs land in the fields. I think aliens are leaving us messages with their beautiful designs.

Girl: Aliens are leaving us messages with their beautiful designs? Wow!

Reading 14

**A Home away from Home**

Girl: Dad, I know of a way to take a vacation this year without spending a lot of money.

Man: “Home Exchange Program. com.” What’s this?

Girl: A home exchange program is a way to trade houses for free during a vacation.

Man: A way to trade houses for free during a vacation? I’m confused.

Girl: It’s simple. You want to go to Paris, right? Well, these people from Paris want to come here, to New York. We can trade houses for a few weeks. They can spend two weeks here in our house and we can spend two weeks there in their house.

Man: Ah, I see. Since we simply trade houses, we don’t have to rent hotel rooms. And they can even take care of our dog. Maybe we should do this. It’s a great way to save money.

Girl: I’ll ask Mom what she thinks. Oo! Look here! Here’s a South African family that wants to go to New York!

Man: Now you want to go to South Africa?

Reading 15

**Who, Him? He’s My Dad!**

Man: Alright, everyone. We’ve seen the tigers and the giraffes. Now I want to show you an

animal that I think is even more interesting. Look over there. That’s an emperor penguin.

Girl: An emperor penguin? Why do you think it’s even more interesting than a tiger?

Man: Well, for one thing, the male emperor penguins are really great fathers.

Boy: Really? Those big, fat penguins make great fathers? That seems hard to believe. I bet they spend the whole day sitting around eating fish.

Man: Well, they do eat a lot of fish! But you can’t blame them for that! In Antarctica, male

emperor penguins need to eat a lot. That’s because, when the females lay eggs, the males can’t eat for around 65 days.

Girl: Really? Wow! They don’t eat for 65 days? That’s between the time the eggs are laid until the time they’re hatched, huh? That’s a really long time. They must get really skinny then.

Man: Sure. The males lose nearly 50 percent of their body weight while waiting for the babies to

be born. You see, they put the eggs on top of their feet for the whole time. They don’t even move that much.

Boy: That’s amazing! They put the eggs on their feet and just wait around until the eggs are hatched? They don’t even move that much?

Man: That’s right. Do you see what I mean? Male emperor penguins make great fathers!

Girl: They sure are!

Reading 16

**Philo Farnsworth**

Boy: Ah, don’t turn on that television! I hate TV!

Girl: Really? Why do you hate TV? That seems strange.

Boy: My great grandfather was Philo T. Farnsworth. He was the inventor of the television.

Girl: Your great grandfather was the inventor of the television? So why do you hate TV? It seems to me you should love TV since your great grandfather first made it.

Boy: No way! Because of television, my great grandfather had a terrible life. After he made the first TV, he had a legal battle with this big company called RCA. The company said that he wasn’t the real inventor.

Girl: Really? He had a legal battle with the company because they didn’t think your great

grandfather was the real inventor of the TV? That’s terrible!

Boy: Yeah. Well, my great-grandfather won the battle. But then, during World War II, the U.S. government stopped companies from making TVs. The government wanted workers to spend their time making weapons.

Girl: So I guess your great grandfather didn’t make much money during the war, huh? I mean if the government stopped companies from making TVs, he must not have earned anything.

Boy: Exactly. And then, after the war, people started watching more TV. But the programs that people watched were just silly. My great grandfather hated that.

Girl: I can understand why he hated it. Most TV programs are really silly.

Boy: Yeah, that was something that really drove my great grandfather crazy. He hated TV. He even told my father not to watch TV.

Reading 17

**Sunblock – Block Out Wrinkles Now!**

Boy: Irene! You really need to put on some sunblock! It’s really sunny today. You don’t want to look like an old lady by the time you’re thirty years old, do you?

Girl: Why would I look like an old lady by the time I’m thirty? What does that have to do with the sun and sunblock?

Boy: The sun damages your skin. The sun creates those wrinkles you have on your face. Nearly four out of five wrinkles are caused by sun damage.

Girl: Really? The sun damages your skin? Nearly four out of five wrinkles are caused by sun damage? I had no idea! I sat out in the sun a lot.

Boy: That’s why you’re starting to get wrinkles. How old are you? Eighteen? And you already have a fair few wrinkles.

Girl: It’s true. I’m only eighteen and I already have some wrinkles. Oh, this is terrible! What should I do?

Boy: Well, anytime you’re out in the sun you should wear sunblock with an SPF of at least 30. SPF stands for Sun Protection Factor. The higher the SPF on sunblock, the more protection there is.

Girl: Okay, let me get this straight. I need to wear sunblock with an SPF of at least 30. SPF means Sun Protection Factor. The higher the SPF, the more protection there is.

Boy: Exactly. And wrinkles are not even the biggest danger. If you don’t protect your skin from the sun, you can get skin cancer. Sunblock greatly reduces the risk of skin cancer.

Girl: Is that right? Sunblock reduces the risk of skin cancer. Okay, you’ve convinced me. Pass me that bottle of sunblock. Thanks.

Reading 18

**Language Is a Mirror of History**

Woman: What do you want in your taco, David?

Boy: Mm… I’d like some beef. Thanks. Mom, how come we say “beef” when we mean “cow’s

meat”?

Woman: Well, the word “beef” comes from the Normans. It’s just like “pork.” Pork is also a

Norman word for pig meat.

Boy: The word comes from the Normans? I don’t understand. Who are the Normans?

Woman: The Normans were people that lived in the northern part of France long ago. In the year 1066, they invaded and conquered England.

Boy: They lived in northern France long ago, eh? And they took over England in 1066? Interesting. I didn’t know that.

Woman: Yep. Anyway, the Norman kings and Norman nobles liked to eat meat a lot. But they only spoke French. They would order cow, pig and sheep meat. But they would use the French words for them. Those words sounded like “beef,” “pork,” and “mutton.”

Boy: So the French-speaking kings and nobles ordered cow, pig and sheep meat in their own language. And those words sounded like “beef,” “pork,” and “mutton.” Do I have you so far?

Woman: Exactly. The thing was, the local people – the English – they were too poor to afford meat. The only people that ordered meat were the French Normans. So the French words replaced the English ones.

Boy: Ah, so that’s why the French words replaced the English ones! Because the words were

only used in French. The English hardly used the words because they couldn’t afford the

meat. How interesting!

Reading 19

**The Rules of Diet in Islam**

Man: Hi, Amal. Thanks for inviting me to your lovely home. Your house is really nice. Oh, and

that smells really great, too. Here’s a little gift.

Woman: Hi, Darryl. I’m so glad you could make it. Thank you so much for the gift. But I’m afraid I can’t accept it. I’m Muslim. We Muslims don’t drink wine. It’s ”Haram.”

Man: It’s “Haram?” Does that mean it’s something you can’t eat or drink? Oh. I’m sorry. I didn’t realize Muslims could not drink wine.

Woman: That’s okay. I really appreciate the gift. But you should keep it. You can enjoy this at home with your family. That will make me happy. Well, we’re about ready to eat. Here, have a seat.

Man: How interesting! You eat on the floor. And what’s this little bowl of water for?

Woman: That bowl of water is to wash your hands. Also, we usually sit on the floor when we eat. And we always eat with our right hands only.

Man: Oh, yeah? You only use your right hand to eat, huh? I’ve also heard that most Muslims don’t eat for, like, a whole month or something. Is that right?

Woman: Ah, you mean during Ramadan. Yes, Ramadan is a time when most Muslims don’t eat between sunrise and sunset for a month.

Man: Wow! That’s hard to believe. You don’t eat between sunrise and sunset for a whole month? You must lose a lot of weight during that time.

Woman: I do. Also, the food we do eat must be “Halal.” Halal foods are animals like cows, sheep and chickens. They must be killed in the name of God. People say a prayer before killing them. And the animals must not suffer.

Man: Okay, let me get this straight. Halal foods are animals like cows, sheep and chickens. A

prayer must be said before killing them. And they must not suffer. This is great! I’m really

learning a lot today!

Reading 20

**Nature’s Sticky Secret**

Boy: Ah! I hate these sticky seeds! They’re all stuck to my pants!

Girl: But these seeds are interesting, aren’t they? Did you know that these seeds gave a man the idea to make Velcro?

Boy: Sticky seeds gave a man the idea to make Velcro? No, I didn’t know that.

Girl: Yeah. You see, there was this Swiss engineer walking through the woods one day. He got these sticky seeds stuck all over his pants. He was annoyed because he couldn’t get them off.

Boy: Wait, wait. Let me see if I’ve got this straight. Some Swiss guy was walking through the woods one day. He got annoyed because he had sticky seeds all over his pants. Is that right? Okay, go on.

Girl: So he looked at the seeds under a microscope. He saw a bunch of tiny hooks on the ends of the seeds. Small threads from his pants were still stuck in the hooks. That’s how he got the idea to make Velcro.

Boy: So you’re saying that, when he looked at the seeds under the microscope, he saw a bunch of tiny hooks at the ends of the seeds. And there were small threads from his pants still stuck in the hooks. Really? That gave the guy the idea to make Velcro?

Girl: Yes. It took ten years, but this Swiss guy finally made Velcro. And today Velcro is used

everywhere. Look you have Velcro on your shoes, your jacket and your hat.

Boy: That’s true. Velcro is used everywhere. It’s interesting that he got the idea from sticky seeds. Oo! Look at this plant! What do you think we can discover with this plant?

Reading 21

**The Mystery of Mars**

Girl: Here. Point the telescope this way. What do you see?

Boy: I see a red planet. Hey, is that Mars?

Girl: That’s right. That’s Mars. Do you know why it’s red? It’s because the dirt of Mars has a lot of iron in it. The iron gives it that red color.

Boy: Really? Iron gives it that red color, huh? Interesting!

Girl: Yep. And did you know that Mars is similar to Earth? A day on Mars is 24 hours and 37 minutes long. Mars has seasons just like Earth. Oh, and it also has volcanoes, polar icecaps and storms just like our planet.

Boy: Huh! I didn’t realize it was so similar to Earth. So its day is 24 hours and 37 minutes long. It has seasons. And it has volcanoes, icecaps and storms. Mars is almost the same as Earth.

Girl: Well, I wouldn’t go that far. There are also some big differences between Earth and Mars. For example, there is no water on Mars except in the polar icecaps. And there is very little oxygen on Mars. And the temperature! It’s really, really cold on Mars.

Boy: So there is little water or oxygen and it’s extremely cold there. Yeah, I guess in that respect it is pretty different.

Girl: Scientists are really interested in Mars. Nowadays, many scientists are trying to figure out if Mars was even more like Earth a long time ago.

Boy: Scientists are trying to learn if Mars used to be a lot more like Earth, huh? Fascinating. Let’s have a look on the Internet. Maybe we can learn a little bit more about Mars.

Reading 22

**The Power of YouTube**

Boy: Hi, Jen. What are you doing?

Girl: Ah, I’m just watching some video clips here on YouTube. You know, I never realized how great YouTube is until right now. Look here. It says 65,000 new clips were posted just today.

Boy: Wow! 65,000 clips were posted just today. That’s amazing! I’ve heard that at least 70 million videos are watched daily on YouTube.

Girl: Yeah, I’ve heard the same thing. At least 70 million videos are watched daily on YouTube.

Boy: Do you know how YouTube was invented?

Girl: No. How was it invented?

Boy: Well, one day, three young men wanted to send an email with a video clip to their other friend. But the problem was that the video clip was too big. So they couldn’t attach it to the email.

Girl: So the three guys were trying to attach a video clip to an email. But the video clip was too big. Right. So what happened?

Boy: Well, the three guys were all programmers. They all sat down together and created a video sharing website. That was YouTube. It opened in 2005.

Girl: Really? Those three guys then made YouTube? That was in 2005? Wow! YouTube is not that old! And it has totally changed the way people report news. How interesting!

Reading 23

**Wear Red to Win**

Boy : Oh, no! The Devils lost again! Oh, this is terrible!

Girl: I think they lost because of the color of their uniforms.

Boy: You think they lost because of the color of their uniforms? Jenny, don’t be crazy! The color of their uniforms has nothing to do with it.

Girl: Oh, yes, it does! In 2004, two scientists studied the Athens Olympic Games. They studied athletes that had been given either red or blue uniforms. They discovered that athletes wearing red were more likely to win.

Boy: So what? They studied a bunch of Olympic athletes. In Athens, athletes in red happened to win more often than athletes in blue. That’s just chance.

Girl: No, it isn’t. That same year, the scientists studied the European Cup soccer tournament. They found that teams wearing red won more games.

Boy: So in the 2004 European Cup soccer tournament, teams in red won more often. You still haven’t convinced me.

Girl: Let me finish! The two scientists argued that it’s just like in the animal kingdom. When male animals have red on their bodies, it sends a signal of power and strength. It’s like with monkeys. The more male monkeys show red scars, the more they can attract females.

Boy: You’re saying that athletes are just like animals. Male monkeys that have red scars send a signal of power and strength. Likewise, male athletes wearing red show power and strength.

Girl: Exactly! Male athletes that wear red show power and strength. It’s just like the monkeys.

Boy: That’s an interesting theory, Jenny. But you’ll have to show me a lot more information than that to convince me.

Reading 24

**Chew to Be Healthy**

Girl: Why are you always chewing gum, Danny? It’s rude!

Boy: I’m sorry that you find it rude, Diane. But I chew gum for my health.

Girl: You chew gum for your health? What are you talking about?

Boy: Chewing gum is a healthy habit! Didn’t you know that? I chew xylitol. It helps fight tooth decay.

Girl: Really? There’s a gum that helps fight tooth decay? I didn’t know that….

Boy: Yeah. And not only that, American researchers found that chewing sugar-free gum 100 times a minute for 12 minutes can burn 70 kilocalories an hour.

Girl: Wow! Chewing gum is like a diet food! Chewing sugar-free gum 100 times a minute for 12 minutes can burn 70 kilocalories an hour. Who would’ve thought it?

Boy: Sure. Some doctors even think that gum may be a great way to deliver medicine. They’ve put some kinds of medicine in chewing gum. And they’ve found that the medicine is absorbed quickly and efficiently through their cheeks.

Girl: Okay, okay, let me get this straight. Some doctors are now considering putting medicine in gum. That’s because the body absorbs the medicine quickly and efficiently that way.

Boy: That’s it. So the next time you see me chewing gum, don’t give me a hard time! I’m just trying to stay healthy!