

WORKING WITH THE FIRST SOURCE: TEXT

READING COMPREHENSION TIPS

As you read the text, you should try to identify:

- what is being proposed, stated, suggested, etc., as the general idea of the text;
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It is estimated that one out of four people in the world speaks English, although literacy, competence, and mastery may vary considerably. Still, there is little or no doubt that English has reached a global status and is probably the most widespread language in the world today. Millions and millions of native and nonnative speakers communicate in English every day on social network sites and blogs, and in discussion forums and

chat rooms. English is also systematically used in a number of different fields of expertise such as science, technology, diplomacy, business, and advertising. In addition, it is the main language of academic conferences, international sports competitions, books and newspapers. In summary, English has become an international lingua franca.

Does that mean everyone in the world speaks English the same way? Not at all. In fact, the more widespread English becomes, the more we have to rethink our traditional concept of the language and embrace the idea of different “Englishes.” First, there are huge countries, such as India or Nigeria, where English is considered the official language but is undergoing changes due to the influence of secondary local languages and unique cultural aspects. And then there is the phenomenon that has been dubbed “Globish,” which is a simplification of the English language to facilitate communication between nonnative speakers of English who do not share the same first language. In this respect, English can no longer be considered just that language that is spoken in England and the United States, because it is developing and being shaped by forces working from the bottom-up, not from the top-down.

The Case of the UNWELCOME GUEST (Part 1)



"If James turns up at my Sweet Sixteen, I'm leaving, Mom!" This was the ultimatum Kathy Morgan presented her mother with on the eve of her sixteenth birthday party. The ultimatum came as no surprise to Laura, Kathy's mother. Even though Kathy and James were first cousins and had gotten along well together when they were younger, they hadn't seen eye to eye since they had met in the arrivals lounge of JFK airport just five days earlier.



James, his mother, his younger brother Keith, and his little sister Emily arrived in the United States for a two-week visit. As Kathy waited for the visitors to emerge from customs at the airport, she wondered if she would recognize James. It had been six years since she had last seen her cousin. At the time, she was ten and James was twelve. The two families had spent four days together in London when Kathy and her parents visited the city on one of the stops of a three-week tour of Europe.

Kathy had fond memories of those four days. At first it was difficult to understand the quaint British accents. “They talk funny,” she had said at the time. “They call French fries, chips; potato chips, crisps; and when they offer you lemonade, they’re offering some kind of soft drink, not *real* lemonade.” She also couldn’t help but notice that people in Britain drove on the wrong side of the road. During her stay in London, James saved her from being run over at least a dozen times.



There were moments when Kathy felt like she had stepped into a time machine and traveled back in history.

Like on the day they visited Westminster Abbey. It was almost 5 p.m. as they entered the Abbey, and Evensong was about to begin. As they sat listening to the choir, Kathy looked up at the vaulted stone ceiling lined with stained-glass windows and was impressed by the sheer majesty of the building, although she might not have put it in those words herself at the time.

It was magical to think that so many kings

and queens had walked those same aisles and sat in those same pews. It was also a little creepy to remember that, along with hundreds of others, nearly twenty English monarchs were buried there.

Kathy and James got along really well, and Kathy couldn't have enjoyed the four days more. She remembered the fun they had feeding and chasing the pigeons at Trafalgar Square. She recalled the laughs at Madame Tussauds as they posed for photos beside the wax models of historical figures, celebrities, and infamous criminals.



The Case of the

**WEIRD
BOYFRIEND**

(Part 1)

The heated argument between Mr. Edgar Morales and his daughter

Mirian suddenly ended when he told her: "I'm ordering you to stop seeing that weirdo. As long as you live under my roof, I suggest that you do as I say, or else . . . Hey! Where are you going? Come back here!" Nonchalantly, Mirian got up from the sofa, went to the landing of the stairs, turned around with her arms crossed and looked at her father with a poker face: "I'm not a child anymore. I decide who I want to date."



And on that note, Mirian sprinted up the stairs to her bedroom, slammed the door, and locked herself in.

"Way to go, Edgar. Spoken like a true dictator!" said his wife Lilly.

The whole affair had started earlier that day when Edgar Morales, the sports coach and PE teacher at Faulkner High, was window-shopping at the mall after school.



As he was heading to the parking lot, he glanced over at a nearby café in the mall and thought he spotted his daughter with a young man, holding hands and swapping kisses. He stopped dead in his tracks and stared for a while.

“Holy mackerell!” gasped Mr. Morales as he hid behind a column, like a secret agent in a spy movie, to avoid being seen. “That looks like Mirian, but it can’t be . . . she doesn’t hang around with weirdos like that.”



The problem wasn’t Mirian having a boyfriend. After all, she was a senior in the high school where Mr. Morales taught, and she had already dated some guys at school. The problem was the dude she was with: tattooed arms, punk hair, a sleeveless leather jacket, chains around his neck, torn jeans, and something that glittered on his ears and nose. “Probably earrings or piercings,” thought Mr. Morales as his heart started beating faster.

Mr. Morales whipped out his cell phone and, stealing glances now and then from behind the column, dialed Mirian’s number. When the young woman at the café pulled out a cell phone from her bag to answer, Mr. Morales broke into a cold sweat.

“Oh, my God,” he muttered to himself.

"Hi, Daddy. What's up?" answered Mirian.

"Hey . . . Mirian . . . uh . . . well . . . uh . . . where are you?" he asked in a state of shock.

"Dad, are you all right? You sound awful."

"Just a . . . uh . . . just a bad case of heartburn. Had Mexican food for lunch. Where . . . are you?" he stuttered.



"At the mall with a friend. Are you sure you're OK?" were the last words Mr. Morales heard because he dropped his cell phone and, as he clumsily lurched to pick it up, he almost crashed into a lady coming by in a wheelchair.

When Mr. Morales got home later, after getting a ticket for speeding and another for running a red light, he rushed by his wife without a word.



"Eddy! How was your day, honey? Hmm, you don't look so hot. No kiss today? I'll take a rain check," said Lilly jokingly.

WORKING WITH THE SECOND SOURCE: TEXT

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WHO WON THE DEBATE?

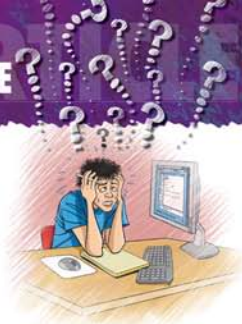
Larissa is a 17-year-old green activist who has been involved in all kinds of environmental movements. For the past six months, she has been particularly concerned about global warming issues.

This morning she attended a debate between Professor Fitchens and Professor Dalton, both celebrated and well-published scientists and researchers in the field of climate change. Right after the debate, she posted the following on her blog:

(1) Will someone kindly explain to me what that Professor Dalton was talking about? Was he really denying the fact that we are responsible for global warming? How can a scientist say something like that? (2) He said people who are trying to do something about global warming are irresponsible. If you ask me, he is the irresponsible one. (3) The bottom line is that his speech put me off. (4) I loved Professor Fitchens though. What a fascinating man. And he is so sarcastic; I really liked that. (5) When he said that stuff about global warming being recognized by all civilized nations, everybody laughed. Of course any civilized person knows global warming is real. He knew Professor Dalton was going to say it is a hoax, so he kinda called Professor Dalton uncivilized without being downright rude or anything. That was very clever, and I totally agree with him. (6) In my opinion, Professor Fitchens won the debate. (7) My takeaway from the whole discussion is that we are definitely destroying our own planet. (8) So, here's my suggestion: How about carpooling, recycling, and using less water and energy? Maybe then we'll be able to stop global warming, or at least reduce its effects. Isn't that obvious? I mean, to any civilized person? LOL.

THE COLLEGE ESSAY

Your Life in 500 Words or Less



High-school seniors hate them. Colleges ignore them. So why have those pithy personal essays become the bane of every university-hopeful?

BY ANDREW FERGUSON

Meg is a lawyer-mom in suburban Washington, D.C., where lawyer-moms are thick on the ground. She's asked us not to use her last name to prevent mortification to her son Doug. He is quite mortified enough already.



Doug is one of several hundred thousand high-school seniors who had a painful fall. The deadline for applying to his favorite college was Nov. 1, and by early October he had yet to fill out the application. More to the point, he had yet to settle on a subject for the personal essay accompanying the application. According to college folklore, a well-turned essay has the power to seduce an admissions committee.

STUDENT INFORMATION FORM

First		Middle		Last	
<input type="checkbox"/> Male		<input type="checkbox"/> Female		<input type="checkbox"/> Citizen	
City:					

SPACE FOR NOTES

"He wanted to do one thing at a time," Meg says, explaining her son's delay. "But really, my son is a huge procrastinator. The essay is the hardest thing to do, so he's put it off the longest."

Friends and other veterans of the process have warned Meg that the back and forth between editing parent and writing student can be gruesomely traumatic. "But I tell them, you can't scare me," she says. "I'm already there. I mean, I was an English major, I'm a lawyer, I write for a living! And I'm panicking already."



A college application is a relatively straightforward questionnaire asking for the basics: name, address, family history, employment history. It would all be innocent enough—20 minutes of busy work—except it comes attached to an incendiary device: the personal essay.

"There are good reasons it causes such anxiety," says Lisa Sohmer,

director of college counseling at the Garden School in Jackson Heights, N.Y. "It's not just the actual writing. By now everything else is already set. Your course load is set, your grades are set, your test scores are set. All that's done. But the essay is something you can still control, and it's open-ended. So the temptation is to write and rewrite and rewrite." Or stall and stall and stall.

SPACE FOR NOTES