

Clear Speech Together

Exercise Manual for
Group Sessions

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Resources for Speech Practice

This workbook has been designed as part of a speech therapy programme where groups of people with speech difficulties work with each other to practise their speech strategies, speaking CLEARLY and LOUDLY ¹.

However, you can also use these exercises, either by yourself or together with family and friends.

The CLEAR prompt refers to articulating your words as carefully as possible, potentially exaggerating your speech movements, as if talking to someone who is lipreading.

The LOUD prompt does **not** mean you should shout, but that you should speak with as strong as voice as possible, as you have been practising with the breathing and phonation exercises in the toolkit.

The programme was designed for daily meetings over a 4 week period, so there are 20 units in the workbook. The complexity of the speech tasks increases each week. Depending on the level of your speech difficulties, you might not be able to do them all, so adjust your practice according to what you feel comfortable with. By the end of the workbook you will hopefully have gained experience in how to select further practice materials to suit your level to continue your own practice.

As with the exercises listed in the toolkit, you should consult a clinician if you experience any negative effects from performing these exercises.

¹ Lowit, A., Cox, J., Loucas, M., Grassly, J., Egan, A., van Brenk, F., & Hadjivassiliou, M. (2023). ClearSpeechTogether: a Rater Blinded, Single, Controlled Feasibility Study of Speech Intervention for People with Progressive Ataxia. *The Cerebellum*, 22 (5), 865–876. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12311-022-01462-9>

INTRODUCTION

The Treatment

- ❖ **ClearSpeechTogether** is a combined individual and group practice approach for people with speech difficulties.
- ❖ It consists of individual treatment sessions with a Speech and Language Therapist, usually four sessions, to help identify and practise what you can do to improve your speech. The strategies include speaking with a strong, **LOUD** voice and articulating in a **CLEAR** manner.
- ❖ The individual sessions are followed by four weeks of daily group practice without a clinician, four times a week, and one weekly clinician led group session.
- ❖ Some people might require further individual support. This should be identified by the clinician during the weekly check in session, however, it is important that you **raise any concerns immediately** with your clinician to ensure maximum benefit from this treatment.

What's in this Manual

- ❖ This manual is designed to support group practice for **ClearSpeechTogether**.
- ❖ It contains exercises for a four week period, starting with single word exercises and ending with practice at conversational level.
- ❖ You will be asked to prepare your own materials for practice at various points. This is intended to make the exercises more relevant to your own interest, and also guide you toward finding further material by yourself after therapy has completed. You can find examples in the resource section to help you identify such materials or for use if you did not manage to source your own.
- ❖ You will notice that you are asked to practise 10 daily phrases in each session. These should be phrases that you are likely to say a lot, e.g. Can I have a coffee, I'm tired, etc., so that you can keep using your speech strategies for the rest of the day without having to set aside a specific time for practice. You can change the phrases if you want but try to stick to the same set for at least a week.

Group Session Aims

- ❖ Using strategies designed to make your speech more understandable can alter the way you sound and it can take time to get used to this.
- ❖ The intention of the group sessions is to allow you to practise your speech techniques in a more natural, conversational environment.
- ❖ The group should be a supportive environment where you can experiment with making changes to your speaking style and familiarise yourself with it whilst receiving feedback from the others about how it improves your speech.
- ❖ Listening to others applying the same techniques can also help you to monitor your own way of using them. To achieve these goals, it is essential that you **provide positive and constructive feedback** to each other at all times. This also includes alerting each other when someone is not using the strategies in the most effective way!

The Schedule

- ❖ Your clinician will have provided you with some **individual warm-up exercises** and you should complete these before you join the group session.
- ❖ The group exercises are designed to take around 20-30 minutes and there should be ample opportunity for social chat at the start and the end.

- ❖ As you progress through the exercises try to use your speech strategies during these informal conversations as much as possible.
- ❖ Altogether, the daily session should take around one hour (15 minutes for warm up, 45 minutes for the group practice).
- ❖ As you will be working through the materials without the presence of a clinician, one of the group members should act as session chair on a rotating basis. This will involve keeping an eye on the time to work through all the exercises and ensuring everyone gets the chance to contribute during the discussions.

Ground Rules for successful group sessions

Confidentiality

- ❖ Anything discussed in the group should stay in the group
- ❖ If you meet a group member in another setting, respect their boundaries

Listening

- ❖ When someone is speaking give them your full attention
- ❖ Always let the previous speaker finish before contributing

Taking part

- ❖ To benefit from the treatment you should try to take part in all of the exercises, but it's okay to say if you find something difficult or need a break
- ❖ If you feel you have been contributing more than other members try to give opportunities for others to speak

Encouragement

- ❖ Be supportive and encouraging without pressing anyone to do anything that makes them uncomfortable

Session chair

- ❖ When you are session chair make sure the group is ready to move on before changing task
- ❖ Work as a group to let the chair know when the group is ready to move on

Online communication

- ❖ You might want to agree some non-verbal signs such as raising your hand to let people know you want to speak, thumbs up if you agree with a suggestion, etc.

Potential problems and how to solve them

- ❖ If you experience problems with your speech, e.g. you find the exercises too challenging, you can't remember how to use the strategies, or you are feeling some discomfort with your voice, please contact your clinician immediately and they will try to help you resolve these issues
- ❖ If you get distressed during the session, either because of personal circumstances or because of how someone else is behaving towards you, please sign off from the session. The session volunteer will contact you to ensure you are supported in the short term and also alert the therapist where appropriate who can then discuss with you how they can help you further

We hope you will enjoy working with each other. Remember...

Be LOUD and CLEAR



Provide CONSTRUCTIVE FEEDBACK



**Be KIND and
SUPPORTIVE to each other**

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WEEK 1 SCHEDULE

WEEK 1 - DAY 1: SINGLE WORDS



FEED
BACK

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** take turns to produce your 10 daily phrases, one phrase per person at a time
3. **First letter, last letter** (*single words*): someone starts with a word, the next person has to say a word starting with the last letter of the previous word: e.g. bread, dog, gracious, salty). Start with short words, then try to find longer ones.
4. **I'm going shopping, and I'm buying...** (*two word sequences*): one person starts with a shopping item, the next person repeats that word and adds another. Start your sentence with "I'm buying" and make sure you say your shopping items **Loud** and **Clear**.
5. **Category naming** (*word lists*): take a minute to write down 10 words of a particular category of your choice, e.g. food items, modes of transport, countries, etc., then read the list out to the others.
6. **Final chat**



LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 1 - DAY 2: SINGLE WORDS AND SHORT PHRASES

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** take turns to produce your 10 daily phrases, one phrase per person at a time
3. **Category naming:** this is the same activity as the previous day, but we have made it more difficult as you need to think of the words on the spot. Decide on the categories you wish to use (see examples below), the chairperson numbers them randomly, at your turn you choose a number and find out your category. Start immediately and say as many words as possible in 1 minute. Remember to speak **LOUD** and **CLEAR**! If you want to make it a competition, the person with the greatest number of words wins.

Example Categories: Baked goods, Vegetables, Sports, Dog breeds, Trees, British wildlife, Capital cities, Cars
3. **Who Am I?** Everybody secretly selects a well-known person, and the others take turns to ask short yes/no questions **LOUDLY** and **CLEARLY** to find out who they are.
4. **Final chat**



LOUD &
CLEAR



FEED BACK

WEEK 1 - DAY 3: SHORT PHRASES

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** take turns to produce your 10 daily phrases, one phrase per person at a time
3. **Unusual Recipes:** take turns to read out the ingredients from one of the recipes provided in the resource section (P. 14).
4. **Find the longer word:** in turns, choose one of the words in the list on (P. 17). Say the word, and then say a longer version of the word and then a short phrase containing that longer word, e.g. "rain" – "rainbow" – "a rainbow has many colours". Everybody should get 2 turns.
If there is time...
5. **Story Telling:** One person starts with a sentence of a story, e.g. 'One day I...' and the next person thinks of the next phrase/sentence to continue the story... and then the next... etc.
6. **Final chat**

Homework: find 3 news headlines (about 6 to 10 words long) that interest to you to read out tomorrow (see examples in Resources P. 17).

LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 1 - DAY 4: LONGER PHRASES

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** take turns to produce your 10 daily phrases, one phrase per person at a time
3. **Newsreader:** Read out your news headlines as if you were a news reader on the TV/radio or newspaper vendor – remember: LOUD and CLEAR. Particularly try to emphasise the highlighted words to achieve this. If you did not have time to prepare any there are some in the resource section (P. 17).

FEED BACK

4. Final chat

Homework: pick some more headlines AND a limerick (see resource section, P. 18) that you would like to read next Monday. If you write or print the headlines out, mark which words you would like to emphasise when you read them similar to today's exercise.

LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 2 SCHEDULE

WEEK 2 - DAY 1: LONGER PHRASES

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** Produce your 10 daily phrases, two phrases per person at a time.
3. **Newsreader:** read some more headlines as if you were a presenter on the news! If you did not have time to prepare any there are some more in the resource section ([p. 18](#)). Everybody should get 3 turns.
4. **Limericks:** take turns reading a limerick (see resource section, [p. 18](#))
5. **Final chat**



FEED
BACK

Homework: Find 2-3 news headlines to read tomorrow. In addition to the headline, get the first 2-3 lines of the story.



LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 2 - DAY 2: LONGER PHRASES & SHORT PARAGRAPHS

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** Produce your 10 daily phrases, two phrases per person at a time.
3. **Newsreader:** read a headline and start of the story - see resource section ([p. 19](#)) for some examples if you could not find your own. Split phrases into small enough chunks to remain LOUD and CLEAR throughout and emphasise important words!
4. **Limericks:** read a whole limerick each, there are some more in the resource section ([p. 19](#)).



LOUD &
CLEAR

5. **Final chat**



FEED
BACK

WEEK 2 - DAY 3: SHORT PARAGRAPHS



FEED
BACK

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** Produce your 10 daily phrases, two phrases per person at a time.
3. **Poems:** read a poem stanza each – see resources ([p. 20](#)). If there is time, go round twice.
4. **Unusual Recipes:** read out the instructions to some more unusual recipes ([p. 22](#)). They are quite long, so share each recipe between 2 speakers. Remember to break the sentences up into manageable chunks and speak LOUDLY and CLEARLY!

5. **Final chat**

Homework: find a news story to read out tomorrow (see WEEK 2 day 2 resources as example, [p. 19](#)) AND bring along a poem you like.



LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 2 - DAY 4: SHORT PARAGRAPHS



FEED
BACK

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily Phrases:** Continue to take turns to produce your 10 daily phrases, two at a time. In addition, repeat the last sentence of the person that came before you, i.e., say three phrases at a time.
3. **News Stories:** Read out your news headlines and short story.
4. **Poems:** Read a longer section of a poem – see resources ([p. 23](#)) section or bring your own.
5. **Final chat**

Homework: Bring along the recipe for your favourite dish to read out.



LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 3 SCHEDULE

WEEK 3 – DAY 1: SHORT PARAGRAPHS

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)



2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases (5 at a time) – does saying more at a time make a difference to how clear you can say them?

3. **On the screen:** Read out the reviews of a TV show or film from the resource section ([p. 25](#)).

4. **Recipes:** Read out the instructions to make your favourite dish.



5. **Final chat**

Homework: go to Wikipedia or a similar site to find 1-2 paragraphs on a complicated topic to read out, see examples in Resources ([p. 28](#)). Prepare a description of a person, thing or place.

WEEK 3 – DAY 2: LONGER PARAGRAPHS

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)

2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases, 5 at a time- focus on remaining **LOUD** and **CLEAR** across all five!



3. **Wikipedia:** Read out a paragraph on the topic you chose, there are some examples in the resource section ([p. 28](#)) if required.

4. **Mystery Game:** In about 5 or 6 sentences, describe a person, thing, place, etc. - the other members of the group then have to guess who/what it is. Take turns to ask questions until you find the answer. Everybody should focus on staying **LOUD** and **CLEAR** in this exercise!

5. **Final chat**



WEEK 3 – DAY 3: LONGER PARAGRAPHS



FEED BACK

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases 5 at a time- focus on remaining **LOUD** and **CLEAR** across all five!
3. **Famous women:** Read through one of the descriptions in the resource section ([P. 29](#)), 2 paragraphs each. Follow this with a group discussion of who this might refer to, then check who was correct. If you guess the character quickly, discuss what you think of them. Keep listening to each other and feedback if someone loses their **LOUD** and **CLEAR** speech! (Answers are at the end of the resource section).

4. **Final chat**

Homework: Find another synopsis of a film or show that you like (1 paragraph, see e.g., rottentomatoes.com). You will be asked to read it out and talk freely about it.



LOUD &
CLEAR

WEEK 3 – DAY 4: LONGER PARAGRAPHS & FREE SPEECH

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)
2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases, 5 at a time
3. **On the screen:** Read out the synopsis of the film etc. you have chosen. Then say whether you agree with this or not, and why, for about 3 min. Others can voice their own opinion about it if they like but make sure there's time for everybody to get a turn. Remember, stay **LOUD** and **CLEAR** during the discussion



LOUD &
CLEAR

4. If there is time, there are some more **news stories** for you to read in the resource section ([P. 33](#)).

4. **Final chat**



FEED
BACK

Homework: Next week you will be practising free speech on topics of your choice. Have a look ahead at the programme for each day to make sure you are prepared. You can write yourself notes on what you want to say but try not to read from a script when you present on your topic.

WEEK 4 SCHEDULE

WEEK 4- DAY 1: LONGER PARAGRAPHS & FREE SPEECH

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)

2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases. Say all in one go without losing clarity!

3. **Newsreader:** Find the news reports in the resource section (p. 36). Read one of the longer articles until the indicated break, then pass to the next person. Discuss the story afterwards – what did you think? Remember to use your LOUD and CLEAR voice both during reading and the discussion. Remind each other when someone forgets – you can agree a hand signal in advance so you don't need to interrupt them.



FEED
BACK

4. **Art critique** – choose an image from the resource section (p. 41) and talk about whether you like it or not and why. Everybody joins in.

5. **Final chat**



LOUD & CLEAR

WEEK 4- DAY 2: FREE SPEECH

1. **Introductory chat** (5-10 mins)

2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases. Say all in one go without losing clarity!

3. **Presentation:** speak for 2-3 minutes on one of the following topics or another one of your choice:

daily routine, how things have changed since you were younger,

special family traditions around celebrations, favourite spot to go on holiday, etc.

Follow this with a discussion of what the others think or do.

4. **Final chat**



LOUD & CLEAR



FEED BACK

Homework: Think of a topic that you could talk about for 3-4 minutes tomorrow. If necessary, do some research for it.

WEEK 4 - DAY 3: FREE SPEECH

1. *Introductory chat* (5-10 mins)



2. **Daily phrases:** Practise each of your daily phrases. Say all in one go without losing clarity!

3. **Storytelling:** Tell a short story (3-4 minutes each) about an event of your choice. Alternatively, you could retell the plot of a well-known story, film, etc, (**without using any written guides**). The others can ask question or comment if there is time.

4. *Final chat*

Homework: Think of an event or a story that you could talk about for 5 minutes tomorrow. If necessary, do some research for it.



WEEK 4- DAY 4: FREE SPEECH

1. *Introductory chat* (5-10 mins)



2. **Presentation:** speak for about 5 minutes on a topic of your choice.

It could be a hobby, a favourite piece of media, something you learnt about recently, something you're passionate about! (**Don't use written guides**). The others can ask question or comment if there is time.

Imagine you are presenting this to a large audience, so keep your voice LOUD and CLEAR!

3. *Final chat*

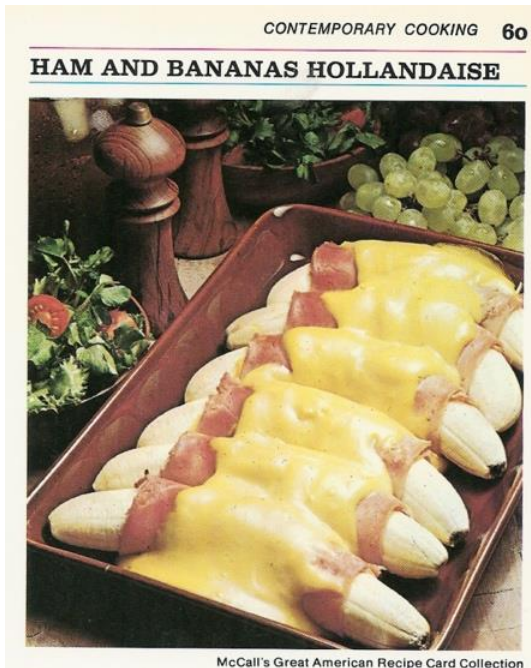


RESOURCES

WEEK 1

DAY 3: UNUSUAL RECIPES

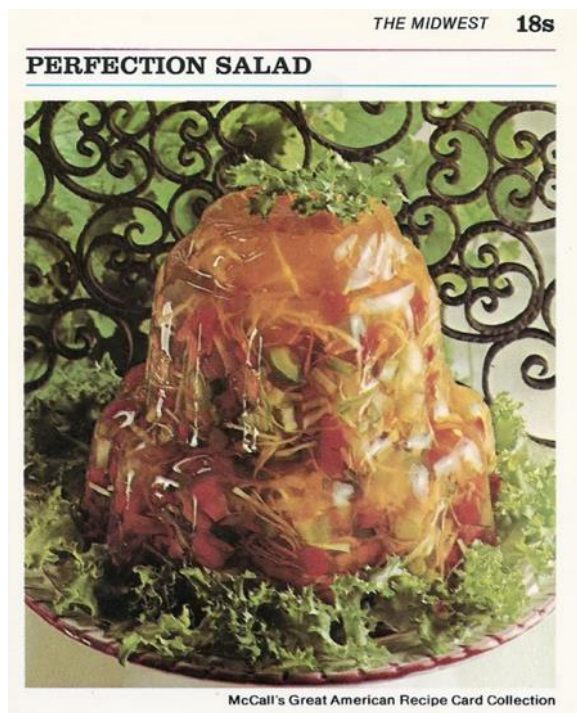
“Ham and bananas hollandaise”



- 6 medium bananas
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 6 thin slices boiled ham
- 3 tablespoons prepared mustard
- 2 envelopes hollandaise sauce mix
- 1/4 cup light cream
- Parsley, to serve

(Adapted from Vintage Recipe Cards, 2011, <https://vintagerecipecards.com/2011/06/15/ham-and-bananas-hollandaise/>, accessed 13/10/2021)

“Perfection Salad”



- 1 cup boiling water
- 3 oz. package lemon gelatine
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1 cup finely diced celery
- 1 cup finely shredded cabbage
- 1 tablespoon dried onion flakes
- 2 tablespoons chopped pimienta
- Mayonnaise

(Adapted from Vintage Recipe Cards, 2011, <https://vintagerecipecards.com/2011/05/24/perfection-salad/>, accessed 13/10/2021)

“Almonds in a Haystack Appetiser”



- 4 cup finely chopped ham
- 8 oz. cream cheese
- 3/4 cup. mayonnaise
- 1/3 cup sliced green onions
- 1/4 cup pickle relish
- Pinch of pepper and salt
- ¼ cup chopped green peppers
- Slivered almonds

(Adapted from The Housewife Modern, 2020, <https://www.thehousewifemodern.com/blog/almonds-in-a-haystack/>, accessed 13/10/2021))

“Tuna Jell-O Pie”



- 1 package of lemon-flavoured gelatin
- ¼ cups of boiling water
- 1 can of tomato sauce
- 1 tbsp. vinegar
- ½ tsp. salt
- Few drops each of Worcestershire sauce and Tabasco
- Dash of Pepper
- ½ cup each chopped celery and pimento stuffed olives
- ¼ cup chopped onion

(Adapted from The Housewife Modern, 2015, <https://www.thehousewifemodern.com/blog/insane-vintage-recipes-summer-salad-pie-aka-tuna-jell-o-pie/>, accessed 13/10/2021)

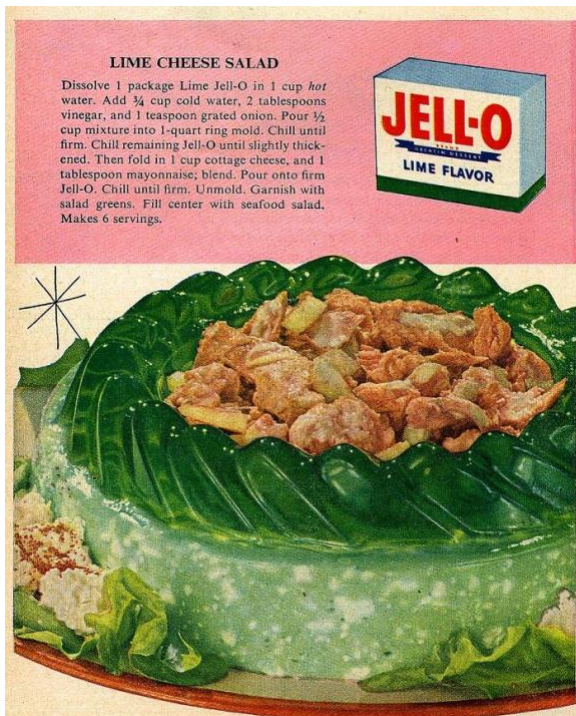
“Igloo meatloaf”



- 2 pounds ground beef
- 1/2 cup fine dry bread crumbs
- 6 tablespoons instant minced onion
- 2 teaspoons salt
- 1/8 teaspoon pepper
- 1-1/3 cups evaporated milk
- 1 envelope instant mashed potatoes
- Cheddar cheese slices

(Adapted from Rochelle's Vintage Recipes, 2008
<https://rochellesvintagerecipes.blogspot.com/2008/05/igloo-meat-loaf.html>, accessed 12/10/2021)

“Lime cheese salad”



LIME CHEESE SALAD

Dissolve 1 package Lime Jell-O in 1 cup *hot* water. Add 3/4 cup cold water, 2 tablespoons vinegar, and 1 teaspoon grated onion. Pour 1/2 cup mixture into 1-quart ring mold. Chill until firm. Chill remaining Jell-O until slightly thickened. Then fold in 1 cup cottage cheese, and 1 tablespoon mayonnaise; blend. Pour onto firm Jell-O. Chill until firm. Unmold. Garnish with salad greens. Fill center with seafood salad. Makes 6 servings.



- 1 package lime Jell-O
- 1 teaspoon grated onion
- 2 tablespoons vinegar
- 1 cup cottage cheese
- 1 tablespoon mayonnaise
- 1 cup seafood salad
- Salad greens
- 1/4 cup shredded cheddar cheese

(Adapted from F*ck Yeah vintage Recipes, 2010,
<https://fuckyeahvintagerecipes.tumblr.com/post/1571585232/lime-cheese-salad-w-seafood> ,
accessed 12/10/2021)

DAY 3: FIND THE LONGER WORD

UNDER
LIFE
SUN
GEM
FOOT
CAT
POP
THUNDER
LAWN
SUPER
ICE
RAIL

(Adapted from <https://mariasplace.com/find-the-longer-word/?social>, accessed 2/11/2022)

DAY 4: NEWSREADER: emphasise the words in bold script

(BBC News App, accessed 28/03/2022)

• Oscars red carpet fashion in pictures • Greece hit by riots after police brutality • Patients are flocking to India for surgery • Just Eat takeaway sales soar 54% in 2020 • ‘Beyond the symbolism: the Pope’s Iraq visit • Can snap elections calm protests in Armenia? • UK Covid infections climb by a million a week • Big regional divide on some energy bill charges • 1000 year old oaks used to create “super forest”	• Pension funds should not dump fossil fuel shares • Oxford teen said to be millionaire cyber-criminal • Fire on island once used for Anthrax experiments • Royal Mint wants to turn your old phone into gold • Buttergate’: Why isn’t butter softening in Canada? • Teenage social media use linked to lower wellbeing • Europe agrees new law to curb Big Tech dominance • England schools set to be set new minimum week length • Supermarket chain urged to up pay to match cost of living
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DAY 1: NEWSREADER: *emphasise the words in bold script*

- **Thousands** of **Indian women** join **farmer's** protests
- It's **time** to understand the **COVID vaccine passport**
- **Pupils** could be **released** from **isolation** by **PCR test**
- **Young women** 'must **work 40 years longer** than **men**'
- Should **primary schoolchildren** be **made** to **wear masks**?
- A '**me first**' approach to **vaccination** won't defeat **COVID**
- **Mothers** struggle to **return** to **work** amid **lack** of **childcare**
- Is it **time** for **politicians** to **invest** in **new social media sites**?
- **Pope** ends historic **Iraq visit** with **messages** of **coexistence**
- **Palace** should launch **investigation** into **Meghan allegations**
- **Majority** think that **COVID** has **increased** **UK social inequality**
- In a **pandemic**, remember **no one** is safe until **everyone** is safe
- **Piers Morgan**: **GMB staff** **complained** about **Meghan** comments
- **Bronze age** **burial site** in **Spain** suggests **women** were rulers too
- **MPs** back **law** to hold **firms** **accountable** for **environmental abuses**
- **Developing nations** demand **equal access** to **coronavirus vaccines**
- **Japan** honours **victims** of **2011 earthquake**, **tsunami**, and **nuclear disaster**
- **NHS** to use **world's most** expensive **drug** to treat **spinal muscular atrophy**

DAY 1: LIMERICKS

Limericks sourced from Pun.me, 2021. You can find more limericks at <https://www.varietyreading.com/funny-stories/limericks.php> or <https://pun.me/funny/limericks/> Although do mind they can be quite rude!

Read one line each initially, then two lines in the second round. **Highlight or underline the words you want to emphasise in advance.**

There once was a farmer from Leeds, Who swallowed a packet of seeds. It soon came to pass, He was covered with grass, But has all the tomatoes he needs.	There was an odd fellow named Gus, When traveling he made such a fuss. He was banned from the train, Not allowed on a plane, And now travels only by bus.
There was a young woman named Bright, Whose speed was much faster than light. She set out one day, In a relative way, And returned on the previous night.	There once was a fly on the wall, I wonder why didn't it fall. Because its feet stuck, Or was it just luck, Or does gravity miss things so small?
My neighbour came over to say, Although not in a neighbourly way, That he'd knock me around, If I didn't stop the sound, Of the classical music I play.	I'd rather have fingers than toes, I'd rather have ears than a nose And as for my hair, I'm glad it's still there I'll be awfully sad when it goes

DAY 2: NEWSREADER: underline which words should be highlighted, then take care to emphasise them as before

UK government faces questions over vaccine supply:

It is understood a shipment of five million Oxford Astra-Zeneca doses has been held up by four weeks.

This is partly due to a delay in delivery from India of five million vaccine doses.

Donald Trump's wealth takes tumble after presidency:

The former US president's fortune

slipped to \$3.2 billion

according to the Bloomberg Billionaire's Index.

The COVID-19 pandemic hit his fortunes hard.

Russia recalls envoy after Biden remarks

President Joe Biden says Russian leader Vladimir Putin

will "pay" for alleged election meddling.

In return Russia has recalled its Washington ambassador for talks to prevent the "irreversible deterioration" of relations with the US.

UAE to test cloud-busting drones to boost rainfall.

Drones that fly into clouds, giving them an electric shock

to "cajole them" into producing rain

are about to be tested in the United Arab Emirates.

The country has "plenty of clouds" although only 100mm of water a year,

Space projects scrubbed in UK overseas aid cut.

Space projects are the latest international scientific collaborations to lose funding because of the cut in UK overseas aid.

Ten initiatives to tackle developing-world problems have had their support cancelled.

Cadbury shrinks size of Dairy Milk sharing bar

Cadbury has shrunk the size of its Dairy Milk sharing bars by 10%

but will not reduce the price for customers.

They blamed costs associated with the production of its chocolate spiking.

The company is accused of "shrinkflation"

(BBC news app 29 March 2022)

DAY 2: LIMERICKS: remember to underline the words to be emphasised in preparation

A young gourmet dining at Crewe, Found a rather large mouse in his stew. Said the waiter, Don't shout,	Is it me or the nature of money, That's odd and particularly funny. But when I have dough,
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And wave it about, Or the rest will be wanting one, too.	It goes quickly, you know, And seeps out of my pockets like honey.
There was an old man of Peru, Who dreamt he was eating his shoe. He woke in the night, With a terrible fright, And found it was perfectly true.	I'm really determined and keen, To start giving this house a spring clean. I will do it I say, Yes, I'll do it today, Well, I'll do it tomorrow, I mean.
I need a front door for my hall, The replacement I bought was too tall. So I hacked it and chopped it, And carefully lopped it, And now the dumb thing is too small.	Oh, I wish that I had a green thumb. All my houseplants are looking quite glum. I never can tell Why they're looking unwell Or why so many succumb.
There once was an Old Man with a beard, Who said 'It is just as I feared! – Two Owls and a Hen, Four Larks and a Wren, Have all built their nests in my beard'	Have I failed to give enough water? Have I watered them more than I oughta? Are they getting too hot? Is this not the right spot? It's like sending poor lambs to the slaughter.

DAY 3: POEMS: *underline the words to be emphasised in preparation*

Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, Robert Frost Whose woods these are I think I know. His house is in the village though; He will not see me stopping here To watch his woods fill up with snow. My little horse must think it queer To stop without a farmhouse near Between the woods and frozen lake The darkest evening of the year. He gives his harness bells a shake To ask if there is some mistake. The only other sound's the sweep Of easy wind and downy flake. The woods are lovely, dark and deep, But I have promises to keep, And miles to go before I sleep, And miles to go before I sleep.	Hope is the thing with feathers, Emily Dickinson Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all, And sweetest in the gale is heard; And sore must be the storm That could abash the little bird That kept so many warm. I've heard it in the chillest land, And on the strangest sea; Yet, never, in extremity, It asked a crumb of me.
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Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening, Robert Frost: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42891>

Hope is the thing with feathers, Emily Dickinson: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/42889>

DAY 3: UNUSUAL RECIPES: *remember to underline the words...*

Haggis



- Rinse the stomach thoroughly and soak overnight in cold salted water.
- Rinse the liver, heart, and tongue. In a large pot of boiling, salted water, cook these parts over medium heat for 2 hours. Remove and mince. Remove any gristle or skin and discard.
- In a large bowl, combine the minced liver, heart, tongue, suet, onions, and toasted oats. Season with salt, pepper, and dried herbs. Moisten with some of the cooking water so the mixture binds. Remove the stomach from the cold salted water and fill 2/3 with the mixture. Sew or tie the

stomach closed. Use a turning fork to pierce the stomach several times. This will prevent the haggis from bursting.

- In a large pot of boiling water, gently place the filled stomach, being careful not to splash. Cook over high heat for 3 hours.
- Serve with mashed potato, if you serve it at all.

(Adapted from Food Network, undated)

Stargazey pie



- Make the filling: Cook the bacon until slightly crisp. Add butter and onion to pan; cook until golden. Remove from heat; whisk in stock, crème fraîche, mustard, parsley, lemon juice, half the egg, and salt; set aside.
- Assemble and bake the pie: Heat oven to 400°. Roll 1 disk of dough into a round. Fit into a 9" pie plate; leave an inch of dough overhanging edge of plate. Arrange sardines in a clocklike pattern with heads resting along edge of crust.
- Pour filling over sardines; top with bacon, the hard-boiled eggs, salt, and pepper. Roll remaining disk of dough into a 12" round; cut eight slits in dough about 2" from the edge. Place over top of pie and pull sardine heads through slits. Pinch top and bottom edges together and fold under. Brush with remaining egg and cut three 1"-long slits in top of pie; bake until crust is golden, 35–40 minutes. Let cool slightly.

(Adapted from Saveur, 2014)

Laverbread



- Wash the laverbread very well in cold running water through a colander. Ensure there is no sand or grit left behind. Then squeeze out the excess water in your hands. Fill the crock pot of the slow cooker and add 150ml of apple cider vinegar or lemon juice. This helps to break down and tenderise the laver. Put the lid on, switch it onto the high setting, and leave for 8 hours.
- In the morning – instant laverbread! All you will need to do now is make sure that any on the top or sides has become a paste. If in doubt, a quick whizz in the blender or with a stick blender will make sure the consistency is right.
- Season to your taste. I sometimes make a chili version or a soy version. It freezes extremely well in freezerbags.
- Use to add flavour to cooking as you would use tomato paste or garlic paste. Add to sauces and gravies, or use with oatmeal to make laverballs or lavercakes.

(Adapted from Monica Wilde, 2017)

DAY 4: POEMS

“IF”

by RUDYARD KIPLING

If you can keep your head when all about you
Are losing theirs and blaming it on you,
If you can trust yourself when all men doubt you,
But make allowance for their doubting too;
If you can wait and not be tired by waiting,
Or being lied about, don't deal in lies,
Or being hated, don't give way to hating,
And yet don't look too good, nor talk too wise:

If you can dream—and not make dreams your
master;
If you can think—and not make thoughts your
aim;
If you can meet with Triumph and Disaster
And treat those two impostors just the same;
If you can bear to hear the truth you've spoken
Twisted by knaves to make a trap for fools,
Or watch the things you gave your life to, broken,
And stoop and build 'em up with worn-out tools:

If you can make one heap of all your winnings
And risk it on one turn of pitch-and-toss,
And lose, and start again at your beginnings
And never breathe a word about your loss;
If you can force your heart and nerve and sinew
To serve your turn long after they are gone,
And so hold on when there is nothing in you
Except the Will which says to them: 'Hold on!'

If you can talk with crowds and keep your virtue,
Or walk with Kings—nor lose the common touch,
If neither foes nor loving friends can hurt you,
If all men count with you, but none too much;
If you can fill the unforgiving minute
With sixty seconds' worth of distance run,
Yours is the Earth and everything that's in it,
And—which is more—you'll be a Man, my son!

If—, Rudyard Kipling: <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46473>

Texts are becoming longer now. Continue to mark in the text which words you want to emphasise if necessary. Also consider indicating with a vertical line where you want to stop and take a breath. You could start with shorter phrases and then gradually make them longer.

DAY 1: ON THE SCREEN

Here are some film reviews in case you did not find any. Everyone reads one review.

Ma Rainey's Black Bottom

Viola Davis and Chadwick Boseman lead a strong cast in this enthralling adaptation of August Wilson's play. It's about a 1920s blues diva and her backup musicians trying to get through a recording session. The film is opened up slightly from the stage, but not enough to overwhelm or dilute this very intimate character drama. If anything, the new scenes give depth to the discourse about racial injustice, exploitation, and cultural appropriation. But they also give added excuses for music, which is appreciated.

In his last film appearance, Boseman is strong as the cocksure trumpeter Levee, whose brash attitude masks deeper insecurities and a propensity for violence. He and Glynn Turman were named Best Actor and Best Supporting Actor by the Los Angeles Film Critics Association. Davis (who won a Best Supporting Actress Oscar for another Wilson adaptation, "Fences") is terrific as the imperial Ma Rainey, whom you never want to make wait for her cold Coca-Cola.

(Adapted from Morgan, CBS, 2020)

Nomadland

In her follow up to her 2017 film *The Rider* director Chloé Zhao again blurs fiction and non-fiction. In a story inspired by journalist Jessica Bruder's book "Nomadland," an account of nomadic van dwellers eking out a life amid the fallout of the 2008 economic crash. Frances McDormand stars as Fern, a widow who shuttles from state to state, job to job, living an itinerant life among other nomadic seniors whose quasi-retirement resides on a razor's edge between personal fulfilment on their own terms, and despair.

The direction by Zhao (which was honoured as the year's best by both the New York and Los Angeles critics) is finely attuned to those on the margins. With a cast that includes some of the real-life people documented in Bruder's book. In lesser hands it might look like cheap wish fulfilment or showboating at its most gratuitous. Instead, director Chloé Zhao works magic with McDormand's face and the real world around it, delivering a profound rumination on the impulse to leave society in the dust.

(Adapted from Morgan, CBS, 2020)

Soul

With such recent successes as "Inside Out" (which explored the makeup of personalities), "Ratatouille" (sensory delight) and "Coco" (travels to the afterlife), the Pixar animation studio returns to familiar territory for a story that pulls from all three. While "Soul" seems similar, it has a bracing and inventive narrative, about a middle-school music teacher, Joe (voiced by Jamie Foxx), who dreams of a successful jazz career. When Joe has an accident on the very day of his most promising gig, his soul leaves his body, and is desperate to find a way back.

Being a Pixar film, "Soul" is filled with humour and wondrous production and character design, in this case representing a dimension where new souls acquire their personalities before they are shipped off to Earth. There is

also blissful music, from the score by Trent Reznor and Atticus Ross ("The Social Network") to the jazz compositions and arrangements by Jon Batiste.

(Adapted from Morgan, CBS, 2020)

The Queen's Gambit

A show about chess may seem like it would be a snooze, but Scott Frank's miniseries *The Queen's Gambit* makes it look like war. The adaptation of the 1983 novel by Walter Tevis is part sports movie, part character study, and part thriller, following the early life of female chess prodigy Elizabeth Harmon in the late 1950s and '60s as she rises through the male-dominated chess ranks while dabbling in addiction to pills and alcohol, behaviour at least partially learned from her adoptive mother.

As Harmon, Anna Taylor-Joy again shows why many peg her to be a future Oscar winner in one of the great performances of the year, and Frank's direction and visual palette are entrancing, particularly for those of us who are fans of smart '60s clothes and dazzling wallpaper. The finale may have been a little flat, but the series pulled off a true anomaly for a Netflix series: a middle section that was better than its bookends.

(Adapted from TV Guide, 2020)

The Mandalorian

The Mandalorian's back and, like a lot of stressed single parents, he still hasn't got time for any of your nonsense. The Star Wars spin-off from Disney+ works because it mimics its bounty-hunting main character and unwaveringly follows its own path. The Mandalorian has all the quirky luxuries of the fictional universe you know from the films – the monsters, the gadgets, the characters who only previously appeared in *Return of the Jedi* novelisations – yet it never lets the weight of expectation slow it down, as it does exactly what it wants.

What it wants is to deliver sleek, lean action stories that jettison the lamer elements of the movies and focus on the cool bits. No to windy philosophising, yes to punch-ups against bipedal reptiles in bars with blue clientele. Less sentimentality over fallen heroes, more moments like the one halfway through the season two opener, where a failed attempt to snare a ravenous sand-worm leads to perhaps the funniest horrific death in the whole Star Wars canon.

(Adapted from Seale, *The Guardian*, 2020)

Don't look up

The film, written, produced, and directed by McKay, stars DiCaprio and Lawrence as two astronomers who are trying to warn the US president and the public about an approaching comet set to destroy the planet within six months. Few people take the pair seriously to begin with, and many dismiss it as a hoax. The severity of the matter, however, becomes increasingly hard to deny as the film progresses. The comet, Bradshaw noted, is a thinly-veiled metaphor for climate change. But, he continued: "If the movie helps to do something about climate change, such critical objections are unimportant. *Don't Look Up* features a star-studded ensemble cast which also includes Cate Blanchett, Tyler Perry, Mark Rylance and Jonah Hill, as well as Timothée Chalamet, Ariana Grande and Meryl Streep.

One of the film's main stars, DiCaprio, has been an active environmental campaigner in recent years. He warned that "climate change is real" during his winner's speech at the 2016 Oscars ceremony. *Empire's* Ian Freer was broadly

positive on the film and awarded it four stars, viewing DiCaprio and Lawrence's characters as "likeable if not especially complex guides through the chaos".

(Adapted from BBC news, Entertainment & Arts, 2022)

Quantum mechanics

Quantum mechanics is a fundamental theory in physics that provides a description of the physical properties of nature at the scale of atoms and subatomic particles. It is the foundation of all quantum physics including quantum chemistry, quantum field theory, quantum technology, and quantum information science.

Classical physics, the collection of theories that existed before the advent of quantum mechanics, describes many aspects of nature at an ordinary (macroscopic) scale, but is not sufficient for describing them at small (atomic and subatomic) scales. Most theories in classical physics can be derived from quantum mechanics as an approximation valid at large (macroscopic) scale.

Quantum mechanics differs from classical physics in that energy, momentum, angular momentum, and other quantities of a bound system are restricted to discrete values (quantization), objects have characteristics of both particles and waves (wave–particle duality), and there are limits to how accurately the value of a physical quantity can be predicted prior to its measurement, given a complete set of initial conditions (the uncertainty principle).

Quantum mechanics arose gradually from theories to explain observations which could not be reconciled with classical physics, such as Max Planck's solution in 1900 to the black-body radiation problem, and the correspondence between energy and frequency in Albert Einstein's 1905 paper which explained the photoelectric effect. These early attempts to understand microscopic phenomena, now known as the "old quantum theory", led to the full development of quantum mechanics in the mid-1920s by Niels Bohr, Erwin Schrödinger, Werner Heisenberg, Max Born and others. The modern theory is formulated in various specially developed mathematical formalisms. In one of them, a mathematical entity called the wave function provides information, in the form of probability amplitudes, about what measurements of a particle's energy, momentum, and other physical properties may yield

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated j)

Confucianism

Confucianism, also known as Ru classicism, is a system of thought and behaviour originating in ancient China. Variouslly described as tradition, a philosophy, a religion, a humanistic or rationalistic religion, a way of governing, or simply a way of life, Confucianism developed from what was later called the Hundred Schools of Thought from the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius (551–479 BCE).

Confucius considered himself a transmitter of cultural values inherited from the Xia (c. 2070–1600 BCE), Shang (c. 1600–1046 BCE) and Western Zhou dynasties (c. 1046–771 BCE). Confucianism was suppressed during the Legalist and autocratic Qin dynasty (221–206 BCE), but survived. During the Han dynasty (206 BCE–220 CE), Confucian approaches edged out the "proto-Taoist" Huang–Lao as the official ideology, while the emperors mixed both with the realist techniques of Legalism.

A Confucian revival began during the Tang dynasty (618–907 CE). In the late Tang, Confucianism developed in response to Buddhism and Taoism and was reformulated as Neo-Confucianism. This reinvigorated form was adopted as the basis of the imperial exams and the core philosophy of the scholar official class in the Song dynasty (960–1297). The abolition of the examination system in 1905 marked the end of official Confucianism. The intellectuals of the New Culture Movement of the early twentieth century blamed Confucianism for China's weaknesses. They searched for new doctrines to replace Confucian teachings; some of these new ideologies include the "Three Principles of the People" with the establishment of the Republic of China, and then Maoism under the People's Republic of China. In the late twentieth century, the Confucian work ethic has been credited with the rise of the East Asian economy.

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated j)

DAY 3: FAMOUS WOMEN

Character 1

Her father owned a tobacconist's and a grocery shop. Before the Second World War, the family of X briefly gave sanctuary to a teenage Jewish girl who had escaped Nazi Germany. With her pen-friending elder sister Muriel, X saved pocket money to help pay for the teenager's journey. X school reports showed hard work and continual improvement; X's extracurricular activities included the piano, field hockey, poetry recitals, swimming and walking.

X studied chemistry at Somerville College, Oxford. X graduated in 1947 after specialising in X-ray crystallography under the supervision of Dorothy Hodgkin. During these years X was noted for isolated and serious attitude.

X worked briefly as a research chemist, before becoming a barrister.

X married at Wesley's Chapel and her children were baptised there, but X and her husband began attending Church of England services and would later convert to Anglicanism.

X ranked highest among living persons in the 2002 BBC poll 100 Greatest Britons. In 1999, Time deemed X one of the 100 most important people of the 20th century. In 2015 X topped a poll by Scottish Widows, a major financial services company, as the most influential person of the past 200 years; and in 2016 topped BBC Radio 4's Woman's Hour Power List of women judged to have had the biggest impact on female lives over the past 70 years. In 2020, Time magazine included X's name on its list of 100 Women of the Year. X was chosen as the Woman of the Year 1982.

X died on 2013, at the age of 87, after suffering a stroke. X had been staying at a suite in the Ritz Hotel in London since December 2012 after having difficulty with stairs at her Chester Square home in Belgravia. Queen Elizabeth II and the Duke of Edinburgh attended her funeral.

Shortly after X's death, Scottish first minister Alex Salmond argued that her policies had the "unintended consequence" of encouraging Scottish devolution. Lord Foulkes of Cumnock agreed on Scotland Tonight that she had provided "the impetus" for devolution.

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated b)

Character 2

After the deaths of her father and grandfather X was raised under close supervision by her mother. X described her childhood as "rather melancholy". Her mother was extremely protective, and X was raised largely isolated from other children. X shared a bedroom with her mother every night, studied with private tutors to a regular timetable, and spent her play-hours with her dolls. Her lessons included French, German, Italian, and Latin, but she spoke only English at home. X disliked trips; the constant round of public appearances made her tired and ill, and there was little time for her to rest. According to her diary, she enjoyed her future husband's company from the beginning. After a visit she wrote, "[Y] is extremely handsome; his hair is about the same colour as mine; his eyes are large and blue, and he has a beautiful nose and a very sweet mouth with fine teeth; but the charm of his countenance is his expression, which is most delightful." X proposed to him on 15 October 1839. They were married on February 1840, in the Chapel Royal of St James's Palace, London. X was love-struck. She spent the evening after their wedding lying down with a

headache. X hated being pregnant, viewed breast-feeding with disgust, and thought new-born babies were ugly. Nevertheless, she had 9 children.

X became a national icon who was identified with strict standards of personal morality.

X's reign of 63 years and seven months was longer than any previous British monarch. It was a period of industrial, political, scientific, and military change within the United Kingdom, and was marked by a great expansion of the British Empire. Places named after her include Africa's largest lake, the capitals of British Columbia and Saskatchewan, two Australian states, and the capital of the island nation of Seychelles.

X Day is a Canadian statutory holiday and a local public holiday in parts of Scotland celebrated on the last Monday before or on 24 May.

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated d)

Character 3

In the mid 1950's, X gained a reputation for being difficult to work with, which would worsen as her career progressed. She was often late or did not show up at all, did not remember her lines, and would demand several re-takes before she was satisfied with her performance. Her dependence on her acting coaches—Natasha Lytess and then Paula Strasberg—also irritated directors. X's problems have been attributed to a combination of perfectionism, low self-esteem, and stage fright. She disliked her lack of control on film sets and never experienced similar problems during photo shoots, in which she had more say over her performance and could be more spontaneous instead of following a script.

She dedicated 1955 to building her new film production company and began studying method acting under Lee Strasberg at the Actors Studio. Later that year, Fox awarded her a new contract, which gave her more control and a larger salary.

Her subsequent roles included a critically acclaimed performance in *Bus Stop* (1956) and her first independent production in *The Prince and the Showgirl* (1957). She won a Golden Globe for Best Actress for her work in *Some Like It Hot* (1959), a critical and commercial success. Her last completed film was the drama *The Misfits* (1961).

X had become one of 20th Century-Fox's biggest stars, but her contract had not changed since 1950, meaning that she was paid far less than other stars of her stature and could not choose her projects. Her attempts to appear in films that would not focus on her as a pin-up had been thwarted by the studio head executive, Darryll F. Zanuck, who had a strong personal dislike of her and did not think she would earn the studio as much revenue in other types of roles. Under pressure from the studio's owner, Spyros Skouras, Zanuck had also decided that Fox should focus exclusively on entertainment to maximize profits and cancelled the production of any 'serious films'. In January 1954, he suspended X when she refused to begin shooting yet another musical comedy, *The Girl in Pink Tights*.

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated c)

Character 4

The sixth of eight children born to a poor family in Tryon, North Carolina, X initially aspired to be a concert pianist. With the help of a few supporters in her hometown, she enrolled in the Juilliard School of Music in New York City. She then applied for a scholarship to study at the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia, where she was denied admission despite a well-received audition, which she attributed to racial discrimination. In 2003, just days before her death, the Institute awarded her an honorary degree. To make a living, X started playing piano at a nightclub in Atlantic City. She changed her name to "X" to disguise herself from family members, having chosen to play "the devil's

music" or so-called "cocktail piano". She was told in the nightclub that she would have to sing to her own accompaniment, which effectively launched her career as a jazz vocalist. She went on to record more than 40 albums between 1958 and 1974, making her debut with Little Girl Blue. She had a hit single in the United States in 1958 with "I Loves You, Porgy".

Her musical style fused gospel and pop with classical music, in particular Johann Sebastian Bach, and accompanied expressive, jazz-like singing in her contralto voice. In an interview for Jet magazine, X stated that her controversial song "Mississippi Goddam" harmed her career. She claimed that the music industry punished her by boycotting her records. Hurt and disappointed, X left the US in September 1970, flying to Barbados and expecting her husband and manager (Andrew Stroud) to communicate with her when she had to perform again. However, Stroud interpreted X's sudden disappearance, and the fact that she had left behind her wedding ring, as an indication of her desire for a divorce. As her manager, Stroud was in charge of X's income. When X returned to the United States, she learned that a warrant had been issued for her arrest for unpaid taxes (unpaid as a protest against her country's involvement with the Vietnam War), and returned to Barbados to evade the authorities and prosecution.

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated e)

Character 5

In her youth X performed silent dance performances to raise money for the Dutch resistance effort. A 2019 book provided evidence that she had supported the resistance by giving "underground concerts" to raise money, delivering the underground newspaper, and taking messages and food to downed Allied flyers hiding in the woodlands north of Velp. She also volunteered at a hospital that was the centre of resistance activities in Velp, and her family temporarily hid a paratrooper in their home during the Battle of Arnhem.

X had her first starring role in a film co-starring Gregory Peck. The producers of the movie initially wanted Elizabeth Taylor for the role, but director William Wyler was so impressed by X's screen test that he cast her instead. Wyler later commented, "She had everything I was looking for: charm, innocence, and talent. She also was very funny. She was absolutely enchanting, and we said, 'That's the girl!'"

Originally, the film was to have had only Gregory Peck's name above its title, with "Introducing X" beneath in smaller font. However, Peck suggested to Wyler that he elevate her to equal billing so that her name appeared before the title, and in type as large as his: "You've got to change that because she'll be a big star, and I'll look like a big jerk." The film was a box-office success, and X gained critical acclaim for her portrayal, unexpectedly winning an Academy Award for Best Actress, a BAFTA Award for Best British Actress in a Leading Role, and a Golden Globe Award for Best Actress – Motion Picture Drama in 1953.

In his review in The New York Times, A. H. Weiler wrote: "Although she is not precisely a newcomer to films, X, the British actress who is being starred for the first time as Princess Anne, is a slender, elfin, and wistful beauty, alternately regal and childlike in her profound appreciation of newly-found, simple pleasures and love. Although she bravely smiles her acknowledgement of the end of that affair, she remains a pitifully lonely figure facing a stuffy future."

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated c)

Character 6

X is an American singer-songwriter and actress. She is considered one of the most influential figures in popular culture. X is noted for her continual reinvention and versatility in music production, song writing, and visual presentation. She has pushed the boundaries of artistic expression in mainstream music, while maintaining control over every aspect of her career. Her works, which incorporate social, political, sexual, and religious themes, have generated both controversy and critical acclaim.

Her father's parents were Italian emigrants from Pacentro while her mother was of French-Canadian descent. Her father worked as an engineer designer for Chrysler and General Motors. She was raised in the Detroit suburbs of Pontiac and Avon Township (now Rochester Hills), alongside her two older brothers, Anthony and Martin, and three younger siblings, Paula, Christopher, and Melanie. She moved to New York in 1978 and found an apartment in the Alphabet City neighbourhood of the East Village. She had little money while working at Dunkin' Donuts. She worked with modern dance troupes, taking classes at the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre and eventually performing with Pearl Lang Dance Theatre. She also studied dance under the tutelage of Martha Graham, the noted American dancer and choreographer. X started to work as a backup dancer for other established artists.

In June 1986, X released her third studio album, *True Blue*, which was inspired by and dedicated to her husband Penn. The album topped the charts in 28 countries worldwide, an unprecedented achievement at the time, and remains X's best-selling studio album, with sales of 25 million copies. *True Blue* was featured in the 1992 edition of Guinness World Records as the best-selling album by a woman of all time.

X has received acclaim as a role model for businesswomen in her industry, "achieving the kind of financial control that women had long fought for within the industry", and generating over \$1.2 billion in sales within the first decade of her career. According to Gini Gorlinski in the book *The 100 Most Influential Musicians of All Time* (2010), X's levels of power and control were "unprecedented" for a woman in the entertainment industry. According to Billboard, X is the most successful solo artist in the Hot 100 chart history (second overall behind the Beatles) and the most successful dance club artist of all time.

X released *Madame X*, a documentary film chronicling the tour of the same name, on Paramount+ in October 2021.

(Adapted from Wikipedia, undated g)

DAY 4: NEWS STORIES

NASA Ingenuity Mars Helicopter Prepares For First Flight

NASA is targeting no earlier than April 8 for the Ingenuity Mars Helicopter to make the first attempt at powered, controlled flight of an aircraft on another planet. Before the 4-pound (1.8-kilogram) rotorcraft can attempt its first flight, however, both it and its team must meet a series of daunting milestones.

Ingenuity remains attached to the belly of NASA's Perseverance rover, which touched down on Mars Feb. 18. On March 21, the rover deployed the guitar case-shaped graphite composite debris shield that protected Ingenuity during landing. The rover currently is in transit to the "airfield" where Ingenuity will attempt to fly. Once deployed, Ingenuity will have 30 Martian days, or sols, (31 Earth days) to conduct its test flight campaign.

“When NASA’s Sojourner rover landed on Mars in 1997, it proved that roving the Red Planet was possible and completely redefined our approach to how we explore Mars. Similarly, we want to learn about the potential Ingenuity has for the future of science research,” said Lori Glaze, director of the Planetary Science Division at NASA Headquarters. “Aptly named, Ingenuity is a technology demonstration that aims to be the first powered flight on another world and, if successful, could further expand our horizons and broaden the scope of what is possible with Mars exploration.”

Flying in a controlled manner on Mars is far more difficult than flying on Earth. The Red Planet has significant gravity (about one-third that of Earth’s) but its atmosphere is just 1% as dense as Earth’s at the surface. During Martian daytime, the planet’s surface receives only about half the amount of solar energy that reaches Earth during its daytime, and night time temperatures can drop as low as minus 130 degrees Fahrenheit (minus 90 degrees Celsius), which can freeze and crack unprotected electrical components.

(Adapted from NASA, 2021)

Food For Thought: The Protein Transformation

The world’s consumers love animal-based protein—so much so that in 2020 they ate 574 million metric tons’ worth of meat, seafood, dairy, and eggs—almost 75 kilograms per person. Moreover, the amount consumed is still increasing, especially in developing markets. Yet concerns about the environmental costs of growing all the animals we eat, how those animals are treated, and the consequences for human health of eating so much conventional protein are rising even faster.

That’s why alternative proteins have morphed in just the past few years from a niche product to a mainstream phenomenon. Plant-based meats are now a fixture at fast-food restaurants around the world, and plant-based milk is a household staple. Alternatives based on microorganisms have been available for decades, and you can taste meat grown from animal cells in restaurants in Singapore and Israel. Indeed, consumers will soon be able to make nine out of ten of the world’s most popular dishes—especially those using less-structured meat, such as ground beef—with reasonably priced alternative proteins.

What we see today is only the beginning of the protein transformation, however. By 2035, after alternative proteins reach full parity in taste, texture, and price with conventional animal proteins, 11% of all the meat, seafood, eggs, and dairy eaten around the globe is very likely to be alternative. With a push from regulators and step changes in technology, that number could reach 22% in 2035. By then, Europe and North America will have reached the point of “peak meat,” and consumption of animal proteins will begin to decline.

In addition to its beneficial impact on human health, the shift to alternatives can make a real contribution to the efforts to combat climate change. By 2035, the shift to alternatives will save as much carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂-e) as Japan emits in a year, conserve enough water to supply the city of London for 40 years, and promote biodiversity and food security. Consumers can eat tasty food while helping protect the planet and making progress toward several of the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Investors focused on environmental, social, and governance (ESG) criteria can participate in a fast-growing market.

(Adapted from Morach et al., BCG, 2021)

Wind and solar generated 10% of global electricity for the first time in 2021, a new analysis shows.

Solar and wind and other clean sources generated 38% of the world's electricity in 2021. For the first time wind turbines and solar panels generated 10% of the total.

The share coming from wind and sun has doubled since 2015, when the Paris climate agreement was signed.

The fastest switching to wind and solar took place in the Netherlands, Australia, and Vietnam. All three have moved a tenth of their electricity demand from fossil fuels to green sources in the last two years.

"The Netherlands is a great example of a more northern latitude country proving that it's not just where the Sun shines, it's also about having the right policy environment that makes the big difference in whether solar takes off," said Hannah Broadbent from Ember.

Vietnam also saw spectacular growth, particularly in solar which rose by over 300% in just one year.

"In the case of Vietnam, there was a massive step up in solar generation and it was driven by feed-in tariffs - money the government pays you for generating electricity - which made it very attractive for households and for utilities to be deploying large amounts of solar," said Dave Jones, Ember's global lead.

"What we saw with that was a massive step up in solar generation last year, which didn't just meet increased electricity demand, but it also led to a fall in both coal and gas generation."

Despite the growth and the fact that some countries like Denmark now get more than 50% of their electricity from wind and solar, coal power also saw a remarkable rise in 2021.

A large majority of the increased demand for electricity in 2021 was met by fossil fuels with coal fired electricity rising by 9%, the fastest rate since 1985.

Much of the rise in coal use was in Asian countries including China and India - but the increase in coal was not matched by gas use which increased globally by only 1%, indicating that rising prices for gas have made coal a more viable source of electricity.

"The last year has seen some really super high gas prices, where coal became cheaper than gas," said Dave Jones.

"What we're seeing right now is gas prices across Europe and across much of Asia being 10 times more expensive than they were this time last year, where coal is three times more expensive.

He called the price rises for both gas and coal: "a double reason for electricity systems to demand more clean electricity, because the economics have shifted so fundamentally."

The researchers say that despite the coal resurgence in 2021, major economies including the US, UK, Germany, and Canada are aiming to shift their grids to 100% carbon free electricity within the next 15 years.

This switch is being driven by concerns over keeping the rise in the world's temperature under 1.5C this century.

(Adapted from Matt McGrath, BBC, 2022, Wikipedia undated h)

DAY 1: NEWSREADER

Read half of the article, until it says **PASS TO NEXT MEMBER**, in a clear and loud voice, as if you were reading it on the news. Continue to mark emphasis and pauses in the text if that helps.

Why Uruguay's Schoolchildren Are Doing So Well In The Pandemic

Two weeks after Amelia's first day of school last March, she was suddenly unable to go anymore. Her school had been shut down because of the coronavirus pandemic. But for the first grader from Uruguay, it wasn't such a big deal. She learned the alphabet by way of digital tutorials, and she had so much fun with the digital math lessons that she did additional exercises. There were video conferences three times a week, so she could get to know her teacher and classmates better. And under the leadership of her physical education teacher, Amelia, 7, did gymnastics exercises in her living room.

Amelia, though, is not some well-off pupil at a private school. She goes to a public school in Uruguay's capital of Montevideo. And like all of the other schoolchildren in the small country sandwiched between Argentina and Brazil, she received her tablet computer from the state.

Uruguay has been investing in digital education for years in addition to making it accessible to everyone. The country's education system was better prepared for the pandemic than most of the other countries in the region, and also better than many in the wealthy West. Whereas some teachers in Germany had no contact with their students for several weeks, there was a constant exchange between pupils and teachers in Uruguay. Instead of blurry scans and erroneous internet links hiding content that could not be found, Uruguay was able to offer schoolchildren digital schoolbooks with science experiments, homework in the form of quizzes or games, interactive video conferences, personalized exercises, and chats to clear up any questions.

It has already been more than 10 years since the country – as one of six around the world – introduced a one-laptop-per-child policy. On top of that, Uruguay installed free internet in public squares around the country, including in rural areas, and also founded a state agency for digital education called Plan Ceibal. "In general, the last school year worked quite well," says Fiorella Haim, a manager at Plan Ceibal.

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All that makes Uruguay the exception in a region where the educational prognosis tends to be disastrous. UNICEF believes that 2020 was a lost year for millions of schoolchildren in Latin America. Around a third of the children, the UN agency believes, hardly learned anything at all, while more than 3 million will likely never return to school. Experts believe that it will be more of the same in 2021, with lockdowns and school closures.

"Children, particularly those from poorer families, are the biggest losers of this crisis. Their dream of a better future has already been destroyed," says Brazilian education expert Claudia Costin, a former senior director for education at the World Bank. In addition, she says, the schooling crisis has intensified the already extreme educational inequalities on the continent.

At the beginning of the pandemic, Plan Ceibal expanded the capacity of its servers "essentially overnight." In addition, the country began offering every schoolchild 50 gigabytes of free internet per month. "Ninety-eight percent of the

children regularly used the digital lessons," says Haim. Poorer children in rural areas also participated. "We don't know exactly how we did it, but we did."

Bello doesn't understand why there are children in rich countries like Germany without access to a computer and internet. In a digital world, he sees it as being a right for children. "Every child should have a laptop and internet," he says. "We've managed to do it too. "Plan Ceibal costs \$100 per child each year, including the laptop, teacher material, teacher training and internet at schools. Parents even end up saving money because they have to buy fewer books and teaching materials.

Amelia, the elementary school pupil in Montevideo, also returned to school after four months, in contrast to most other children in Latin America. Even there, though, her tablet is an important part of her lessons. She says she especially likes all of the virtual buttons she can push on her tablet. And the seven-year-old also has a pretty good idea of she wants to be when she grows up – a job that will let her push all kinds of buttons: "spaceship pilot."

(Adapted from Abé, Der Spiegel, 2021)

PASS TO NEXT MEMBER

One of Earth's giant carbon sinks may have been overestimated

The storage potential of one of the Earth's biggest carbon sinks – soils – may have been overestimated, research shows. This could mean ecosystems on land soaking up less of humanity's emissions than expected, and more rapid global heating. Soils and the plants that grow in them absorb about a third of the carbon emissions that drive the climate crisis, partly limiting the impact of fossil-fuel burning. Rising carbon dioxide levels in the atmosphere can increase plant growth and, until now, it was assumed carbon storage in soils would increase too.

But the study, based on over 100 experiments, found the opposite. When plant growth increases, soil carbon does not. The finding is significant because the amount of organic carbon stored in soils is about three times that in living plants and double that in the atmosphere. Soils can also store carbon for centuries, whereas plants and trees rot quickly after they die. It is not yet known how big the effect of lower carbon storage in soils might be on the speed of climate change, and experts cautioned that other impacts of the climate emergency such as drought would also affect how well plants and soils store carbon.

"We found that when rising CO₂ increases plant growth, there is a decrease in soil carbon storage. That's a very important conclusion," said César Terrer, who led the research while at Stanford University in the US. He said that if soils do absorb less in future, "the speed of global warming could be higher". Terrer said soils, plants and trees were important for carbon levels, but that ending the burning of fossil fuels remains essential. "If we really want to stop global warming, we need to stop emissions, because ecosystems only take up a fraction of all the CO₂ emissions," he said. The study, published in the journal Nature, analysed more than 100 experiments from across the world in which soils, plants and trees were exposed to higher CO₂ levels than in today's atmosphere.

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The biomass growing in forests rose by 23% in experiments where the CO₂ level used was double pre-industrial atmospheric levels. It is 50% higher today. But the forest soils did not store any more organic carbon at all.

It was thought that biomass and soil carbon would increase in tandem, as more plant biomass falls to the ground and turns into organic matter. But increased plant and tree growth requires more nutrients from the soil, which may explain the new finding, the scientists said. Extracting the extra nutrients requires the plants to increase the symbiotic microbial activity in their roots, which then releases CO₂ to the atmosphere that might otherwise have remained locked in the soil.

The researchers found that in grasslands, elevated CO₂ led to 9% plant growth – less than forests – but soil carbon rose by 8%. Terrer said there has been a lot of discussion about tree planting as a way to tackle the climate crisis. “What I found very concerning in that debate is that people were suggesting planting trees in natural grasslands, savannah, and tundra,” he said. “I think that would be a terrible mistake because, as our results imply, there is a very large potential to increase soil carbon storage in grasslands.”

Prof Simon Lewis, at University College London, who was not part of the research team, said: “Given that the land absorbs 30% of the carbon emitted from fossil fuels and deforestation, understanding if that will change in the future matters.”

He said the change would be determined by the balance between rising CO₂ boosting plant growth and the negative effects of climate change itself, including drought, heatwaves and fires. The evidence to date suggests the biggest change will be the negative effects of global heating on ecosystems, he said.

Prof Pete Smith at the University of Aberdeen said: “The combined effect of CO₂ on plants and soils and on climate change is what matters in terms of the real world response.”

(Adapted from Carrington, The Guardian, 2021)

PASS TO NEXT MEMBER

Fancy a deep red? The rise of underwater wineries

Slipping into the chilly waters of the Baltic sea, the divers descended more than 60 metres to where the masts of the Jönköping lay strewn across the seabed. They glided past the wounds left when the Swedish schooner was sunk by a German U-boat in 1916 to home in on the rare treasure they had come for: thousands of bottles of 1907 Heidsieck champagne.

For more than eight decades the bottles had sat undisturbed on the seabed, cloaked in darkness and protected by near-constant temperatures and pressure. Photographs showing the bottles being gingerly raised from the sea by the divers in 1998 soon began to circulate, accompanied by rave reviews from impromptu tastings of the precious cargo.

In Spain's Basque country, the discovery added to the list of wine-laden shipwrecks that had long captured the imagination of Borja Saracho, a keen diver. Could the sea's dark depths, gently rocking tidal movements and constant temperatures hold the secret to creating great wines? “We decided there was an opportunity to find out what was going on in these shipwrecks,” he said.

Working with a small team, he secured permission to rent 500 square metres of seabed in the bay of Plentzia on Spain's north coast, sinking specially designed structures capable of storing wine while also acting as an artificial reef. Winemakers across the country soon joined in the experiment, sending bottles of wine for Saracho to plunge into the sea.

The results transformed Saracho into a proponent of underwater ageing and culminated in the launch of Crusoe Treasure, one of Spain's largest underwater wineries, in 2010. "It was astounding," he said. "The wines' evolution underwater was very distinct from what would happen with the same grape on land."

Similar experiments were playing out around the world, laying the foundation for what today is a niche – but rapidly growing – sector of the wine industry. From Greece and Italy to new world producers in Chile and the US, winemakers are harnessing the power of underwater environments to shape everything from bold reds to sparkling cavas.

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The logic is that underwater conditions mimic the crucial ageing factors that are thought to contribute so much to the flavour of wine, such as constant temperature and the absence of light. Winemakers soon went further, arguing that the watery cellar was leaving its own, singular imprint on the wines, said Mark O'Neill, a wine writer and the owner of Spain's The Wine Place. "If you've got a good wine, it will add a point of difference," he said. "The wine will have evolved in a different way."

Even so, interest in the idea has soared in recent years, in part boosted by the recovery of 168 bottles of champagne from another shipwreck in the Baltic sea, this time in 2010. After spending about 170 years deep-sea ageing in what researchers described as "close-to-perfect conditions", a single bottle of Veuve Clicquot found in the wreckage later sold for €30,000.

As the sector grows, the techniques are varying wildly. Some winemakers sink their wines in sealed amphorae, while others use custom-designed barrels or submersible cages laden with algae-encrusted bottles. Others have eschewed marine environments for water-filled tanks on land. Wines have been plunged to depths of 40 metres, while others have wallowed in shallower waters, left to the whims of rising tides and at times partly exposed to air.

The lack of any kind of overarching ethos was among the factors that led to the first-ever underwater wine congress, held in 2019 in northern Spain. "The hope is that people are responsible with the environments that they're working in," said Anna Riera, a marine biologist who works with the Crusoe Treasure winery. "If all of a sudden everyone started projects like this, not with small spaces but with large underwater factories, this type of production would lose all meaning."

The unpredictable nature of the process soon had him hooked. "If I put 20 wine tanks below the sea – all exactly the same – they'll all come back different," he said.

More than a decade after he and his team began plunging wines underwater, it was a hint of how much remains unknown about underwater ageing and the bodies of water it relies on. "We're opening a window in a world that's still to be discovered," said Saracho. "There's so much we have to learn."

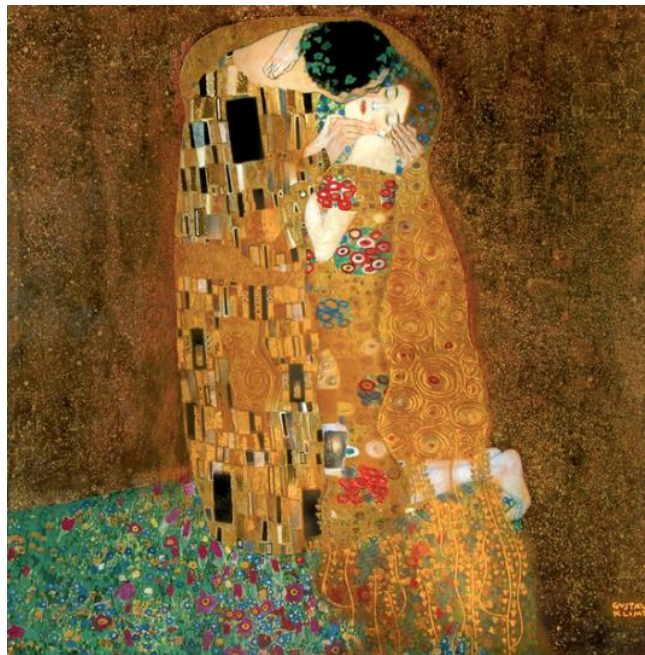
(Adapted from Kassam, The Guardian, 2021)

DAY 1: ART CRITIQUE

Choose an image from this section and talk about whether you like it or not, what it might mean to you, and why.



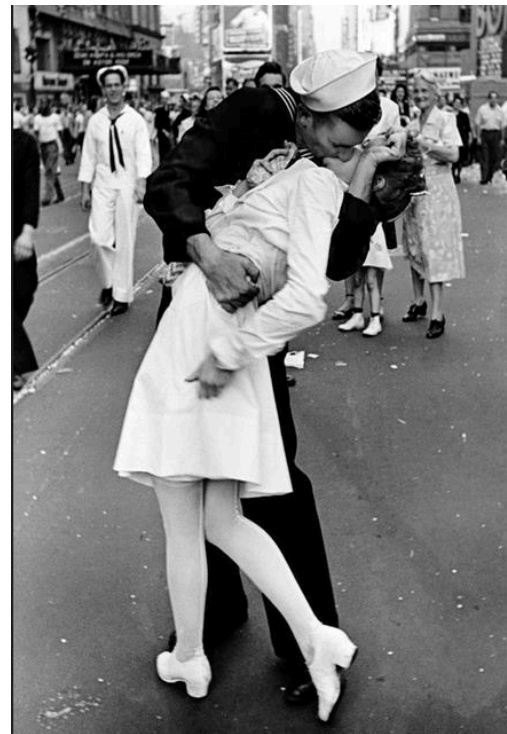
Sunflowers, Vincent Van Gogh
(Image from Van Gogh Museum, undated)



The Kiss, Gustav Klimt
(Image from Nicholas de Lacy-Brown, The Daily Norm, 2012)



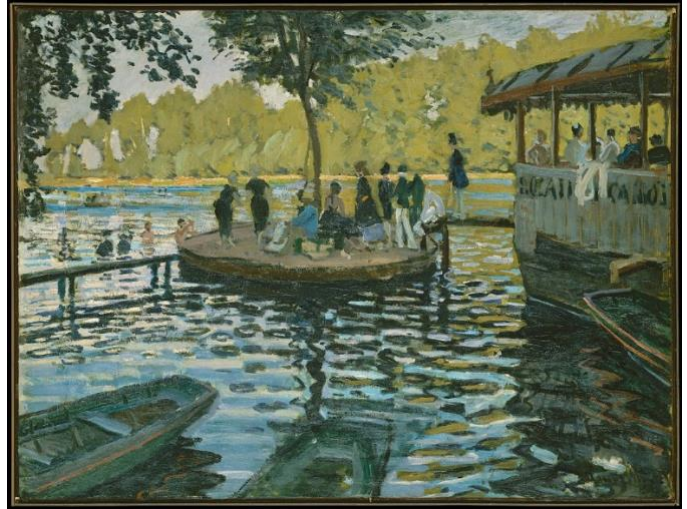
Girl with a Pearl Earring, Johannes Vermeer.
(Image from Bricker, Huff Post, 2013)



V Day in Times Square, Alfred Eisenstaedt
(Image from Wikipedia, undated f)



Girl with balloon, Banksy
(Image from Public Delivery, 2021)



La Grenouillère, Claude Monet
(Image from Wikipedia, undated i)

Answers to Famous Women: Character 1: Margaret Thatcher, Character 2: Queen Victoria, Character 3: Marilyn Monroe, Character 4: Nina Simone, Character 5: Audrey Hepburn and Character 6: Madonna.

FINAL WORDS

Congratulations

Well done for having completed your four week programme! We hope you have enjoyed working with each other and found the exercises beneficial to help with your communication.

The programme has not only provided you with opportunities to practise your speech strategies, but also equipped you to find your own materials from now on. This will allow you to continue working on your speech by yourself or with others independently in future. If you have reached the “free speech” level, there is no further to go, but you can make the exercise more challenging by speaking for longer, on more complex topics (where your attention is divided between what you say and how you do it), with less preparation, in noisy environments, on the phone or while doing other tasks at the same time. Also remember that you might want to backtrack a little at certain times, such as after a break, to remind yourself of the strategies and practise them in less complex speaking tasks.

Additional Resources

If you are looking for further resources to practise reading, the websites below contain free material for English second language learners and are organised by levels, mostly by sentence length. Always start at a length where you can implement your strategies comfortably, then work towards the next level.

<https://breakingnewsenglish.com/>

<https://www.newsinlevels.com/>

Your most important task from now on will be to **keep communicating** with others, remember...



**USE IT or
LOSE IT**

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