

The first hurdle used to be at the start of freshman year, when students faced having to live with an assigned roommate with whom they may have had nothing in common.

Tolerating annoying habits, differing political views and radical mood swings can teach lessons that help in the real world. But for a narcissistic and highly curated generation, the goal is perfect harmony. Universities are contracting with matchmaking companies, where students fill out a questionnaire then receive a list of compatible freshmen.

But some believe the process delays growing up. "Very quickly, college students are able to form self-selected cliques where their views are reinforced," Dalton Conley, a sociology professor at New York University, told The Times.

Still not comfortable? A growing number of colleges like the Massachusetts Institute of Technology let students bring pets. "It's harder and harder for students to leave home," a president claims. "Bringing this particular piece of home with them may make that separation easier."

Colleges acknowledge that these tactics are also ways to differentiate themselves in a competitive market for top students.

It's also a competitive job market, and to make students look more attractive, some schools are inflating grades. In the last two years, at least 10 law schools have changed their grading systems to make them more lenient, reported The Times. Harvard and Stanford recently switched to a pass/fail system.

You can also find access to free-for-all resources. Harvard, Yale and Stanford now offer a large portion of their courses online. In Britain, Open University even has its own YouTube channel. The very idea of a university has become unbundled, do-it-yourself and perhaps peerless---if not a little pampered.

对于大一新生而言，他们面对的第一个难关便是不得不与学校分配的室友相处一室，尽管彼此毫无交集。

尝试去包容对方的恼人习惯、不同的政治立场及激烈的情绪波动，这有助于学到在现实世界中的处事之道。但对于孤芳自赏且自我独断的一代，和室友相处融洽更重要一些。现在，一些美国大学与交友资讯公司合作，学生填写这些公司出具的调查问卷后，就可以收到和自己志趣相投的大一新生名单。

但有些人认为此举会妨碍学生的成长进程。纽约大学社会学教授达尔顿·康利在接受《泰晤士报》采访时说表示：“（这样一来）大学生很快便会形成各自的，思想达成共鸣的小团体。”

这还不算舒适？那么看看下面的吧！包括麻省理工在内的越来越多的学校允许学生带宠物上学。一位校长称：“对于学生来说，离开家的过程变得越来越残酷，随身携带家里的某种特殊物件会使得这种分离变得更容易些。”

美国的许多高校承认此举是为了在竞争激烈的（招生）市场中，凸显自身优势，进而吸引更多的顶尖学生。

就业市场亦是如此激烈，为了增强学生竞争力，有些学校开始放宽评分标准。《泰晤士报》报道，在过去的两年里，至少有 10 所法律院校放宽了他们的评分制度。近日，哈佛大学和斯坦福大学不约而同地改用及格/不及格的评分制度。除了以上这些外，你还可以轻松获取完全免费的资源。现在，哈佛、耶鲁、斯福这些一流大学都开设了网上课程。位于英国的开放大学甚至在 YouTube 上拥有自己的频道。大学已然演化成无拘无束、自力更生、独具优势的代名词。当然这些的前提是不要对学生纵容。

Seating position in lecture halls can affect grades 终于知道成绩不好的原因了！原来是选错了座位

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新的学期开始了。又一波大学新生走进象牙塔开始新的校园生活。走进教室去上课的时候，你一般会选择哪里座位呢？前排？后排？还是中间？最新研究显示，你在教室所选择的座位或许有助于预测你的考试成绩。为了有个好成绩，选座也要谨慎啊！

Choice of seating in the lecture hall can affect a college student's performance, a study suggests.

Lectures are a staple (主题, 主要产品) of higher education, and understanding how students interact and learn within the lecture theatre environment is central to successful learning.

Researchers from Sheffield Hallam University in the UK examined students' reasons for choosing particular seats in a lecture hall, and investigated how seating positions correlate with student performance.

"Interaction is a key part of learning and knowing who the students are interacting with can be a great benefit when designing activities," said David P Smith of Sheffield Hallam University.

Many students preferred being able to sit with their friends, while others were more concerned with either attracting or avoiding the lecturer's attention.

Some students chose seats that allowed them to see and hear clearly, while others picked easily vacatable seats that made them feel less anxious, researchers said.

Friendship groups who sat together tended to achieve similar grades, and students who sat alone at the edges tended to do worse than average.

Lecturers may be able to use these findings to provide assistance to anxious students, and to support the learning of all students by encouraging interactions between the different groups.

Front

Appraising (评价) classroom rows based on academic success, some professors have observed that the front row remains prime sitting position typically held by outgoing scholarly students. "I notice the more prepared and personable students sit in front rows," said Dr. Chris Hammons, interim dean of the College of Arts and Humanities and chair of the department of government (London). "Students in the front almost always score higher on exams."

Perhaps more importantly, the front row may be the ideal location for shy, timid students who have trouble paying attention. Also, sitting closer to the front of the room does have an effect on student-teacher rapport (关系和谐), which is linked to greater academic performance.

According to a study published in 2013, GPAs decreased by 0.1 point on a four-point scale for every row further back students sit.

Middle

Still, some students prefer the middle rows. This location in the classroom can

make paying attention difficult depending on the student. In fact, Dr. Robert Wallace, a member of the National Education Association, considers choosing to sit in the middle of the classroom one of the worst decisions a student can make. “In a classroom setting, a speaker’s eyes tend to go to the front of the room and the back,” he wrote in an article for Creators.com. “They don’t look at the centre of a room as often or with the same amount of attention.”

The Back

If neither the front nor middle is suitable for a student, there can only be one other solution: the back.

For the broker on the value of classroom seating, the back row would have the lowest value. This fringe vicinity of the physical classroom often plays host to the biggest distractions.

Many distractions occur at the back of the classroom. That’s where students would chat, play video games and do some other stuff which the teacher must not know about. With the advent of Facebook and the likes, the situation would be worse by now.

Row placement is not the only critical decision students face when choosing a seat. The position of the seat within the row is equally important. Like being on an airplane or at church, the aisle usually gets taken first as it provides the most legroom and easiest escape route when students decide to duck out of class.

Students who are late the first day usually end up with middle seats, so punctuality is a good strategy for those seeking the aisle.

除了常见的座位排列，下面的几种座位安排方式对某些课堂形式也很有好处。

Circle arrangement

When a teacher is conducting discussions, a circular arrangement can be apt to facilitate the flow of ideas, thoughts and expressions. Students have a clear view of the person expressing their opinions; educators find it easy to control the discussion and can also motivate passive students to pitch in.

Semi circular arrangement

A semi-circular arrangement can be effective when audio-visual aids, interactive boards, etc. are being used. This ensures clear visibility for every student. Teachers can maintain eye contact with all students and also check to see that they are being attentive. This arrangement can assist in controlling the class as students are in the open and their actions can more easily be observed.

Round table arrangement

Planning to give the students some group work? A round table arrangement is probably your best option. It encourages students to sit in friendly groups, facilitates free discussion and allows educators to monitor student work. However, the disadvantage is that there is high probability of students misbehaving when the teacher is not looking.

研究显示，教室座位的选择可能会影响大学生的学业成绩。

高等教育的主要授课内容都是在课堂中进行的，理解学生们在阶梯教室的课堂环境中如何互动和学习对取得好的学习效果很关键。

英国谢菲尔德哈勒姆大学的研究人员分析了学生们在课堂中选择特定座位的原因，并调查了他们所选择的座位和学业成绩之间的关系。

英国谢菲尔德哈勒姆大学的戴维·史密斯说：“互动是学习的关键部分，而在设置课堂活动的时候，知道学生在与什么人互动会大有帮助。”

许多学生喜欢和朋友坐在一起，而另外一些学生则希望引起或避开授课老师的注意。

有些学生选择那些能让他们可以清楚地看到和听到老师讲课的座位，而其他学生则偏爱那些让他们觉得不那么焦虑的座位，因为他们可以方便地起身离开教室。

坐在一起的一群朋友倾向于获得相似的成绩。而独自坐在教室角落的学生的成绩往往低于平均水平。

老师们可以利用这项研究结果帮助焦虑的学生，并通过鼓励不同学生群体之间的互动，来帮助所有学生的学习。

一些教授基于学业成就对学生在教室中的座位进行评价，他们注意到，开朗活泼且博学的学生最爱坐前排。艺术与人文学院的临时院长、伦敦教育部门的主席克里斯·哈蒙斯博士说：“我注意到，准备越充分，越品貌兼优的学生越爱坐在前排。坐在前排的学生通常考试成绩更好。”

或许更重要的是，前排座位也是害羞胆怯学生的理想之选，因为他们总是不能集中注意力。而且，坐在教室前排还能促进师生关系和谐，从而带来更好的学业表现。

根据 2013 年发表的一项研究，学生每靠后坐一排，GPA 成绩就下降 0.1 分（总分为 4 分）。

有些学生选择坐在教室中间的座位，这种座位会使一些学生更难集中注意力。事实上，全美教育协会成员罗伯特·华莱士教授认为，中间排的座位是最差的选择之一。他在发表于创作者网站的一篇文章中说：“在教室里，老师的目光总是落在前排或者后排。他们不怎么看中排的学生，或者给予的关注没那么多。”

如果前排和中间排都不合适，他们就只能坐在后排了。

如果要评估教室座位的价值，后排价值最低。后排是教室的边缘地带，学生最容易分心。

教室后排的学生最容易走神。后排的学生常常在聊天、玩电子游戏或者在忙一些老师们肯定不知道的什么事儿。在脸书等等社交媒体出现后，现在情况肯定是更糟糕了。

选座位的时候不仅要考虑选择哪一排，同一排不同座位的挑选也同样重要。就像在飞机上或教堂里，靠近过道的座位总是先被占，因为那里伸腿空间更大，而且坐在靠过道的座位时，学生也最容易从教室溜走。

第一天上课就迟到的学生一般只能坐在中间的座位，所以如果想坐在边上，你得早点到教室。

座位排成一圈

老师组织学生进行讨论时，座位排成一圈有助于学生们灵感迸发，积极表达。学生们都能看清楚谁在发言，老师们也能很容易掌控整个讨论，还能激励一些不那么积极主动的学生参与进来。

座位排成半圆形

在使用视听设备和互动板等教学用具时，座位排成半圆形效果很好。这能确保每位同学都看得清楚。老师能与所有同学保持目光接触，看他们是否在认真听讲。学生们在户外上课时，这种座位排列有助于控制课堂，学生的一举一动更容易被观察到。

圆桌座位

想让学生们完成小组作业？圆桌座位或许是最好的选择。这能鼓励学生们友好地坐在一起，有助于促进自由讨论，也让老师能更好地监督学生的任务完成情况。但缺点是，老师没注意到时，学生更容易搞小动作。

Reading for A's

by Gregory Cowan and Elizabeth Mcpherson

Where and when and what you study are all important. But the neatest desk and the best desk light, the world's regular schedule, the best leather-covered notebook and the most expensive textbooks you can buy will do you no good unless you know how to study. And how to study, if you don't already have some clue, is probably the hardest thing you will have to learn in college. Some students can master the entire system of imaginary numbers[Ⓢ] more easily than other students can discover how to study the first chapter in the algebra book. Methods of studying vary; what works well for some students doesn't work at all for others. The only thing you can do is experiment until you find a system that does work for you. But two things are sure; nobody else can do your studying for you, and unless you do find a system that works, you won't get through college.

Meantime, there are a few rules that work for everybody. The first is *don't get behind*. The problem of studying, hard enough to start with, becomes almost impossible when you are trying to do three weeks' work in one weekend. Even the fastest readers have trouble doing that. And if you are behind in written work that must be turned in, the teacher who accepts it that late will probably not give you full credits. Perhaps he may not accept it at all.

Getting behind in one class because you are spending so much time on another is really no excuse. Feeling pretty virtuous about the seven hours you spend on chemistry won't help one bit if the history teacher pops a quiz. And many freshmen do get into trouble by spending too much time on one class **at the expense of** the others, either because they like one class much better or because they find it so much harder that they think they should devote all their time to it. Whatever the reason, doing whole hog for[Ⓢ] one class and neglecting the rest of them is a mistake. If you face this temptation, begin with the shortest and easiest assignments. Get them out of the way and then go on to the more difficult, time-consuming work. Unless you do the easy work first, you are likely to spend so much time on the long, hard work that when midnight comes, you'll say to yourself, "Oh, that English assignment was so easy, I can do it any time," and go on to bed. The English assignment, easy as it was, won't get done.

If everything seems equally easy (or equally hard), leave whatever you like best until the end. There will be more incentive at half past 11 to read a political science article that sounded really interesting than to begin memorizing French irregular verbs, a necessary task that strikes you as pretty dull.

In spite of the noblest efforts, however, everybody does get a little behind something some time. When this happens to you, catch up. Don't skip the parts you missed and try to go ahead with the rest of the class while there is still a big gap showing. What you missed may make it impossible, or at least difficult, to understand what the rest of the class is doing now. If you are behind, lengthen your study periods for a few days until you catch up. Skip the movie you meant to see or the nap you

planned to take. Stay up a little later, if you have to. But catch up.

The second rule that works for everybody is *don't be afraid to mark in textbooks*. **A good student's books don't finish the term looking as fresh and clean as the day they were purchased; they look used, well used.** Some sections are underlined. Notes are written down the margins. Answers to some of the questions are sketched in. In fact, the books look as though somebody had studied them....To get your money's worth from your textbooks, you must do more with them than just read them.

To begin with, when you first get a new textbook, look at the table of contents to see what material the book covers. Flip through the pages to see what study aids the author has provided; subheadings, summaries, charts, pictures, review questions at the end of each chapter. After you have found what the whole book covers, you will be better prepared to begin studying the chapter you have been asked to read.

Before you begin reading the chapter, give it the same sort of treatment. Skim through the first and last paragraphs; look with more care at the subheadings; **if there are questions at the end of the chapter, read them first so you will know what points to watch for as you read.** After you are thus forewarned, settle down to the actual business of reading. Read the chapter all the way through, as fast as you comfortably can. Don't mark anything this first time through except the words that are new to you. Circle them. When you have finished the chapter, find out what these unknown words mean, and write the definitions in the margin opposite the word.

Then look again at the questions, seeing whether you have found the answers to all of them. Guided by the things the questions emphasize and your knowledge of what the whole chapter covered, go rapidly through the chapter again, underlining the most important points. If the chapter falls into three major divisions, underline the three sentences that come closest to summing up the idea of each division. Number these points in the margin: 1, 2, 3. For each major point you have numbered, underline two or three supporting points. In other words, underline the sections you think you might want to find in a hurry if you were reviewing the chapter.

What happens in class the next day, or whenever this assignment is discussed, will give you some check on whether you found the important points. If the teacher spends a lot of time on the part of the text you didn't mark at all, probably you guessed wrong. Get yourself a red pencil and mark the teacher's points. You can make these changes during the study time you have set aside for comparing class notes with the textbook.

One word of warning: don't underline **everything** you read. If you mark too much, the important material won't stand out, and you will be just as confused as if you had not marked anything at all.

The third rule useful to everybody is *don't let tests terrify you*. If you have kept up in all your classes, if you have compared your class notes with your texts, if you have kept all your quizzes and gone over your errors, if you have underlined the important parts of each chapter intelligently, the chances are good that you can answer any questions the teacher will ask.

Being fairly sure that you can answer all the questions, however, is not the same

thing as answering them. Nothing is more frustrating than freezing up during an important test, knowing all the answers but getting so excited at the sight of the test that half of what you actually know never gets written down.

Do you know the story of the lecturer who cured his **stage fright** by pretending that all the people listening to him were cabbages? A head of cabbage is no more capable of criticizing a lecture than cabbage soup would be. And who is afraid of a bowl of borsch? You might adapt this system to taking tests. Pretend that the test is only a game you are playing to use up an idle hour. Pretend that your test score is no more important than your score in canasta last night. But you tried to win at canasta; try for as high a test score as you can get without frightening yourself to death.

One way to insure a good score is read the entire test before you answer any questions. Sometimes questions that come near the end will give clues to the answers on earlier questions. Even if you don't find any answers, you can avoid the error of putting everything you know into the first answer and then repeating yourself for the rest of the test.

Following these suggestions, reading through the test, budgeting your time, doing the easy part first, will not guarantee A's on all your tests. To get A's on essay tests, you must be able to write well enough that your teacher is convinced you do understand. What following these suggestions can do, however, is help you make the most of what you know.

Romance and Reality

Dr. Stanley J. Katz & Aimee E. Liu

Romance can be dangerously seductive. A full moon, soft candlelight --- the mood is complete. Add an attractive partner and some soft background music, and who can resist feeling “in love”? This, after all, is what the magazine ads say love is supposed to look like. If you find a partner who provides this setting and invites you in, it’s natural to think of love.

Romance is both an atmosphere and a state of mind. It’s great to relish it for a while, but as a steady diet romance is dangerously under-nourishing. Ideally, romance will be woven through a loving relationship, and reviving it now and then is an excellent way to express affection and commitment. But if you insist that your relationship be in a constant state of romance, you are asking the impossible. Not only that, but the pressure of your demands may end up destroying your chances for success as a truly loving couple.

This doesn’t mean that we should automatically be suspicious of romantic behavior or keep our own romantic feelings under lock and key. It’s natural to expect, and to express, some degree of romance in a new relationship. That’s part of what makes a relationship fun and exciting --- but only if both partners understand the role that romance is playing. In true love, the purpose of romance is not to deceive, but to express real affection and enrich an ongoing relationship. It is sincere. It pleases both partners and renews their commitment to each other. It gives them a brief break from the daily grind, an opportunity to focus on each other and the relationship in a positive way.

Once you’ve determined that you and your partner both are prepared to accept true love, you need to make sure the ties are there to hold the two of you together as a couple. These strengths will form the basis for your love, supporting your relationship through the challenge to come. They fall into the following eight general categories:

1. Physical attraction. The attraction need not be electric. With many loving couples, it builds gradually and gently, sometimes taking years to ripen. All that’s really required in the beginning is some attraction, mutual openness, affection, and desire for intimacy.
2. Shared goals, interests and belief systems. Couples with similar religious, cultural and political beliefs tend to be more united than those with differing backgrounds, but differences can be overcome if there is a solid foundation of shared goals and interests.
3. Mutual respect, acceptance, and the desire to please each other. In relationships based on false love, these attitudes often flow from one partner only. In true love, there must be balance, and both partners must accept the responsibility of living up to each other’s expectations.
4. Mutual honesty and trust. Dishonesty has no place in true love; it can only lead to mistrust and division. From the very start, you and your partner must be truthful, both with yourselves and with each other.
5. Realistic expectations for each other and the relationship. Your expectations should be based both on the requirements for true love and on your individual personalities and needs. Discuss them openly, recognizing that some are nonnegotiable while others need to remain flexible.
6. A balance of dependence and independence. True love requires a connection, but not the submersion of two individuals. Mature lovers don’t melt completely into each other, as obsessive couples do, nor do they remain disconnected. Rather, they interlock, so that parts of their lives become shared. In diagram form, the three possibilities look like this:



obsessive couple



disconnected couple



loving couple

To succeed in love, you and your partner must be able to rely on each other for comfort and support without expecting all your needs to be met within the relationship. Part of your life must remain separate. You need some friends, activities, and interests that your partner does not share. In addition to the personal benefits you get from these outside sources, they provide ideas, energy, and information that keep the relationship open and developing.

7. A cooperative approach to problems. Conflict and struggle are necessary to life and therefore also to love. You and your partner must accept this fact from the start and figure out how to deal with problems when they arise. The process of working through difficulties should help you understand each other and bring you closer together.
8. A shared life. True love does not occur without effort and it does not develop overnight. For most of us, it takes years to reach fulfillment. Through the routine of daily life, you and your partner come to know each other's deepest hopes, fears and feelings, and discover and become part of each other's inner rhythms.

Questions

1. The authors' point in the first paragraph is that: (It is easy to mistake a romantic mood for real love.)
2. The diagram accompanying the article shows that: (loving couples don't fulfill all of each others' needs.)
3. The final paragraph makes it clear that the authors: (don't believe in love at first sight.)

Mark Twain's Speechmaking Strategy

From How Mark Twain Solved the Speechmaker's Dilemma by Lydel Sims

Most Americans recognize Mark Twain as the author of such classics as *Huckleberry Finn* and *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*. But Twain in his own time was probably almost as well known for his great ability as a speaker. One of his secrets suggests why this is so.

The schoolboy in the old story explained the technique nicely. "Strategy", he wrote, "means that when you run out of bullets you keep on firing." It hasn't caught on in military circles^①, but speechmakers have been practicing that kind of strategy for generations.

Consider the problem:

You're going to a sale conference, a convention, a testimonial dinner, a meeting of department heads. You're scheduled to speak or you know you'll be called on. So you organize your thoughts, scribble notes on a piece of paper... and worry. You worry, because like all good speakers you want people to believe the words just flow out--all the humor, the motivation, the drive, the matchless grasp of detail, the fresh and sparkling anecdotes.

But speakers who hold audiences in the palm of their hand don't speak from notes. Are you going to pause and consult those plaguey notes, thus admitting mere mortality? ^② Or are you going wing it^③ and risk forgetting your best story, omitting your most important point? And if you run out of ammunition, are you going to try to keep on firing?

Mark Twain faced that very same dilemma and solved it, becoming one of the most successful speakers in America's history.

In his early days on the lecture circuit, Mark Twain worked out a solution to the speechmaker's dilemma by trial and error, but he didn't explain it until years later in a little-known essay that was published after his death. The system was so good, he testified, that a quarter-century after he had given a lecture he could remember the whole thing by a single act of recall.

You have Twain's posthumous guarantee that it'll work for you. When he first began his speaking career, Twain recalled, he used a full page of notes to keep from getting mixed up. He would write down the beginnings of key sentences, to take him from one point to another and to protect him from skipping. For a typical evening's lecture, he would write and memorize 11 key beginnings.

The plan failed. Twain would remember the sentences, all right, but forget their order. He would have to stop, consult his notes, and thereby spoil the spontaneous effect of the whole speech.

Twain then decided to memorize not only his key sentences, but also the first letter of each sentence. This initial-letter method did not work either. Not even when he cut the number of letters to 10 and inked them on his fingernails.

"I kept track of the fingers for a while," he wrote in his essay, "then I lost it, and after that I was never quite sure which finger I used last."

He considered licking off the inked letters as he went along. People noticed he seemed more interested in his fingernails than his subject; one or two listeners would come up afterwards and ask what was wrong with his hands.

Then Mark Twain's great idea came---that it's hard to visualize letters, words and sentences, but picture are easy to recall. They take hold. ④ They can make things stick . . . Especially if you draw them yourself.

Twain was no artist, mind you, but that didn't stop him. "In two minutes I made six pictures with a pen," he reported, "and they did the work of the 11 catch-sentences, and did it perfectly."

Having once drawn the pictures, he found he could throw them away. He discovered (and you can test it for yourself) that, having once made a crude series of drawings he could recall their image at will.

He left us samples of three of those first six pictures, and they are pathetic things indeed by artistic standards. But they go the job done.

The first was a haystack with a wiggly line under it to represent a rattlesnake--that was to tell him to begin talking about ranch life in the West. Alongside it, he drew a few lines with what could just possibly be an umbrella and the Roman numeral II- that referred to a tale about a great wind that would strike Carson City at 2 o'clock every afternoon. Next, he drew a couple of jagged lines---lightning of course---telling him it was time to move on to the subject of weather in San Francisco, where the point was that there wasn't any lightning. Nor thunder either, he noted.

From that day, Twain was able to speak without notes, and the system never failed him. Each portion of his speech would be represented by a picture. He would draw them, all strung out in a row, then look at them and destroy them. When the time came to speak there was the row of images sharply in his mind

Twain observed you can even make last-minute notes based on the remarks of an earlier speaker. Just insert another figure in your set of images.

The magic of the Twain technique should be immediately obvious to the speaker who organizes remarks around anecdotes. Are you introducing your first point with a story about a nervous doctor in Dubuque? Draw the doctor. Are you following that with the principle that's best illustrated with the tale of the fellow who treed a wildcat? ⑤ Draw a tree alongside the doctor. And so on.

The remarkable thing is that Twain's method can work just as well for concepts as it does for anecdotes. Sales must be increased? Draw a vertical arrow with a dollar sign. Something about productivity? A lopsided circle representing a wheel is sufficient. Research and development? Even you can draw what will be recognized---by you---as a mad scientist. And if you need figures, put them in the pictures, too, coming out of people's mouths, piled in pyramids, outlined in exclamation marks, lurking under bridges.

The wilder the image the easier it'll be to remember. And once you have your scrawls in sequence and take a good look, you're fixed. Instant memory.

Mark Twain didn't mention it, but there's one more thing you might do. When you reach the end of your drawings, hence the end of your speech, you could add one

more---a drawing of an octagonal sign: STOP!

That would be smart strategy, for then you really are out of bullets. No need to keep on firing.

注:

- (1) It hasn't become popular among personnel of the armed forces
- (2) thus admitting that you have the usual weaknesses of ordinary people
- (3) to speak without the aids of notes
- (4) the pictures take root (in one's memory)
- (5) chased a wildcat up a tree

Why not Speed up Your Reading

Leonard A. Stevens

For many people today, reading is no longer relaxation. To keep up their work they must read letters, reports, trade publications, interoffice communications, not to mention newspapers and magazines: a never-ending flood of words. In getting a job or advancing in one, the ability to read and comprehend quickly can mean the difference between success and failure. Yet the unfortunate fact is that most of us are poor readers.

A few months ago a man who had been promoted to a top management job came to see Dr. Emmett A. Betts, director of Temple University's Reading Clinic. The first morning on his new job he had found a huge pile of mail on his desk. He realized it would take him most of the day just to read the letters; moreover, a similar pile would confront him every morning.

A reading test showed that the executive was reading only about 160 words a minute. He was an engineer who had spent years plowing through difficult technical material. He had been forced to go slowly to get the meaning. Soon he began reading everything, even light fiction, at the same turtle's pace. Dr. Betts diagnosed the executive's reading problem as a common one---inability to "shift gears." If the subject matter were difficult, careful reading was justified; when it was easy, he should have zipped through it.

First, Dr. Betts forced the executive to read exceptionally fast some first-and second-grade material. Then he gave him increasingly difficult texts. Soon the former engineer was reading on his job at about 900 words a minute---and his problem was over.

Bad readers trudge home with briefcases bulging with material that should have been read on the job. Recently the vice-president of a large company conferred with Paul D. Leedy, adult adviser at New York University's Reading Institute. Nights and weekends, he said, he had to catch up on reading he should have done at the office, leaving little time to devote to his family.

Leedy found that the executive was a word-by-word reader. He gave him special assignments to help him grasp whole phrases instead of individual words, and also gave him assignments on a reading accelerator. This moves a curtain down a page at a predetermined rate of speed, forcing the student to read faster to keep ahead of it. At first the executive felt he was reading only superficially. But as his speed picked up, he found he was getting more out of his reading. Soon he was reading nearly 1200 words a minute, compared to 225 when he started.

An engineer reported graphic evidence that faster reading improves concentration. He told of working with a reading accelerator in a room outside which children were playing noisily. At first he couldn't keep up with the pace set by the accelerator because of the clatter. As an experiment he set the device to scan the pages even faster. He soon found that he was concentrating so hard on keeping up with the machine that he was no longer aware of the noise.

Most reading faults can be traced to early school training. According to Dr. Betts, two persons out of 5 in school were forced to read material too difficult for them to

understand at the time, a frustrating experience which left them with bad reading habits.

Fortunately, almost anyone can learn to read faster and with more comprehension. Age makes little difference. According to a recent study of 138 students at the Reading Lab, Inc., all age groups showed a marked increase in reading rate after training---from 93% for the 50-90 age group to 142% for the age 20-29. Dr. Mila, director of New York University, says that the average adult student, in 28 training hours, nearly triples his reading speed and boosts his comprehension by about 30%.

The best way to improve your reading, of course, is to enroll in a reading clinic. If there is no clinic handy or you cannot afford special training, most experts agree you can improve your reading ability yourself---provided you have no eye trouble.

Here are some suggestions on how to train yourself:

If you are a lip reader, mouthing each word so you are slowed down to a snail's pace, place a finger on your lips and hold them firmly until the habit has been broken.

If your head swings as your eyes move along the lines, lock your head between your hands as you read.

To break yourself of the habit of following print with your finger or pencil, grip the sides of what you are reading firmly with both hands.

Read in a quiet spot, as free from distractions as possible. Don't daydream; force yourself to concentrate on what you are reading.

If you stumble over unfamiliar words, try to guess the meaning from the context, then check the meaning in a dictionary later.

Make your eyes literally leap, over lines of print and try to grasp the meaning of whole phrase at a time.

Race an alarm clock. Estimate the number of words in an article or book chapter and set a time limit on how long you should take to read it. Set the alarm for that period of time. See if you can finish before the alarm goes off. Gradually shorten your target time.

After reading a section as fast as you can, pause and summarize in your mind the author's main points. Check yourself by reviewing the section.

Don't reread. Pretend the words disappear as your eyes pass over them. You'll probably be surprised to find that you didn't miss anything important.

Try glancing only at nouns and verbs in sentences to see how much you can get out of the reading this way. Underlining these key words may help you get started, but stop underlining as soon as you catch on to the technique.

The secret of success is constant practice. The pay-off will be worth the effort.

How Has English Language Developed From Early Times

How has the English language developed into what it is today? To answer this question, we must go back to early times.

(British recorded history begins with the Roman invasion.)

You must all have heard of a European city called Rome, which is the capital of present-day Italy; the people of Rome are sometimes called Romans. In very early times, about the middle of our Han dynasty, ancient Romans built a very powerful empire. For several hundred years, almost the whole of Europe and even parts of Asia and Africa were under the rule of the Romans.

In the year 55 BC. the Romans crossed the sea and invaded what is now England. They remained there until the 5th century. Before the Romans came, a people called the Celts lived in the island. People often speak of these Celtic people as Britons.

After the Romans left, the country was attacked by invaders from the north and northwest of Europe. These invaders are called Anglo-Saxons.

The Anglo-Saxons settled down in England and drove the Celtic people northwards into Scotland and westwards into Wales and Ireland. The present-day English people come mainly from these early Anglo-Saxons.

In the 9th and 10th centuries, Britain was frequently attacked by invaders from Denmark or the Danes, who came and settled in different parts of the land. We must realize, therefore, that the present inhabitants of Britain have had Celts, then Romans, Anglo-Saxons and Danes as their forefathers.

In 1066, England was attacked by a new group of invaders called Normans. The Normans came from Normandy, which was then a province of France. Once more a different people had come to stay, and they had brought with them many new influences. The Normans spoke French and the native English spoke Anglo-Saxon. Gradually, **out of these two languages, grew the English we know today.**

You Say Begin, I Say Commence--- Two Rivers Flow Together

Rita Mae Brown (American poet, novelist)

Fortunately for writers of English we possess the largest vocabulary in the world. This ocean of discourse is really two rivers flowing together: Anglo-Saxon and Latin. Until 1066 we did fine with what we had. When Harold fell at Hastings, shot through the eye with an arrow, our language changed forever. We now had High English and Low English. These divisions are with us to this very day and provide the subtle shadings of meaning available to a writer through careful word choice alone.

High English is Latin --- really Latin that came through French, which the Normans spoke. When the Normans took over, everything that was Anglo-Saxon was ruthlessly shoved aside. Culture was Latin. Granted (是的,不错), the Romans invaded England in 54 BC and discovered what every tourist has discovered since: England is an aquarium, not a nation. The Romans managed to colonize English speakers, but it was superficial. The true intrusion into our native tongue did not occur until 1066. **After that time the words for the enjoyment of life were Latin. The words for labor and game were Anglo-Saxon.**

So if you were a lord and sat down to a feast you ate **beef**. The poor peasant tending what was your meat called it an **ox**. **Cow** when it hits the table becomes **veal**. **Sheep** becomes **mutton** and **swine** becomes **pork**. **Deer** when eaten is **venison** and **boar** is **brawn**. The division was clear and will be with us as long as English is spoken. One reason the Anglo-Saxon words survived at all is because the native population was not killed but utilized as workers. Another reason Anglo-Saxon survived is that the people themselves proved more resilient, flexible and intelligent than William the Conqueror and his progeny could have imagined.

A writer can create and develop a character through her or his use of dialogue. An upper-class person will draw from a more Latinate word pool and use more subordinate clauses and longer, less volatile speech rhythms. A character from the lower classes will use more Anglo-Saxon words, much more colorful speech patterns and shorter, staccato rhythms unless this character is from the American South. In that case, rich and poor alike are more prone to use the rhythm of the King James Version of the Bible. Here again, the poor character will employ more Anglo-Saxon words and will probably be more emotionally direct.

The entrance of Latin gave us a reservoir of synonyms unlike anything else in the world. We abound in choices. Synonyms allow us shadings of class and meaning that can be textured. They can be felt, not just heard. Below is a short list of parallel words. Once they had equivalent meanings, but the centuries have pulled apart some of the synonyms, and let others remain. Brief though the list is, it gives an idea of our language's potential for nuance (意义、情感等的细微差别) and deep emotion. If you've fallen through the ice you scream "Help!" not "Aid!" In times of greatest danger or heartbreak even the most aristocratic of people will revert to Anglo-Saxon.

Not Quite Synonymous

Centuries ago, the following words were synonymous. Over the years, many have retained equivalent meanings while others have changed, but the pairs illustrate the difference in tone between Anglo-Saxon words and Latinate words.

Anglo-Saxon	Latin	Anglo-Saxon	Latin
Woman	female	watery	aquatic
Happiness	felicity	timely	temporal
Bill	beak	daily	diurnal
Friendship	amity	truthful	veracious
Help	aid	kingly	regal
Folk	people	youthful	juvenile
Hearty	cordial	weighty	ponderous
Holy	saint	share	portion
Deep	profound	wretched	miserable
Lonely	solitary	same	identical
Darling	favorite	killing	homicide
Love	charity	manly	virile
Begin	commence	kind	sort
Hide	conceal	tale	story
Feed	nourish	up	ascend
Hinder	prevent	put out	extinguish
Leave	abandon	freedom	liberty
Die	perish	cold	frigid
House	domicile	half	semi-
Moon	lunar	sun	solar

The Tell-Tale Heart

by Edgar Allan Poe

True!—nervous—very, very dreadfully nervous I had been and am! but why *will* you say that I am mad? The disease had sharpened my senses—not destroyed—not dulled them. Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heaven and in the earth. I heard many things in hell. How, then, am I mad? Hearken! and observe how healthily—how calmly I can tell you the whole story.

It is impossible to tell how first the idea entered my brain; but once conceived, it haunted me day and night. Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! Yes, it was this! One of his eyes resembled that of a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye forever.

Now this is the point. You fancy me mad. Madmen know nothing. But you should have seen *me*. You should have seen how wisely I proceeded—with what caution—with what foresight—with what dissimulation I went to work! I was never kinder to the old man than during the whole week before I killed him. And every night, about midnight, I turned the latch of his door and opened it—oh, so gently! And then, when I had made an opening sufficient for my head, I put in a dark lantern, all closed, closed, so that no light shone out, and then I thrust in my head. Oh, you would have laughed to see how cunningly I thrust it in! I moved it slowly—very, very slowly, so that I might not disturb the old man’s sleep. It took me an hour to place my whole head within the opening so far that I could see him as he lay upon his bed. Ha!—would a madman have been so wise as this? And then, when my head was well in the room, I undid the lantern cautiously—oh, so cautiously—cautiously (for the hinges creaked)—I undid it just so much that a single thin ray fell upon the vulture eye. And this I did for seven long nights—every night just at midnight—but I found the eye always closed; and so it was impossible to do the work; for it was not the old man who vexed me, but his Evil Eye. And every morning, when the day broke, I went boldly into the chamber, and spoke courageously to him, calling him by name in a hearty tone, and inquiring how he had passed the night. So you see he would have been a very profound old man, indeed, to suspect that every night, just at twelve, I looked in upon him while he slept.

Upon the eighth night I was more than usually cautious in opening the door. A watch’s minute hand moves more quickly than did mine. Never before that night had I *felt* the extent of my own powers—of my sagacity. I could scarcely contain my feelings of triumph. To think that there I was, opening the door, little by little, and he not even to dream of my secret deeds or thoughts. I fairly chuckled at the idea; and perhaps he heard me; for he moved on the bed suddenly, as if startled. Now you may think that I drew back—but no. His room was as black as pitch with the thick darkness (for the shutters were close fastened, through fear of robbers), and so I knew that he could not see the opening of the door, and I kept pushing it on steadily, steadily.

I had my head in, and was about to open the lantern, when my thumb slipped upon the tin fastening, and the old man sprang up in bed, crying out: “Who’s there?”

I kept quite still and said nothing. For a whole hour I did not move a muscle, and in the meantime I did not hear him lie down. He was still sitting up in the bed listening;—just as I have done, night after night,

hearkening to the death watches in the wall.

Presently I heard a slight groan, and I knew it was the groan of mortal terror. It was not a groan of pain or grief—oh, no!—it was the low stifled sound that arises from the bottom of the soul when overcharged with awe. I knew the sound well. Many a night, just at midnight, when all the world slept, it has welled up from my own bosom, deepening, with its dreadful echo, the terrors that distracted me. I say I knew it well. I knew what the old man felt, and pitied him, although I chuckled at heart. I knew that he had been lying awake ever since the first slight noise, when he had turned in the bed. His fears had been ever since growing upon him. He had been trying to fancy them causeless, but could not. He had been saying to himself: “It is nothing but the wind in the chimney—it is only a mouse crossing the floor,” or “it is merely a cricket which has made a single chirp.” Yes, he has been trying to comfort himself with these suppositions; but he had found all in vain. *All in vain*; because Death, in approaching him, had stalked with his black shadow before him, and enveloped the victim. And it was the mournful influence of the unperceived shadow that caused him to feel—although he neither saw nor heard—to *feel* the presence of my head within the room.

When I had waited a long time, very patiently, without hearing him lie down, I resolved to open a little—a very, very little crevice in the lantern. So I opened it—you cannot imagine how stealthily, stealthily—until, at length, a single dim ray, like the thread of the spider, shot from out the crevice and full upon the vulture eye.

It was open—wide, wide open—and I grew furious as I gazed upon it. I saw it with perfect distinctness—all a dull blue, with a hideous veil over it that chilled the very marrow in my bones; but I could see nothing else of the old man’s face or person: for I had directed the ray, as if by instinct, precisely upon the damned spot.

And now—have I not told you that what you mistake for madness is but over-acuteness of the senses?—now, I say, there came to my ears a low, dull, quick sound, such as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton. I knew *that* sound well too. It was the beating of the old man’s heart. It increased my fury, as the beating of a drum stimulates the soldier into courage.

But even yet I refrained and kept still. I scarcely breathed. I held the lantern motionless. I tried how steadily I could maintain the ray upon the eye. Meantime the hellish tattoo of the heart increased. It grew quicker and quicker, and louder and louder every instant. The old man’s terror *must* have been extreme! It grew louder, I say, louder every moment!—do you mark me well? I have told you that I am nervous: so I am. And now at the dead hour of night, amid the dreadful silence of that old house, so strange a noise as this excited me to uncontrollable terror. Yet, for some minutes longer I refrained and stood still. But the beating grew louder, louder! I thought the heart must burst. And now a new anxiety seized me—the sound would be heard by a neighbor! The old man’s hour had come! With a loud yell, I threw open the lantern and leaped into the room. He shrieked once—once only. In an instant I dragged him to the floor, and pulled the heavy bed over him. I then smiled gaily, to find the deed so far done. But, for many minutes, the heart beat on with a muffled sound. This, however, did not vex me; it would not be heard through the wall. At length it ceased. The old man was dead. I removed the bed and examined the corpse. Yes, he was stone, stone dead. I placed my hand upon the heart and held it there many minutes. There was no pulsation. He was stone dead. His eye would trouble me no more.

If still you think me mad, you will think so no longer when I describe the wise precautions I took for the concealment of the body. The night waned, and I worked hastily, but in silence. First of all I dismembered the corpse. I cut off the head and the arms and the legs.

I then took up three planks from the flooring of the chamber, and deposited all between the scantlings. I then replaced the boards so cleverly, so cunningly, that no human eye—not even *his*—could have detected anything wrong. There was nothing to wash out—no stain of any kind—no blood-spot whatever. I had been too wary for that. A tub had caught all—ha! ha!

When I had made an end of these labors, it was four o'clock—still dark as midnight. As the bell sounded the hour, there came a knocking at the street door. I went down to open it with a light heart—for what had I *now* to fear? There entered three men, who introduced themselves, with perfect suavity, as officers of the police. A shriek had been heard by a neighbor during the night: suspicion of foul play had been aroused; information had been lodged at the police office, and they (the officers) had been deputed to search the premises.

I smiled—for *what* had I to fear? I bade the gentlemen welcome. The shriek, I said, was my own in a dream. The old man, I mentioned, was absent in the country. I took my visitors all over the house. I bade them search—search *well*. I led them, at length, to *his* chamber. I showed them his treasures, secure, undisturbed. In the enthusiasm of my confidence, I brought chairs into the room, and desired them *here* to rest from their fatigues, while I myself, in the wild audacity of my perfect triumph, placed my own seat upon the very spot beneath which reposed the corpse of the victim.

The officers were satisfied. My *manner* had convinced them. I was singularly at ease. They sat, and while I answered cheerily, they chatted familiar things. But, ere long, I felt myself getting pale and wished them gone. My head ached, and I fancied a ringing in my ears: but still they sat and still chatted. The ringing became more distinct:—it continued and became more distinct: I talked more freely to get rid of the feeling: but it continued and gained definitiveness—until, at length, I found that the noise was *not* within my ears.

No doubt I now grew *very* pale;—but I talked more fluently, and with a heightened voice. Yet the sound increased—and what could I do? It was *a low, dull, quick sound—much such a sound as a watch makes when enveloped in cotton*. I gasped for breath—and yet the officers heard it not. I talked more quickly—more vehemently; but the noise steadily increased. Why *would* they not be gone? I paced the floor to and fro with heavy strides, as if excited to fury by the observation of the men—but the noise steadily increased. Oh, God; what *could* I do? I foamed—I raved—I swore! I swung the chair upon which I had been sitting, and grated it upon the boards, but the noise arose over all and continually increased. It grew louder—louder—*louder!* And still the men chatted pleasantly, and smiled. Was it possible they heard not? Almighty God!—no, no! They heard!—they suspected!—they *knew!*—they were making a *mockery* of my horror!—this I thought, and this I think. But anything was better than this agony! Anything was more tolerable than this derision! I could bear those hypocritical smiles no longer! I felt that I must scream or die!—and now—again!—hark! louder! louder! louder! *louder!*—

“Villains!” I shrieked, “dissemble no more! I admit the deed!—tear up the planks!—here, here!—it is the beating of his hideous heart!”

Choose the best way of finishing each statement, based on what you have just read.

1. The narrator believes that he suffers from acute nervousness that has _____.
 - a. destroyed the power of his senses
 - b. increased the power of his senses
 - c. driven him mad

2. The motive for the murder was _____.
 - a. a strong desire for the victim's money
 - b. an intense hatred for the victim
 - c. a dislike of the victim's eye

3. During the week before he killed the old man, the narrator's manner toward him was very _____.
 - a. kind
 - b. angry
 - c. indifferent

4. Each night just at midnight, he thrust into the old man's room a _____.
 - a. black cat
 - b. chain
 - c. lantern

5. On the 8th night, the old man awakened because of a noise and then _____.
 - a. went right back to sleep
 - b. began to call for help
 - c. sat up waiting in terror

6. After a while, the murderer heard a sound that increased his fury and that he thought was _____.
 - a. a watch enveloped in cotton
 - b. the neighbors coming to enter the house
 - c. the beating of his victim's heart

7. The murderer disposed of the old man's body by putting it _____.
 - a. in the garden
 - b. under the floor
 - c. into the chimney

8. At 4 in the morning, three police officers arrived because neighbors had complained of _____.
 - a. the lights
 - b. some knocking
 - c. a shriek

9. The officers found out the truth because _____.
 - a. the murderer confessed
 - b. a neighbor had told them
 - c. there was a bloodstain on the floor

Setting

The story covers a period of approximately eight days with most of the important action occurring each night around midnight. The location is the home of an elderly man in which the narrator has become a caretaker.

Characters

This story contains a nameless narrator, an old man and the police who enter near the end of the story after the mention, that they were called by a neighbor whose suspicions had been aroused upon hearing a scream in the night. The protagonist or narrator becomes the true focus of the tale. This narrator may be male or female because Poe uses only "I" and "me" in reference to this character. Most readers assume that the narrator is a male because of a male author using a first person point of view; however, this story can also be plausible when the derranged protagonist appears as a woman. Most critics would argue this point by saying that Poe would "assume" that the reader would "know" that the protagonist was male, therefore, he would see no need to identify his sexless narrator. However, Poe was a perfectionist who left very little to guesswork 猜测. Could it be that this was no accident or something that he thought would be universally understood, but that Poe was creating a story whose impact could be changed simply by imagining this horrendous and vile deed being committed by a woman?

Point of View

Poe writes this story from the perspective of the murderer of the old man. When an author creates a situation where the protagonist tells a personal account, the overall impact of the story is heightened. The narrator, in this particular story, adds to the overall effect of horror by continually stressing to the reader that he or she is not mad, and tries to convince us of that fact by how carefully this brutal crime was planned and executed.

Style and Interpretation

Poe's story is a case of domestic violence that occurs as the result of an irrational fear. To the narrator that fear is represented by the old man's eye. Through the narrator, Poe describes this eye as being pale blue with a film over it, and resembling that of a vulture. Does the narrator have any reason to fear the old man or his eye? Is it this phobia that evokes the dark side, and eventually drives the narrator to madness? Or could Poe be referring to a belief whose origins could be traced back to Greece and Rome?

The belief in the evil eye dates back to ancient times, and even today, is fairly common in India and the countries bordering the Mediterranean Sea. References are made to it in Jewish, Islamic, Buddhist and Hindu faiths. The belief centers around the idea that those who possess the evil eye have the power to harm people or their possessions by merely looking at them. Wherever this belief exists, it is common to assign the evil eye as the cause of unexplainable illnesses and misfortunes of any kind.

To protect oneself from the power of the eye, certain measures can be taken. In Muslim areas, the color blue is painted on the shutters 百叶窗 of the houses, and found on beads worn by both children and animals. There is also a specific hand gesture named the "Hand of Fatima," named after the daughter of Mohammed. This name is also given to an amulet 护身符 in the shape of hand that is worn around the neck for protection.

In some locations, certain phrases, such as "as God will" or "God bless it" are uttered to protect the individual from harm. In extreme cases, the eye, whether voluntarily or not, must be destroyed. One Slavic folktale 斯拉夫民间故事 relates the story of the father who blinded himself for fear of harming his own children with his evil eye.

Would Poe have had knowledge of this rather strange belief? It is altogether possible that he would have, which creates another interesting twist to this story. Maybe the narrator who tries to convince us that madness is not really the issue, is telling the truth. Maybe this vile act is necessary in order to destroy the power of the old man's evil eye!

Theme

Human nature is a delicate balance of light and dark or good and evil. Most of the time this precarious balance is maintained; however, when there is a shift, for whatever reason, the dark or perverse side surfaces. How and why this "dark side" emerges differs from person to person. What may push one individual "over the edge" will only cause a raised eyebrow in another. In this case, it is the "vulture eye" of the old man that makes the narrator's blood run cold. It is this irrational fear which evokes the dark side, and eventually leads to murder. The narrator plans, executes and conceals the crime; however, "[w]hat has been hidden within the self will not stay concealed...." (Silverman 208) The narrator speaks of an illness that has heightened the senses: "Above all was the sense of hearing acute. I heard all things in the heavens and in the earth. I heard many things in hell." The narrator repeatedly insists that he/she is not mad; however the reader soon realizes that the fear of the vulture eye has consumed the narrator, who has now become a victim to the madness which he had hoped to elude 逃避.

Martha Womack : Martha Womack, better known to Internet users as Precisely Poe, has a BA degree in English from Longwood College in Virginia, and teaches English and Theatre Arts at Fuqua School in Farmville, Virginia. When Martha first began teaching American literature, she found so much conflicting information about Edgar Allan Poe that she became confused about what to teach her students. As she began to research the author's life and literature, Martha discovered that a horrible injustice had occurred, and she became determined, like many others, "to set the record straight." "This mission" has led to ten years of research and the creation of her web site, Precisely Poe. Martha is proud and pleased to be a part of the Poe Decoder, a continual project to dispel the myth surrounding Poe, the man and his literature.

Medusa 美杜莎简介

(也译作梅杜莎) 美杜莎是希腊神话中的蛇发女妖,她之前是一位很艳丽的美女,由于过度自大和自信就站在了雅典娜的面前高声大喊自己比神都美丽,于是就被变成了蛇发女妖。她长有满头的蛇发,及一对野猪的獠牙,就连脖子上都长满了蛇的鳞片,甚至下身也变成了蛇的样子,(多数是响尾蛇的下身,因为羞辱她所以连下身都变成如此自傲的响尾蛇的下身)于是智慧女神赐予了她一对任何看到她们的人都会立即变成石头的双眼。

在希腊神话中美杜莎原本是凡身。据说美杜莎曾经是一位美丽的少女,而且傲慢虽为海神波塞冬所爱,但却在智慧女神的神庙里说比女神还要美丽。雅典娜被

激怒了，她施展法术，把美杜莎的那头秀发变成了无数毒蛇。美女因此成了妖怪。更可怕的是，她的两眼闪着骇人的光，任何人哪怕只看她一眼，也会立刻变成毫无生气的一块大石头。宙斯之子珀尔修斯知道这个秘密，因此背过脸去，用光亮的盾牌作镜子，找出美杜莎，在雅典娜和赫耳墨斯的帮助下割下了她的头。从美杜莎的躯体里跳出双翼飞马珀伽索斯和巨人克律萨俄耳，他们都是美杜莎的后代。珀尔修斯骑着从美杜莎鲜血中飞出的珀伽索斯，在空中遇到狂风的袭击，被吹得左右摇晃，从美杜莎的头颅上滴下的鲜血落到利比亚沙漠中，成为毒蛇。美杜莎的血液虽然剧毒，却拥有特殊的力量，曾赋予埃里克特翁尼亚斯以起死回生的能力。珀尔修斯用割下的美杜莎的头颅杀死了海怪塞特斯，回去后把头颅交给雅典娜，雅典娜把它固定在自己的盾牌、胸甲中央。美杜莎的头像常被艺术家用在象征性的徽章、建筑的装饰物甚至雅典的钱币上，也曾用于士兵的盾牌上。

Reading effectively means recognizing the author's purpose. Some of the clues that you can watch for to help you identify that kind of writing you are dealing with include:

- 1) Informational writing features facts, observations and evidence, not opinions or value judgments. The writer may present theories to explain the facts, but the aim is not so much to change the reader's opinion as it is to clarify a question or situation.
- 2) Persuasive writing features emotional appeals: opinions and arguments, rhetorical questions, evaluating language and /or judgmental language.
- 3) Texts written mainly to entertain can, of course, be very varied --- but they often use rather informal language, simple sentence structure, dialogs, puns and/or figures of speech.

Before you read the following text, scan it for clues that help you identify the writer's aim. Use the questions below to guide your scanning, then decide: is the text informational, persuasive or meant mainly to entertain?

1. Look at the title and the topic sentences. Is the language that the author uses rather formal and serious? Informal and light-hearted? Or strongly emotional?
2. How many times does the writer use the words *right* and *wrong* in the text? Is he using them to make moral judgments?
3. What quotes do you see in the text? Are they dialogs? Quotes from experts? Or evidence supporting a general observation?

American Values and Assumptions

Gary Althen

People who grow up in a particular culture share certain values and assumptions. That doesn't mean they all share exactly the same values to exactly the same extent; it does mean that most of them, most of the time, mostly agree with each other's ideas about what is right and wrong, desirable and undesirable, and so on. They also agree, mostly, with each other's assumptions about human nature, social relationships, and so on.

One of the most important things to understand about Americans is how devoted they are to "individualism". They have been trained since very early in their lives to consider themselves as separate individuals who are responsible for their own situations in life and their own destinies. They have not been trained to see themselves as members of a close-knit, tightly interdependent family, religious group, tribe or nation.

You can see this in the way Americans treat their children. Even very young children are given opportunities to make their own choices and express their opinions. A parent will ask a one-year-old child what color balloon she wants, which dessert she prefers, or where she wants to sit. The child's preference will normally be accommodated. Through this process, Americans come to see themselves as separate human beings who have their own opinions and who are responsible for their own decisions.

Indeed, American child-rearing manuals state that the parents' objective is for the child to move out of the parents' house and make his or her own way in life. Americans take this advice very seriously, so much so that someone who remains dependent on their parents longer than the norm may be thought to be "immature", "tied to the mother's apron strings", or otherwise unable to lead a normal independent life.

Americans are trained to conceive of themselves as separate individuals, and they assume

everyone else in the world is too. When they encounter a person from abroad who seems to them excessively concerned with the opinions of parents, with following traditions, or with fulfilling obligations to others, they assume that the person feels trapped, or is weak and “too dependent.”

Americans, then, consider the ideal person to be an individualistic, self-reliant, independent person. They assume, incorrectly, that people from elsewhere share this value and this self-concept. In the degree to which they glorify, “the individual” who stands alone and makes his or her own decisions, Americans are quite distinctive.

The American version of the “ ideal individual” prefers an atmosphere of freedom, where neither the government nor any other external force or agency dictates what the individual does. For Americans, the idea of individual freedom is strongly positive. By contrast, people from many other cultures regard some of the behavior Americans justify as “individual freedom” to be self-centered and lacking in consideration for others.

Foreigners who understand the degree to which Americans are imbued with the notion that the free, self-reliant individual is the ideal kind of human being will be able to understand many aspects of American behavior and thinking that otherwise might not make sense. A very few of the many possible examples:

Americans see as heroes those individuals who “stand out from the crowd” by doing something first, longest, most often, or otherwise “best”. Examples are aviators Charles Lindbergh and Amelia Earhart.

Americans admire people who have overcome adverse circumstances (for example, poverty or a physical handicap) and “succeeded” in life. Black educator Booker T. Washington is one example; the blind and deaf author and lecture Helen Keller is another.

Many Americans do not display the degree of respect for their parents that people in more traditional or family-oriented societies commonly display. They have the conception that it was a sort of historical or biological accident that put them in the hands of particular parents, that the parents fulfilled their responsibilities to the children while the children were young, and now that the children have reached “the age of independence” the close child-parent tie is loosened, if not broken.

It isn’t unusual for Americans who are beyond the age of about 22 and who are still living with their parents to pay their parents for room and board. Elderly parents living with their grown children may do likewise. Paying for room and board is a way of showing independence, self-reliance, and responsibility for oneself.

Certain phrases one commonly hears among Americans which capture their devotion to individualism include”

“Do your own thing.”

“I did it my way.”

“You’ll have to decide that for yourself.”

“You made your bed, now lie in it.”

“God helps those who help themselves.”

“Look out for number one.”

Closely associated with the value they place on individualism is the importance Americans assign to privacy. Americans assume that people “need some time to themselves” or “some time alone” to think about things or recover their spent psychological energy. Americans have great difficulty understanding someone who always wants to be with another person, who dislikes being

alone.

If the parents can afford, each child will have his or her own bedroom. Having one's own bedroom, even as an infant, imbues people with the notion that they are entitled to a place of their own where they can be by themselves and --- notice --- keep their possessions. They have their own clothes, toys, books and so on. These things are theirs and no one else's.

Americans assume that people have their "private thoughts" that might never be shared with anyone. Doctors, lawyers, psychiatrists, and others have rules governing "confidentially" that are intended to prevent information about their clients' personal situation from becoming known to others.

Americans' attitudes about privacy can be difficult for foreigners to understand. Americans' houses, yards, and even their offices can seem open and inviting, yet, in the Americans' minds, there are boundaries that other people are simply not supposed to cross. When the boundaries are crossed, Americans will visibly stiffen and their manner will become cool.

Before you read the following text, scan it for clues that help you identify the writer's aim. Use the questions below to guide your scanning, then decide: is the text informational, persuasive or meant mainly to entertain?

1. Look at the title and the list in the text. Is the language that the author uses rather formal and serious? Informal and light-hearted? Or strongly emotional?
2. What quotes do you see in the text? Are they dialogs? Quotes from experts? Or simply proverbs and idioms.

A Foreign Anthropologist's Observation of Americans

Deena R. Levine & Mara B. Adelman

Sometimes it is difficult to describe the values or ideals of a culture from within that culture. However, if one looks at the culture from the outside, certain observations can be made more easily. It is important to understand American values if you want to understand American behavior. Certain ways of thinking, acting and communicating are a direct result of cultural values. The following list of values describes the basic values of many Americans (even a majority of Americans). For each entry in the list of American values, a "contrasting value" is expected. The opposite values may be found among some Americans (particularly those belonging to certain minority groups), but for the most part is perhaps more typical of people in non-Western cultures of the world.

You are expected to write down the "contrasting values" from the perspective of one growing up in a non-western culture, if the values ARE indeed in contrast with the American values listed. If we have the same value, you may leave it blank.

1. **Americans Value:** Personal control over the environment: People can alter nature, and, to a large extent, can determine the direction of their lives.

Contrasting value:

2. **Americans Value:** Change: Change is healthy. People stagnate if they don't make enough changes

Contrasting value:

3. **Americans Value:** Control over time: Time flies. People are pressured by time. People shouldn't waste time. They must rush to get things done, and must follow their schedules to be productive.

Contrasting value:

4. **Americans Value:** Equality and egalitarianism: All people created equal deserve equal rights. (Remember: This is a value or ideal, not an established reality.)

Contrasting value:

5. **Americans Value:** Individualism and privacy: Individual needs are considered primary.

Contrasting value:

6. **Americans Value:** Self-help: People can and should try to improve their own lives, their own minds, their own marriages and even their own personalities.

Contrasting value:

7. **Americans Value:** Action and work orientation: Work often defines people; they identify themselves by what they do. (“What do you do” nearly means: “Who are you?”)

Contrasting value:

8. **Americans Value:** Informality: First name usage (“Just call me Bob”), casual clothes, and a lack of formal ceremony are typical of American life.

Contrasting value:

9. **Americans Value:** Directness, openness, and honesty: “Honesty is the best policy.” People should express themselves openly. It’s not considered good to “beat around the bush.”

Contrasting value:

10. **Americans Value:** Materialism: It’s okay to be more concerned with material goals than with spiritual or intellectual goals.

Contrasting value:

Literally

by Calvin Trillin

A man came to enjoy country life, only to be frustrated again and again by the way his rural friends, and later his wife as well, used language. He got even madder at his own "degradation" and decided to go back to the city. How did this happen?

My problem with country living began innocently enough when our well ran dry and a neighbor said some pump priming would be necessary.

"I didn't come up here to discuss economics," I said. Actually, I don't understand economics. There's no use revealing that, though, to *every Tom, Dick and Harry* who interrupts his dinner to try to get your water running, so I said, "I come up here to get away from that sort of thing." My neighbor gave me a puzzled look.

"He is talking about the water pump," Alice told me. "It needs priming."

I thought that experience might have been just a fluke --- until on a fishing trip with the same neighbor, I proudly pulled in a fish with what I thought was a major display of deep-sea angling skill, only to hear a voice behind me say, "It's just a fluke."

"This is dangerous," I said to Alice, while helping her weed the vegetable garden the next day. I had thought our problem was limited to the pump-priming ichthyologist down the road, but that morning at the post office I had overheard a farmer say that since we seemed to be in for a few days of good weather he intended to make his hay while the sun was shining. "These people are robbing me of aphorisms," I said, taking advantage of the discussion to rest for a while on my hoe. "How can I encourage the children to take advantage of opportunities by telling them to make hay while the sun shines if they think that means making hay while the sun shines?"

"Could you please keep weeding those peas while you talk," she said. "You've got a long row to hoe."

I began to look at Alice with new eyes. By that, of course, I don't mean that I actually went to a discount eye outlet, acquired two new eyes (*20/20* this time), replaced my old eyes with the new ones and looked at Alice. Having to make that explanation is just the sort of thing I found troubling. What I mean is that I was worried about the possibility of Alice's falling into the habit of rural literalism herself. My concern was deepened a few days later by a conversation that took place while I was in one of our apple trees, looking for an apple that was not used as a *dacha* by the local worms. "I just talked to the Murrays, and they say that the secret is picking up windfalls," Alice said.

"Windfalls?" I said. "Could it be that Jim Murray has taken over *Exxon* since last time I saw him? Or do the Murrays have a natural-gas operation in the *back forty* I didn't know about?"

"Not those kinds of windfalls," Alice said. "The apples that fall from the tree because of the wind. They are a breeding place for worms."

"There is nothing wrong with our apples," I said reaching for a particular plump one.

"Be careful," she said. "You may be getting yourself too far out on a limb."

"You may be getting yourself out on a limb yourself," I said to Alice at breakfast the next morning.

She looked around the room. "I'm sitting at the kitchen table," she said.

"I meant it symbolically," I said. "The way it was meant to be meant. This has got to stop. I won't have you coming in from the garden with small potatoes in your basket and saying that what you found was just small potatoes. 'Small potatoes' doesn't mean small potatoes."

“Small potatoes doesn’t mean small potatoes?”

“I refuse to discuss it,” I said. “The tide’s in, so I am going fishing, and I don’t want to hear any encouraging talk about that fluke not being the only fish in the ocean.”

“I was just going to ask why you have to leave before you finish your breakfast,” she said.

“Because tide and time wait for no man,” I said. “And I mean it.”

Had she trapped me into saying that? Or was it possible that I was falling into the habit myself? Was I, as I waited for a bite, thinking that there were plenty of other fish in the sea? Then I had a bite --- then another. I forgot about the problem until after I had returned to the dock and done my most skillful job of filleting.

“Look!” I said, holding up the carcass of one fish proudly, as Alice approached the dock. “It’s nothing but skin and bones.”

The shock of realizing what I had said caused me to stumble against my fish-cleaning table and knock the fillets off the dock. “Now we won’t have anything for dinner,” I said.

“Don’t worry about it,” Alice said. “I have other fish to fry.”

“That’s not right!” I shouted. “That’s not what that means. It means you have something better to do.”

“It can also mean that I have other fish to fry,” she said. “And I do. I’ll just get that other fish you caught out of the freezer. Even though it was just a fluke.”

I tried to calm myself. I apologized to Alice for shouting and offered to help her pick vegetable from the garden for dinner.

“I’ll try to watch my language,” she said, as we stood among the peas.

“It’s all right, really,” I said.

“I was just going to say that tonight it seems rather slim pickings,” she said. “Just about everything has *gone to seed*.”

“Perfectly all right,” I said, wandering over toward the garden shed, where some mud seemed to be caked in the eaves. I pushed at the mud with a rake, and a swarm of wasps burst out at me. I ran for the house, swatting at wasps with my hat. Inside, I suddenly had the feeling that some of them had managed to crawl up the legs of my jeans, and I tore the jeans off. Alice found me there in the kitchen, standing quietly in what the English call their *smalls*.

“That does it,” I said. “We are going back to the city.”

“Just because of a few stings?”

“Can’t you see what happened?” I said. “They scared the pants off me.”

(Pun is a witty remark that involves the playful use of a word in different senses. It is usually employed for humorous effect. This figure of speech depends on the fact that some words have more than one meaning, so it is impossible to understand the pun and enjoy the humor if the reader fails to know the various meanings of one word.)

	To Alice and the rural people:	To Trillin
Pump priming		
Fluke		
Windfall		
Small potatoes		
Skin and bone		

Literal meaning vs. symbolic meaning

Look at the following proverbs and aphorisms and try to interpret them both literally and symbolically

1. Make hay while the sun shines
2. get a long row to hoe
3. get yourself too far out on a limb
4. Time and tide wait for no man
5. have other fish to fry

Note

every Tom, Dick and Harry 张三李四

20/20 视力正常的

dacha (俄语) 乡间别墅

Exxon world's largest oil company

back forty 边远荒地

go to seed 花谢结籽

Really Useful Schooling

The function of education is to prepare us for life. Here is what Adrian Tan thinks our schools should teach.

By ADRIAN TAN

Life is complicated. It starts before we're ready, it continues while we're still trying to figure out the point of it. And it ends long before we've worked out just what to do. It's vital then that young people prepare for that journey as soon as they can. We're lucky because there is a brief, special time in their lives when they are meant to do just that – school.

For a few short years, our children are our captive audience. We are able to impart whatever knowledge we think will benefit them at some point of their lives. This is where the school system fails us. Because we try to **make schools do a lot of other things at the same time.**

We want schools to act as cheap childcare centers, to keep our children occupied while the adults are occupied. So, we start school days early and stretch them throughout the day, even when we don't really need to. We also think our schools should separate clever kids from average kids. So we teach them fiendishly complicated subjects like calculus and chemistry in order to see which kids are 2.3 percent better than their peers at those subjects. Apart from mathematicians and chemists, very few of us have any use for those subjects in the years ahead.

If we agree that the function of education is to prepare us for life, then there is very little time to waste. We know that before long, our children will become bored, disillusioned, and far too large to intimidate. So, while we can, we ought to concentrate on teaching them really useful things. Here is what I think our schools should teach.

Courtesy – The sooner our young people learn this, the better. Politeness and consideration are the hallmarks of civilization. In any case, a lot more can be accomplished by a smile and good manners than with a PhD.

Managing Money – Like it or not, for most of us, our adult lives will be consumed by the struggle for this. It baffles me that we don't make an effort to teach our young people the rudiments of managing it. Is borrowing on a credit card a good thing? Should you take a second mortgage if you have no income? How do you live within your means? No-one should be expected to pick this up after leaving school (or worse, after getting a job). We have a responsibility to teach our young people this basic skill from the outset.

Critical thinking – Today, we're swamped by fact and opinion. There's always a temptation to accept something we are told, especially if it's well-crafted, especially if it's something we agree with. But that's not what educated people do. Educated people are rational and reasonable. They look at facts and they apply logic. If our schools teach nothing else, they should at least teach critical thinking.

Health – Kids should learn to take care of their bodies. They should know that if they eat junk, they will become fat and unhealthy. They should be very clear about

what happens to their bodies when they drink, or smoke, or take drugs. They should know how people become pregnant. That's crucial when they enter puberty, and beyond. They really shouldn't have to learn about sex from the latest rap video.

Society – The idea here is that all of us are part of something much bigger. We have rights and responsibilities. We ought to understand what they are, and why they are that way. We have to know a little bit of our immediate history and geography, because we need to have a context in which to relate to the people around us.

How will we test students on these subjects? We can't. How then will we know they are learning? We won't. At least not immediately. But that's not a reason to avoid teaching important topics. We don't close down churches, mosques and temples just because we're not sure that the congregation is paying attention. We keep at it, because we can't afford not to.

Are these subjects too "low-brow"? Perhaps. Don't get me wrong: science and literature are important. There will always be a place in the world for quantum physicists and Shakespearean scholars. But **our schools cannot be designed to enable the best and the brightest to excel. They must also equip the weakest among us to survive.** I can't think of a more noble purpose for our schools than for them to spend every moment they have telling this to our kids: "This is life, this is what you are going to face, and this is how you deal with it." Everything else is superfluity.

Colorful, Colored and Colorless Words

By Paul Roberts

The writer builds with words, and no builder uses a raw material more slippery and elusive and treacherous. A writer's work is a constant struggle to get the right word in the right place, to find that particular word that will convey his meaning exactly, that will persuade the reader or soothe him or startle or amuse him. He never succeeds altogether---sometimes he feels that he scarcely succeeds at all---but such successes as he has are what make the thing worth doing.

There is no book of rules for this game. One progresses through everlasting experiment on the basis of ever-widening experience. There are few useful generalizations that one can make about words as words, but there are perhaps a few.

Some words are what we call "colorful". By this we mean that they are calculated to produce a picture or induce an emotion. They are dressy instead of plain, specific instead of general, loud instead of soft. Thus, in place of "Her heart beat", we may write "Her heart pounded, throbbed, fluttered, danced". Instead of "He sat in his chair", we may say, "He lounged, sprawled, coiled". Instead of "It was hot", we may say, "It was blistering, sultry, muggy, suffocating, steamy, wilting".

However, it should not be supposed that the fancy word is always better. Often it is as well to write "Her heart beat" or "It was hot" if that is all it did or all it was. Ages differ in how they like their prose. The nineteenth century liked it rich and smoky. The twentieth has usually preferred it lean and cool. The twentieth century writer, like all writers, is forever seeking the exact word, but he is wary of sounding feverish. The twentieth has usually preferred it lean and cool. He tends to pitch it low, to understate it, to throw it away. He knows that if he gets too colorful, the audience is likely to giggle.

See how this strikes you: "As the rich, golden glow of the sunset died away along the eternal western hills, Angela's limpid blue eyes looked softly and trustingly into Montague's flashing brown ones, and her heart pounded like a drum in time with the joyous song surging in her soul." Some people like that sort of thing, but most modern readers would say, "Good grief", and turn on the television.

Some words we would call not so much colorful as colored—that is, loaded with associations, good or bad. All words—except perhaps structure words—have associations of some sort. We have said that the meaning of a word is the sum of the contexts in which it occurs. When we hear a word, we hear with it an echo of all the situations in which we have heard it before.

In some words, these echoes are obvious and discussable. The word mother, for example, has, for most people, agreeable associations. When you hear mother you probably think of home, safety, love, food, and various other pleasant things. If one writes, "She was like a mother to me," he gets an effect which he would not get in "She was like an aunt to me." The advertiser makes use of the associations of mother by working it in when he talks about his product. The politician works it in when he talks about himself.

So also with such words as home, liberty, fireside, contentment, patriot, tenderness, sacrifice, childlike, manly, bluff, limpid. All of these words are loaded with favorable associations that would be rather hard to indicate in a straightforward definition. There is more than a literal difference between "They sat around the fireside" and "They sat around the stove." They might have been equally warm and happy around the stove, but fireside suggests leisure, grace, quiet tradition, congenial company, and stove does not.

Conversely, some words have bad associations. Mother suggests pleasant things, but mother-in-law does not. Many mothers-in-law are heroically lovable and some mothers drink gin all day and beat their children insensible, but these facts of life are beside the point. The thing is that mother sounds good and mother-in-law does not.

Or consider the word intellectual. This would seem to be a complimentary term, but in point of fact it is not, for it has picked up associations of impracticality and ineffectuality and general dopiness. So also with such words as liberal, reactionary, Communist, socialist, capitalist, radical, schoolteacher, truck driver, undertaker, operator, salesman, huckster, speculator. These convey meanings on the literal level, but beyond that— sometimes, in some places— they convey contempt on the part of the speaker.

The question of whether to use loaded words or not depends on what is being written. The scientist, the scholar, try to avoid them; for the poet, the advertising writer, the public speaker, they are standard equipment. But every writer should take care that they do not substitute for thought. If you write, "Anyone who thinks that is nothing but a Socialist (or Communist or capitalist)" you have said nothing except that you don't like people who think that, and such remarks are effective only with the most naive readers. It is always a bad mistake to think your readers are more naive than they really are.

But probably most student writers come to grief not with words that are colorful or those that are colored but with those that have no color at all. A pet example is nice, a word we would find it hard to dispense with in casual conversation but which is no longer capable of adding much to a description. Colorless words are those of such general meaning that in a particular sentence they mean nothing. Slang adjectives, like cool ("That's real cool"), tend to explode all over the language. They are applied to everything, lose their original force, and quickly die.

Beware also of nouns of very general meaning, like circumstances, cases, instances, aspects, factors, relationships, attitudes, eventualities, etc. In most circumstances you will find that those cases of writing which contain too many instances of words like these will in this and other aspects have factors leading to unsatisfactory relationships with the reader resulting in unfavorable attitudes on his part and perhaps other eventualities, like a grade of "D." Notice also what "etc." means. It means "I'd like to make this list longer, but I can't think of any more examples."

Self-esteem: the Myth of Feeling Good About Oneself

No one would argue that children thrive when they feel respected, important, and cared for by other persons, or that they falter when they lack the self-pride and self-confidence that accompanies such approval and support. However, at the hands of educators eager to encourage lagging pupils, a myth has developed that raising youngsters' self-esteem is a sure means of improving their levels of achievement and solving many of the nation's social ills.

A 1990 report, for instance, proposes that "self-esteem is the likeliest candidate for a 'social vaccine', something that empowers us to live responsibly and that keeps us from the lure of crime, teen pregnancy, and educational failure. The lack of self-esteem is central to more personal and social ills plaguing our state and nation as we approach the end of the twentieth century. "

By the 1960s, following the advent of the self-actualization theories of personal growth espoused by psychologists Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, interest in enhancing self-esteem as a path to accomplishment got under way in the nation's schools. Since then, dozens of "how-to" books have described ways for improving children's positive feeling about themselves. The theory is simple: Feeling good is a necessary predecessor of accomplishment.

Despite its current popularity, questions can be raised about the assumptions underlying the self-esteem movement. For example, what benefit does a third-grader gain in telling herself, "I am smart," "I am a good student,"—all forms of the "affirmative language" advocated by Douglas Bloch in his book *Positive Self-talk for Children*?

Does it really enhance the self-esteem of members of the fifth-grade baseball team—or improve their athletic skill—when everyone is awarded a trophy, despite the fact that the team did not show noticeable improvement throughout the season? What effect will this have on next year's efforts when this record of performance ends with apparent approval and satisfaction? Countless statistics and surveys have had a unanimous(一致的) result: nothing is changed, and the days go on the same as ever.

People are eager to praise the toddler for a few tentative steps and the two-year-old for simply attempting to match form with hole in a puzzle board. Self-esteem is heightened in the young child through such love and Approval. Older kids, though, are foxy analysts and know when performance merits praise and when it does not. Repeating indiscriminate praise or acclaiming minimal accomplishments run the risk of transforming positive response into meaningless flattery(恭维).

Self-esteem theorists appear to have it backwards. Meaningful self-evaluation and positive self-esteem usually are the results, not the prerequisites(前提), of accomplishment. Praise is just one source of feedback; self-esteem more often comes from an awareness that the requirements of a sought-after goal have been mastered. Acquiring the knowledge and skills that enable a child to make progress toward such goals is a necessary basis for developing healthy, realistic self-esteem.

Sports are an arena in which Americans generally have little reluctance to require hard work and persistence. Coaches do not hesitate to point out errors and mistakes. Children's self-esteem does not appear to suffer when they are told that they need to practice more and concentrate on the task at hand. The usual effect is renewed effort to work, practice, and learn.

In contrast, Americans are reluctant to have teachers evaluate the academic performance of their elementary school children with more than a "satisfactory" or "needs improvement. " Later, parents urge high schools to adopt more lenient(宽松的) grading systems, worried that the

children's self-esteem will plummet when they find that the "satisfactory" of earlier years now has become a "C" or "D."

Sympathetic teachers, aware of the difficulties students encounter in their everyday lives, often relinquish standards in an effort to build students' self-confidence. In doing so, they deprive youngsters of the kinds of experience that are prerequisite to later success. Students are fooled and their prospects for later employment are placed in jeopardy when teachers fail to teach them how diligence and effort can help to avoid academic problems, and when they fail to provide children with realistic feedback in meeting well-defined, challenging goals.

American students face a bleak future if they are unable to compete with their peers, both in the U.S. and other industrialized countries. The seriousness of the matter becomes evident in the results of comparative studies of academic achievement. In one, for example, 96% of Chinese and 90% of Japanese fifth-graders tested had mathematics scores higher than the average of their counterparts in the U. S. Results are not much better at the 11 th-grade level: 86% of the Chinese and 92% of the Japanese received scores above American average scores.

One might guess from the growing emphasis on self-esteem that American children generally have a negative self-image. This is not the case. In research conducted with representative samples of 11th-graders and their parents in Minnesota and Virginia, for instance, we found that Americans seem to have an unusually positive image of themselves. Participants were asked to rate the student's achievement in mathematics on a seven-point scale where a rating of four was defined as average. Both students and their parents made ratings whose averages were significantly above average—that is, above four. "Above average" ratings were not limited to academic areas; the students gave themselves these ratings on a diverse array of characteristics, including athletic skills, physical appearance, and how well they got along with others. Chinese and Japanese students and parents made more realistic appraisals., their average ratings conformed more closely to the average as the researchers had defined it.

Evaluations made by the Americans do not describe students plagued by self-doubt and in need of strong reassurance. Of course, there are American youngsters who have low self-esteem and who respond to this by giving up academic pursuits. Nevertheless, the principal challenge, it seems, is not so much in building up their self-esteem as in teaching them that all students are capable of raising their levels of performance if they are willing to work hard.

We asked several thousand American and East Asian students to tell us what was most important for doing well in school. The most common response of the East Asian students was "studying." The U.S. students said "a good teacher". The difference in the place of responsibility reflected in these answers well may reveal the consequences of a "feel good" approach.

What conclusions can be drawn? First, it is through progress and accomplishment that students develop the confidence which underlies solid self-esteem. Second, meeting challenging goals and receiving accurate feedback provides a sense of competence that leads to a healthy, realistic basis for feeling good about oneself. There is no evidence that adopting ever-higher standards as they learn and requiring students to work harder will lower their positive feelings about their abilities.

Having kids tell themselves "I'm good enough. I'm smart enough. And doughnut, people like me" may be comforting for the moment, but we delude ourselves if we think a "feel good" approach will solve the problems of educating America's children and protecting the nation from social ills.

Praise and award certificates—the currency of the self-esteem movement—are cheap. More

tangible types of reform that rely on redesigning institutions such as schools are expensive, difficult, and time-consuming. Even so, Americans must be as hardheaded and as clear as their competitors in realizing that an effective educational system for children and youth are fundamental to a nation's health and progress. Feeling good is fine., it is even better when people have something to feel good about.

Diogenes and Alexander

Lying on the bare earth, shoeless, bearded, half-naked, he looked like a beggar or a lunatic. He was one, but not the other. He had opened his eyes with the sun at dawn, scratched, done his business like a dog at the roadside, washed at the public fountain, begged a piece of breakfast bread and a few olives, eaten them squatting on the ground, and washed them down with a few handfuls of water scooped from the spring. (Long ago he had owned a rough wooden cup, but he threw it away when he saw a boy drinking out of his hollowed hands.) Having no work to go to and no family to provide for, he was free. As the market place filled up with shoppers and merchants and slaves and foreigners, he had strolled through it for an hour or two.

Everybody knew him, or knew of him. They would throw sharp questions at him and get sharper answers. Sometimes they threw bits of food, and got scant thanks; sometimes a mischievous pebble, and got a shower of stones and abuse. They were not quite sure whether he was mad or not. He knew they were mad, each in a different way; they amused him. Now he was back at his home. It was not a house, not even a squatter's hut. He thought everybody lived far too elaborately, expensively, anxiously. What good is a house? No one needs privacy: natural acts are not shameful; we all do the same thing, and need not hide them. No one needs beds and chairs and such furniture: the animals live healthy lives and sleep on the ground. All we require, since nature did not dress us properly, is one garment to keep us warm, and some shelter from rain and wind. So he had one blanket—to dress him in the daytime and cover him at night—and he slept in a cask. His name was **Diogenes**. He was the founder of the creed called **Cynicism**; he spent much of his life in the rich, lazy, corrupt Greek city of Corinth, mocking and satirizing its people, and occasionally converting one of them. His home was not a barrel made of wood: too expensive. It was a storage jar made of earthenware, no doubt discarded because a break had made it useless. He was not the first to inhabit such a thing, but he was the first who ever did so by choice, out of principle.

Diogenes was not a maniac. He was a philosopher who wrote plays and poems and essays expounding(解释) his doctrine; he talked to those who cared to listen; he had pupils who admired him. But he taught chiefly by example. All should live naturally, he said, for what is natural is normal and cannot possibly be evil or shameful. Live without conventions, which are artificial and false; escape complexities and extravagances: only so can you live a free life. The rich man believes he possesses his big house with its many rooms and its elaborate furniture, his expensive clothes, his horses and his servants and his bank accounts. He does not. He depends on them, he worried about them, he spends most of his energy looking after them;the thought of losing them makes him sick with anxiety.They process them. He is their slave. In order to procure a quantity of false, perishable goods he has sold the only true, lasting good, his own independence. There have been many men who grew tired of

human society with its complications, and went away to live simply—on a small farm, in a quiet village, in a hermit's cave. Not so Diogenes. He was a missionary. His life's aim was clear to him: it was "to restamp the currency", "to take the clean metal of human life, to erase the old false conventional markings, and to imprint it with its true values". The other great philosophers of the fourth century BC, such as Plato and Aristotle, taught mainly their own private pupils. But for Diogenes, laboratory and specimens and lecture halls and pupils were all to be found in a crowd of ordinary people. Therefore, he chose to live in Athens or Corinth, where travelers from all over the Mediterranean world constantly came and went. And, by design, he publicly behaved in such ways as to show people what real life was. He thought most people were only half-alive, most men only half-men. At bright noonday he walked through the market place carrying a lighted lamp and inspecting the face of everyone he met. They asked him why. Diogenes answered, "I am trying to find a man." To a gentleman whose servant was putting on his shoes for him, Diogenes said, "You won't be really happy until he wipes your nose for you: that will come after you lose the use of your hands."

Once there was a war scare so serious that it stirred even the lazy, profit-happy Corinthians. They began to drill, clean their weapons, and rebuild their neglected fortifications. Diogenes took his old cask and began to roll it up and down, back and forward. "When you are all so busy," he said, "I felt I ought to do something!" And so he lived—like a dog, some said, because he cared nothing for conventions of society, and because he showed his teeth and barked at those he disliked. Now he was lying in the sunlight, contented and happy, happier than the Shah of Persia. Although he knew he was going to have an important visitor, he would not move.

The little square began to fill with people. Page boys, soldiers, secretaries, officers, diplomats, they all gradually formed a circle centered around Diogenes. He looked them over as a sober man looks at a crowd of tottering drunks, and shook his head. He knew who they were. They were the servants of Alexander, the conqueror of Greece, the Macedonian king, who was visiting his new realm. Only twenty, Alexander was far older and wiser than his years. Like all Macedonians he loved drinking, but he could usually handle it; and toward women he was nobly restrained and chivalrous. Like all Macedonians he loved fighting; he was a magnificent commander, but he was not merely a military automaton. He could think. At thirteen he had become a pupil of the greatest mind in Greece, Aristotle, who gave him the best of Greek culture. He taught Alexander poetry; the young prince slept with the **Iliad** under his pillow and longed to emulate **Achilles**, who brought the mighty power of Asia to ruin. He taught him philosophy, in particular the shapes and uses of political power and he taught him the principles of scientific research, and shipped hundreds of zoological specimens back to Greece for study. Indeed, it was from Aristotle that Alexander learned to seek out everything strange which might be instructive.

Now, Alexander was in Corinth to take command of the League of Greek States which his father Philip created. He was welcomed and honored and flattered. He was the man of the hour, of the century; he was unanimously appointed commander-in-chief of a new expedition against old, rich, corrupt Asia. Nearly everyone crowded to Corinth in order to congratulate him, to seek employment with him. Only Diogenes, although he lived in Corinth, did not visit the new monarch. With that generosity which Aristotle had taught him, Alexander determined to call upon Diogenes. With his handsome face, his fiery glance, his strong supple body, his purple and gold cloak, and his air of destiny, he moved through the parting crowd, toward the Dog's kennel. When a king approaches, all rise in respect. Diogenes merely sat up on one elbow. When a monarch enters a place, all greet him with a bow or an acclamation. Diogenes said nothing. There was a silence. Alexander spoke first, with a kindly greeting. Looking at the poor broken cask, the single ragged garment, and the rough figure lying on the ground, he said, "Is there anything I can do for you, Diogenes?" "Yes," said the Dog. "Stand to one side. You're blocking the sunlight." There was an amazed silence. Slowly, Alexander turned away. A titter broke out from the elegant Greeks. The Macedonian officers, after deciding that Diogenes was not worth the trouble of kicking, were starting to guffaw and nudge one another. Alexander was still silent. To those nearest him he said quietly, "If I were not Alexander, I should be Diogenes." They took it as a paradox. But Alexander meant it. He understood Cynicism as the others could not. He was what Diogenes called himself, a "citizen of the world." Like Diogenes, he admired the heroic figure of Hercules, who labored to help mankind while all others toiled and sweated only for themselves. He knew that of all men then alive in the world only Alexander the conqueror and Diogenes the beggar were free.

"Don't Let Stereotypes Warp Your Judgments"

[Robert L. Heilbroner](#)

Is a girl called Gloria apt to be better-looking than one called Bertha? Are criminals more likely to be dark than blond? Can you tell a good deal about someone's personality from hearing his voice briefly over the phone? Can a person's nationality be pretty accurately guessed from his photograph? Does the fact that someone wears glasses imply that he is intelligent?

The answer to all these questions is obviously, "No." Yet, from all the evidence at hand, most of us believe these things. Ask any college boy if he'd rather take his chances with a Gloria or a Bertha, or ask a college girl if she'd rather blind-date a Richard or a Cuthbert. In fact, you don't have to ask: college students in questionnaires have revealed that names conjure up the same images in their minds as they do in yours—and for as little reason.

Look into the favorite suspects of persons who report "suspicious characters" and you will find a large percentage of them to be "swarthy" or "dark and foreign-looking"—despite the testimony of criminologists that criminals do not tend to be dark, foreign or "wild-eyed."

And whereas we all think we know what an Italian or a Swede looks like, it is the sad fact that when a group of Nebraska students sought to match faces and nationalities of 15 European countries, they were scored wrong in 93 percent of their identifications. Finally, for all the fact that horn-rimmed glasses have now become the standard television sign of an "intellectual," optometrists know that the main thing that distinguishes people with glasses is just bad eyes.

Stereotypes are a kind of gossip about the world, a gossip that makes us prejudge people before we ever lay eyes on them. Hence it is not surprising that stereotypes have something to do with the dark world of prejudice. Explore most prejudices (note that the word means prejudice) and you will find a cruel stereotype at the core of each one. For it is the extraordinary fact that once we have typecast the world, we tend to see people in terms of our standardized pictures. In another demonstration of the power of stereotypes to affect our vision, a number of Columbia and Barnard students were shown 30 photographs of pretty but unidentified girls, and asked to rate each in terms of "general liking," "intelligence," "beauty" and so on. Two months later, the same group were shown the same photographs, this time with fictitious Irish, Italian, Jewish and "American" names attached to the pictures. Right away the ratings changed. Faces which were now seen as representing a national group went down in looks and still farther down in likability, while the "American" girls suddenly looked decidedly prettier and nicer.

Why is it that we stereotype the world in such irrational and harmful fashion? In part, we begin to type-cast people in our childhood years. Early in life, as every parent whose child has watched a TV Western knows, we learn to spot the Good Guys from the Bad Guys. Some years ago, a social psychologist showed very clearly how powerful these stereotypes of childhood vision are. He secretly asked the most popular youngsters in an elementary school to make errors in their morning gym exercises. Afterwards, he asked the class if anyone had noticed any mistakes during gym period. Oh, yes, said the children. But it was the unpopular members of the class—the "bad

guys"—they remembered as being out of step.

We not only grow up with standardized pictures forming inside of us, but as grown-ups we are constantly having them thrust upon us. Some of them, like the half-joking, half-serious stereotypes of mothers-in-law, or country yokels, or psychiatrists, are dinned into us by the **stock jokes** we hear and repeat. In fact, without such stereotypes, there would be a lot fewer jokes. Still other stereotypes are perpetuated by the advertisements we read, the movies we see, the books we read.

And finally, we tend to stereotype because it helps us make sense out of a highly confusing world, a world which William James once described as "one great, blooming, buzzing confusion." It is a curious fact that if we don't know what we're looking at, we are often quite literally unable to see what we're looking at. People who recover their sight after a lifetime of blindness actually cannot at first tell a triangle from a square. A visitor to a factory sees only noisy chaos where the superintendent sees a perfectly synchronized flow of work. **As Walter Lippmann has said, "For the most part we do not first see, and then define; we define first, and then we see."**

Stereotypes are one way in which we "define" the world in order to see it. They classify the infinite variety of human beings into a convenient handful of "types" towards whom we learn to act in stereotyped fashion. Life would be a wearing process if we had to start from scratch with each and every human contact. Stereotypes economize on our mental effort by covering up the blooming, buzzing confusion with big recognizable cut-outs. They save us the "trouble" of finding out what the world is like—they give it its accustomed look.

Thus the trouble is that stereotypes make us mentally lazy. As S.I. Hayakawa, the authority on semantics, has written: "The danger of stereotypes lies not in their existence, but in the fact that they become for all people some of the time, and for some people all the time, substitutes for observation." Worse yet, stereotypes get in the way of our judgment, even when we do observe the world. Someone who has formed rigid pre-conceptions of all Latins as "excitable," or all teenagers as "wild," doesn't alter his point of view when he meets a calm and deliberate Genoese, or a serious-minded high school student. He brushes them aside as "exceptions that prove the rule." (*He regards them as people different from the great majority, and simply ignores them*) And, of course, if he meets someone true to type, he stands triumphantly vindicated. "They're all like that," he proclaims, having encountered an excited Latin, an ill-behaved adolescent.

Hence, quite aside from the injustice which stereotypes do to others, they impoverish ourselves. A person who lumps the world into simple categories, who type-casts all labor leaders as "racketeers," all businessmen as "reactionaries," all Harvard men as "snobs," and all Frenchmen as "sexy," is in danger of becoming a stereotype himself. He loses his capacity to be himself—which is to say, to see the world in his own absolutely unique, inimitable and independent fashion.

Instead, he votes for the man who fits his standardized picture of what a candidate "should" look like or sound like, buys the goods that someone in his "situation" in life "should" own, lives the life that others define for him. The mark of the stereotyped person is that he never surprises us, that we do indeed have him "typed." And no one fits this strait-jacket so perfectly as someone

whose opinions about other people are fixed and inflexible.

Impoverishing as they are, stereotypes are not easy to get rid of. The world we type-cast may be no better than a Grade B movie, but at least we know what to expect of our stock characters. When we let them act for themselves in the strangely unpredictable way that people do act, who knows **but** that many of our fondest convictions will be proved wrong? Nor do we suddenly drop our standardized pictures for a blinding vision of the Truth . *Sharp swings of ideas about people often just substitute one stereotype for another.* (突然改变对一种人的看法往往是从一种固定模式跳到了另一种固定模式) The true process of change is a slow one that adds bits and pieces of reality to the pictures in our heads, until gradually they take on some of the blurriness of life itself. Little by little, we learn not that Jews and Negroes and Catholics and Puerto Ricans are "just like everybody else"—for that, too, is a stereotype—but that each and every one of them is unique, special, different, and individual. Often we do not even know that we have let a stereotype lapse until we hear someone saying, "all so-and-so's are like such-and-such," and we hear ourselves saying, "Well—maybe."

Most of the time, when we type-cast the world, we are not in fact generalizing about people at all. We are only revealing the embarrassing facts about the pictures that hang in the gallery of stereotypes in our own heads.

BBC-Future---Different nationalities really have different personalities

By Christian Jarrett 13 April 2017

Whether it's the caricature of the introverted English, the brash Americans or the industrious Japanese, national stereotypes are easy to come by. But do countries really have their own distinct personalities?

When psychologists have given the same personality test to hundreds or thousands of people from different nations, they have indeed found that the average scores tend to come out differently across cultures. In other words, the average personality in one country often really is different from the average personality in another.

Crucially, these average differences in personality between nations are not the same as the stereotypes we hold. Although we tend to agree with each other about what the typical personality type is in a given country, including our own, the research suggests that our assumptions are often wide of the mark.

Comprehensive global studies have shown that some personality traits are more prevalent in some cultures - like extraversion in Brazil. Several large international studies have now documented cross-cultural differences in average personality. One of the most extensive was published in 2005 by Robert McCrae and 79 collaborators around the world, who profiled more than 12,000 college students from 51 cultures. Based on averaging these personality profiles, the researchers were able to present an "aggregate" trait score for each of the cultures.

The highest scoring cultural groups for Extraversion on average were Brazilians, French Swiss and the Maltese, while the lowest scoring were Nigerians, Moroccans and Indonesians. The highest scoring for Openness to Experience were German-speaking Swiss, Danes and Germans, while the lowest scoring on average were Hong Kong Chinese, Northern Irish and Kuwaitis. The study also uncovered variation between countries in the three other main personality traits of Neuroticism, Conscientiousness and Agreeableness.

Of course, it's important to remember that these are averages and there is a lot of overlap between countries; there are undoubtedly a lot of people in Indonesia who are more extraverted than some from Brazil. There are also complications and controversies around how to interpret these kinds of results, such as the huge challenge of ensuring that personality questionnaires are translated to mean exactly the same thing to participants in all the different cultures, and that the samples in each culture are truly representative of that culture. Last year, Katherine Corker at Kenyon College and colleagues demonstrated that small but non-trivial differences in the average personality scores between students at different US universities, thus showing the risks of inferring too much about an entire country from a single sample.

Critics of this field also point out issues like how much citizens of different countries are disposed to tick extreme scores on a psychological test (although McCrae and his collaborators did address some of these concerns, for example by including a measure of "acquiescence" - people's tendency to agree with survey items).

Despite these methodological challenges, several large studies have repeatedly uncovered variation in average personality across the globe, and the results usually chime in theoretically consistent ways with other measures – countries that score higher in Extraversion, for example, also tend to score higher in average levels of self-esteem. International studies of personality have also shown that while average trait levels vary between cultures, the basic structure of personality, organized into five main traits, seems to be a universal.

Consider another huge study of cross-cultural personality differences, led by David Schmitt at Bradley University and published in 2007, that involved over 17,000 people from 56 different nations around the world. Again, between-nation variation emerged in average personality. For example, the highest average scores for trait Neuroticism were found in Japan and Argentina while the lowest were found in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Slovenia. Meanwhile, the highest scoring nations for Agreeableness, on average, were the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Jordan, while Japan and Lithuania scored the lowest.

This study also looked at similarities in average personality across supra-national regions, finding for example, that people in Africa tended to score higher on trait Conscientiousness than people from all other world regions, while people in East Asia tended to score lower.

But while differences in personality do exist between cultures and nations, they often don't match up with the widely held stereotypes of national character. You probably have an idea in your head of what the average personality profile is of people from the various cultures that you're familiar with. Take the trait of Extraversion. Here in the UK most of us would probably say that the average English person is far more reserved than the average American. But these kinds of national personality stereotypes are rarely accurate (in fact, the 51-culture study described above found that average Extraversion was higher in England than in the USA; the 56-culture study found that Americans edged it, but with very little difference between the two countries).

Early in the 2000s, in one of the first comparisons of national stereotypes with real national personality differences, Robert McCrae tested the assumptions about national personality held by a group of people who arguably ought to know better than most: experts in cross-cultural psychology. McCrae presented a panel of eight of these experts with a list of 26 different world cultures for which he had average personality data. Then for each of the five main personality traits, McCrae asked the experts to organise the cultures into lists according to the seven highest- and lowest-scoring. The experts' performance was woeful. Compared with the actual personality data, the experts performed no better than if they had simply been guessing.

The rest of us seem to fare no better. In 2005, Antonio Terracciano and his colleagues asked nearly 4,000 participants, mostly college students, from 49 cultures across six continents to estimate the average personality profile of a person from their own culture. Once again, the participants' idea of the typical personality type in their country did not match their country's actual personality profile. A more recent study

published in 2013 involving over 3,000 participants in 26 nations came to a similar conclusion.

Some researchers posit that islanders may be less extraverted and open-minded because their ancestors who carried risk-taking genes emigrated away.

What could explain these national differences in average personality? The reasons are likely partly genetic, perhaps to do with historic migration patterns. For example, people strong on traits related to risk-taking and openness might be more likely to migrate, so these traits are likely to be over-represented in regions that were historically on the frontier of exploration; conversely, an isolated population is likely to become more introverted and inward focused through the generations as bolder individuals are more likely to choose to emigrate.

A recent series of studies conducted with islanders resident in several isolated Italian archipelagos put these principles to the test. Andrea Ciani at the University of Padova and his colleagues found that islanders are less extraverted and open-minded, but more conscientious and emotionally stable, than their mainland neighbours located 10 to 40 miles away. This is likely because, over time, bolder more open-minded individuals have chosen to emigrate away from the islands.

Supporting this, a sample of recent emigrants from the islands to the mainland were found to score higher on extraversion and openness than the remaining islanders. Ciani's team also genotyped a sample of islanders and mainlanders and found that a version of a gene previously associated with risk-taking (the 2R allele of the DRD4 gene, which codes for a receptor for the neurotransmitter dopamine) was less common among islanders. The researchers said this suggests there is “some genetic basis for the observation that individuals in long-isolated communities exhibit a particular personality type”.

Undoubtedly environmental factors also play a part: for instance, there's evidence that traits associated with extraversion and openness are lower in regions where risk of infection is greater, which makes evolutionary sense in terms of reducing the spread of disease. Experts have also speculated that differences in climate could influence regional differences in personality, such as cold regions with a lack of sunlight contributing to greater emotional instability.

Living in a crowded environment leads us to adopt a more future-oriented mindset, such as investing more in long-term relationships. Even population density could play a part. Recent evidence suggests that living in a crowded environment leads us to adopt a more future-oriented mindset, such as investing more in long-term relationships, perhaps in part as a way to deal with increased competition with other people; in other words, just the kind of approach you would associate with higher-trait conscientiousness.

Whatever the causes, once regional differences in personality are established, one possibility is that they may become self-perpetuating as there is evidence that people are drawn to live in areas occupied by others with similar character profiles to their own.

Given how important personality traits are to life outcomes at the individual level – from wellbeing to career success – this issue of national differences in personality is

arguably more than a lively conversation topic for a dinner party. Any cross-cultural differences in trait levels at the national level might contribute to, or at least reflect, international differences in such things as wealth, happiness, corruption, innovation, and health. Higher-trait neuroticism, for example, is strongly associated with numerous negative health outcomes, including mental health diagnoses like anxiety and depression, but also chronic physical conditions like heart disease and dementia. It stands to reason that in countries where average trait neuroticism is higher, citizens will be more vulnerable to physical and mental ill health.

Personality differences around the world might even have contributed to the emergence of different political systems. Last year, Joan Barceló at Washington University in St Louis compared countries' average personality trait levels with their political systems and found a correlation: countries with higher average trait Openness tended to have more democratic institutions, an association that held even after factoring out other relevant influences such as economic development. Although we can't conclude that more of this personality trait in a national population causes democracy (the causal direction could flow the other way, for example), Barceló believes this is certainly plausible and that part of the reason is that open-minded citizens are more motivated by self-expression and less by traditional values. Her data seemed to back this up: differences in these motivations partly mediated the links between nations' average trait levels and their political institutions. "Societal personality differences may play a larger role in predicting a country's democracy than previously realized," she said.

At the very least, the findings on international differences in personality could be another reason for us to question our assumptions about other countries' attitudes and behaviours. As the personality psychologist Richard Robins commented in 2005, this line of research suggests that "in contrast to personality traits – which reflect actual differences in the way people think, feel and behave – stereotypes about national character seem to be social constructions designed to serve specific societal purposes."

In other words, your views on other cultures may say more about yourself and your own society, than the patchwork of personalities that actually exists across the world.

保加利亚摄影师 Yanko Tsvetkov 脑洞大开从各个国家不同的角度去描绘我们所生活的这个星球，出版了一本名为《世界偏见地图》的图册。



世界偏见地图 | 一个国家真的存在截然不同于他国的个性吗？

原创 2017-05-15 译/张飘洋 文谈

每个国家可能都有其独特的特质、行为以及态度——但实际上，它们却很少与人们对这个国家的既定印象相匹配。

不管是英国人的内敛，美国人的自负，还是日本人的勤勉，从这些漫画式的夸张描述中不难看出，我们很容易对某个国家形成某种刻板印象。但是，一个国家真的存在截然不同于他国的个性吗？

心理学家邀请来自不同国家的成百上千人参与同一项性格测试，确实发现不同文化群体之间的平均得分不同。换句话说，一个国家的普遍性格通常真的与另一个国家不同。至关重要的是，国家个性的平均差异与我们所持有的刻板印象并不一致。虽然我们往往会就包括自己国家在内的某个国家的典型人格类型达成一致，但研究表明，我们的假设通常相当离谱。

现在，有几项大型国际研究已经证明，群体的普遍性格确实存在跨文化差异。其中规模最大的一项研究是由罗伯特·麦克雷及世界各地 79 位合作者于 2005 年发表的，他们分析了来自 51 种文化背景的超过 1.2 万名大学生，为每个文化群体的个性特征打出了“总体”分。

“外向性”平均得分最高的文化群体是巴西人、法裔瑞士人和马耳他人，得分最低的是尼日利亚人、摩洛哥人和印度尼西亚人。“开放性”得分最高的是瑞士德语区人、丹麦人和德国人，平均得分最低的是中国香港人、北爱尔兰人和科威特人。

当然，重要的是要记住，这些只是平均值，而且国家与国家之间也存在很多重叠之处。无疑会有许多印尼人比一些巴西人更加外向。对于如何阐释这些研究

结果，也有许多错综复杂之处和存在争议的地方。例如，将个性调查问卷翻译到位，确保其表达的内容对来自不同文化的所有参与者完全一致，就已经是一个巨大的挑战了。此外，每种文化中选取的样本是否在该文化中真正具有代表性，这又是一个问题。

虽然各文化、各民族之间确实存在个性差异，但它们往往与人们对民族性格的成见不符。或许在你的脑海中，已经对自己熟悉的、来自不同文化背景的人们有怎样的普遍性格有了一个大体印象。拿“外向性”特征来举例。在英国，我们大多数人可能会觉得英国人普遍比美国人保守得多。但这些有关民族性格的成见大部分都是不准确的。

如何解释不同国家存在的普遍性格差异呢？部分原因可能是遗传性的，也许与历史上的迁移模式有关。例如，如果一个人性格中的冒险意识和开放观念较强，他就更有可能迁移，所以在历史上处于开拓前沿的地区，居民具有这些性格特征的比例可能会很高；相反，偏远地区的人口经过世代繁衍可能会变得更加封闭和内向，因为他们中胆子更大的人更可能选择移民。

无疑，环境因素也起了作用。例如，有证据表明，在疾病传染风险较高的地区，人们在外向性以及开放性方面的特质更少，这在减少疾病传播方面具有进化意义。专家也推测，气候差异可能会影响区域人格差异，例如在缺乏阳光的寒冷地区，人的情绪起伏更大。甚至连人口密度都在其中发挥了作用。最近有证据表明，拥挤的生活环境会让我们采取更加面向未来的心态，比如会加大对长期关系的投资。或许这样做的部分原因是为了应对与其他人日益激烈的竞争。

无论原因如何，一旦区域人格差异得以确立，它们很可能会自我维系下去。有证据表明，人们会被与他们个性相近的人所吸引，并且更愿意生活在这些人群所在的地区。

鉴于在个人层面上，个性特征对生活有重要影响（从生活上的幸福到事业上的成功），国民性格特征的差异问题或许不仅仅是茶余饭后的谈资。在国家层面上，性格上的任何跨文化差异都可能会导致（至少可以反映出）诸如财富、幸福、腐败、创新和健康等方面的国际差异。因此有理由认为，“神经质”平均得分较高的国家，公民更容易在生理和心理健康方面受到伤害。

世界各地的人格差异甚至可能导致不同政治制度的出现。去年，华盛顿大学的琼·巴塞罗将各国的普遍性格特征与政治制度相比较，发现了其中的联系：“开放性”性格平均得分较高的国家，拥有的民主机构往往更多，即使排除经济发展水平等其它相关因素的影响，这种联系仍然存在。

至少，上述关于国际人格差异的调查结果可能会成为另一种推动因素，促使我们质疑自己对其他国家态度和行为的臆断。换句话说，你对其他文化的看法，可能更多的与你自己和你所在的社会有关，而非这个世界上实际存在的个性差异。

BUTTON, BUTTON

By Richard Matheson

The package was lying by the front door--a cube-shaped carton sealed with tape, the name and address printed by hand:

MR. AND MRS. ARTHUR LEWIS, 217 E. 37TH STREET, NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10016.

Norma picked it up, unlocked the door, and went into the apartment. It was just getting dark.

After she put the lamb chops in the broiler, she made herself a drink and sat down to open the package.

Inside the carton was a push-button unit fastened to a small wooden box. A glass dome covered the button. Norma tried to lift it off, but it was locked in place. She turned the unit over and saw a folded piece of paper Scotch-taped to the bottom of the box. She pulled it off: "Mr. Steward will call on you at eight p.m."

Norma put the button unit beside her on the couch. She sipped the drink and reread the typed note, smiling.

A few moments later, she went back into the kitchen to make the salad.

The doorbell rang at eight o'clock. "I'll get it," Norma called from the kitchen. Arthur was in the living room, reading.

There was a small man in the hallway. He removed his hat as Norma opened the door.

"Mrs. Lewis?" he inquired politely.

"Yes?"

"I'm Mr. Steward."

"Oh, yes." Norma repressed a smile. She was sure now it was a sales pitch. "May I come in?" asked Mr. Steward.

"I'm rather busy," Norma said. "I'll get you your watchamacallit, though." She started to turn.

"Don't you want to know what it is?"

Norma turned back. Mr. Steward's tone had been offensive.

"No, I don't think so," she said.

"It could prove very valuable," he told her.

"Monetarily?" she challenged.

Mr. Steward nodded. "Monetarily," he said.

Norma frowned. She didn't like his attitude.

"What are you trying to sell?" she asked.

"I'm not selling anything," he answered.

Arthur came out of the living room. "Something wrong?"

Mr. Steward introduced himself.

"Oh, the ..." Arthur pointed toward the living room and smiled. "What is that gadget, anyway?"

"It won't take long to explain," replied Mr. Steward. "May I come in?"

"If you're selling something ..." Arthur said. Mr. Steward shook his head.

"I'm not." Arthur looked at Norma.

"Up to you," she said.

He hesitated.

"Well, why not?" he said.

They went into the living room and Mr. Steward sat in Norma's chair. He reached into an inside coat pocket and withdrew a small sealed envelope. "Inside here is a key to the bell-unit dome," he said. He set the envelope on the chairside table. "The bell is connected to our office."

"What's it for?" asked Arthur.

"If you push the button," Mr. Steward told him, "somewhere in the world, someone you don't know will die. In return for which you will receive a payment of fifty thousand dollars."

Norma stared at the small man. He was smiling.

"What are you talking about?" Arthur asked him.

Mr. Steward looked surprised. "But I've just explained," he said.

"Is this a practical joke?" asked Arthur.

"Not at all. The offer is completely genuine."

"You aren't making sense," Arthur said. "You expect us to believe ..."

"Whom do you represent?" demanded Norma.

Mr. Steward looked embarrassed. "I'm afraid I'm not at liberty to tell you that," he said. "However, I assure you the organization is of international scope."

"I think you'd better leave," Arthur said, standing.

Mr. Steward rose. "Of course."

"And take your button unit with you."

"Are you sure you wouldn't care to think about it for a day or so?"

Arthur picked up the button unit and the envelope and thrust them into Mr. Steward's hands. He walked into the hall and pulled open the door.

"I'll leave my card," said Mr. Steward. He placed it on the table by the door.

When he was gone, Arthur tore it in half and tossed the pieces onto the table.

"God!" he said.

Norma was still sitting on the sofa.

"What do you think it was?" she asked.

"I don't care to know," he answered.

She tried to smile but couldn't.

"Aren't you curious at all?"

"No." He shook his head.

After Arthur returned to his book, Norma went back to the kitchen and finished washing the dishes.

"Why won't you talk about it?" Norma asked later.

Arthur's eyes shifted as he brushed his teeth. He looked at her reflection in the bathroom mirror.

"Doesn't it intrigue you?"

"It offends me," Arthur said.

"I know, but--" Norma rolled another curler in her hair

--doesn't it intrigue you, too?"

"You think it's a practical joke?" she asked as they went into the bedroom.

"If it is, it's a sick one."

Norma sat on the bed and took off her slippers.

"Maybe it's some kind of psychological research."

Arthur shrugged. "Could be."

"Maybe some eccentric millionaire is doing it."

"Maybe."

"Wouldn't you like to know?"

Arthur shook his head.

"Why?"

"Because it's immoral," he told her.

Norma slid beneath the covers.

"Well, I think it's intriguing," she said. Arthur turned off the lamp and leaned over to kiss her.

"Good night," he said.

"Good night." She patted his back.

Norma closed her eyes. Fifty thousand dollars, she thought.

In the morning, as she left the apartment, Norma saw the card halves on the table.

Impulsively, she dropped them into her purse. She locked the front door and joined Arthur in the elevator.

While she was on her coffee break, she took the card halves from her purse and held the torn edges together. Only Mr. Steward's name and telephone number were printed on the card.

After lunch, she took the card halves from her purse again and Scotch-taped the edges together. Why am I doing this? she thought. Just before five, she dialed the number.

"Good afternoon," said Mr. Steward's voice.

Norma almost hung up but restrained herself. She cleared her throat.

"This is Mrs. Lewis," she said.

"Yes, Mrs. Lewis." Mr. Steward sounded pleased.

"I'm curious."

"That's natural," Mr. Steward said.

"Not that I believe a word of what you told us."

"Oh, it's quite authentic," Mr. Steward answered.

"Well, whatever ..." Norma swallowed. "When you said someone in the world would die, what did you mean?"

"Exactly that," he answered. "It could be anyone. All we guarantee is that you don't know them. And, of course, that you wouldn't have to watch them die."

"For fifty thousand dollars," Norma said.

"That is correct."

She made a scoffing sound. "That's crazy."

"Nonetheless, that is the proposition," Mr. Steward said. "Would you like me to return the button unit?"

Norma stiffened.

"Certainly not." She hung up angrily.

The package was lying by the front door; Norma saw it as she left the elevator. Well, of all the nerve, she thought. She glared at the carton as she unlocked the door. I just won't take it in, she thought. She went inside and started dinner.

Later, she carried her drink to the front hall. Opening the door, she picked up the package and carried it into the kitchen, leaving it on the table.

She sat in the living room, sipping her drink and looking out the window. After awhile, she went back into the kitchen to turn the cutlets in the broiler. She put the package in a bottom cabinet. She'd throw it out in the morning.

"Maybe some eccentric millionaire is playing games with people," she said.

Arthur looked up from his dinner.

"I don't understand you."

"What does that mean?"

"Let it go," he told her.

Norma ate in silence. Suddenly, she put her fork down.

"Suppose it's a genuine offer," she said.

Arthur stared at her.

"Suppose it's a genuine offer."

"All right, suppose it is!" He looked incredulous. "What would you like to do? Get the button back and push it? Murder someone?"

Norma looked disgusted.

"Murder."

"How would you define it?"

"If you don't even know the person?" Norma asked.

Arthur looked astounded. "Are you saying what I think you are?"

"If it's some old Chinese peasant ten thousand miles away? Some diseased native in the Congo?"

"How about some baby boy in Pennsylvania?" Arthur countered. "Some beautiful little girl on the next block?"

"Now you're loading things."

"The point is, Norma," he continued, "that who you kill makes no difference. It's still murder."

"The point is," Norma broke in, "if it's someone you've never seen in your life and never will see, someone whose death you don't even have to know about, you still wouldn't push the button?"

Arthur stared at her, appalled.

"You mean you would?"

"Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur."

"What has the amount--"

"Fifty thousand dollars, Arthur," Norma interrupted.

"A chance to take that trip to Europe we've always talked about."

"Norma, no."

"A chance to buy that cottage on the Island."

"Norma, no." His face was white. "For God's sake, no!"

She shuddered. "All right, take it easy," she said. "Why are you getting so upset? It's

only talk."

After dinner, Arthur went into the living room. Before he left the table, he said, "I'd rather not discuss it anymore, if you don't mind." Norma shrugged.

"Fine with me."

She got up earlier than usual to make pancakes, eggs, and bacon for Arthur's breakfast.

"What's the occasion?" he asked with a smile.

"No occasion." Norma looked offended. "I wanted to do it, that's all."

"Good," he said. "I'm glad you did."

She refilled his cup. "Wanted to show you I'm not ..." She shrugged.

"Not what?"

"Selfish."

"Did I say you were?"

"Well--" She gestured vaguely "--last night ..."

Arthur didn't speak.

"All that talk about the button," Norma said. "I think you--well, misunderstood me."

"In what way?" His voice was guarded.

"I think you felt--" She gestured again. "--that I was only thinking of myself."

"Oh."

"I wasn't."

"Norma."

"Well, I wasn't. When I talked about Europe, a cottage on the Island ..."

"Norma, why are we getting so involved in this?"

"I'm not involved at all." She drew in a shaking breath. "I'm simply trying to indicate that ..."

"What?"

"That I'd like for us to go to Europe. Like for us to have a nicer apartment, nicer furniture, nicer clothes. Like for us to finally have a baby, for that matter."

"Norma, we will," he said.

"When?"

He stared at her in dismay. "Norma ..."

"When?"

"Are you--" He seemed to draw back slightly. "Are you really saying ...?"

"I'm saying that they're probably doing it for some research project!" she cut him off.

"That they want to know what average people would do under such a circumstance!

That they're just saying someone would die, in order to study reactions, see if there'd be guilt, anxiety, whatever! You don't really think they'd kill somebody, do you?"

Arthur didn't answer. She saw his hands trembling. After awhile, he got up and left.

When he'd gone to work, Norma remained at the table, staring into her coffee. I'm going to be late, she thought. She shrugged. What difference did it make? She should be home anyway, not working in an office.

While she was stacking the dishes, she turned abruptly, dried her hands, and took the package from the bottom cabinet. Opening it, she set the button unit on the table. She stared at it for a long time before taking the key from its envelope and removing the

glass dome. She stared at the button. How ridiculous, she thought. All this over a meaningless button.

Reaching out, she pressed it down. For us, she thought angrily. She shuddered. Was it happening? A chill of horror swept across her.

In a moment, it had passed. She made a contemptuous noise. Ridiculous, she thought. To get so worked up over nothing.

She had just turned the supper steaks and was making herself another drink when the telephone rang.

She picked it up.

"Hello?"

"Mrs. Lewis?"

"Yes?"

"This is the Lenox Hill Hospital."

She felt unreal as the voice informed her of the subway accident, the shoving crowd. Arthur pushed from the platform in front of the train. She was conscious of shaking her head but couldn't stop.

As she hung up, she remembered Arthur's life insurance policy for \$25,000, with double indemnity for--

"No." She couldn't seem to breathe. She struggled to her feet and walked into the kitchen numbly. Something cold pressed at her skull as she removed the button unit from the wastebasket. There were no nails or screws visible. She couldn't see how it was put together.

Abruptly, she began to smash it on the sink edge, pounding it harder and harder, until the wood split. She pulled the sides apart, cutting her fingers without noticing. There were no transistors in the box, no wires or tubes. The box was empty.

She whirled with a gasp as the telephone rang. Stumbling into the living room, she picked up the receiver.

"Mrs. Lewis?" Mr. Steward asked.

It wasn't her voice shrieking so; it couldn't be. "You said I wouldn't know the one that died!"

"My dear lady," Mr. Steward said, "do you really think you knew your husband?"

A Friend in Need

Somerset Maugham

Some people seem easy to understand: their character appears obvious on first meeting. Appearances, however, can be deceptive.

For thirty years now I have been studying my fellowmen. I do not know very much about them. I shrug my shoulders when people tell me that their first impressions of a person are always right. I think they must have small insight or great vanity. For my own part I find that the longer I know people the more they puzzle me.

These reflections have occurred to me because I read in this morning's paper that Edward Hyde Burton had died at Kobe. He was a merchant and he had been in business in Japan for many years. I knew him very little, but he interested me because once he gave me a great surprise. Unless I had heard the story from his own lips, I should never have believed that he was capable of such an action. It was more startling because both in appearance and manner he suggested a very definite type. Here if ever was a man all of a piece. He was a tiny little fellow, not much more than five feet four in height, and very slender, with white hair, a red face much wrinkled, and blue eyes. I suppose he was about sixty when I knew him. He was always neatly and quietly dressed in accordance with his age and station.

Though his offices were in Kobe, Burton often came down to Yokohama. I happened on one occasion to be spending a few days there, waiting for a ship, and I was introduced to him at the British Club. We played bridge together. He played a good game and a generous one. He did not talk very much, either then or later when we were having drinks, but what he said was sensible. He had a quiet, dry humor. He seemed to be popular at the club and afterwards, when he had gone, they described him as one of the best. It happened that we were both staying at the Grand Hotel and next day he asked me to dine with him. I met his wife, fat, elderly, and smiling, and his two daughters. It was evidently a united and affectionate family. I think the chief thing that struck me about Burton was his kindness. There was something very pleasing in his mild blue eyes. His voice was gentle; you could not imagine that he could possibly raise it in anger; his smile was benign. Here was a man who attracted you because you felt in him a real love for his fellows. At the same time he liked his game of cards and his cocktail, he could tell with point a good and spicy story, and in his youth he had been something of an athlete. He was a rich man and he had made every penny himself. I suppose one thing that made you like him was that he was so small and frail; he aroused your instincts of protection. You felt that he could not bear to hurt a fly.

One afternoon I was sitting in the lounge of the Grand Hotel when Burton came in and seated himself in the chair next to mine.

"What do you say to a little drink?"

He clapped his hands for a boy and ordered two gin fizzes. As the boy brought them a man passed along the street outside and seeing me waved his hand.

"Do you know Turner?" said Burton as I nodded a greeting.

"I've met him at the club. I'm told he's a remittance man."

"Yes, I believe he is. We have a good many here."

"He plays bridge well."

"They generally do. There was a fellow here last year, oddly enough a namesake of mine, who

was the best bridge player I ever met. I suppose you never came across him in London. Lenny Burton he called himself. I believe he'd belonged to some very good clubs." "No, I don't believe I remember the name."

"He was quite a remarkable player. He seemed to have an instinct about the cards. It was uncanny. I used to play with him a lot. He was in Kobe for some time."

Burton sipped his gin fizz.

"It's rather a funny story," he said. "He wasn't a bad chap. I liked him. He was always well-dressed and smart-looking. He was handsome in a way with curly hair and pink-and-white cheeks. Women thought a lot of him. There was no harm in him, you know, he was only wild. Of course he drank too much. Those sort of fellows always do. A bit of money used to come on for him once a quarter and he made a bit more by card-playing. He won a good deal of mine, I know that."

Burton gave a kindly chuckle. I knew from my own experience that he could lose money at bridge with a good grace. He stroked his shaven chin with his thin hand; the veins stood out on it and it was almost transparent.

"I suppose that is why he came to me when he went broke, that and the fact that he was a namesake of mine. He came to see me in my office one day and asked me for a job. I was rather surprised. He told me that there was no more money coming from home and he wanted to work. I asked him how old he was.

"'Thirty-five,' he said.

"'And what have you been doing hitherto?' I asked him.

"'Well, nothing very much,' he said.

"I couldn't help laughing.

"'I'm afraid I can't do anything for you just yet,' I said. 'Come back and see me in another thirty-five years, and I'll see what I can do.'

"He didn't move. He went rather pale. He hesitated for a moment and then he told me that he had had bad luck at cards for some time. He hadn't been willing to stick to bridge, he'd been playing poker, and he'd got trimmed. He hadn't a penny. He'd pawned everything he had. He couldn't pay his hotel bill and they wouldn't give him any more credit. He was down and out. If he couldn't get something to do he'd have to commit suicide."

"I looked at him for a bit. I could see now that he was all to pieces. He'd been drinking more than usual and he looked fifty. The girls wouldn't have thought so much of him if they'd seen him then.

"'Well isn't there anything you can do except play cards?' I asked him.

"'I can swim,' he said.

"'Swim!'

"I could hardly believe my ears; it seemed such an insane answer to give.

"'I swam for my university.'

"I got some glimmering of what he was driving at. I've known too many men who were little tin gods at their university to be impressed by it.

"'I was a pretty good swimmer myself when I was a young man,' I said.

"'Suddenly I had an idea.'

Pausing in his story, Burton turned to me.

"Do you know Kobe?" he asked.

"No," I said, "I passed through it once, but I only spent a night there."

"Then you don't know the Shioya Club. When I was a young man I swam from there round the beacon and landed at the creek of Tarumi. It's over three miles and it's rather difficult on account of the currents round the beacon. Well, I told my young namesake about it and I said to him that if he'd do it I'd give him a job.

"I could see he was rather taken aback.

"'You say you're a swimmer,' I said.

"'I'm not in very good condition,' he answered.

"I didn't say anything. I shrugged my shoulders. He looked at me for a moment and then he nodded.

"'All right,' he said. 'When do you want me to do it?'

"I looked at my watch. It was just after ten.

"'The swim shouldn't take you much over an hour and a quarter. I'll drive round to the creek at half past twelve and meet you. I'll take you back to the club to dress and then we'll have lunch together.'

"'Done,' he said.

"We shook hands. I wished him good luck and he left me. I had a lot of work to do that morning and I only just managed to get to the creek at Tarumi at half past twelve. But I needn't have hurried; he never turned up."

"Did he funk it at the last moment?" I asked.

"No, he didn't funk it. He started all right. But of course he'd ruined his constitution by drink and dissipation. The currents round the beacon were more than he could manage. We didn't get the body for about three days."

I didn't say anything for a moment or two. I was a trifle shocked. Then I asked Burton a question.

"When you made him that offer of a job, did you know he'd be drowned?"

He gave a little mild chuckle and he looked at me with those kind and candid blue eyes of his. He rubbed his chin with his hand.

"Well, I hadn't got a vacancy in my office at the moment."