

TOEIC Training Report

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Helping Students Prepare For The TOEIC

What is the single most significant factor determining the EFL learner's success in mastering English? I firmly believe it is the EFL learner's **information-processing speed**. If the EFL learner can process the information (English words) he or she is reading or listening to very quickly, he or she will be able to master English without a tremendous amount of effort. In order to process the information (English words) used in oral and written English communication very quickly, one must have **cognitive flexibility**. The most effective way to help students to master English is to help them increase their **information-processing speed** through enhancing their **cognitive flexibility**. Using brainpower-boosting **Lateral Thinking Exercises** that I created has been one of the methods I have used while conducting TOEIC training during the academic year. I created a number of **Lateral Thinking Exercises**, and have used them to enhance my students' **cognitive flexibility and creativity**. The more **cognitive flexibility** a person has, the faster he or she will be able to process English, and the faster he or she can be expected to master the language.

The brainpower-boosting **Lateral Thinking Exercises** that I created have been used to maximize my students' **language-learning potential** by enhancing their **cognitive flexibility and thinking-out-of-the-box skills**. The **Lateral Thinking Exercises** have stimulated my students' **free-range thinking**, and have developed their **problem-solving and information-processing skills**.

Doing the **Lateral Thinking Exercises** has enhanced my students' **creativity**. Thousands

of books have been written about creativity, and definitions of the word vary considerably, but, in a nutshell, it is **the process of thinking, exploring, discovering, and imagining whereby original ideas are created**. A creative person generates original ideas, and these can be used to generate other original ideas.

Unfortunately, there are still many EFL learners that haven't the slightest idea what a **Lateral Thinking Exercise** is, and have never had an opportunity to use brainpower-boosting **Lateral Thinking Exercises** to help them master English. Here is an example of a **Lateral Thinking Exercise**:

*Marcia was violent. Marcia seriously injured ten people in a town in less than twenty-four hours. The local police knew what Marcia did. However, it was impossible for the police to punish Marcia. **How can this be?***

If someone tried to solve this **Lateral Thinking Exercise** by taking a **vertical thinking approach**, he or she would probably have a great deal of difficulty solving it because he or she would try to solve it based on his or her assumption that Marcia was a human being. However, if someone tried to solve this **Lateral Thinking Exercise** by taking a **lateral thinking approach**, he or she would probably be able to solve it in a short amount of time without a great deal of effort because he or she wouldn't assume that Marcia was a human being. In this **Lateral Thinking Exercise**, Marcia was not a human being. Marcia was a hurricane. Hurricanes are often given human names. When the person trying to solve the **Lateral Thinking Exercise** understands that Marcia was a hurricane, it makes sense that it was impossible for the

police to punish Marcia. How could a hurricane be punished? Obviously, a hurricane couldn't be punished. One possible answer for this **Lateral Thinking Exercise** is "Marcia was a hurricane. Therefore, it was impossible for the police to punish Marcia." During the academic year I have taught my students how to take a **lateral thinking approach**. Taking a **lateral thinking approach** enhances **cognitive flexibility**, and makes experiences in life more stimulating, because it frees people from the rigid control of vertical thinking.

The TOEIC Training

During the academic year I have conducted TOEIC training for junior high and high school students in seminars and in the Special English Class. The seminars have been held once per week after school and during the Summer Seminar. The Special English Class consists of 7th, 8th and 9th graders who have displayed a special ability in English. The class has been held twice per week. I have conducted the TOEIC training to help my students acquire the skills needed to perform successfully on the TOEIC, and to enable them to master English in the least amount of time and with the least amount of effort.

I have used numerous brain-stimulating activities and a great deal of material for the TOEIC training, including brainpower-boosting **Lateral Thinking Exercises** that I created. The students who have received the TOEIC training have been given many opportunities to engage in exploratory thinking using their predicting, hypothesizing, inferring and deducing skills. By doing **Lateral Thinking Exercises** and other brain-stimulating exercises and activities they have gained a deeper understanding of the four

steps needed for rational problem solving: (1) defining the problem, (2) generating alternatives, (3) evaluating alternatives, and (4) implementing a solution.

I have conducted the TOEIC training using exercises and activities that have stimulated the students' free-range thinking, developed their problem-solving and information-processing skills, and increased their information-processing speed. As my students have engaged in exploratory thinking, using predicting, hypothesizing, inferring and deducing skills to solve the **Lateral Thinking Exercises** that I created and to do the other exercises and activities that I have given them, they have acquired the skills needed to perform successfully on the TOEIC and have raised their level of English comprehension significantly.

The Results Of The TOEIC Training

The students who received the TOEIC training that I conducted have acquired the skills needed to perform successfully on the TOEIC. **I'm very pleased to report that after receiving my TOEIC training, one student scored 900 on his TOEIC, another 870, another 850, two others 665, another 650, another 595, another 550, and another 530. After receiving my TOEIC training, one student was able to raise his TOEIC score from 460 to 665.**

Lateral Thinking Exercises

I created the following brainpower-boosting **Lateral Thinking Exercises**. These are some of the **Lateral Thinking Exercises** that I used while conducting TOEIC training for students during the academic year. I have provided one answer for each of them. This is not the only answer possible.

1. An elevator in a skyscraper has a maximum weight capacity of 500 kilograms. If the weight of the people in the elevator exceeds 500 kilograms, a buzzer buzzes and the elevator door will not shut. The elevator's weight monitor is functioning properly. A man weighing 80 kilograms is waiting for an elevator on the first floor of the skyscraper. He wants to go to the 23rd floor. The elevator door opens and the man enters the empty elevator. The elevator goes to the 5th floor. The elevator door opens. A woman weighing 50 kilograms enters the elevator. She wants to go to the 20th floor. The elevator goes to the 10th floor. The elevator door opens. Four men are waiting in the hallway. Each of them weighs 100 kilograms. The tallest man enters the elevator first, the second tallest man enters second, the second shortest man enters next, and the shortest man enters last. He is carrying a ten-kilogram dumb-bell in his right hand. He is on his way to the fitness center located on the 20th floor. When the man carrying the dumb-bell enters the elevator, the buzzer doesn't buzz. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The man weighing 80 kilograms got out of the elevator on the 5th floor. After he had gotten into the elevator on the first floor, he remembered he needed to do something on the 5th floor before going to the 23rd floor.

2. The stowaway had traveled thousands of kilometers to the United States on a cargo ship. The dock inspector who had found the stowaway had only been on the job for a few months. He was wondering what he should do with the stowaway. For all he knew, the stowaway could be very dangerous. He decided to take the stowaway to his office. The dock inspector expected the

stowaway to attempt an escape. He wasn't sure how he could stop the stowaway from escaping. He phoned the security office at the dock and asked his friend, a security officer, to come to his office immediately. The dock inspector wanted his friend to see the stowaway. He thought he would know what to do in that kind of situation. The dock inspector looked out the windows of his office waiting impatiently for his friend to arrive. After what seemed to the dock inspector like a very long time, the security officer's car pulled up in front of the office. The dock inspector greeted the security officer as he got out of his car.

The dock inspector excitedly described the circumstances of the stowaway's capture in great detail. The dock inspector noticed that his friend was armed. After talking outside, the two men entered the dock inspector's office. To the astonishment of the dock inspector, the stowaway was nowhere to be seen. The two men locked the office windows and began searching the office. They looked behind filing cabinets, curtains, and under desks. Suddenly, the security officer motioned to the dock inspector. He had found the stowaway behind a large cardboard box. As he pointed at the stowaway with the index finger of his left hand, the security officer drew his weapon with his right hand. The dock inspector motioned to him to put his gun back in his holster.

The two men captured the stowaway. The dock inspector asked a number of people to check into the stowaway's situation. They came to the conclusion that the stowaway was dangerous. The dock inspector was a kind man so he let the stowaway live in a small shed behind his house. The dock inspector saw the stowaway in the shed almost every day when he went inside to get gardening tools. He felt very sorry for the stowaway. However, he never greeted or talked

with the stowaway. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The stowaway was a spider. It had traveled to the United States in a crate of bananas on a cargo ship.

3. Teresa entered her house through the kitchen door. She was holding her side because she was in a lot of pain. Teresa's mother was slicing an onion when Teresa came into the kitchen. Teresa walked straight through the kitchen into the living room without saying a word and sat down on a sofa. Her mother followed her into the living room and asked her what was wrong. Teresa told her mother that she was on her way home from the public library when suddenly she felt a sharp pain in her side. Teresa's mother could see that her daughter was in a lot of pain so she decided to take her to a hospital. An x-ray was taken at the hospital and revealed that Teresa had fractured a rib. She hadn't bumped into anyone or anything, nor had she had an accident, but she had fractured a rib. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: On her way home from the public library, Teresa sneezed hard and fractured a rib. Sneezing hard can fracture a rib.

4. The day of Freddy's high school graduation party arrived. His grandmother, aunts, uncles, and cousins came to the party at Freddy's house. Freddy was happy to see all of his relatives and thrilled to see all of the presents they brought with them. There was a big stack of presents in Freddy's dining room. He pretended not to be excited about all of the presents, but every chance he had, he peeked into the dining room and tried to imagine what was inside of each wrapped box. There was one long, flat box that he was especially

curious about. When nobody was looking, Freddy sneaked into the dining room. He picked up the long, flat box and shook it, hoping that would help him figure out what was inside. As he was shaking it, an envelope fell to the floor near his feet. He picked up the envelope. It wasn't sealed. Freddy's heart sank when he opened it and realized that the card inside was from his grandmother. He was hoping that the present in the long, flat box was from his Uncle Raymond. His Uncle Raymond was a wealthy bachelor and always gave Freddy great presents on special occasions. Based on the size and shape of the box, and knowing his grandmother's obsession with neatness, Freddy came to the conclusion that there was an ironing board inside the box. He was going to be leaving for college in the fall and he figured his grandmother had bought him an ironing board so he could iron his clothes in his dormitory room.

Suddenly, Freddy heard footsteps. He ran out of the dining room and into the living room. He pretended to be looking for something in the living room as his mother came in, followed by his grandmother and his other relatives. Everybody went into the dining room and sat down. Freddy sat down in front of the stack of presents. His grandmother asked him to open her present first. She told him that hers was the one in the long, flat box. Freddy tried to prepare himself so he could look surprised and happy when he saw her present, which he thought was an ironing board. He didn't want an ironing board and tried to think of how he could hide his disappointment when he opened the box. Freddy opened the box quickly, pretending that he was excited to see what was inside of it. He didn't want to reveal his true feelings through his facial expression or the way he opened the box.

When Freddy saw what was inside the box, he could hardly believe his eyes. There wasn't an ironing board inside the box. There was a bright yellow surfboard with a picture of his grandmother's face painted on it. Freddy held up the surfboard and smiled at his grandmother. His grandmother smiled back at him. They hugged. Freddy tried, but he couldn't figure out why his grandmother had bought him a surfboard. The ocean was thousands of miles from Freddy's house and even further from his college. Freddy couldn't swim and was afraid of the ocean. He was perplexed by his grandmother's present. Freddy's mother asked Freddy's grandmother how she had decided to buy Freddy a surfboard. Freddy's grandmother said she knew Freddy loved to ride on breaking waves on a surfboard because he had told her so when he visited her at her nursing home a few weeks before his high school graduation party. Freddy looked at his grandmother quizzically. Freddy had visited his grandmother at her nursing home a few weeks before his high school graduation party and had told her he loved to surf. However, Freddy's grandmother was incorrect when she said she knew Freddy loved to ride on breaking waves on a surfboard because he had told her so. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: Freddy's grandmother was incorrect when she said she knew Freddy loved to ride on breaking waves on a surfboard because he had told her so. She was incorrect when she said that because Freddy wasn't talking about riding on breaking waves on a surfboard; he was talking about surfing the Internet.

5. The famous movie star received fan mail every

day. So many letters from fans had arrived at the studio that one room was not enough to hold them all. The letters contained many questions about the future plans of the movie star. Fans wanted to know when and where his next movie would be filmed and what the title would be. Some of the fans wrote the movie star asking if they could spend some time with him. The movie star's agent handled the fan mail, but there were too many letters for her to be able to reply to all of the fans. One letter from a seven-year-old girl impressed the agent so much that she decided to grant the girl's request to spend time with the movie star.

One day, to her surprise, the seven-year-old girl received a letter from the movie star's agent informing her that she could spend a day with the movie star. The little girl screamed when she read the letter. She rushed into the living room where her mother was watching television. The mother was just as surprised as her daughter when she read the letter. The movie star's agent had written down her telephone number in the letter so the mother called her. They arranged a day for the little girl to spend time with the movie star.

The day arrived. A white limo pulled up in front of the little girl's house. Wearing her best dress, she climbed into the limo and waved goodbye to her mother. She saw a bucket filled with ice and various kinds of soft drinks in the limo. The limo driver told her that all of the drinks were for her. She could hardly believe her ears. The ride to the house where the movie star lived was very comfortable. After an hour or so, the limo pulled through the big gates in front of the mansion where the movie star lived. The little girl had never seen a mansion before. The limo driver stopped the limo in front of two large pillars, got out, and opened the door for the little girl. The

little girl felt like a princess. Stepping out of the limo, she was greeted by a slender lady. The lady introduced herself as the movie star's agent. The little girl shyly extended her hand and shook hands with the agent. The agent told the little girl that the movie star was in the backyard.

The agent and the little girl walked down a path towards the backyard. The little girl looked in the windows of the mansion and saw beautiful chandeliers hanging from the ceiling. She was terribly nervous about meeting the movie star. She was wondering what she should say to him. She didn't want to say something stupid. She was the envy of every student in her school and every friend in her neighborhood. She didn't want to blow this great chance and make a fool of herself by saying something stupid to the movie star. As she rounded the corner of the mansion with the agent, the little girl could hardly believe her eyes. There was the movie star standing in the backyard. The little girl suddenly burst into tears. She couldn't control her emotions. Her tears were ones of joy, not sadness. The movie star's agent told her not to be nervous. The movie star noticed the little girl and walked up to her. The little girl wiped her tears and held out her hand. The movie star moved a little closer to the little girl. The little girl felt less nervous when she looked into the movie star's gentle eyes. The little girl asked the agent what she should do next. She told the little girl to keep her eyes fixed on the movie star's ears. She told her she could determine how the movie star was feeling by looking at the position of his ears. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The movie star was a horse.

6. The elderly escapologist was famous worldwide because he had performed many feats of great

daring. One day, he announced that he had decided to retire. He said he would perform one last feat of great daring before retiring. He promised his fans that it would be the most spectacular feat of his illustrious career. He said he would enter a large block of ice, would remain inside of it for three days, and then would escape from it unharmed. His agent worked tirelessly promoting the event. After a date and place were announced, the escapologist couldn't go anywhere without being mobbed by autograph seekers. The paparazzi were lying in wait for the escapologist whenever he left his home. His devoted fans worldwide were obviously concerned about the elderly man's health. They remembered when he was hospitalized after narrowly escaping death during one of his previous performances. The escapologist was bombarded with letters from his fans. They wrote letters to encourage him. They wanted to know how he was training his body to enable himself to endure the cold inside the block of ice.

On the day of the event, a huge crowd of over ten thousand people gathered in the open-air stadium where the event was to be held. An announcement was made letting the waiting crowd know that the escapologist's helicopter would soon be arriving. The crowd cheered as the helicopter came into sight. The helicopter landed. As the escapologist climbed out of the helicopter, the crowd's cheering could be heard a mile away. The escapologist walked directly to the stage that had been erected in the middle of the stadium. He waved at the crowd as the Master of Ceremonies, a stout man with a big nose, introduced him. After he had been introduced, the escapologist stepped up to the microphone. He thanked his fans for coming and told them they were going to witness a feat that had never been attempted before.

Stepping back from the microphone, he suddenly disappeared behind a huge curtain. A few minutes later he appeared from behind the curtain wearing a caveman costume. He was holding a wooden club. He shuffled over to the microphone, grunted, and began pounding his chest. The crowd went wild.

Suddenly, another huge curtain on the stage opened and the crowd could see a large block of ice and a petite woman, his assistant, standing next to it. The escapologist walked over to the block of ice and crawled through a large hole that had been drilled into it. After the elderly man climbed into the block of ice, the assistant started packing snow into the hole. Suddenly, she stopped packing the snow and looked up at the Master of Ceremonies. When the Master of Ceremonies saw the panicky expression on the woman's face, he immediately knew that something was wrong. She was panicking because the block of ice was moving. It was sliding because the stage was not level and a layer of water had built up between the block of ice and the surface of the stage. The block of ice was sliding towards the edge of the stage. Two security personnel, seeing what was happening, rushed onto the stage, but it was too late. The block of ice with the escapologist inside slid off the stage. As the escapologist's fans in the stadium watched the block of ice falling towards the concrete floor that was twenty feet below the stage, they cheered with joy. The cheering with joy was justifiable. How can this be?

ANSWER: As the escapologist's fans in the stadium watched the block of ice falling towards the concrete floor that was twenty feet below the stage, they cheered with joy because they thought that the block of ice falling off the stage was part of the escapologist's act. They

didn't realize that the block of ice falling off the stage was not part of his act. That's why the cheering with joy was justifiable.

7. A man was hiking through a forest in a remote area in early winter. It was snowing heavily and he could only see a few feet in front of him. Suddenly, he was attacked by a bear and knocked to the ground. The bear jumped onto his back and tried to bite the back of the man's neck, but was unable to bite him because of his backpack. The man could hear the backpack being torn apart by the bear and he knew he had to do something quickly before the bear tore all the way through it and bit him. The man's left arm was pinned under the bear's body and he was unable to move it. The man could hardly breathe because of the weight of the bear. The man's right arm was free. Suddenly, he saw something in the snow near his right hand. He grabbed it. Gripping it tightly in his hand, he thrust it into the side of the bear with all his might. The bear grunted, lifted its huge body off the man, and ran off into the forest. The man stayed very still for a few minutes. Then he sat up. He saw blood in the snow. He checked his body to see where he was bleeding. He wasn't bleeding. Remarkably, he hadn't been seriously injured. It was the bear's blood in the snow.

He got up on his feet. His legs were wobbly. He was dizzy. The bear's pungent odor on his clothes nauseated him. He looked down at his right hand. He was still gripping the object that he used to stab the bear. He shoved the object down into his pants just in case the bear came back. The man began walking through the forest. After walking about three miles, he came upon a mountain road. He started walking on the road. The road hadn't been plowed, and the snow was knee-deep in places. After walking on the road for

about an hour, he spotted a forest ranger riding on a snowmobile. The forest ranger saw the man and rode the snowmobile to where he was. The man told the forest ranger he had been attacked by a bear.

The forest ranger decided to take the man to the nearest ranger station so he could be checked for injuries. The man assured the forest ranger that he was okay, but the forest ranger suspected that the man was suffering from shock. The forest ranger radioed ahead to another forest ranger at the ranger station and explained about the situation. When the men arrived at the ranger station, a forest ranger was waiting for them outside. The two forest rangers grabbed the victim under his armpits and carried him into the ranger station. When the victim was inside the ranger station, he said he felt pain around his rib cage, and was short of breath. The forest rangers thought that he might have some broken ribs. Staring at the victim's shredded backpack, the two forest rangers asked him how he had managed to survive the vicious attack. The victim explained that he had driven the bear away by stabbing it. He reached into his pants to pull out the object he had used to stab the bear, but it was gone. He had not lost the object. It was impossible for anyone to see that object again. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The man who was attacked by the bear stabbed it with an icicle. The icicle melted in his pants.

8. It was a sweltering summer day. Kathy was on cloud nine because it was her birthday. Five of her friends were coming over to her house to celebrate her thirteenth birthday with her. Like Kathy, they were all members of their school's cheerleading squad. Kathy sat on her front lawn and anxiously

awaited their arrival. She was reading a book and from time to time she stretched her neck to see if she could see the car they would be coming in. Her best friend's mother had offered to drop the five girls off at Kathy's house. Kathy spotted the car as it came around the corner of the street. She jumped high into the air when she saw all five girls in the car. Kathy ran up to the car as it pulled into her driveway. Each of Kathy's friends was wearing a swimsuit. When Kathy called to invite them to her birthday party, she asked them to bring their swimsuits along with them so they could swim in her new pool.

When the girls were dropped off at Kathy's house, Kathy's mother had just started making lunch for Kathy and her friends. The girls asked Kathy to show them her new pool. Kathy asked her mother if it would be okay to swim before lunch. Her mother said it would be fine and that she would let her know when lunch was ready. Kathy took the girls to see the pool. She was so proud of it. Her parents had saved money for years in order to have the pool built. She was the only one in her neighborhood who had a pool. Kathy's friends screamed with excitement when they saw the pool. Kathy and her friends decided to get into the pool at the shallow end where the water was only three feet deep. They didn't dive into the pool. Each of the girls slowly climbed down a ladder into the shallow end. After all of the girls had gotten into the pool, they held hands and made a circle. They looked up into the sky.

They looked at the clouds overhead and tried to see if they could find some unusual cloud formations. Each girl took turns telling what she saw in the clouds. One girl said she saw the face of a popular teen idol. Another girl said she saw an alien's face. Another girl said she saw an angel. As the girls were looking up at the

clouds above their heads, it began to rain hard. They looked up into the sky for ten minutes as the rain poured down towards them. The rain cooled the air outside. Suddenly, Kathy heard her mother calling. Lunch was ready. The girls were famished. They quickly got out of the pool and walked directly to the dining room table without drying themselves off with their towels. It took the girls less than one minute to walk from the pool to the dining room table. Even though they had looked up into the sky for ten minutes as the rain poured down towards them, their hair was completely dry. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The pool was an indoor pool. The girls were looking through a skylight as the rain poured down towards them. The skylight prevented the rain from pouring down on them.

9. Four men are stranded on a deserted island. The four men had been on a fishing boat that capsized. When the boat capsized, the men were thrown into the water. They were not wearing lifebelts. However, each of the men was able to don a lifebelt in the water. The tide had carried them to the shore of the island. They have survived for nearly a month by catching and eating fish, small mammals and birds, and by drinking rainwater. The four men are in good health. It hasn't been difficult for them to catch small mammals, birds and fish, and there is an abundance of edible plants on the island. One day, as one of the men is trying to catch fish near a reef, a cargo ship appears on the horizon. He calls to the three other men and points to the ship. The four men decide to start a fire to let the people on the ship know they're there. They gather some driftwood and banana leaves, and start a fire by hitting stones together. The men use banana

leaves to fan the fire. Smoke billows into the air. The four men fix their eyes on the cargo ship hoping that a crewmember will see the smoke.

After watching the ship for almost an hour, their hopes are dashed as it disappears from sight. Heavy-hearted, the four men walk slowly to a row of coconut palms and sit down. That had been the only ship they had seen since they had become stranded on the island. They know they might not see another ship for months, and even then there would be no guarantee that they would be seen. They know that their chances of ever seeing their families again are slim. One of the men begins to cry, and then another, then another, and then another. Tears flow down their weathered, sunburned faces. Without saying a word, one of the men, the captain of the fishing boat, stands up and walks away. After a few minutes, the three men hear him yelling their names loudly. They jump to their feet thinking that perhaps he had been bitten by a poisonous snake and rush to the place where the yelling is coming from. When they reach the man, he's smiling broadly and holding up a small handmade trap with a bird inside. The three men can't understand why the man is so excited about catching a bird. He had trapped many other birds on the island. After the captain of the fishing boat trapped the bird, only one week passed before the four men were rescued. The bird played a major role in the men's rescue. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The bird was a carrier pigeon. It had landed on the island to rest on the way to its destination. There was a message attached to it when it was caught. The man who trapped the bird, the captain of the fishing boat, attached another message to it and let it fly to its destination. The man's message said

the fishing boat had capsized and that he and three other crewmembers were stranded on an island. The man remembered the boat's coordinates when it capsized and wrote them down in the message. The man also wrote down the approximate length of time the four men had drifted on the sea before reaching the island. This information was used to rescue the four men after the carrier pigeon reached its destination and the message was read.

10. Nathan loved Saturday afternoons, especially in springtime when the leaves were bright green. He loved to lie on his carpeted bedroom floor and look out his window at the majestic oak tree in his yard. The old oak's branches were large enough to support the nests of many of the neighborhood squirrels. On most Saturday afternoons, the squirrels entertained Nathan as he watched them from his bedroom. He gave names to some of the squirrels that lived in the oak tree. Nathan named one squirrel Marvelous Mary, another Bashful Betty, another Nervous Nancy, and another Big Bob. Big Bob was Nathan's favorite squirrel. Big Bob was not only the biggest, strongest and most agile squirrel that lived in the oak tree, but also the most aggressive. Nathan believed Big Bob wasn't afraid of anything. Nathan recalled the day Big Bob protected the other squirrels when a big tomcat climbed up the oak tree. Big Bob ran back and forth on a limb between the tomcat and the other squirrels in the tree and barked for most of the afternoon, warning the other squirrels of the tomcat's presence. Nathan believed Big Bob was a natural-born leader.

One Saturday afternoon, Nathan's mother walked into his bedroom with a pair of binoculars she had bought for him at a yard sale. She showed him how to adjust the binoculars. Nathan walked

over to his bedroom window and looked through the binoculars. He could see some of his hairy friends performing their breathtaking acrobatics in the oak tree. He scanned the tree, looking for Big Bob. Nathan found Big Bob sitting on a large branch eating an acorn. While Nathan was looking at Big Bob through the binoculars, he saw a female squirrel, Marvelous Mary, jump down onto the large branch. She sniffed Big Bob and then scampered towards a nest on the same branch. She stopped about a meter from the nest and started eating an acorn. Nathan looked into the nest and saw two tiny baby squirrels. Nathan excitedly called his mother to the window and handed her the binoculars. He pointed at the nest. His mother gasped when she saw the baby squirrels. Nathan told her he noticed how gentle Big Bob was with Marvelous Mary and felt they were mates. The babies in the nest are Big Bob's offspring. However, Big Bob is not the father. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: Big Bob is the mother of the babies. Big Bob is a female squirrel.

11. A foreman standing near a rusty pickup truck blows a whistle. When Brandon hears the whistle, he knows his lunch break has begun. He places his chainsaw at the base of the huge cedar he had started to cut into. Brandon removes his leather gloves and shoves them into his pocket. He walks over to the pickup truck. He jumps up onto the bed of the truck and grabs his lunch pail out of a cooler. Brandon always looks forward to his lunch break. His usual routine is to eat his lunch within fifteen minutes and then take a thirty-minute nap on the bed of the truck. Even though the nap is a short one, it energizes him. Brandon is accustomed to hard work. His father owned a

lumberyard. Brandon worked there on weekends and during school vacations from the time he was in junior high school until his graduation from high school. Brandon has been a lumberjack for five years.

He has a close rapport with the other lumberjacks and is respected because he's a tireless worker who always pulls his weight. He's levelheaded, and the people working with him know they can count on him in case of an emergency. Unfortunately, emergencies are all too common in Brandon's line of work. Brandon receives great satisfaction from his work because he knows the trees he fells will be used for building houses where families can live.

After getting his lunch pail, Brandon begins eating his lunch. He finishes his lunch in a few minutes and takes a nap on the bed of the pickup truck. While Brandon is napping, the foreman blows the whistle again. Brandon wakes up. He feels refreshed after his nap. He's in a good mood and ready for an afternoon of work. He jumps down off the bed of the truck and returns to the tree he had been cutting before his lunch break. He puts his leather gloves on, picks up his chainsaw, and then throws it against a tree that is about two meters away from him. The chainsaw falls to the ground. The handle is broken and the blade of the saw is bent from the force of hitting the tree. The chainsaw was not running when Brandon threw it. If Brandon wouldn't have thrown his chainsaw, he could have been killed. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: There's a deadly poisonous snake coiled around Brandon's chainsaw. If Brandon would've continued holding the chainsaw, the snake could've bitten him. The snakebite could've been fatal.

12. The six astronauts had been in space for ten days. Each astronaut was from a different country. They had worked hard and had completed all of the required experiments on the space shuttle. They felt they had accomplished the mission successfully. After the space shuttle had come back to earth, the astronauts were questioned about their health condition while in space. The press were especially interested in the health condition of the oldest astronaut since he was much older than the others. The astronaut told the press that other than an attack of indigestion after eating chicken teriyaki and a freeze-dried ice cream sandwich, he had had no health problems while in space. When asked if he took some medicine for the indigestion while in space, he said he did, and that it helped him stop burping. When the press heard the astronaut say that the medicine helped him stop burping, they knew he wasn't telling the truth. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The press knew the astronaut wasn't telling the truth because they knew that humans cannot burp in space since there is no gravity in space to separate liquid from gas in their stomachs.

13. Ever since Maria was a small child she has hated mosquitoes. She never goes anywhere without taking along a can of mosquito repellent. She would rather see a large spider than a tiny mosquito. Maria uses a mosquito-net when she sleeps, but somehow she still wakes up with mosquito bites. She has read that mosquitoes can be carriers of diseases such as malaria and yellow fever. She isn't an entomologist, but she knows a lot about mosquitoes. One morning, Maria and her father go bass fishing on a lake. They're in a small

boat. Just as she is about to cast her line into the water, a mosquito flies onto her hand and bites her. Maria is concentrating on casting her line and doesn't notice the mosquito. Her father sees the mosquito, but he doesn't say anything to Maria because he doesn't want to distract her. After Maria casts her line into the water, her father tells her a mosquito bit her. Maria looks down at her hand. It has already started to itch. She didn't see the mosquito that bit her hand, but she knows exactly what its gender is. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: Male mosquitoes do not bite because they do not lay eggs. Only female mosquitoes bite because they need blood to develop fertile eggs. Maria knows this.

14. A boy was on vacation with his family far away from his hometown. His family didn't have much money so they decided to stop at a rest area near the highway and sleep in their car instead of finding a hotel. While his mother was shopping for groceries in a small store at the rest area, the boy decided to explore the woods nearby. As he was walking on a path through the woods, one large, oddly shaped tree caught his eye. He decided to carve his name into the tree with his pocketknife. He carved his first name into the tree using the largest blade on his knife. He felt that the blade was a bit dull so he decided to use another blade to carve his last name into the tree. Just as he finished carving the last letter of his last name into the tree, he heard his mother calling for him. The boy left the woods thinking that he would never return to that place.

The boy grew up and became a world-famous actor. Years later, while filming a movie, he had a chance to return to the place where the tree was. The woods were much smaller than he

remembered them. He found the tree that had his name carved in it. The tree was much taller than he remembered it. He smiled when he saw that his name was still clearly visible on the side of the tree. Some moss had grown on the bark just below his name. Deciding to remove it so it wouldn't cover his name, he started picking the moss off the tree. But then he thought about what he was doing and stopped because he felt it would be better to let the moss grow naturally so it could cover his name. Then it wouldn't be so easy for people to see it. He reached into the deep pockets on his brown leather jacket and pulled out his digital camera. Just as he was about to take a picture of his name carved in the tree, a group of junior high school girls came down the path where he was. They were on a nature hike as a class. Their school bus had arrived at the rest area a few minutes earlier. When they saw the actor, they screamed and rushed up to him. All of the students knew the actor's name. Each of the students had a notebook so they could record their observations during the nature hike. They asked the actor to sign their notebooks.

The actor patiently signed each notebook, and tried to make small talk. As he autographed the notebooks, the girls feverishly took pictures. As he finished signing the last notebook, one of the students, a tall girl with red hair, noticed the name carved in the tree. She called to her classmates and told them to take a look at the name carved in the tree. The students gathered around the tree. The actor looked over their shoulders at his name carved in the tree and cringed when he heard the tall girl with red hair say that she was going to add some letters to the last name. Each of the other girls yelled out letters and suggested that the girl add them to the last name carved in the tree. She asked if anyone had a pocketknife.

One of the girls pulled one out of her pocket and handed it to the tall girl with red hair. The actor watched nervously. As she was just about to start carving, the students' biology teacher came down the path and told the students to hike deeper into the woods. The students said goodbye to the actor and left with their teacher. The actor breathed a sigh of relief. The tall girl with red hair tried to add some letters to the last name carved in the tree, and each of the other girls encouraged her to add some letters to the last name even though the actor was standing nearby. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The students didn't recognize the name carved in the tree because it was not the name the actor was using in his profession.

15. The airport employees were told to look for rabbit dens near the runways of an international airport. They were told that they should flush the rabbits out of their dens and catch them so they could be transported to a park near the airport. After finding a rabbit den, one person would use a shovel to dig into the den as two people waited with nets. The two people with nets would try to use them to catch the rabbits. The person in charge of the airport made it clear that he wanted all of the rabbits removed from the airport. An animal had recently been sucked into a commercial jet's engine while it was taxiing on a runway at the airport and had caused severe damage to the aircraft. Someone working in a control tower had observed the animal being sucked into the jet's engine. It was not a rabbit that was sucked into the jet's engine. However, a rabbit played a part in the animal being sucked into the jet's engine.

How can this be?

ANSWER: A rabbit was not sucked into the

jet's engine. A large bird of prey was swooping down to attack the rabbit that was running across a runway. The large bird of prey was sucked into the jet's engine. Someone in a control tower witnessed what happened and reported it. That's why employees were told to catch the rabbits at the airport.

16. It was 6:30 p.m. and over two hundred people had already lined up in front of the movie theater. They were all there to see a popular movie, the only movie that was showing that evening. The entertainment media was saying that it was without doubt the movie of the year and that it would win numerous Academy Awards. The first person in line was talking to the person in back of him about the state of the global economy. He shared his theories about globalization and expressed his concern about a number of large companies that had recently filed for bankruptcy. The person standing behind him listened intently, nodding every few seconds. Suddenly, the ticket window opened. The first person in line pulled his wallet out of his pocket. He took a wad of twenty-dollar bills out of his stylish leather wallet and asked the lady at the ticket window for one ticket. There were still many tickets available for the movie the person wanted to see. He had enough money for the ticket. However, he was refused admittance. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: The first person in line was a boy. He was refused admittance because he was not old enough to see the movie because of its rating.

17. A little boy was in his kitchen helping his mother make some chocolate chip cookies. His mother asked him to hand her two eggs from a

carton of eggs. The little boy grabbed two eggs from the carton. As he was about to hand them to his mother, a cockroach suddenly ran out from under the carton. Startled, the little boy dropped the eggs into a bucket of plain, clean water that was on the floor in the kitchen. Fortunately, neither of the eggs was broken. One of the eggs settled to the bottom of the bucket and rested horizontally. The other floated on the surface of the water. The little boy picked up the egg that was floating on the surface of the water and threw it into a trashcan in the corner of the kitchen. He picked up the egg that was at the bottom of the bucket and handed it to his mother. His mother used it to make chocolate chip cookies. The little boy's mother thanked him for throwing away the egg that was floating on the surface of the water. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: A fresh egg will not float on the surface of plain water. A very old egg will float on the surface of plain water. The mother thanked her son for throwing away the egg because she thought it was not fresh because it floated on the surface of the water.

18. Luella spent two months hiking through the outback in Australia. Her dream was to become a professional nature photographer. Luella, from Germany, was studying photography at one of Australia's best universities. After spending so much time alone in the outback, she was very excited to get back to school where she could socialize. She wanted to show her fellow members of the university's photography club the pictures she had taken while in the outback. During the club's first meeting after the summer, she asked the professor supervising the photography club, Mr. Kennedy, if she could show some slides of

the pictures she had taken in the outback. The professor told her she could have the last twenty-five minutes of the meeting to show the slides. Luella placed the slides into the projector while the other club members discussed budget matters.

After the discussion ended, the professor told Luella she could begin the slide show. Luella had a keen eye for discovering animals in their natural habitats and some of the scenes in the slides were absolutely breathtaking. One slide showed a group of kangaroos grazing, with the sun setting in the background. Mr. Kennedy knew that Luella had a special gift for photographing animals. He was impressed by how much enthusiasm she showed for the photography club's many projects. She was well known on campus as the photography geek who could be seen taking pictures at all times of the day. On her way to Mr. Kennedy's class, Luella would often stop and photograph caterpillars, butterflies, and beetles. Sometimes she was late for classes because she didn't want to miss an opportunity to photograph animals living on the campus. Much to her classmates' amusement, when she was late for Mr. Kennedy's class, she would rush into the classroom, her hair disheveled and her face flush, and would hurriedly sit down in a seat, always one at the front of the classroom.

When Mr. Kennedy saw the slide of the kangaroos grazing during Luella's slide show, he asked Luella how she had managed to get such a great close-up shot of the kangaroos. She told him that approaching the kangaroos was much easier than she had thought it would be. She said she just tried to walk like the kangaroos, hoping they would think she was one of them. Luella said when the kangaroos walked forwards, she walked forwards, and when they walked backwards, she walked backwards. When Luella said she walked

backwards when the kangaroos walked backwards, she lost some of Mr. Kennedy's trust in her. **How can this be?**

ANSWER: Luella lost some of Mr. Kennedy's trust in her because he felt she wasn't being completely honest when she talked about the way the kangaroos walked. Mr. Kennedy knew that kangaroos cannot walk backwards.

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