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**Readers' Forum: Preface**

# **Simply English**

**An Introduction to Today's Key Concepts**



**NAN'UN-DO**



## READERS' FORUM

*Readers' Forum* is a series of four books that make up a comprehensive, sequential course that promises a high level of English proficiency, enabling students to read English-language newspapers, magazines, books, and online material with complete confidence and to fully participate in serious conversations and discussions.

The *Readers' Forum* books naturally reinforce and enhance one another. They have similar formats and develop all of the essential language and active-reading skills. In some cases, their general subjects and topics, vocabulary, and concepts overlap, but with the topics and concepts discussed in greater detail and looked at from different perspectives, using a more advanced vocabulary and syntax, in succeeding volumes. To expand students' knowledge and expose them to different writing styles, the books' readings all include pertinent background information and abundant short quotations and citations from various media, academic, and classic sources.

Though designed to be used in sequence as a complete and intensive course, the *Readers' Forum* books all stand on their own as well. Each can be effectively adapted to fit the demands of specific teaching and learning situations. Here, in brief, are the four *Readers' Forum* volumes.

*Simply English: An Introduction to Today's Key Concepts* is the "preface" to the series. Its essays are short (under 300 words) and accessible, written in simplified, but natural English. *Simply English* introduces beginning or low-intermediate-level students to important current-English topics and concepts and familiarizes them with essential words and phrases, giving them the fundamentals they need to smoothly step up to subsequent *Readers' Forum* volumes.

*How-To English: Advice for a Better Life* is for intermediate-level students. Its 400-450-word readings offer step-by-step advice and instructions on how to perform (and talk about) difficult daily tasks, set and achieve personal goals, and work for a better world.

*Everyday English: Current Topics to Read and Talk About* is intended for high-intermediate-level students. Its 500-word readings explore a wide variety of today's most interesting topics and pressing issues, public and private, local and global.

*Active English: Readings in the Liberal Arts and Humanities* is for advanced students. Its 750-800-word readings take up more sophisticated topics related to culture, art, history, ethics, and ideas. Its more challenging exercises and activities further develop the active-reading and critical-thinking skills students have attained through completion of the previous books in the series. *Active English* serves as an effective, all-round "study guide" for higher-level English-language-proficiency tests like TOEFL and SAT.

## To the Student

*Readers' Forum* is a four-book, current-English course that consists of:

*Simply English* for beginning or low-intermediate students;

*How-To English* for intermediate students;

*Everyday English* for high-intermediate students;

*Active English* for advanced students.

As its title suggests, this first book in the course, *Simply English*, is a warm-up of sorts. Using somewhat simplified vocabulary and sentence structure, it “prefaces” many of the main subjects, important concepts, and key words and phrases that appear in the later volumes in the series. The essays in *Simply English* are all very accessible—300 words or under. To make the lesson’s reading even more manageable for you, the “difficult” words, key current-English expressions, and main ideas are all introduced in the three “preview” activities. And the essay’s follow-up exercises are all very accessible, too. They are designed not to “test” you but to develop step-by-step your English reading-comprehension skills and to slowly but surely build up your active English vocabulary. And your listening-comprehension and conversation skills to boot. By the time you finish *Simply English*, you will be well prepared for (and, I’m sure, confidently looking forward to) “stepping up” to the more challenging volumes in the course.

Though the language level of the book is simplified, the topics it deals with are not. Its general subjects include social history, anthropology, education, psychology, crime, communications, and science. Many of today’s most important and interesting ideas, trends, and issues are covered: civil rights, climate change, technical innovation, animal welfare, the future of employment, cross-cultural understanding, and lots more. And, as I said, all these subjects and topics are presented in a way that you will find both satisfying and motivating. So welcome to *Simply English*—and welcome to *Readers' Forum*. I’m very glad to have you with me.

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## LESSON 2

# FOOD AND CULTURE: “But Is It Sushi?”

### KEY WORDS PREVIEW

Scan through the essay on the next page. Find the words in bold that match the definitions/synonyms below. Write the words on the lines.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ real; genuine; true; not fake or phony
2. \_\_\_\_\_ change food into energy in the body
3. \_\_\_\_\_ easy to see; apparently; it goes without saying
4. \_\_\_\_\_ give proof; make certain; confirm; make sure
5. \_\_\_\_\_ created; thought up; devised; developed

### KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW



Fill in the blank in each sentence-definition below with one of these key concepts from today's reading. Listen to check your answers.

**health hazard**

**nausea and vomiting**

**values**

1. Your \_\_\_\_\_ are the ideas about good behavior that you and your culture respect.
2. When you eat something “bad” or not fresh, you may suffer from \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A \_\_\_\_\_ is something dangerous that can make you very sick.

### THINKING AHEAD

As you read today's essay, look for answers to these questions.

1. What “strange sushis” can you find in overseas Japanese restaurants?
2. What does MAFF stand for?
3. What did UNESCO recently call *washoku*?
4. What mistakes do some chefs make in Japanese restaurants overseas?
5. How are some American sushi-shop customers being cheated?



**TODAY'S  
READING**

Read this essay carefully and then do the exercises that follow.



[1] Sushi abroad can be very different from sushi in Japan. Overseas chefs are often more imaginative and adventurous than their Japanese counterparts. Overseas, you can find Big Mac sushi, beef-bacon-and-cheese sushi, and burrito sushi. **Obviously**, these “sushis” aren’t truly Japanese—not even the highly popular California roll, which was **invented** by a Japanese chef, is “real sushi.” 5

[2] But now the Japanese Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry, and Fisheries (MAFF) wants to do something about this “non-traditional” Japanese cuisine. According to America’s National Public Radio (NPR), MAFF has a new program. It plans to make sure that all 90,000 overseas Japanese restaurants are more **authentic**.

[3] Recently, UNESCO named *washoku* as an Intangible Cultural Heritage. So MAFF’s goal is to **certify** that overseas Japanese restaurants “uphold the values of *washoku*.” MAFF wants to do away with mistakes that overseas chefs commonly make. For example, many chefs “over-touch” the fish. This raises the fish’s temperature and spoils its freshness. They also boil the Japanese soup stock (*dashi*) too long, causing it to lose flavor. But most important, many overseas chefs fail to 15 present the food to customers in the correct “Japanese ceremonial way.”

[4] But perhaps MAFF should be more concerned about customers’ being cheated. A recent study has come up with some shocking information. Nearly 70% of the fish served in U.S. Japanese restaurants is not what the restaurant says it is. DNA testing shows that much sushi-shop tuna, for example, is actually a fish 20 called “escolar.” Escolar is much cheaper for restaurants to buy than tuna. But unfortunately, it is also a health hazard. It is hard to **digest** and can cause nausea and vomiting and other stomach ailments. Serving escolar, by the way, is against the law in Japan.

counterparts = people doing the same job

Intangible Cultural Heritage = very important tradition or custom

spoils = destroys; damages

ailment = disease

against the law = not legal

READING  
COMPREHENSION

 **SENTENCE COMPLETION:**



Fill in the blank in each sentence below with information from the reading. Listen to check your answers.

1. Overseas sushi chefs tend to make more \_\_\_\_\_ “sushis.”
2. The highly \_\_\_\_\_ California roll isn’t really Japanese, either.
3. MAFF is worried about “ \_\_\_\_\_ ” Japanese cuisine.

 **TRUE-FALSE:**

Read the sentences below. Circle T if the sentence is true, F if it is false.

4. **T** **F** National Public Radio is a Japanese radio station.
5. **T** **F** There are 90,000 Japanese restaurants around the world, including those in Japan.
6. **T** **F** MAFF is probably very proud that *washoku* was named a UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage.

 **MULTIPLE CHOICE:**

Complete each sentence below with the correct choice.

7. MAFF thinks some overseas chefs spoil fish by \_\_\_\_\_ it too much.  
(A) cooking                      (B) touching                      (C) flavoring
8. Japanese *washoku*, says MAFF, should be  
(A) presented as if it were a ceremony  
(B) made only by chefs back in Japan  
(C) DNA tested before being served

 **GIVE IT A TRY:**



Write a full-sentence answer to this question. Listen to check your answer.

9. Why most likely aren’t sushi shops in Japan allowed to serve “escolar”?

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**KEY WORDS IN ACTION**

Fill in the blank in each sentence below with the correct form of one of the words you wrote in **KEY WORDS PREVIEW** on page 12. Listen to check your answers.

- Let's check the \_\_\_\_\_ of this diamond. It doesn't look real.
- When you complete the cooking course, you get a \_\_\_\_\_.
- I'm having \_\_\_\_\_ problems. My stomach always aches.
- Her happiness was \_\_\_\_\_. She had a big smile on her face.
- Here's my new \_\_\_\_\_. It makes brushing your teeth easier.

**USEFUL IDIOMATIC PHRASES**

Fill in each blank below with one of these words so that sentence B means the same as sentence A. Listen to check your answers.

**away                  come                  something**

- A: I have to decide on a topic for my speech.  
B: I need to \_\_\_\_\_ up with a topic for my presentation.
- A: In my opinion, schools should no longer give homework.  
B: Schools should do \_\_\_\_\_ with homework, if you ask me.
- A: The shop must solve the "fake" tuna problem.  
B: The shop must do \_\_\_\_\_ about its "phony" tuna.

**MAKING CONVERSATION**

Fill in each blank below with one of the words or phrases in **KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW** on page 12. Listen to check your answers. Then practice the conversations with a partner.

- A: You shouldn't drink the tap water in this country.  
B: Why not? Is it a \_\_\_\_\_?
- A: I've had some \_\_\_\_\_ recently, doctor.  
B: Well, perhaps it's some kind of stomach flu.
- A: What personal \_\_\_\_\_ do you hold highest?  
B: I believe in hard work, honesty, courtesy, and love of family.

# EDUCATION: “Two Trends”

**KEY WORDS PREVIEW**

Scan through the essay on the next page. Find the words in bold that match the definitions/synonyms below. Write the words on the lines.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ decreasing; going down; falling; dropping
2. \_\_\_\_\_ becoming deeply or completely involved in
3. \_\_\_\_\_ not willing; hesitant; unsure; doubtful
4. \_\_\_\_\_ normal; traditional; orthodox; usual
5. \_\_\_\_\_ see as being real or useful; realize; admit

**KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW**



Fill in the blank in each sentence-definition below with one of these key concepts from today’s reading. Listen to check your answers.

**annual tuition cost      insular      undergraduate degrees**

1. A Bachelor of Science (BS) and a Bachelor of Arts (BA) are examples of \_\_\_\_\_ you can earn at university.
2. The fee for one year’s worth of instruction at a school or college is the \_\_\_\_\_.
3. Places, countries, or cultures that are \_\_\_\_\_ are not open to outside influences and are often quite conservative.

**THINKING  
AHEAD**

As you read today’s essay, look for answers to these questions.

1. What countries send the most college students overseas to study?
2. What has happened to the quality of college education in South Korea?
3. Why aren’t some Korean businesses hiring students educated overseas?
4. Why do some American students dislike campus-based education?
5. What is meant by “extreme study abroad” and “campus hopping”?

**TODAY'S  
READING**

Read this essay carefully and then do the exercises that follow.



[1] South Korea ranks third, behind China and India, in sending college students to study abroad. But Korea's numbers are steadily **declining**, for several reasons. For one, overseas university education has become extremely expensive. The annual tuition cost at an American elite school, for example, is about \$30,000. In South Korea, it's about one-sixth that, says Reuters. 5

[2] For another, domestic education has greatly improved. Instruction offered at Korean universities is now on a par with many programs offered overseas. Students are also finding that connections made at domestic colleges are more useful in employment and getting ahead. Another reason fewer Korean kids are studying abroad is that some people feel that "returnees" are too "individualistic." The kids 10 have a hard time adapting to Korean social and business mores. Thus, many Korean businesses are **reluctant** to take them on. Instead, companies are now actively recruiting students educated at home.

[3] Meanwhile, something different is happening in the U.S. The *New York Times* calls it "Extreme Study Abroad." Some American students find domestic campuses 15 to be "insular places." They see **conventional** campus-based education as "poor preparation for our globalized world." As for the traditional lecture format—the same information is available on the Internet, these students say.

[4] So they "campus hop from continent to continent." They spend a semester in England, the next in Turkey, the next in Brazil. "Foreign cities are their classrooms," 20 says the *Times*. Many U.S. universities now **acknowledge** the trend and offer special programs. Students can earn undergraduate degrees at their home college while **immersing** themselves in diverse cultures abroad. This "unorthodox college path," says the *Times*, gives students a "special blend of traits: maturity, curiosity, adventurousness, and openness." 25 The very things that graduate schools and employers are looking for.

*domestic* = not foreign; national

*hop* = move; jump

*diverse* = different; various

READING  
COMPREHENSION

 **SENTENCE COMPLETION:**



Fill in the blank in each sentence below with information from the reading. Listen to check your answers.

1. Annual college tuition in South Korea costs about \_\_\_\_\_ dollars.
2. Korean college \_\_\_\_\_ is now equal to that offered overseas.
3. Connections made at home in Korea can help students find \_\_\_\_\_.

 **TRUE-FALSE:**

Read the sentences below. Circle T if the sentence is true, F if it is false.

4. **T** **F** All “returnees” are too individualistic for life in Korea.
5. **T** **F** The underlined word “mores” is a synonym for “customs.”
6. **T** **F** Some Korean businesses prefer to recruit students educated at home.

 **MULTIPLE CHOICE:**

Complete each sentence below with the correct choice.

7. Some American students want their education to
  - (A) be less costly, so they study overseas
  - (B) prepare them better for living among diverse cultures
  - (C) include more information from the Internet
8. It is implied that America’s unorthodox “campus-hopping” students
  - (A) must all be very rich
  - (B) all speak several foreign languages
  - (C) spend part of the time on their home university campus

 **GIVE IT A TRY:**



Write a full-sentence answer to this question. Listen to check your answer.

9. What does the *New York Times* say about what this “unorthodox college path” does for students?

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## KEY WORDS IN ACTION



Fill in the blank in each sentence below with the correct form of one of the words you wrote in **KEY WORDS PREVIEW** on page 44. Listen to check your answers.

- To kill time on the train, I like to \_\_\_\_\_ myself in a good novel.
- The \_\_\_\_\_ in Japan's population has some leaders worried.
- I understand your \_\_\_\_\_ to change jobs. It's a hard decision.
- I'm upset! No one has \_\_\_\_\_ how hard I worked on the project.
- Singing hymns is one of the \_\_\_\_\_ of church-going.

## USEFUL IDIOMATIC PHRASES



Fill in each blank below with one of these words so that sentence B means the same as sentence A. Listen to check your answers.

ahead                  on                  par

- A: If you want to succeed as a manager, you have to be flexible.  
B: Getting \_\_\_\_\_ as a manager requires flexibility.
- A: Do you think our product is as good as their product?  
B: Tell me. Is our product on a \_\_\_\_\_ with theirs?
- A: I wish we hadn't hired Fred. He's not right for our company.  
B: We shouldn't have taken Fred \_\_\_\_\_. He doesn't fit in.

## MAKING CONVERSATION



Fill in each blank below with one of the words or phrases in **KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW** on page 44. Listen to check your answers. Then practice the conversations with a partner.

- A: What did you study in college?  
B: I have two \_\_\_\_\_, one in English and the other in political science.
- A: Do you think Japan is becoming less \_\_\_\_\_ these days?  
B: Definitely. I might even call it a multicultural society.
- A: Why do so many American college students drop out?  
B: They simply can't afford the high \_\_\_\_\_.