

JIM KNUDSEN

READERS' FORUM 2

# EVERYDAY ENGLISH

– CURRENT TOPICS TO READ AND TALK ABOUT –



NAN'UN-DO

## READERS' FORUM

*Readers' Forum* is a series of three readers (with a fourth volume being planned) that make up a comprehensive, sequential course for students who have achieved a fairly high level of English proficiency. The books' aim is to give students the information, vocabulary, and concepts they need to be able to read English-language newspapers, magazines, and books with complete confidence and to fully participate in serious conversations and discussions.

*How-To English: Advice for a Better Life*, the first book in the series, 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*, the second book in the series, is intended for high-intermediate-level students. Its 500-word readings explore a wide variety of current topics and issues, public and private, local and global. *Past, Present, and Future English* is for advanced students. Its 600-word readings take up more challenging topics related to culture, art, history, ethics, and ideas.

The *Readers' Forum* books naturally reinforce and enhance one another. They have similar formats and develop all of the essential skills of reading, writing, listening, and vocabulary building. In some cases, their general subjects (travel, history, sociology, education, and so on), vocabulary, and concepts overlap, but with the topics and ideas discussed in greater detail and looked at from different perspectives, using a more sophisticated vocabulary, in succeeding volumes. To expand students' knowledge and expose them to different writing styles, the books 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 books all stand on their own as well and can be effectively adapted to fit the demands of specific teaching and learning situations.

## TO THE STUDENT

Let's say that you're pretty good at English. And let's imagine that you're an exchange student for the summer term at a college in the United Kingdom (or in Australia, Canada, or New Zealand), and a classmate invites you over to his house to meet his family. Or perhaps in a couple of years from now you're on a business trip in New York City, and you're out for drinks with some colleagues and clients. Let's also say that you read the papers every day and like to keep up with current events—in Japanese. But at dinner or out for drinks in a foreign country, will you be able to understand what the others are saying in English about these current topics? Will you be able to ask the right questions, nod or shake your head at the right times, or bring up other related topics to talk about? The answer to all these questions is “Yes,” because by then, you will have worked your way through this textbook. You will be familiar with the English words and phrases and current-English concepts that you need to know to confidently take part in and add to any discussion.

Here is a brief explanation of what this book's goals are and what it asks you to do. The first page of each lesson is a warm-up page that introduces you to the most important words and concepts in the lesson's reading. In both KEY WORDS PREVIEW and KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW, to make sure you know how to spell them and to help you remember them better, you must write out the words and concepts. In THINKING AHEAD, three warm-up questions serve as a “sneak preview” of the lesson's main subject and ideas.

Thus, by the time you do start reading the essay, you already know its most important words and ideas so that you can read right through and fully understand it. And just to make sure you *do* understand it (and to help you remember its contents for future use), the reading is followed by READING COMPREHENSION: GETTING FACTS, UNDERSTANDING IDEAS, an exercise that asks you to decide if statements are true about or can be reasonably inferred from the information in the reading.

This is followed by four more quick exercises. In KEY WORDS IN ACTION, you will use the lesson's key words in a different form and in somewhat different contexts from those in which they are used in the reading. USEFUL IDIOMATIC PHRASES both introduces you to and gives you practice in using four common idiomatic phrases that appear in the reading. And in MAKING CONVERSATION, you get a chance to both see how the lesson's concepts are used in everyday communication and to practice using them yourself. Then comes LISTENING CHALLENGE, in which you listen to a short talk and then answer some questions related to it.

In other words this textbook, *Everyday English*, will give your English reading, writing, listening, and vocabulary skills a big boost. And give you lots to talk about. So pay attention, work hard, and have a good time. Your future, in a way, depends on it.

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**Readers' Forum 2**  
**EVERYDAY ENGLISH**  
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# LESSON 1 EVERYDAY EDUCATION, 1



## KEY WORDS PREVIEW

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ put into a lower position at work
- \_\_\_\_\_ exceptional; extraordinary; outstanding
- \_\_\_\_\_ bad behavior; naughtiness
- \_\_\_\_\_ in a dependably unchanging way
- \_\_\_\_\_ meaningful; significant; pertinent
- \_\_\_\_\_ explained; proven; given good reasons for

## KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW

Match these key concepts from today's reading with their definitions or explanations below. Write the concepts on the lines.

**boot camp**

**expulsion**

**turnover rate**

**underachievers**

- \_\_\_\_\_ ratio of employees who leave their jobs
- \_\_\_\_\_ military training program
- \_\_\_\_\_ people who don't reach their ability potential
- \_\_\_\_\_ the act of expelling or kicking a student out of school as a disciplinary measure for bad behavior

## THINKING AHEAD

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

1. Who are Thomas Gradgrind, Charles Dickens, and Robert Frost?
2. What are Success Academy schools' "tough love" teaching methods?
3. What does Charles Sahm conclude about the Success Academy method?

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



[1] “Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. You can only form the minds of reasoning animals upon Facts: nothing else will ever be of any service to them.” These are the words of Thomas Gradgrind, the headmaster of a small country school who appears in *Hard Times*, an 1859 novel by the great English author Charles Dickens. That’s over 150 years ago, but Gradgrind’s little speech to his class sounds, on the surface at least, as if it could serve as the motto of the Success Academy. This is a network of charter schools established in 2006 by Eva Moskowitz, a former New York City council member. Success Academy schools have become all the rage in recent years, because they do indeed succeed. Their students have **consistently** outscored the pupils of other New York public schools on standardized tests. This is all the more **remarkable** because most of the students come from low-income minority families. These are kids who were, until they entered Success Academy, considered underachievers but who now have a newfound enthusiasm for education.

[2] But despite their impressive record, the schools have given rise to heated controversy. The “tough love” teaching techniques and harsh disciplinary methods, say some critics, verge on those of a military boot camp. Pupils must conform to a rigid dress and posture code. There is “zero tolerance” for any kind of **mischief** or misbehavior. There is a very high rate of student suspension and expulsion. Exceptionally high academic expectations are placed on students. Those who don’t live up to them are shamed in front of their peers, though the opposite can be true, too. According to a recent *New York Times* article, one pupil was actually praised by his teacher for wetting his pants rather than ask to be allowed to leave the classroom for a “bathroom break.” Meanwhile, teachers must put in 11-hour days, yet are quickly **demoted** or let go if their students perform poorly. This has resulted in a teacher turnover rate of over 50% that one critic called a “revolving door on the faculty lounge.”

[3] Of course, the most common criticism of Success Academy methods is that they sacrifice students’ true love of learning for a demanding “teach-to-the-test culture.” But educator Charles Sahm, in an article in *Education Next*, concludes that most of this criticism is not **justified**. Eva Moskowitz’s vision, he writes, “is essentially progressive. The curriculum stresses experiential learning, problem solving, and critical thinking. Reading selections expose children to **relevant**, important, beautiful material that deals with diverse cultures, economic backgrounds, settings, and characters.” I hope this last part is true, because it sounds to me less like Thomas Gradgrind and more like what the American poet Robert Frost had in mind when he wrote: “Education is the ability to listen to almost anything without losing your temper or your self-confidence.”

**be of service** = be useful

**charter school** = a school that receives public funds but that is run independently of the local school board

**verge on** = be close or very similar to

**posture** = the way in which a person holds his or her body

**experiential learning** = learning by doing; hands-on learning



## READING COMPREHENSION

### GETTING FACTS, UNDERSTANDING IDEAS:

Check [✓] the sentences below that are true or that can be reasonably inferred from the information in the essay.

1. [    ] Before she started Success Academy, Eva Moskowitz was a New York City politician.
2. [    ] Success Academy students often score higher on standardized tests than some children from wealthier backgrounds.
3. [    ] The phrase “tough love” in paragraph 2 refers to teacher training.
4. [    ] One reason Success Academy schools have such a high rate of student expulsion is that they have “zero tolerance” for misbehavior.
5. [    ] One student was shamed in class for not taking a bathroom break.
6. [    ] The faculty lounge of all Success Academy schools has a revolving door.
7. [    ] Most of the critics who complain about Success Academy methods point out the schools’ emphasis on helping students score high on standardized tests.
8. [    ] Charles Sahm believes that Success Academy schools do not just emphasize “teach-to-the-test” education but that the curriculum develops students’ minds and exposes students to important ideas.

### KEY WORDS IN ACTION

Fill in the blank in each sentence below with the correct form of one of the **KEY WORDS** you wrote on page 8.

1. Once an underachiever, Robert is now an enthusiastic learner who does \_\_\_\_\_ well on all his tests.
2. Sahm argues that the curriculum does indeed have \_\_\_\_\_ for students’ lives.
3. “There is no \_\_\_\_\_ for these complaints. They simply aren’t accurate.”
4. Rather than take a \_\_\_\_\_ to teaching assistant, Mr. Peters left the school.
5. If you are \_\_\_\_\_ or make any trouble, you will be expelled!
6. This student’s test scores aren’t \_\_\_\_\_. Sometimes he passes with high marks, and at other times he fails.



### USEFUL IDIOMATIC PHRASES

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

live      rage      rise      temper

1. A: The test scores have been very high thanks to the new methods.  
B: The new methods have given \_\_\_\_\_ to excellent test scores.
2. A: Teachers get angry if you don't dress properly.  
B: If you don't obey the dress code, teachers lose their \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A: Was the school as good as you expected?  
B: Did the school \_\_\_\_\_ up to your expectations?
4. A: People really like the charter-school idea these days.  
B: Today, the charter-school system is all the \_\_\_\_\_.

### MAKING CONVERSATION



Fill in each blank below with one of the **KEY CONCEPTS** on page 8. Listen to check your answers. Then practice the conversations with a partner.

1. A: Misbehaving students are subject to \_\_\_\_\_.  
B: If you ask me, expelling students doesn't help them at all.
2. A: Another teacher quit today. That's five already this month.  
B: The school has to reduce its teacher \_\_\_\_\_.
3. A: What did the critic say after she visited the school?  
B: She said it was run like a military \_\_\_\_\_.
4. A: Every student passed the test with a very high score.  
B: Not bad for kids who were once thought of as \_\_\_\_\_.

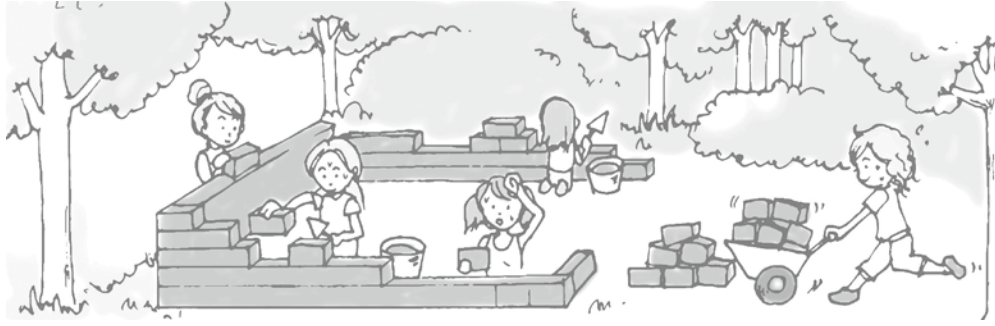
### LISTENING CHALLENGE



Listen to the short passage and then write a short answer to each question below.

1. Is Hanson Academy a primary school or a secondary school?  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. Were some students sent home because they had on the wrong kind of shoes or because they weren't wearing earrings?  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. Does Ms. Churton say her "zero tolerance" uniform policy is for improving learning or for improving pupils' appearance?  
\_\_\_\_\_

## LESSON 2 EVERYDAY TRAVEL



### KEY WORDS PREVIEW

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ superior; stuck-up; patronizing
- \_\_\_\_\_ strongly; energetically; enthusiastically
- \_\_\_\_\_ meaningful; satisfying
- \_\_\_\_\_ unlucky; unfortunate
- \_\_\_\_\_ a feeling of love, sincere liking, or fondness
- \_\_\_\_\_ caring; compassion; good-heartedness

### KEY CONCEPTS PREVIEW

Match these key concepts from today's reading with their definitions or explanations below. Write the concepts on the lines.

**gap year      orphanage      photo op      privileged background**

- \_\_\_\_\_ a good chance to take a good snapshot
- \_\_\_\_\_ a vacation taken between high school graduation and the beginning of university study
- \_\_\_\_\_ what children from a wealthy family have
- \_\_\_\_\_ home for parentless children

### THINKING AHEAD

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

1. Who are the most common "voluntourists," or volunteer travelers?
2. What do many volunteer travelers lack that they need to be really helpful?
3. What effect can some short-term stays by volunteers have on poor local children?

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



[1] One of the hottest trends in the travel industry these days is “voluntourism,” or volunteer travel. Many “voluntourists” are teenagers on “working party” school excursions. Others are students using their “gap year” to combine world travel with doing volunteer work in developing countries. Their motivation is to have a personally **fulfilling** international experience while helping others. Sounds like a good idea, right? What could be wrong with kids wanting to make a difference? But some critics, many of whom were volunteers themselves and who have some doubts about the experience, suggest that voluntourism is actually doing more harm than good. Some are even calling it the “new colonialism.” 5

[2] The big problem, they say, is that voluntourists are almost always young people who come from a privileged background. Their socio-economic status is vastly different from that of the people they aim to help. Volunteers have little or no understanding of local culture, history, language, or ways of life. They lack true humility and thoughtfulness, and, though they may not know it themselves, they have a **condescending** attitude towards their hosts. Thanks to the media, they have a mistaken idea of poverty and the lives of poor people. Coming from a wealthy country, they think they can make themselves “better people” by sharing their **benevolence** with the poor. Rafia Zakaria, writing in the *New York Times*, summed it up like this: “Volunteers are often led to believe that **hapless** villages can be transformed by schools built on a two-week trip—that diseases can be wiped out by the digging of wells during spring break. The photo ops, the hugs with the kids, and the meals with the natives are part of this package. The volunteers can see and touch those they are ‘saving’ and take evidence of their new nobility back home with them.” 10 15 20

[3] In fact, however, most voluntourists don’t have a clue as to how to build a school or dig a well, or how to be of any real assistance at all. As Pippa Biddle, a former volunteer, recently wrote on her popular blog: “Wanting to create change does not necessarily mean that you have the skills to make that happen. By sending unskilled volunteers to do complicated tasks, we set them up for failure, and increase the likelihood that their trips become ‘poverty tourism’ rather than productive service work.” 25

[4] Many volunteers are sent to work in overseas orphanages. But Linda Richter, a developmental psychologist, says this creates another serious problem: “Children in orphanages long for **affection**. They cling to any adult who responds to them. When volunteers stay in orphanages for short periods of time, children become attached to them.” But these short-term relationships don’t help the child in the long term, says Richter. “When the volunteer leaves, it becomes another in a long line of disappointments for the child.” 30

[5] And as you might expect, there’s one more problem: travel agencies and tour companies are **vigorously** exploiting the voluntourism trend. 35

**excursion** = short trip

**this package** = volunteering

**become attached to** = grow to like very much

**humility** = humbleness; modesty; respect

**nobility** = goodness

## READING COMPREHENSION

### GETTING FACTS, UNDERSTANDING IDEAS:

Check [✓] the sentences below that are true or that can be reasonably inferred from the information in the essay.

1. [    ] Most critics of “voluntourism” have had no experience of volunteering themselves, and thus have no right to complain about the trend.
2. [    ] The underlined word “colonialism” in paragraph 1 refers to the era in history when European countries controlled much of Africa, Asia, and Latin America.
3. [    ] To be a volunteer, you must show that you have a working knowledge of the language and history of the country you will be working in.
4. [    ] Many ideas that young volunteers have about what it’s like to be poor come from TV, newspapers, and the Internet.
5. [    ] Rafia Zakaria seems to think that many young overseas volunteers only volunteer because it will make them look good to their friends and family when the volunteers get back home.
6. [    ] Pippa Biddle has no skills herself and was a failure at volunteering.
7. [    ] Pippa Biddle uses the phrase “poverty tourism” in paragraph 3 to mean “a nice way to see how poor people live.”
8. [    ] Linda Richter believes that short-term stays by volunteers can be psychologically harmful to children in orphanages.

### KEY WORDS IN ACTION

Fill in the blank in each sentence below with the correct form of one of the **KEY WORDS** you wrote on page 12.

1. The child was very \_\_\_\_\_ and liked to be loved and hugged.
2. Being a volunteer and using my nursing skills to work in a clinic in Chad \_\_\_\_\_ a lifelong dream of mine.
3. Jack’s \_\_\_\_\_ towards those he was working with showed up in the way he always talked down to them.
4. What a shame! Poor Gary \_\_\_\_\_ was in the wrong place at the wrong time.
5. While people’s intentions are \_\_\_\_\_, their actions are actually often quite harmful.
6. To start the water pump, give the rope a \_\_\_\_\_ pull.



**USEFUL IDIOMATIC PHRASES**

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

**clue      difference      term      wipe**

1. A: Eventually, the volunteer program will pay off.  
B: The volunteer program will be effective over the long \_\_\_\_\_.
2. A: I have no idea how to use this device.  
B: I don't have a \_\_\_\_\_ as to how this device works.
3. A: I just want to help make the world a better place.  
B: Making a \_\_\_\_\_ is my only ambition.
4. A: My belief is that technology will help eliminate hunger.  
B: I'm certain that technology will help \_\_\_\_\_ out hunger.

**MAKING CONVERSATION**



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

1. A: Most of the volunteers know nothing about real poverty.  
B: Why would they, coming from a \_\_\_\_\_ as they do?
2. A: There's Bill, taking advantage of another \_\_\_\_\_.  
B: I know. He can't wait to put his pictures up on Facebook.
3. A: What was it like, working in an \_\_\_\_\_?  
B: Fulfilling, of course, but the kids made me so sad sometimes.
4. A: Are you going to take a \_\_\_\_\_?  
B: No, I think I'll just jump right in to college.

**LISTENING CHALLENGE**



Listen to the short talk and then, on the lines, write the information requested below.

1. \_\_\_\_\_ the country Pippa was in
2. \_\_\_\_\_ who she was there with
3. \_\_\_\_\_ what they were building
4. \_\_\_\_\_ what they used to build it with
5. \_\_\_\_\_ who had to redo their work
6. \_\_\_\_\_ what the girls were unaware of