

TOPIC

Conversation for Advanced



1 Read and Learn

Aloft the canopies of the concrete jungle hang the most prolific of all marketing devices, the billboard. They have sprung up along every major highway, as well as any highly traveled roads. For the denizens of the urban landscape, it is a fixture of daily life. It is as imposing as it is ubiquitous. These colorful depictions of commercialized living are where one finds the constant promises of the enhancement of one's life through the consumption of their offers.



Sleazy and slick salesmen exploit the fears and basic instincts of the vulnerable populace, all in an effort to extract more revenues, with billboards being one of their main tactics in their campaign to be bought by the public. Among those who fight back against the oppressive tutelage of modern marketing is an anonymous street artist who goes by the name of Banksy. He's internationally known for provocative art that challenges the status quo of crass commercialism and champions cause drowned out by the noise of advertising. He brings humanity back to a dehumanized society. He is a hero of our time.

Billboards are attention grabbers. You can't help but notice a sign that is as wide as your house. Because of their size, they are highly successful at catching people's attention but billboards can be distracting. It attracts too much attention then it can potentially increase the likelihood of drivers crashing into each other because they were too mesmerized by what is on the billboard.

2 New words



prolific
existing in large numbers



provocative
causing an angry reaction, usually intentionally

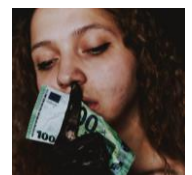


slick
clever and good at persuading people but probably not honest or sincere

ubiquitous
present everywhere



sleazy
dishonest, or immoral



1

Read and Learn

People are innately social. We all gravitate towards one another for omnifarious reasons. If we don't have an actual reason, we're quite creative in making one. Take for example parties, galas, and other events that encourage us to congregate. Some more proof that we never grow tired of being gregarious is the development of online social networking sites and messenger apps. I wouldn't be surprised if Mark Zuckerberg reveals that the reason behind the creation of Facebook is the trusted and proven fact that



business propagates at a rate which is directly proportional to the number of people. So why not provide a site that'll allow everybody to demonstrate how crazy we are about everybody else? Such a clever guy.

Messenger apps and online social networking sites give us the ability to make friends with people from as far as halfway across the world. Isn't it amazing? Intercultural exchange and assimilation of different customs and traditions are now happening ubiquitously. On top of that, incipient advancements in technology may enable us to detect other life forms in our solar system, and eventually, our galaxy. In the future, we'd not only be taking pleasure in making conversations with fellow earthlings, but also with Jedis, Na'vis, or Kryptonians. Before you know it, you're already sharing your hobbies and interests with a Jedi! Taking things up a notch, by the time all these speculations have become a reality, physical teleportation of things might already be one of the features on your messenger app!

Internet friends will have been able to send and receive gifts from halfway across the galaxy. What kinds of interesting gifts would they be! The future of internet friendship is indeed something to look forward to. The internet affords us a future of boundless opportunities for interaction and contact. It transcended our expectations with the emergence of many social networking sites that now serve as venues for us to stay in touch with our friends and be updated on their whereabouts and current preoccupation.

2

New words



omnifarious

of all varieties, forms, or kinds



gregarious

liking to be with other people



ubiquitously

seeming to be seen everywhere

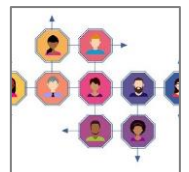
congregate

to gather together in a group



propagate

to make (something, such as an idea or belief) known to many people



1

Read and Learn

All people feel a different range of emotions. Some of these emotions are pleasant and are always wanted to be felt while other emotions we try to avoid as much as possible due to the pain it may cause us. What is perhaps the most popular and desired of these emotions is “happiness”. While all people are Naturally inclined to seek to be happy, one might consider what actually would make him or her happy. Is happiness the same for everyone? What actually defines happiness?

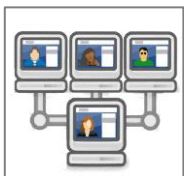


Happiness can be considered a fuzzy concept and could mean many different things to many people. Some closely related concepts to happiness are well-being, quality of life, flourishing, and contentment. According to a research study, humans seem happiest when they have: pleasure (tasty food, warm baths, etc.), engagements (or flow, the absorption of an enjoyed yet challenging activity), relationships (social ties have turned out to be an extremely reliable indicator of happiness), meaning (a perceived quest or belonging to something bigger), and accomplishments (having realized tangible goals).

Happiness has also been closely linked to religion. Such an association may be attributed to the social connections of organized religion, and by the neuropsychological benefits of prayer and belief. To elaborate further, the benefits that make people happier from religion include social contact and support that result from religious pursuits, the mental activity that comes with optimism and volunteering, learned coping strategies that enhance one’s ability to deal with stress, and psychological factors such as “reason for being.”

2

New words



link

to make a connection between two or more people, things, or ideas



optimism

a tendency to be hopeful and to expect that good things will probably happen



fuzzy

not clear or not easily heard, seen, or understood

attribute

to believe that something is the result of a particular situation, event, or person’s actions



contentment

the happiness you feel when you have everything you want and you enjoy your life



1

Read and Learn

Can you imagine someone winning a Nobel Peace Prize at the age of 18? Known mainly for her human rights advocacy, Malala Yousafzai is a young Pakistani girl who stood against the Taliban, an Islamic militant group, and fought for education and women's right in her native land. Malala received the Nobel Peace Prize exactly two years and a day after a Taliban gunman shot her in the head on her way home. Despite the growing threat and danger, she continued fighting for every young girl's right to education and became an inspiration to them. She believes that education is a basic human right and a powerful weapon in promoting global peace and progress.



She once told reporters that going to school, "is like walking through a magic door to your dreams". Malala became an international Icon for Peace and a role model to the youth. She is the youngest ever recipient to scoop the Nobel Prize.

2

New words



advocacy
a strong public support for something

stand against

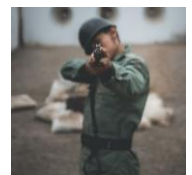
to oppose someone or something in a brave or determined way



militant
using extreme and sometimes violent methods to achieve political or social change

threat

a situation or an activity that could cause harm or danger



powerful weapon
something that is strong, influential and helps you to achieve something difficult or to get rid of something bad

1 Read and Learn

What is a superhero? The definition of superhero, quoted from Wikipedia is “a type of heroic character possessing extraordinary talents, supernatural phenomena, or superhuman powers and is dedicated to a moral goal or protecting the public”. Superheroes and super heroines are non-existent. They are made-up characters for fictional stories. Their purpose is sheer entertainment for readers and sometimes stands as an inspiration to people to do better on what they can do or drag them out from a feculent life.



The word “superhero” dates back to at least 1917 according to Wikipedia. Based on the genealogy of superheroes such folkloric heroes like Robin Hood, who adventured in idiosyncratic clothing are the first of the superheroes. Then came Scarlet Pimpernel in the year 1936 which inspired masked avengers and a superhero trope of a secret identity. Zorro who is a masked and costumed character came out in 1919. The first comic strip hero is named Phantom which came out in 1936. These early superheroes were the inspirations of the superhero characters of today and to avid fans of fiction stories.

Being a superhero or super heroine is possible in real life and some even live amongst us. What does it take to be a super hero?, you ask. It is simply being kind towards society. Protect your world by being friendly to the environment. Defend your citizens by helping them with what you can and be generous to people when the need arises. These are simple gestures for being recognized as a superhero in real life.

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2 New words



quote

to say or write words that someone else has said or written

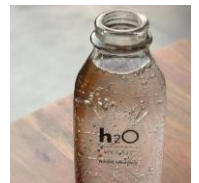


heroic

very brave and deserving admiration

sheer

not mixed with anything else; pure or complete



avid

extremely eager or interested



1 Read and Learn

Angkor (in Cambodia) is the ancient capital of Khmer Empire. A temple built for King Suryavarman II in the early 12th century as his state temple and capital city is called Angkor Wat (or Angkor Vat) which is dedicated to Vishnu (Hindu). In Khmer language, "Angkor wat" means "temple city". It is located about six kilometers north of Seam Reap, south of Angkor Thom. The estimated construction time of the temple is 30 years.

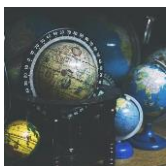


Angkor Wat is a miniature replica of the universe in stone and represents an earthly model of the cosmic world. The central tower rises from the center of the monument symbolizing the mythical mountain, Mount Meru, home of the gods in Hindu mythology. The surrounding moat represents the sea. The four sides face the cardinal compass points.

If you want to visit Cambodia and witness the world's largest religious monument, it's best if you get some guidebooks to read. In the guidebook, it is stated that a traveler or a visitor may walk through the temples in the morning to avoid afternoon heat but this would take a minimum of five days. Temple veterans were quick to dismiss this strategy and advised to rent a bicycle in Siem Reap. Another option is a bus tour, which is offered at most area hotels. The easiest way if you are with two to four other visitors is to hire a car and a driver.

Traveling increases our knowledge and widens our perspective. It can help us change some of our habits or even create new ones. Traveling with friends or family creates memories for a lifetime.

2 New words



replica
an exact copy of an object

mythical
imaginary or not real; existing only in stories



cardinal
main or of great importance

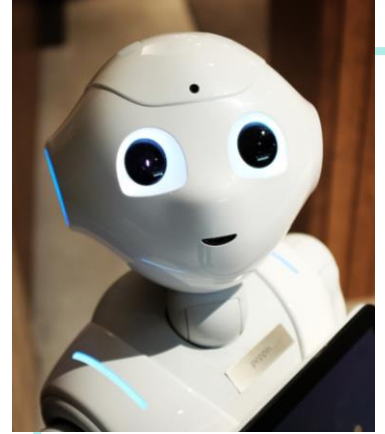
compass
a device for finding direction with a thin pointed metal part that turns to always point north



1 Read and Learn

Artificial intelligence is a wide field of computer science concerned with creating smart machines capable of performing tasks that normally require human intelligence. From the development of self-driving cars, smart assistants such as Siri and Alexa, email spam filters, smart home devices, and emerging innovations such as screenless video and advanced robotics, AI is becoming more prevalent in everyday life.

According to an Ipsos survey for the World Economic Forum, about 60% believe that AI-powered products and services will make their lives easier. But will it make life better? Those surveyed were less certain, with only 52% believing that products and services based on artificial intelligence have more advantages than drawbacks.



AI can help reduce human error and is available at all times. We can use it to make machines work 24 hours a day. Furthermore, AI is also powering many inventions in almost every domain, which will assist humans in solving the majority of complex problems.

However, every bright side has a darker counterpart. With its advanced features, AI is making humans lazy, with most work becoming automated. As AI replaces robots for the majority of repetitive tasks and other manual labor, human interference is decreasing. This will cause a significant problem in employment standards.

The benefits of artificial intelligence are indeed enormous. The key for humans will be to prevent the "rise of the robots" from becoming out of control. Some argue that artificial intelligence can destroy human civilization if it falls into the wrong hands. Nonetheless, none of the AI applications created at that scale can destroy or enslave humanity.

2 New words



computer science

the study of computers and computational systems that includes theory, design, development, and application

domain
an area of control or a sphere of knowledge



prevalent

widespread/ common in a particular area or at a particular time

enslave
cause (someone) to lose their freedom of choice or action



1 Read and Learn

People around us have asked what we want to be when we grow up at some point in our lives. This question has led us to believe that we must find one true calling to which we must devote our lives. As a result, people overly romanticize the idea of having that one true calling. Yet, some people do not want to be just one thing. Does that mean there is something wrong with them?

“Multipotentialites” are people who have a variety of creative pursuits and interests, a term coined and popularized by Emilie Wapnick in her TED talk. She defined multipotentialites as people who pursue multiple paths in life, either concurrently or sequentially. Unlike specialists, they do not have one true calling. Furthermore, unlike polymaths, multipotentialites do not need to be experts in those fields. Their potential lies in their interests and efforts to pursue those career paths. Leonardo da Vinci, Benjamin Franklin, Aristotle, and others are examples of famous multipotentialites.



Employers find multipotentialites valuable to the workforce. They are known for their ability to synthesize ideas (providing fresh and new ideas by bringing knowledge together from various fields), learn quickly, and adapt to new situations. These skills give them an advantage in the labor market.

Choosing the path to take is hard. You may be confused about your choice, or you may not have come up with one. Therefore, whether you are a specialist or a person with multipotentiality, you should embrace your passion and true self. Being true to yourself leads to a more fulfilling life.

2 New words

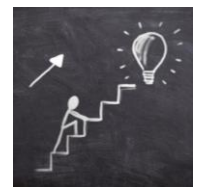


calling

a profession or career which someone is strongly attracted to

sequentially

in a way that follows a particular order



pursuit

an occupation, interest, etc. to which one devotes time and energy

polymaths

a person who know a lot about many different subjects



1 Read and Learn

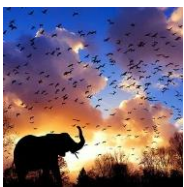
In today's world, a vast diversity of animal and plant species populate different regions of the planet. Millions of species of various organisms constitute biodiversity that encompasses a number of ecosystems. Each of these species plays integral role in maintaining the balance of the ecosystem. The absence of any of these species may bring about unpleasant consequences and disrupt the ecological balance.



Despite the millions of species that exist, an alarming number of them are under the threat of facing extinction. In fact, it can be said that a number of them have already ceased to exist. Perhaps the best known examples would be the dinosaurs and the dodo birds. Other species such as the American bald eagle, the giant panda, and the Siberian tiger are already at risk. A number of factors come into play that resulted in the slow decline in population of certain species. First of these would be overhunting which involves mankind hunting down animals for the reasons of food consumption or mere sport. Another factor would be the introduction of invasive species in certain areas that could result to a number of outcomes such as competition for food or prey or even the transmission of unavoidable diseases.

Due to these dangerous developments, various measures have likewise been enacted to preserve these endangered species and spare them from extinction. Governments have implemented laws that outlawed the hunting down of such species. Despite these laws, illegal poachers have still sought to hunt down these endangered species. Captive breeding is another measure being undertaken that involves the process of breeding endangered species in human controlled environments such as wildlife preserves and zoos. Only time will tell if these measures will prove effective and successful in the preservation of these species.

2 New words



biodiversity

the variety of different types of plant and animal life in a particular region



implement

to start using a plan or system

extinction

a situation in which something no longer exists



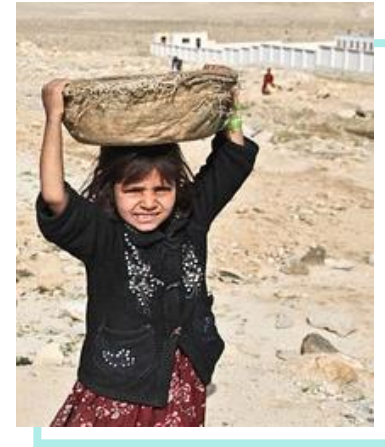
outlaw

to make something illegal or unacceptable



1 Read and Learn

In traditional and modern cultures around the world, it has been the role of adults to undergo labor and employment in order to provide income for their respective families. Children, on the other hand, are traditionally obliged to pursue education. Unfortunately, in some instances, children would be forced to undergo labor, thus being deprived of a proper childhood and education. To make matters worse, such forms of labor may prove to be detrimental and harmful to the children's mental, physical, social, and moral well-being. As such, the issue of child labor has been one of the most prevalent and controversial ones being faced by various countries in the world today.



A number of causes have been attributed to the existence of child labor. What has been cited as its greatest single cause is poverty. For impoverished households, a child's work income is usually crucial for his or her own survival or for that of the household. Income of working children, even a small amount, may be between 25 to 40% of the household income. The lack of meaningful alternatives such as the lack of affordable schools or quality education is another primary factor and concern. Many communities, particularly rural areas where child labor is prevalent, do not possess adequate school facilities. Other circumstances would include the distance of some available schools and the difficulty of reaching them. Such conditions would entail that children would have nothing better to do.

On the other hand, certain cultural beliefs have rationalized child labor and thereby encouraged it. Some view that work is good for character building and skill development of children. In many cultures, particularly where the informal economy and small household businesses thrive, the cultural tradition is that children follow in their parents' footsteps; child labor then is a means to learn and practice that trade from a very early age.

2 New words

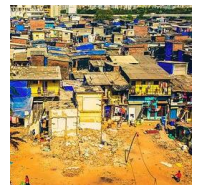


detrimental
causing harm or damage



crucial
extremely important or necessary

impoverished
very poor



prevalent
existing very commonly or happening often

