

Naming customs around the world

1 Korea

Names in Korea are written with the surname first, and the first name usually has two parts. So, if Yeon Seok has the surname Lee, his name is written Lee Yeon Seok. Two-part first names are never shortened; that is, Lee Yeon Seok will always be called Yeon Seok, not Yeon.

2 Russia

Russian names have three parts: a first name, a patronymic (a middle name based on the father's first name), and the father's surname. If Viktor Aleksandrovich Rakhmaninov has two children, his son's name might be Mikhail Viktorevich Rakhmaninov and his daughter's name might be Svetlana Viktorevna Rakhmaninova (the 'a' at the end of all three names shows that she is female).

3 Spanish-speaking countries

In most Spanish-speaking countries, people have a first name (sometimes in two parts, e.g. Maria José, Juan Carlos) and two surnames, their father's and their mother's, for example, Maria José López Ramírez. In Spain, traditionally the father's surname goes first, followed by the mother's, but nowadays the order can be reversed. However, both surnames are always used and on any form, people will be asked for their surnames, not their surname.

4 India

India has many religions and languages which influence the naming customs. Hindu first names are usually based on the position of the planets at the date and time of birth, but the names are often shortened by family and friends. For example, a brother and sister may have the formal names Aditya and Aarushi, but family and friends may call them Adi and Ashi for short.



5 China

Chinese names are made up of three 'characters': a one-character surname followed by a two-character first name, e.g. Li Xiu Ying. A child's official name is used for their birth certificate and for school, but Chinese children often have a different name that is used among friends and classmates.

6 Afghanistan

Afghan names traditionally consist of only a first name. Male first names are usually Arabic double names, e.g. Abdul Ahad, and women are generally given Persian names, e.g. Jasmine. Surnames are chosen only when needed. Commonly, this is when people have contact with the Western world. The surname may be related to the tribe the person comes from, their place of birth, or their profession, e.g. 'Doctor'. This may result in people within the same family having different surnames.

7 The UK

Since the 15th century, British women have taken their husband's surname when they get married, so when Sophie Jones marries Peter Elliot, she becomes Mrs Sophie Elliot. However, 14% of married women now choose to keep their maiden name. If they do so, couples sometimes then combine their surnames for their children, so if Sophie decided to keep the surname Jones, their children might have the surname Jones-Elliot or Elliot-Jones.

Kickstarter.com

500 million plastic drinking straws are thrown away every day in the United States. Our organic straw is made from seaweed. It feels like plastic, but it's 100% plastic-free. You can eat it – it's delicious, fun, and has zero calories. It lasts up to 24 hours in a drink.

We make nice things that are **good for the planet**. We created this amazing lamp for a student competition. It produces **warm light** from a low energy bulb. The lamp is made from a wine bottle from a local restaurant and oak wood from local trees. The lamp is very easy to take apart and all the parts are entirely **recyclable**.

These are the first snack bars that improve your **brainpower**. They are high in **healthy** fats and low in carbohydrates and are made only from natural ingredients. They come in three **delicious** flavours using nuts, fruit, and chocolate; much better for you than snacks with lots of salt, sugar, or caffeine.

Our **simple building system** is **for creative people** of all ages. You can make almost anything you can think of, in either 2D or 3D, from a picture or a model, to large, complex sculptures, and even furniture. The small magnetic coloured blocks **click together easily** and are available in **a wide range of modern colours**. Use it in your workplace, at home, or simply as a fun hobby. Start small, but dream big.

seaweed a plant that grows in the sea, or on rocks at the edge of the sea

Fascinating colour facts

Research shows that the world's most popular colour is blue, followed by purple, red, and green, while white, orange, and yellow are our least favourite colours.

Works of art using the colour **(1)** _____ tend to be more expensive. ...

The word **(2)** _____ didn't describe a specific colour in English until the 16th century, when it was named after the fruit. Instead, people used the old English word 'geoluhread', which meant 'yellow-red'. ...

(3) _____ has a calming effect and reduces anger and anxiety. ...

In Imperial Rome, the colour **(4)** _____ was produced with an extremely expensive dye made from thousands of seashells. ...

Mosquitoes are attracted to dark colours, especially **(5)** _____. ...

There is no such thing as a **(6)** _____ mammal, even though it's a perfectly common colour for birds, reptiles, fish, and insects. ...

Van Gogh said that **(7)** _____ was the colour of happiness, and it's the main colour of many of his paintings between 1880 and 1890. ...


The safest colour for a car is **(8)** _____. ...

Most diamonds in their natural state are **(9)** _____. ...


The name for the colour **(10)** _____ hasn't always meant 'dark'. ...

How colour affects our mood

Since ancient times, colour has been linked to the way we think and feel. For early humans, the red of fire signalled danger. Later, artists used coloured glass in church windows to represent different feelings, for example, green symbolized hope. In modern times, the colours we use to paint the walls in our houses can affect our mood. So which colours should we use when we are decorating?




Red is an optimistic colour. It's a good colour for a dining room, because it makes people feel sociable. It stimulates conversation and makes you feel hungry. But as it's a strong colour, it can sometimes be a bit too much, and even give people headaches. You could just paint one wall red, or use it for accessories such as lamps and curtains. However, never use red in a baby's bedroom, as it may stop the baby from sleeping. **Pink**, on the other hand, is often used in bedrooms. It's traditionally the colour of love – a pale shade can be peaceful and restful, while a darker shade can suggest passion. Some people think it's a very 'girlie' colour, so adding in areas of dark grey or black to this colour scheme can help make it more generally attractive.




If you want a warm, comforting effect, try **orange**. It's also good for dining rooms, as it's said that it helps you digest your food. However, like red, it's a strong colour and can make a room look smaller, so only use it in a room that gets plenty of light. A colour that's great for smaller spaces, on the other hand, is **yellow**. It's a happy, energetic colour, and is a good colour for a kitchen, as apparently, it discourages insects! It's not very restful though, so it's best not to use it for a bedroom.





Purple is good for rooms where you work, for example, a study or a bedroom, because it's a very creative, stimulating colour. However, it's another colour that can make it difficult for people to relax after a busy day, so if you use it in a bedroom, it's a good idea to combine it with a lighter shade or another colour. **Blue** is also suitable for a study, because it helps you to think and concentrate, as well as being calm and restful. It's a popular colour for bathrooms, and bedrooms too, where a lot of people spend 'thinking time'. Another calming colour is **green**, and it's also good for a bedroom or living room. Green makes people feel relaxed and less stressed, but it can make them lazy, so if you don't want people to go to sleep on the sofa, choose cushions and carpets in a bright colour like red or orange.



For people who prefer neutral colours, **brown** can be a good choice. Although it can be boring, it's a safe, reliable colour in a living room, and you can paint one wall green or blue if you want a bit of extra mental stimulation! Other neutral colours, like white, grey, and beige, are always in fashion. White is the most flexible. It's safe and clean, and you can add any other colours to make the room look brighter. However, **white** isn't great for a bedroom if you want to relax there – a survey showed that people with a white bedroom tended to work in bed at least three times a week. Finally, the most dramatic, and perhaps eccentric, choice of bedroom wall colour is **black**. In fact, it works in any room in moderation, for example, one black wall.

We only do them on holiday

We all have them. Strange little rituals that have become an important part of any holiday, and if you don't do them, it somehow doesn't feel quite right...

Go on an airport shopping spree

This could be because you like a bargain. It could also be because you get to the airport and realize that you packed at the last minute and **(1)** . **Whatever the reason,** the hour before your flight is usually spent buying more travel adaptors, sweets, another pair of headphones, and unnecessary clothes.

Pay too much for hotel extras

You never eat macadamia nuts at home. But when you find them in a little jar beside the minibar, you have to eat them. Whether it's a tiny but ridiculously expensive tub of Pringles, or an overpriced and mediocre cocktail at the bar, you don't seem to have a problem paying far too much for little extras at your hotel. It may be because you're tired after the journey, or just because you're on holiday, but suddenly **(2)** .

Steal things (sort of)

Of course you don't take bathrobes or towels, but after being charged so much for those macadamia nuts, you try to **get your revenge on** the hotel by taking little things – espresso capsules, shampoo, shower gel...sometimes even a sewing kit, that **(3)** .

Talk to strangers

On holiday, suddenly everyone wants to make new friends. How many times have you started talking to the people at the next table at a restaurant in your town? Probably never. But walk into a beachside taverna, and **(4)** .



Change your eating habits

Your normal breakfast routine **goes completely out the window**.

Goodbye cornflakes, hello smoked salmon, eggs, toast, and a big slice of cake from the hotel buffet. You're also thrilled when you find strange and exciting foods at the local supermarket and you want to try them all, even though **(5)** .

Sleep in the afternoon

Maybe it's because the shops have closed. Maybe **(6)** .

Maybe it's all that breakfast. Whatever the reason, afternoon naps only become a fixture twice a year: at Christmas and on holiday.

Buy pointless postcards, and other rubbish

There must be millions of postcards out there that people buy and never send. They're a great reminder of your holiday, but when you get home, you put them in a shoebox under the bed and never look at them again. You also **have the urge** to buy cheap souvenirs from street stalls. 'A fridge magnet of the Eiffel Tower? A solar-powered Japanese sumo-wrestler figure?' 'Yes, sure, **(7)** ...'

Visit obscure museums

Can you imagine your partner suggesting a Saturday afternoon trip to the local ethnographical museum to see a wonderful new ceramics exhibition? Definitely not. But on a city break, suddenly the most obscure cultural attractions **develop a magnetic pull**. 'Darling, the guidebook says it's one of Hungary's six best museums, so **(8)** ...'

David and Goliath, or Waterstones versus Amazon...



Queues outside the Waterstones bookshop in Piccadilly.

At 6.00 p.m. on Thursday, in Waterstones in Piccadilly, London, staff were running around with bowls of jelly beans and bottles of raspberry lemonade. Five minutes later, people of all ages started to come through the doors, some dressed up as characters from the books – a small girl even produced an owl cage! ‘I’m reading the fifth book again at the moment’, said 28-year-old Alex. ‘This is the third event I’ve been to. Last year they transformed the second floor into Diagon Alley.’ In many of the chain’s 275 branches across the UK, similar scenes were taking place. ‘Our first wizards have arrived for #harrypotterbooknight’, tweeted staff at the Bradford store.

But Harry Potter night wasn’t the only cause for celebration for staff and customers. The previous day, Waterstones had announced that it was back in profit for the first time since 2011, under the leadership of its very own wizard, James Daunt. Daunt was already a successful bookseller, who had many loyal customers. He was brought in to rescue the Waterstones chain when it was about to close down.



When Daunt took over Waterstones, his first task was to cut costs. Then he had to make the stores more attractive and improve the lighting. Coffee shops were opened inside the stores, and events were held, such as the now-famous Harry Potter nights, or talks by authors. But the biggest change was that Daunt gave each individual store the power to choose what books to sell, and to choose the prices for different books. This made a big difference. Sales went up because shops were stocking more books that appealed to local customers.

Another of his changes was training really knowledgeable staff. 'If a customer can tell me what was the last really good book they read, I know exactly what to sell them next,' Daunt says. Given that Waterstones stocks more than 150,000 titles, this is not an easy thing to do – but it is something that is helping Waterstones to differentiate itself from Amazon.

Daunt is optimistic about the future of bookshops. 'People love buying books,' he said. 'It's a physical pleasure that customers don't get when they shop online. If we keep creating shops that do that, it doesn't matter what goes on online. High streets and shops are part of the heart of the community. People will always want to go to shops.'

David and Goliath a situation in which a weaker person fights a much stronger one; from a story in which a giant, Goliath, is killed by a boy, David, with a small stone

jelly bean a kind of small coloured sweet

Diagon Alley the name of a street full of shops in the Harry Potter stories

high street the main street of a town where you can find shops, banks, and other businesses

So you think you're a grown-up? Think again.

Are you 29 or older? Then you're officially an adult.

Well done. In a research study, 29 was the age at which most people thought they finally felt like a proper grown-up. But you're a legal adult when you're 18, so that's about 11 years to live through what psychologists call 'emerging adulthood', that is, the stage when you don't yet have children, don't live in your own house, and don't earn enough money to be financially independent.

Some people say that buying your first house or having your first child represent real adulthood, as these mean you are a responsible person. A few years ago, a bank did a survey to find out the top things that proved you were a grown-up. Number one was having a mortgage and number two was no longer relying on your parents for money. Other things included having a pension plan, doing a weekly food shop, and getting married. A less obvious sign was owning a vacuum cleaner!

So when do you become a real grown-up?

We asked two journalists...

What kind of child were you...and have you changed?

David, 47

I loved being an only child. I was never lonely; I enjoyed spending time on my own, doing what I wanted, when I wanted. I **(1) was liking / used to like** reading, going for walks and bike rides in the countryside, and birdwatching. I also collected insects and I **(2) used to keep / kept** them in the garden to learn how they grew and behaved. Now I am a professional biologist, so I still enjoy those things! I'm still very happy spending time on my own, but I enjoy the company of others much more now.

Magda, 22

I was quite sociable as a child and I really enjoyed playing with my friends. But I used to be a bit shy about meeting new people and also quite afraid of some things. Once when I was little, I remember we went for a walk, and I **(3) was holding / held** an ice cream and a big black dog ran over and bit the whole top off. As a result, I didn't like dogs or going for walks for many years. 'Dog ate my ice cream' has become a bit of a family joke. After I **(4) started / was starting** university, I became much more confident. Now I still enjoy spending time with friends, but I like spending time on my own, too. I also love dogs. So maybe I've changed a lot!



Alex, 59

I am one of five brothers and sisters – I'm the second youngest. I **(5) was having / used to have** tantrums as a two-year-old, but I was very independent. When I was three, my mum **(6) went / used to go** into hospital to have my younger brother, and I was the only one in the house who knew how to turn the washing machine on. Actually, I haven't changed much. I'm almost 60 now – I've been strongly independent all my life and I even have the occasional tantrum.

Stephen, 23

I **(7) used to be / was always** very messy when I was younger. I used to throw my clothes around everywhere, and Mum never knew which was clean and which was dirty washing. However, now that I'm older, I'm very tidy – mess really stresses me out! Also, I **(8) always hated / was always hating** going to school, but now I'm doing a postgraduate course at university. But in some ways, I haven't changed at all. I was quite a thoughtful, sensitive person when I was young, and I'm the same now.

The dangerous art of the selfie

Jane Wakefield

A lot of people have died this year while **(1) making / taking** selfies. In Moscow, a university graduate died after trying to take a selfie while he was hanging from a bridge. In Australia, a very fragile and unstable rock that looks like a wedding cake was closed to the public because too many people were climbing it to take wedding photos of themselves. And in Colorado, USA, officials had to close a park after several people were caught getting a little too close to the wildlife. 'We've seen people using selfie sticks to **(2) do / take** a photo of themselves with the bears **(3) in the foreground / in the background**. Sometimes they get as close as three metres,' said recreation manager Brandon Ransom. So why are some people willing to risk their life to take the ultimate selfie? Lee Thompson's selfie **(4) on top of / in front of** the Christ the Redeemer statue in Rio de Janeiro went viral. 'People see how pictures like mine spread across the world, and they see a way to make themselves famous for 15 minutes,' he said.



Lee Thompson

Grammar

prepositions

I took this photograph when we were flying
(1) _____ the Great Wall of China – I was
going back (2) _____ the USA after a
holiday in Beijing. I was sitting (3) _____
the window, so I had a great view. I'm not usually very
good (4) _____ taking photographs, but
I'm quite proud (5) _____ this one. It was
a long flight, and by the time we finally arrived home
(6) _____ Washington, DC, I was exhausted.
But when I look (7) _____ this photograph, it
reminds me (8) _____ the fantastic trip I had
to China.

How safe are your digital photos?

In the past, your grandmother probably kept her photos in a box, or in an old album, and sadly, over time, these memories faded or disappeared. But with today's technology, that shouldn't be a problem. A digital photo lasts forever, right? Actually, think again. Although it is still a good idea to keep all of your photos as digital computer files, there are plenty of things that can damage or even destroy those high-tech memories.

(1)

Very few people realize this can happen, but if you store your photos as .jpgs (the most common file format), the file will actually deteriorate every time you copy and edit it. Experts disagree about how much damage this can do, but the damage is real.

(2)

Your files may be safe on your hard drive, but how long until your hard drive dies? The average lasts just five years. You could back up your photos on a CD-ROM or flash drive, but they don't last forever either – about 10–20 years at most, experts say.

(3)

Let's say all goes well and your CD-ROM or flash drive full of photos lasts for 20 years. By then, will there still be any CD-ROM drives in the world that can read the disc? Will you be able to insert your flash drive into a modern computer? Today's high-tech storage solution is tomorrow's useless floppy disk.



(4)

People talk about saving their photos in a magical place on the internet, like Apple's iCloud, or Dropbox. But this just means they are in a company's data centre on – guess what? – lots of hard drives, which could die or corrupt just as easily as your own. During a thunderstorm, a cloud storage centre in the USA was hit, and major sites like Netflix, Pinterest, and Instagram went offline for almost a whole day. Thousands of files were lost.

(5)

Websites like Flickr and Instagram let you quickly upload photos and share them with others. But bear in mind that a photo site which is popular now could one day go out of business, taking your photos with it. What's more, if you upload photos to these sites, there is someone other than you who controls your access. While it is generally not in their interest to stop you accessing your files, they can and sometimes do. They can even cancel your account.

So what should you do? Experts say you should make lots of copies of your photos and save them in many different ways – on your computer, on a back-up drive, online, and even as traditional printed photos. It may be too late to save Grandma's photos, but you can still save yours.

floppy disk a flexible disk covered in hard plastic, which used to be used for storing computer data

Why your recycling isn't working



1

'Since its invention some 100 years ago, plastic has become an integral part of our daily lives,' said naturalist David Attenborough in the final episode of the highly praised BBC series **Blue Planet II**. 'But every year, some eight million tons of it ends up in the ocean...and there it can be lethal.' Slowly, it seems, we may at last be waking up to the fact that something that makes our lives easier in the short term has consequences that can last thousands of years.

2

One of our main convenience items is plastic water bottles. They are a major contributor to waste in the UK, and we use ten million of them a day. Although the bottles themselves can be recycled, the caps cannot. The problem doesn't stop with plastic bottles. According to new research, almost a fifth of the waste that people put into recycling bins cannot, in fact, be recycled. The reason for this is that the packaging is often made up of several components, many of which are not recyclable.



3

People often believe that something is recyclable when it's not. Take, for example, that black plastic ready-meal tray that you normally put with your bottles and newspapers, or your glittery Christmas wrapping paper – these cannot be recycled, though white trays and plain wrapping paper can be. Plastic pouches, such as the ones used for baby food or pasta sauce, can't be recycled, so it's better to buy them in glass jars, which can be. Toothpaste tubes also can't be recycled, but the pump-action bottles can be.

4

Unclear labelling is often to blame. Recycling information on packaging varies dramatically. Sainsbury's supermarket, for example, labels on its own-brand packaging exactly which parts can and cannot be recycled. Some manufacturers, on the other hand, include no information. Even the recycling symbol itself is confusing, because people don't know what the numbers mean. A 1 or 2 means that a product can be widely recycled, 3 indicates PVC, which is not widely recycled, 4 is polyethylene, and 5 is polypropylene, both of which can only be recycled in some centres. 6 and 7 are not widely accepted for recycling.

5

Last year, more than half of the plastic waste that the UK exported for recycling was sent to China. China has now banned imports of 'foreign garbage', because it is receiving too much poor-quality plastic, contaminated with non-recyclable items. It's a worrying prospect. There are fears that it might not be possible to find alternative destinations for all our recyclable waste. As a result, plastic may end up being burnt, or put in landfill, or more will end up in the sea.

6

Perhaps we should stop assuming that everything that looks recyclable actually is. Instead, we need to start buying products that come in packaging that we are sure can be recycled, or better still, we should try to avoid packaging altogether.

The best part-time job I ever had...

Dog walker, babysitter, shelf-stacker – most of us would have one of these classic part-time jobs on our CV. But did we really learn anything from the experience?

A Sir Ranulph Fiennes, explorer

When I was 16, I wanted to buy a canoe and needed £85. I washed the buses at Midhurst bus station between 3.00 a.m. and 7.00 a.m. during the week. Then I washed the dishes at the Angel Hotel from 6.00 p.m. to 10.00 p.m. I was paid £11 per week in all, and that's how I got the cash. It's too long ago to know if I actually learned anything from the experience.

B Russell Kane, comedian

I did two humiliating Saturday jobs. The first was selling vacuum cleaners door to door. I didn't sell a single one. The other job was working with my granddad for a frozen-food delivery service. I doubt that a Saturday job really teaches you anything. Where I come from, it's automatic – at age 11 you get a job. It wasn't, 'Hey man, I'm really learning the value of work.' It was, 'If I want money, I must work for it.' My dad never gave me a penny of pocket money after the age of 11.



C Tony Ross, illustrator and author

In the fifties, when I was a boy, I used to work at the post office over Christmas. It was fantastic fun. I earned enough to buy an old motor scooter. My favourite part was going in the lorry to collect the mailbags from the station because you didn't have to walk the streets all day. The other good thing was doing a round with your own house in it, because then you could stop for a cup of tea. I learned the basics of working for money, like arriving on time and enjoying it no matter what. It was a good introduction because very few people work for fun.

D Clive Stafford Smith, lawyer

I worked for a sand and gravel company when I was 16. It was cold, damp, and so boring that I cried. I've learned various important things from that job. First, I know I'm very lucky to have a job now that I truly love. I also learned that it's crazy to pay bankers millions while paying a low wage to people at gravel companies. It's terrible work and no one should have to do it. Anyone who says differently should be forced to work at that gravel company for a year.

E Adele Parks, author

When I was doing my A levels, I worked in our local supermarket for two years, stacking shelves. I was 16 then, and in a job like that, you make the decision whether this is what you want to do for the rest of your life. I spent a lot of time chatting to the other guys and girls who had permanent jobs. I am good at talking and telling stories, and I think I learned it there because one of the things about stacking shelves or being at the checkout is that you have lots of opportunities to talk to people. That's what I liked best.

shelf-stacker a person who puts things on shelves in a supermarket

sell sth door to door visit houses to ask people if they want to buy something

do a round do a job with a particular route, e.g. a postman

Foreign drama series

A few years ago, if you'd mentioned to a British friend or colleague that you were addicted to a Danish drama series, people would have thought you were a bit strange. But in the UK today, subtitled foreign-language dramas aren't just in fashion, they're completely mainstream.

It all began when the BBC bought the French crime drama **Spiral**, though it was Denmark's **The Killing** that was the tipping point. 'I remember hearing people talking about it on the bus,' admits Sue Deeks, Head of Programming at the BBC. 'It was clearly growing and growing in popularity, but the extent of it took everyone by surprise.' **The Killing** was followed by **The Bridge**, in which a crime is committed on the bridge between Denmark and Sweden, which regularly topped a million viewers. The British were hooked.

One of the reasons for the success of foreign TV is that it is more accessible than it used to be, thanks to catch-up and online services. And if you haven't watched the latest foreign series that everybody is talking about, you can binge watch the episodes that you've missed, and tweet about how much you love **The Returned**.

There may be something else in foreign TV's new popularity, too. In a world in which we're frequently distracted from our TV viewing by Twitter and WhatsApp, subtitles force us to focus. 'When you read subtitles, you have to be glued to the screen,' says Deeks. 'That concentration gives a particular intensity to the viewing experience. You just can't multitask when you're watching a foreign-language drama.'



And while foreign-language dramas are often remade for the Anglo-American market – for example, **The Bridge** became **The Tunnel** – the originals still dominate, because they transport us to a different culture. As Walter Iuzzolino, who has set up a new streaming service dedicated to foreign-language TV, says, ‘You develop a love for the distant world, because while you’re watching, you’re in the country. If you see something amazing set in Argentina, then Argentina itself, the houses, the people, what they wear, what their voices sound like, the language, is one of the biggest appeals. There is a huge pleasure in that.’

tipping point the point at which an idea suddenly spreads quickly among a large number of people, as a result of a number of small changes over a period of time before that

A new life for dying towns

Italy is famous for its picturesque small towns and villages, many of them originating from medieval times, but a recent report suggests that almost 2,500 risk becoming abandoned ghost towns. It all started with the post-war economic decline of rural Italian communities, when many inhabitants of these small towns and villages emigrated to cities. As more and more young people left, birth rates fell, and the villages began to empty. But recently, some of these villages have discovered new ways of surviving.

Civita is a tiny village about 120 kilometres north of Rome. It was founded by the Etruscans more than 2,500 years ago. The main piazza has a bell tower and a 13th-century church, the narrow streets have beautiful stone houses on either side, and there are ruins of Renaissance palaces. However, Civita **(1)** which connects it to another small town, Bagnoregio. The only vehicles **(2)** , and a couple of tractors, which are used to transport building materials, or to bring supplies for the small number of restaurants and bars. Civita **(3)** , although in the summer, this rises to 100. It became known as 'the dying town', because of **(4)** that have been threatening its survival since the 17th century, and it seemed destined to become a ghost town.



But in 2013, a brilliant idea from the local mayor saved it from certain death. His idea was to charge people an entrance fee to visit the village. Visitors now have to pay €3 Monday to Saturday and €5 on Sundays or public holidays. For a few euros more, they can get a private tour of the village, or a sandwich and a glass of wine. As they walk through its main entrance – a huge stone gateway – any irritation at having to pay quickly evaporates, as visitors are taken back to the Middle Ages. In only five years, the number of tourists has grown from 40,000 to 850,000 per year. As the mayor says, ‘Today Civita is not only alive, but it’s keeping the entire area alive, too.’

Another approach has worked for the tiny medieval village of **Santo Stefano di Sessanio**, 145 kilometres east of Rome. At the end of the 20th century, the village was in ruins, with only 70 inhabitants. But in 1999, Swedish–Italian millionaire Daniele Kihlgren drove through the village on a solo motorbike tour, and decided to do something about this sad situation. He started by buying one house and quickly followed that with another ten. He then made a deal with local government officials to preserve Santo Stefano and not allow any new buildings. In return, he would restore it to its original state and give the village a chance to live again by making the houses into hotel rooms.



Five years later, the village was opened to visitors and became the first 'Albergo Diffuso', which means a hotel which is in fact a whole village with rooms in different buildings. Thirty-two of the restored houses are now hotel rooms. Kihlgren buys everything from local people in and around the village, from the food for the restaurants to the accessories in the guest rooms. As a result, local crafts and the local economy have been revived. In spite of a recent earthquake, the village is now thriving, and Kihlgren has since bought several more villages, which he plans to restore in the same way. Staying in Santo Stefano is like stepping back in time. Walking back in an intense silence from a cosy restaurant to the warmth of your own private, medieval house has a comforting and calming effect. Where once there were empty buildings and locked doors, now fireplaces burn again and soft light pours through the small windows of the centuries-old houses. Santo Stefano di Sessanio is alive again.



How to complain in restaurants... without losing your cool

People often lose their temper when they try to complain about bad food or service. So how do you do it effectively?

(1)

Seventy-five per cent of all problems in restaurants are caused by bad organization, bad training, or employing the wrong staff. The waiters are often innocent victims, so they are not the right person to complain to.

(2)

Have a reasonable idea in your head of how you want the complaint dealt with (i.e. the dish re-cooked, removed from the bill, etc.). Make your case politely, but clearly; don't start your sentence with 'Sorry...'. What are you apologizing for?

(3)

A waiter's job isn't easy. You need to recognize the difference between when they are being genuinely rude or lazy, and when they are simply **overworked**. Booking systems crash. A big group of people who haven't booked suddenly arrives. Staff get ill. Look around you. Are you waiting for your drinks because the staff are chatting by the till, or are they rushing around because the restaurant is clearly **understaffed**?



(4)

Never tell restaurant staff how you think a dish should be cooked or how a drink should be served. If you want something done in a specific way, ask for it. Good restaurants will do it. You don't need to prove how much you know about food and wine by talking about your holiday in Italy or your best friend who has a vineyard. Please also bear in mind that you probably don't know everything. They are the professionals. You aren't.

(5)

The fact that a dish has not been made 'how you do it at home' is not a good reason to complain. The same applies to portion size, unless you can see that the table next to you got twice as much as you. But too much salt, important ingredients missing, **undercooked** fish, cold or burnt food: these are all good reasons for complaining.

(6)

You want a dish served without one of its ingredients? Within reason, that's fine. You want your steak cooked until it's like shoe leather? It's OK to ask for that. However, if you want spaghetti bolognese and it isn't on the menu, that's too bad. Similarly, you can't expect the staff to run to the nearest supermarket to get you some white bread because you don't like the chef's wholemeal loaf.

(7)

Don't threaten to write a bad review on a restaurant review site if you are unhappy with the food or service. If your complaint hasn't been satisfactorily resolved on the night, email the restaurant. You will be amazed how receptive restaurants can be.



(8)

Don't continue drinking your vinegary wine or eating your **overcooked** steak until you are halfway through and then complain. Similarly, there's no point in telling the waitress who is clearing the table that there wasn't enough sauce. Speak up while the mistake can be corrected.

Tipping in restaurants – a waiter’s guide

Knowing how to tip in restaurants can be a nightmare, especially on holiday. A waiter tells you what to do...

Is there anywhere where people never tip?

In Japan. **You mustn’t** do it there. The Japanese think that tipping someone means treating them like a servant. The price is the price.

Where should you tip?

Everywhere else. As a waiter, I find it hard to imagine anyone being upset with extra cash. You should never feel embarrassed to leave a tip on the table. In fact, in countries where **you don’t have to** tip, it’s even more appreciated.

Do you need to tip if service is already included?

In countries like France and Australia, service is always included in the prices. The service charge is often shared with the kitchen staff as well – which is a good thing, helping everyone to earn a bit more. When **you have to** pay a service charge, of course, **you needn’t** add an extra tip unless you really want to. If you do tip, check that the money is going to the waiter and not to the restaurant owner, and if in doubt, leave cash.

How much should you tip?

The standard service charge is 12.5% of the bill in Britain, so if your bill doesn’t include service, **you should** tip about 10% (the USA and Canada are another story – there’s no upper limit!). But – and this is important – if you’re leaving a good tip, don’t make a big thing about it and expect the waiter to look at you adoringly. Do it discreetly and enjoy the feel-good factor instead.



When shouldn't you tip?

The only circumstances when I think **you shouldn't** tip are when the service is really really bad, for example, if you ask for things that never arrive, or if staff are extremely unfriendly. But remember that what many people think of as 'slow service' is often more the kitchen's fault than the waiter's.

Marina's extraordinary uses for ordinary things

Your house is full of everyday items that can be used for things you would never have expected. I promise all these ideas work – I've tried them!

1

Do you have a problem with insects? Don't like spiders in your house? Citrus or lemon oil is a traditional repellent for insects of all kinds – and the oil is in the peel. Take large pieces of peel and **place** them along window sills and cracks outside your house, to stop spiders, ants, and other unwelcome guests from coming in. Cats also really dislike the strong smell of lemons, so you can use lemon peel or lemon juice to **keep** them **away** from specific areas in your house or garden. However, despite what you may have heard, lemon oil doesn't have any effect on mosquitoes, sadly, so it won't protect you from their bites.

2

Even after you've washed them, plastic food containers often end up with a rather unpleasant smell from the food you kept in them. Newspaper can **absorb** all sorts of moisture and smells. Just **crumple** a piece of newspaper and put it inside your food container, then **seal** the container and leave it overnight.

In the morning, throw away the newspaper and enjoy your clean container. You can also use the same method to deal with smelly trainers. Just **stuff** them with newspaper overnight and they'll be smell-free the next day.



3

Towels are always soft and lovely when they're new, but they soon become a bit rough. You could buy fabric conditioner to help to **restore** that softness, but you can also use a tennis ball. Just put the ball in the dryer with your towels or sheets. Because of the movement of the ball against the material, they will feel really soft when you take them out. Make sure you use a new tennis ball, though, or you risk ruining your lovely clean laundry.

4

Eggs are rich in proteins that are very similar to those found in our hair, so they make a great conditioner. Try beating an egg with a bit of olive oil, and **apply** it to your hair. (Use a couple of eggs if your hair is really dry.) If you want to smell less like an omelette and more like you've just come back from the hairdresser's, add a couple of drops of scented oil. Leave on for about 20 minutes and then **rinse** with warm water. Your hair will be shiny and extra smooth. But be careful not to use really hot water or you might cook the eggs!

5

Many people know that you can use olive oil to stop doors from making a noise, or to make machines work more smoothly. But you might be surprised to learn that it is also a great alternative to shaving cream. Just **rub** it on your skin and shave normally. Olive oil can also help with dry skin, so you can use it to moisturize your face or legs after you finish shaving.

He gives away his salary to save the world

Working for a big financial company in London on a six-figure salary, you might expect Grayden Reece-Smith to **(1)** , going on expensive holidays or driving a sports car around south London, where he lives. In fact, the 28-year-old lives a very different existence from his colleagues. He **(2)** – a figure that he calculated he could comfortably live on.

Over the past five years, Reece-Smith has handed over more than £250,000 to organizations such as International Care Ministries, which **(3)** , and the Against Malaria Foundation. He is part of a growing number of young professionals described as ‘effective altruists’. Effective altruists typically donate regularly to a charity which they think will have a significant impact. Some **(4)** to make more money, which can then be given away.

Reece-Smith considered working in the charity sector after graduating from university, but calculated that he could make a bigger difference by donating a large part of his salary. He had **(5)** at a school in Tanzania, but then realized that earning and giving would be more effective. ‘The cost of my flights there could have paid the salaries of two teachers for an entire year,’ he says. Instead, he could ‘stay at home, living a nice life and still **(6)** .

He is not frugal – last year he went to Cuba on holiday, and **(7)** . But his lifestyle isn’t as luxurious as some of the people he works with. ‘I tend not to buy supermarket-branded food products, but I don’t **(8)** .

Other people on my salary might have a bigger house. Some of my colleagues have four-bedroom houses, but we only bought what we needed – a two-bedroom flat. £42,000 is more than enough to live on and still save,’ he says.

Can money buy you happiness?

According to research, it seems that it can. But what makes us really happy is not buying ourselves the latest iPhone, it's spending our money on other people.

In a study of the link between money and happiness, researchers from Zurich University divided 50 people into two groups. The first group was asked to plan how to spend 25 Swiss francs a week on gifts or outings for other people, and the second group was asked to plan how to spend the same amount of money on themselves. The people in the first group increased their happiness more than the group who planned to buy themselves treats. Spending on ourselves, it turns out, doesn't make us nearly as happy as giving to other people.

Other studies in which people have been given envelopes of money to spend show that those who spent some of it on a gift, or gave some to charity, felt happier than those who spent it on something for themselves or on a bill they needed to pay. A study of young children found that even toddlers felt happier giving rather than getting treats. And the best news is that you don't have to give a lot of money away to feel the benefits.

treat (noun) sth very pleasant and enjoyable

A different kind of social network

It's a bright Thursday morning in Oxford and the Thirsty Meeples café is a buzz of activity. As I, my wife, and two sons sit at a sunny window table, the assistant, Gareth, introduces himself and recommends some games. First, he suggests **Forbidden Desert**. 'You have crash-landed in a desert,' explains Gareth. 'You have to find all the pieces of a flying ship in order to escape.' Next, he suggests **Small World**, in which wizards, giants, and humans with special powers battle for land in a world that's too small for them all. Last, he recommends **Citadels**, a game where you compete to become the King's Master Builder by building a medieval city. We choose Citadels. As we play, next to us Eveline, a 30-year-old Dutch university teacher, is playing **Ticket to Ride** with her Belgian husband, Roger – they are racing against each other to build railway tracks across Europe. Two teenagers play **Sushi Go!**, a card game where they have to create sushi dishes. What has drawn all these different people here, from serious gamers to families? Eveline thinks she has the answer. She looks around at the other customers and at the library of games on the shelves. 'I would say it's the original social network.'

Thirsty Meeples's name comes from the combination of 'meeples', the pieces that board gamers play with, and wanting a drink. It is one of a growing number of board game shops and cafés popping up all over the UK, inspired by their growing popularity in the USA.

Peter Wooding, a former punk rocker, opened a board game shop called Orc's Nest in Covent Garden, London, in 1987. For the first few years, the shop hardly made any money at all, but over 30 years later, it is thriving.



Wooding says that one of the reasons for its success is that the games and players are very different from 30 years ago. Today, they are young professional couples, who like the idea of playing a game with friends and having a few drinks, rather than going out to the pub. Another reason is that there are also far more women playing games. Wooding says the game **Pandemic**, where players must collaborate to control global diseases, and whose main character is a female scientist, has had a huge influence. ‘Much wider appeal,’ says Wooding. ‘More friendly.’ Pandemic is an example of the newer, less aggressive games, with themes like farming or landscape building. One such game, **Catan**, in which players have to buy and sell natural resources to build roads and new cities, has sold more than 22 million copies in 30 languages.

The growth of the video games industry has, perhaps surprisingly, also been one of the biggest factors in the new popularity of board games, largely because they have made playing games such a normal thing for adults to do. Everyone has at least one game on their phone, and more people are open to the idea of playing a game than ever before. Social media has also provided an easy way for people to recommend new games to each other.

At Thirsty Meeples in Oxford, I talk to owners John and Zuzi Morgan. What’s Zuzi’s explanation for the trend? ‘There’s so much technology,’ she says. ‘Everybody’s busy and you want to bring people back together in a way that’s not just staring at screens. It’s a natural thing in people. We are supposed to be together and communicating with each other in the real world.’

‘You connect with people across the table. It’s a very human thing.’ Matt Leacock, creator of Pandemic

Spa treatments – women love them. Can men enjoy them too?

The Sunday Times decided to find out. Two of their journalists, Joanna Duckworth and Stephen Bleach, went to spend a day at a health spa and try out the treatments. These are some of the treatments they had:

Kanebo kai zen facial

Deep intensive cleaning with face and neck massage.
1 hr 40 minutes.

Banana, papaya, and strawberry body polish

Leaves your skin feeling smooth and hydrated. Includes head massage. 40 minutes.

Elemis foot treatment

Pedicure and foot massage. 55 minutes.

The battle that changed England's history

Every year, on 14th October, a famous battle is re-enacted on the exact site where the original battle took place. Over 600 people dress up in period costumes and bring the story of an 11th century battle to life. The Battle of Hastings, which was **fought** in 1066, is one of the best-known events of English history, when William of Normandy **defeated** the army of King Harold of England. This marked the end of the Anglo-Saxon era and the beginning of Norman rule.

1066 was a turbulent year for England. King Harold had **succeeded** his brother-in-law, Edward, as King of England, but he was being attacked by others who wanted to rule the country – the King of Norway, and Duke William of Normandy (in what is now France). The Norwegians **invaded** in the north, and were defeated by the English army at the battle of Stamford Bridge on 25th September, but soon after, the Normans landed in Sussex on the south coast, and made their camp near the small seaside town of Hastings.

The English army immediately travelled south. On 13th October, after covering 275 miles, they arrived exhausted near Hastings, and on the morning of 14th, the two armies met in a field about 7 miles north-west of the town. Each army had between 5,000 and 7,000 men. They had similar armour and weapons, but William had over 2,000 cavalry, whereas the English fought on foot. William also had archers with powerful bows.




The battle lasted all day. The English soldiers used their shields to protect themselves against the Normans' arrows, but gradually the Normans gained control, and in the last attack, King Harold was **killed**. The English lost the battle, and on Christmas Day, William of Normandy was **crowned** King of England. He later became known as William the Conqueror.


In 1071, King William built an abbey on the site where the battle had taken place, as a memorial to all those who had died. Although no relics of the battle have ever been found there, we have very strong evidence that it took place, because an enormous tapestry was made – nearly 70 metres long – showing the story of the battle. This tapestry, which was completed in about 1077, is known as the Bayeux tapestry, and it has been kept in France for nearly 1,000 years. It can be visited in a museum in the town of Bayeux, Normandy.


William's abbey was called Battle Abbey, and the town that grew up nearby was also called Battle. The whole of the town would once have been part of the battlefield; for example, Harold's soldiers almost certainly **retreated** up what is currently Battle high street. Although the abbey was **destroyed** by King Henry VIII in the 16th century, the ruins and the battlefield remain one of the most atmospheric historical sites in Britain today.



How to remember numbers

We are surrounded by numbers – PINs, codes for credit card security, online accounts, or entry codes to buildings – and we are expected to **memorize** them all. Wouldn't it be great if we could remember these numbers instantly, whenever we needed them? I am not brilliant at remembering numbers, but I have trained my memory. Now I can **(1)** . How is this possible?

I use a method called the Number-Shape System. This is a great way to store any sequence of digits, such as PINs, calendar dates, telephone numbers, and much longer ones as well. First, for numbers 0–9, **(2)** . For example, '0' could be a ball, '1' could be a pencil, and so on. My suggestions for numbers 2–9 are: 2 a swan, 3 handcuffs, 4 a sailing boat, 5 a seahorse, 6 an elephant's trunk, 7 a boomerang, 8 an egg timer, and 9 a balloon on a string. You can use these ideas, or choose images of your own, for example, number 8 could also be a snowman.

Now you can start using the pictures. Connect **(3)** . So, to **remind** you that you have to catch a number 67 bus, imagine an elephant ('elephant trunk' = number 6) standing at the bus stop throwing a boomerang ('boomerang' = number 7); an unlikely scene, but certainly one you won't forget. Or if you want to remember that oxygen has the atomic number 8, imagine a snowman wearing an oxygen mask. Now, suddenly, numbers come to life and are instantly more memorable. This is called the Link Method. It works by linking one object to the next by creating an imaginary connection between the two items.



You're going to try to memorize the following 20-digit number.

7 9 0 4 6 2 1 3 5 8 5 9 9 4 0 1 3 2 7 6

First, using the Number-Shape System, convert each number into its equivalent shape (use either your own number shapes or mine). Then connect them together using the Link Method. So to start, imagine throwing a boomerang at a balloon on a string. Continue by connecting the balloon on a string to a ball, and so on. You should now have created **(4)** , starting with a boomerang and ending with an elephant's trunk. Now try to write down the sequence of numbers. Score one point for each digit you can **recall** before making a mistake. Maximum points: 20.

Mabel

Part 1

George was working in Burma for the British colonial government. He and Mabel became engaged when he was back in England. When he returned to Burma, it was arranged that she would join him there in six months. But one difficulty came up after another. Mabel's father died, the war came, then George was sent to a district which was unsuitable for a white woman. In the end, it was seven years before she was able to start. He made all the arrangements for the marriage, which was going to take place on the day of her arrival, and went down to Rangoon to meet her. Then, suddenly, without warning, his nerve failed him. He had not seen Mabel for seven years. He had forgotten what she was like. She was a total stranger. He felt a terrible feeling in his stomach. He couldn't go through with it. He must tell Mabel that he was very sorry, but he couldn't, he really couldn't marry her. But how could a man tell a girl a thing like that when she had been engaged to him for seven years and had come 6,000 miles to marry him? He didn't have the nerve for that either. There was a boat just about to sail for Singapore; he wrote a letter to Mabel, and without any luggage, just in the clothes he was wearing, he boarded the boat. The letter Mabel received said:

Dearest Mabel,

I have been suddenly called away on business and do not know when I will be back. I think it would be much wiser if you returned to England. My plans are very uncertain.

Your loving George.

the war the First World War, which started in 1914

Rangoon the old name for Yangon, the largest port in Myanmar (Burma)



Part 3

No, no, she wasn't going to catch him so easily. He had **(1)** already _____ made his plans. He could catch the last ship along the Yangtze river to Chungking.

(2) _____, no one could get there until the following spring. He arrived at Chungking, but he was desperate now. He was not going to take any risks. There was a place called Cheng-tu, the capital of Szechuan, and it was 400 miles away. It could **(3)** _____ be reached by road, and the area was full of thieves. A man would be safe there.

George set out. He sighed with relief when he saw the walls of the lonely Chinese city. He could rest **(4)** _____. Mabel would **(5)** _____ find him there. The British consul was a friend of his and he stayed with him in his luxurious house.

The weeks passed lazily one after the other.

(6) _____, George and the consul were in the courtyard when there was a loud knock at the door.

This is how much a wedding really costs!



After we got **(1)** [redacted] and started seriously planning our wedding, I read all the wedding magazines, and they all tell you that the average cost of a UK wedding is now £25,000. After the event, I can tell you that unless you are having the **(2)** [redacted] in your garden, and are only inviting ten **(3)** [redacted], this is just not true.

We didn't have an enormous wedding. We got **(4)** [redacted] in a country house in Surrey, and invited about 100 people, which I think is the average, judging by every other wedding I've been to. We saved money where we could. We were very lucky because friends designed the **(5)** [redacted], and did the music and photography for free. My sister made the cake, and my parents paid for the drinks. We bought the dresses for the **(6)** [redacted] and the suit for the **(7)** [redacted] ready-made from a department store.

Still, we ended up spending over £30,000, and if we hadn't had very kind and helpful friends, it would've been more like £35,000. Just to give other **(8)** [redacted] a little bit of guidance, I'm sharing some of our biggest expenses with you so it'll hopefully be a bit less of a shock when you get the bills!

Six things Americans do that drive Brits crazy

By Ruth Margolis

American people are some of the friendliest you'll ever meet. But occasionally, they do things that we find a bit...eccentric.

(1) Saying 'I love your accent!'

Before I moved to the USA, I never imagined that my London accent made me sound intelligent. At first the **compliments** were nice, but then a New York mum asked me to teach her two-year-old how to talk like me. A bit too much, I thought.

(2)

In America, people in shops say things like 'Ma'am, you have been an **awesome** customer today', just because I bought some toilet paper. I do not want that.

(3)

American waiters love to please, but sometimes they're too helpful. Over-enthusiastic waiters take away your plate the second it's empty, even if no one else at the table has finished.

(4) Insisting that turkey is tasty

There's a good reason why Brits only eat this bird at Christmas. **Turkey** meat is dry and tasteless. But Americans put it in everything – burgers, meatballs, lasagna – everything!



(5)

We **get** it, you're proud to be an American. We Brits like our country too, but to your average Brit, hanging a giant flag from your house is a little bit **creepy**.

(6)

Having to remove 'u's from words like 'colour' and change 're' to 'er' in words like 'theatre' is a headache. And Americans, please note: saying 'erb' instead of 'herb' and pronouncing 'fillet' as 'fillay' (without the 't') is not clever or sophisticated. You are not French.

Six things Brits do that drive Americans crazy

By Maria Roth

Americans love the British. They're so charming and smart! But there are some things about them that we don't quite understand.

(1)

When strangers in stores and people on the street make eye contact, **nod**, or say, 'Hi!', it's OK to smile and say hello back. We won't bite!

(2) Overcooking vegetables

The authentic British way to prepare vegetables is to put them in boiling water for a fortnight. We Americans think this is **weird** and unpleasant.



(3)

Oh, we fat Americans with our big cars and flags! Too many Brits are convinced that this inaccurate picture of us is true, and we are not amused.

(4)

It seems that some Brits would rather not leave a 15 to 20 per cent tip for their waiter. They may not realize that waiters in the US are paid very low wages and depend on tips to survive.

(5) Not wanting to 'share'

Brits are famous for being **reserved** – they never complain or discuss their problems. But that's not the way we do things here. We're more open with our friends, and even with strangers, and when people don't share, we find it strange.

(6)

We get it, in British English, 'trousers' means pants and 'pants' are really underwear. And the letter 'z' is 'zee' to Americans, but 'zed' to Brits. We Americans just have a different way of speaking and writing. It doesn't mean we're stupid, and I promise we're not trying to offend you.

A nation prepares for the dreaded gaokao

Shanghai, 5th June – Tomorrow, cities throughout China **(1) will close** roads near schools, prohibit the hooting of car horns, and even change some aeroplane flight paths, so that nine million students can concentrate on the **gaokao**, the three-day-long national university entrance exam.

University places are scarce in China, and most students **(2) are not going to have** a chance if they do not do well in the gaokao, a name which means ‘high exam’ in Mandarin Chinese. The stakes are very high indeed: a place in a top university will almost always lead to a high-paid job after graduation. For millions of Chinese students, the exam is an important chance to improve their lives, and because most families **(3) have** only one child, the pressure on candidates is intense.

We spoke to students who **(4) hadn’t been** out with their friends for many months, and who **(5) were studying** all the time that they weren’t sleeping. And while some cram, others cheat. Each year, candidates **(6) are caught** with high-tech devices such as wireless earphones, as well as pens and watches with tiny scanners. James Bond would be proud.

Teachers’ lives are difficult, too. One gaokao tutor **(7) explained** her schedule: morning exercises start at 6.10 a.m., evening classes end at 10.00 p.m., students get only one day off a month – and teachers must spend that day marking practice exams.

To prepare for the exam, students memorize past exam papers and try to guess what questions **(8) will be asked** this year. All candidates answer questions in Chinese, maths, and English, then choose two additional subjects: history, geography, physics, biology, chemistry, or political ideology. Some of the unusual essay questions that **(9) have appeared** on past papers include:



- ‘An Englishman dreams of living in Western China in another era. Write a story based on this.’
- ‘Why chase mice when there are fish to eat?’
- ‘Talk about water.’
- ‘Why do we want to return to our childhood?’

The exam **(10) has been criticized** for testing endurance rather than intelligence. Small reforms **(11) were made** to the exam a few years ago, but little has changed overall. More and more Chinese students **(11) have been moving** overseas for university, or even secondary school, just to avoid the gaokao. The number of candidates who sit the exam has fallen dramatically in recent years, from 10.2 million in 2009, to 9 million this year.

However, at the same time, the gaokao **(13) is beginning** to be more widely recognized abroad. The University of Sydney has said it will accept gaokao scores from Chinese students in place of its own entrance exam. China may not need to reform the gaokao after all – it will reform the rest of us.