

ENGLISH
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For Today

Book Five: OUR CHANGING CULTURE
The National Council of Teachers of English

Second Edition

Second Edition

ENGLISH FOR TODAY

Book Five: OUR CHANGING CULTURE

THE NATIONAL COUNCIL
OF TEACHERS OF ENGLISH

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ENGLISH FOR TODAY

Book Five: OUR CHANGING CULTURE

Contents

Unit One: CHANGING PATTERNS OF BEHAVIOR 1

| | | |
|---------------|--|----|
| Lesson One: | Seeking Advice | 1 |
| | Reverse Psychological Verbs | 13 |
| Lesson Two: | Folk-Life Festival: The Celebration of Hands | 15 |
| | Object Clauses Introduced by <i>that</i> | 23 |
| | Negative Raising | 24 |
| Lesson Three: | Four Choices for Young People | 25 |
| | Object Clauses with Infinitives | 35 |
| | Object Clauses with Gerunds | 36 |

Unit Two: THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT 38

| | | |
|---------------|---|----|
| Lesson Four: | Motion Pictures | 38 |
| | Noun Compounds | 45 |
| Lesson Five: | The "American Musical" | 49 |
| | Compounds of a Verb + Particle or a Particle + Verb | 57 |
| | Genitive Compounds | 58 |
| Lesson Six: | Rock Superstars: What Do They Tell Us About Ourselves and Our Society? | 60 |
| | Noun Compounds | 68 |
| Lesson Seven: | The Art of the Skyscraper | 72 |
| | Noun Adjuncts | 81 |
| | Noun Compounds | 82 |
| | Review of Compounds | 83 |

Unit Three: NEW DIRECTIONS IN EDUCATION 84

| | | |
|---------------|---|-----|
| Lesson Eight: | A New Lease on Life: Education for Mature Women | 84 |
| | Noun Clauses: Alternatives with <i>whether</i> | 92 |
| Lesson Nine: | Making It in America: Puerto Ricans Attend College | 95 |
| | Clauses with <i>whoever</i> and <i>whatever</i> | 103 |
| | Clauses with <i>whenever</i> and <i>wherever</i> | 104 |
| Lesson Ten: | Education Indian-Style: A Happy School at Rough Rock | 106 |
| | Content Clauses after Verb-Noun Pairs | 114 |

Unit Four: OUR CHANGING LANGUAGE 116

| | | |
|-------------------------|---|------------|
| Lesson Eleven: | Who Uses English? | 116 |
| | Tag Questions (A Review) | 124 |
| Lesson Twelve: | A Conversation on British and American English | 128 |
| | Shortened Questions | 137 |
| | Negative Shortened Questions | 139 |
| Lesson Thirteen: | Where Do All the New Words Come From? | 140 |
| | Special Tag Questions | 148 |
| | Questions Meaning "I'm Listening" | 149 |
| Lesson Fourteen: | Variety and Style in Language | 152 |
| | Special Tag Questions | 164 |
| | Short Responses with <i>too, so, either, neither</i> | 165 |

Unit Five: VIEWS OF AMERICA 167

| | | |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------|
| Lesson Fifteen: | Reverence for the Earth | 167 |
| | Request Clauses after Verbs | 176 |
| | Negated Request Clauses after Verbs | 177 |
| Lesson Sixteen: | I Have a Dream | 178 |
| | Request Clauses after Adjectives | 186 |
| | Infinitive Clauses | 187 |
| Lesson Seventeen: | The Inaugural Address (1961) | 188 |
| | Clauses after Nouns of Request | 196 |
| | Parallelism | 197 |

Lesson One

Seeking Advice

Letter 1

to date to go to a party, a
dance, the movies, etc., with
someone of the opposite sex

all hell broke out a lot of
trouble arose

Dear Ann Landers: You have made plenty of trouble for me and I want you to know it. It's hard enough to be a step-mother—now I've got double trouble because Ann Landers says, "A high school student should be able to date if she is dependable and has a sense of responsibility."

My step-daughter is in high school. She is only 14 but has the body of an 18-year old. The problem is she has the mind of a 10-year old. We have told her no dating in cars until she is 16. All hell broke out around here when your column appeared.

Thanks for nothing—Reader From The Old School

beat down bully or intimi-
date

Dear O.S.: Go back and read my advice again. Then read it to your step-daughter. I said a high school girl who has integrity and a record of dependability should be permitted to date. According to your letter, that child has neither. You're on solid ground, Mother. Don't let her beat you down.

Letter 2

lift a finger help
yells bloody murder com-
plains loudly

Dear Ann Landers: Is our daughter normal? Am I crazy or what? Linda is 16, doesn't lift a finger around the house, yells bloody murder if I misplace something that SHE should have put away. She has a tantrum if I don't have her blouses pressed in time. If I ask her to run an errand



Courtesy of Ann Landers

Ann Landers

for me, she says I'm exploiting her. I'm exhausted and disgusted. What goes?—Beat Mom.

Dear Mom: Who raised that vegetable? When you plant onions, don't expect lilacs to bloom.

Letter 3

my heart went out to her I
sympathized with her

change purse purse for coins

cut that out stop that

bar mitzvah Jewish
religious ceremony for boys

some kind of nut a crazy
person

Dear Ann Landers: I read the letter from the young woman who went to the funeral of her best friend and couldn't shed a tear. My heart went out to her, even though my problem is just the opposite.

I can cry if a girl I work with tells me she left her change purse in the ladies' room and it had \$2 in it. A sad movie starts me bawling so loud my husband has told me repeatedly, "If you don't cut that out, I'm going to move to another row and act like I don't know you."

I cry at weddings, bar mitzvahs, christenings, graduations and birthday parties. Every time I hear "God Bless America," tears run down my cheeks and I streak my makeup.

Am I some kind of nut? Why do I feel everything so strongly? Please explain, Ann. And if you print my letter in the paper, I just know I'll be so thrilled I'll bawl my head off.—Weepers Finders



Dear W.F.: Here's your letter. Now go get a handkerchief and wipe your eyes so you can read it.

You're in better shape than the woman who couldn't shed a tear at her best friend's funeral. Stop feeling embarrassed because you are a sensitive person and your emotions are close to the surface. What this world needs is more people who care and aren't ashamed to show it.

Letter 4

Dear Ann Landers: I'd like to delve further into your response: "Hard work never killed anybody." Maybe hard work never killed anybody, but it sure has destroyed a lot of marriages. The man who is obsessed with his job is just as hooked as the alcoholic, the junkie, or the compulsive gambler. The big difference is that the "work freak" is admired by society, considered a "go-getter." The other guys are considered "sick" or "bums."

Having followed your column for several years, I am well aware that you are a staunch supporter of the Work Ethic. From what I've heard, both you and your husband

hooked addicted
work freak work addict

work ethic a set of
principles that stress the
value of hard work

are extremely energetic and superachievers. Well, not everybody possesses that kind of drive or wants that kind of life.

loon

fool

More and more marriages are breaking up because husbands are spending all their time and energy piling up money. The final battle cry of the driven loon is, "Look how hard I work to provide my family with something better! All I get is criticism." What he DIDN'T provide his family with was his presence when they needed him. Sign me—Ex-wife.

shortchanging

cheating

Dear Ex: The man who puts in so many hours at his job that his family gets no time or attention is shortchanging them AND himself. Those dynamos pay a big price for their so-called success. Often they end up with a large net worth, a bleeding ulcer, and no relationship with a wife or child.

for the steak
sizzle

*for money
excitement*

But not all work freaks fall into that category. Some (myself, for example) make plenty of time for family, friends, worthy causes, and fun travel. I enjoy the challenge, the excitement, and the opportunity for growth that my work provides. But I'm not actually working for the steak. It's the sizzle that fascinates me.

Letter 5

grief therapy *activity to*
relieve the feeling of sorrow

Dear Ann Landers: I buried my husband yesterday. We were married for 23 years. My hand is not very steady but I must write this letter. Perhaps it is grief therapy for myself, but whatever the reason I hope you will not think I am out of my head.

on balance *altogether; on*
the whole

Our marriage was what you might call "average." We had more than our share of arguments but on balance we had more fun together than most couples our age. I am Italian and Bill was Irish. Maybe that explains a few things. Anyway, I loved him very much and I know he loved me.

massive

severe

We had an argument Wednesday night. It was a bitter quarrel and we both said things we shouldn't have. Thursday morning I fixed Bill a good breakfast but we didn't speak. I figured we'd patch things up at supper. That afternoon at 4 o'clock he was dead. It was a massive heart attack, his first. By the time I reached the hospital, he was gone.

Years ago you gave some advice on how to have a good marriage. You said, "Never go to bed mad." How I wish I had taken that advice. It's awful to know that our last words were angry ones.

I hope every married couple who reads this will ask themselves this question: "If I never see my beloved again, what were the last words we spoke to one another?" That's something to think about, isn't it?—Too Late For Me

Dear Friend: Yes, it is. And I thank you for starting a lot of people thinking. God bless you.

Letter 6

got over gave up; recovered
hangup from
 obsession

Dear Abby: I think it's about time girls got over this ridiculous hangup of refusing to give a guy a goodnight kiss. A goodnight kiss is just an expression of thanks. Why hurt a guy's feelings by turning him down?

There are all kinds of kisses. A goodnight kiss is one way of saying, "Thanks for taking me out and spending your hard-earned money on me."—A Sensitive Guy.

call it square consider the
 obligation paid

Dear Sensitive: Sorry, but I don't believe a girl should kiss a guy for taking her out and spending his hard-earned money on her. She might prefer to give him the cash and call it square.

A kiss should say, "I like you," not "Thank you."



Courtesy of Abigail Van Buren

Abigail Van Buren

Letter 7

on the outs *not on friendly terms*

Dear Abby: On Christmas Day a relative with whom I had been on the outs for four years telephoned me and said, "There is no sense in our being mad at each other for the rest of our lives. Let's be friends again!"

I wept.

bury the hatchet *agree to be friends*

He later told me that he had been inspired to call me after reading in your column, "Call up an enemy today and bury the hatchet."

de nada (Spanish) *equivalent to "you're welcome" or "don't mention it"*

Thanks a million, Abby.—De Espana

Dear De: De nada!

Letter 8

Dear Abby: My own tendency to be late was cured when someone said that tardiness is the subtlest form of self-love and conceit—counting your time and convenience more important than another's.

Perhaps that is why the tardiness of my in-laws rangles me so. They are consistently late, a half hour to an hour and a half, even for a dinner when others are involved.

Don't suggest that I give them an earlier arrival time. One family member did this, and when it was discovered, retaliation set in.

How would you handle this? (Short of excluding these members from family gatherings.)—Offended and Baffled

don't sweat it *endure it; don't let it bother you*

Dear O and B: Don't sweat it. Invite them only on those occasions when their late arrival will not inconvenience YOU!

Selection 9: Mr., Mrs., Miss—and Ms.

1. MS? Isn't that the abbreviation for manuscript? As a matter of fact, it is. And *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language* lists it as an abbreviation for "millisecond" as well in this era of precision and technology. What is it doing then in a series of familiar titles of address?



circles

groups

2. Generally pronounced /MIZ/, the term has been in use for some time in advertising and public-relations circles to avoid "mislabeling" women whose marital status is unknown. Since "Mrs." clearly indicates a married woman and "Miss" an unmarried one, "Ms." it was felt, nicely avoided making any such distinction but still let it be known that the person so addressed was female. Since "Ms." has no spelled-out form ("Mr." and "Mrs." are both bona fide abbreviations, but "Ms." uses the period without being an abbreviation for anything), no plural, and (to date at least) no foreign-language equivalent, grammarians are having a hard time accounting for it.

3. Recently, the women's liberation movement adopted the designation as its own. Feminists feel that it is an invasion of their privacy to be obliged to indicate via the title "Mrs." or "Miss" whether or not they are married. A man, they argue, is always just plain, "Mr." Why shouldn't a woman have the same right to keep her marital status her own business? Often a woman is widowed or divorced anyway—technically single but still theoretically a "Mrs.," a situation that might perhaps be a source of confusion.

4. The term "Ms." has been struggling for wider acceptance during the last few years, and there are signs that it is finally becoming respectable. One woman member of the U.S. House of Representatives has managed to get the *Congressional Record* to list her as "Ms." Some state legislatures have introduced bills allowing women to use "Ms." when registering to vote. In February, 1972, the revised edition of the Government Printing Office stylebook included "Ms." in its list of acceptable "prefixes."

5. Further indication of the widening application of "Ms." is a monthly magazine which began publication in 1972. Its masthead bears the title *Ms.* No additional explanatory subtitle is provided. The magazine is written, edited, produced, and published by women, and it contains articles and features of interest to the "new generation" of feminists as well as to their male antagonists or supporters. So far in its young career, *Ms.* seems to be thriving.

6. With the flexible ways of the English language, it probably won't be too long before "manuscript" and "millisecond" have to move over to make way for a new dictionary definition. "Ms." will have scaled the heights of grammatical respectability.

scaled the heights reached
the goal

COMPREHENSION

True-False Sentences

Letter 1

1. Ann Landers says that a high school girl should be able to date if she is dependable and responsible. _____
2. The step-daughter has a mature mind. _____
3. Ann Landers agrees with the step-daughter. _____

Yes-No Questions

Letter 2

Answer Yes or No. Quote a reason for your answer.

1. Does Linda help around the house? _____
2. Does Linda force her Mom to wait on her? _____
3. Does Linda readily agree to run errands for her Mom? _____

Contradiction and Comment

Letter 3

These statements are incorrect. Reply negatively and then supply the correct information. (Number 1 is partly answered for you as an example.)

1. The letter writer only cries about important or serious things. No. She cries about _____.
2. Her husband approves of her crying. _____.
3. If the letter is printed in the newspaper, the writer says that she will be very unhappy and cry. _____.

True-False Sentences

Letter 4

According to the letter writer, are these statements true or false?

1. Hard work has destroyed marriages. _____
2. The work freak is similar to the alcoholic or gambler. _____
3. Ann Landers does not believe in hard work. _____

According to Ann Landers, are these statements true or false?

4. The man who works so hard that he has no time for his family is hurting them and himself. _____
5. All work freaks are alike. _____
6. She enjoys working hard, but she doesn't like steak. _____

Or Questions

Letter 5

1. Did the husband and wife have more arguments or more fun together than most couples? _____
2. Did they make up after the last quarrel or did they stay angry? _____
3. Had the wife followed Ann Landers' advice of years ago or had she ignored it? _____

Multiple-Choice Questions

Selection 9

After you read the selection, quickly answer the following without looking back. Choose one or more answers.

1. The term "Ms." means _____ manuscript/ _____ millisecond/
_____ an unmarried woman.