

edge

Issue 3

ENGLISH

前沿英语



WHEN IN ROME ...
Welcome to Italy

ON THE
TABLE

Organic
healthy food



ON THE
WATER

The America's
Cup



ON THE BEACH
Leonardo DiCaprio

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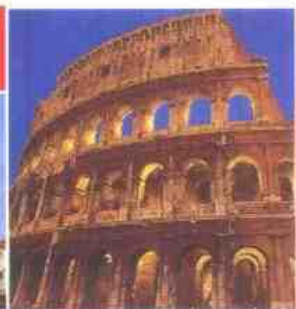
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To our readers

Greetings!

You've probably already picked up on our enthusiasm for the Internet here at Edge English. The Internet is seriously hip, these days. But, at heart, it's all about greater communication between each other. Especially on the global level. And that's the whole focus of Edge English. Giving you English you can communicate with. Up-to-date English. English on the edge.

And along with contemporary English, we try to give you some contemporary ideas as well, to help you understand the new decade we are living in.

Lastly, for the next couple of issues, how about some contemporary music to keep you tuned in to the contemporary music scene? We've chosen for you the rock group Telling Stories whose music you can hear on our audio tape. More on this great group next issue!

edge
ENGLISH

<http://www.about.com>

If you want to get expert advice on hundreds of subjects, **about.com** is the Internet site for you.

This site describes itself as the "network of sites led by expert guides".

You can click on the names of hundreds of subjects - education, learning English, travel, computers, relationship advice, movies, shopping, money tips, entertainment, sport, hobbies, help with the Internet. Just click on the name of the subject that interests you, and you will also find a photo of the guide. All the guides are chatty and helpful, and know their stuff.

❖ **Julie Altebranda**, the New York guide, grew up in and loves New York where her father was a manager at the famous Waldorf Astoria hotel.

❖ **Kenneth Beare** (TESOL diploma, London), is the guide who helps foreign speakers of English. He has worked in this field for more than 14 years

(contact: esl.guide@about.com).

❖ Teen advice guide **David Hoover** holds a master's degree in family therapy and is a youth and family counsellor.

❖ The "Internet for beginners" guide **Gwen Schertel** has a company called Internet Resources. She has a welcoming style ("I hope to show newcomers that the Internet is FUN! And most importantly, my motto is, and will always be, NO QUESTION IS A STUPID QUESTION!! So ask away!")

In these days of global communication, about.com guides can, and do, live and work in more than 20 countries. But that is no barrier to working on the about.com site. They give advice that applies anywhere in the world. And it could be fun. As the about.com site says: **Our goal is to provide you with a simple and joyful Internet experience.** ☺



Want to be
happy?

Here's how!

Are you happy? If not, it could be the fault of your genes. Researchers now say that some people really are born happy.

Happiness has a strong genetic **component***. Even if sad things happen to these lucky people, within six months they are back to their 'natural state'. Happy.

If you are not one of these people who are genetically programmed to be happy, the good news is that: you can work at being happy. Here's how.

1. Smile

☺ Your internal feelings and physical responses send messages to your brain about how you feel. Trick your brain into good behaviour by sending it a 'smiling message'.

2. Pretend to be happy

☺ Researchers have discovered that positive thoughts and positive behaviour do affect the biochemistry of your brain by raising levels of serotonin (a

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page 6.

Mind & Body

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brain neurotransmitter linked with feelings of happiness).

3. Stand up straight

☺ Don't **slouch*** around. You'll feel brighter and happier.

4. Exercise

☺ A good workout brings a sense of **wellbeing***. Why? Because exercise increases the production of 'good' brain chemicals such as endorphins. So 20 minutes of exercise three or four times a week will bring you health and energy, and clear your mind of feelings of anxiety and depression.

5. Rest

☺ Every one needs it. If you don't get enough sleep, damaging chemical changes can occur in your brain making you feel depressed and unhappy.

6. Laugh more

☺ When you laugh, you increase your oxygen intake.

Your body relaxes and your heart rate goes down. Laughter also produces those good chemicals, endorphins, which can even kill pain.

7. Fill your life

☺ Fill your life every day with lots of little things that bring you pleasure—a bunch of flowers, a good book, a cup of good coffee, a chat with a friend.

8. Stop negative thoughts

☺ Check yourself out. When you find yourself thinking negative thoughts, replace them with

positive thoughts. Why? Negative thoughts are **"toxic"**, like poison. They do cause biochemical changes in your brain, which can lead to depression. So if you are thinking negative thoughts, tell yourself to stop!

9. Avoid "emotional vampires"

☺ Who? People who complain a lot, criticise others (or you) and don't support

"the good news: You can work at being happy"

you. Vampires suck blood
Emotional vampires will suck
your happiness.

10. Do things that use your skills

☺ You will become absorbed
in your work-and be happy.

11. Train yourself to think like an optimist

☺ Train yourself to say 'I will
do' things, not 'I will try'
things. Optimists are sure they
will succeed.

12. Reduce stress in your life

☺ Make things simpler. Try
relaxation or meditation
techniques.

13. Take charge of your time

☺ Plan, plan, plan. Spend ten
minutes in the morning trying
to work out how to get through
the day most efficiently.

14. Give your time to others

☺ Volunteer for social
work. All of us need to
interact with society around
us. Engaging in productive
work for other people makes
us happy.

15. Cultivate your spiritual side

☺ A spiritual corner in your
life gives you support when
you need it. It also gives you
an opportunity to focus on
things beyond yourself.

16. Take the long view of life

☺ On bad days, remember
things are bound to get better.
Think how you might feel in
three months or a year's time.
Good days will return.

17. Look after your close relationships

☺ Your friends. Your family.
They will give social support
and help with your emotional
wellbeing. ☺

Key WORDS*

component*

— Ingredient, content.

slouch*

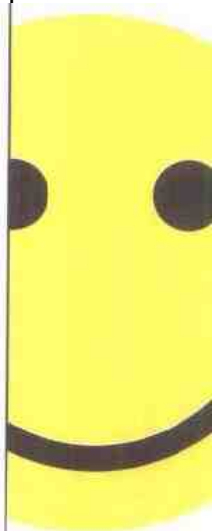
— Not stand straight up.

wellbeing*

— A good state of mental and
physical health.

toxic*

— Poisonous.



On The Beach

Something for Everyone

The Beach has something for everyone – romance, comedy, drama, action-adventure and thrills, and a two-hour opportunity for fans to sit back and enjoy Leonardo DiCaprio (of *Titanic* fame) in action.

Film critics have said that this lack of focus by the scriptwriters and by the director (Danny Boyle, **hip*** director of the hip film *Trainspotting*) is the film's downfall. Dedicated filmgoers could well come out of the film dissatisfied and disappointed with the **disjointed*** direction of the film. But all the rest of us should be entertained by this 'Generation X' film about a young American 'looking for himself' on the beautiful beaches of Thailand.

Leonardo DiCaprio plays the main character, Richard, a innocent, young traveller visiting Bangkok, who hears a story of a **fantasy*** island and an unknown

beach in Thailand where he can find 'paradise'.

Richard teams up with a French couple and eventually manages to find the remote island and the community of young foreigners who live there, isolated (cut off) from the outside world.

Life seems great, at first. Then things don't go so well. The rest of the film is about Richard's discovery of, as one film critic puts it "the **mirage*** of his vain imagination". As the beach paradise falls apart, Richard discovers new, nice and not so nice, things about himself, about life and about the world in general.

Based on a novel by the young English writer, Alex Garland (see his profile in *Edge English* Issue 2), *The Beach* has been compared to the famous English classic novel *The Lord of the Flies* (by Sir William Golding, 1954) in





which a group of children are stranded on an island. As social **conventions*** disappear, terror and the law of the jungle take their place. The Nature versus Civilisation story.

While there are differences between the classic novel and Alex Garland's novel, the hidden society in *The Beach* can also

be seen as a **microcosm*** of the larger world. Richard's slow disillusionment with life there is a story of what happens to most of us as we face our real nature and face the reality of life as adults.

If you can put up with the film's disjointed style, there are good reasons to see the movie and they don't include the chance to see Leonardo DiCaprio (although said by some film critics to be in top form). The reasons do include gorgeous backdrop scenery, interesting visual **gimmicks*** by the camera and a 'groovy*' soundtrack of electrosound that helps move the film along when all else fails. ●

Did you know:

Leonardo DiCaprio got his name when his mother felt her yet unborn child give her stomach a big kick as she stood in front one of Leonardo Da Vinci's painting in the Florence art gallery, the Uffizi.

Key WORDS*

hip* – Fashionable, trendy. Popular in the 1960s. Now making a comeback.

disjointed* – Not connected together.

fantasy* – A mental image which your imagination invents.

mirage* – Not real. Only a fantasy of

your imagination.

conventions* – Accepted rules.

microcosm* – Small scale representation of the world.

gimmicks* – Tricks.

groovy* – Youthful slang that is used to show appreciation of something. Very popular in the 1960s, occasionally used now for emphasis.

Pick up your camera. Focus on the subject. That's the way it used to be.

Not now. Just listen to any young English speaker talking about their work, lives or kids and you can be sure you'll hear them use the word "focus".

FOCUS

You can "focus" on many things. You use the words "focus" and "focused" to describe an intense concentration. It is like the same kind of concentrated point of view you see through the camera's lens.

"Tiger Woods is a very focused golfer. When he wants to win the prize, his mind

concentrates only on that goal." – *sports report.*

"We want to focus our growth strategy on the Internet. We believe future success lies in that direction." – *Californian computer company.*

"The American presidential candidates are going to focus on the health issue because they know that is what many voters are worried about." – *newspaper article.*

"I didn't know if we were going to reach the top. It was difficult climbing, and our lungs were hurting. But there is nothing like a bit of pain to focus the mind on finishing the job you set out to do." – *mountain climber.*

Or simply use the word to get your colleagues or friends to pay attention to what you are all supposed to be doing: **"Come on you guys, focus!"**

So if you want to sound contemporary when speaking English, just add the word 'focus' to your vocabulary. Focus on focus. ●

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Mind & Body

The Secret Life of

Kiwifruit

In looks, it's nothing special. Small, brown and furry. But the latest research has proven that kiwifruit, originally from China, may have an important use in some people's love lives.

This startling finding is just one of many in a series



juicy

secret that made this hairy fruit

HEALTH INSURANCE

-the organic

Organic food. Definitely a millennium buzzword. It used to be seen as

- food for fanatics*
- food for people who spent their lives worrying about their health.
- marginal food.

Not any more.

Over the past couple of years, the interest in eating organic food has boomed. Organic farming has boomed. For the last ten years, the area of farms under organic management in Europe has grown at least 25% each year. By 2005, it is predicted that 10% percent of all Western European agriculture will be organic. That figure will grow

to 30% by 2010.

Most major supermarkets already sell a wide range of organic food and almost half of bottled baby food is already organic. Organic food is heading towards the **mainstream***.

Some people call this new decade the Internet Decade, but it could equally be called the Organic Decade.

What is organic food?

This is food grown:

1 Without synthetic fertilisers, **pesticides***, **fungicides***, growth-promoting sex hormones, **antibiotic*** growth chemicals



FOR THE FUTURE

food industry.

or other inorganic chemicals;

2 Not using genetically modified seed.

It is important that:

■ organic vegetables and fruit are grown in soils that are fed with **compost***;

■ pests and diseases are controlled by working in harmony with nature: rotating crops, planting "companion crops" that repel (drive off) insects, and using natural sprays made from such plants as garlic and pyrethrum (a plant that is a natural pesticide).

Why is this happening?

Simply, a concern for healthy

eating and a healthy environment means the public has decided it wants organic food. This major shift of attitude has probably been prompted by two **scandals***:

1 the 'mad cow disease' health scare in the eighties and nineties;

2 the discovery of the widespread sale of genetically modified seeds by the seed giant, the American company Monsanto.

What is wrong with our food?

Chemical Fruit

The public has awakened to the knowledge that the delicious

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Organic food is much more

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red apple they bite into may have been sprayed ten to twenty times with various pesticides while growing on a tree. The apple may then have been treated with fungicides after picking, ripened in gas and had its skin waxed. All these treatments were to make an apple that looked good for sale. Little attention was paid to how healthy the apple was.

Dead Animal Remains

Many animals have been fed with strange chemicals as well as the ground-up remains (waste left-overs) of other animals, including their intestines, in their feeds. This feeding of animal remains to other animals has already caused strange illnesses in humans such as the 'mad cow' virus.

Residues

Residues means: what is left over. In the food you eat, there may be residues of pesticides, fungicides, antibiotics, sex hormones or other chemicals. Whatever chemical is left over in that red apple enters your body. Evidence is growing that these chemical residues can cause cancer, birth defects, reduced sperm counts and immune system damage. No wonder more and more people are turning to organic food as their long-term health insurance and to safeguard their old age.

Green Concerns

Another major worry that the public are now facing up to is the damage to the environment caused by the



nutritious ...and probably tastes better.

huge use of chemicals. Farmers blitz their produce with cancer-causing chemicals just so consumers in the supermarkets don't turn their nose up at the produce on display because there is a mark on the fruit or vegetable. But the price these consumers pay for their good-looking fruit is to live in an environment **saturated*** with chemicals.

What Makes Organic Food So Great?


Organic food is much more nutritious (very high in vitamins and minerals) and probably tastes better. People who are converts to organic food like eating food:

- that has very little or no inorganic chemical residue;
- that probably does not have strange viruses;
- that has no sex hormones;
- that has no **synthetic*** additives or colours; and
- that is not genetically engineered.

Organic food is grown in soil that is rich in organic matter. Organic farmers also work hard to look after their crops. Organic farmers are people committed to producing good quality food.

How Can I Tell?

Organic farmers must be certified by national organisations whose job it is to check on all aspects of the growing process. They set strict standards and lay down

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Organic farming takes money

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strict requirements for things like organic sprays and methods of storage.

Any Problems?

Yields of organic farms can be lower than that of **conventional*** farms. So the question is asked: can organic farms feed the world's growing population?

Organic farmers are confident that scientific research in the future will help them to increase their output, while still producing healthy food in a healthy environment.

The Future

Some say we might have to aim at a balance between organic farming methods and

current farming methods. We could reduce as much as possible the use of unhealthy chemical products, while still using them when they are really necessary.

Organic farming takes money, time (at least three years) and commitment to set up. But judging by public opinion and market trends, organic farms are fast becoming big money earners while providing healthier food for the world.

How do you Get Organic Food?

From health food shops. Or demand it from your ordinary food shops. Public opinion is one force that companies love to take notice of. ☺