

ON THE BUS

We are going home.

Stop and go.

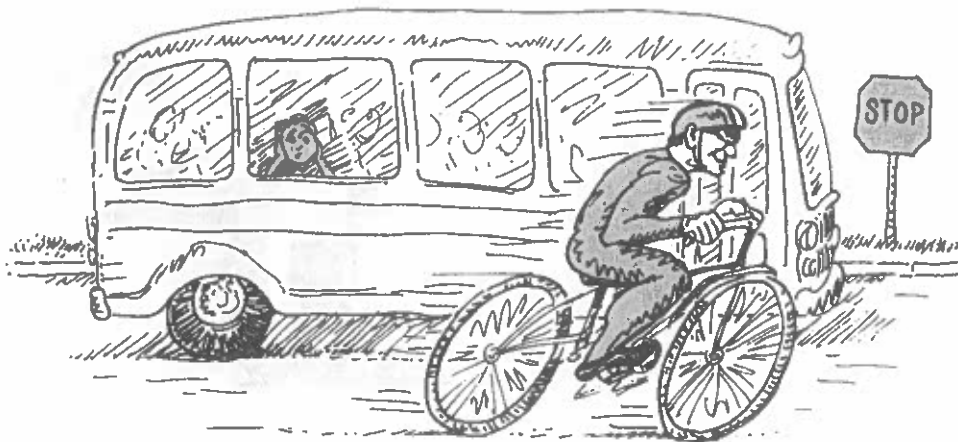
Stop and go.

The bus is so slow.

Look at that man.

He has a bike.

He can go fast.



THE PET STORE

I went to a pet store.

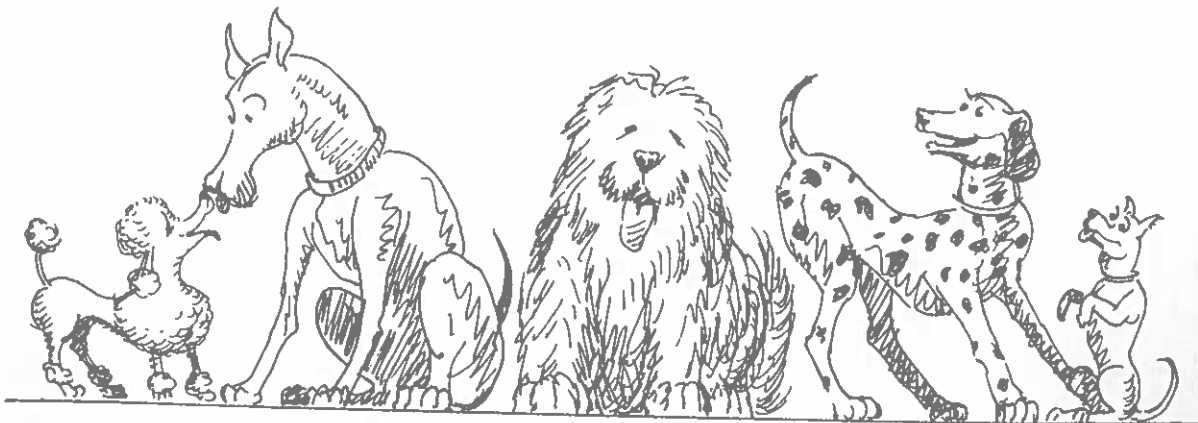
I saw big dogs.

I saw little dogs.

I saw dogs with long hair.

I saw dogs with short hair.

I got a little dog.



TURTLES AT HOME

Turtles are always at home.

If they visit the sea, they are at home.

If they go to the high hills, they are at home.

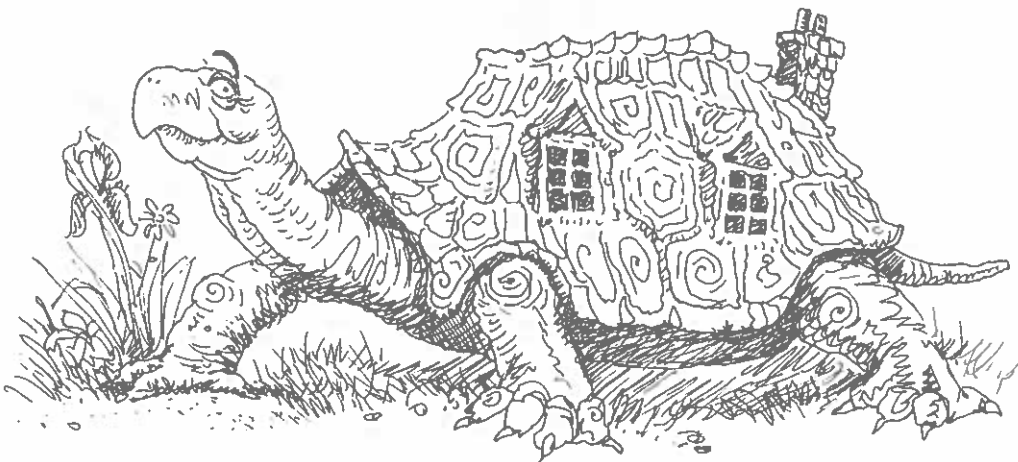
If they go far away, they have a home.

Turtles carry their homes with them.

Their shell is their house.

Turtles stay in their shells.

That is why they are always at home.



A SLIPPERY SIDEWALK

It was a cold day.

A man fell on the ice.

He was not hurt.

“Put salt on the ice,” said Bill.

“Salt will melt the ice.”

“Salt can kill the grass,” said Pat.

“Put sand on the ice.”

“I will try to find some sand,” said Bill.

“But it is better to kill some grass than

have a bad fall.”



TONY AND THE FLOWER SHOP

Tony lived in a big city. He had a flower shop. Tony loved his flowers, for the flowers did not make any noise. Tony loved peace and quiet.

The city where Tony lived was noisy. The buses, trucks, and cars were very noisy. He did not like the noise of the city.

Without the quiet Tony found in the flower shop, he would have moved from the city. The flower shop was his only reason for staying in the city.



GIVE ME ROOM

I saw an old man get on the bus. He walked very slowly. He used a cane. I looked at the cane with surprise. The man had a bike horn on it. I told him I had never seen a cane with a horn. "Have you ever been to the city market?" he asked. I said that I had. "Then you know it is crowded," he said. "People did not give me room. Now I honk my horn and they move."



SAM BUYS A NEWSPAPER

Sam stopped to ask Mrs. Kay if she needed anything from the store. She was very old. Sam liked to help her. She asked him to buy her a newspaper. Sam went to the store.

The store was closed. Sam walked for a long time to another store. He asked for a newspaper. One was folded and put into his bag.

Sam gave Mrs. Kay the paper. She said, "Oh, Sam, you are so good. I have not seen a paper written in Greek for months!"

Sam was surprised, but he just said, "You're welcome, Mrs. Kay."



LINDA AT THE DINER

Linda has a part-time job in a diner. She works in the morning from six until ten. The diner is busy at breakfast time. Linda works hard, but she likes her job at the diner. She likes talking with people. Many of the same people come in every day.

At night Linda goes to school. She likes night school. She has made new friends in her classes. The teachers are very nice.

Linda wants to learn more about business. She hopes to become a manager of a diner. Then she wants to buy her own diner someday.



ANTS

There are more than 10,000 different kinds of ants in the world. They come in different sizes and colors. Some ants are black, and others are red. Some are big, and others are very small. Ants can be fun to watch as they work together to gather food.

Ants can also cause problems. Most people want to keep ants out of their homes and away from their food. Some people buy ant spray to keep them away. However, spraying ant spray near food can cause problems. No one wants ant spray on his or her food. Instead of chemicals like ant spray, some people use natural herbs and spices. Black pepper is a spice that keeps ants away from food. Other people use an herb called bay leaves. These also keep ants away from food.

THE LUCKY WRONG NUMBER

Sue and Bill were eating dinner when the telephone rang. Bill said, "I'll get it." A man asked if the washer could be delivered in the morning.

Bill said, "We did not order a washer."

The man said, "Is this the home of Pete Johnson?"

"No," Bill said, "but wait; Pete Johnson is our uncle's name, and we haven't seen him in a long time. What address do you have for him?"

The caller said, "201 Second Street."

Bill and Sue went to the address of Pete Johnson. He was their uncle. They were happy to see each other. Later Sue said, "Buying that washer was lucky."

Uncle Pete laughed, "I didn't buy a washer; I bought a TV. We just had a lucky wrong number."



GOOGLE IT

Juan and his grandfather were repairing an old engine. His grandpa said, "This part is broken, and we need a replacement. I hope we can find one because they stopped making this machine." His grandpa then said, "Let's call the hardware store and see if they can help us."

Juan asked, "Why don't we Google it?" Laughing, his grandfather said, "Juan, I don't own a computer. So I don't Google."

The man at the hardware store told them, "Sorry, that engine was discontinued, and no one makes that part anymore."

That night, Juan went online and searched the Internet. Later that evening, he called his grandfather and told him, "Guess what? I searched the Internet, and a man in Michigan sells parts for your engine. I emailed him, and he replied that he has your part. Here is his phone number."

Juan's grandpa laughed and said, "I think you taught me something today. Maybe it is time for me to buy a computer and learn how to search and Google."

LAND OF MANY RICHES

In 1869, American Secretary of State William Seward did something that many people thought was foolish. He bought a huge piece of land called Alaska. He bought Alaska for only two cents an acre from a country called Russia. But many people thought the purchase was a waste of money. To them, Alaska was just a useless land of rocks, snow, and ice.

However, the following years have proved these people wrong. What was found in Alaska has made the purchase worthwhile. Much of the land in Alaska is covered by forests. The trees are cut and sold to all parts of the world. Oil has been found in Alaska.

The sea around Alaska is full of fish. Codfish, herring, crabs, and shrimp live there. They are caught and sold to the rest of the United States and the world. Alaska has been worth much more than it cost because much has been found there.

BAMBI'S MOTHER AND HUNTING

Bambi is a children's story that was made into a Walt Disney movie. In the story, Bambi is a baby deer who plays with other baby forest animals. When Bambi is almost grown, a hunter shoots Bambi's mother, and Bambi goes to live with his father.

In real life, deer have caused many car crashes when they try to cross a road. This is especially true at night when drivers cannot see as well. People have been hurt and some have died because of these car crashes. If too many deer live in an area, it can cause problems. Besides causing car crashes, deer can also cause property damage. They eat people's plants and gardens. Having too many deer in an area is not good for either people or the deer. Too many deer is one reason states allow hunters to get a license to shoot deer.

People who like deer do not want hunters to shoot them. They say, "This is like shooting Bambi's mother." Others say, "Bambi's mother could get killed on the highway." No one seems to have an answer to this problem.

NOT IN THE MOOD TO READ

Have you ever heard someone say, “I used to like to read, but now I am not interested in reading?” Carlos used to say that. Then one day he found that he could not read the small print on a medicine bottle. Carlos had his eyes tested, and he was told he needed glasses. The day Carlos put them on, he stopped at a paperback bookstore and bought a sports magazine, a paperback mystery, and a newspaper. Carlos’s eyes had never hurt, so he hadn’t thought about needing glasses. It seemed good to be reading again. Carlos had forgotten how much he enjoyed reading.

There are many people, both children and adults, who believe they don’t feel like reading or doing close work. Their vision is poor, but they do not know that they are having problems with their sight. However, there are others who know they should wear glasses but don’t want to wear them. They think glasses may not be attractive. This is not necessarily true. Glasses now have such nice-looking frames that some people wear them who don’t need them! In fact, the lenses in their glasses are just plain window glass.

VOLCANOES

Have you seen pictures of a volcano erupting? Volcanoes can be awesome sights as they spew gas, rocks, and lava into the air. Eruptions are acts of nature and caused by powerful forces within the Earth. Deep inside the Earth it is hot enough to melt rock. The melted rock mixes with gases and rises toward the Earth's surface and explodes where the Earth's crust is the weakest.

When the melted rock erupts, it can be very molten or it can be sticky with rock fragments that are not melted. These large rock fragments are called bombs and are spit out during the eruption. Bombs can travel in the air for miles before crashing to the Earth. During an eruption, gas is vented along with the molten rock. This gas is mostly steam; but it also contains dust, so it looks like smoke coming from the volcano's mouth.

The melted rock, or lava, flows out of the hole in the Earth caused by the eruption. Lava can flow like water until it cools down and becomes rock again. There are places on the Earth where cooled lava forms a bed of rocks stretching for miles.

DRIVER'S LICENSES

States vary in their requirements for a driver's license. Some will give a license to persons sixteen years of age, while others will not. Usually the consent of a parent or guardian is needed if an applicant is under eighteen.

Generally, people need to fulfill three important requirements to get a driver's license. Drivers have to prove skills in driving a vehicle and knowledge of rules and safety procedures. They also have to be physically capable of safe driving. For example, people who are nearsighted are often issued restricted licenses. This means that they must wear glasses or contact lenses when they drive.

Responsible people drive carefully to avoid hurting others or themselves. Most of us realize that having a driver's license suspended or revoked can be very inconvenient. This is especially true when driving is needed for daily commuting to work.

Some states have a system of points. This means that for every rule the driver does not obey, points are held against him or her. If a driver has too many points in a particular period, the license to drive will be suspended. The system seems to work because people don't want to lose their driving privileges.

FAST TRAIN TRAVEL

The fastest train in the world was reported in 2010 by China. They developed a train that traveled 310 miles per hour. China is a very large country, and that makes rapid train travel especially useful over long distances. Japan was one of the first countries to develop high-speed trains. Here, too, the size of the country was a factor. Because Japan is a small country with a large population, roads with heavy car and truck traffic would take up too much space. So, Japan created the bullet train.

For several years travel by rail in Europe has been comfortable and convenient. Now several European countries are building high-speed rail links that will cross borders. Tunnels and bridges are being built to make more connections.

The United States has lagged behind other countries in developing fast, convenient rail travel. Instead more attention has been given to travel by air and by car. The United States has one high-speed rail line, the Acela Express, which runs between Washington, D.C., and Boston via New York City. Although the Acela trains are capable of running up to 150 mph (241 km/h), they average around 78 mph. More rail lines need to be built in the United States to have high-speed trains. This is because passenger trains share tracks with freight trains and the tracks are too crowded to allow high-speed trains to run.

THE JOB APPLICATION

Tina wanted a job in an office. A magazine publishing company had some openings, so Tina went to the personnel department. The receptionist gave her an application form and asked her to go into the next room and complete it. The form was only two pages long, but it had several parts. At the top of the first page, Tina had to write her name, address, and social security number. She was glad that she had put her social security card in her wallet. Next Tina was asked about her record of business experience. That part was easy too, except for the box that said, "Reason for separation." Tina was puzzled, but then she realized they were asking why she had lost her other job. She thought she could explain why she left, but Tina didn't know how she could write the reason in such a tiny box.

The last part of the application asked for names, occupations, and addresses of three references. Tina could not remember the addresses of her references. She didn't know whether to leave that part blank or come back later. Then she had a better idea. Tina used the telephone directory to find the correct addresses. Tina decided that before she applied for any more jobs, she would write down the kind of information needed on applications and take it with her.

FIREFIGHTERS

Firefighters are called “first responders” because they are often the first to arrive at an emergency. While they are normally called to put out fires, many other situations require their help. They may be called for medical emergencies, traffic accidents, oil spills, or forest fires.

Firefighters require skills and training. Entry-level workers have a high school diploma and are 18 years old or older. Recruits receive training for several weeks. This training may take place at large fire departments or at community colleges. Recruits study firefighting methods, fire prevention, building codes, first aid, and hazardous materials control. They also learn about using hoses, ladders, chain saws, and fire extinguishers. The training courses vary in length of time. Some training courses at large fire departments meet every day for a month. Others at community colleges meet twice a week for a half a year.

There is much competition for entry-level jobs as firefighters. However, special training can help one find a job. Emergency medical technicians and paramedics are also needed. Some paramedics can earn an average of \$78,000 a year.

A NEW JOB

Maria was interested in a job in a canning factory. She did not have much work experience, but her brother had a good job in the factory as a supervisor. Maria remembered that he had not had any experience when he started to work there.

At the personnel office, Maria was given an application form to fill out. There was a section that listed several physical problems such as rheumatism, dermatitis, and back trouble. Maria had not heard of some of the conditions, but she decided that if she didn't know what they were, she didn't have a problem with them.

Next, Maria had to check the times she was willing to work: day shift, second shift, or third shift. Because she was taking a class in adult education in the evening, she decided to check day shift and third shift. Maria hoped for the day shift, but she realized that, as a new employee without seniority, she would probably get the third shift.

Finally, Maria filled in the part of the form that asked about apprentice training. She had just finished a vocational training program that had given her some experience, so she was happy to fill in that part.

When Maria returned the completed form, she was told that she would be notified within two weeks about her employment with the company.

A FAILURE TO COMMUNICATE

When two people speak the same first language, they occasionally misunderstand each other. Imagine the difficulties that interpreters have when they must first understand what the speaker of one language has said and then translate the message into another language.

Translators are challenged when the speaker makes a reference to an event or story character that is not known to listeners from another country. A speaker may refer to someone as a “Cinderella,” meaning that a person was once poor and is now wealthy, but if the listeners do not know the story, the meaning is lost.

Translating quickly, while the first person is speaking, is especially difficult. Yet, simultaneous translation is used today in about 85 percent of all international meetings. Not only are translators working with the United Nations, but they are employed for business, scientific, and educational meetings as well.

Computers are being programmed to translate languages. Although computers have great potential for speedy translations, they have some of the same problems that human translators have. In an early attempt to translate English into Russian, a computer translated “out of sight, out of mind” as “invisible idiot.”

In our global society, we need to work hard to understand each other and keep a sense of humor.

VOTER DRIVE

Soon after Jim moved to Plainfield, he received a telephone call from a person who asked if he was registered to vote in the coming election. Jim said that he hadn't thought about it. The caller said she was a member of a local organization that was sponsoring a voter drive. She didn't represent any particular political party but only wanted to encourage people to register and to vote.

Since registration terms and procedures differ from one part of the country to another, the people working in the voter drive offered to explain the local procedures and tell people where they could register.

The caller explained that after Jim registered, he would be mailed a sample ballot for each election. The ballot would contain the names of the candidates and the measures to be voted on.

Jim asked some questions and then thanked the caller for giving him information about voter registration.

Frequently people say that they don't bother to vote because one vote is not significant. Jim read that a presidential election, referred to as the Revolution of 1800, resulted in Burr and Jefferson having the same number of votes. Jim appreciated being reminded about voter registration when he recalled that important tie.

DO YOU HAVE AN OPEN MIND?

A study conducted at the University of Illinois found that the majority of people do not want to hear ideas that contradict their existing beliefs. This study concluded that approximately 70 percent of people did not seriously consider ideas with which they disagreed, compared to only 30 percent of people who pondered both sides. So, do you spend time only with people who share your beliefs? Do you primarily read materials that reinforce your existing opinions? If so, you are not unique because these are widely occurring human behaviors. Unfortunately, these behaviors could be detrimental since they frequently result in a closed mind that is unwilling to consider potentially meritorious ideas.

Being educated means being open to a range of ideas, some of which might challenge our existing beliefs. When President Obama spoke to graduates at the University of Michigan, he challenged them to expose themselves to divergent views. He said, "If you are a Republican, read *The New York Times*; if you are a Democrat, read *The Wall Street Journal*." He urged those graduates to use their intelligence, which means occasionally leaving one's comfort zone and hearing what others, whom you might not agree with, are saying.

Television shows, radio news programs, and Internet blogs can be very persuasive. Unfortunately in these venues, factual information is often misused as biased people express opinions to an audience that already agrees with them. By getting information from a variety of media sources, a person can become better informed and more thoughtful about important issues. Having an open mind, and knowing as much information as possible, is essential if we are to be intelligent voters.

A common joke is, "Don't confuse me with facts. My mind is made up."

WEATHER AND CLIMATE

When talking about weather, scientists differentiate between weather patterns and climate. Weather patterns refer to yearly patterns. Climate refers to long-term trends in the weather. In order to understand the debate on climate warming, a person must understand the difference between weather and climate. Many scientists believe that man-made pollutants are causing the climate of the Earth to become warmer.

The theory that a build-up of heat-trapping pollutants in the atmosphere is warming the Earth recently received support. The United States National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's 2008 data indicated that there has been a steady increase in temperature since the 1880s. In addition, the eight warmest years on record since reliable record keeping began more than a century ago have occurred since 2001. The warmest year was in 2005. The next year, 2006, the temperature decreased. However, the following two years saw an increase in the average temperature across the United States.

Scientists from Great Britain also support the idea that a temperature change is occurring in the climate. The head of climate science at the British Meteorological Office noted differences in weather and climate patterns. She reported that the overall climate pattern is one of record highs since the 1980s. She also noted that 2006 was a cold year where the average temperature fell almost 10 degrees. This temperature change, however, was caused by natural fluctuations, which is a weather pattern.

While all scientists will not endorse the notion that man-made pollutants are causing the climate to change, there is widespread agreement that overall the Earth is getting warmer. Scientists from many countries are investigating weather and climate patterns to try and have a clear idea why the Earth's temperature is increasing.