

Texts for Advanced English Learners

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The Role of Silence in Japanese Communication

In Japanese culture, silence often signifies respect, contemplation, or agreement. Unlike in many Western cultures, silence is used to preserve harmony and avoid confrontation. This cultural difference can lead to misunderstandings, especially in business or diplomatic settings.

Source: Nakane, I. (2007). Silence in intercultural communication: Perceptions and performance. John Benjamins Publishing.

Questions:

- Why is silence considered powerful in Japanese communication?
 - How might Westerners misinterpret silence in a Japanese context?
 - Can silence ever lead to misunderstandings in international negotiations?
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The Psychology of Collecting Rare Objects

Collecting reveals deep psychological motivations. People may collect for nostalgia, prestige, or the thrill of the hunt. The emotional attachment and dopamine release during the search are similar to feelings associated with gambling or love.

Source: Belk, R. W. (1995). *Collecting in a Consumer Society*. Routledge.

Questions:

- What psychological needs can collecting satisfy?
 - How is collecting similar to gambling?
 - Do you think collecting is more about the item or the process?
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Urban Mining: Extracting Gold from Electronics

Urban mining is the recovery of precious metals like gold from electronic waste. This process is more efficient than traditional mining and environmentally friendly. However, it requires proper infrastructure and awareness.

Source: Oguchi, M., Sakanakura, H., & Terazono, A. (2013). *Waste Management*, 33(6), 1253–1258.

Questions:

- What is urban mining, and why is it important?
 - How does it compare to traditional mining?
 - What challenges do countries face when trying to implement urban mining?
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Biohacking and the DIY Biology Movement

Biohacking involves individuals using science to enhance biology outside of traditional labs. While empowering, it raises concerns about ethics and safety. The movement blurs the line between scientists and citizens.

Source: Grushkin, D., Kuiken, T., & Millet, P. (2013). Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars.

Questions:

- How does biohacking challenge traditional science?
 - What are the potential risks and benefits of DIY biology?
 - Should biohacking be regulated? Why or why not?
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The Loneliness of Long-Duration Astronauts

Astronauts on extended missions face isolation and psychological stress. Coping methods include VR, recorded messages, and group activities. NASA invests in training and technology to support mental health.

Source: Kanas, N., & Manzey, D. (2008). Space psychology and psychiatry (2nd ed.). Springer.

Questions:

- What psychological effects do astronauts experience on long missions?
 - How do space agencies try to mitigate these effects?
 - What can these studies teach us about isolation on Earth?
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