

PERSONALITY/PERSONAL ABILITIES**MONOLOGUE**

Read the text and comment briefly on it. Use the questions below to help you plan your monologue. Speak for about 2-3 minutes. Do not retell the story in detail.

TENNIS STAR COUNTS WIMBLEDON WINNINGS

Former British tennis champion Annabel Croft, 37, will be commentating on Wimbledon 2004 for BBC TV and Radio Five Live.

Annabel grew up in Kent and went to West Heath School in Sevenoaks. At the age of nine Annabel started playing tennis at a local club and her talent was soon spotted. She became the national junior champion for the under-12s, under-14s and under-16s.

Annabel was 15 when she first played at Wimbledon, and she remains the youngest British player to have done so for 95 years. In 1985 she won Junior Wimbledon and the Junior Australian championship, and was ranked as one of the top youngsters in the world.

She retired at the age of 21 because she was tired of travelling after her seven years on the senior tennis circuit. She has since appeared in pantomime, been the tennis anchor for Eurosport, tennis commentator for the BBC and reporter for GMTV.

(Natalie Graham, The Sunday Times, June 20, 2004)

1. What is the text about? (the topic and the source)
2. Give a short summary (2-3 sentences). What is the message of the text? What is the author trying to say?
3. What is your point of view?

FAMILY AND HOME**MONOLOGUE**

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MANNERS

Depressed at the rowdy behaviour the young are learning from television and school, more and more Americans are seeking the services of companies such as Petite Protocol, a Los Angeles-based manners school for the young.

Tutoring takes place in the Bel-Air hotel, where Diane Diehl, an etiquette instructor for 20 years, puts children as young as six through their paces for a fee of £180 a day. This involves teaching them how to hold a fish knife, how to address an adult and how to answer the phone. Boys are told to open doors and lift out chairs for women.

One of the American manners gurus is Michele Borba. She is keen to point out that rude children are not a uniquely American problem but one found from "Birmingham to Beijing". She added: "The biggest headache is parents refusing to see how much offence their children cause, although they are quick enough to see it in others. I call it the NMK syndrome: not my kid. My kid is perfect."

(John Harlow, The Sunday Times, September 5, 2004)

- rowdy – noisy and causing trouble
- to put somebody through their paces – to make a person show how good they are at doing something

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FRIENDS AND OTHER SOCIAL RELATIONS

MONOLOGUE

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THE BEAR AND THE TRAVELLERS

Two Travellers were on the road together when a Bear suddenly appeared on the scene. Before he observed them, one made for a tree at the side of the road and climbed up into the branches and hid there. The other was not as nimble as his companion; and, as he could not escape, he threw himself on the ground and pretended to be dead. The Bear came up and sniffed all around him, but he kept perfectly still and held his breath; for they say that a bear will not touch a dead body. The Bear took him for a corpse and went away. When the coast was clear, the Traveller in the tree came down and asked the other what it was the Bear had whispered to him when he put his mouth to his ear. The other replied, "He told me never again to travel with a friend who deserts you at the first sign of danger."

(www.forbetterlife.org)

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ENVIRONMENT

MONOLOGUE

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INDIA'S ELEPHANTINE PROBLEM

At its core, the story is not entirely unfamiliar: Mankind pushes animal species to the brink of extinction through habitat destruction. We've watched similar stories unfold in central Africa, where the mountain gorillas have been forced high into the Virunga Mountains, and again in North America, where the once wide-ranging grizzly looks to Alaska for its only remaining stronghold. But perhaps nowhere on Earth is the showdown between man and beast more widespread, or more deadly, than in Assam, where a wild elephant population numbering some 5,000 has been pushed into increasingly violent conflict with a burgeoning number of human inhabitants. As a result, over the course of the past decade, hundreds of villagers as well as elephants have been killed.

To complicate matters, most Indians view elephants as earthly manifestations of the Lord Ganesha, one of the most popular gods in the crowded Hindu pantheon. The conflict, then, is more than just a showdown of man versus beast. Assam's people are at war with a god.

(National Geographic, August 2004)

- brink – the point in time when something very bad or very good is about to happen
- showdown – a big meeting, argument, or fight that finally settles a disagreement between people or proves who is the best
- burgeon – to grow or develop quickly

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ENGLISH SPEAKING COUNTRIES

MONOLOGUE

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SPELLING: IT'S EVEN HARDER THAN COMMAS

In his new book, *Accommodating Broccoli in the Cemetery*, Vivian Cook, professor of applied linguistics at Newcastle University, chides teachers and colleges for placing too little emphasis on spelling. "Six out of ten 15-year-olds can't write 10 lines without at least one spelling mistake."

Cook concludes that young people today are far more likely to spell words how they sound. "There's more informality in spelling than there used to be," he said. "We often get pop groups and singers with phonetic spellings now such as Sugababes, Gorillaz and Eminem."

Gender, it seems, affects spelling: Cook found that girls are better spellers than boys. "They are more diligent," he said. He also cites an American study that claims people with long names are better spellers. "I think it is because from a young age they get used to writing out their own names and perhaps are conditioned to be better spellers," he said.

(Richard Brooks, The Sunday Times, June 20, 2004)

- chide – to criticize someone
- to be conditioned – to be influenced

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EVERYDAY LIFE

MONOLOGUE

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CLARKE TO CUT FAT OUT OF SCHOOL MENUS

The Government is to order a review of school meals in an attempt to stop pupils eating too many chips and fatty foods at lunchtime. Charles Clarke, the Secretary of State for Education, will announce the review tomorrow as the focal point of a campaign to reduce obesity among schoolchildren by the end of the decade.

The review will look at ways in which ministers can order a reduction in the levels of salt, sugar and saturated fats in school dinners. "We want to reduce chip intake not to ban it," said the spokesman.

The Government is also to issue guidance on how schools should be encouraging their pupils to adopt a healthier lifestyle – increasing the amount of physical activity pupils take part in.

Other measures being advocated include lessons in how to achieve a balanced diet as part of food technology courses. And help will be given to schools to build bicycle sheds to encourage more youngsters to cycle to school.

(Richard Garner, The Independent on Sunday, September 5, 2004)

- obesity – a condition in which someone is too fat in a way that is dangerous for their health
- saturated fat – fat from food such as meat or milk products that is difficult for the body to process and is therefore considered to be bad for your health

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EDUCATION AND JOBS

MONOLOGUE

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CLARKE AIMS FOR 10-HOUR OPENING OF SCHOOLS

Charles Clarke, the education secretary, is to extend a scheme which allows primary schools to stay open for a 10-hour day. The aim is to improve schools' links with their communities and provide a schedule that fits in better with busy working parents.

Currently, two-thirds of schools offer some provision beyond the normal school day, which ends in mid-afternoon, offering breakfast clubs and other initiatives.

The government is keen to persuade other schools to open their buildings in the evenings and at weekends. The activities on offer could include parenting and family learning classes, adult education, extra study support for pupils and increased sporting provision. A spokeswoman for the Department for Education and Skills said: "We want schools to make sure their facilities are open to other members of the community and part of this could be IT sessions for parents or even "Dads and Lads" sessions".

(David Sanderson, The Sunday Times, September 5, 2004)

- parenting – the activities involved in being a parent and bringing up children

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HOBBIES AND CULTURE

MONOLOGUE

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DAVID BECKHAM

David Beckham is England's answer to the Spice Girls. He is a pop star in a soccer uniform. Not only is he married to Victoria Adams, the Spice Girl formerly known as Posh, but he is England's most famous and brightest soccer player. He is the pretty boy, rock star and teen idol of the country, even though he no longer plays for the English Premiership (England's top football league).

In June 2003, Beckham was traded to Real Madrid – soccer's Dream Team – for \$41 million. Despite his ability on the field, he is becoming a pop culture icon, as the unofficial poster boy.

He isn't outspoken or particularly extroverted. He does, however, have a quiet hunger to be the best soccer player in the world. His temper is almost as famous as his hairstyles, and has gotten him into a fair share of trouble.

(www.askmen.com)

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