

二年級英文朗讀比賽

B4U1

You Have Just Been Phubbed!

A few days ago, I hung out with my friend Ellie. We were sitting in a café and catching up on some gossip. However, she kept using her smartphone and was busy exchanging instant and text messages with others. Our conversation was interrupted every time she looked at her phone. I didn't enjoy our talk, and neither did she. Finally, I had no choice but to leave her alone with her smartphone. I had just been phubbed!

“Phub” is a new word that combines two words—“phone” and “snub.” When you snub someone, you ignore him or her, which often upsets that person. Therefore, “phubbing” is doing this by keeping using your smartphone in others' presence. It has become a common habit that can have a negative effect on personal relationships. Yesterday, for example, I was looking at my Facebook page on my smartphone when my sister asked me for help with her homework. I wasn't happy about the interruption, so I yelled at her, “Can't you see I'm busy?” As a result, she had no choice but to struggle with her homework by herself. My friend Ellie is normally a polite person, and so am I. However, when we are absorbed in our smartphones, we often behave rudely toward other people. We just can't resist interacting with our electronic devices.

Smartphones are so appealing. They allow people to share things with others anytime, anywhere. People often use them to send instant messages or visit social networking websites. There is even a growing trend toward using smartphones to take selfies. That is, more and more people like to take photos of themselves and post the attractive ones online. It is obvious that people love communication and are eager to be connected with others.

However, something odd happens. People seldom talk to others when they are using their smartphones. While smartphone users are busy interacting with others far away, they often phub the people who are actually next to them. Smartphones seem to encourage people to engage in the virtual world rather than the real world. This can not only change personal relationships but cause unpleasant incidents or even harm in people's lives. For instance, many traffic accidents occur because people are using smartphones and not paying attention to the road. In addition, due to their smartphone addiction, many people can no longer appreciate things in their actual environment.

It feels bad to be phubbed, and you certainly don't want to hurt your friends' feelings by phubbing them. So, using smartphones too much is not a good idea. Oh, are you using one right now? Maybe it's time to put it down and say hello to the friends next to you. They will be happier to share things with you face to face.

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B4U2

A New Look at American English

As a student learning English in Taiwan, I had always been confident of my ability to speak English. When I traveled to the United States one summer, though, I quickly discovered that I still had plenty to learn, especially regarding the informal English often used there. That is, I found that the English spoken in the United States could be quite different from the English that I had learned in textbooks in Taiwan.

As soon as I arrived in the United States, I was tripped up by a common American greeting. In Taiwan, I had been taught to ask “How are you?” and then to reply “Fine, thanks. And you?” when greeting others. So, I was very surprised when an American teenager asked me, “What’s up?”

At first, I didn’t know how to respond. Should I say, “The sky” or “The clouds”? He didn’t want me to look up above him, did he? So, I just went with my standard reply: “Fine, thanks. And you?”

This American teen seemed amazed by my answer because it didn’t make sense. However, he was patient enough to explain to me that the phrase “What’s up?” was another way to ask, “What’s going on?” “Most people just answer ‘Nothing’ or ‘Not much’,” he said.

Also, there can be a big difference between the literal and the actual meanings of many colloquial phrases. For example, I had learned in Taiwan that the phrase “Shut up!” was a forceful way to tell someone to stop talking. I also knew that this command was considered impolite and even rude. So, I was stunned when an American girl said this to me.

“I eat mangoes every day in Taiwan during the summer,” I was telling her.

“Shut up!” she said.

I hadn’t expected to hear that. As a result, I blushed with embarrassment and immediately stopped talking. Had I been boasting? Had I offended her?

Seeing my strange behavior, she then asked me, “What’s wrong? Why did you become so silent, out of the blue?”

“You told me to shut up,” I said, on the verge of tears, “so I did.”

The American girl chuckled and said, “You didn’t actually think that I meant for you to shut up, did you?” She went on to tell me that “Shut up!” is used by young Americans today to express astonishment. “It is similar to ‘No way!’ or ‘Get out of here!’,” she added.

Though it was confusing at times, my summer in the United States taught me a lot. I learned that language is very flexible. Sometimes a phrase does not have a very strict meaning. So, when I got off the airport bus to catch my flight back to Taiwan and the bus driver said to me, “Have a good one!”, I didn’t attempt to ask him to clarify if “a good one” meant a good day, a good trip, or even a good life. I just smiled back and said, “You, too!”

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B4U4

The World on a Plate

Visitors to Scotland are often tempted to try a Scottish national dish called haggis. Haggis is a boiled sheep's stomach that is stuffed with a sheep's lungs, liver, and heart. Although it is thought of as a delicacy by the locals, some visitors are not so sure about this. If you go to Scotland, will you dare to eat this dish?

Food is an important part of any travel experience, and nothing helps develop friendships or business relationships like sharing a meal. As a matter of fact, if you are not willing to try the local food when you travel, you will miss the opportunity to know more about the culture there. Most people who travel frequently realize that trying the local food is not only a great way to show respect for the host, but also an essential part of experiencing a different culture.

You may have difficulty eating exotic cuisine, but it is diplomatic to take a bite of everything that is being served to you in order not to offend the locals. As a frequent traveler, I never turn down any chance to experience a foreign culture through its food. During my travels, I have eaten a lot of weird food. In Saudi Arabia, I have tasted sheep's eyeballs, which are served to the guest of honor. In Africa, I have tried caterpillars, which are important sources of protein for millions of people there. In Indonesia, I have eaten fried frog legs, which are not as tasty as chicken, but otherwise pretty similar. In China, I have tried a kind of boiled fish. It was so spicy that I felt like it could burn a hole in my tongue. In South Korea, I have eaten live octopus—the octopus almost stuck to my throat when I swallowed it. Eating these dishes has not always been easy for me, but it has contributed greatly to my travels and given me terrific stories to tell back home!

As for my advice for travelers who are unsure about eating strange food, the most important thing to remember is never to offend the hosts. Here are a few tips for making it easier to try foreign food. First of all, don't ask what the food is before you try it. Very often, the food you consider weird is probably delicious—it is the thought rather than the taste that spoils your appetite. Second, take small bites, or if you are serving yourself, just take a small helping. Trying a small amount of everything first is wiser than filling your plate with a lot of food. Finally, if you have trouble swallowing something, just take a sip of your drink. This can help disguise the unfamiliar taste.

When you travel overseas, remember that you are representing your country. If you try some of the local food, you'll probably make friends for both yourself and your country.