



**AiSpikEnglish**  
 Because this is the language which is spoken all over the world. If you speak English you can keep in contact with the friends you met during the summer; you are able to use a computer; you can understand the texts of your favourite songs and read the English article about the Take That. In other words, you feel a citizen of the world. Welcome.

In MERA we trust

# FLYING BLIND

**S**omewhere over Texas, 10,000 metres up, the trainee pilot Robert Walding was feeling real exhilaration. Next to him sat his instructor, Group Captain Joseph Garner. He was not doing anything, only keeping an eye on things.

The time was 22.45.

Suddenly the right jet reactor of the plane spat flames. It must have been a cut in the oil supply causing it to overheat.

The captain believed the plane to be lost. At once he gave a crisp command: 'Bale out.' Straight away he raised the glass dome of the cockpit and a fierce wind rushed into the plane which was flying at 700 kilometres an hour.

The young man at once pressed the button to eject but nothing happened. Something was not working. With enormous effort Robert turned his head and what he saw made him stiff with fright. The captain's seat was still there but empty. The Group Captain must have been torn away by the wind.

For Robert there remained only one chance of survival and that was to bale out, and quickly. For the engine was spouting flames like a catherine wheel. He bent down to undo his seatbelt. Then all at once he saw a boot. When he looked behind he could see Captain Joseph Garner lying squeezed into the rear part of the cockpit, unconscious.

Robert did not know what to do now. The plane could explode at any moment.

Suddenly the young pilot took a completely crazy de-

cision. He could not jump! He could not leave his unconscious instructor behind. It was a million to one chance but he would risk it.

Robert seized the joystick and went into a dive. The speed went up to 800-900 kilometres. The temperature in the open cockpit was minus 40. Robert was no longer able to close his eyes. The icy storm glued his eyelids back and his eyes were terribly painful.

The plane neared a speed of 1000 kilometres an hour and that with an open cockpit! Robert counted the se-



conds in the dive and when he judged he could not be far from the ground he brought the plane back to the horizontal. He groped for the radio control button and called the landing ground: 'This is trainee pilot Robert Walding. I'm blind. Help me.'

A voice answered: 'You are 1700

metres up. We'll try to bring you down.' The voice bade him reduce his speed to 400 kilometres.

Then Robert heard: 'That's it. You are in a line with the runway.' The voice told him to put on his floodlights so that he could be guided in. He felt for the switch but could not find the right button.

'Go around again, take your time! I will tell you exactly where the button is,' came the voice out of the earphones.

Four minutes later the lights went on and he now came full circle. But just before the plane grounded it dipped. The voice said then without a trace of agitation: 'You can choose, son. Either you open the throttle and go round again or you draw the wheels in and make a belly landing.'

Robert answered at once: 'I can do no more. I'm coming down.'

Two minutes later the fire engines were racing towards the plane which had flopped down in a gigantic rain of sparks. The plane was dren-

ched with foam. The rescue team were on the spot at once and pulled the two men out.

Captain Garner woke up ten minutes later in hospital. They had to tell him everything.

Robert Walding needed three days before he could see normally again. He will suffer from weak eyesight for the rest of his life.

(Pierre Lefèvre - One hundred stories to change your life)

New York. Pythons are in fashion; you can «wear» them all the year round.



Gulp!!!

## BERMUDA SHORTS THAT COME DOWN, GYM SHOES THAT LIGHTEN

Extra small, small, medium, large, extra large, extra extra large: here are the American sizes. Nothing extraordinary, you could say. But their extra small corresponds to our medium, therefore sometimes it's difficult to make a jumper fit, and you have to go and look in the children's department. At the beginning, you feel delightfully thin, at least until you realize it's not you who are lean, but their sizes which are large.

As with food, for fashion, too, everything is possible, in every season. For instance, while you're wearing a coat and scarf, you may encounter somebody in a silk and cotton jacket, but nobody will look at you or at them in a strange way.

Apart from the typical western

shoes and casual wear which are well known in Europe, too, the shopping centres sell more or less what we find here: modern and classic garments, in natural or synthetic fibres. In all the department stores there is also a great variety of evening dresses. Many boutiques sell famous creations by Italian and French designers.

What about hair? The young have long hair, or short, or they have completely shaved heads. Hair can fall over their shoulders or it can be arranged in a pony tail; it can be ordinary fair or brown, but also blue, green or bright orange, or all three colours together.

Today's fashion for many black women is blond hair, always maintaining their rich and elaborate hair-styles. Actually, their hair is not so much blond, as various shades of yellow, but they wear it with pride.

As you can see, habits in the USA seem very elastic and you could think that racial identity tends to disappear

or to mingle. But often fashions and customs are only apparent achievements of social welfare and equality. The racial differences and resentments persist among those who in the past exploited and those who were exploited.

Anyway, in America you meet people from all over the world, a concentration of civilizations, though with many problems, and you don't mind about habits and food, as long as you can continue meeting them. The United States are still their dream.



## TR THS!

Can you supply the missing vowels to turn the following into words? Ex: *BRTSH* (2 vowels) *BRITISH*

- 1) BK (2 VOWELS) .....
- 2) CHS (3 VOWELS) .....
- 3) CT (1) .....
- 4) PNCL (2) .....
- 5) CMPTR (3) .....
- 6) CHCLT (4) .....
- 7) NWSPPR (3) .....
- 8) TLPHN (4) .....
- 9) PPL (2) .....
- 10) PPL (3) .....
- 11) CFF (3) .....
- 12) DSC (2) .....
- 13) CNM (3) .....
- 14) RNG (3) .....
- 15) SCHL (2) .....

Key: 1) BOOK, 2) CHEESE, 3) CAT, 4) PENCIL, 5) COMPUTER, 6) CHOCOLATE, 7) NEWSPAPER, 8) TELEPHONE, 9) APPLE, 10) PEOPLE, 11) COFFEE, 12) DISCO, 13) CINEMA, 14) ORANGE, 15) SCHOOL.

## PALINDROMES

What are they? Strange animals, enormous sandwiches, special autodromes? Read the following words carefully and try to find out what the words below have in common.

- |       |         |
|-------|---------|
| DEED  | MINIM   |
| NOON  | PEEP    |
| MADAM | ROTATOR |
| RADAR | LEVEL   |
| NUN   | CIVIC   |

Key: Palindromes read the same backwards as they do forwards.

**RANDY JOE**

by Stella

