

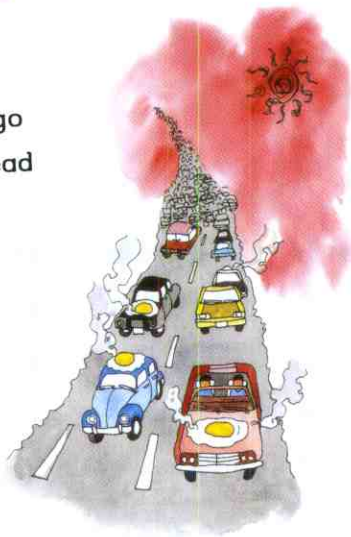
ISSUE 21

Vacation Season is Approaching

Are you happy or sad when the vacation season is coming?" seems, at first glance, to be a pointless question; you are probably thinking: "Everyone would be happy about it, of course." But, actually, many people do not at all look forward to vacation time. They worry about the disruption of their routine, the expense, the difficulties of travel, the possibilities of disease or danger, and even the possibility of boredom and disappointment!

What is the first thing that occurs to you in connection with a vacation?

- (1) Traffic jams
- (2) Footing the bill
- (3) Uncertainty about where to go
- (4) Preference for working instead
- (5) Desire to just stay home



Sample Answers

(A) As soon as one vacation is over I start planning for the next one. As a result, every year I have an *affordable* and convenient but highly exciting trip. I find the best deals on travel and *accommodations*, I know exactly what I want to do (and how to do it) in advance so I don't waste any valuable time off, and I come back home with a wonderful memory.

(B) Vacations would be better if everyone didn't take theirs at the same time. I like going to the beach, and I like going to the mountains as well. I get re-energized by being *in tune with* nature and not having the regular nine-to-five schedule to *contend with*. But, unfortunately, I have to share the experience with too many other people, so the beach is overcrowded and the mountains are full. The main value of being away from the city is completely *negated* if the whole *populace* merely moves to the country. So I've started staying at home when I'm off; sometimes there are fewer people left in the city during a holiday than there are in the *rural* areas.

Speak Your Mind

1. Vacationing *requires* money and time and leads to *fatigue*. So, do you still think it is worth while going out?
2. Which do you prefer — going abroad or traveling in this country?
3. What is the best season for taking a vacation?
4. Who plans your vacations? Why?
5. What do you usually do if you can't take a vacation?
6. What is the ideal vacation?
7. Describe the most impressive vacation you've ever had.
8. Would you *sacrifice* your vacation in order to make more money at work?

Speak Your Mind Helpers

1. Vacationing requires money and time and leads to fatigue. So, do you still think it is worth while going out?

(A)

I know that taking a trip leads to a lot of *hassles*. Sometimes people work harder “relaxing” than they do on their jobs. But I would not trade the vacation experience for anything. It doesn’t matter what one does on vacation, as long as it is not something that one does every day. So by doing something new and different, we change our *perspective*, we expand our self-awareness, and we *recharge our batteries* to *get through* the rest of the year with more energy and sense of accomplishment than we otherwise would.

(B)

I stopped taking vacations years ago. They just aren’t worth the trouble. *Don’t get me wrong*: I take the time off from work. But I spend my time off doing things I enjoy at home. I *take in* a few movies, I take nice long walks in the neighborhood, I reorganize my living space and maybe buy some new furniture, or I devote myself to my hobbies. All of these activities appeal to me more than spending a lot of money and time to exhaust myself in a *frantic* effort to “have fun” in some strange place.

2. Which do you prefer — going abroad or traveling in this country?

(A)

I’m always amazed when I talk to my fellow countrymen to find out how little of their own nation they have ever been to. Of course, there are a few popular vacation spots that nearly everyone has visited *multiple* times; but few people go anywhere else. So I plan on visiting every island and every mountain and every town in the country at least once before I die. I’m well *on the way* to accomplishing my goal, and as a result I think I know my own land more than anyone else does, from the inside — but not more than everyone else should know it.

(B)

I like to *vary* my vacation locations. So, one year I will travel someplace at home, even if I’ve been there before, and the next year I’ll travel abroad, especially to some new place. So I’m able to compare the way people live here in my country — what they do, what they think, what they eat, how they dress — with the ways people live in other places. As a result, I’m learning a lot about both kinds of people, my own and others.

3. What is the best season for taking a vacation?

(A)

Like most people, I prefer summer vacations. It's hot at work and *tempers* often *flare*. But the days are long. So if I can go somewhere else, I can spend a lot of time not only relaxing but changing my routine. Summer vacations are thus more efficient than holidays at any other time of the year. And I enjoy being part of the crowd; it adds excitement to the occasion.

(B)

By accident one year, I started taking my vacations in the late fall. And I'm glad that happened, even though I had not planned it. Since it is not peak season it is easy to find a place to stay. Whatever transportation I need — boat, train, bus, whatever — is easy to find, and comfortable since it is not crowded. If I drive, there are few traffic jams. And the weather is still very pleasant, so I can enjoy myself while avoiding the problems that *plague* most people's vacations at other times of the year.

4. Who plans your vacations? Why?

(A)

I have a friend who's a travel agent. She keeps me constantly informed about good travel deals and helps plan my *itinerary*, so I always get the maximum benefit from my vacation.

(B)

I let my wife handle the details. I'm always busy at work and don't really mind where I go, but know she greatly looks forward to our annual trip. So, to make her happy, I let her decide what we're going to do. And, I must say, she always does a wonderful job. We've had some great vacations together, much better than if I had done the planning myself. I'm very lucky.

→ **temper** : particular emotional state or mood, esp. anger

→ **flare** : suddenly become angry or violent → **plague** : cause a lot of problems for (sb/sth)

→ **itinerary** : plan for a coming trip, including information about when, where, and how

SPEAK YOUR MIND

Speak Your Mind Helpers

5. What do you usually do if you can't take a vacation?

(A)

If for some reason I can't go on vacation when I want to, I make it very clear to my boss that I'm extremely unhappy about it. But I continue to do my job as well as I can, as I am expected to do, even though I am not happy. This situation has come up from time to time, but I've always managed to convince the company to let me have some time off at a later date. So I guess I don't have anything to complain about (and neither does my boss).

(B)

Oh, I don't care if I have a vacation or not. Even if I take time off, I seldom go anywhere. I just like to stay home and spend more time with my friends.

6. What is the ideal vacation?

(A)

The perfect vacation would be two weeks in Florence before the Italians all take their vacations (because then everything is closed); luxury accommodations in a centuries-old *winery*; a lovely, knowledgeable guide who could show me all the art treasures during the day and all the hot spots at night; eating at wonderful restaurants every day; and someone else to pay all the bills!

(B)

Most people are too *materialistic*. They want to take some *frantic*, *status-laden* trip to some famous, *exotic* place where the *in-crowd hangs out*. But for once I'd like to make a voyage of self-discovery. Perhaps the best way to do this would be to join the lifestyle of a *monastery* in Tibet or India or Europe: wake up early every morning and pray or *meditate*, engage in simple manual labor during the day, eat *spare* but nutritious meals, *fast* from time to time, and then pray or meditate again before going to bed. I'm sure an experience like this would change my entire life, not just waste a week or two of it while doing expensive, foolish things.

7. Describe the most impressive vacation you've ever had.

(A)

Last year I took the trip of my life! I finally visited India after many years of dreaming about it. The country is too big to do everything in one vacation, so there's plenty more to experience later. But I spent a few days at either end of the country, in Kolkata and in Mumbai. The two cities are very different; Kolkata seems more *chaotic* and traditional, while Mumbai is more orderly and modern. But neither city was like any other place I've ever been; everywhere, there is an ever-changing mix of cultures, religions, nationalities, languages, customs, costumes, *castes*, economic classes, and attitudes. It's confusing but *invigorating* at the same time. However, the best part of the trip was a journey by train I took to a small village a couple of hours north of Kolkata, where Rabindranath Tagore *founded* a college. It was *serene*, quiet, traditional, and intellectually stimulating all at once, and I'd like to go there every time I visit India.

(B)

Don't laugh, but the most vivid vacation memory I have was when I was about three years old. I lived in a small country town, but suddenly found myself in Chicago. I'd been to small cities, but I had never seen even one *skyscraper* before, *let alone* blocks and blocks of them. I was *utterly* amazed by the *hustle and bustle* of the people around me, as well as by the wide variety of nationalities and races. The noise and the *congestion* of the city were *disorienting*, but the *shoreline* of Lake Michagan was like going to the ocean. I was an *impressionable* toddler from the countryside, and the buildings and the beaches have stayed in my memory for a long time.

Speak Your Mind

Speak Your Mind Helpers

8. Would you sacrifice your vacation in order to make more money at work?

M : I don't know what to do. Maybe you can give me some advice.

F : If I can be of any help, I'd be glad to offer my services. What's wrong?

M : I'm supposed to go on vacation in two weeks. I've already made plans and *reservations*, and my family is looking forward to it. But my boss offered me a chance to do some extra work. It's not a lot of extra money, but the experience would look good on my *résumé*. I don't know what to do.

F : Hmmmm. Can you *postpone* the vacation, do it later on?

M : Not really. There's a set schedule of classes that I have to teach, so basically I'd have to wait until next year for another vacation opportunity.

F : Can you get your money back if you *cancel* your plans?

M : I'd get some of it back, but not much. I had to get my tickets well in advance, and there's a strict penalty for any changes or cancellations.

F : Would the extra money cover your losses?

M : Well, almost. But it's not *primarily* about the money.

F : What about the extra work? Would there be some other opportunity later on, when it wouldn't *interfere with* your family vacation plans?

M : It's hard to say. But if I *turn it down* this time, the boss probably won't offer it to me again. It looks like it's either "*take it*" or "*leave it*."

F : Well, what do you think your wife will say?

M : I know she's looking forward to this trip. We've talked about visiting New Zealand for years, and we finally got the chance.

F : New Zealand? Which island, North or South?

M : A bit of both, but mainly the North Island. That's the one that interests us the most.

F : What if the rest of your family go by themselves and you stay behind to work?

M : I've thought of that, but I'd feel jealous if I didn't get to go. It's something I've always wanted to do, too. Besides, I know my wife would need my help with the kids. If she had to do all the work by herself, she wouldn't have much fun either.

F : Then there's only one solution.

M : Really? What is it?

F : Stay here and work. This will open up opportunities for you, so you will have a better future. You can take your dream vacation next year. I know your family will be disappointed, but it's really just a temporary *setback*, not the end of the dream. You can do something for your wife to *make up for* the loss, like getting her a nice present or something, and next time, due to your new job situation, you might be in a position to take an even better trip.

M : OK. But what should I do with my tickets?

F : Since you can't use them and you're going to lose your money anyway, give them to me. I've always wanted to go to North Island!

