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STUDENT EDITION

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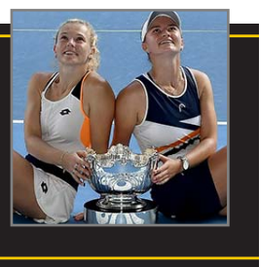
TIMES nie Newspaper in Education

TODAY'S EDITION

➤ How to get rid of grammatical glitches? Read 'Language Lab' and follow the rules PAGE 2

➤ An educationist speaks about the changing phases of education– from offline to online classes, where the school has become an avenue to explore possibilities PAGE 3

➤ Krejcikova, Siniakova win Australian Open women's doubles title PAGE 4



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Centre likely to issue advisory on reopening schools soon: Sources

With the Covid-19 vaccination drive for children aged 15 gathering pace, the Centre is likely to issue an advisory soon to reopen schools across the country. According to sources, Union health minister Mansukh Mandaviya has asked the National Expert Group to suggest ways and work on modalities to open schools nationwide. "Covid-19 has affected children of all age groups. However, the mortality rate and severity of disease in children are negligible. Health experts believe that it is high time children return to schools," sources said.

Top sources have also revealed that the Centre wants to reopen schools in a staggered manner and under strict adherence to Covid-19 protocols

The countrywide vaccination drive was rolled out on January 16, 2021 and vaccination of all eligible population above 18 years of age started from May 1, 2021. The next phase of Covid-19 vaccination commenced from January 3 for adolescents in the age group of 15-18 years

Time to reopen schools? Share your views at timesnie175@gmail.com

How government allocates funds

Have you ever wondered why petrol prices are skyrocketing, despite a fall in the global oil prices? Why is the Air Force unable to modernise its fleet of fighter jets? Or, why do you have to pay for the life-saving Covid-19 vaccines? Many of these questions find answers in the government's ability to deliver. However, a major aspect of it is also related to budget allocation. Hence, it is important to understand how the government spends its money. Let's check how the successive governments of India managed its expenses...

One-fourth of the budget goes to interest payment

■Yes, you heard it right. Nearly one-fourth of the government's budget is allocated to paying interest. After paying off interests, the government is left to spend only three-fourths of the total budget on things that matter to you. This severely restricts the government's ability to spend on developmental programmes. The remaining amount is utilised on securing the country's borders, developmental programmes, providing subsidies to people, and transferring money to states. The government pays interest on all its outstanding debt on past borrowings, which haven't yet been paid back.

Defence pockets highest allocation

■The 2021-22 Union Budget allocated over 13% of its total budget to defence. More than half of this sum was assigned to the Indian Armed Forces.

Over 65% of all subsidies go to food

■The Government of India undertakes one of the largest food subsidy programmes in the world. The initiatives have helped the government create an effective social safety net but, at the same time, the initiative has faced criticism because of its contribution to the government's budget deficit. Over 220 million Indians survive on less than ₹32/day, according to a 2020 study by the World Economic Forum. To meet the needs of these people, a subsidy on food becomes a necessity. Among the various forms of government subsidies, food subsidies constitute nearly 65% of the total. The government also provides subsidies on fertilisers and petroleum products, such as LPG and kerosene. It is provided on loans under various scheme and for procuring agricultural products other than paddy and wheat.

Where does the rest of the money go?

The payment on interest, defence, subsidies, health, and education consumes nearly 50% of the country's total budget expenditure. The remaining 50% is spent on funds for various ministries and states, paying pensions, paying salaries to its employees, government schemes, the welfare of women, children marginalised communities and development of agriculture and rural areas.

Trivia

How long is the average Union Budget presentation speech?

1 The duration of Budget speeches has varied over the years.

2 The Budget presentation can last anywhere from 90 to 120 minutes.

3 The FM's 2020 Budget speech was the longest in duration in India's independent history as it continued for around two hours and 40 minutes. Even after presenting for 160 minutes, she couldn't finish the last two pages and had to cut the speech short.

4 In 2019, Sitharaman spoke for around two hours and 17 minutes, which broke the record of Jaswant Singh's two-hour-and-15-minute-long presentation in 2003.

5 However, in terms of the number of words, Manmohan Singh delivered the longest Budget speech comprising 18,650 words.

7 The shortest speech, comprising just 800 words, was presented by HM Patel in 1977 when he delivered the interim Budget.

APP FOG

From Instagram to Facebook or Whatsapp, most of us have a range of apps installed on our smartphones and there are times we actually get lost in these apps. Now, a new research has revealed the extent to which people are obsessed with their apps. A YouGov survey found that one in four people struggle to keep up with friends because they are using too many apps. The survey of 1,966 smartphone users found that of those who used two apps, 23 per cent experienced app fog.

WHAT

App fog is a phenomenon caused by confusion when multiple apps are used to message friends. Smartphone users forget who uses which app, and in turn are unable to stay on top of conversations.

HOW

IT HAS IMPACTED OUR LIVES:

■A YouGov poll found one in three people said they had missed an important event with friends, while one in 10 said it had caused them to lose touch with a friend or have their relationship negatively impacted

■Nearly half, 47 per cent, said they would rather use just one messaging app if they could

■The research found young people's relationships were more affected by app fog than older generations

■Some 57 per cent of 18-34-year-olds have forgotten to respond to a friend, which significantly decreases for those aged above 55

Do you suffer from app fog? Share your views at toinie175@gmail.com

Object found in the Milky Way sending radio waves every 18 minutes

Australian researchers have discovered a strange spinning object in the Milky Way they say is unlike anything astronomers have ever seen. The object, first spotted by a university student working on his undergraduate thesis, releases a huge burst of radio energy three times every hour. The pulse comes "every 18.18 minutes, like clockwork," said astrophysicist Natasha Hurley-Walker, who led the investigation after the student's discovery, using a telescope in the Western Australian outback, known as the Murchison Widefield Array.

While there are other objects in the universe that switch on and off, such as pulsars, Hurley-Walker said, 18.18 minutes is a frequency that has never been observed before

DID YOU KNOW?

A pulsar (from pulsating radio source) is a highly magnetised rotating neutron star that emits beams of electromagnetic radiation out of its magnetic poles. The periods of pulsars make them very useful tools for the astronomers

Taking screen grabs of disappearing messages on Messenger? The sender will soon get an alert

Gone are the days when you could freely take screen grabs of disappearing messages on Facebook's Messenger app. Soon, the sender will get an alert as soon as the receiver takes a screenshot of the conversation. To mark Data Privacy Day on Friday, Meta founder and CEO Mark Zuckerberg confirmed that the Messenger team is working on a new update that will ensure end-to-end encryption of the chats. The billionaire also informed that Messenger will have new GIFs, stickers, and reactions to encrypted chats.

'Dune, 'Licorice Pizza' and 'West Side Story' score high on Hollywood guild nominations

Sci-fi epic 'Dune', coming-of-age drama 'Licorice Pizza' and musical remake 'West Side Story' received major boosts in Hollywood's awards season race, as several of the film industry's top guilds unveiled their nominees. The movies earned nods from Tinseltown's directors', producers' and writers' unions, putting them in contention alongside presumed early Oscars frontrunners 'Belfast' and 'The Power of the Dog', which also secured multiple nominations.

NASA offers $1 million for innovative ideas to feed astronauts

NASA will pay up to $1 million to people who can come up with innovative and sustainable food production ideas to feed astronauts in space, as the US space agency prepares to send astronauts further into the cosmos than ever before.

Giving future explorers the technology to produce nutritious, tasty, and satisfying meals on long-duration space missions will give them the energy required to uncover the great unknown

■ In coordination with the Canadian Space Agency, NASA has launched the 'Deep Space Food Challenge' that calls on teams to design, build, and demonstrate prototypes of food production technologies that provide tangible nutritional products or food

■ Over time, food loses its nutritional value. That means for a multi-year mission to Mars, bringing along pre-packaged food will not meet all the needs for maintaining astronaut health

■ In October 2021, Phase 1 of the challenge culminated as NASA awarded 18 teams a total of $450,000 for their concepts for innovative food production technology that produces safe, acceptable, palatable, nutritious food products

■ NASA now invites both new and existing teams to enter Phase 2 for a prize purse up to $1 million.

■ Proposed technologies such as plant growth systems, manufactured food products, and ready-to-eat solutions combined could provide the future crews with a variety of options that would provide the needed daily nutrition, it added

Quote unquote

Corruption is like a termite, which makes the country hollow, and there is an urgent need to get rid of corruption. All countrymen should come together to get rid of it. Today's youth have to do it together, and we have to do it as soon as possible. Therefore, it becomes very important that we give priority to our duties, where there is a sense of duty. Where the duty is supreme, corruption does not exist there

Narendra Modi, PM, on how to work towards a corruption- free India, while addressing the monthly Mann ki Baat

"The difference between the almost right word and the right word is the difference between the lightning bug and the lightning."
Mark Twain

TECH TALK

PODCASTS, THE NEW LANGUAGE TOOL

Whether it is reinforcing your existing language skills, using them to pick up new grammar and vocabulary, or just wanting to learn a new language, the podcast possibilities are endless!

Consider this the evolution of ordering cassette tapes to learn a language. Podcasting is a booming trend in the field of language learning and the reasons for it are plenty...

Free of Cost: Probably the best thing about podcasts is that all the benefits and content they bring to your ears is absolutely free of charge at all times.

Accessible all the time: The very nature of the fact that you have your phone with you 24/7 means that listening to a podcast is incredibly easy. Whether you are waiting for a bus, lying in bed in the evening, or going for a walk, you can access great language inputs with just a couple of taps on your phone.

No pressure: Podcasts don't have to feel like hard work as you're listening to them. They also don't require you to tax your mental capacity too much by memorising words or answering questions. There is no need to plan ahead, you don't need to have a speaking partner, just put your headphones in, press play, and enjoy the show.

Listening is learning: In case of learning a foreign language, podcasts give the opportunity to listen to your new language being spoken. As you listen, you'll learn correct pronunciation. You might have thought that podcasts are only good for improving your listening skills. After all, "listening" is what you do to a podcast, right? But it might surprise you to find out that podcasts can also help improve your speaking skills. One study of students learning Mandarin found how podcasts improved speaking test scores.

Cultural appreciation: While the majority of these podcasts are aimed at native speakers of the language, there is an increasing amount of podcasts aimed at language learners. These podcasts will often be spoken at a slower speed, using less complicated vocabulary. Many will come with transcripts, so you can follow along. Podcasts that feature native speakers help students improve their listening skills and gain cultural knowledge.

HOW TO USE LANGUAGE PODCASTS EFFICIENTLY

1 **Pick the right one:** Podcasts may target beginning, intermediate or advanced students. Selecting a podcast that's the right level for you will help ensure the podcast helps you grow without overwhelming you.

2 **Learn from peers:** Following, reading and listening to podcast reviews from previous language learners is also a great strategy to help you locate the best of the best when it comes to pod-resources.

3 **Use for travel:** When travelling to a different country, learning simple expressions and being able to understand them in conversation is important. There are plenty of podcasts out there that offer shorter lessons for ease of learning.

4 **Take notes:** If you are able, take notes while you are listening. This isn't a crucial step, but noting down interesting expressions can be useful if you're trying to also build up your own set of vocabulary or sentence structures.

MANNER OF SPEAKING

PICS: ISTOCK

POWERFUL SPEAKING LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S GREATEST ORATORS

Franklin Delano Roosevelt's first inaugural address

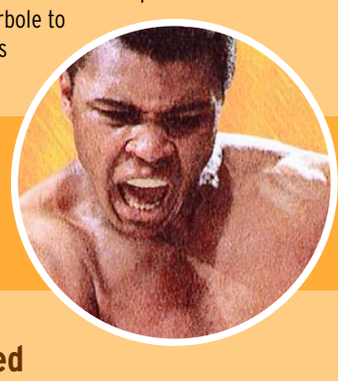
Takeaway: Inspire your audience. Roosevelt's belief that the "nation will endure as it has endured" spoke directly to the hearts of a country ready to have hope again.

Martin Luther King, Jr's "I Have a Dream" speech

Takeaway: Give your audience a vision to embrace. Less than a year later, the Civil Rights Act of 1964 was law.

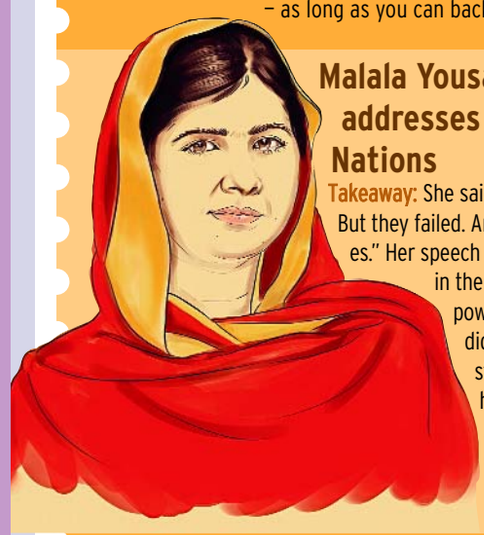
Neil Armstrong at the first lunar landing

Takeaway: His statement, "The Eagle has landed," became part of the American vernacular. Sometimes simple does the trick. Armstrong didn't need hyperbole to encapsulate the gravity of this iconic moment in space history.



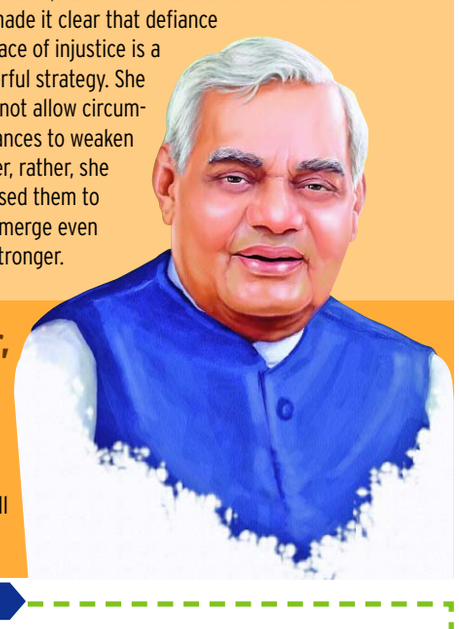
Muhammad Ali's "I am the greatest" proclamation

Takeaway: Don't be afraid to be loud, boisterous, and proud – as long as you can back it up.



Malala Yousafzai addresses the United Nations

Takeaway: She said: "They thought that the bullets would silence us. But they failed. And then, out of that silence came thousands of voices." Her speech made it clear that defiance in the face of injustice is a powerful strategy. She did not allow circumstances to weaken her, rather, she used them to emerge even stronger.



Atal Bihari Vajpayee, Srinagar, April 2003

Takeaway: Vajpayee's famous words, "*Insaaniyat ke daayre mein*," were part of a large-hearted speech that changed diplomatic dialogue in Kashmir. Vajpayee declared that "all issues can be resolved through talks".

MIND YOUR LANGUAGE

MOST COMMON GRAMMAR GLITCHES

1. EVERYDAY/EVERY DAY

"Everyday" (one word, no space) is an adjective describing something that's very common, like an everyday occurrence. "Every day" (with the space) is an adverbial phrase that means each day.

2. ITS/IT'S

We've seen a lot of people write "it's" when they want to show possession. But that's the incorrect usage! It's is a contraction, meaning a shorter or "contracted" form of "it is" or "it has." (Example: It's going to rain.) Its is a possessive pronoun meaning, "belonging to it," or a "quality of it".

3. LOSE/LOOSE

This is a pair of so-called "confusables" that have only one letter differentiating them — that extra "o" in loose. Just remember that "loose" is almost always used as an adjective meaning "not tight," and "lose" is a verb meaning to suffer a loss.

4. YOUR/YOU'RE

Here's another one that auto correct often doesn't catch because it's spelled right even if it's grammatically wrong. But be careful! "You're" is a contraction, only used to mean "you are." "Your" is a possessive of "you," used when you want to show possession. Remember this: You're going to be just fine if you watch your grammar.

5. SINCE OR FOR

You use "for" if you don't have to calculate the period of time, because the amount of time is indicated in the sentence already. (Example: "I have lived here for two months) You use "since" if you have to calculate the period of time, because you only have the starting point. (Example: I have lived here since 1975.)

6. LESS VS FEWER

There's a commonly repeated rule about fewer and less. It goes like this: fewer is used to refer to number among things that are counted, as in "fewer choices" and "fewer problems"; less is used to refer to quantity or amount among things that are measured, as in "less time" and "less effort." The use of less to modify ordinary plural count nouns (as in "made less mistakes") is pretty rare in writing and is usually better avoided, though it does occur frequently in speech.

WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE?

SIMILE, METAPHOR AND ANALOGY

Metaphors, similes, and analogies are three literary devices used in speech and writing to make comparisons. Each is used in a different way. Identifying the three can get a little tricky sometimes: for example, when it comes to simile vs metaphor, a simile is actually a sub-category of metaphor, which means all similes are metaphors, but not all metaphors are similes. Understanding this difference — and knowing how to use both — can be a jewel in the crown of your writing, making your descriptions and comparisons more colourful and engaging.

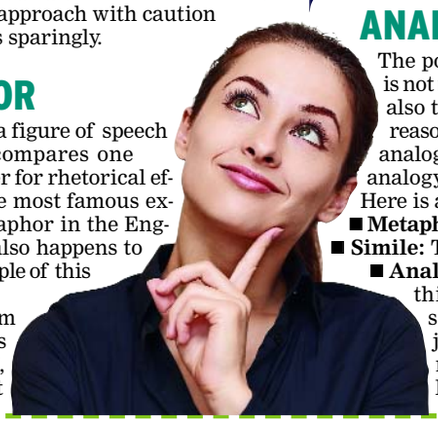
SIMILE

While both similes and metaphors are used to make comparisons, the difference between similes and metaphors comes down to a word. Similes use the words 'like' or 'as' to compare things — "Life is like a box of chocolates." In contrast, metaphors directly state a comparison — "Love is a battlefield." When it comes to simile use in writing, a good rule of thumb is to approach with caution and use similes sparingly.

METAPHOR

A metaphor is a figure of speech that directly compares one thing to another for rhetorical effect. One of the most famous examples of metaphor in the English language also happens to be a great example of this technique.

In William Shakespeare's *As You Like It*, the playwright writes: *"All the world's a stage, And all the men and women merely players."*



ANALOGY

The point of an analogy is not merely to show, but also to explain. For this reason, when it comes to analogy vs metaphor, an analogy is more complex. Here is an example:

- **Metaphor:** Time is a thief.
- **Simile:** Time is like a thief.
- **Analogy:** Time is like a thief in that thieves steal physical objects and time steals moments of our lives.

WORDMAP

The Italian village that doesn't speak Italian

Nicknamed the 'Little Provence' of Italy, Sancto Lucio de Coumboscuro is an isolated town in almost every way. Located near the border between the Piedmont region of Italy and France, visitors must either fly into Turin, take a train and then a bus, or drive south from Provence to get there.

Those who make the trip here would be forgiven for wondering if they are in the right country, particularly when the locals say goodbye with the unknown "arveire" instead of "arrivederci".

The official language of the Coumboscuro is Provençal, an ancient Neo-Latin medieval dialect of Occitan, the language spoken in the Occitanie region of France.

Electricity often goes out for weeks during the winter, while internet connection here is minimal.

But the town's tranquil mountain meadows and bright purple lavender fields are ideal for visitors seeking an unplugged retreat, as are the stunning views from its alpine peaks, stretching all the way to the Côte d'Azur.

The area of the Piedmont region where Coumboscuro is located passed between Italian and French rule several times in history. This explains why the locals feel neither Italian nor French, just Provençal.

— Thewingsofwisdom.com

Queries relating to language skills

Do you find grammar confusing? Do you get stuck with words when writing a letter, an essay or a blog? Do you have a fear of public speaking? Or do you simply want to improve your communication skills? Times NIE is here to help you master the intricacies of the English language. Just shoot us your queries on toinie175@gmail.com