

Text 1

I do like the underground. There's nothing surreal about plunging into the bowels of the earth to catch a train. It's a little world of its own down there, with its own strange winds and weather systems, its own eerie noises and oily smells. Even when you've descended so far into the earth that you've lost your bearings utterly and wouldn't be in the least surprised to pass a troop of blackened miners coming off shift, there's always the rumble and tremble of a train passing somewhere on an unknown line even further below. And it all happens in such orderly quiet: all these thousands of people passing on stairs and escalators, stepping on and off crowded trains, sliding off into the darkness with wobbling heads, and never speaking, like characters from Night of the Living Dead.

Text 2

Once there was a little brown bat named Billy. Billy had soft, brown fur, tiny, pointy ears and lovely, graceful wings. Billy lived in the belfry high up in the First Church, which was located on the corner of Maple and Main Streets. Every night Billy flew out of the belfry and with his strong wings, would soar and glide and dip around the street light by the church. As you probably know, bats can't see very well, so Bill had to hear extremely well. His favourite pastime was squeaking and then listening to all the echoes coming back to his sensitive ears. Each echo had a different sound, and Billy learned to identify everything on his block by its echo. He especially liked to hear the echoes whining, buzzing mosquitoes, his favourite food, and some nights, when he was really hungry, he ate thousands of mosquitoes.

Text 3

Bats are the only flying mammals. Bats' forelimbs are greatly modified and form wings very different from those of birds. Bats have limited eyesight. In flight their ears form part of a unique system for locating and avoiding objects. Bats emit a sound, too high-pitched for us to hear, which is echoed back like a radar beam. Picked up by the bat's sensitive ears, this echo indicates the direction and distance of obstacles to be avoided and of flying insects that may be seized for food. Grown bats and their kind are a group of common small bats with long, narrow ears and simple faces. Over a dozen species occur in North America. Thousands have been found in larger caves -- sometimes in clusters, sometimes forming a layer over the cave walls. They also live in deserted buildings.

Text 4

Cannabis is widely known for its medicinal ability to ease a host of serious conditions such as:

- Cancer: cannabis can suppress nausea brought on by chemotherapy
- AIDS: it can increase appetite and prevent weight-loss
- Glaucoma (an eye condition): cannabis can relieve eye pressure
- Muscular pain: it can ease muscle spasms and period pains.

In the 19th century cannabis was widely used to relieve muscle spasms and rheumatisms. Even Queen Victoria was given it by her doctor to ease her period pains. It was the invention of the syringe towards the end of the century that marked an end to its widespread medicinal use.

Injecting drugs meant that they could take effect a lot faster. Cannabis cannot be dissolved in water, so it can't be injected.

Text 5

The issue of childcare and working mothers has been the subject of dispute for some time. Many argue that the best place for children is always in their own homes with their own parents. However, it is my contention that there are many advantages to be had from using childcare and the government should provide more financial assistance who do so.

It has been argued that children who attend childcare centres at an early age miss out on an important early learning that occurs in parent-child interaction. This argument goes, may be educationally disadvantaged later in life. However, childcare centres may actually assist children in their early learning. They give children an opportunity to mix with others and to develop social skills at an early age. Indeed, a whole range of learning occurs in childcare centres.

Another argument against the use of childcare facilities is that children can be emotionally deprived in these facilities compared to the home. This argument assumes that the best place for children is to be at their parents, especially mothers side for twenty-four hours a day. It claims that children's emotional development can be damaged when they are left in childcare facilities. However parents and children need to spend some time apart. Children become less dependent on their parents and parents themselves are less stressed and more effective care-givers when there are periods of separation.

It could be further asserted that the government and the economy as a whole cannot afford the enormous cost involved in supporting childcare for working parents. However working parents actually contribute to the national economy. They are able to utilise their productive skills and pay income tax while nonworking parents can become a drain on the tax system through dependent spouse and other rebates.

In conclusion, government support for childcare services assist individually families and is important for the economic well-being of the whole nation.

Text 6

DIY GUIDE: Build your own wine rack

Project: woodwork

Skill level: basic

Duration: day

Here's a corking idea of how to make a wine rack out of a drainpipe!

Tools you will need:

Drainpipe, handsaw, wood, paint, tape, measure

- a- **Measure your wine bottles:** Assume an average wine bottle is 30mm long and 80mm wide. The average drainpipe is 100mm in width and therefore a wine bottle will fit easily inside.
- b- **Cut your drainpipe to size:** Cut piece of drainpipe 100 c long into three sections. A small piece will be left over. Cut more drainpipe into the same length sections, until you have 16 wine bottle lengths of pipe.
- c- **Make the frame:** Next make a box to house the pipes in. Remember to ensure that the inside measurements of the box are the same as the external measurements of the pipes.
- d- **Assemble and paint:** Slot the pipes into the box and paint as desired.

Text 7

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