

UOW College Hong Kong / Community College of City University
Student English Enhancement Unit (SEE U)
Daily English Practice

Week 10

#98 The toughest life form on Earth

Skills/ Objectives: To train students' reading, listening and writing skills

PART 1: Before you read...

Preparatory questions

Qt 1: How does the discovery of tardigrades on Earth help scientist make speculations about life in the universe?

Qt 2: Is there any living creature in this world which can survive heating up to 300 degrees and freezing down to -300 degrees Fahrenheit?

The answers to Qts 1 and 2 will be provided at the next set of Daily English Practice exercises.

Vocabulary

1. pluck (verb): to pull something with a sharp movement
2. clump (noun): a solid mass of something
3. moss (noun): small green and yellow plants growing on wet rocks or trees
4. protruding (adjective): raised from the surface
5. chunky (adjective): thick
6. bumpy (adjective): uneven
7. apocalypse (noun): a big serious event causing destruction and major changes
8. plump (adjective): with a rounded shape
9. waddling (verb): walking with short steps moving the body from side to side
10. lichen (noun): a grey, green, or yellow plant-like organism that grows on rocks, walls, and trees
11. recoil (verb): to move back to resist something
12. pockmarked (adjective): covered with small holes left after recovery from a skin illness
13. chalice (noun): a cup used in magic
14. stringy (adjective): like strings
15. filaments (noun): thin threads
16. strand (noun): a thin thread of something

The following is/are answer(s) to relevant question(s) in the preceding set of exercises "The US Government's search for aliens in the universe":

Qt 2: This is because the Earth is the only place we know where life exists and is thus used as the guinea pig for detecting life on other planets in the universe.

Qt 3: No. Scientists who believe in the Fermi paradox think that the probability of finding life in another planet other than the Earth is very low.

PART 2: Article for Reading

Read the article posted by National Geographic on the web which tells you a kind of creature in this world that can survive very tough physical environments and will not easily die:

Tardigrades are as close to indestructible as it gets on Earth

<https://news.nationalgeographic.com/2018/03/tardigrade-water-bear-parking-lot-japan-spd/national-geographic>

PART 3: Listening Comprehension

You should also listen to the following YouTube video clip to find out more on the topic, while practicing your listening skills at the same time:

Tardigrades: The Most Resilient Animals in the Universe

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eXBkmLzBHZk>

PART 4: Writing Practice

Have you ever wondered why the verb “help” is not followed by the infinitive “to” in some circumstances? An example can be found in the sentence below cited from the main text:

*The dehydration resistance of water bears could **help** inform scientists on how to preserve biological materials, like cells, crops, and meats.*

Originally used in American English, the use of the verb “help” directly followed by another verb without the infinitive “to” has become common and acceptable even in British English. However, do not assume this liberal use is widely applicable to other verbs. You could be marked wrong by a teacher in Hong Kong if you say “I want talk about it.” unless the teacher is strongly in favour of using English in American style.

Can you practice the use of the verb “help” by writing one of your own? Send your writing to: see.u@cccu.edu.hk. Remember! Our **SEE U** teachers are always ready to give you feedback.