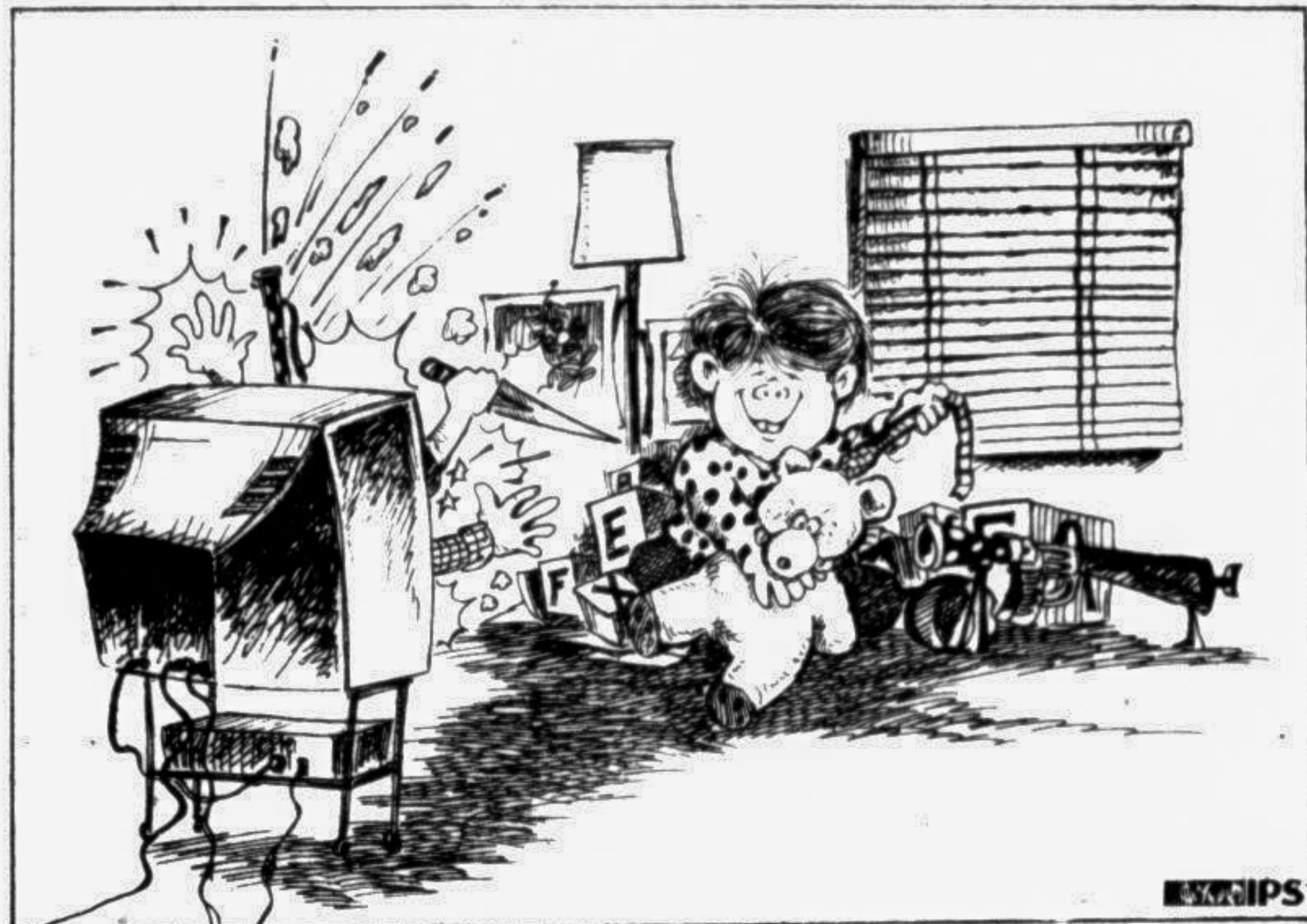


The Age of Violence

Children are being exposed more and more to onscreen violence, which is spilling into real life. **Ramon Isberto** of Inter Press Service reports from Manila



THE seven-year-old boy had been quietly watching the US hit movie 'Robocop' in his parents' room when the family housemaid came in and switched the TV channel to a local programme. The boy's reaction was swift — and shocking. Before the maid apparently knew what was happening, the child had taken his father's .22-calibre pistol from the closet, and had shot her in the head. The woman died instantly. Commentators quickly blamed the tragic killing, which took place here in October, on the violent film the boy had been watching. Indeed, less than a month later, an eight-year-old boy shot and seriously wounded a relative. The boy told the police he was merely "doing what they do on TV". Experts warned against leaping to hasty conclusions. But they agree the twin incidents are signs things have gone terribly wrong with Philippine television. "Parents have to give up the idea that they can shelter their kids from the rising tide of violence in TV," says Feny delos Angeles-Bautista, a child educator

and executive director of 'Batibot', an educational TV programme for children. "With satellite and cable TV catching on, there will be no place to hide," she adds. Like in many other countries, violence is on the rampage in Philippine television. Among the obvious culprits are the 30-second movie trailers advertising the latest films being shown in Manila's hundreds of theatres. Action films being the fad, trailers come packed with more violent incidents per minute — automatic gunfire, karate chops and kicks, spectacular explosions — than anything else on TV. Manila TV networks have been sharply criticised by parents for showing these trailers throughout the day, exposing kids to heavy doses of mayhem. But the commercials continue. But the worst offenders seem to be the so-called children's shows. According to a 1992 study entitled 'TV, Toys and Violence: Some Disturbing Connections', cartoons have the biggest number of violent incidents per hour (34.2) among all the shows.

The study said the worst of the lot are the Japanese imported shows like 'Shaider', and 'Ultraman' that pit semi-mechanised superheroes against alien villains in incredibly gory battles. Another popular show, 'Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles', a cartoon feature on turtles armed with samurai swords, daggers and other deadly weapons, has been found to be psychologically harmful. "Increased aggressive behaviour among children in day care centres, pre-schools and other settings have been attributed to the Ninja Turtles," the study said. The cartoon carnage has sparked calls for state controls. "Government should lay down what is acceptable, what is beneficial for children, and what is not," says Amihan Abueva, secretary general of 'Salinlahi', a network of non-governmental organisations focused on children's interests. These groups see merit in the position taken by US Attorney General Janet Reno who says TV networks there should be given up to January next year to find ways of

reducing on-the-air bloodbaths by themselves before tough laws are enacted. Philippine Senator Orlando Mercado, a radio-TV personality before turning politician, prefers providing carrots along with the sticks. "TV stations should be rated in terms of violence and those found to be sowing the least violence should be granted tax and other privileges," he says. But others, fearing regulations would be full of holes, stress parental action. Argues literature professor Alma Fernandez: "Rather than putting off their TVs, parents should watch violent shows with their kids and then discuss with them what it really means." Like elsewhere, TV here has become substitute babysitters, serving as convenient means for keeping young children occupied so grown-ups can go about their chores. Thus, pre-schoolers are far more exposed to TV than school-age kids. To these children, TV shows can be quite real. "When I used to come out on a local TV programme, my students in school, kids of two or three years, used to cry," says Bautista. "Their parents told me that the children would talk to me and would get quite frustrated because I did not answer them. They thought the picture of me on TV was really me."

Older kids tend to copy or imitate the rough stuff they see onscreen, she says. "Some of our students in grade six were copying the wrestling they see on TV. They took the wrestlers' names like 'The Undertaker' and the 'British Bulldogs' and copied the stunts — until one of them broke another child's arm." She says education — both of children and grown-ups — will have to be part of the long-term solution. "We've been caught flat-footed. Media has changed our lives, but we have changed our responses to media," Bautista says. "Children have to be taught to become critical viewers of television." But child experts also say a large part of the problem lies in the widespread violence in the real world. The Philippines, for instance, has witnessed numerous coups, and a rise in the number of political killings and homicides in the past few years. TV news brings more and more of such actual violence swiftly to people's living rooms.

HORSES may not go to the university to study books but universities have now started to study how horses run. From pastures and fields horses have now entered the academic arena. The Bristol university in the United Kingdom has decided to offer students as chance to study horse racing as a degree subject. As a part of the course the students will be touring the British racecourses and meeting top trainers and horse owners as a part of the course. The course will not include study of racing forms or finding winners. The accent of this science degree will be on the race horses themselves and what made them tick. Nowhere in the academic field and animal study like that of horse constituted an academic attempt leading to a bachelor degree. The horses finally entered the realm of institutional education. The ancestors of horses once roaming at large unfettered and unmuzzled in the pastures of central Asia will be happy to find their progeny being studied at university level. Horses' service to thieves and thugs, rulers and invaders have not gone vain. We may not owe our common sense to horses but horse sense is common sense which also means that what horses congenitally possess, we rationally beings acquire them by practice. And some among us do not even acquire it in our lifetime. Man owes a lot to horses even in his initial steps towards hunt for better feed, food or forage. Horse abetted innocently in satisfying man's greed too. It helped man to discover and get enlightened which we called summarily as civilization. Like the miller's wheel, horses made us mobile and faster. That's why man loved horses, cared to keep it fit. Chenghiz Khan used to ex-

change kisses with his favourite horses. He believed it was his horse which helped him overtake others in spirit, speed and prowess. Alexander loved his horse Bucephalus (bull's head) so dearly that he wept bitterly when it was killed in India in the battle with Purus. He wept only once again when his best friend Hephæstion died. All great conquerors considered horses as an important element in their expedition. The cavalry man was the decisive factor in any battle. Napoleon did not forgive the keeper of his horses for not feeding them with adequate salt before his Russian expedition. Most of his horses died due to contraction of muscles in severe Russian winter. Adequate salt in blood stream only prevent such ailment. The Dravidian civilization of India, popularly known as Indus civilization, fell to an inferior hordes of marauders called Aryans because they came riding horse-driven chariots, faster than bull or bullock-run carts of the Indians people. It was speed which horses provided for centuries before machine was invented. Chenghiz, Halagu, Hannibal, Caesar, Alexander and Darius — all were horse minded or minded their horses intimately and meticulously. King Richard in the crusade with Muslim Saladin accepted defeat when his horse drowned. Man used horses for battle, for carriage and also for fun. That's how races began. No one knows the date and reason how races began. It was perhaps to keep the horses fit to run long distance was the ne-

cessity of introducing races. Also was the aim of deriving fun out of it. Chariot races used to be held in Olympic games from 700 to 40 BC. Organized racing began in China, Persia, Arabia and other countries of the East. Europe learnt racing through Turkey which sat across three continents — Asia, Africa and Europe. In England Charles the second (1660-85) known as the Father of the English turf introduced award and prizes in races. In France Louis XIV introduced gambling in races. Louis XIV organized Jockey club and established race rules. Man learnt to bet on horses, invested money and some lost it while some gained. Gambling on horses made many rich including late Prince Aly Khan. In horse race pleasure multiplied when man began to win. It also gave birth to lot of humour. After returning from a horse race, a man developed his horse sense and commented that men were strange animals. They had always known that one horse could run faster than another and yet they would squander millions of dollars to see that simple fact demonstrated over and over in horse races. The native Dhakaitas, popularly known as Kutli are a lot jolly great people with sharp sense of humour. Their jokes about horse and horse races are typical in texture, sarcasm and intrinsic wit. Speaking in hybrid language — a cocktail of Urdu Persian and Bengali — perhaps a legacy of Mughal and Arab rule, the Dhaka jokes on horses are classic. Once a train passenger disembarking at Fulbaria rail station was looking for a horse carriage. His

choice for one with healthy horses was not met. Insisted upon by the cartman he had to ride one with a horse too weak and frail. The horse cart owner claimed that his horse was a Pankhiraj (the king of birds) meaning, it flew other than ran. When other horse carts overtook the Pankhiraj, the disappointed passenger drew the cartman's attention. Presenting no sign of defeat, he claimed that his horse was chasing other horses from behind. On another occasion a passenger of a horse cart offered a fare which was considered too low by the cart owner. Without rejecting it forthwith, he whispered something into the ear of the horse. At this moment the horse sneezed possibly out of its own physical need. But the cart owner interpreted the sneezing as a sign of horse's refusal to accept the offer of fare. From pasture, unbounded and open, we brought horses and muzzled them. We rode them to conquer, to thrive and also to kill. When faster and mechanized vehicles were invented we used horse to run races and we bet on money for fun. Now they have entered the academic arena. No other animal has done so much to keep man's body and mind so mobile and moving. Richard Armous, the poet, suffered twice for selecting the wrong horse. He bet on a horse which collapsed even before covering half the distance of the course. Then he aspired to become a rider himself and replaced the jockey. This time he himself collapsed on horse back after covering half the distance. In sheer despair, he delivered the following versatile judgment on horses: They head the list Of bad to bet on. But I insist they are worse to get on.

The Chiapas Uprising

Continued from page 9 Cule explains how he was digging a latrine when the troops came charging over the hill, ransacked his home and destroyed a gun he uses to protect his sheep from coyotes. A single bullet in the chamber was enough to convict of him of being a Zapatista. First, the soldiers beat him around the head and kicked him repeatedly in the chest in front of his children, bound his hands behind his back, covered his head with a canvas bag and

beaten and questioned for two more days, and finally released 100 kilometres from their homes without a single centavo in their pockets. "Were the Zapatistas here?" the lanky Texas lawyer for whom I am translating wants to know. "In Chivil, we are all from the PRI," Don Manuel sobs. "I am the representative of our communal lands. Why has our government done this to us?" "We want an end to the malaria and the measles that kill our children" Two weeks after they abandoned the towns and melted back into the Lacandon jungle, no-one quite remembers the rebels. They are quickly fusing into shadow and legend. At El Tiempo, the crudely-printed San Cristobal daily "in service to the indigenous community," editor Concepcion Villafuerte estimates that the rebel army has at least 5,000 fighters. "How else could they have occupied all these places at one time?" she asks. Her husband, Amado Avandeno, who interviewed "Sub-commandante Marcos", the EZLN spokesperson in San Cristobal on the first day of the uprising, believes him to be a chilango, a native of Mexico City. "But this is an indigenous problem," Dona Concha insists, "and this is an indigenous army." Mexico City reporter Ricardo Aleman drives into the jungle to prove that the departed

The British Council Language Matters

The Intro

Today there is an article on reported speech. Most textbooks deal with reported (or indirect speech) as merely a kind of grammatical transformation exercise. This article, however, looks at other ways of reporting what is said. Take care with it though. Many of the verbs suggested are precisely those where many people make mistakes with the 'verb pattern', that is the form of the sentence that follows it (+ing, to +infinitive etc).

In addition there are two puzzles, a vocabulary/spelling game and a Wobbly Words puzzle.

Good for a Game?

Here is an interesting puzzle for you. Hidden in the words below, you will find another word which has more or less the same meaning. The letters of the hidden word are in order but they do not have to follow each other directly. The first one is done for you as an example.

- | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 1. DeceasedDead | 6. Observe..... |
| 2. Illuminated..... | 7. Deliberate..... |
| 3. Salvage..... | 8. Precipitation... |
| 4. Separate..... | 9. Encourage..... |
| 5. Rotund..... | 10. Prosecute..... |

Reporting speech

Reporting what people say is not as simple as 'He said.....' and 'She said.....' and then 'I said.....'. If it was, language would be very dull. You need to think of the function of what was said in order to use the most appropriate reporting verb. For example:

'Don't touch that - it's dangerous!' could be reported as She warned me not to touch it, and 'I was very disappointed not to have been invited' could be He complained that he hadn't been invited.

Here's a selection of 'reporting verbs':

told	instructed	
pleaded	promised	advised
suggested	denied	
ordered	wondered	
insisted	reassured	invited
moaned	recommended	
threatened	begged	demand

Look at the following things people said, and consider which would be the most appropriate way of reporting them. Think about who would be saying it, to whom, and in what circumstances.

- * Look out!
- * I'll be there at 8 o'clock on the dot.
- * Please don't hit him - he didn't mean to do it.
- * This is absolutely outrageous! I want my money back.
- * You must always wash your hands before eating.
- * You must change your lifestyle from today - your heart simply can't take the strain.
- * Stop that at once!
- * How about going to Ramna Park with me on Friday?
- * Have a seat.
- * Do you think she knows?
- * It's a brilliant film - you should see it.
- * Sorry, but I can't let you in without one.
- * Shouldn't we ask Ayesha first?

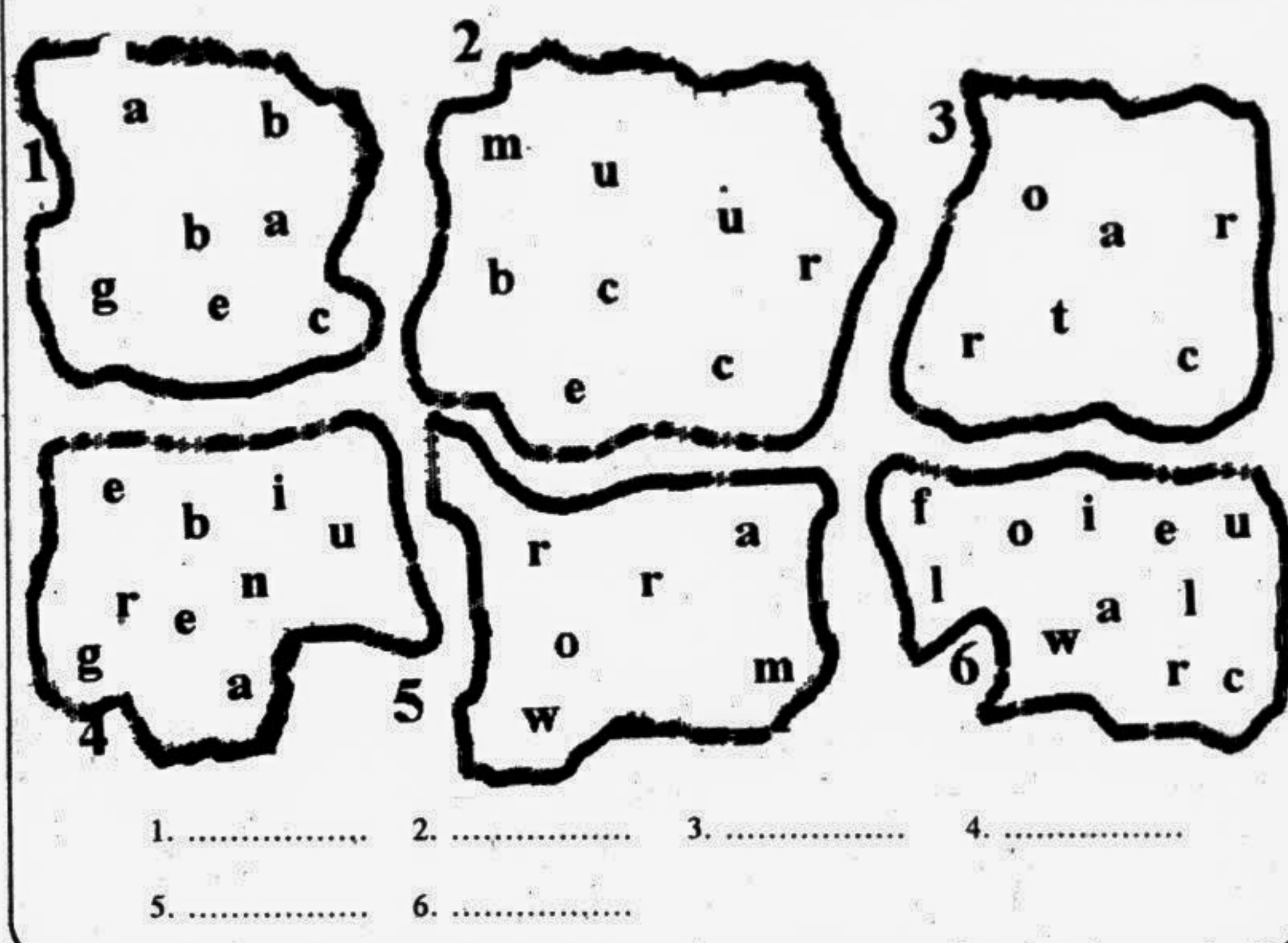
- * That's not what I said at all!
- * She'll be there - you just wait and see.
- * Go on without me!
- * Fix the blue wire to the neutral terminal.
- * I hate to say this, but you're wrong.
- * That is most definitely untrue.
- * If I were you, I'd wait until he's calmed down.
- * Not on your life!

Note that there is not necessarily only one way of reporting each one - it really does depend on who said it, who they said it to, and what the circumstances were.

Contributors: Marina Burns, Michael Matthias, Dennis O'Brien, Janet Raynor, Robert Shruball

Wobbly Words

Try this word puzzle. In each shape the letters are jumbled up. Put them in the correct order. What do they all have in common? Be careful. Some shapes might have more than one word.



The Undying Flames

by Faiz Ahmed Faiz
Mutai loh-o-kalam chhin gaet to kiya hoga.
Ki khoon-e-dil men dubo li hai ungli main ne.
Zaban pe muhr lagi hai to kia.
Ki rakhi di hai.
Her ek halqa-e-zanjir men zaban mai ne

What happened!
If they've snatched
My mighty, fiery pen:
For I've dipped my fingers
Into the blood vessels of my heart.
What happened!
If they've stitched
My tongue and lips:
For I've given speech
To every ring of the chains
In which my hands and feet are tied.

Translated from original by K R Zakhmi

For You, these Impulses ...

by Samir Asaf
When I thought birds would never sing.
Some eyes played such lovely notes!
When there were no words, I held your hand.
Those flowers promised to stay forever.
But that was a storm.
It doesn't rain anymore.
If you fall asleep this nightfall,
How will you know, I had come and gone?