



Bangkok Post Learning: *Test Yourself*

Test Yourself is where you can improve your reading skills. Whether it's for tests like University Entrance Exams or IELTS and TOEFL, or even just for fun, these stories help you to read, understand and improve your English.

How to be a 'neighbourdude' by Gary Boyle

Read the following story by Suwittha Chaiyong from the *Bangkok Post*. Then, answer the questions that follow.



Photo by Nath Suppavatee

Making friends with a stranger in Beijing, meeting an Indian friend and cooking with a family in Japan are all stories in a new travel book, *Neighbourdude Country*.

BREAK THE ROUTINE

At the age of 36, most people prefer to stick with their routine rather than trying something different, but Nath Suppavatee isn't afraid of change. In the past,

the author quit his job to be a volunteer a couple of times. A few months ago, he went to Taipei to learn Mandarin as well as look for possibilities to live in Taiwan.

Unlike author Nath's other books about his volunteer experiences in Japan and South Korea -- *Living In Japan Like A Wolf* and *Under The Bed In South Korea*, *Neighbourdude Country* shows readers his interesting relationships with international friends.

"My previous books were about my volunteer experiences allowing me to live without paying for my meals and accommodation. I've travelled a lot and made friends with many people in many countries. *Neighbourdude Country* is about activities that my international friends and I did together in their countries," Nath said.

How is visiting your friends in their countries different from travelling abroad alone?

When I travel to other countries, I always search for information from the internet and websites such as Lonely Planet and Trip Advisor and go to tourist attractions. But when I visit my international friends in their countries, they take me to where local

people go. Likewise, when they come to Thailand, I take them for street food in Yaowarat or at Rot Fai Market. They're usually impressed with khao moo daeng which they don't see in any reviews.

Have you ever experienced culture shock?

Not really. I travel a lot, but when I was at a house of Indian people I didn't want to do nothing while they were busy, so I entered their kitchen and asked if I could help. They told me that in India, a kitchen is a place for women only. It's their culture. At first, I thought they didn't let me in the kitchen because I was a guest, but I later noticed that the Indian guys did nothing while waiting for their meals.

You now live in Taiwan. What do you like about it?

I think Bangkok is more modern than Taipei, but Taipei has better management. I worked in Bangkok and faced problems with public transport and pollution every day. It never changes, so I wanted to live elsewhere. When I was in Bangkok, I hated the rain. It's always raining in Taipei, but I don't have any problem with it. I realised that I didn't hate rain. I hated an unfriendly city during the rain. In Taipei, there's no bad traffic or late public transport. When walking on the pavement, it isn't cracked causing water to pop up like in Bangkok.

Why did you decide to create Taipei Daily?

I usually share what happens in my daily life on Facebook to remind myself about it, but I was afraid that writing about my daily activity in Taiwan may bother other friends on my personal Facebook page. So I decided to open Taipei Daily, which is a journal to record what I'm doing. When I leave Taiwan, I will close the page.

What was it like to live in Taiwan during the coronavirus outbreak?

The Taiwanese government had a strong approach to handle the pandemic. They sent text messages urging people to use social distancing and advising what to do if they wanted to travel.

On the subway, if you don't wear a mask, you can't board. On a train, if you take your mask off, you will be fined. If you feel sick and go out and get caught, you will be fined too. The law is very strict. Now, I attend online classes because the university found a student was infected with Covid-19. The university was closed. The classmates and instructors who attended the same class as the patient had to have self-quarantine for 14 days.

Section 1: Answer the following questions in the space provided.

1. Which country does Nath live in?
2. How many of his books does the story mention?
3. What is he currently studying?
4. Nath takes his friends to see Thai tourist attractions. True or false?
5. Which city does Nath think is more modern - Bangkok or Taipei?
6. Nath hates rain. True or false?
7. Nath records his daily activity in Taiwan on his personal Facebook page. True or false?
8. The Taiwanese government took Covid-19 seriously. True or false?

Section 2: Write the noun form of the following words in the space provided.

9. different
10. paying
11. together
12. causing
13. sick

Section 3: Read the following passage. Then, fill in the blanks with the correct words from the choices given.

Travelling and learning are two things that I can do as ...14... as I like. Many people asked me why I quit my job at ...15... age to study a language. For me, it's ...16... . Travelling gives you experiences that you can't ...17... from school. It allows me to learn about myself and where I visit. I learned how to adjust into ...18... cultures and societies. Reading books and surfing websites can't ...19... to our first-hand experience.

- | | | |
|----------------|----------------|-------------------|
| 14. A. many | ___ B. much | ___ C. whenever |
| 15. A. an | ___ B. this | ___ C. our |
| 16. A. worth | ___ B. worthy | ___ C. worthwhile |
| 17. A. gain | ___ B. be | ___ C. have |
| 18. A. various | ___ B. vary | ___ C. variety |
| 19. A. better | ___ B. improve | ___ C. compare |

Section 4: Find words that match the following definitions.

20. a usual set of activities or way of doing things
21. a person who works without being paid for it
22. the way of life of a particular group of people
23. to disturb or upset somebody
24. demanding that rules are followed

For the answers, find the story online at www.bangkokpost.com/learning. If you have any questions or feedback, please contact the Editor at garyb@bangkokpost.co.th