

GAS STATION SUSHI

A photograph of a gas station at night. The scene is illuminated by the station's lights, which cast a blue and purple glow on the asphalt. A prominent sign on the left reads "OPEN 24 HOURS". To the right, a gas pump is visible, and the station's canopy is lit from within. The overall atmosphere is quiet and somewhat surreal.

OPEN
24
HOURS

A SHORT STORY FOR ENGLISH READING AND SPEAKING

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Introduction

What do you think it is like to work in an all-night gas station?

Is the food they sell there good? Do people like to eat it?

What is gas station sushi? Is it delicious?

Gas Station Sushi

Dale's eyes focused on the man marching across the gas station forecourt.

He breathed in, pulled himself back into the here and now. The job was so mind-numbingly dull that he found himself drifting off into some other netherworld countless times during his shift.

And the night shifts were the worst.

The minutes moved like treacle off a dirty stick.

The man shoved the door open and came into the store. Dale stood upright, trying to appear awake.

Outside, the night air wrapped itself around the station. Like the lights were on under a huge dark blanket. Maybe the outside world beyond that was in full, brilliant light.

It could all be just an illusion.

“Got any sushi?”

Dale turned his head towards the voice.

Where was he? He was here just a second ago.

Then his head popped up from behind the aisle of chocolate bars and fruit-flavoured candy.

“Sushi? Er, sure. Right over there. In the frozen section.”

Dale nodded at the large shelf to the side. That’s where they kept the stuff that could go bad.

That was all he could remember in his training.

Anything that can go bad in two days, shove it in the frozen section.

But not bread. That goes on the bread shelf.

The bread shelf was made of wood to make it look more organic. Make it appear that the bread had been baked in an oven that morning out in the back.

The man rushed to the shelf and started to rummage around the items. His longish hair lay greasy and unkempt over the dirty collar of his shirt.

Maybe a bum. Who else would buy sushi at a gas station?

Of all the food to buy at a gas station, what would you buy?

If you were really hungry at three in the morning and your only choice was a gas station, what meal would you prepare

for yourself?

Dale pondered these questions in quick succession as the man selected three or four packs of sushi.

He brought them to the counter and slammed them in front of Dale.

“How much for all of these? Can I get a discount?”

Dale liked the man’s way of questioning.

When he studied advertising at college, professors often presented lines of questions to the students to test which ones worked best.

They were the kind of questions that he and his classmates would spend twenty minutes deconstructing, trying to see the psychological value of each one to the average consumer.

“Ahh, let's see.”

He picked up the first one and beeped it with the little scanner.

“This is \$3.99. So around sixteen bucks for all of them.”

The man nodded, his dark eyes on Dale all the time.

“And the discount price?”

Dale smiled and shook his head.

“I can’t give you a discount, man. I just work here.”

That’s all he had done. Just worked there.

He had graduated from college two years before and applied for some jobs in the city. Got no replies and then had to find a job — *any job* — and got this.

For the hundredth time that week, Dale did a quick assessment of how happy he was.

He never scored more than four out of ten.

“No discount? Come on, man, I’m buying —” the man tapped each of the sushi containers and counted under his breath “— four of these damn things.”

“I just told you. I only work here. I don’t own the place.”

The man stared at Dale as if he were trying to evaluate Dale’s position in life.

“I think we can do a lot better than this,” said the man with a low growl.

He scurried around the store, picking up items as he darted from left to right.

Soon, he was holding a pile of things that he had collected from different parts of the store.

Dale noticed that the man was only wearing flip-flops on his feet. It was not exactly the right weather for wearing flip-flops.

“Are you gonna pay for all of this?” asked Dale.

“Sure I am!” said the man. “You think I ain’t got money?”

He pulled out a fistful of notes, all scrunched up in one big pile. Dale realised they could all be singles. He might only be holding about fifteen bucks.

Not enough for all the items he had bundled on the counter.

Dale began to ring them all up in the till. He noticed one thing that the man wanted to buy was a small bag of charcoal.

“You planning to have a barbecue?”

“What else would I do with charcoal? Eat it?”

Dale shook his head. He was past caring.

He finished ringing everything up, but the man was already taking the things to the door.

“Where you going?” said Dale. “You have to pay for all of that.”

But the man was already outside.

He watched as the man emptied out all the charcoal on the gas station forecourt. Took all the items of food and placed them carefully on the charcoal.

What the hell was he doing? thought Dale.

Then he casually walked to one of the gas pumps, pulled it out, and started to pour gasoline all over the pile of charcoal.

Dale looked on in horror. This can't be happening...

He shifted himself from behind the counter and ran for the door. He yanked it open.

“Wait!” he yelled out at the man. “Stop!”

The man looked up, a grin on his face, and in his hand, a lighter he had just taken from the store.

He clicked it.

“No discount, huh?”

He clicked the lighter again, and a small flame appeared.

Dale clenched his teeth, frozen in the spot by the door.

“Watch this,” said the man.

And he moved the lighter towards the pile of charcoal.

Gas Station Sushi – Story and Reading Comprehension Questions

Dale’s eyes focused on the man marching across the gas station forecourt.

He breathed in, pulled himself back into the here and now. The job was so mind-numbingly dull that he found himself drifting off into some other netherworld countless times during his shift.

And the night shifts were the worst.

The minutes moved like treacle off a dirty stick.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 1

- What is Dale's job?
- How does Dale feel about working night shifts?
- Who does Dale see walking across the forecourt of the station?

The man shoved the door open and came into the store. Dale stood upright, trying to appear awake.

Outside, the night air wrapped itself around the station. Like the lights were on under a huge dark blanket. Maybe the outside world beyond that was in full, brilliant light.

It could all be just an illusion.

“Got any sushi?”

Dale turned his head towards the voice.

Where was he? He was here just a second ago.

Then his head popped up from behind the aisle of chocolate bars and fruit-flavoured candy.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 2

- What is the weather like during the story?
- What does the man ask for when he enters the store?
- How does Dale react to the man's question?
- Where is the man standing?

“Sushi? Er, sure. Right over there. In the frozen section.”

Dale nodded at the large shelf to the side. That's where they kept the stuff that could go bad.

That was all he could remember in his training.

Anything that can go bad in two days, shove it in the frozen section.

But not bread. That goes on the bread shelf.

The bread shelf was made of wood to make it look more organic. Make it appear that the bread had been baked in an oven that morning out in the back.

The man rushed to the shelf and started to rummage around the items. His longish hair lay greasy and unkempt over the dirty collar of his shirt.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 3

- Where does Dale say the sushi is located?
- What was Dale told in his training about where to put food that could go bad?
- Where is the bread kept?
- Why is the bread shelf made of wood?

- What detail does Dale notice about the man's appearance?

Maybe a bum. Who else would buy sushi at a gas station?

Of all the food to buy at a gas station, what would you buy?

If you were really hungry at three in the morning and your only choice was a gas station, what meal would you prepare for yourself?

Dale pondered these questions in quick succession as the man selected three or four packs of sushi.

He brought them to the counter and slammed them in front of Dale.

“How much for all of these? Can I get a discount?”

Dale liked the man’s way of questioning.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 4

- What assumption does Dale make about the man?
- What does Dale think about people who buy sushi at a

gas station?

- What does the man ask for?
- How does Dale feel about the way the man asks this question?

When he studied advertising at college, professors often presented lines of questions to the students to test which ones worked best.

They were the kind of questions that he and his classmates would spend twenty minutes deconstructing, trying to see the psychological value of each one to the average consumer.

“Ahh, let's see.”

He picked up the first one and beeped it with the little scanner.

“This is \$3.99. So around sixteen bucks for all of them.”

The man nodded, his dark eyes on Dale all the time.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 5

- What did Dale study in college?

- What can Dale remember doing in class at college?
- How much is one pack of sushi?
- What does Dale use to check the price?
- How much does Dale say all the sushi will cost?

“And the discount price?”

Dale smiled and shook his head.

“I can’t give you a discount, man. I just work here.”

That’s all he had done. Just worked there.

He had graduated from college two years before and applied for some jobs in the city. Got no replies and then had to find a job — *any job* — and got this.

For the hundredth time that week, Dale did a quick assessment of how happy he was.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 6

- What does the man ask Dale about?
- Why can't Dale give a discount on the sushi?
- How long has it been since Dale graduated from college?

- Had he applied for other jobs before?
- Did he receive any replies from his job applications?
- How many times this week has Dale thought about his happiness?

He never scored more than four out of ten.

“No discount? Come on, man, I’m buying —” the man tapped each of the sushi containers and counted under his breath “— four of these damn things.”

“I just told you. I only work here. I don’t own the place.”

The man stared at Dale as if he were trying to evaluate Dale’s position in life.

“I think we can do a lot better than this,” said the man with a low growl.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 7

- What does Dale think about his happiness level?
- How does the man react when he hears there is no

discount?

He scurried around the store, picking up items as he darted from left to right.

Soon, he was holding a pile of things that he had collected from different parts of the store.

Dale noticed that the man was only wearing flip-flops on his feet. It was not exactly the right weather for wearing flip-flops.

“Are you gonna pay for all of this?” asked Dale.

“Sure I am!” said the man. “You think I ain’t got money?”

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 8

- What does the man do after Dale tells him there is no discount?
- Does he get many things from the store?
- What kind of shoes is the man wearing?
- Why does Dale think these are not the right kind of shoes to wear?

- What does Dale ask the man?
- How does the man respond?

He pulled out a fistful of notes, all scrunched up in one big pile. Dale realised they could all be singles. He might only be holding about fifteen bucks.

Not enough for all the items he had bundled on the counter.

Dale began to ring them all up in the till. He noticed one thing that the man wanted to buy was a small bag of charcoal.

“You planning to have a barbecue?”

“What else would I do with charcoal? Eat it?”

Dale shook his head. He was past caring.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 9

- How does the man keep his money in his pocket?
- How much money does Dale think the man has?
- Is this enough money to pay for all the man’s purchases?

- What item surprises Dale when ringing up purchases?
- What does Dale ask the man about this item?
- How does the man respond?

He finished ringing everything up, but the man was already taking the things to the door.

“Where you going?” said Dale. “You have to pay for all of that.”

But the man was already outside.

He watched as the man emptied out all the charcoal on the gas station forecourt. Took all items of food and placed them carefully on charcoal—pieces of sushi, bread, some candy.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 10

- Does the man pay for his items?
- As Dale is cashing up the items, where does the man go?
- What does Dale ask the man?
- What does the man do outside?

What the hell was he doing? thought Dale.

Then he casually walked to one of the gas pumps, pulled it out, and started to pour gasoline all over the pile of charcoal.

Dale looked on in horror. This can't be happening...

He shifted himself from behind the counter and ran for the door. He yanked it open.

“Wait!” he yelled out at the man. “Stop!”

The man looked up, a grin on his face, and in his hand, a lighter he had just taken from the store.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 11

- What does the man do with one of the gas pumps?
- How does Dale react when he sees what is happening outside?
- What does Dale call out to the man?
- What item does the man pull out after pouring gasoline?

He clicked it.

“No discount, huh?”

He clicked the lighter again, and a small flame appeared.

Dale clenched his teeth, frozen in the spot by the door.

“Watch this,” said the man.

And he moved the lighter towards the pile of charcoal.

Reading Comprehension Questions — Section 12

- What does the man do with the lighter?
- Does it light the first time?
- What does Dale feel when confronted with what might happen next?
- How does the story end?

Reading Comprehension Questions

What is Dale's job?

How does Dale feel about working night shifts?

Who does Dale see walking across the forecourt of the station?

What is the weather like during the story?

What does the man ask for when he enters the store?

How does Dale react to the man's question?

Where is the man standing?

Where does Dale say the sushi is located?

What was Dale told in his training about where to put food that could go bad?

Where is the bread kept?

Why is the bread shelf made of wood?

What detail does Dale notice about the man's appearance?

What assumption does Dale make about the man?

What does Dale think about people who buy sushi at a gas

station?

What does the man ask for?

How does Dale feel about the way the man asks this question?

What did Dale study in college?

What can Dale remember doing in class at college?

How much is one pack of sushi?

What does Dale use to check the price?

How much does Dale say all the sushi will cost?

What does the man ask Dale about?

Why can't Dale give a discount on the sushi?

How long has it been since Dale graduated from college?

Had he applied for other jobs before?

Did he receive any replies from his job applications?

How many times this week has Dale thought about his happiness?

What does Dale think about his happiness level?

How does the man react when he hears there is no discount?

What does the man do after Dale tells him there is no discount?

Does he get many things from the store?

What kind of shoes is the man wearing?

Why does Dale think these are not the right kind of shoes to wear?

What does Dale ask the man?

How does the man respond?

How does the man keep his money in his pocket?

How much money does Dale think the man has?

Is this enough money to pay for all the man's purchases?

What item surprises Dale when ringing up purchases?

What does Dale ask the man about this item?

How does the man respond?

Does the man pay for his items?

As Dale is cashing up the items, where does the man go?

What does Dale ask the man?

What does the man do outside?

What does the man do with one of the gas pumps?

How does Dale react when he sees what is happening outside?

What does Dale call out to the man?

What item does the man pull out after pouring gasoline?

What does the man do with the lighter?

Does it light the first time?

What does Dale feel when confronted with what might happen next?

How does the story end?

True or False

Look at all the statements below.

Say whether they are true or false based on the above story.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Dale was working a day shift at the gas station.

The man entered the gas station and asked for sushi.

Dale graduated with a degree in advertising.

The sushi was located in the refrigerated section of the gas station.

The man was wearing flip-flops despite the

weather being unsuitable for them.

Dale offered the man a discount on the sushi.

The man purchased a small bag of charcoal.

The man used a lighter to ignite the pile of charcoal and food.

Dale was able to stop the man before he could light the pile on fire.

Dale often found his job exciting and engaging.

Essential Vocabulary

Look at the table of vocabulary from the story above.

How many of these words do you know?

rummaging	clenched	sushi
professors	frozen section	evaluate
forecourt	mind-numbingly	advertising
scurried	darted	counter
gasoline	till	yanked
bundled	nodded	fruit-flavoured candy
fistful	charcoal	grinned
scrunched up	drifting off	chocolate bars
shoved	illusion	unkempt
scanner	ring them up	average consumer
treacle	darted	selected

Exercise

Write down all the words and phrases in your vocabulary notebook. Look in your dictionary and find the meaning of each word. Write the definition next to each word.

Then make up your own sentences using each word or phrase.

For example:

Rummaging — *Searching through something in a hurried or careless way, often looking for a specific item.*

Professors — *Teachers of the highest academic rank at a college or university.*

Then write a sentence of your own that uses the new word or phrase correctly.

He started rummaging through his backpack, trying to find his lost notebook.

She sought advice from her professors on which graduate program to pursue.

Do this with all the vocabulary and, over time, this will help

improve all your English skills — reading, writing, speaking and listening.

Expressions and Idioms

Look at these expressions and idioms from the story below.

What do they mean?

Use a dictionary to find out the meaning.

How could these phrases be used in a common conversation?

here and now

wrapped itself around

shoved the door open

appeared awake

outside world

beyond that

it could all be just an illusion

slammed them in front

deconstructing

psychological value

Write these expressions in your notebook, along with descriptions of what they mean.

Try to learn some of these phrases to use in your everyday English speech.

Dialogue Expressions

Look at the spoken dialogue expressions from the story.

What do these expressions mean?

Try to find out what they mean and how to use them.

***Could you use any of these expressions in your own life?
If so, how?***

“Can I get a discount?”

“You think I ain’t got money?”

“Are you gonna pay for all of this?”

“No discount, huh?”

“Watch this.”

What is the Correct Synonym?

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct synonym on the right.

A synonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Word	Synonym
forecourt	daydreaming
mind-numbingly	tightened
drifting off	dishevelled
shoved	tediously
unkempt	hurried
rummaging	entryway
scurried	searching
scrunched up	smirked
grinned	thrust
clenched	crumpled

What is the Correct Antonym?

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct antonym on the right.

An antonym is a word of similar meaning.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Word	Antonym
forecourt	exciting
dull	shook
drifting off	pulled
shoved	relaxed
greasy	backyard
rummaging	scattered
scurried	clean
bundled	organizing
nodded	focusing
clenched	strolled

Words and Meanings

Look at the table below.

Match the words on the left with the correct meaning on the right.

You can find all the correct answers at the end of the lesson plan!

Word	Meaning
forecourt	Pushed or forced something suddenly
illusion	Moved quickly with short, rapid steps
unkempt	Closed tightly, especially out of tension
scurried	A deceptive appearance or impression
rummaging	A refined petroleum used as fuel
clenched	The open area in front of a building
grinned	A black substance used for fuel or drawing
thrust	Smiled broadly, often showing teeth
charcoal	Having an untidy or disordered appearance
gasoline	Searching thoroughly but haphazardly

What is the Missing Word?

Look at the table below.

Forecourt	Illusion
Unkempt	Scurried
Rummaging	Clenched
Grinned	Thrust
Charcoal	Gasoline

Now, use each of the words to fill in the gaps in the sentences below.

She _____ her fists in frustration, trying to hold back her anger.

The artist used _____ to sketch a dramatic portrait on the canvas.

He spent ten minutes _____ through his backpack, searching for his keys.

The gas station's _____ was eerily empty under the dim streetlights.

The mechanic warned him to be cautious while handling _____ near an open flame.

The child _____ with delight as she opened her birthday present.

His _____ hair and wrinkled shirt suggested he hadn't slept in days.

The calm demeanour he displayed was just an _____, masking his true anxiety.

She _____ across the room to pick up the ringing phone.

He _____ the door open and stormed into the room without knocking.

Discussion Questions

Read all the following questions and answer them.

Try to discuss them with other classmates or a study partner.

What is sushi? Where does it come from?

Have you ever tried sushi? Was it delicious?

What about gas station sushi? Is this the same kind of food?

What were your initial thoughts when you read about a character buying sushi at a gas station?

Does sushi bought at a gas station have a negative reputation?

Why do you think gas station sushi has a negative reputation?

How does the setting of the gas station contribute to the mood and atmosphere of the story? What emotions does it evoke for you?

Why do you think Dale finds his job so boring? How does this affect his interactions with the customer? Have you ever had a similar job? How did you cope?

What do Dale's reflections on his college experience and life satisfaction reveal about his character?

How would you describe the man's personality? What evidence from the story supports your opinion?

What do you think motivates the man's actions throughout the story? Is he truly desperate, or do you think there's another explanation?

Why does the man make a fire at the end of the story? What is the reasoning behind this?

Why does the man insist on a discount?

Discuss the man's request for a discount. What does it reveal about his situation and personality?

Why does the man use the phrase "No discount, huh?" before setting the charcoal on fire? What does this suggest about his mindset?

How does the story use imagery and sensory details, such as descriptions of the frozen section and bread shelf, to create a vivid setting?

If you were in Dale's position when the man began pouring gasoline, how would you have reacted? Would you have tried to stop him? Why or why not?

Have you ever had a challenging or unusual experience while working in customer service? How does it compare to Dale's situation?

What responsibility do businesses have to protect employees and customers from potentially dangerous situations like the one in the story?

What lessons can we learn from Dale's experience with this customer? How might these lessons apply to real-life situations?

How does this story challenge or reinforce stereotypes about people who shop at gas stations late at night? Is this accurate? Is it fair to describe people like this?

If you were to write an alternative ending for this story, what would happen after the man lights the charcoal? Why would you choose that direction?

Radio Script

This is a radio script.

Get into pairs and read out the lines of the two characters.
Try to add feeling to your voice to make the story come alive.

Another student can add sound effects...

Get into pairs, and practice reciting all the lines.

When you are ready, show your classmates!

[INTRO MUSIC FADES OUT]

[SFX: BUZZING FLUORESCENT LIGHTS, DISTANT HUM OF TRAFFIC]

[SFX: DOOR CREAKS OPEN, CHIME RINGS]

DALE: (mutters) Okay, stay sharp, Dale. Look awake.

[SFX: FOOTSTEPS APPROACHING]

MAN: Got any sushi?

DALE: (confused, distracted) Sushi? Uh... yeah. Frozen section. Over there.

[SFX: RUMMAGING IN FREEZER]

[SFX: FOOTSTEPS RETURNING, ITEMS SLAMMING ON COUNTER]

MAN: How much for all these? Can I get a discount?

DALE: Let's see. (beeping scanner) \$3.99 each. Comes to... about sixteen bucks.

MAN: (persistent) And the discount price?

DALE: (sighs) No discount, man. I just work here.

MAN: (grumbling) No discount? Come on, I'm buying four!

DALE: (firm) I told you. I don't own the place.

[SFX: SILENCE, THEN SUDDEN RUSHING FOOTSTEPS]

[SFX: RUSTLING ITEMS]

DALE: (sceptical) Planning a barbecue?

MAN: (snapping) What else would I do with charcoal? Eat it?

[SFX: ITEMS DROPPED ON COUNTER]

DALE: (muttering) Sure doesn't look like you can pay for all this...

MAN: (triumphant) You think I ain't got money?

[SFX: RUSTLING CASH]

[SFX: BEEPING SCANNER, TILL OPENING]

DALE: That'll be...

[SFX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING, DOOR SWINGS OPEN]

DALE: Hey! Where are you going? You have to pay for that!

[SFX: NIGHT AIR, DISTANT TRAFFIC]

[SFX: GAS PUMP NOZZLE UNHOOKED, LIQUID POURING]

DALE: (shouting) What the hell are you doing?!

[SFX: FOOTSTEPS RUNNING OUTSIDE]

DALE: (yelling) Stop!

MAN: (grinning) No discount, huh?

[SFX: CLICKING OF A LIGHTER]

DALE: No—wait! Don't —

[SFX: FLAME IGNITING, TENSION MUSIC BUILDS]

MAN: Watch this.

[SFX: MUSIC SWELLS, THEN CUTS TO BLACKOUT]

[OUTRO MUSIC FADES IN]

HOST (V.O.): Thanks for listening to "Midnight Tales." Sleep tight.

The Worst Food to Buy in a Gas Station

This is a group discussion and presentation activity.

Objective:

In this activity, you will practice using English to describe things in great detail.

You will also express your opinions and apply your creativity to talk about food you would never buy at a gas station.

Instructions:

Introduction:

Do this part all together in the class.

Begin by discussing the concept of "gas station food." Ask each other if you have ever bought food at a gas station and what it was like.

Introduce the idea that some foods are better suited to certain places, while others may be strange or unsafe to buy

in a gas station.

Focus on describing food in terms of quality, freshness, and appropriateness.

Brainstorming (10 minutes):

Ask each other to think about the kind of food that is generally not good to buy at a gas station.

Focus on food that is:

- Expired or old
- Unhealthy or not fresh
- Strange or unappetizing
- Overly priced for the kind of food that it is

In your group, you should list at least 5-6 items you would never buy.

Write down all your ideas in English.

Group Discussion (15 minutes):

Get into small groups of three or four students and share your lists of food to buy at the gas station.

In your group, you should discuss why these foods are bad choices for gas stations.

Think about:

- the food shelf life
- the quality of ingredients
- the risk of illness (Is the food clean and hygienic?)
- personal experiences with bad gas station food

After 10 minutes, each group should share all their ideas with the whole class.

Take it in turns to stand up and make a short presentation about **The Worst Food to Buy in a Gas Station**.

Conclusion

After hearing all the different presentations, decide all together what could be **The Worst Food to Buy in a Gas Station**.

Role Play

This is a role play activity.

Role Play Scenario: Late-Night at the Gas Station

The Situation:

It's the middle of the night at an all-night gas station.

Dale, the tired gas station worker, is minding the store when a customer comes in.

The customer is behaving oddly and trying to buy something unusual or inappropriate.

Dale must decide whether to help them — *or get them out of the store quickly.*

Customer Role Play Characters:

These are the **FOUR** characters for the customers in the role play. In your group, choose only **ONE**.

The Insomniac: A sleepless person who wants to buy ten cups of coffee and insists that they must all be different flavours and styles — espresso, latte, cappuccino, Americano, mocha, etc etc. The gas station only has one basic kind of coffee and that is it.

The Conspiracy Theorist: Someone who insists that the gas station has "hidden supplies" of aluminium foil. They "need to block the government signals" — *and the only way to do this is to make a tinfoil hat...*

The Lost Tourist: A confused traveller is trying to buy something strange as a souvenir. Like a piece of the gas pump outside. Or the "Open 24 Hours" sign. Or Dale's work shirt.

The Zombie Enthusiast: A quirky individual who keeps asking if the gas station sells items to "prepare for the zombie apocalypse," like canned brains or wooden stakes or maybe a crossbow.

Required Lines:

In your role play, each character must use the following lines in the right way and in the right context.

Dale: *"I'm sorry, but I don't think we sell that here. Is there something else I can help you with?"*

Customer: *"Are you sure? This is exactly the kind of place I'd expect to find it!"*

Method:

Get into groups of two students. Each student must choose **ONE** character.

Dale or The Customer.

Take your time in your pairs to prepare for the role play.

When you are ready, take it in turns to show your role play to all the class.

Follow-Up Activity:

After the role-play, discuss:

- *How did Dale handle the situation?*
- *How could the conversation have gone differently?*
- *What strategies did both characters use to keep the dialogue interesting?*

Writing

This is a creative writing exercise.

Strange Encounters at Midnight

Task:

Write a short story inspired by the role-play scenario at the all-night gas station.

Imagine you are either Dale, the gas station worker, or one of the odd customers.

Use your creativity to build on the role-play dialogue and create a complete story.

Guidelines:

Choose Your Perspective:

Write from Dale's point of view as he deals with an unusual customer.

OR write from the customer's perspective and explain why they are behaving so strangely.

Setting:

Describe the atmosphere of the gas station at night — *its eerie stillness, flickering neon lights, and the quiet hum of the refrigerator.*

Develop the Encounter:

- *What does the customer want, and how does Dale react?*
- *Do things escalate into a humorous or tense situation?*
- *How does the encounter resolve?*

Add a Twist:

Include something unexpected that changes the tone of the story — *perhaps Dale discovers the customer has a genuine need, or the customer finds something truly bizarre in the store.*

Requirements:

Write 300-500 words.

Include at least two lines of dialogue from the role-play scenario:

Dale: "I'm sorry, but I don't think we sell that here. Is there something else I can help you with?"

Customer: "Are you sure? This is exactly the kind of place I'd expect to find it!"

Use descriptive language to bring the scene to life (e.g., *"The fluorescent lights buzzed overhead, casting long shadows across the empty aisles."*).

Think about the following questions to help you:

- *Why is the customer at the gas station at such an odd hour?*
- *What does Dale think about working the night shift?*
- *Does the encounter end in laughter, fear, or something completely unexpected?*

Post-Writing Activity:

Share your story by reading it out loud in front of all the class.

After each student reads their story, the rest of the class should give feedback on their story.

Write your story as a homework exercise, and read it in class the next time you meet each other.

True or False — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Dale was working a day shift at the gas station. (False)

Correction: Dale was working a night shift at the gas station.

The man entered the gas station and asked for sushi. (True)

Dale graduated with a degree in advertising. (True)

The sushi was located in the refrigerated section of the gas station. (False)

Correction: The sushi was located in the frozen section of the gas station.

The man was wearing flip-flops despite the weather being unsuitable for them. (True)

Dale offered the man a discount on the sushi. (False)

Correction: Dale told the man he couldn't give a discount because he just worked there.

The man purchased a small bag of charcoal. (False)

Correction: The man picked up a small bag of charcoal but did not pay for it.

The man used a lighter to ignite the pile of charcoal and food. (True)

Dale was able to stop the man before he could light the pile on fire. (False)

Correction: Dale tried to stop the man, but the man lit the pile on fire anyway.

Dale often found his job exciting and engaging. (False)

Correction: Dale found his job dull and mind-numbingly boring, especially the night shifts

What is the Correct Synonym — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Word	Synonym
forecourt	entryway
mind-numbingly	tediously
drifting off	daydreaming
shoved	thrust
unkempt	dishevelled
rummaging	searching
scurried	hurried
scrunched up	crumpled
grinned	smirked
clenched	tightened

What is the Correct Antonym — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Word	Antonym
forecourt	backyard
dull	exciting
drifting off	focusing
shoved	pulled
greasy	clean
rummaging	organizing
scurried	strolled
bundled	scattered
nodded	shook
clenched	relaxed

Words and Meanings — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Word	Meaning
forecourt	The open area in front of a building
illusion	A deceptive appearance or impression
unkempt	Having an untidy or disordered appearance
scurried	Moved quickly with short, rapid steps
rummaging	Searching thoroughly but haphazardly
clenched	Closed tightly, especially out of tension
grinned	Smiled broadly, often showing teeth
thrust	Pushed or forced something suddenly
charcoal	A black substance used for fuel or drawing
gasoline	A refined petroleum used as fuel

What is the Missing Word — Answers

These are the correct answers below.

How many did you get right?

Forecourt

The gas station's **forecourt** was eerily empty under the dim streetlights.

Illusion

The calm demeanour he displayed was just an **illusion**, masking his true anxiety.

Unkempt

His **unkempt** hair and wrinkled shirt suggested he hadn't slept in days.

Scurried

She **scurried** across the room to pick up the ringing phone.

Rummaging

He spent ten minutes **rummaging** through his backpack, searching for his keys.

Clenched

She **clenched** her fists in frustration, trying to hold back her anger.

Grinned

The child **grinned** with delight as she opened her birthday present.

Thrust

He **thrust** the door open and stormed into the room without knocking.

Charcoal

The artist used **charcoal** to sketch a dramatic portrait on the canvas.

Gasoline

The mechanic warned him to be cautious while handling **gasoline** near an open flame.