

Did you have a good vacation? Did Santa bring you everything that you want? My father (Niko's grandfather) sends her an advent<sup>1</sup> calendar every year. He sends out 24 small gifts and she loves opening them. Some of the gifts are perfect, and some of the gifts are a little bit odd<sup>2</sup>. Last year, he sent her a shower cap and a toothbrush. She wasn't very happy with the shower cap, but I was. I sat on the sofa wearing it. I think it made me look very fashionable. Maybe I will wear it to school one day and you can all get the chance to see how suave<sup>3</sup> I look.

### Something You Didn't Know (ET)

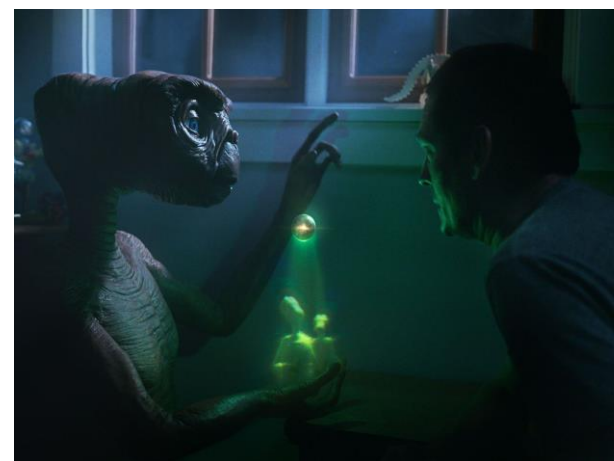
1. ET stands for Extra Terrestrial. "Terrestrial" means "of Earth", so "extra" means anything else.
2. Most of the ET movie is filmed from a child's eye height, to give the sense that we are watching the action through the eyes of the main characters and ET.
3. Because it was made well before CGI, ET is played by 3 short people, a mime<sup>4</sup> (for the hands) and a group of puppeteers.
4. In the movie, ET loves Reece's Pieces. It was supposed to be M&Ms, but the Mars company wouldn't give permission. Reece's paid \$1 million for the right to be in the movie and their profits jumped 65% two weeks after the film was released.
5. There was talk of a sequel, but it was abandoned.



Sometimes later becomes  
never.  
Do it now.

### ET and Elliott Reunite

40 years after the movie was first released, ET and Elliott have been reunited<sup>5</sup>. All of you (teachers excepted) were not born when ET first came out, but I'm sure that many of you have seen it. In England, it is on TV pretty much every Christmas. When I first saw it, I cried and cried and cried. The movie finished with ET getting on his spaceship and going home. (If you haven't already seen it, then I just ruined the ending for you – sorry.) And we all thought that was the end.



However, this month ET and Elliott have been reunited in an extra-long 4-minute commercial for the company Xfinity. ET comes back to Earth and he meets Elliott, now in his late 40s, and Elliott shows him some of the things that have changed on Earth. He shows him a lot of technology (powered by or sold by Xfinity – because it's their commercial) and the two share a very touching<sup>6</sup> scene.

The commercial is surprisingly well done and even had the blessing<sup>7</sup> of Steven Spielberg, the director of ET. Fans are already asking for more and in the first ten hours of the commercial being released on YouTube, it had been viewed over 2 million times. I was very happy when I saw it. It was nostalgic<sup>8</sup>, but it also showed us how the story, and Elliott's life, could have gone. You should watch it.

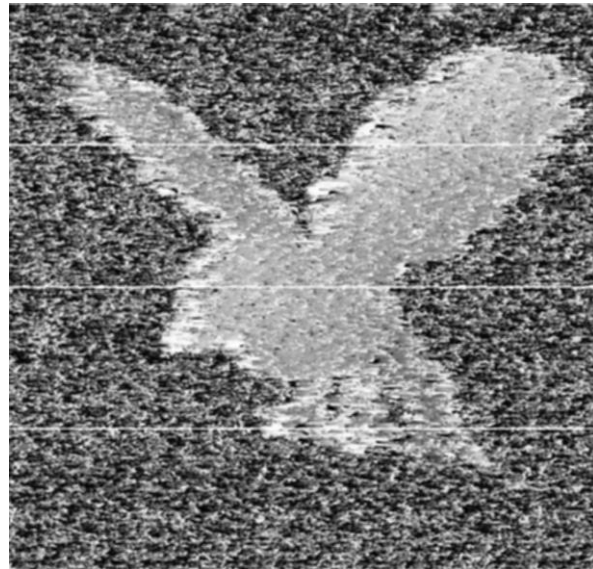


- 1.Advent キリストの降臨 2.Odd 変 3.Suave 温厚な 4.Mime 物まね師  
5.Reunite 再会する 6.Touching 人の心を動かす 7.Blessing 賛成 8.Nostalgic 懐旧に満ちた



Ok. Last chance to see these pictures then I will stop using them. Here is how to see them. This picture of a bird is in the picture below. It is not hidden. You just have to change the way you focus<sup>1</sup>. If you look at the picture and relax your eyes until the two dots become three, you should be able to see the bird come out of the picture in 3D.

The bird is not hidden. It is not a trick or a puzzle. The image is split<sup>2</sup> into two pieces and when you focus your eyes in just the right way, the two parts of the image will come together and you will be able to see the bird. Once you can see them it is a very rewarding feeling. If you google "magic eye", you will find lots more examples and you can keep practicing.



## Something Big and Small

This is kind of an odd choice of topic, and I know that none of you are old enough to drink, but I saw it on the Internet, and it seemed interesting. There are many bars in the world. The biggest (longest?) bar in the world is the Beer Barrel Saloon in Ohio, America. The bar is 123m long. There are 160 stools and 56 beer taps along it. If Usain Bolt stood at one end, it would take him 11.8 seconds to run to the other end; longer if he stopped for a drink. However, the world's smallest (shortest?) bar is Backdoor 43 in Milan. It is 4m<sup>2</sup>. That means only three people and the bartender can fit in there. I'm not sure why anyone would want to make a bar that small, but they did. Each of the three people would have to drink an awful lot to make the bar profitable<sup>3</sup>.



## Why do we...

... use Christmas trees? The evergreen fir tree<sup>4</sup> has been a symbol of pagan religion<sup>5</sup> for thousands of years. It stays green even in the cold winter and reminds people of life and growth. Pagans used to put a branch<sup>6</sup> in their homes over the winter solstice to remind them of the spring to come. Romans used to put decorated fir trees in their temples. The first Christmas was celebrated in 336AD, but the Christmas tree didn't become associated<sup>7</sup> with it until about 1500. A tree was put up in the town square and people danced around it. At the end of the festival it was burned. The first tree in a house was in about 1650 but most people were poor and made do with a branch. The first artificial<sup>8</sup> tree was made in 1880 and used goose<sup>9</sup> feathers.

1.Focus 焦点 2.Split 分ける 3.Profitable 利益になる 4.Evergreen fir tree モミの木 5.Religion 宗教 6.Branch 枝 7.Associate with 関連付ける 8.Artificial tree 偽物のクリスマスツリー 9.Goose ガチョウ