

## **The Way of the World**

Bob Petersburg had been the top salesman at Midwest Motor Parts for years. He had a network of clients that spread out in every direction for about as far as he was willing to drive. His clients loved him for his affable manner and his honesty, and Bob felt that the world was his.

Maybe it was Bob's for a little while, but then the world started changing around him. It happened slowly at first with some of the other salesmen carrying pagers and using email to deal with clients. Bob just said that there was no substitute for a firm handshake. Then his sales base started eroding. Many of his old clients were retiring. He'd visit their offices and only to find that the old, familiar faces had been replaced by young, cold faces. These new faces asked Bob for his email address. Bob said that email could never replace the intimacy of a handwritten letter.

Time passed and it continued to pass by Bob. Rick Summers was Bob's manager and he changed too. Bob had always thought that Rick was a great guy. They played golf together and barbecued occasionally, but Rick's wife got sick and he retired. Rick was replaced by Mike Christmas.

Mike Christmas was not as understanding of Bob's shortcomings as Rick had been. Rick hated computers just as much as Bob did, so he never bothered Bob about embracing new business standards, but Mike was from the new school. One of Mike's first actions as sales chief was to issue company smart phones to every salesman. When Bob did not send emails, take photos of signed purchase orders, or reply to Mike's text messages, Mike grew impatient with him Bob.

One night Bob came home in a particularly somber mood. Mike had just thrashed him around the office for the better part of an hour after Bob had lost a few more clients, and Bob felt that the world had become a terrible place. He wanted nothing more than to run away from his job, but he felt that he had to watch over his family. At that moment, however, Bob's family was watching over him.

Noticing the pain that his father wore on his face, Bobby Junior approached and asked him what was wrong. Bob Senior attempted to keep his troubles from his son, but his emotional state was such that he just couldn't help but to pour out his heart. Bobby wanted to help his Dad and he tried to listen, but he didn't know anything about motor parts, salesmanship, or what Mike Christmas's problem was. But one thing Bobby did know was how to work a mobile phone.

Bobby spent the next month teaching his old man how to use his company phone. He started his dad off by playing Angry Birds so that he could learn basic swiping and tapping gestures. It took Bob Senior three nights to beat the first level. Over the next few weeks they worked on sending text messages, and then taking pictures, and then attaching pictures to the text messages. Bob Senior took a long time to complete these tasks, but he was steadily learning. By the time Bobby Junior finished teaching him about email, Bob had become so passionate about his phone that he went out and bought a belt holster to protect the screen. He wore this proudly despite Bobby Junior's protests.

Soon Bob began applying the skills that his son had taught him to his business. Bob was stunned at how technology simplified many of the problems that he had run into in the past. He filled orders for his clients through a purchase management system accessed from his mobile phone while he waited for more purchase orders to arrive in his email. As his sales climbed, Bob couldn't believe that it had taken him this long to adopt such useful technology. There was even some talk that Bob might be up for salesman of the year again. Even though Mike Christmas and Bob would never go on to play golf or barbecue, Mike did leave Bob alone after that, which was all that Bob ever wanted from him anyway.

# *The Way of the World* - Reading Skill Sheet

1. Author's Purpose: **entertain**  
Why did the author write this?

**inform**

**persuade**

2. Genre: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ex: Nonfiction, fiction, or folklore

Subgenre: \_\_\_\_\_  
Ex: Autobiography, science fiction, fable, informational writing, etc.

3. Narrator's Point of View: \_\_\_\_\_  
1st-person, 2nd-person, 3rd-person objective, 3rd-person limited, or 3rd-person omniscient

4 & 5. Summarize the text:  
Five key events from beginning, middle, & end.

## 6. Exposition

A.

Setting: \_\_\_\_\_  
When and where does the story take place?

B. Conflict: \_\_\_\_\_  
Describe the conflict in the story.

7. **Rising Action:** List some events that occur before the climax.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

Climax:  
The turning point

Falling Action: List some events that occur after the climax.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

Resolution:  
When the conflict is solved