FREUDIAN SLIPS

According to the theory of Sigmund Freud, people have many unconscious wishes, feelings and desires, which they have suppressed so that they are not consciously aware of them or are not willing to think of them at the present time. However, people sometimes make mistakes, called "Freudian slips" which reveal their unconscious thoughts. In a wider sense, "Freudian slip" is used to refer to any mistake in speech which reveals feelings or thoughts a person does not want to reveal.

Example 1: A student lies to a teacher about why their Psychology homework is late, 'Sorry Miss, I have been really sick but I "lied" to get my homework in on time' instead of 'I tried to get my homework in on time'. This is because unconsciously they are guilty lying to the teacher.

Example 2: A person calls his wife "mum" because he unconsciously thinks of her like his mum.

Example 3: A person expecting a dinner guest with a large nose reminds himself to avoid making any reference to noses at dinner. Then dinner comes and he says "Pass the nose" instead of "Pass the salt".

People on average make such slips about two to three times a week. They are more likely to occur when speaking in a crowd, when being interviewed or in an uncomfortable situation. However, not all slips are Freudian, and to interpret all slips as Freudian is not recommended, they have to be specific slips of the tongue that reveal unconscious thoughts and feelings.

KEY QUESTIONS (Answer in your workbooks):

1. What is a ‘Freudian Slip’?
2. How does a ‘Freudian Slip’ differ from a speech mistake?
3. Create your own example of a ‘Freudian Slip’. What unconscious thoughts are revealed in this example?

Task:
Over the holidays, see if you can pick up on a ‘Freudian Slip’ from people you are speaking to or from people on television and see if you can figure out what their unconscious thoughts might be.