

English support
Business House (PO Box 618)
Jernbanegade 23 B
4000 Roskilde

News & Tips

from

English support

Complimentary copy

No. 39 – January 2008

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**Happy New Year
to all our readers!**

Dear friends

Well, here we are, in the new year! *English support* is celebrating its 4th birthday (b. 1.1.2004), and as usual, we present our vision for the coming year, extremely mindful of the fact that certain aspects of our vision for 2007 (and even for 2006) have yet to be achieved. But there is no doubt that we are in a much stronger position today than we have ever been, and we are getting stronger all the time.



Vision for 2008

We closed the year by supplying *Roskilde Business College* with a 6-language translation of their terms and conditions for foreign students. The six languages were Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Nepali, Polish and Urdu. These top-quality translations required an extension of our network and expertise into languages and scripts from the Indian subcontinent.

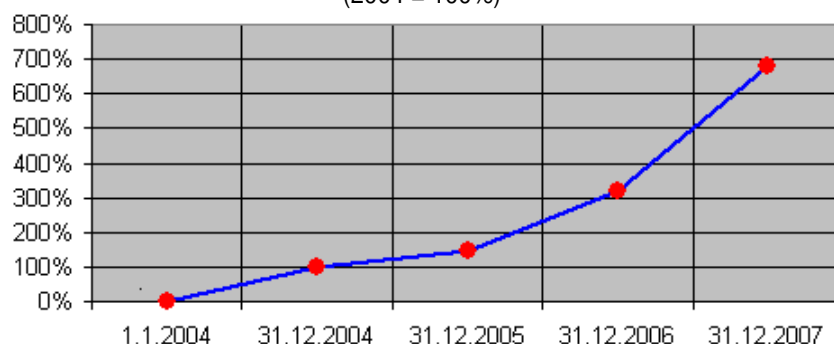
Our vision this year is to expand our network of native-speaker language experts still further. Our *Language support* website must be up and running on full blast in the first half of the year, and the considerable resources now represented by the *English support* network must be put to full use.

The overwhelming majority of our work will remain concerned with English, and like last year, teaching will be a large part of this. We already have pre-orders for nearly half a million Danish kroner in 2008. Much of this is teaching, since that is one activity which really does need to be booked well in advance. But translation and proofreading will certainly dominate the picture as the year goes on. And we will continue to fight for better English, both in Denmark and abroad.

Finally, we hope that the general trend from our first four years will continue. ☺

Turnover: First 4 years

(2004 = 100%)



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Please turn over!

As – a word with many meanings

The little word *as* has many meanings, so the basic rule for non-native speakers is: *Use it with caution!* If you have a perfectly good alternative, you would be well advised to use it instead – for the sake of clarity.

For instance, one common usage of *as* is the temporal meaning of *while*, as in: “*I noticed the man as I was crossing the road*”. But *as* in this sentence could also mean cause or reason: “*I noticed the man because I was crossing the road*”.

To avoid this kind of ambiguity, it is best to use a conjunction that clearly expresses the meaning you intend in such sentences, e.g. *while* or *because*, rather than *as*.

Like instead of as

When making comparisons between one noun and another: “*Elizabeth sings like a bird*” or “*Like children, small dogs need love and care*”.

As instead of like

When describing how someone or something is regarded, or what their function is: “*They thought of him as slow*”; “*She was described as an expert*”; “*As a parent, I think education is important*”.

As or like

In some situations, both *as* and *like* can be used, but the meaning is different: “*He worked as an auditor*” means that was his role or job, whereas, “*He worked like an auditor*” means that he worked in a similar way to the way an auditor works – *not* that he was an auditor or played that role.

As, just as, and like

“*When in Rome, do as they do in Rome*”. This use of *as* means *the same as* and is often prefaced with *just* in modern English: “*He did just as I told him*”.

With verbs other than *do*, it is common to use *like* instead: “*She wore a sari like they do in India*”, and with action verbs *just as* could mean *at the same time as*, so *like* will often be used for the sake of immediate clarity: “*He came down the stairs like his sister had done*” – contrast: “*He came down the stairs just as his sister arrived*”.

But there is a special usage in which *as* alone is followed by inversion with the verbs *to be* or *have* or an auxiliary or modal verb and used

to indicate that a statement also applies to another subject: “*He came down the stairs, as did his sister*”; “*I am a teacher, as is my wife*”.

As ... as

When used to make adjectival comparison, *as* is usually used in pairs: “*It was not as difficult as she had expected*”.

The same applies to adverbial comparisons: “*The car did not go as fast as she expected*”.

And the closing *as*-clause can be left out if it is clear what is being compared: “*It was not as difficult*” or “*The car did not go as fast*”.

Note: the negative “*not as ... as*” could be replaced with “*not so ... as*” in both the above examples.

Such ... as

The word *as* can also be a relative pronoun after *such*: e.g. “*All such staff as have been off sick*” means the same as “*All those staff who have been off sick*”. The first sounds a little stiff, so it is best to use the latter.

Like or such as

And *such as* can be used to introduce examples: “*Public employees, such as policemen, nurses and teachers, ...*”. Here, *such as* can be replaced with *like*.

As at, as from, as of, as per

The word *as* is often used in conjunction with a preposition to indicate the limited sense in which something is true: “*The figures as at 9 am on Tuesday*” means the figures as they were then, not as they may have been at any other point in time.

From the workshop...

As – contd.

As if, as though, and like

These are common when describing how someone or something looks or behaves: “*She looked at me **as if** I were mad*”; “*Their furniture looked **as though** it had all been bought quite recently*”.

Note that in more colloquial English (both British and US) these are often replaced with *like*, and the (formal) subjunctive (*were*) disappears: “*She looked at me **like** I was mad*”.

The same ... as, similar ... to, different ... from

The same is often followed by *as*: “*She lives in **the same** road **as** I do*”. Contrast: “*She lives in **a similar** road **to** the one I live in*”, and “*She lives in **a different** road **from** the one I live in*”. Note that *to* and *from* are prepositions, while *as* in the first sentence is a conjunction.

A prepositional *as* is also possible here: “*She lives in **the same** road **as** the one I live in*”, but this is commonly colloquially reduced to “*She lives in **the same** road **as** me*”.

500 topics have been tackled so far in the pages of

News & Tips

You can look them up on the website at: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backindex.htm>, and back issues can also be downloaded at: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backissues.htm>, where you can also download a whole year at a time (if you wish) by clicking on the year heading.

Just and only

The adverb *just* has several meanings: *exactly*, *by a near thing*, *very recently*, *really* and *merely*:

“*It is **just** what I wanted*”; “*The food lasted **just** long enough*”; “*She has **just** arrived*”; “*The film was **just** brilliant*”; “*He was **just** an ordinary man*”.

The adverb *only*, by contrast, has just one meaning: the event or action of the verb is *limited* to the people or things that follow the word *only* in the sentence:

“***Only** the good die young*”; “*He encountered difficulties **only** when he came to London*”; “*It could have happened **only** by mistake*”.

Only as an adjective

The word *only* can also be applied to a noun or the word *one*:

“*She is the **only** woman for me*”; “*She is the **only one** for me*”; “*That was my **only** copy*”; “*It was the **only** thing they could do*”; “*He found **only** two mistakes*”.

Only as an adjective is seldom seen with an indefinite noun, but there is one common exception: *an only child*. This means that the child has no brothers or sisters.

Only as a conjunction

The word *only* can also play the role of a conjunction expressing contrast:

“*He says he’ll come, **only** I don’t believe it*”; “*She thought she was a princess, **only** she wasn’t*”.

This usage is longstanding and well established, but some people mistakenly think it is colloquial or informal. If you are one of these, use *but* or *except that* instead. ☺

Please turn over!

Am I being difficult?

Dear Lawrence

Are you trying to make it difficult for the **Translatørforeningen** and **Translatørforbund** to reach agreement on a merger by once again raising the question of Dee Shields attack on English support? Wouldn't it be better to let bygones be bygones?

Well, I don't really have an opinion on whether it is a good thing or not for the two organisations to merge. Time will tell. And since I am not a member of either organisation, it's none of my business. The attack on *English support*, however, is my business. So long as it is not repudiated, retracted or apologised for, and my right of reply is denied, what it means is that the leadership of *Translatørforbund* fully backs the attempt to damage the reputation of my company. Not only is such backing clearly indicated in Mette Aarslev's e-mail reported in *News & Tips* No.21, but the article is still pumping out its poison on the *Translatørforbund* website.

I have given the leadership of *Translatørforbund* plenty of time to rethink their position. They have not done so. Now they want to merge with *Translatørforeningen*. This makes it one of the issues the latter must clear up before the merger can take place. Otherwise, the new organisation will clearly take on legal responsibility for the slander in MDTNyt and become only place I will be able to seek redress.

So before the issue can be called a "bygone", it is surely obvious that *both* organisations need to distance themselves from Dee Shields' article.

One word or two?

Dear Lawrence

How do you write **Introduktionsprogram** in English? Is it **introductionprogramme** in one word or two, or is it **introductory programme**?

Hope you have time to answer, because it would be a great help.

Unlike Danish and German and some other languages, the most common way in which English combines nouns is to use one of them as an adjective: e.g. *town hall*, *railway station*, *car park*, *kitchen utensil*. The two words in the compound are written separately, but (usually) only the second one takes a plural form. So the first can be considered as being used adjectivally.

There are exceptions to this two-word pattern, but they are relatively few and can be found as separate entries in the dictionary. Sometimes the two words have grown together into one word, e.g. *railway*, *audiotape*, and just occasionally they may be linked with a hyphen where they clearly form one concept but not yet one word, e.g. *city-state*, *owner-operator*, *owner-occupier*.

So *introduction programme* would be two words. But here another factor comes into play: where there is an adjectival form of the noun (here *introductory*) with the same meaning in the context, we prefer to use the adjectival form rather than the noun as an adjective. So we don't speak of *atmosphere pressure* but of *atmospheric pressure*, and, instead of *parliament questions*, we say *parliamentary questions*. So the best solution for you here is probably *introductory programme*.

More next month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

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No. 40 – February 2008

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Dear friends

Half way through this month, we will be moving into a new office, still at *Business House* (same address), but with double the space, so Claire and I will both have room to swing our respective cats. ☺ Indeed, there will be space for *A.N. Other*, too. And we will also be able to offer in-house courses for classes of up to 16 people. This development marks a significant step for us, and we invite all our readers to celebrate the event with us on 14th March. See below.

English support moves into new office

We are not moving very far, just about 20 metres in the same building, but we will be much more visible for the many people who visit *Business House* because we will be in a glass-fronted area directly facing the entrance lobby.

This is important for us because we want to increase our local customer base. It is here we will find the companies that can make use of our local teaching services. At the moment, almost all our teaching is at the Technical University of Denmark or the University of Copenhagen, which is fine, but perhaps a little lop-sided for a company based in Roskilde. Not that we want to stop teaching where we do (far from it!), but we would like to teach more local business people, too

But teaching is only part of our business, and the new office creates the physical framework within which we can realise a real expansion of our network and services in the fields of proofreading and translation, not just for English, but also the 27 other languages for which we have native-speaker support. We call it *Language support*.

So we are in the market for another “workhorse” to join us in the new office and help build the company. Interested? – Please get in touch!

We will be moving into to our new office later this month and we expect to have it more or less shipshape by 14th March. So come and join us for a drink and light refreshments on that day!

Proofreading for translators!

Did you know that *English support* offers native-speaker proofreading services for 28 languages? Naturally this includes Danish. This means that virtually whatever language you translate into, we have a *native-speaker proofreader/translator* who can check your translation for you.

We’ll ensure that the text “sounds” right to the native-speaker audience it is intended for. And, of course, if you are translating into *your* native language, the proofreading check costs much less.

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invites you to an

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Friday 14th March, from 3–5 PM

Come and meet us in our new office
– *we’d really like to see you!*

Please turn over!

Which and what in questions

Whether used as a pronoun (as in “**What** is your name?”) or as a determiner (as in “**What name** shall I give?”), the most common choice is **what**. Only where we are talking about one out of a limited number of something will we use **which**.

For instance, we say “**What** is the time?” and “**What time** is it?”, because in principle at least the range is infinite, whereas if my daughter says she has hurt her finger, I might ask “**Which one**?” because the possibilities are limited.

So the difference between “**What** train did you catch?” and “**Which** train did you catch?” is that the latter implies the speaker knows something about the choice of trains available. Similarly, if I take a phone call in a company with a very limited number of departments, I will probably list them and ask **which** one (of this limited list) the caller wants, whereas, in a company with a larger number, I am more likely simply to ask **what** department the caller wants.

Minimally invasive treatment

What sometimes goes wrong here is a special case of forgetting to use an adverbial form when modifying an adjective. In *News & Tips* No. 28, I gave the regrettably very common example of “**environmental** friendly” being used instead of the correct “**environmentally** friendly”. The first word qualifies the second word, “friendly”, which is an adjective, so the qualifying word must be an adverb, “environmentally”.

The medical expression “**minimally invasive treatment**” is exactly the same. The word “invasive” is an adjective, so the qualifying word must be an adverb, “minimally”. But here the adverbial ending “-ly” gets lost in pronunciation because of the “i” at the beginning of “invasive”. Native speakers *expect* the adverbial form and “hear” two sounds (“-ly” + “i”), while non-native speakers may not be so sure what to expect and may therefore hear “**minimal** invasive treatment” instead of the correct “**minimally** invasive treatment”.

And before you know it, the incorrect form even starts to *sound* right because that is what the non-native speaker seems to hear being said all the time, even by native speakers ... ☺

Looking good and looking well

The verb *to look* has two meanings, one active (“*He looked at her*”), and the other almost passive (“*She looked nice*”) meaning *how she seemed when he looked*. Notice that in, “*She looked nice*”, she didn’t do the looking; she was looked at, which is why I call it “almost passive”.

This pattern applies to a number of other verbs connected with the so-called five senses in modern English: “*He sounded nice*”; “*The tea tasted sweet*”; “*The grass smelled good*”; “*I felt great*”.

In each case, the last word is an *adjective* in English (in contrast to many other languages) because it is thought of as qualifying the subject, not the verb. We do **not** say “*He sounded nicely*” or “*The tea tasted sweetly*”. For more on this point, see also *News & Tips* No.13.

So you can look **good** or look **well**, but in both cases the words are adjectives describing you, so “well” here is the opposite of “ill”, and not the adverbial form for “good” as in “*she sings well*”.

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Prepositions: *in* and *on*

Dear Lawrence

*I was wondering if you could elaborate on the use of the word “on”? Can you say “a course **on** statistics”? Or is it “a course **in** statistics”? As I understand the word “on”, it generally means “on top of” – but not always. I think you can be **on** the train, even if you are not sitting on the roof ... I get especially confused with the translation of the Danish words **i** and **på**, and whether to use **in** or **on**.*

Yes, the prepositions are a problem – especially *in* and *on* and *at*!

With regard to school and university subjects, *in* is right: “a course **in** English”, or “a course **in** statistics”, but as soon as you start being more specific, there is a tendency to use *on*: “a course **on** the use of English in business”, or “a course **on** the history of statistics”.

But note that the phrase “a course *in* English” is actually ambiguous, because a course in any subject can also be *taught in English*. And indeed, in almost every other context (i.e. apart from school or university course descriptions), we will use *on* (or *about*): “an article **on** statistics”, “a conference **on** English”, etc.

You are quite right that we say “**on** the train (or bus)”. I suspect that this is due to the fact that the usage came into being for the very *first* trains and buses, where passengers really were more “on” than “in”! Both forms of transport were already slightly more developed when they began to be used in Denmark. But we also speak of being **on** a ship and **on** a plane. Note that the pattern breaks down with smaller means of transport (we say **in** a boat, **in** a car) and in space, where you are definitely **in** a spaceship. But, of course, you ride **on** a horse, a bicycle or a motorbike.

There is obviously a lot more to say on these prepositions, especially if we include *at*, so I will go into some other aspects in the next issue.

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Store Erhvervsdag in Roskilde

Every year, Zealand Business Development organises a large-scale get-together for local business. This year’s event will be in Roskilde Conference and Sports Centre on Tuesday 8th April. There will be workshops, presentations, prize-giving for the year’s best new entrepreneurs, and lots of networking.

English support will be there with a stand and we will also be holding a 45-minute workshop on how companies can boost their market visibility with English and other foreign languages.

More next month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

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Please turn over!

A letter to *Translatørforeningen*

On 13th January, I wrote a letter to each member of the Board of Directors as follows:

I am writing to ask you to clarify *Translatørforeningen*'s position with regard to Dee Shields' scurrilous attack on my company and person in the pages of *Translatørforbund*'s magazine MDTNyt in 2005.

The lady concerned shot herself badly in the foot with this article, but the fact remains that a full-blooded attempt to damage and discredit my company was made in the official magazine of *Translatørforbund* with the backing of the leadership. The article had absolutely no academic value and at 11,000 words was much longer than the rest of the issue it was in, or indeed other issues of MDTNyt. And it was dedicated to an attack on one person, me.

You are currently negotiating merger with this organisation. Therefore it is appropriate to ask you where you stand on such vilification of a fellow professional.

I very much hope you deprecate the article as much as I do and will distance your organisation clearly from it. I also hope that you will insist that in the first issue of the magazine of the new merged organisation the right of reply I was denied by Mette Aarslew* and the leadership of *Translatørforbund* should be upheld.

I look forward to hearing your views on these matters.

* Chairman of *Dansk Translatørforbund*. For her letter, see *News & Tips* No. 21

A letter to *English support*

This is what I received (dated 18th January) – *my translation* (their reply was in Danish):

Re: Article in the journal of *Dansk Translatørforbund*

The Board has received your letter dated 13th January 2008 about the above matter.

Translatørforeningen cannot take a position on an article in another organisation's publication.

Translatørforeningen requests that any further correspondence be sent to our secretariat and not to each individual member of the Board.

The reply was signed by a member of the secretariat *on behalf of* the Chairman, Claus Bentsen.

A second letter to *Translatørforeningen*

So on 21st January I replied as follows:

Does the Board of Directors seriously believe that this issue can be dismissed with the wave of a bureaucratic hand?

The only statement of substance in your reply is clearly wrong: the Board of Directors of *Translatørforeningen* not only can but must take a position on an 11,000 word article vilifying a fellow language professional in the pages of the official journal of an organisation *with which you are currently negotiating merger*.

Failure to do so would be a complete abdication of leadership.

To date (4th February), no reply has been received.

Next meeting for their merger negotiations with *Dansk Translatørforbund* is on 7th February.

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No. 41 – March 2008

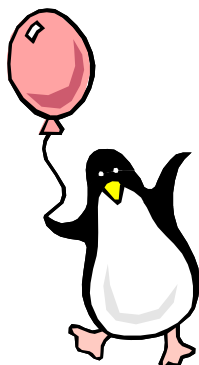
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Including an open letter to the members of DT and TF (page 4)

Dear friends

So we're in our new office and it feels grand. At least, it feels it *will* be grand when we've finished unpacking all our stuff and the new furniture. ☺ Still, the future is what we're all living for, and, of course, we'll get there in the end! In the meantime, the office is a bit of a mess, so we hope our customers will bear with us, insofar as we don't respond quite so fast as usual. We still hope to be ready on 14th March, when all well-wishers are invited to join us for a drink to celebrate.

An Invitation



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“Boost your sales with English and other foreign languages!”

That is the message *English support* will be taking to local companies and other organisations on 8th April at Zealand's *Store Erhvervsdag* – an annual get-together for local business organised by Roskilde Business Forum and Zealand Business Development. Entrance is free – all you pay for is food and drink. Find out more here: www.storeerhvervsdag.dk (website in Danish).

This year, *English support* will not only have our usual stand, but we will also be holding a 45-minute workshop on how companies can boost their market visibility by using English and other foreign languages effectively.

We will explain some of the pitfalls to be avoided and the considerable advantages to be gained by making good use of translators and other language experts – *even if you are only interested in the Danish market.*

The importance of language is currently much underestimated and undervalued, as companies pour large sums into expensive graphics and layout, but forget that the *words in the message* matter too. So come and hear what we have to say!

Sign up for the workshop here: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/workshop.htm>.

Please turn over!

More on the prepositions *in*, *on* and *at*

Last month, we looked at *in* and *on* in relation to school/university subjects and in connection with various means of transport. But there is a lot more to say, especially if we include *at*, so I promised more on these prepositions this month.

At a “point” ...

The focus with *at* is on a point. It might be a point on a “scale” of some kind: ***at 3 o'clock*** (time), ***at 50 mph*** (speed), ***at 60°C*** (temperature), ***at £60*** (price), ***at Waterloo*** (a point on a map). By analogy we also speak of ***at intervals of 5 seconds*** (a series of points in time), ***at a level*** (out of a range of levels), ***at the top***, ***at the bottom*** (e.g. of a page or a mountain), ***at the beginning***, ***at the end*** (e.g. of a book or a course). So if we refer to the days at the end of the (working) week, we say ***at the weekend***. And we say ***at Easter***, ***at Whitsun***, ***at Christmas*** when we refer to them as the days we have free at those times of year.

We also use *at* when speaking of one place as opposed to another: ***at home***, ***at work***, ***at the office***, ***at the laboratory***, ***at a hotel***, ***at a restaurant***, etc.

In a “container” ...

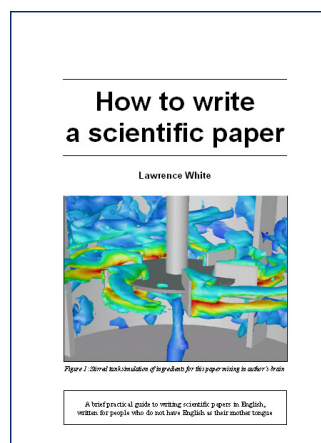
The focus with *in* is on being “inside” something. So if we say ***in the office***, ***in a restaurant*** or ***in a field***, we are thinking of being “inside” these “containers”, as it were. Some places are so big you cannot be *at* them under any circumstances: e.g. London, Mexico City and Beijing are simply too *big* to be thought of as points on a map. Even on quite small-scale maps, they appear more as splodges than points! But you can be *in* even a tiny hamlet, if the focus is on being “inside” it – e.g. *I used to live in a place called Wild Hill, which consisted of a couple of houses and a pub.*

We also use *in* with reference to being “inside” periods of time (longer than one day): ***in Week 27***, ***in April***, ***in 2009***, ***in the 18th century***. And ***in the beginning*** and ***in the end*** are only used of time.

Finally, *in* can be used when talking about time that must pass before something happens: *I will be there in two months*, *in two hours*, *in two seconds*. Please note the difference in meaning if you use *within* instead: *I will be there within two months* means that a *maximum* of two months will go by before I get there. **TIP:** Don't use *within* where *in* will do – see *News & Tips* No.18.

On a “surface”, but also a day ...

As noted last month, *on* is used for surfaces (even the ceiling) and we speak of being ***on a ship***, ***on a train***, ***on a bus***. But we also use it for dates and days: ***on Friday***, ***on 23rd May***, and ***on New Year's Day***. And there are also lots of expressions: ***on arrival***, ***on that occasion***, ***on time***, etc.



Do you need to write scientific papers?

“How to write a scientific paper”, is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

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From the workshop...

Find and think

The word *find* in English does not mean to *think* or *believe*. It is connected with *discovery*. Even when a judge *finds* the defendant guilty, it is the result of a long process of investigation and hearing of witnesses, etc.

So, when Danes carry the *think* or *believe* usage of the Danish cognate (*finde*) over into their English, it can sound very strange, and unfortunately even pompous.

And *findings* are the outcome of an enquiry of some kind, not just opinions.

Find out and work out

Similarly, the phrasal verb *to find out* contains the idea of *discovery* as distinct from *invention*. So you can **find out** a fact (e.g. that tigers do not live in Africa), but must **work out** a plan or a solution (i.e. something that does not exist before you create it).

Dependent on and independent of

The preposition that follows *dependent* is *on*, as in the phrasal verb *to depend on*. But when we say the opposite and use the word *independent*, the preposition that follows is *of*:

She is not dependent on him; she is independent of him.

More than 500 topics have been tackled so far in the pages of

News & Tips

You can look them up on the website at: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backindex.htm>, and back issues can also be downloaded at: <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/backissues.htm>, where you can also download a whole year at a time (if you wish) by clicking on the year heading.

CBS drops the courses that lead to “state-authorised” translators

On 18th January, Copenhagen Business School announced that it would no longer be running the courses that lead to authorised translators and interpreters in French, German, Italian, Russian and Spanish. As from this year, there will only be such a course for English.

This is a body blow for those who think that this particular qualification is what separates the sheep from the goats. At *English support*, we think the real test is the quality of the product. By way of illustration, it seems that some of the *teachers* on these courses are not “qualified” to take the course themselves! But they do have the very real qualification that they are native speakers capable of teaching at that level. *And when it comes down to it, what can be better than that?*

The courses are really good, but the focus on the formal qualification that comes out of them has reached absurd levels. So it may well be that the discontinuation of these courses will shift the focus back to where it should have been all along – on the quality of the work produced, rather than the formal (Danish) qualifications of the person doing the translation into a foreign language.

More next month!

Best wishes
Lawrence White
LW@englishsupport.dk

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Your natural language partner

Please turn over!

Correspondence

If you did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. It's FREE. Get on the mailing list via the website!

An open letter to the *members* of TF and DT

Dear fellow translators!

I have now completely lost patience with the leaderships of your two organisations. They may be about to merge, but there is absolutely no sign that that is going to improve things *one little bit*.

In 2004, I held a small seminar in Roskilde entitled *Do you speak "danglish"?* It was a considerable success. Nearly 50 language-interested people came, many of them translators, including members of both *Translatørforeningen* and *Dansk Translatørforbund*. Everybody enjoyed themselves. No one got upset.

One of my examples of "danglish" was the expression *state-authorised translator* – a literal syllable-for-syllable translation of the Danish word *statsautoriseret*. But the Danish word is very positive, while the English has *negative* connotations – as in *state-authorised phone-tapping*, *assassination* and *terror*. So it's a bit like translating a word meaning "famous" with a word meaning "infamous". Many of the translators present agreed it was an unfortunate translation, but said "*You'll never get our organisation to change it!*"

How right they were! Dee Shields, an American member of *Dansk Translatørforbund*, went so far as to demand that the seminar picture showing the example be taken off my website! She quoted herself and *Dansk Translatørforbund* as authorities on the question and accused me of "impugning her profession". The full correspondence can be read in *News & Tips* Nos. 12 and 13.

Shields published our exchange as the main feature in *MDTnyt* (3/05), *Dansk Translatørforbund's* magazine – wrapped in another 4400 words entirely devoid of any academic value and solely devoted to a virulent attack on myself and my company. But she also let slip that her story about deep reasoning lying behind the translation of "statsautoriseret" with "state-authorised" was a "pseudo-scientific dissertation", or as more honest people might say, a *lie*. See my reply in *News & Tips* No.21.

Well, of course, that completely destroys her argument, which was already looking very much like Swiss cheese. And *making things up* is not normally considered good academic practice. When I discovered this article (I am not a regular reader of *MDTnyt*, and of course Shields did not inform me about it), I wrote to *Dansk Translatørforbund* to ask for the right of reply in their magazine. The leadership of DT refused. DT Chairman Mette Aarslew's haughty letter can also be read in *News & Tips* No. 21.

With the merger negotiations going on between the two organisations, I wrote to the leadership of Translatørforeningen to ask them 1) to take a clear stand against Shields' scurrilous attack on a fellow professional, and 2) to insist on my right of reply in the first issue of the magazine of the new merged organisation.

TF Chairman Claus Bentson did not even take the trouble to *sign* the dismissive reply I received – see last month's issue. (You can download back issues at <http://www.englishsupport.sk/EN/backissues.htm>). The TF leadership's refusal even to take a position on *the right of reply to an article defamatory of another translator* is an appalling abdication of leadership. Last year, TF also refused to allow *English support* to advertise on their website on the grounds that I am not a "state-authorised" translator; *Gyldendals* can advertise their dictionaries, but we may not advertise *our* services to translators! And when I sent TF a full set of corrections to the English on their website, I received *no* reply. I had criticised something they had written. And *no* corrections were made. Presumably they believe no corrections are needed.

Now this is, of course, exactly the same problem that Dee Shields had. She just could not accept that someone who was not among the chosen few could even have an opinion on the subject. So she made up a cock-and-bull story and poured abuse on the critic in the hope that no one would listen.

What we are dealing with here is a load of *vanity and pride* – the twin curses of the translation profession in Denmark! *With this calibre of leadership in the two organisations that claim to speak on behalf of the translation profession in Denmark, it is high time these "leaders" were replaced!*

I wish you all the very best of luck in this endeavour!

Best wishes
Lawrence White
LW@englishsupport.dk

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NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 42 – April 2008

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Dear friends

Well, I don't mind admitting that the last month has been a bit tough. The new office is great, but we still haven't got everything in place because we've been fighting a series of computer problems unrelated to the move (and to each other), but which have been making life very difficult. So this month's issue is just a two-pager, but I hope you will enjoy it anyway. Happily, we can now see the light at the end of the tunnel and should be back to normal very soon. ☺

Store Erhvervsdag – a qualified success

With all the problems we have been experiencing recently, it was not surprising that our rather limited marketing preparation for *Store Erhvervsdag* in Roskilde proved insufficient to attract a lot of people to our workshop on 8th April. But those who came were really interested, and our stand, which was manned all day, was also reasonably well-visited. A lot of good contacts were made.

Thanks to Eileen for the pictures:



Kim Valbum opens the event



A friend drops by for a chat



Lawrence and Claire towards the end

English support goes to Copenhagen University

After last year's successful half-day presentations on *How to write scientific paper* at introductory courses for PhD students, the Cluster of Research Schools in Natural Resources at the Faculty of LIFE Sciences has invited us to hold our full "theory and practice" course spread over a six-month period for researchers currently working on papers. The course includes careful instruction in the IMRAD structure and tips on grammar and style as well as individual proofreading checks on the papers as they are written.

We have been running such courses at the Technical University of Denmark for some while, but this is the first time the full course has been offered at the University of Copenhagen. Next month we will also be going to Odense to give a half-day presentation on scientific writing as part of an introductory week for Copenhagen University PhD students there.

Meanwhile, *English support's* teaching at the Technical University is also expanding, with courses organised by DTU's Human Resources and by individual departments on their own account. Here we are running courses not only for researchers, but also for technical and administrative staff.

Please turn over!

Snout or muzzle?

I have a question to you as a native speaker of English. Is it correct to use the word "snout" when talking about a horse?

I was translating a text about horse infections recently, and someone told me that "snout" is not the right word when talking about horses; she said the right word is "muzzle". But then I visited a website where it says that both words can be used.

I feel a little confused after hearing such different opinions. Who should I believe?

Strictly speaking, the two words do mean the same part of the head, but the word *muzzle* is usually used to refer to the top of a horse's nose (where you might stroke it for example) while the word *snout* refers more clearly to the business end of the nose and mouth of a horse.

So in your text I would use *snout*, because there we are thinking of the saliva and other liquids contained in the mouth and nose rather than just the overall shape and outside (the *muzzle*).

Note that with reference to guns, *muzzle* is the correct word, while *snout* is more slang-sounding.

A tricky word to translate

I would like to invite your opinion on a matter that has preoccupied other translators without a satisfactory solution – what would be the correct term for the Danish word "udsagnskraft"?

In Danish we might say: "På grund af disse svagheder i metode har rapporten megen lille udsagnskraft vedrørende projektets succes". Or just: "Rapportens udsagnskraft vedr. kønsintegration er meget ringe".

I would be curious to know what you suggest.

Well, it was a new one on me! I suggested moving away from the customary Danish abstraction and saying the report is not very *persuasive, convincing, cogent, plausible*, etc., etc. depending on its particular weaknesses, but my correspondent did not feel these options really grasped "the core and flavour of *udsagnskraft*".

So I tried to think about the core and flavour of *udsagnskraft* (!) and came up with, "The report had really very little say on the subject of...". Happily, this met with full approval:

Much better – and so simple! Thanks – hoping you too enlarged your Danish vocabulary!

Yes indeed! But it was also a really good example of how important it is to focus on the *meaning* when you translate, and not on the *word(s)*.

And now for something completely different ...

CONGRATULATIONS

Claire was elected Chairman of the Danish branch of the *English-Speaking Union* last month!

More next month – which is already almost upon us.

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

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No. 43 – May 2008

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Dear friends

This issue is again very late out, but we are in fact getting back on our feet after all the computer problems. We are also very busy. Already the turnover this quarter is set to be the third highest we have ever experienced and it may well end up second only to the “tsunami” of the last quarter of last year. The increased workload obviously slows down our recovery, but is a welcome sign that our customer base is still expanding despite the difficulties we have been through.

Michael de Laine joins *English support*

Like Claire Clausen, who started working for *English support* last year, Michael de Laine works part-time as a freelance journalist for the *Copenhagen Post*. He has had a freelance contract with *English support* for some time, but will now be working part-time in our office as well.

Michael’s specialities are the worlds of business and of science. Amongst his other activities, he is the Chairman of the Danish Science Journalists Association (*Danske Videnskabsjournalister*). But in addition to his journalistic pursuits, he is also an excellent translator and proofreader.

Michael’s presence in the office will considerably strengthen our ability to serve our customers when Claire and I have teaching commitments, and his expertise will prove invaluable as our customer base, notably amongst researchers, continues to expand.

Our freelance network keeps growing! (Updated since No. 34!)

We now have some 150 freelance partners. They are all people with language expertise and many are specialists. Some 30% are English speakers resident in Denmark, while others live elsewhere. We also have a large number of Danish partners, who translate into Danish. And more than 35% of our freelance partners have other languages as their mother tongue, from Japanese to Portuguese, and from Russian to Malay, so that between us we cover 29 languages – with more to come.

In all these languages, we can fulfil all your business needs, from business letters and brochures to complete websites. As long as we think they are ethically defensible. ☺

And in several languages, we can also manage technical and scientific writing. We like challenges. And we have specialists in many fields: medicine and pharmaceuticals, engineering, architecture, computing, hunting and shooting, martial arts, business, accounting and law. And we are always looking for more.

Would you like to join us?

So if YOU have a good command of both your own and at least one other language, and would like some freelance work in your native tongue, whether translation or proofreading, *please get in touch*. You can write to me at: LW@englishsupport.dk. Thanks!



English support needs YOU!

Making opposites

A Chinese student of mine asked if there were any rules about opposites in English. A typical example might be that the opposite of *natural* is **unnatural**, while the opposite of *normal* is **abnormal**, and the opposite of *adequate* is **inadequate**, and the opposite of *polite* is **impolite**, and the opposite of *legal* is **illegal**, and the opposite of *agreeable* is **disagreeable**, and the opposite of *conformist* is **nonconformist**, and the opposite of a *theist* is an **atheist**, and the opposite of *careful* is **careless**, and so on. ☺

Well, at first sight it seems an impossible mess, but in fact there are some patterns from which we can create some (perhaps) useful guidelines.

Where there is a word ...

The first thing to note is that a lot of very common adjectives have completely different words as opposites: *rich* and *poor*, *right* and *wrong*, *clean* and *dirty*, *easy* and *difficult*, *fast* and *slow*, *alive* and *dead*, *wet* and *dry*, *tall* and *short*, *fat* and *thin*, *big* and *small*, etc., etc.

In these cases there is usually no opposite form to make, because we just use the other word. And in those few cases where an apparent opposite form exists, it often has a quite different meaning, e.g. **uneasy** (not feeling at ease), **unclean** (usually meaning *not clean* in some religious/ritual sense).

The prefix **un-** ...

This is the most usual way of making the opposite form of common adjectives: **unable**, **uncomfortable**, **unequal**, **unlike**, **unripe**, **unusual**, etc. The same applies to adverbs made from such adjectives: **uncomfortably**, **unequally**, **unlikely**, **unusually**, etc.

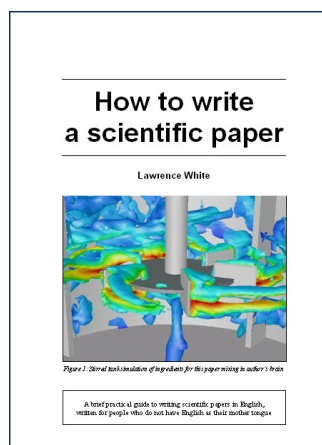
It is also used to make the opposite of quite a lot of verbs: **unbend**, **undo**, **undress**, **unfasten**,

unload, **unplug**, **untie**, **unveil**, etc. You will even find verbs like *to undeceive* and *unlearn*. And verbs made from **un-** + nouns: **unhorse**, **unseat**, **unthrone**, etc. All these verbs reverse a previous action (contrast: **uncover** with **discover**). Note that the verbs **unloose** and **unloosen** are exceptions and mean exactly the same as *loose* and *loosen*.

And, just occasionally, the meaning of a *noun* can be reversed, e.g. **unbelief**, an **untruth**.

The **un-** prefix comes from Old English (cf. the **u-** prefix common in Danish), but English has its roots in French/Latin as well as in the Germanic languages, so do not *assume* that the **un-** form is possible. Often it is not. But it is quite common, also with words originating in Latin: e.g. **unfortunate**, **unnatural** and **unnecessary**.

And when the past (or present) participle of a verb is used as an adjective, the opposite form (if there is one) is formed with **un-**: **undefined**, **uneducated**, **unemployed**, **uninterested** (and **uninteresting**), **unlit**, **unseen** (and **unseeing**), **unsurprised** (and **unsurprising**), **unwritten**, etc.



Do you need to write scientific papers?

“How to write a scientific paper”, is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

Published by *English support*. Order it now from your local bookshop or direct from www.englishsupport.dk

Making opposites (contd.)

The prefix *in-* (and variations) ...

This is the second most common prefix for forming opposites: *inaccurate*, *indefinite*, *informal*, *inhuman*, *inorganic*, *insane*, etc. Where the original word starts with *m*, *p* or *b*, *in-* becomes *im-* as in: *imbalance*, *immature*, *impossible*, *impure*, etc. Where the original word starts with *l*, *in-* becomes *il-* as in: *illegal*, *illiterate*, etc. And where the original word starts with *r*, *in-* becomes *ir-* as in: *irrational*, *irregular*, etc.

The problem is that the Latin prefix can also have another meaning, namely motion *towards* or *into*, so we have a lot of words in English that might look as though they are opposites, but which are not: *infect*, *inform*, *inset*, *imbibe*, *immigrant*, *impress*, etc. And the word *inflammable* means the same as *flammable*. No wonder that fire services all over the world recommend dropping its use entirely!

The words that form their opposites with *in-* usually have Latin roots (if that helps!), but as we have seen, some common words with Latin roots form their opposites with *un-*. This is also the case with many words from Latin that already start with *in-*, e.g. *unimaginative*, *uninformative*, *unintelligent*, etc.

And some opposites can be formed either way: *inadvisable* or *unadvisable*, *incurable* or *uncurable*, *inharmonious* or *unharmonious*, etc. There are also differences between British and US English: *insanitary* and *unarguable* are preferred in British English, while in US English both *inarguable* and *unarguable* are used and *unsanitary* is preferred.

The prefix *ab-* ...

This is another Latin prefix (meaning *from*). Its use in English is harder to define, but it often indicates deviation from some norm, as

in *abuse*, which may account for its use as an opposite in *abnormal*.

The prefix *dis-* ...

This prefix is often used for making opposites of words that already have another prefix of some kind: e.g. *disabuse*, *disembark*, *disinfect*, *disingenuous*, *disrepute*, etc., but it is also seen in opposites like *dishonest*, *dishonour*, *disuse*, and in verbs like *disarm*, *discover*, *displease*, *disprove*, which are what we might call active opposites.

The prefix *non-* ...

Non is simply the Latin word for *not*, so it is often used as a prefix to make an opposite where there is no obvious choice already in existence, e.g. an NGO is a *Non-Governmental Organisation*. It is common in modern words: *non-aggression*, *non-alcoholic*, *non-aligned*, etc.

In British English, these words are usually still hyphenated (as new combinations often are), but the trend is towards dropping the hyphens, as in the case of *nonconformist*.

US English makes less use of this convention in general, and most such words are written without hyphens.

The prefix *a-* ...

This is a Greek prefix for forming opposites. As such, it is only used in English for forming the opposite of words of Greek origin: *apolitical*, *asymmetric*, *atheism*, etc.

In some cases, the Greek prefix *a-* seems to be being replaced with *non-* (or even *un-*) with much the same meaning: e.g. *non-political*.

Something similar must have happened with the word *polite* when its opposite became *impolite*! ☺

And there's more!

The general term for opposites is a nice Greek-derived word, *antonym*. There are several different kinds. Above, we have mostly been concerned with what are called *gradable* or *complementary* antonyms. On page 4, we take a look at what are known as *relational* or *converse* antonyms, but I prefer to call them *reciprocals*.

Reciprocals

A Danish colleague suggested I take up this subject because he has noticed a lot of mistakes in this area. So here goes:

1. There are some pairs of verbs in English whose meanings are not exactly opposite but more *reciprocal*, like the words **push** and **pull** on the two sides of a door. We can draw the relationship between them like this:

PUSH → PULL

The words **push** and **pull** seldom cause foreigners much difficulty, because this pair of meanings exists in most other languages too. The grammar is also easy, because they both have only one object:

e.g. *You **push** this button and then you **pull** this rope.*

The words **imply** and **infer** work in exactly the same way:

e.g. *I did not mean to **imply** that she had lied, but you chose to **infer** it from what I said.*

IMPLY → INFER

2. However, the pattern of the following group of pairs is more complicated and some of the pairs do not exist in other languages:

The verbs on the left-hand side often have *two* objects:

e.g. *She gave **him** a book.*
*They lent **you** some money.*

In most cases, this sentence structure can be changed to:

*She gave a book to **him**.*
*They lent some money to **you**.*

GIVE → TAKE
SELL → BUY
LEND → BORROW
TEACH → LEARN

The verbs on the right-hand side have the following structure:

*He took (received) **the book** from **her**.*
*You borrowed **some money** from **them**.*

3. Finally there are verb pairs where the *place focused upon* (e.g. the position of the speaker, or the person spoken to, at the time spoken of) makes a difference:

GO → COME
TAKE → BRING

Here we use the verb on the right-hand side if the movement is *to the place* where *either* the speaker *or* the person spoken to *is, was* or *will be* at the time spoken of, and we use the verb on the left if the movement is *to any other place*:

e.g. *Can we **come** for dinner on Tuesday? We'll **bring** a bottle of wine.*
*We **went** there for dinner on Tuesday. We **took** a bottle of wine.*

Note that here both **take** and **bring** can take two objects (cf. point 2 above):

e.g. *I **went** to the hospital to see her. I took **her** some flowers.*

If you would like an exercise on using reciprocal verbs, get in touch!

More next month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk
Your natural language partner

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 44 – June 2008

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Dear friends

As the summer period begins, our teaching load eases, but we are still very busy. In fact, turnover this quarter is already the second highest we have ever had – second only to the “tsunami” we experienced in the final quarter last year. Translation and proofreading work continues to pour in, and our extensive network of freelancers takes up the strain. But we can always use more help, so if you would like to join the team, get in touch.

The *Sea Stallion* sets course for home

At 12 noon on 29th June, a very special ship will cast off from Custom House Quay in Dublin and set course home to Roskilde in Denmark.

The *Sea Stallion from Glendalough* is a reconstruction of a Viking longship built in Dublin in 1042 found with four other Viking wrecks at the bottom of Roskilde Fjord during excavations in 1982.

The reconstruction was built over a four-year period from 2000–2004, using Viking tools and methods as part of a scientific project at the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde.

After extensive sea trials, the ship was sailed last year from Roskilde to Dublin, where it has been on display for nine months at the National Museum of Ireland.

And now the *Sea Stallion* is coming home. Last year, the voyage went round the north of Scotland; this year the ship will be sailing up the English channel.

The entire effort is a huge archaeological experiment to gain as much insight as possible into how the Vikings built and sailed their longships.

For the 65-man crew, it is also an experiment in learning how to live in extremely close proximity to each other for six weeks in an open ship only 30 metres long! And last year it rained six out of every seven days they were at sea.

Of course, they will stop off on the way (just like the Vikings did) and camp for the night on land whenever possible, but the trip across the North Sea will be non-stop for obvious reasons.

English support is currently working hard on the translation of all the new material (now coming in ever larger amounts) and getting the English on the *Sea Stallion*'s website shipshape as the final stage of this historic voyage (Roskilde to Dublin and back) gets under way.

Follow the progress of this fantastic archaeological research project at www.havhingsten.dk.



The *Sea Stallion* sailing round Scotland last year. Photo: Werner Karrasch.
Copyright: Viking Ship Museum,

What makes science science?

The Viking Ship Museum's project around the *Sea Stallion* is a shining example of science at its best. In my view, the people involved have a really firm grip on the very essence of the matter.

When I teach scientific writing, I tease my students with the question: “*Why do we write scientific papers?*” Well, it's a good question and it needs a good answer – especially if all the effort of describing your work on paper is not going to seem like an irritating interruption of your “real” work ...

The fundamental answer is that science is not science until it is described so clearly and in sufficient detail that it can be checked by others and at least in principle repeated by others. That is the only real basis for any claim to *objectivity* science might make.

Look at what the Viking Ship Museum has done. Every step of the project has been described in detail, not only for archaeologists and specialists, but also for the general public. They call it making dissemination an integral part of the research, but what it means is that each step and indeed the entire project could (in principle at least) be repeated by another similarly dedicated team elsewhere.

And often a not insignificant by-product of such clear dissemination is being able to obtain the money to continue the research. Tens of thousands of ordinary people have been able to see the work being done, watch

the ship being built, and follow its sea trials and the voyage to Dublin. Such publicity generates sponsorship and other financial support, also from the general public.

Clarity (and funds)

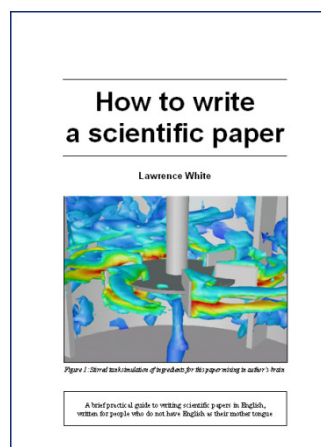
There is an important message here for scientists everywhere, and that is that you must *explain*. The word *explain* means *make clear* – that is, to *other* people. ☺ Now an awful lot of scientific papers are not written like that. On the contrary, a great many are written in a style that makes them very difficult to read – *even for people working in the same field!*

First of all, that means the work becomes virtually unrepeatable and therefore remains merely the *subjective* opinion of the author(s).

But it also means you are much less likely to get funds to continue your research, because people can't see what is so important about it.

Moral: Always write as clearly and simply as you can. Explain your work to your readers as you might if they were sitting opposite you over a cup of coffee. Don't adopt some alleged special “scientific-paper” style. The only correct style for scientific research writing is one that makes it easy to understand why you did it, how you did it, what you achieved, and what it means.

And that is what the Viking Ship Museum has done, and continues to do, so well.



Do you write scientific papers?

“How to write a scientific paper” is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

Published by *English support*. Order it now from your local
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From the workshop...

Affect and effect

These two words are often confused and each has more than one meaning, so let's see if we can disentangle them:

The linked meanings ...

In their most common senses, the word *affect* is a verb and the word *effect* is a noun. For example: "*The beer **affected** my balance*" and "*My loss of balance was the **effect** of beer*". So the verb *to affect* means *to have an effect upon something or somebody*.

Note how this is not the same as the verb *to cause*. The beer *affected* my balance; it did not *cause* it. On the contrary, what it *caused* was my *imbalance*!

Another meaning of affect

But the verb *affect* can also mean to *put on a show* of something, as in a sentence like "*He **affected** innocence*".

Other meanings of effect

The noun *effect* is also used in the theatre and film worlds for things and techniques that give the illusion of something, as in *special effects*.

The plural *effects* is also used as a formal word for *possessions*, as in "*Please take all your **effects** with you when you leave the hotel*".

The expression *in effect* means the same as *for all practical purposes*.

Finally, the word *effect* is sometimes used in rather formal language as a *verb*, meaning to *bring about* as in: "*To **effect** a real change, the board was replaced*".

Tip: Always use "*bring about*" here instead!

Apologise and apologies

The confusion here is generally a matter of spelling (and perhaps pronunciation). *Apologise* is the *verb*, meaning to *say you are sorry about something you take responsibility for*. *Apologies* is the plural of the noun *apology*, which refers to what you said when you *apologised*: you gave an *apology*. So it looks odd if you *apologies* for a mistake or ask someone to accept your *apologise*!

Broadcast and programme

While the verb *to broadcast* is commonly used of both TV and radio, the noun is rare today and a *broadcast* is usually referred to as a *TV (or radio) programme*. See also *News & Tips* no. 19.

Numbers and of

When we use *hundred*, *thousand*, *million*, etc. in numbers, they are always singular: e.g. *a (or one) hundred people*, *two hundred people*. But when used as pronouns, these words take a plural form with *-s*, e.g. "*How many people were at the party?*" "*Hundreds*".

However, the answer to the same question could have been, "*Three hundred and seventeen*". So the plural form is used only when these words are employed in a vague way and not when giving an actual number. And when they are used in this vague way, the word *of* is added to link to any following noun, e.g. "*There were **hundreds of** people at the party*".

Note how the word *several* is treated as a number in this context, whereas the word *many* requires the plural:

"*Many **hundreds of** people came*", but "*Several **hundred** people came*".

Please note this date in your diary ...

KOMMUNIKATIONS- OG SPROGFORUM 2008

Thursday, 25 September, in "Ovnhallen", CBS Copenhagen

Information and booking:

<http://www.kommunikationogsprog.dk/Forum/>

Tel. 33 91 98 00 or e-mail:

forum2008@kommunikationogsprog.dk

See you there!

Reciprocals

Dear Lawrence

Thank you for the clear exposition of reciprocals last month. But what about **replace** and **substitute**? You have written about them before [see News & Tips No. 22], but not as reciprocals. Could you explain how they fit in?

Yes, the reader is quite right! The verbs **replace** and **substitute** are reciprocal in meaning, though in a way that differs slightly from the examples I gave last month. So we should add a point 2a to what was written in News & Tips No. 43 ...

- 2a Like **give** and **take**, **sell** and **buy**, etc., the verbs **substitute** and **replace** also take two objects (a direct object and a prepositional object), but they differ in that if you rewrite the sentence using the other verb *the subject remains the same while the objects change places*:

e.g. *I **substitute** a red colour **for** the green.*
*I **replace** the green colour **with** a red.*

SUBSTITUTE → REPLACE

If we think of a football match, we can see the point of the direction of the arrow:

e.g. *The trainer **substituted** Jones **for** Smith.*
*The trainer **replaced** Smith **with** Jones.*

In the first sentence, the direct object of the verb (Jones) moves *away from* the subject (the trainer), whereas in the second sentence, the direct object of the verb (Smith) moved *towards* the subject (still the trainer) when he comes off the pitch.

Now comes the complication! Suppose we leave out the trainer? The sentences would then have to be:

e.g. *Jones **substituted** **for** Smith.*
*Jones **replaced** Smith.*

This has led a lot of dictionaries to list these two reciprocal verbs as synonyms! But note that it is *only in this limited case*, where the decision-maker (the trainer in this case) is not mentioned in the sentence, that the two verbs can be treated as meaning much the same.

And, as noted in News & Tips No. 22, the verb *substitute for* is more “active” than the verb *replace*. It implies some kind of agent – which is probably why the people who replace other players in team games are called *substitutes*. They don't just *happen* (like *night replaces day*) but are *actively sent* on to the pitch to replace another player.

If you would like an exercise on using reciprocal verbs, get in touch!

Did you know?

English support can offer you **native-speaker** translation and proofreading help with not only English, but also Bangla, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Farsi, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Kurdish, Malay, Nepali, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Ukrainian and Urdu.

More next month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk
Your natural language partner

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 45 – July 2008

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Dear friends

We live in exciting times! Last month we received no less than 14 new subscriptions for *News & Tips* from one company alone. That must be practically everyone involved with translation work in that firm. Last quarter saw the second highest turnover we have ever had, more than doubling up on the previous quarter. And although we are well into the summer months, the work keeps on coming in. At this rate we will have outgrown our new offices by this time next year!

The times they are a-changing!

As reported in *News & Tips* no. 41, Copenhagen Business School is no longer going to be running the courses that lead to authorised translators and interpreters in other languages than English. This is due to the lack of applications for these courses. In fact, all over Europe, students are turning away from taking courses specialising in foreign languages.

This trend is causing an enormous amount of concern among language professionals and their organisations. Where are tomorrow's language teachers and translators going to come from? Lots of reports have been written bemoaning the situation and calling for action, but little or nothing has been done.

The reason for the lack of government action is because there is little any democratic government can do to make people take courses they don't want to. And the reason people don't want to specialise in foreign languages is obvious. It is only a matter of time, and probably not much time, before computer translation becomes a realistic option and we can all enjoy the simultaneous translation of our words as we speak over our mobiles to China. Perhaps as little as five years, but probably ten at the most, and at least within the working life of people deciding their studies now.

So language students sensibly opt for combined courses (a foreign language + some other subject) so they have another leg to stand on. And those who really want to work with languages in the future would be well-advised to choose computer science as the other subject.

What does this mean for language professionals? Well, it means more and more focus on *nuance*, on the things that language software will not be able to do well for a long time, and on finding mistakes. *Editing and language revision*. There will always be a need for people who understand how language works, including foreign languages, but when computerisation hits the language business for real, there will suddenly no longer be the same need for thousands of *translation* specialists. And globalisation is forcing the computerisation of translation – human translation is already simply too expensive in resources. You only have to think of the EU!

So why shouldn't this worry us? Well, for one thing, there is never any point in worrying about what you can't do anything about. ☺ But, for another, things take time. By focusing on *quality*, we can survive well into the age of computer translation. And we must be prepared to transform *ourselves* to meet the challenge, instead of asking the government to stop the *world* changing.

We must turn into language experts in ways that no software can match – in our lifetimes at least!

Branch, industry, sector

A *branch* in English is a local part of an organisation. For instance, I have an account at a branch of *Danske Bank* in Roskilde, and *English support* belongs to the local branch of *ProNetwork*.

The word *industry* is often used to describe a whole category of business: e.g. the motor industry, the shipping industry, the transport industry, the entertainment industry, the advertising industry, etc. Note how the categories concerned do not necessarily have to be “industrial” in the normal sense of working with heavy machinery, etc.

The word *sector* is increasingly being used instead of *industry* in the above sense, and is probably to be preferred where its meaning is clear. But it is a space metaphor (like *area*), so make sure the meaning is clear in the context.

Consequent and consistent

These two words cause problems for many foreigners because several languages (for instance: Danish, Dutch, French, German) have a word which sounds like the first but means the second.

Consequent in English means something resulting from something else: e.g. “*the accident and the **consequent** trauma*” or “*the fire and the **consequent** damage*”. It is also possible to reverse this construction and say “*the trauma **consequent to** the accident*” or “*the damage **consequent upon** the fire*”. Note that both *consequent* and its adverbial form *consequently* strongly imply a causal or logical linkage. If you merely want to say that one thing happened after the other, you can use *subsequent* and *subsequently*.

Consistent, however, means that two things fit *logically* together or at least do not contradict each other: e.g. “*Her evidence was **consistent with** his guilt*”. This means, of course, that an effect can be *consistent with* a cause: e.g. “*the damage was **consistent with** there having been a fire*”. Two different stories about an event can be consistent (i.e. not contradict each other). And things can also be consistent with themselves: e.g. “*He told a **consistent** story*” – i.e. one that did not contradict itself.

Finally a thing (usually physical) can be *consistent*, meaning it has the same quality throughout: e.g. “*the mixture was consistent*” means it had the same properties throughout.

Please note this date in your diary ...

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Information and booking:

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Tel. 33 91 98 00 or e-mail:

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See you there!

Comprise and consist of/in

In modern English the verb *consist* is usually followed by *in* when talking about uncountables and *of* when talking about countable things: e.g. “*Well-being **consists in** not being unwell*” and “*His performance **consists of** a series of anecdotes*” (= the passive, “*is made up of*”).

The verb *comprise* is more tricky. In older texts it is often seen playing the same role as *consist of*, while in modern English it is more usually used in the reverse sense, i.e. moving from the parts to the whole: e.g. “*A series of anecdotes **comprise** his performance*” (= the active, “*make up*”).

Tip: if you want to use *comprise*, use it in this modern sense: e.g. “*Women comprise 30% of the workforce*”.

Each and every

These two words do not mean exactly the same. For one thing, *each* can be a pronoun, while *every* cannot: e.g. “*She gave **every** child some food. **Each** (of them) received a bowl of soup and a bread roll*”. Either word could have played the role of the adjective in the first sentence, but only *each* could be used in the second sentence, where it is a pronoun. The equivalent with *every* would have to be **every one** (two words). Note how the construction “*each of*” is used in front of plural nouns and pronouns; the equivalent construction with *every* would be “**every one of**”.

Secondly, both *each* and *every* imply groups of more than one, but to use *each*, the “group” need only be *two*, whereas to use *every*, the group must be *at least three*, otherwise we would say *both* (+ a plural noun) instead: e.g. “*She gave **both children** some food. **Each** (of them) received...*”.

The other difference is more subtle – a matter of focus. Usually, subject to the above provisos, wherever we use *each*, we could replace it with *every*. But the reverse is not the case. The focus with *each* is always on the individual, whereas the focus with *every* is on the group. Here is an example in which *every* cannot be replaced by *each*: “*The town has been flooded **every** year since 2004*”. In this sentence, the focus is clearly on the whole series of years, not the individual years.

One way of remembering this difference is to think of the words **everyone** (in one word) and **everything** (also in one word), which, despite their singular form, both have the sense of **all**.

More on of

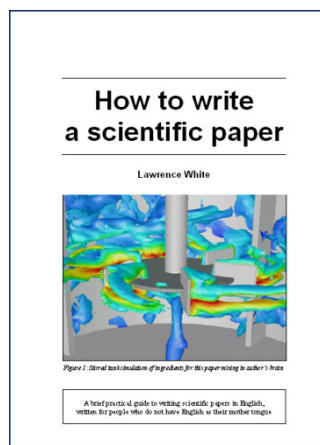
Last month we looked at numbers and *of*, but the little word *of* can also be preceded but a word or figure indicating the *proportion* of something. Many non-native speakers (and, it must be said, Microsoft Word’s spelling and grammar checker) find it difficult to work out what the real subject of the verb is in these cases, so let’s look at the pattern.

Here are three sentences:

1. ***All / Two thirds / Half / 30% / Some of the information** was destroyed.*
2. ***All / Two thirds / Half / 30% / Some of the city** was destroyed.*
3. ***All / Two thirds / Half / 30% / Some of the buildings** were destroyed.*

The first sentence indicates the proportion of an uncountable noun, *information*, so the verb is singular. The second sentence indicates the proportion of a singular countable noun, *city*, so the verb is singular. The third sentence indicates the proportion of a plural noun, *buildings*, so the verb is plural.

Note that whether we have *one* third or *two* as the proportion makes no difference whatsoever. And the third sentence would take a plural in exactly the same way if the sentence started with “*A number / A few / A majority / A minority of the...*”, because the real subject is “**buildings**”.



Do you write scientific papers?

“How to write a scientific paper” is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

Published by English support. Order it now from your local bookshop or direct from www.englishsupport.dk

Questions & Answers

(Edited)

If you did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. It's FREE. Get on the mailing list via the website!

Etc., etc., etc.

Dear Lawrence

Can you confirm that in British English there should always be a "," before etc.?

What is the rule? - Thanks!

Well, opinions vary on this, but I would, yes. The pattern, as I see it, is that the comma should be used before "and" when listing things of more than one word, because we tend to pause to make the meaning clear, and the comma marks that pause in speech.

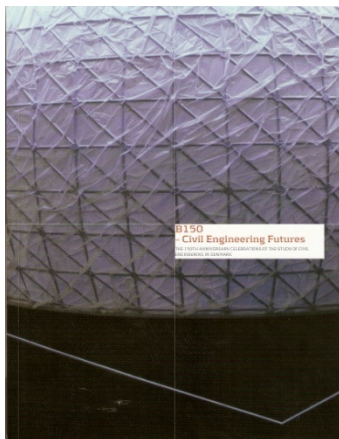
Contrast: *I want visit Spain, Italy, Switzerland and Austria.*

I spent yesterday playing golf, drinking beer, and thinking about the meaning of life.

The Latin abbreviation "etc." is short for "et cetera" ("and the rest"), and is always pronounced in full (two words), so the comma seems appropriate.

Note: US English tends to use more commas than British English, so many Americans would put a comma before "and" in my first sentence, too.

See *News & Tips* No. 8 for the basic patterns and remember that punctuation in English is to show how you should *read* the sentence. It has nothing to do with the grammatical structure of the sentence.



150 years of the study of Civil Engineering in Denmark

To celebrate their 150th anniversary, the Technical University of Denmark's Civil Engineering Department (DTU Byg) has published a truly beautiful illustrated book of interviews, articles and projects presented in English, the entire text of which we had the privilege of proofreading.

The book is called *B150 – Civil Engineering Futures*, and the editor tells that she did not receive even one single complaint from the many famous architects, engineers and other contributors about our corrections to their English...

I think we were both rather happy about that! ☺

Follow the *Sea Stallion* as it comes home...

We continue to translate all the news and other articles that are coming in as the Viking reconstruction makes its way home from Dublin to Roskilde in Denmark. In the picture below, you can see the ship in the Celtic Sea, south of Ireland on 7th July, when the going got really tough. The sail already has two reefs taken in...

Follow the news of this fantastic scientific voyage in English as it happens on the internet at www.havhingsten.dk.

More next month!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk

Your natural language partner



(4)

Copyright: Viking Ship Museum

Proofreading • Copy editing • Translation • Teaching

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No. 46 – August 2008

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Dear friends

Last month, Michael de Laine kept the office going single-handedly, while I took a brief holiday in Paris. And that was really good, because there has been no let up in work. In fact, it seems rather to be increasing. Well done, Michael! And now Claire is back and we can start preparing for the next academic year's teaching. But we still need someone who can help out in the office – a sort of all-rounder who can help us keep things on course... Any (freelance) offers? ☺

Translating the *Sea Stallion* from Glendalough

Over the years, *English support* has worked hard to help Danish scientists communicate their results to the rest of the world.

In 2006, we published a little booklet on *How to write a scientific paper*, and we have run quite a few courses based on it at Denmark's Technical University and now also at the University of Copenhagen.

We have also corrected the English in hundreds of scientific papers prior to publication, not to mention books, such as one on civil engineering, and another on systemics in relation to planning.

But we have never been involved in anything quite like the *Sea Stallion* project before. This is an experiment in progress, being described as it goes on and immediately presented to the world.

And the world is definitely interested. I don't know, but there are probably hundreds of thousands of researchers, sailing enthusiasts, journalists, and others out there who are following the project to varying degrees and are entirely dependent upon the English translation of the Danish reports that come in every day. We feel very privileged to be the ones doing the translation for them.

It's also a fantastic experience. I sit here in my comfortable office in Roskilde, far away from the actual sailing. But when you translate texts from one language into another, you have to get under the skin of the authors and feel what they feel. And in this case it can vary from the enthusiasm of a marine archaeologist explaining his theory about what Viking sails and rigging were really like, or the excitement of the stormy crossing of the Celtic Sea, to the palpable boredom of the long wait for a favourable wind in Lowestoft. And all the time decisions are being made and explained.

This is a marine archaeological experiment to test the theories behind the reconstruction. But it is also a test of the people involved (the 60-strong crew on a 30-metre ship), an educational voyage throwing more light on Viking life and times for us all, a publicity and fund-raising activity that will make further research possible, and a fantastic sailing adventure. All at the same time.

Follow the final stages of the *Sea Stallion*'s voyage home to Roskilde at www.havhingsten.dk.



The *Sea Stallion* crossing the North Sea.

Photo: Werner Karrasch.

Copyright: Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde

Achieve, attain, obtain

Here is a little group of words with some overlap in meaning, but which are far from entirely interchangeable. So when do you use which?

Achieve

The verb *achieve* is used with reference to the end results of effort of some kind.

So you can *achieve* a (metaphorical) *target* or *goal*, so you can *achieve fame, popularity, success, wealth*; you can *achieve promotion* or a *good job*; you can even *achieve everything* or *something* or *nothing* (that you set out to do).

Note how the verb to *achieve* is not about the process involved but the result. So I cannot say I have *achieved* a project or a piece of work.

Note too that the result is always abstract. I would not say I have *achieved* a cake or a computer program. And Robin Hood did not *achieve* targets with his bow and arrow; he *hit* them. Similarly, footballers *score* goals, and thereby *achieve* results.

Contrast the way the noun, *achievement*, can also be applied to a cake, a book or any other concrete result of effort. And it can even be applied to the process involved, as in "*Sailing the Sea Stallion from Dublin to Roskilde was quite an achievement*".

Attain

This verb comes from a Latin word meaning to *reach*, and is used in this quite literal sense in some limited contexts, such as the *age, depth, distance, height*, or *speed* reached, as in, "*The*

Sea Stallion attained a speed of ten knots in the Limfjord" or "*He attained the age of 65 and promptly retired*".

Otherwise, in modern English at least, it is best thought of as an alternative to the verb *achieve* in connection with careers and education, where it may be preferred to *achieve*, as in "*She attained a masters degree*".

The noun *attainment* is only ever used in this latter sense.

Note that *attain* is a more formal word than *achieve* and, unlike the latter, does not necessarily imply that any effort needed to be made... Use with caution.

Obtain

The fundamental sense of *obtain* is to *get* or *receive*. So we can also say, "*She obtained a masters degree*", but the meaning is quite different from our previous example with *attain*.

For instance, you can *obtain* results by getting others to *achieve* them. You may also be able to *obtain* a grant. And you can *obtain* the average speed of the *Sea Stallion* by dividing the distance travelled by the time taken.

Note: There is also a very special (intransitive) usage of *obtain* meaning *apply*, as in "*These conditions no longer obtain*".

Do you write scientific papers?

"How to write a scientific paper" is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

Published by *English support*. Order it now from your local bookshop or direct from www.englishsupport.dk

How to write a scientific paper

Lawrence White

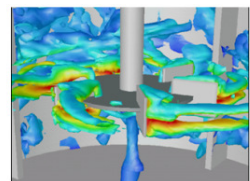


Figure 1. Global maximization of ingredients for the paper writing in author's brain

A free preview of the guide to writing scientific papers in English, written for people who do not have English as their mother tongue

From the workshop...

Reach and arrive at

The fundamental idea in the verb *to reach* is *to stretch out and touch*, as in “*Can you reach the ceiling?*” Its metaphorical use contains this idea: “*The longbow could reach a target 180 metres away*”, and “*During the war, the BBC reached deep into occupied Europe*”.

So when we use it to describe a journey, as in “*The Sea Stallion has reached Lowestoft*”, the idea is of the journey as a kind of stretching out over the distance covered. Contrast with *to arrive at*, which can be used interchangeably with *to reach* in journey descriptions, but which contains no sense of stretch at all.

And the point of arrival in both cases can be metaphorical: you can *arrive at/reach* a conclusion, a decision, a proposal, a solution, etc. The subtle difference is that *to reach* a decision, for instance, implies some discussion or effort or thought beforehand (the “stretching” if you like), whereas *to arrive at* or *come to* a decision does not.

Reach and catch

Things you *reach* for are usually stationary; things that are moving, you have to *catch*. So we *catch* buses, planes, ships and trains – all of which (being means of transport) are characterised by *not* staying in one place. ☺ For the same reason, you have to *catch* someone’s attention.

And the same goes for people on the move: “*I tried to reach Mr Stephens at his office, but I didn’t catch him before he left*”. Sometimes you have to *catch up* with someone, which means that you must move faster than them to get within range so you can talk.

The verb *catch* can also have a passive sense in relation to things that are thought of as moving: so you might *catch* a cold or a disease, or you might *not catch* what someone says to you.

Did you know?

English support can offer you **native-speaker** translation and proofreading help with not only *English*, but also *Bangla, Bulgarian, Chinese, Czech, Danish, Dutch, Farsi, Finnish, French, German, Hindi, Hungarian, Icelandic, Italian, Japanese, Kurdish, Malay, Nepali, Norwegian, Polish, Portuguese, Rumanian, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Spanish, Swedish, Turkish, Ukrainian* and *Urdu*.

Forecast and predict

These two verbs mean more or less the same thing. The first can also be a noun, while the noun from the latter is *prediction*. So when we talk about the weather forecast, we often say something like: “*The weather forecast predicts a day of blazing sunshine*”.

But isn’t this a bit like saying “*the forecast forecasts*” or “*the prediction predicts*”? That would clearly be not only redundant, but also clumsy. Must we then say, “*The weather forecast is for a day of blazing sunshine*” or can we say “*The weather forecast promises...*”?

On the next page, we look at another case of redundancy readers have raised...

Don’t forget:

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Tel. 33 91 98 00 or e-mail: forum2008@kommunikationogsprog.dk

See you there!

The reason why is because...

Hi Lawrence and thanks. Always interesting, but I stumbled over a phrase in there. Can you say that "a reason is because"? In your newsletter, it says: "...The reason for the lack of government action is because there is little any democratic government can do to make people take courses they don't want to..."

Or should it say: "The reason... is that..."? In Denmark, saying "Grunden er fordi..." would be harsh and plain wrong in my ears.

How delicately put! My second correspondent was a little less indirect:

Hi Lawrence –

"The reason for the lack of government action is because there is..." – I have been accustomed to a higher standard from you. "Worrying about what you can't do anything about" – sloppier than what would be expected. Perhaps the publishing of this issue was pushed a bit into the premature?

Hmm! Perhaps. So let me say right from the start that both correspondents have a point. These sentences are not as elegant as they might be. I expect my second correspondent would prefer "Worrying about *things* you can't do anything about", and in retrospect I think I would too, but it must be said that there is nothing actually wrong with the sentence I wrote, in which "what" plays a perfectly reasonable grammatical role, whereas in my correspondent's joke, "sloppier than *what* would be expected", it has no role whatsoever, is entirely superfluous, and should not be used.

But what about "a reason is because"? Well, there certainly is redundancy, and it might have been better if I had written either "The reason for the lack of government action is *that* there is..." or "The lack of government action is *because* there is...", but the plain fact of the matter is that there are 999,000 hits in Google for "reason is because", and that takes no account of all the cases with words in between "reason" and "is because", as in my case.

Now, quite a few of these hits are for sites explaining how the construction is "incorrect", but they all agree it is widely used. And, indeed, this is abundantly clear from all the other hits. My own view is that when grammarians have to put a lot of effort into explaining why we should *not* say something almost everybody *does* say, it is probably a sign that the language has moved on. A closely related example is the expression "the reason why", which is now established idiom.

So, I agree it is not elegant, and I think it is probably wise to avoid it – if only so your Danish and Norwegian friends don't start believing you are losing your grip – but it's actually quite normal at all levels of speech and writing, included edited writing, and I suspect the theologians of grammar will be avidly defending it within half a century. ☺

Roskilde City Council and the Viking Ship Museum invite you to a giant

WELCOME-HOME PARTY FOR THE SEA STALLION

10:00 AM: Viking Ship Museum opens with a Viking Market, and the four other Skuldelev Viking ship reconstructions sail off to meet the *Sea Stallion* in Roskilde Fjord

2:00 PM: *The Sea Stallion from Glendalough* arrives in the Museum harbour to an official welcome

For the full programme, see www.vikingskibsmuseet.dk and (in Danish only) www.roskilde.dk

See you there!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk

Your natural language partner

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 47 – September 2008

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Dear friends

There are a number of events of particular interest this month. **Iværk08**, Denmark's biggest trade fair for small and newly started businesses takes place on 12–13th September. The **Copenhagen Language Festival** organised by the Copenhagen Esperanto Association is on 21st September. And the **Communication and Language Forum 2008** organised by the *Union of Communication and Language Professionals* is on 25th September. See details on each event later in this issue.

Helping organisations in Denmark communicate with the rest of the world

Like many other translation companies, *English support* helps companies communicate their message to the rest of the world. We translate primarily into English, but our network of native-speaker language consultants covers 30 languages in all. So a lot of companies who want their websites, brochures or other materials in both Danish and English, or perhaps in several languages, come to us for what we call “one-stop shopping”. One company for all your translation work.



The *Sea Stallion* in Roskilde Fjord on 9 August.
Photo: Werner Karrasch,
Viking Ship Museum, Roskilde

This service is particularly important for small businesses, which is why we will be at the **Iværk08** trade fair. But there are a great many other organisations and institutions who have the same need for high-grade multi-lingual communication. For example, we translated all the reports of the voyage of the Viking Ship Museum's longship reconstruction, the *Sea Stallion*, as it sailed back home from Dublin this year. And we supply six-language translations to *Roskilde Business College* for prospective international students from eastern Europe, the Indian sub-continent, and China.

Helping scientists in Denmark communicate with the rest of the world

This year's *Communication and Language Forum* is focused on the communication of knowledge. Perhaps the most obvious and direct communication of new knowledge takes place in scientific papers, and *English support* is very heavily committed to helping scientists in Denmark produce better scientific papers.

To that end we not only proofread and edit a lot of scientific papers for researchers, but we also run courses in *Scientific Writing* at Denmark's Technical University (both in Lyngby and at Risø) and for Copenhagen University's Faculty of Life Sciences.

The courses are based on our pamphlet, *How to write a scientific paper*, and they motivate researchers to think in new ways about scientific papers and to express themselves in a clear and simple structure and style. And they have proved extremely popular.

You can order the pamphlet direct from www.englishsupport.dk.

How to write a scientific paper

Lawrence White

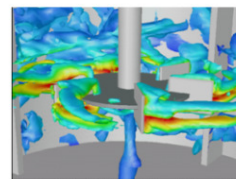


Figure 1: Ideal visualization of gradients for the paper writing in author's brain

A brief practical guide to writing scientific papers in English,
written for people who do not have English as their mother tongue

Arrive at and come to

These two phrasal verbs got a mention last month in contrast to the verb to *reach*. But it is also worthwhile noting the important difference between them.

Verbs of motion are usually followed by the preposition *to*: you *go to* the bank, *come to* a party, *run to* the railway station, *move to* another house, *fly to* Moscow, and so on. And the same applies to phrases implying movement: you take the bus *to* the bank, drive your car *to* the party, etc.

But in each case, you *arrive at* the bank, *arrive at* the party, and so on. The focus with *arrive* is on where you are *after* the movement rather than on the motion itself.

Moreover, the idea of movement can be combined with other prepositions: you can *go into* the bank, *go up to* a person, *climb on to* a table, and so on. If we used *arrive* in these cases, we would have to say: you *arrive in* the bank, *arrive at* the person, and *arrive on* the table.

So the verb *to arrive* is best not thought of as a verb of motion at all, even though if you *arrive* somewhere it means you were in motion just before you arrived... ☺

Get to

Note: The phrasal verb *to get to* is used both as a verb of motion and in the sense of *to arrive at*.

So you might ask a policeman how to *get to* Trafalgar Square (i.e. how to *move* from here *to* there). But when he has explained how to do that, he might say that you will know when you *get to* (i.e. *arrive at*) Trafalgar Square because you will see Lord Nelson's statue and a lot of pigeons.

At with aims, arms and looks

Where the subject of the verb does not move, though something else may, we often use *at*. So we *aim at* a goal, *shoot at* a target, *look at* a person, and so on.

Again we can make a contrast. If I point *towards* something, I point in its general direction, whereas if I point *at* it, I am being more precise.

To and towards

In English, we speak of the plane *to* London and the boat *to* Greenwich. We can also say the plane *for* London and the boat *for* Greenwich. But we do not normally say the plane *towards* London or the boat *towards* Greenwich.

The word *towards* is used for the *direction in which you face or point* something. It does not imply either the actual or intended *completion* of a journey or movement, which is usually the sense we want with boats and planes and other means of transport. But, of course, you can turn your boat *towards* the shore and your plane *towards* London (i.e. change the direction in which it is pointing).

"Language is the key to inter-cultural dialogue"

COPENHAGEN LANGUAGE FESTIVAL 2008

11 AM to 9 PM, Sunday 21 September, in Kulturhuset Dorteavej 61, 2400 Copenhagen NV

Information: <http://www.sprogfestival.dk>

Tel. 39 89 10 13 or e-mail: chatterjeebetty@hotmail.com

See you there!

From the workshop...

History and story

These two words have a common origin, but are used quite differently in English. While *history* is usually meant to be what actually happened, a *story* is usually fictional. Where both words *could* be used (as in “*the story of Buckingham Palace*”), the choice of the latter usually implies a more popular or gossipy account of “goings-on” rather than a strictly factual account.

Safety and security

These two words do not have a common origin, but are often just one concept in other languages. They do *overlap* in meaning (e.g. “*All the security at airports nowadays is for our own safety*”), but they are two quite separate concepts in English.

Security and the adjective *secure* relate to the avoidance of criminal intrusion or violence (whether against a person or property). The verb to *secure* can mean little more than to take possession of something.

Safety and the adjective *safe* relate more to the avoidance of personal injury or illness. So *safety* and *security* can conflict: the *safety* of people attending a discotheque may require that the emergency exit doors remain unlocked, while the *security* of the premises may lead to them being locked.

So the people who guard premises are often referred to as “security”, while the “safety officer” is the person who tries to ensure “safety at work”.

Humour and mood

In modern English, *humour* (US: *humor*) and *humorous* are related to being funny (in the sense of making people laugh), but there are a few expressions that preserve the older meaning of a *state of mind* or *mood*, e.g. if you are *in a bad mood*, you might be said to be *out of humour*.

Tip for non-native speakers: Use the word *humour* only in its modern sense!

REMEMBER:

KOMMUNIKATIONS- OG SPROGFORUM 2008

(Communication and Language Forum 2008)

9 AM to 4 PM, Thursday 25 September, in “Ovnhallen”, CBS Copenhagen

Information and booking: <http://www.kommunikationogsprog.dk/Forum>

Tel. 33 91 98 00 or e-mail: forum2008@kommunikationogsprog.dk

See you there!

Farther and further

The comparative form of *far* can be *farther* or *further*, but in modern English the latter form is by far the most common (especially in British English, but also in American English). If used at all, *farther* is only used as an adjective of literal distance.

Further, on the other hand can be used as an adverb (e.g. “*He further annoyed me by being drunk at the time*”) meaning *additionally*. It can even be a verb – meaning to *promote* (e.g. “*He was just furthering his own interests*”).

Farthest and furthest

With the superlative forms, US English tends to prefer the former and British English the latter, although the preferences are not quite so clear cut as with the comparative forms.

Further and furthermore

Some people use the word *further* in the sense of *furthermore*. I do not recommend this usage for non-native speakers, because it is so easy to use it in the wrong place. ☺

So if you mean *furthermore*, use *furthermore*.

Where was the Danish Government?

When the *Sea Stallion* came home to Roskilde, fifteen thousand people came to the Viking Ship Museum to welcome the ship and crew home after the long voyage from Dublin. And there were official speeches of welcome from Poul Lindor Nielsen, the mayor of Roskilde, Dr Martin Mansergh, TD, Irish Minister of State at the Department of Finance and the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism, and of course Tinna Damgård-Sørensen, the Director of the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde.

Notable by their absence was any representative of the Danish Government.

Ask people round the world what they know about Denmark, and the chances are they will mention two things: the Mohammad cartoon crisis and the *Sea Stallion*. As Henrik Kastoft, a communication consultant with the UN, put it, the *Sea Stallion* is a 30-metre long piece of sailing public diplomacy. In fact, he suggested it should be financed by the Foreign Ministry! Hundreds of thousands of people all over the world followed this two-year project, and the BBC made a two-hour documentary on it, which has recently been shown to millions of viewers all across Europe.

Yet the surprising fact of the matter is that the Irish Government contributed *ten times* as much to the project as the Danish Government, that private foundations in Denmark also played a much more significant role, and that marine archaeology in Denmark is desperately short of public funding.

Research and innovation

Unfortunately, the same is true of research in general. Those whose job it is to decide these things tell me that the lack of funds means that at least as many good research projects get turned down as are given grants. This not only a terrible waste, but it means that researchers often spend a lot of time competing for limited funds instead of on research!

Another area of waste is in the field of new businesses. Most collapse within the first two years because starting up in business can be tough, even when the business idea is good. Free business consultancy support for the first year would probably save a lot of trouble for all concerned.

It really is time the Government put more money behind all the talk about the importance of knowledge and innovation for Denmark's future!

Come and support innovation at Denmark's biggest trade fair for start-up businesses

IVÆRK08

Friday and Saturday, 12 and 13 September 2008, in Forum Copenhagen

Practical Information: www.ivaerk.dk
Tel. 24 40 13 79 or e-mail: info@ivaerk.dk

English support will have a stand (no. 409) in the HR area.

See you there!

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk
Your natural language partner

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 48 – October/November 2008

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Dear friends

Turnover last quarter was up by 12% over the previous quarter, and this coming quarter promises the highest turnover yet. This does not mean that we're rich, but it does mean that more and more people are using our services, which is very positive. It also means we are very busy. So, for the first time ever, we didn't manage to get this newsletter out at all last month. Sorry about that folks! We will try not to do it again – promise. After all, our readers are important ambassadors for the company's value, just like our customers and our freelance partners. We value you all. ☺

We've been doing a lot of teaching lately...

English support walks on three (main) legs: proofreading (including copy-editing), translation and teaching. The latter is looming rather large at the moment!

We are running courses in English for *administrative staff* and for *technical staff* at Denmark's Technical University (DTU) both in Lyngby and at Risø, a special course for DTU Informatics staff, and courses in *Scientific Writing* at both DTU and Copenhagen University's Faculty of Life Sciences. We have also run one-day introduction courses in *Scientific Writing* at DTU and made contributions on the same theme on courses for new PhD students at Copenhagen University.

The University College of Engineering in Copenhagen has asked us to run brush-up courses for their staff, we are starting a special course for DTU Human Resources staff, and we recently started two new courses in *Scientific Writing* at DTU. All these courses will continue into the new year. November–December we are running a completely new course we call *Talking Science* for PhD students at Copenhagen University. Finally, there is yet another course in *Scientific Writing* we are running for the Danish Association of Masters and PhDs (*Dansk Magisterforening*).

Fortunately, we've got Michael holding the fort at the office when Claire and I are out teaching, so we can still answer enquiries. ☺

But with all those courses in *Scientific Writing*, we've had to print extra copies of *How to write a scientific paper* to cope with demand! So we've got some in stock now if you'd like one.

As the Prime Minister was saying, only the other day...

I was fortunate enough to have about a one-minute conversation with Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen, who spoke at a business meeting I attended the other day. I told him how *English support* helps researchers at Danish universities write better scientific papers. The PM talks a lot about how important research is for Denmark's future. He took a copy of *How to write a scientific paper* and he said: **"That's just what we need!"**

So now we are looking forward to a really big order from Helge Sander (Minister for Science, Technology and Innovation). Mind you, he got one last time I saw *him*, too... ☺

Note to the Minister: *Order 800 or more and you get 'em HALF PRICE.*



Although, despite and in spite of

The fundamental meaning of these words is very similar, but the way they are used is not. The vital difference lies in the fact that *although* is a conjunction, while *despite* and *in spite of* are prepositions.

So the latter can be used (interchangeably) in front of nouns and gerunds, e.g. “*In spite of the rain, she cycled to work*” or “*Despite being angry, he spoke very quietly*”.

But *although* introduces a subordinate clause, e.g. “*Although it was raining, she cycled to work*” or “*Although he was angry, he spoke very quietly*”.

If you wish to use *despite* or *in spite of* to introduce a subordinate clause, you have to add *the fact that*, so that the sentence becomes: “*In spite of the fact that he was angry, he spoke very quietly*”. This rather longwinded construction is quite common and preserves the prepositional character of *despite* and *in spite of*.

BusinessHouse.dk

For office space in Roskilde contact Johnny Schäffer, tel. 70 27 89 10 or e-mail johnny@businesshouse.dk.

Options currently available:

Your own 15-square-metre office
Time-share office one day a week
Rent-a-desk.

Although and though

In speech and informal writing, people sometimes use *though* instead of *although* to introduce a subordinate clause, as in: “*Though he was angry, he spoke very quietly*”, and this would often be shortened to “*Though angry, he spoke very quietly*”. *TIP*: When the meaning is the same as *in spite of the fact that*, always use *although*, or the stronger *even though*, with a subordinate clause.

The word *though* is more correctly used as a contrastive (like the stronger *but*), as in: “*He gets on with most people, though not with James*”.

This is seen most clearly when it is used as a contrastive adverb (like *however*), as in: “*I wouldn't stake my life on it, though*”.

Want a job in Sweden?

English–Danish translator

One-year renewable contract

Get details from *English support*

As though

The combination *as though* (like *even though* and *although*) is a conjunction and introduces a subordinate clause, e.g. “*He was smiling as though he hadn't a care in the world*”. Its meaning is virtually indistinguishable from *as if*.

Implied clauses

English often uses a past participle or a gerund or even an adjective instead of a clause. We had an example above in the sentence “*Though angry, he spoke very quietly*”, in which the words “*though angry*” substitute for “*although he was angry*”. In *News & Tips* No. 25, we looked at how the gerund or *ING*-form can replace a whole clause, as in “*They spotted Jack walking down the street*”, in which the gerund substitutes for “*as he was walking down the street*”.

What is often less understood is the way a past participle can do the same. For instance, in the sentence, “*International courses are courses taught in English*”, the word *taught* substitutes for “*which are taught in English*”. When the past participle plays this role, it comes *after* the noun it refers to, whereas when it plays the role of an adjective, it comes *before* the noun it modifies.

For example, in the sentence “*The completed report was sent to head office*”, the past participle *completed* plays the role of an adjective, whereas in the sentence “*The study performed shows that DNA can be copied in this way*”, the past participle substitutes for the clause “*which was performed*” and it must therefore come after the noun the implied relative clause refers back to.

Big, large and great

These three adjectives have overlapping meanings, but must be carefully distinguished because they are used in different contexts:

Used to modify:	BIG	LARGE	GREAT	Examples
Amounts	No	Yes	Yes	a large amount of money, a great number of cases
Countables	Yes	Yes	Yes	a big tree, a large rock, a great meal
Uncountables	No	No	Yes	great beauty, great dignity, great progress
Feelings	No	No	Yes	great anger, great expectations, great sorrow
Sudden feelings	Yes	No	Yes	a big surprise, a great shock
Problems	Yes	No	Yes	a big problem, a great threat

NOTE: The word *great* is often used to say that something is important or impressive in some other way than its size, e.g. “The **great** man was not very **big**” or “How was the party? – **Great!**” In fact, this usage is the most common in modern English.

Largely and greatly

There is no adverbial form of *big*, and the adverb *largely* has come to mean the same as *mostly* or *chiefly*, as in “Her warnings went **largely** unheeded” or “Richard was **largely** responsible for the success of the play”. In both cases, the meaning is “mostly, but not entirely”.

The adverb *greatly*, however, retains the full force of the meaning of *great*, as in “Michael **greatly** enjoyed the concert” or “Susan was **greatly** upset by the news”.

This difference is also reflected in adverbial phrases containing the adjectival forms; contrast “to a **large** extent” with “to a **great** extent”.

Most and mostly

Someone invited me to a meeting the other day and added I would be “**mostly** welcome”. What he meant to say (I think) was that I would be “**most** welcome”. The word *mostly* contains the idea of *not entirely*, whereas the word *most* is used to make the superlative forms of many adjectives, as in “*most beautiful*” or “*most famous*”.

Do you write scientific papers?

“How to write a scientific paper” is an excellent guide – even for the experienced author of scientific articles and reports. It is easy to read and gives good advice about the structure of such papers, the writing process, and a number of the many linguistic traps that authors who do not have English as their mother tongue tend to fall into.

Kurt Lauridsen, MSc, PhD
Danish Decommissioning, Risø

Published by **English support**. Order it now from your local
bookshop or direct from www.englishsupport.dk

How to write a scientific paper

Lawrence White

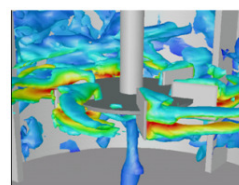


Figure 1. Global maximization of gradients for the paper writing in author's brain

A best practice guide to writing scientific papers in English,
written for people who do not have English as their mother tongue

The best trade fair we've been to so far!

The thing about *Iværk08* is that there is no question that the stands are the most important attraction. And, with more than 4000 visitors, this trade fair for small businesses and self-employed people on 13–14 September was clearly a great success.

It was the first time *English support* has taken part, but it won't be the last! We met a great many potential customers, both among visitors and other exhibitors, and a lot of interest from other language professionals.



The Communication and Language Forum 2008

We also had a stand at the *Communication and Language Forum*, where the focus this year was on the communication of knowledge. The forum is organised by the Union of Communication and Language Professionals.

Knowledge only has value insofar as it is communicated in such a way that it can be used by others – a point made by Peter Kastberg from Aarhus University at the Forum. The importance of language and communication for the “knowledge-based” society should be clear for all.

Unfortunately, the final discussion about whether English is enough (or good enough) in Denmark for the communication of knowledge to the wider world focused on how many languages Danes should learn in school. Thomas Harder argued for multi-lingual standards to be maintained, while Lone Dybkjær thought English was sufficient (though she would prefer Esperanto) as a kind of “technical language” – without all the culture, as she put it, such as “outside water pipes”!

Neither speaker seemed to grasp the idea that there are native speakers of other languages living in Denmark who could help communicate its knowledge to the rest of the world. The multi-cultural society is already here and gives tremendous opportunities if looked at in the right way.

If the Danish Tax Office, for instance, wants to communicate to the Arabic-speaking population, the chances are that they will do the logical thing and get a native speaker of Arabic to translate the Danish. But unfortunately this is not what they do in the case of English, although there are rather more expert native speakers of English in Denmark than of Arabic.

Part of the explanation for this is the argument repeated by Harder that “if I want my car fixed, I choose a qualified mechanic”. He used it to argue for Danish qualified language people. The implication is that the best kind of “language mechanic” you can get is one with a Danish qualification in that language.

Apparently, getting expert *native-speaker* help is only something you do as a last resort (like the Tax Office), or if you can't find anyone with a Danish qualification...

We will continue to argue for the importance of making use of native-speaker language skills to improve Danish schoolbooks, websites, scientific papers, etc., etc., despite the sadly narrow “little Denmark” views on foreign languages represented by Dybkjær and Harder.

Best wishes

Lawrence White

LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk

Your natural language partner

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 49 – December 2008

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Dear friends

We want to thank all our readers for your support and your help in making this fifth year of *English support* the best yet!

The work keeps coming in and we are very conscious of the fact that your recommendation is a major factor in our success. So a big THANK YOU to all of you who have told your friends, work colleagues, bosses and others about us, and a very MERRY CHRISTMAS to you all!



Come and help us celebrate!

English support will be holding an open house arrangement to celebrate our fifth birthday.

The company officially started on 1st January 2004, so strictly speaking our fifth birthday falls on New Year's Day.

But we had this sneaking feeling not many people would be able to come then, so we are holding it three weeks later on **Thursday 22nd January** (by which time they should be over the worst of it).

The programme will include welcome drinks, a little talk on the past five years, a buffet "high tea" (that means standing up in this case) with lots of very English things to eat and drink, a bit of entertainment from "the office staff" (and maybe others), and finally closing remarks on the next five years, before we finish.

So we are very much hoping you'll come and join us! ☺

OPEN HOUSE

An afternoon's entertainment starring

Claire Clausen

Michael de Laine

Lawrence White

(and hopefully others, too)

on

Thursday 22nd January

roughly between the hours of 3 and 6 pm

at

English support

Business House

Jernbanegade 23 B

Roskilde

Denmark

(that's the bit sticking out of the top of Germany)

Please let us know you're coming!

I'm sure there's a moral in there somewhere...

A reader drew my attention to this rather nice story that appeared on the website of the BBC.



All road signs and other public notices in Wales appear in both English and Welsh. So when officials at Swansea Council wanted to put up a road sign barring heavy lorries from a road near a supermarket, they sent off an e-mail asking for the Welsh translation.

A reply came back in Welsh, and they duly set it up on the sign.

Unfortunately, what it actually said was: "*I am not in the office at the moment. Please send any work to be translated*".

From the workshop...

If you did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. It's FREE. Get on the mailing list via the website!

Regard and regards

The fundamental meaning of the verb, *to regard*, is *to look at*, as in “*He regarded her with deep attention*”, but this usage is not very common nowadays, and should be used with extreme care by non-native speakers.

Much more common is the *metaphorical* usage with *as*. Here it means something like *believe to be true*, as in “*He regarded her as beautiful*”. This usage can also be followed by a gerund as in “*She regarded him as having little to say*”. In other words, *as* here is a preposition.

In the same way, the noun, *regard*, is almost only used metaphorically, as in “*His regard was important for me*”, meaning that I wanted him to think well of me. The same idea is present in expressions like “*She was held in high regard*”. And when we say “*Give my regards to*” someone, we are asking for our best wishes and/or greetings to be passed on.

This latter is the sense in the expression, *Best regards*, (with which we might end an informal letter), or the phrase *with (kind) regards to*, which we might use in a letter to send regards to someone.

But please note the quite different expression, *with regard to*, which is a way of referring to something, as in “*With regard to your second point...*”. This is quite formal language, but is usually to be preferred to *regarding*, which (like *concerning*) is much overused by non-native speakers, as noted in *News & Tips* No. 20.

Another expression meaning the same is *as regards*, as in “*As regards your second point...*”, but I cannot recommend it, because it can easily sound rather contemptuous.

Clear, evident and obvious

An explanation, a proof, or a solution can be described as *clear*, *evident* or *obvious* (in the sense of *easy to see or understand*). However, while the word *clear* is reasonably neutral, the other two, especially the word *obvious*, can sound arrogant.

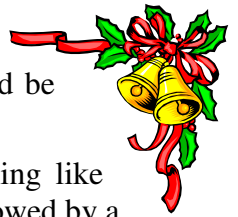
Evidently and obviously

That which is *evident* is also *obvious* (in the sense of *easy to see or understand*), but the adverbial forms, *evidently* and *obviously*, are used in slightly different ways. While the latter contains all the force of the adjective, *evidently* implies the revelation or exposure of something that was *not* obvious earlier. For instance, while Bernie Madoff *evidently* had been lying about his investment strategy for years, he had not been doing so *obviously*. In other words, *evidently* has the sense of “*it turns out to be so, but was not always obvious*”.

Conclusively and in conclusion

These two expressions are different. While *in conclusion* merely introduces the last thing you are going to say, the adjective *conclusive* and the adverb *conclusively* are used when describing a decisive and convincing proof of something.

So while the *concluding* evidence is just evidence given at the end (*in conclusion*), the *conclusive* evidence is what puts an end to all doubt (*conclusively*). So your conclusion may or may not be conclusive. ☺



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Options currently available:

Your own 15-square-metre office
Time-share office, one day a week
Rent-a-desk



From the workshop...

A majority of and most of

At first sight, it might seem that these two are the same, but in modern British English *a majority of* is only used with countables. So while we can speak of *a majority of* people, cats or pot plants, we must use *most* when referring to uncountables, as in *most of* the money, information or paint.

Unfortunately, many non-native speakers of English seem very fond of *a majority of*, which is can sound odd with uncountables, is longer than *most of*, and is not necessary at all.

Divide, separate and part

In modern English, the verb *to part* does not mean the same as *to divide*.

The subject of the verb *to divide* is usually the person or thing causing the division, as in the maxim, *divide and conquer*. So you might *divide* a pizza into four pieces. The subject of the verb *to part* is usually at least one of the things that get separated, as in “*They parted good friends*” and “*She did not want to part with the money*”. So when Shakespeare said “*Parting is such sweet sorrow*”, he was not thinking of the joys of cutting up the loved one into small bits!

Note how the verb *to part* also implies the *emotive value* of the togetherness that is ending. When you leave a place, the usual verb is *depart* rather than *part*.

But there are exceptions to these patterns. So in Parliament we speak of the House (of Commons) *dividing* on a question. And a dress might *part* at the seams when you wash it. On the other hand these exceptions are few and far between, and in the latter case, the expression *come apart* would be more common.

The verb *to separate* can have either sense. So you can *separate* the sheep from the goats, and couples can *separate* (with no implications about emotions). This latter is the reason we use the word *separated* to describe couples that no longer live together.

Back-up you don't have to think about

One thing everybody who uses a computer has to worry about is what happens if (when) the thing stops working.

You know, one day the screen is just black and you can't recover your hard disk. So you need to take back-ups, right? But do you? And if you do, how often? And is it enough?

The scope for sleepless nights is enormous, especially if you are self-employed and all your data is on one machine. *So take back-ups!*

Xmas gift ideas



And the neat way to do it is over the Internet.

There are several such systems. I use one called Carbonite. It starts automatically and works quietly and continuously in the background, backing up your changed data. Everything is encrypted before it leaves your machine and is therefore safe in more than one way.

And, no, the system does not slow down your computer or your internet connection. Nor does it cost the earth ...

The perfect Xmas gift for the scientist in your life!

You can find out more and order the booklet on writing scientific papers published by *English support* at:

www.englishsupport.dk.



How to write a scientific paper

Lawrence White

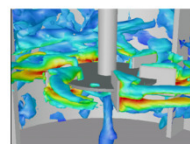


Figure 1: A cross-section of a planet showing the internal structure.

A brief guide to writing scientific papers in English, written for people who do not have English as their mother tongue.

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A bit of a challenge!

Hi Lawrence

I am interested in the word "challenge" as a noun in a sense of testing abilities. I couldn't find that in your index section, so could you please tell me which is correct: "answering a challenge" or "accepting a challenge" or "going along with a challenge" or something else?

Well, all these are possible in certain contexts. If someone challenges you to a game of chess, you can *answer the challenge* by *accepting the challenge* (= saying Yes). In this sense you can be said to *go along with the challenge*. ☺

But I think what you are probably after is the more abstract sense of *challenge* as in "being self-employed is a challenge". The usual phrase here is to *meet the challenge* as in "She met the challenge of being self-employed with her characteristic courage".

University names and job titles

Dear Lawrence

I always enjoy reading your News & Tips.

In your latest edition No. 48, you mention DTU where I'm employed. Just for your information, DTU's English name is the Technical University of Denmark. Please see our website: <http://www.dtu.dk/english.aspx>.

I also have a question. DTU used to translate the title "rektor" as "rector". In DTU's latest organisation chart, I recently discovered that the title "rector" has been replaced by "President". Please see: http://www.dtu.dk/English/About_DTU/Organization.aspx. Is it better to use "President" than "Rector"?

As titles may be quite difficult to translate, I suggest that you write about university titles/titles in companies in one of your future editions of News & Tips.

Thank you for your comments. Yes, I know the official translation of DTU is the *Technical University of Denmark*, but it always looks so odd to follow that with DTU; it looks like it should be TUD. ☺ The more direct translation (*Denmark's Technical University*) is therefore less confusing, and I commend it to DTU.

As an employee of DTU, you must of course continue to use the official version, but I am in a different situation. I also refer to Copenhagen University (whose official title is the University of Copenhagen) and Oxford University (whose official title is the University of Oxford), and so on.

With regard to your second question, "president" is definitely *not* to be preferred to "rector". It sounds like the head of an American corporation. But this is part of a wider (still informal) debate that is going on at DTU on whether to use British or American English. Other things being equal, it always seems best to me for Danish and other European organisations to use British English, which is after all the European form of English.

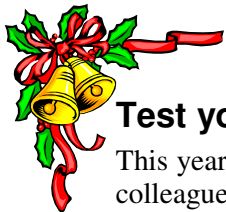
Thank you for your suggestion about job titles. As you say, it is a difficult (and touchy) subject, so naturally we will be happy to do so! ☺ On the other hand, it will also require quite a bit of research.

Best wishes to all our readers
for Christmas and the New Year!

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Your natural language partner



Christmas quiz

Test your English... (News & Tips Nos. 1–49)

This year, I thought I'd give you a challenge – which you are welcome to pass on to your family, friends, colleagues, competitors and worst enemies! Can you improve the English in the sentences below? They all have at least one mistake, and most answers are in the issue of *News & Tips* with the same number. ☺

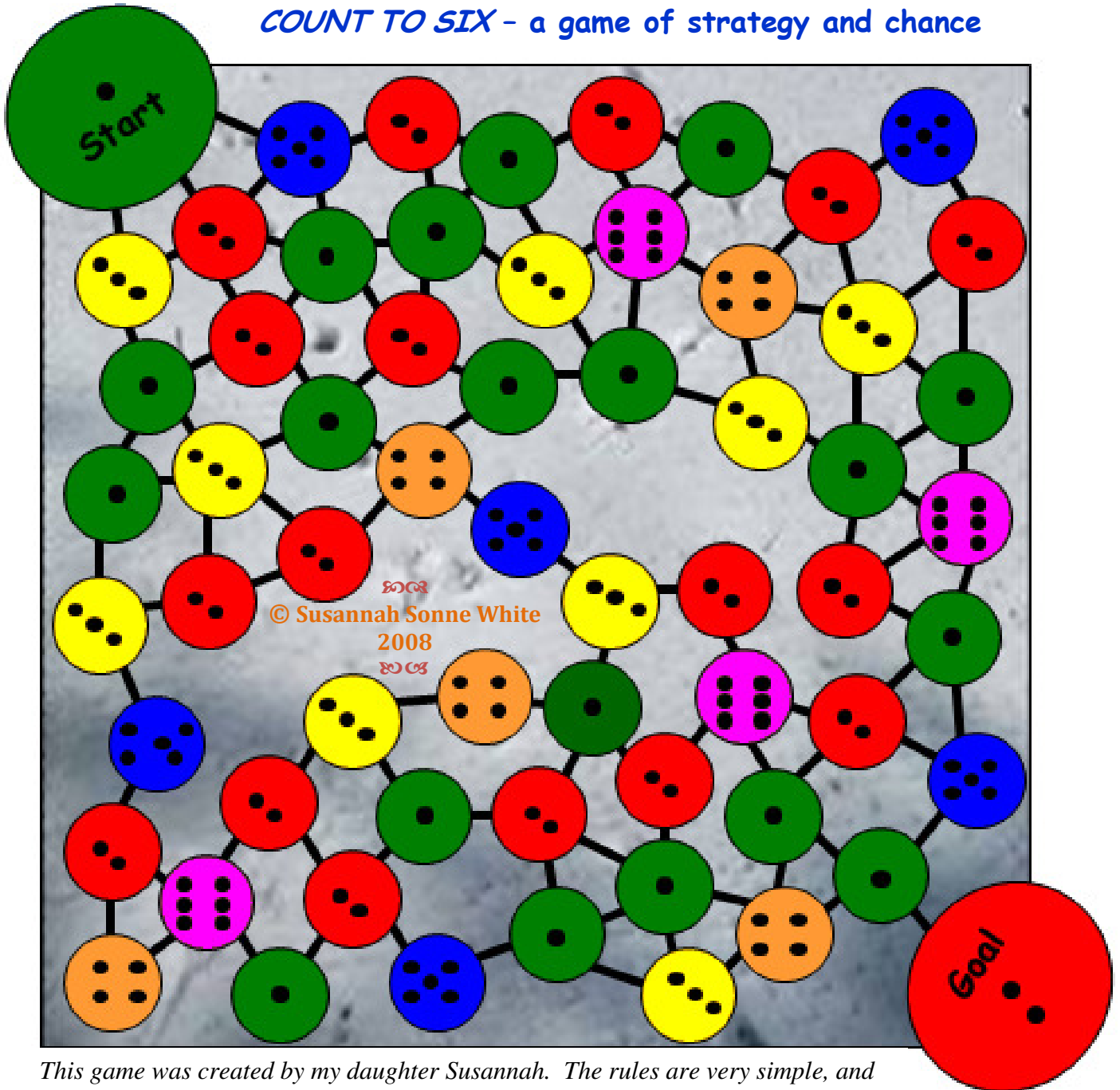
1. We would like to inform that we are specialised in English.
2. We will be finish in six month.
3. The people for who he worked thought he was good at his job.
4. The news are that a number of cases of piracy has been reported.
5. The economics of the agreement mean that the staff gets a pay rise every year.
6. I work hard at the moment, because we are having a lot of customers.
7. I look forward to hear from you but will revert if I do not.
8. He claimed, that the Sun is about ninety-three millions of miles away.
9. She saw an add in the paper the other day for a film with mr. Bean.
10. I am out of office untill 2nd January.
11. The staff drinks all kind of beer after work.
12. A part of the apprentices should stay on after completing their apprenticeship.
13. There are things you should buy, like for an example an umbrella, in the case that it rains.
14. Were where the boxes whit a length, width and heigth of 30 cm?
15. While in Paris he had the possibility to visit the Louvre.
16. We hold considerable knowledge and experience about Danish society.
17. Be aware that I have lived in London for many years before I moved to Denmark.
18. I would appreciate if you would let me know about your experience within teaching.
19. If you do not have an education as a book-keeper, you may loose your job.
20. Please notice that the different requirements are according to the regulations.
21. He missed having a job because he failed passing his exams.
22. To a considerable extend, wind energy can substitute fossil-fuel energy.
23. I would appreciate to hear from you whether you are capable to do this job.
24. He was looking forward to see her although he had difficulty to understand her English.
25. She suggested to drink a toast to success.
26. A substantial amount of paintings was stolen.
27. He properly worked in close corporation with someone in the company.
28. I saw an environmental friendly radio last week – isn't the progress wonderful!
29. I spent yesterday playing golf, drinking beer and talking about the meaning of life.
30. In the last years, I have had my own company.
31. In the hereafter, You will find a description of the cottage.
32. After this course, you will have knowledge on all our products with prizes as low as £10.
33. He held a party on Saturday with few friends.
34. The principle was wearing his daily clothes at the time.
35. When he is coming, tell him I'm not in!
36. If you are going to Greenland, make sure you take some isolating clothing with you.
37. If I may advice you, I suggest you check the prizes carefully before you buy anything.
38. The transport company had a series of different kinds of vehicle for hire.
39. Mozart was only brilliant.
40. I thought the tea tasted well, and I said so.
41. Please write your name in the top of the sheet.
42. Is she still dependent of him?
43. It is unpolite to speak like that.
44. My loss of balance was the affect of drinking too much beer.
45. Three-quarters of the city were destroyed in the earthquake.
46. Did you reach the train all right the other day?
47. You shoot to a target and hopefully hit it in the middle.
48. He kept smiling despite he was very angry.
49. She parted the Christmas cake into 12 equal pieces.

**MERRY
CHRISTMAS!**

Christmas game

If you did not receive this newsletter by e-mail, you will need to subscribe if you want it again. It's FREE. Get on the mailing list via the website!

COUNT TO SIX - a game of strategy and chance



This game was created by my daughter Susannah. The rules are very simple, and it can be played by as many people as can sit around the "board" – just so long as they can all COUNT TO SIX... ☺

Each player has a counter. Start at *Start* and try to be the first to get to the *Goal*. And there are SIX rules:

1. Take turns in throwing a dice.
2. Move the same number of places as shown on the dice.
3. You must end on a circle with the same number too.
4. You may not step on the same circle twice in a move.
5. You may not use circles occupied by others.
6. If you cannot move, you go back to *Start*.

Have fun!

English support

(6)

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