

N B: 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. 14 – December 2005

© English support 2005

Dear friends

We had 24 participants at the seminar on **9th November at SDU in Kolding**, which everybody seems to have enjoyed – “it ended too soon” was one comment. There is a short report on the web site at <http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/seminar.htm>. The next seminar is back in Roskilde again on **30 January at Heinzes (Boghandel og Videncenter)** almost opposite the main entrance of the railway station. The seminar is from 4 – 6 PM and costs DKK 60, but is free for students.

The growing network of collaborating partners

At the time of writing, *English support* has collaboration agreements with nearly 50 translators, proofreaders, copywriters, layout experts, and other specialists. Languages covered by native speakers include Danish, English, French, German, Hungarian, Russian, Serbo-Croat, Spanish and Swedish, with more to come. One advantage is that if your customer wants a service you can't supply (you are ill, too busy, don't speak the language, etc.), *you don't have to say No*. You can keep the customer and pass the work on to *English support*. And you get work from us too!

The expansion has been so rapid that it's hard to keep up! And our informal network is even broader, including for instance: accounting, computing, engineering and legal expertise.

The team of native English-speakers is now 10-strong, including two North Americans. All this means that there are very few conceivable jobs that are too big for us to tackle.

*If YOU would like a collaboration agreement with **English support**, please get in touch!*

The Hotline service gets hot!

For a long time, it seemed as if the Hotline service might not catch on, but now more and more people are waking up to the possibilities it offers. Just as you may sometimes need immediate support with your computer, the *English support* Hotline service offers you immediate support with your English.

There's a word you don't know how to pronounce, or a word or expression you can't think of, and the dictionary doesn't help? You ring or e-mail us and we give you an answer straightaway (normally within 24-hours). You receive an invoice at the end of each quarter. We only charge for the total time it has taken to deal with your queries, but there is a minimum quarterly charge of 20 euros (or DKK 120).

You must register to receive this service, but for language professionals, the benefits are obvious.

We wish all our readers

A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR!

Please turn over!

Speaking of Christmas...

Did you know that the old (pre-Christian) words *Yule* and *Yuletide* still exist in English and still appear on some Xmas cards? But I'm afraid Danes can't get away with wishing their English friends "Good Yule!" – that particular expression simply does not exist.

And one other concession to Yuletide. The British are crazy about Christmas crackers, which usually contain a silly paper hat, a worthless little plastic "gift", and a piece of thin paper with something like a joke on it. These jokes can be pretty terrible. So in this month's edition of *News & Tips* there is a special "pull-out-and-cut-up" supplement for your amusement. It's a collection of "terrible two-liners" and the idea is that you cut them out and give them to your dinner guests to work out which lines go together... Teachers can try it in a class, too. ☺

Words that often get mixed up

It may seem strange, but there are some English words that are very frequently mixed up, *where* and *were*, for example, and *whit* for *with*. The mistakes stem from insecurity over pronunciation, and the spelling checker doesn't catch them. And then there is *god* for *good*, which can look very strange in English! So these are worth keeping a special eye out for.

Words that often get misspelled

Words that contain "th" or "ht" seem to cause particular havoc. Again it is probably the difficulty non-English speakers have in saying the English "th"-sounds that is the root cause, so watch out for *brighth* instead of *bright*, *eighth* instead of *eighth*, *weighth* instead of *weight*, *lenght* instead of *length*, and so on. In each of these cases, using the spelling checker would help...

The subjunctive

On a heavier note, a reader wrote to ask if I hadn't made a mistake in my last letter to Dee Shields last month when I wrote, in the next to last sentence, "*If I was you, I'd stop pretending that it does...*". Shouldn't it have been "*If I were you...*"?

Now it is true that the subjunctive would be more correct here in formal writing, but in spoken English (including e-mails and other informal letters) the subjunctive is not usual. This is a fairly sure sign that it is in the process of disappearing completely from the language – though it may hang on in the still quite common "*If I were you*". Maybe I'm just a bit ahead of my time. ☺

School book campaign

From this month we are launching a campaign to try and improve the standard of English in our children's school books. Teachers, parents and others who know of books used in schools and colleges for teaching English (and other foreign languages) are invited to let us know the name of each book, the publisher, and where it is used. We hope to check the most widely used books and approach the publishers where there are serious problems.

See the web site for how you can help.

Best wishes
Lawrence White
LW@englishsupport.dk

www. **English support** .dk

Your natural language partner

Xmas supplement

KEY: 1:29, 2:27, 3:7, 4:13, 5:17, 6:9, 8:30, 10:20, 11:16, 12:19, 14:23, 15:25, 18:26, 21:28, 22:24

Terrible two-liners

[English support accepts no responsibility whatsoever for these jokes – their use is entirely at your own risk]

1. What's yellow and always points north?	16. Well, pick them up and roll them right back to her!
2. How do you take a lion's temperature?	17. No, Mummy. The boy in front of me thanked her, and Mrs Jones said, 'Don't mention it' – so I didn't.
3. Last night I had to open the door in my pyjamas.	18. If you don't stop playing those bagpipes, I'll go crazy!
4. Which hand do you use to stir cocoa with?	19. What was I wearing?
5. Jane, did you thank Mrs Jones for the lovely party?	20. Tell him, I can't possibly see him!
6. What did one eye say to the other?	21. Now we're engaged, I hope you'll give me a ring.
7. That's a funny place to have a door.	22. Jennifer, did your father help you with your homework?
8. Why did Robin Hood only steal from the rich?	23. Madam, have you ever seen a squirrel carrying an umbrella?
9. There's something between us that smells.	24. Certainly not! He did it all by himself.
10. The Invisible Man is here to see you.	25. Certainly, sir – but you'll have to wait your turn!
11. That girl over there just rolled her eyes at me.	26. Too late! – I stopped playing five minutes ago.
12. I dreamed I danced with the world's most beautiful woman.	27. Very carefully!
13. Well, personally, I always use a spoon.	28. Yes, of course. What's your number?
14. Would it be all right to wear this fur coat in the rain?	29. A magnetised banana.
15. Waiter! Do you serve nuts?	30. Well, the poor didn't have any money!

Happy Christmas!