

English support
Business House (PO Box 618)
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News & Tips

from

English support

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. **50** – January 2009

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

Dear friends

We enter 2009 with the **50th** issue of this newsletter. The first issue of *News & Tips* came out in November 2004 and, except for the slight hitch in October-November last year, it has appeared every month since. The start of this year also marks 5 years of our existence as a company, which we hope you will come and help us celebrate on **Thursday 22nd January** (see page 4 for more details).



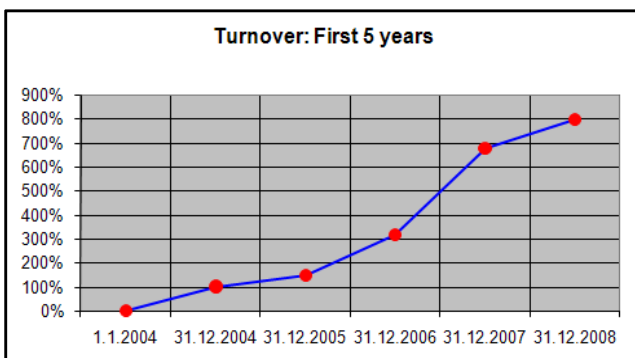
Good, but could do better!

2008 was a good year for *English support*. Turnover was up 17% over the previous year. But this is, of course, a rather modest increase compared with those of the previous two years.

We cannot blame the banking crisis; our customers are extremely loyal and we already have pre-orders and sales this year for more than two-thirds of last year's turnover.

But we do seem to be reaching the limits of what can be achieved with our current company structure.

While our network of native-speaker language experts continues to expand, we have neither been able to make full use of their skills nor develop our website as planned and projected over the last two years. These two things hang together and reflect a time problem.



Vision for 2009

Clearly some changes are necessary. For one thing, I cannot continue to work such long hours as I currently do. On the other hand, this business is as solidly based as any company our size could hope to be in the current economic climate. So changes will be deliberate, gradual, and unfold month by month over the course of the year.

By the end of 2009, the aim is to fulfil the entire range of goals presented in these pages in January over the years. These include a reworking of our web pages so that they more fully represent our teaching activities and the language capacities of our network. Our customers, not least those who sign up for our *Hotline* service (see below), will receive an even better service. Our network of freelancers will experience increasing opportunities to work for us. And you, our readers, will see improvements in this newsletter to make it even more useful in your work.

In short, we want to gear up for continuing rapid growth in our turnover and impact. ☺

Translators, secretaries, teachers ... **English support Hotline** *... helps you get it right!*

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Do and make

There are a lot of expressions that use one or other of these verbs, but the fundamental meaning difference between them is that you *do actions* and you *make things*.

Do

So we use *do* when talking about an *action* of some kind – even if you do not know what it is:

e.g. *What are you doing?*
I like doing nothing.
I don't know what to do
Do something!

And *do* is usually the right word when talking about any kind *work*:

e.g. *Have you done your homework?*
I am not going to do any work today.
I hate doing the cooking and shopping and cleaning and washing up!
Let's get a maid to do all the boring jobs.

Do is also used in a relatively *small* number of common expressions, all concerned with actions:

e.g. *do business*
do good / harm / damage
do one's best / worst
do someone a favour / a good turn / a good deed

Make

Make is usually more concerned with the product than the process:

e.g. *Let's make some bread.*
My grandfather once made me a small sailing-boat.

This can also be seen in some of the very large number of expressions using *make*:

e.g. *make a plan / a noise / a profit / a loss.*

But in many other expressions using *make*, this focus on the product is, shall we say, less clear:

e.g. *make a phone call / a mistake / an offer*
make a suggestion / an arrangement
make an attempt / an effort / a mistake
make an exception / an excuse
make an appointment / a decision
make money / love / war / peace
make the most of something / the best of something, etc., etc., etc.

There is even an expression to *make do*, which means to *put up with having very little*.

Since there are so many expressions with *make*, one way of picking up some very useful vocabulary quickly is to look up the word *make* in a dictionary and see how many expressions using it you know!

Economics revisited

As I was preparing this newsletter, including the answers to last month's Christmas quiz (page 5), I discovered that *News & Tips* no. 5 contains a mistake that could mislead people trying to sort out sentence no. 5 in the quiz.

While the word *economics* is normally treated as a singular (as stated in *N&T* no. 5), this is not the case in quiz sentence no. 5, which read: "*The economics of the agreement mean that the staff gets a pay rise every year*". Here the word refers not to the *subject* or *field* of economics, but to the *financial aspects* of the deal. In this sense, the meaning is plural.

Please note that this does not mean that this sense of the word *economics* has a singular form, as with the plural meaning of *ethics* (see *N&T* no.5), *lyrics* and *statistics* (see no. 28). On the contrary, *economics* in the sense of *financial aspects* is always plural and always preceded by the definite article: *the economics of the agreement*. This makes it a bit like *the police* ☺ [see next page].

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Plural uncountables

Talking about *the police* brings us naturally on to plural uncountables.

Most uncountables are singular (*education, money, progress*, etc.) and this applies to words that look as though they might be plural (*gymnastics, news, politics*, etc) – see *News & Tips* no.5.

But English (like Danish) also has plural uncountables. These are words that are always plural but cannot be counted. Danes often laugh when I tell them that *money* is uncountable in English, but the Danish word *penge* is also uncountable; the only difference is that the Danish word is also plural.

Examples of plural uncountables are *clothes, credentials, earnings, outskirts, surroundings, thanks*, etc. In each case, these words are both plural and uncountable.

The police are a special case. Unlike most uncountable plurals, it does not look plural. In fact it looks as if it might be a collective noun, like *crowd* or *family* or *government*, and take a singular verb when the focus is on the *group*, but a plural when the focus is on the *members* of the group (see *News & Tips* no. 4).

But *the police* are not like that. The noun is always plural and always uncountable and always preceded by the definite article. So even if just *one* policeman called round to see you, we might say “*The police were here to see you*”. And if there were two of them, we could **not** say “*Two police were here ...*”, but would have to say “*Two policemen were here to see you*”.

So watch out for the police! ☺

Care and caution

These two words overlap a little in meaning, which sometimes leads people to choose the wrong word in the context.

If I treat something (or someone) with *care*, the focus is usually on the way I am trying to avoid causing damage or injury to the thing or person. Just occasionally, however, the context may make it clear that I am avoiding harm to myself.

If I treat something (or someone) with *caution*, on the other hand, it definitely means I am trying to avoid the risk of harm to myself.

Careful and cautious

The adjectives retain the basic meaning difference of the noun forms, except that *careful* is used much more often in the sense of avoiding harm to oneself, as in: “*Be careful!*” So the use of the word *cautious* often implies a psychological state of hesitation or uncertainty, as in: “*He was cautious about buying shares in the company*”.

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*.

And if YOU can translate from at least one foreign language, speak English or Danish, and are a native speaker of Arabic, Greek, Greenlandic, Swahili, Welsh, etc., we’d like to hear from you!

More on challenge!

Hi Lawrence

Isn't it "face the challenge" and "take up the challenge"?!

Last month, in answer to another reader, I suggested *meet the challenge*, as in "*She met the challenge of being self-employed with her characteristic courage*".

The two suggested above are also possible, but the second in particular conjures up more of the original metaphor of responding to a challenge to duel to the death.

Being self-employed is not *really* like facing a medieval knight in full armour, but if you like that image, use it! The nice thing about *meeting challenges* is that no one is likely to think of the original blood and gore. ☺

University names and job titles

The same reader says:

My dictionary says vice-chancellor for "universitetsrektor" – how about that?

Vice-chancellor is certainly the usual British equivalent, but we don't call all the finance ministers in other European countries the *Chancellor of the Exchequer* either! ☺ *Rector* is the normal word in respect of European universities and some British ones.

Where there is some special term in Britain, we do not usually use that in the context of another country. For instance, we don't call the *Metro* in Paris, Moscow or Copenhagen *the Tube* or *the Underground* just because that is what we call it in London.

So extreme care needs to be taken in such cases. Another example in my view is the common translation of the Danish *Lov* with *Act*, as in *Act of Parliament*. I cannot really think of any justification for calling laws passed by the Danish Parliament *Acts*, and it does not reflect normal English-speaking practice with respect of the laws passed by other non-English speaking parliaments. We have a perfectly normal word, *Law*, which seems much more appropriate, since the word *Act* is a special term in the British legal system.

Come and help us celebrate the first FIVE YEARS of English support!

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

The company officially started on 1st January 2004, but we had this sneaking feeling not many people would come on New Years Day, so we are holding it from 3–6 pm on **Thursday 22nd January**.

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 closing remarks on the next five years, before we finish.

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

Please let us know via the website, using this link:
<http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/fiveyears.htm>

We look forward to seeing you then.

Best wishes to all our readers in the year to come!

Lawrence White
LW@englishsupport.dk

OPEN HOUSE

An afternoon's entertainment starring

Claire Clausen

Michael de Laine

Lawrence White

(and, with a bit of luck, 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!

[<http://www.englishsupport.dk/EN/fiveyears.htm>]

www. **English support** .dk

Your natural language partner

Xmas quiz answers

Test your English... (See News & Tips No. 49)

The "proofreading corrections" below show answers to last month's quiz. ☺

1. We would like to inform you that we specialise in English.
2. We will have finished in six months.
3. The people for who m he worked thought he was good at his job.
The people he worked for thought he was good at his job.
4. The news is that a number of cases of piracy have been reported.
5. The economics of the agreement mean that the staff get a pay rise every year.
6. I am working hard at the moment, because we have a lot of customers.
7. I look forward to hearing from you, but will get back to you if I do not.
8. He claimed that the Sun is about ninety-three million miles away.
9. She saw an ad in the paper the other day for a film with Mr Bean.
10. I will be out of the office until 2nd January.
11. The staff drink all kinds of beer after work.
12. Some of the apprentices should stay on after completing their apprenticeship.
13. There are things you should buy, for example an umbrella, in case it rains.
14. Where were the boxes with a length, width and height of 30 cm?
15. While in Paris he had the opportunity to visit / option of visiting the Louvre.
16. We have considerable knowledge and experience about Danish society.
17. Please note that I lived in London for many years before I moved to Denmark.
18. I would appreciate it if you would let me know about your experience in teaching.
19. If you have no training as a book-keeper, you may lose your job.
20. Please note that the various requirements are in accordance with the regulations.
21. He could not get a job because he failed his exams.
22. To a considerable extent, wind energy can replace fossil-fuel energy.
23. I would appreciate hearing from you whether you are capable of doing / able to do this job.
24. He was looking forward to seeing her although he had difficulty in understanding her English.
25. She suggested drinking a toast to success.
26. A substantial number of paintings were stolen.

Slettet: are

Slettet: d

Slettet: be

Slettet: for who

Slettet: are

Slettet: has

Slettet: s

Slettet: are having

Slettet: revert

Slettet: ,

Slettet: s of

Slettet: d

Slettet: m

Slettet: .

Slettet: am

Slettet: I

Slettet: s

Slettet: A part

Slettet: like

Slettet: an

Slettet: the

Slettet: that

Slettet: h

Slettet: whit

Slettet: h

Slettet: possibility

Slettet: hold

Slettet: Be aware

Slettet: have

Slettet: with

Slettet: do not

Slettet: an education

Slettet: o

Slettet: ic

Slettet: different

Slettet: ing to

Slettet: missed having

Slettet: passing

Slettet: d

Slettet: substitute

Slettet: to

Slettet: to

Slettet: to

Slettet: was

More than 600 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 it is also possible to download a whole year at a time by clicking on the year heading.

Xmas quiz answers

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!

(Continued from previous page)

27. He probably worked in close co-operation / collaboration with someone in the company.
28. I saw an environmentally friendly radio last week – isn't progress wonderful!
29. I spent yesterday playing golf, drinking beer, and talking about the meaning of life.
30. In recent years, I have had my own company.
31. In the following, you will find a description of the cottage.
32. After this course, you will have knowledge of all our products with prices as low as £10.
33. He held a party on Saturday with a few friends.
34. The principal was wearing his everyday clothes at the time.
35. When he comes, tell him I'm not in!
36. If you are going to Greenland, make sure you take some insulating clothing with you.
37. If I may advise you, I suggest you check the prices carefully before you buy anything.
38. The transport company had a number of different kinds of vehicle for hire.
39. Mozart was just brilliant.
40. I thought the tea tasted good, and I said so.
41. Please write your name at the top of the sheet.
42. Is she still dependent on him?
43. It is impolite to speak like that.
44. My loss of balance was the effect of drinking too much beer.
45. Three-quarters of the city was destroyed in the earthquake.
46. Did you catch the train all right the other day?
47. You shoot at a target and hopefully hit it in the middle.
48. He kept smiling although he was very angry.
49. She divided the Christmas cake into 12 equal pieces.

Slettet: properly

Slettet: corporation

Slettet: the

Slettet: the last

Slettet: hereafter

Slettet: Y

Slettet: on

Slettet: z

Slettet: principle

Slettet: daily

Slettet: is coming

Slettet: isolating

Slettet: advice

Slettet: prizes

Slettet: series

Slettet: only

Slettet: well

Slettet: in

Slettet: of

Slettet: un

Slettet: a

Slettet: were

Slettet: reach

Slettet: to

Slettet: despite

Slettet: parted

For more information, check the issue of *News & Tips* with the same number.

How to write a scientific paper

Lawrence White

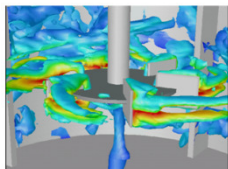


Figure 1: Internal book illustration of ingredients for this paper relating to author's brain

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

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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