

Classification: ~~CONFIDENTIAL~~ //REL TO USA, AUS, CAN, GBR, NZL

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11 June 2010 CLArion

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1. CLA Film Library Additions

(Item courtesy of longtime CLA Librarian [redacted])

Some recent additions to the library:

Afghan Star Dari, Pashto, English

X Japanese anime

A Scene at the Sea Japanese

Bread and Tulips Italian

The complete library list of close to 600 videos is available on request.

The CLA Film Library is located in Ops1, room 3N053. When you go in the door, the film cabinets are at the top of the ramp to the right. Let me know when is a good time to meet you there. Most days I am at work between 0630 and 1430.

New acquisitions to the library are usually announced on ESS 1362; you can subscribe to ESS 1362 via the CLA web page.

[redacted]
CLA Film Librarian
963-6617 [redacted]

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2. Presidential Language Trivia

Approved for Release by NSA on 09-05-2017, FOIA Case #61705

Which future U.S. president remained in Mexico for several months after serving there in the Mexican-American War, among other things learning Spanish?

- A. Andrew Johnson
- B. Millard Fillmore
- C. Ulysses Grant
- D. James Buchanan
- E. Abraham Lincoln

Answer and details at very end of issue

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3. English Is a Foreign Language Too

(Editor's Note: This one, courtesy of [REDACTED] is great, getting [REDACTED] five star rating)

Mark my words; We ask the experts at a world-famous dictionary about our amazing, intricate English language

Source: WP - The Washington Post (Full Coverage, Daily)

Jun 09 01:18

Section: Style

Page: C10

You might not realize it, but English is one of the most difficult languages on Earth. Its rules have lots of exceptions, and its words are hard to spell. Here's a typical example of how confusing English can be: Say the words "mate," "eight" and "strait" out loud. They all make the same sound when you say them, but they are spelled totally differently!

Pronouncing and spelling most English words probably is easy for you, but for people learning English for the first time, these kinds of quirks in our language make it extremely challenging.

As you get ready to leave school for summer break, we thought it was a good time to learn some cool things about the English language. These fun facts are from the Web site of the Oxford English Dictionary, a highly respected authority on the language. To see lots of other interesting facts, go to

www.askoxford.com and click on "Ask the Experts."

What other words besides "hungry" and "angry" end in "-gry?"

There aren't any!

Are there any words in which the same letter appears three times in a row?

Typically, English requires a hyphen to prevent that from happening, as in bee-eater, or cross-section. But the Oxford English Dictionary does contain a few examples without hyphens, including frillless (without frills) and duchessship (the office of being a duchess). And, no, "brrr" is not a real word.

What's the longest one-syllable English word?

There are several examples of one-syllable words with nine letters, including "stretched," "scratched" and "screeched."

Are there any words that have no words that rhyme with them?

There are no words in the language that rhyme with either "orange" or "silver." Pity the poets.

Are there any words that exist only as a plural?

There are quite a few, including scissors, binoculars and tongs. (What do those three objects have in common?)

What is the opposite of exceed (which means to be superior to or better than)?

There isn't one, but the editors of the Oxford English Dictionary think that one is needed. They are considering the possibility of "deceed," which would mean "to be less than."

Is there a word for a baby hedgehog?

Until recently, they were simply called baby hedgehogs (awww). But lately, experts have started calling these spiny little critters "hoglets" or even the super-cute "hedgehoglet."

-- Margaret Webb Pressler

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4. 1811 Dictionary of the Vulgar Tongue.

[REDACTED]

(Editor's Note: At first I thought I would get a little vulgar (there are few in here) but then I remembered that this newsletter is PG-rated.)

Coker—a lie
Cuffin—man
Glaze—a window
Monosyllable—a woman's commodity
Rank Rider—a highwayman

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5. David Crystal Book

(Item courtesy of [REDACTED] FYI—Crystal has spoken at the National Museum of Language in College Park)

Watch your language (and here's a great guide for doing so)
Source: WP - The Washington Post (Full Coverage, Daily)
Jun 03 00:58

Byline: by Michael Dirda

Section: Style

Page: C05

A LITTLE BOOK OF LANGUAGE

By David Crystal

Yale Univ. 260 pp. \$25

Five years ago, Yale published Ernst Gombrich's "A Little History of the World." Its text, intended for children, was originally written in German during the 1930s, but Gombrich -- one of the greatest art historians of our time -- slightly revised its 40 chapters for the English edition. He died in 2001, at age 92, and, alas, never saw the finished book.

"A Little History of the World" proved to be phenomenally successful, and not just among young people. Like the "Harry Potter" novels and the "Twilight" series, the book was read by many adults, who rightly admired its beautifully crafted and concise overview of humankind's past.

Recognizing a winning concept, Yale has now followed Gombrich's history with "A Little Book of Language," by the eminent and prolific linguist David Crystal. Best known for the Cambridge Encyclopedia of Language and "The Stories of English," Crystal here writes for the true beginner, but does so with his usual clarity and authority, as he ranges from ancient etymologies to modern text-messaging. The chapters -- again 40 of them -- are made doubly

etymologies to modern text messaging. The chapters -- again 10 of them -- are made doubly engaging by Jean-Manuel Duvivier's frolicsome, highly stylized black-and-white illustrations.

Crystal begins at the beginning, with baby talk. He notes, for instance, that a newborn can already recognize its mother's voice. In one experiment, scientists "put a teat into the baby's mouth and wire it up to a counter. The baby sucks away at a steady rate. When it hears the dog, man, and woman sounds, the sucking speeds up a bit and then slows down. But when it hears the mother's voice it sucks like crazy! It recognizes her!" That gosh-wow tone is, I suspect, one of the few signs that "A Little Book of Language" is directed primarily toward young readers. While Crystal sometimes quotes Shakespeare and Dickens, he refers just as often to J.K. Rowling, Roald Dahl and Terry Pratchett. One chapter describes Grimm's Law -- the way that Latin "pater" becomes German "Vater" and English "father" -- but never mentions Jakob Grimm (of fairytale fame), who first noted this pattern. Indeed, apart from passing references to the slang expert Eric Partridge and to Sir William Jones -- who promulgated the idea that many European languages, as well as Sanskrit, derive from ancient Indo-European -- this book resolutely focuses on the most basic elements of linguistic study. There's nothing in the least academic or pretentious about it.

Two early chapters examine just how our throats and mouths make sounds; other sections take up the reasons for grammar and explain some of the idiosyncrasies of English spelling. There are plenty of no-nonsense definitions throughout: Sentences "help us to make sense of words." That, emphasizes Crystal, "is what sentences are for." Vivid anecdotes clarify important points: "The day I kill three buffaloes and draw them as three dead animals on my cave wall, I'm being an artist. But the day I kill three buffaloes and invent a sign for them (such as $\{\$181\}=\{\$181\}$) and mark up on my cave-wall ' $\{\$181\}=\{\$181\}$ 111,' then I'm being a writer."

Factoids abound throughout this latest "little book": There are, for instance, around 6,000 languages in the world. However, without some effort toward preservation, roughly half of them will die out in the next 100 years. Did you know that nearly three-quarters of the human race grows up learning two or more languages? Today, "in half the primary schools in Inner London, over half of the pupils do not speak English as a mother tongue." Because there are competing sign-systems for the deaf, when the play "Children of a Lesser God" -- about a teacher and his deaf student -- was staged in London, "British deaf people couldn't understand the signs, and they had to employ an interpreter to translate from American into British Sign Language."

In other chapters, Crystal tells us about the origin of geographical place names and our own personal names. "The word 'nickname,' " we learn, "first began to be used in the Middle Ages, where it was originally an 'an eke name.' 'Eke' (pronounced 'eek') meant 'also.' A nickname was an extra name, showing a special relationship." There are several excellent pages on how to use a dictionary (though Crystal refrains from making any particular lexical recommendations). Later sections on computer slang and texting duly remind the censorious that people have always used abbreviations and playful neologisms. Many adults, Crystal writes, will remember the meaning of the apparent gobbledygook of "YY U R YY U B I C U R YY 4 ME." Read properly, this means "too wise you are, too wise you be, I see you are too wise for me." He also discusses puns -- "You shouldn't write with a broken pencil because it's pointless" -- and palindromes ("Madam, I'm Adam") and other word games.

Words may be used for play or poetry or persuasion, and Crystal reminds us that one important reason for studying language "is to make ourselves aware of the way people often try to manipulate our thoughts and feelings by the way they speak and write." Hence, the very same action may be described as "Terrorists Move South" or "Freedom Fighters Move

South." In its closing chapters, "A Little Book of Language" proceeds to focus on linguistics itself, a discipline whose students don't necessarily try to learn lots of languages but instead aim to discover just how those languages work.

At the end of his book, Crystal lists six causes that are important to him and that he hopes will become important to his readers:

- 1) The preservation of dying languages.
- 2) The appreciation of minority languages, those spoken only by small groups of people.
- 3) The pleasure of learning at least smatterings of languages other than English.
- 4) A greater appreciation of the variety -- the dialects and accents -- within one's own native tongue.
- 5) The importance of knowing many styles of English, from the most formal to the slangiest.
- 6) The need to help people who, for whatever reason, have difficulty in learning to speak or write.

Like Gombrich's "A Little History of the World," Crystal's "A Little Book of Language" may be for children (of all ages, as the saying goes), yet it's by no means childish or juvenile. In other words, buy it for your son or daughter, but read it yourself.

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6. Free DLI Books

(Item courtesy of)

Many older Defense Language Institute (DLI) textbooks, and other linguistic reference materials (including GWOT languages) published by the Foreign Service Institute, and various universities, are available for free download at the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) Internet website:

<http://www.eric.ed.gov/>

They have the complete 16-volume set of textbooks for the 47-week, 180-lesson, Chinese-Mandarin Basic Course that I took way back in 19-something-or-other, and the course's associated publications. If you want to get long-form character reading practice, as well as the full flavor of military terminology taught at DLI in a bygone era, then download the last textbook of that course, Volume XVI, listed below. The text they used to create the electronic file was not in very good condition but is still mostly readable. It has drawings of recoilless rifles, mortars, and other fun stuff, as well as the bonus vocabulary item 尉级, "company

grade," which doesn't appear to be in our online dictionaries. Here's a partial list of things that are available:

Chinese-Mandarin: Basic Course, Volume XVI: Lessons 168-180 (ED184327)

Chinese-Mandarin Basic Course Glossary: Chinese-English (ED189882)

Chinese-Mandarin Basic Course: References (ED189880)

Chinese-Mandarin: Chinese Character Exercise Book (ED030882) (this provides the stroke order for 825 long-form characters and space to practice writing them)

For a real challenge, try:

Chinese-Cantonese Basic Course (ED022179) (Caution: It's a 115287K file!)

Chinese-Cantonese (TOISHAN) Basic Course (ED022176) (Toishan...台山...is a sub-dialect of Cantonese spoken in the county ancestral home of most Chinese-Americans)

To find these and other gems, search on keywords such as "mandarin basic course," "cantonese basic course," "persian," "turkish," etc., or on the ERIC Document (ED) numbers, like those provided above, in the Search window. Be advised that many documents listed in the ERIC database do not have downloadable text. To weed-out the non-downloadable search results you can do an Advanced Search for Title keywords, such as "mandarin basic course," check the box that says "Full-Text Availability," and then click "Search." When the search results come back, click on "ERIC Full Text" at the bottom of the document description to download the document.

Well, I guess there are other educational topics besides languages, like archery or integral calculus, so search to your heart's content!

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7. CLA Books To Give Away

CLA FANX still has a bunch of books and tapes to give away to a good home. While many are old, I have no doubt that these books, if properly placed, will provide hours and hours of language-learning excitement for the whole family and/or significant others. Please contact me to find out about availability.

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8. Ever Hear This One Before???

"How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood?"

I suspect many who do not have English as a first language might be hearing about this dilemma for the very first time. Welcome, welcome. Personally, I think that on Ground Hog Day mass recitation of this ought to become part of the ritual.

(U)

Which future U.S. president remained in Mexico for several months after serving there in the Mexican-American War, among other things learning Spanish?

A. Andrew Johnson

B. Millard Fillmore

ANSWER C. Ulysses Grant (18th President, 1869-1877)

D. James Buchanan

E. Abraham Lincoln

DETAILS: This one is easy if you know that Grant was the only one of the bunch (to my knowledge at least) to ever serve in that war. On at least one occasion, he used Spanish in combat when dealing with the locals.

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