



Dear Colleague:

I hope you are settling in and have gotten the onerous chores of paperwork and testing out of the way. Hope your health is good, too. Our artist Dave Nicholson, and our copyeditor Nancy Baxter each had serious surgeries this week, but being troopers, Dave got in his illustrations the night before going to the hospital, and Nancy worked up until the anesthesia stopped her. Please send them both your white light.

The U.S. Election: 13 months away

The candidates of the major parties are out in force as never before. Not only are they earlier than in any previous pre-election season, but more candidates are vying to be chosen by the two major parties. Candidates from the smaller political parties haven't gotten any press coverage at all.

Each month, *Easy English NEWS* will cover an aspect of the coming election and the issues, plus the details of how Americans select their president: political parties, primary elections, campaign, electoral system, voting laws, issues, candidates, minor parties, and so forth. This month we mention in brief the issues that the candidates are talking about. Closer to the election, when the choices have been narrowed down, we will highlight the major candidate's positions on several issues of concern to newcomers as well as Americans. The election is potentially historical if either a woman, a black, or a Mormon is elected for the first time.

Objectives: Students will be able to say who the current President is, how long his term is, and when his term will end. They will know the date of the next election, and the fact that a large number of people in each of the two major parties are debating each other, preparing for primary elections. They will be able to state several issues that candidates are talking about.

Procedure: Assess your students current level of awareness of our governmental system and the 2008 election. Ask students questions such as: *Who is the leader of your country? How did he or she get to be leader? How long will that person be the leader? Who is the President of the United*

States? How did he get to be President? How many times was he elected? How long is a President's term in office? When will his term as President be over? Have you seen any of the candidates in the news or the debates? When will American voters choose the next president? And then introduce the article.

Sending mail—part 1

This month we cover the general facts about the U.S. Postal Service and procedures and costs of sending a letter. Part 2 next month will deal with sending larger packages and other services of the post office: certified mail, money orders, holding mail, post office boxes, etc. We'll mention the alternatives: UPS, FedEx and other ways of getting mail delivered.

Objectives: Students will know where their local post office is located, as well as a blue box where they can mail letters. They will be able to tell the cost of a First Class stamp for under one ounce, as well as a stamp to their home country. They will know that a package over 12 ounces must be taken in, for security reasons, to the post office to be mailed. Students will know how to properly address an envelope. They will know the proper abbreviation for their state, as well as be able to look up the abbreviation for other states. They will distinguish USPS from UPS, (United Parcel Service), which confuses Americans as well. (Note: First Class Mail, Priority Mail, and Express Mail all take capital letters as these are trademarked services of the USPS.)

Ask questions such as *Who sends letters or pays bills by mail? What do you need on a letter before you can mail it? How much does a stamp cost? How much does it cost to mail a letter to your home country? How long does it usually take?*

Read the article using any reading technique suitable to your students' interests and ability levels.

Address an envelope: This is fast becoming a lost art, with the advent of email, and the dependence on telephone conversations. Work with the envelope on page 10. Have students notice each of the details listed. Have students practice addressing an envelope. *Do you address a*

letter the same way in your home country? You can distribute envelopes, or use blank, unlined paper, and have students fold it in three, to get the size of a regular # 10 envelope. On the board, write your name and your address (in care of the school rather than giving out your home address if you prefer), so students can practice addressing a letter. Then have them practice addressing a letter to themselves. They can work with a partner and practice addressing a letter to that partner. (Some students may be uncomfortable making their address known, so provide an alternative for them.)

Point out that when they see two or more mailboxes in front of a Post Office, to read the large label on the boxes. Some say "Metered Mail" or "Local Mail Only" Point out the mail slots for Local Mail and All Other Mail inside Post Offices.

On Page 5 is a list of states with abbreviations, plus the standard abbreviations for the various names of "street" (avenue, boulevard, road, etc.) Optional activity: find these states on a U.S. map.

Events in October

Elicit from your students what special days are celebrated in their home countries in October. Also, *who has a birthday?, anniversary?, or other celebration in October? What school events will take place in October?* Have students write these directly on the calendar in the newspaper.

Remind students that it is still Hispanic American Heritage Month (September 15-October 15) October is also Italian American Month and Polish American Month. California and Arizona celebrate European Heritage Month in October. There are petitions circulating to establish January as European Heritage month. Ask what other months they know for history or heritage of minority groups. (November: American Indians; February: African-American History Month; March: Women's History Month, Irish American Heritage Month; April: Asians and Pacific Island Americans Heritage Month, and May: Jewish American History month and Older Americans' Month.

Columbus Day Will there be a Columbus Day Parade in your town? Encourage students to go to see it. Yes, Columbus was like many other people of his time: avaricious, prejudiced, cruel, arrogant, racist, and a self-seeking adventurer. His discovery spelled the end of life and culture for millions of American Indians on two continents. Nevertheless, we still can admire his remarkable vision, boldness, and persistence.

Use a world map to show Columbus's route south from the Azores to catch the winds blowing from the east, and returning at a more northern latitude, to catch the prevailing westerlies. If Columbus had not sailed to America, other sailors would have done it within another fifty years. It was an event waiting to happen. Ships had become more reliable, the mariner's astrolabe invented in 1480 helped sailors locate themselves when out of sight of land, and the rewards of getting to India and the Spice Islands was a strong motivator. Ask students questions such as *What did you expect to discover when you came to America? What things would you take home to show your friends in your native country that are here, but not there? What did you expect to find but did not find here? What was here that you did not expect to find?*

Who discovered America? Objectives: Students will be able to name three people prior to Columbus who may have discovered America. They will be able to name other adventurers/discoverers who came to the New World and claimed the land they explored for the country they sailed for. Have students think about and make a list of the enormous changes that took place after these European explorers. (Millions of Europeans migrated to the New World; the devastation of the native American Indians by illnesses they were not resistant to; the enrichment at first of Spain, then of France, England, and the Netherlands; new foods such as potatoes and corn that fed a population explosion in Europe, the creation of an inhumane system of slavery which removed millions of Africans to the Americas; rivalries and wars among European nations over colonies; the wars of independence and beginnings of new nations.)

Eid al-Fitr If there are Muslims among your students, be aware that they will be fasting for the first two weeks of October. Have them tell the class about their customs during Ramadan and to explain their feelings about fasting to the class. There are an estimated 5.5 million Muslims in North America (many American blacks are Muslim) and one billion Muslims in the

world. Point out that actions by individual members of any race, nationality, or religion are not reason to fear or hate others of that group.

United Nations Birthday Objectives: Students will be able to state the purposes of the United Nations, tell the 5 permanent members of the Security Council and the 6 official languages of the UN. This is a good opportunity for students to learn the pronunciation of English names for important countries of the world. *Is their home country a member of the United Nations?*

Halloween Ask students questions such as: *Were you here in October last year? Did you dress up for Halloween? Tell about it. Do you plan to dress up this year? What are some symbols of Halloween?* Bring in one or more pumpkins and carve them, or have students carve them (use the plastic pumpkin carvers that can't cut flesh.) Talk about Halloween safety for children regarding costumes, traffic, not entering homes of strangers, not eating unwrapped food from strangers, having parents check treats before children eat them, brushing teeth after eating sweets, and dangers of sugar overload. Briefly tell the history of Halloween: Celtic people believed that on the last night of the year, spirits of the dead could visit with the living. (Similar to Dia de los Muertos in Mexico); the Celtic year ended when the leaves were all off the trees.

This Is Your Page

Have students relate the stories to their own lives. Ask questions such as *Has something like this happened to you? At what age do people retire in your home country? Is it easier for a young person or an older person to get a job? Why do you think that is? Do you have trouble ordering food in a restaurant?*

America the beautiful

Working with a map, locate the Rocky Mountain and Appalachian Mountain Systems. Have students see the other major ranges, as well (Sierra Nevada; Cascade Range). Follow the Rockies up through Canada into Alaska. Then use a map of your state to have students learn the names of mountain chains and any peaks near you. Find out the highest point in your state. Research an almanac for highest peaks in the U.S. and in the world. Have students tell about mountains in their home countries. *What activities are*

common around mountains? (camping, skiing, touring, lumbering, mining). *Why are mountains important?* (habitat for animals, too hilly for farms so trees are left to grow, producing oxygen; water from melted snow provides drinking water; gold, iron, silver, and other metals are found in mountains.)

The Great Depression

One way to introduce the topic: *Today's unemployment rate is about 4.9%. That means 95% of the people who want to work have jobs. What would it be like if the unemployment rate were 50%?*

Many students come from countries that are experiencing economic conditions similar to the Great Depression, with no social safety nets. They may be able to say what things would be like: *People have to leave the country to get a job someplace else.* Distinguish the word *depression* used here from its other meanings: low land surrounded by higher land; a long period of sadness. Many immigrants are afraid to trust banks with their savings. Explain the FDIC system that insures savings accounts up to \$100,000 per account. While savings accounts do not pay much interest (about 0.5%, a CD (certificate of deposit) may pay 3-5% depending on the time, and may also be insured by the FDIC up to \$100,000.

ANSWERS

- | | |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| 1. b | 16. F (after) |
| 2. b | 17. T |
| 3. c | 18. F (English) |
| 4. b | 19. F (Halloween) |
| 5. d | 20. T |
| 6. a | 21. J (Plains) |
| 7. a | 22. F (debate) |
| 8. b | 23. H (peak) |
| 9. c | 24. E (depression) |
| 10. d | 25. A (dust) |
| 11. F (Spain) | 26. C (dormant) |
| 12. F (west) | 27. G (drought) |
| 13. T | 28. I (prosperity) |
| 14. F (Indians) | 29. B (baby boom) |
| 15. F (England) | 30. D (offend) |

Quiz I

Choose the best answer. Write its letter on the line in front of the number.

- | | |
|---|---|
| <p>___ 1. When will Americans elect a new President?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) November, 2007.b) November, 2008.c) January, 2008.d) January, 2009. <p>___ 2. Why can't President Bush run for election as President again?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) He's too old.b) He's been elected two times already.c) He is a Republican.d) Americans want a new President. <p>___ 3. How long is a president's term?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) One year.b) Two years.c) Four years.d) Eight years. <p>___ 4. Primary elections or caucuses are held in each state</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) to elect the president of the U.S.b) to choose the candidate for each political partyc) to talk about the issues.d) to choose state governors and lawmakers. <p>___ 5. The primary elections and caucuses will</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) start in January, 2009b) start in November, 2008c) start in June, 2008.d) start in January, 2008. | <p>___ 6. You can mail a letter at</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) any post officeb) schoolc) a supermarketd) a police station <p>___ 7. In the U.S., mail is generally delivered</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) once a day, except Sunday.b) Every day of the week.c) twice a day.d) five days a week. <p>___ 8. A First-Class stamp for a one-ounce letter costs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) 23 cents.b) 41 cents.c) 60 cents.d) \$4.60. <p>___ 9. For security reasons, all packages 13 ounces and over must</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) be sent First Class.b) be mailed at a blue mailbox.c) be taken to the Post Office.d) pay extra postage. <p>___ 10. On an envelope, your return address should be</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">a) in the center of the envelope.b) on the other side of the envelope.c) in the upper right corner.d) in the upper left corner. |
|---|---|

II. Events in October

True or False? Write the letter “T” if the sentence is true. Write the letter “F” if the sentence is false. If the sentence is *false*, make the sentence true by writing a word to replace the underlined word.

- ___ 11. Columbus got money from the Queen of England to get ships and men.

- ___ 12. Columbus sailed north and hoped to get to China, Japan, and the Indies.

- ___ 13. Columbus thought he was in the Indies.

- ___ 14. Columbus named the people he met Americans.

- ___ 15. John Cabot explored the east coast of North America and claimed this land for Spain.

- ___ 16. Eid al-Fitr comes before the month of Ramadan. _____
- ___ 17. The United Nations’ birthday is October 24.

- ___ 18. There are six official languages of the United Nations: Spanish, French, Chinese, Arabic, Russian, and Korean.

- ___ 19. Children go trick or treating on Columbus Day.

- ___ 20. You can make a jack-o’-lantern from a pumpkin.

III. Words from here and there

Choose the best word to complete the sentence. Write the letter of the word on the blank in front of the number.

Word List

- | | |
|----------------|---------------|
| A. dust | F. debate |
| B. “baby boom” | G. drought |
| C. dormant | H. peak |
| D. offend | I. prosperity |
| E. depression | J. Plains |
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- ___ 21. The flatlands in the central part of the U.S. are the Great _____.
 - ___ 22. A discussion among people who have different opinions on something is a _____.
 - ___ 23. The highest point of a mountain is the _____.
 - ___ 24. A time when very many people are poor and unemployed is a _____.
 - ___ 25. Very small bits of dirt blowing in the air or covering things is _____.
 - ___ 26. When a volcano is not active it is _____.
 - ___ 27. A long period of time when it does not rain is called a _____.
 - ___ 28. Most people have jobs and business is doing well during times of _____.
 - ___ 29. The U.S. population grew fast after World War II. This was called the _____.
 - ___ 30. Do not _____ a person by using bad manners or making him or her feel bad.