



# How to Use *Easy English* **NEWS** In your **ESL Classroom**

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# Regular Features in *Easy English NEWS*

- Current news or civics article
- *Life in the U.S.A.* (survival skills and information)
- Events and holidays for the month
- *This Is your page* (true stories from readers)
- *Ask Elizabeth* (grammar, usage, culture, or advice in answer to readers' questions)
- *Ask a Speech Coach*: pronunciation tips and listening/speaking practice
- *America the Beautiful /Places to Go, Things to See* (geography, national parks, national wonders, cities, and other places of interest)
- *Heroes and History* (important events and people in U.S. history)
- *Idiom corner* (explanations and practice with American idioms)
- *Funny Stuff* (jokes and riddles)
- Comic Strip (occasional)
- *Crossword Puzzle*
- *Let's Talk About It* (Discussion starters; writing prompts)
- *Word Help* (glossary of the difficult words in this month's articles, with the meanings defined in Easy English)

A monthly Teacher's Guide accompanies each delivery in a separate 4-page section. It contains background information for the month's main articles and suggestions for procedures, questions, and expansion activities, as well as three Reproducible Quizzes .

Elizabeth Claire is the creator, author and publisher of ***Easy English NEWS***. She has taught ESL for 35 years, has authored 22 ESL text books, and is now your support in the classroom. Please let us know how we're doing, what's missing, what you would like in future issues, how students respond, and any mistakes we may have made.

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## Overview

*Easy English NEWS* is designed for adult and young adult ESL students in their second year in the United States and beyond.

You can use *Easy English NEWS* in any adult education or high school classroom for students of English as a Second Language or in classes for native-English speaking students (basic skills classes) who would benefit from adult content in a plain English presentation.

The purpose is to maximize growth in reading, comprehension, and vocabulary in a useful format, by providing vital information needed by immigrants to survive (and thrive) in their new environment.

In addition, *Easy English NEWS* contains features to assist culture sharing, discussion, problem solving, writing topics, pronunciation, and retention of facts as well as the English to express themselves.

It's our intention to make your job in the classroom easier, more rewarding for both you and your students, and more relevant to their lives and society.

This HOW TO booklet will provide general ideas to work with the various features in the newspaper and to work with various English abilities of students. You can use these suggestions with any issue.

In addition, when you subscribe to *Easy English NEWS*, you'll get a 4-page supplement each month with specific teaching suggestions and background information for the month's major articles.

## Meeting standards

Each state has its own way of describing its standards. Used effectively, *Easy English*

*NEWS* allows teachers to meet all standards that are generated from the needs of adult and young adult immigrants in high beginner through advanced classes in the following areas:

- vocabulary building
- reading
- listening
- writing
- speaking
- cultural integration
- content reading in social studies, civics and
- citizenship preparation.

In addition, it stimulates higher-order thinking skills such as researching and organizing information; evaluating and comparing ideas, as well as applying knowledge they have acquired.

## How to prepare

Pre-read *Easy English NEWS* to select the articles you will use with your students based on their needs, interests, age, English levels, and your goals for the class. Look over the following suggestions to get started. Read the monthly Teacher's Guide for specific ideas with the articles you choose.

There are no "wrong" ways to use *Easy English NEWS*, and you can use different techniques each month. Experiment with any of the following suggestions to get started. Follow your students' lead as well as your own plans.

## How to work with beginners

- When you first introduce ***Easy English NEWS***, build up familiarity with the vocabulary that students will need to talk about the newspaper: *What's this?* It's a newspaper. *What's the title of the newspaper?* *What month is this newspaper for?* *What's this?* It's a photograph. (picture). *What's this?* It's an article. It's a headline. *What is the headline for this article?* *How many pages are in the newspaper?* *What is the headline for pages 2 and 3?* *What is the title for page 4? 5? 6? 7? 8? What do you see on page 9?* A crossword puzzle, and so forth. Teach additional words as needed, such as: *top of the page, bottom of the page, turn the page, beginning, middle and end of the article, continued on page, caption, author*, and all the other terms that will allow you to speak about any newspaper in English.
  - Choose very short articles, particularly ones with illustrations that help communicate the context. *This is your page* and *America the Beautiful* as well as the holiday articles are good ones to start with. Page one articles are more complex, and generally much longer.
  - Prior to reading an article, create a focus for reading. Ask students questions such as *What do you see in this picture?* *What's happening?* *What's the title of this story?*
  - Write several key new words on the board and elicit or explain the meanings.
  - Read the article to the students, one paragraph at a time as students follow along. Use additional pictures, maps, real objects, gestures, and actions to get the meanings across.
- After each paragraph check for comprehension and build vocabulary. Ask “yes/no” questions and questions that can be answered in one word or a short phrase (*who/what/where/when*). Ask questions in which you supply the answer, so they don't have to recall it, merely recognize it: Is the capital of the United States New York City or Washington, D.C.?
- Read the article aloud again, sentence by sentence. Have the entire class read each sentence after you. (Break longer sentences into phrases or breath groups). Call on individuals to repeat a sentence after you. Then have volunteers read a paragraph aloud. Help with pronunciation. Finally, have students work in pairs to read an article to each other, alternating paragraphs.
  - **Word Help** may be difficult for many beginning students. Allow them to use a bilingual dictionary instead, if needed. (Teach them to look at all the definitions their dictionary may give, and choose the one that fits the article.)
  - Have students copy the article, or a key paragraph or key words from the paragraph. Later, give listening/writing practice as you dictate a few of the words or sentences.
    - Create a “cloze” exercise for students: Type in a paragraph from a story they have just read. Eliminate every 8th word, leaving a blank in its place. Dictate the paragraph to the students for them to write in the missing word. Alternatively, have students search to find the missing words and write them in.
  - Let students correct each other's writings by comparing their sentences with the text in the newspaper.
  - Find a useful sentence structure in the article that students need more familiarity with. Teach the grammar underlying the

structure, and provide additional practice with the structure. Use “pattern practice” or drill similar sentences if it seems useful.

- Connect the article with the students’ experience. Have students express their opinions, tell about similar experiences, or share information from their own culture.
- Evaluate students’ understanding and retention with the quizzes done at the easiest level. Reproduce the Self-Evaluation on page 15 to help you understand students’ level of comprehension.

## How to work with intermediate students

- Before reading an article, find out what the students already know about the topic. Have students share the experiences they have had with the topic. Ask questions about how this topic is handled or dealt with in their native countries.
- Decide how much of the article you will cover in one session. Some of the longer articles may take two or three sessions.
- Write the **boldfaced** words in the article (or section of the article you plan to cover) on the board. Pronounce the words for the students, and have them practice saying them.
- Elicit the meanings of the words, if possible. If not, explain the words, and use the words in sample sentences.
- Write several fact questions (that will be answered in the article) on the board. Tell the students to listen for the answers as you read the article to them (with their papers closed). Have students raise their hands to stop you when they hear the

answer to a question. Write their answers on the board next to the appropriate questions.

- With papers open, read the article as students follow along in the text.
- Check for comprehension after each paragraph. Ask “WH” questions and other fact-finding questions.
- Next, have students take turns reading out loud. Help by modeling pronunciation or intonation when necessary. Finally, let students read the article to each other in pairs, alternating paragraphs.
- On a subsequent day, review the part of the article you completed with the class earlier, and continue with the next part of the article.
- Use the questions in *Let’s Talk About It* on page 11 of *Easy English NEWS* for discussion. Add additional questions to encourage students to express their opinions, describe their own experiences in the matter, or tell about the situation in their native countries.
- Use any of the writing activities listed in “high beginner” tips.
- With papers open, have students write the answers to questions you dictate.
- With papers closed, have students write the article in their own words.
- Have students write opinions, comparisons, or culture sharing based on the article or the class discussion about the article.

## Working with Advanced Students

Advanced students will not have the need for slower paced, assisted reading of *Easy English NEWS*. Their focus may be on the content that is new to them, new concepts, and occasional

new words. With an advanced group, there can be extensive oral work on finding facts, giving summaries, expressing opinions, sharing cultures.

- Ask preview questions to create interest and focus for the article you choose to read: “What do you think this article is about?” “What do you already know about this?” Provide time for class discussion *prior* to reading the article.
- Read the article in any way suitable to the levels of your class; ask volunteers to read aloud one paragraph each; read at home for homework; read aloud in pairs.
- Discuss any new information that has come out in the article, any surprises, things they learned, or differences of opinion.
- Have students tell how the treatment of this topic is the same as or different from customs in their home countries.
- Have students tell how the information affects their own lives. Ask questions that generate thoughtful responses: *If this happened to someone you know... What would happen if...? What do you think could be done to prevent (fix) this?*
- Encourage students to express their opinions about the articles.
- Provide class time for silent reading. Let students explore the paper, and read the articles, in the order they choose.
- Have students present a class “TV NEWS Broadcast.” Have students work with a partner or small group. Assign each group an article to report on, or let the groups choose.
- Ask students what else they would like to know about the article. Bring in additional information on the topic and invite students to do further research and bring in any materials they want to share.

## How to Use the Quizzes

There are three reproducible quizzes included in each month’s *Teacher’s Guide*. There are various ways you can tailor these to students of different abilities. In general, the quizzes require that students have read the major articles of the newspaper. This might leave out the beginning students who will focus on shorter, easier articles. You might want to select only those questions that can be answered from the readings that students have actually done.

**Quiz I** is a multiple choice quiz. It usually focuses on the top front page story and one other main story.

**Quiz II** is a modified True-False quiz, and focuses on holidays and one or two other articles. Students have to decide if a statement is true or false. If it is false, they must write a word to replace the underlined word in order to make the statement true.

**Quiz III** is a vocabulary matching quiz, which draws vocabulary items from any of the articles in the newspaper.

The quizzes can be given at four different levels of difficulty. You can use a quiz as a pre-test before reading *Easy English NEWS*, if you like. Then give the same test as a post test. Or, you can test students with the *same quiz* at a higher level of difficulty on a subsequent day.

- **Level 1** (most basic): You may give the quiz orally to the entire class as a practice for doing the test later in a written form. Or, students work in groups. They read questions aloud, help each other understand, and may search for answers in the newspaper. Students help each member of the group to practice answering the questions.
- **Level 2**: Students work in groups and help each other, but are working from memory,

having read the newspaper previously.

- **Level 3:** Students work alone, may have a dictionary, and may search for answers in the newspaper.
- **Level 4:** Students work alone completing the quiz, with no aid.

### Correcting the students' quiz papers:

- You have various options: Students correct their own papers, each others' papers, or a class monitor corrects their quizzes. In any case, you should learn how each of the students scored, so they are ultimately reporting to you.
- Optional: Explain the four testing levels to your class. Have the class vote on the level of difficulty they would like. In a multi-level class let individual students choose their own quiz level.
- As an additional challenge, have groups of students select articles, and prepare quizzes on that article for the class. These can be multiple choice, fill-in-the blank, True/False, matching questions or open ended questions.

## How to work with the regular features in *Easy English NEWS*

### Boldfaced words

Point out to students that words in **dark type**, with **asterisks\*** (stars) after them can be found with definitions in **WORD HELP** on page 12.

Let students know that words may have many meanings, but **WORD HELP** gives only the meaning used in *this* issue of *Easy English NEWS*. This saves students' time and avoids the confusion of having to choose among many meanings of a word that they would find in a

regular English/English or English/native language dictionary.

Point out that, as in a regular dictionary, the word is listed in its basic form. That is, singular, if it is a noun, and the base form if it is a verb or adjective. The part of speech is given (we write it out in full rather than merely an abbreviation), and the definition. Some words with non-phonetic pronunciations will have the pronunciation given.

Activity: After completing the newspaper, have a quiz show, with a "show host" reading the definitions from *Word Help* at random, and teams competing for points by giving the correct word being defined. (You can mark the words in the list that you feel are the most important for review.)

### Top Story

Page One will usually have two articles. The first article will feature an aspect of U.S. government, an issue in democracy, or a current news story of importance to immigrants or to all Americans.

Bring in additional news articles on the topic, books, pictures, DVDs, videos, and photos. Have students find the locale of the story on a world map and U.S. map. Pace the reading, based on your students' abilities. An intermediate class might spend two to three class sessions on one major article, while an advanced class can cover it in a single session. It may prove too challenging for high beginners, so you might just use the photo as a point of teaching vocabulary. Add background information where needed.

Record a TV news broadcast or documentary on the topic and show it to the class after they have read the article. Or ask students to read or watch TV in their native language and bring more information on the topic to share in the class.

NOTE: We do our research from a variety of sources, but most of it is necessarily second hand. We do not have any reporters in Washington, D.C., the Middle East, or anywhere else, for that matter. We subscribe to weekly and monthly news magazines, check Internet news, and watch both network and public broadcasting news. We check our facts with almanacs, the Census Bureau, government and other public sources as well as news services and our own experts. We attempt to provide several sides to controversial stories and allow teachers and students to sort out their own opinions. Completed articles are run past six well-educated teachers and editors each month before going to press.

While we make all possible efforts to avoid bias, misinformation, and error, pressures of monthly deadlines and time limits are always after us. If you notice any bias, misinformation, or errors, please explain them to your class. Let us know our shortcomings; that's how we learn, too.

## **Life in the U.S.A. (Survival skills)**

The bottom of Page One is usually a "survival topic" which helps to understand American ways of doing things. Many of these "Life in the U.S.A." features appear in a series of several articles over several months. However, each article is self-contained and does not rely on previous or future articles.

Follow up on any ideas that are pertinent to your students' needs and interests. Plan a class trip, go shopping, or invite a guest expert to speak to your class. Bring in more illustrations, plus real items to handle and discuss. Generate math activities where appropriate.

## **Events in (this month)**

A blank calendar is provided on this page.

Elicit from students any days that are special to them in the current month—school events, holidays in their home countries, their own birthdays and anniversaries, etc. Have students write these events and the month's holidays on the correct dates on the calendar.

Before reading about a holiday, ask students how that holiday is celebrated in their home countries (or if that holiday exists). After reading about a holiday in the U.S. add your own experiences to it, or have guests come in to talk about the holiday in their family. Holiday customs in the U.S. vary from family to family, and even from city to city, and generation to generation. Point out that some holidays are celebrated only by Christians, Jews, Muslims, (Christmas, Easter, Rosh Hashana, Passover, Ramadan, etc.) and other holidays are celebrated by the general population (Labor Day, Columbus Day, Thanksgiving, New Year's Day, Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, Memorial Day, and Independence Day).

Having a whole month to celebrate a particular ethnic or racial or gender group may be an unusual concept for people who come from a one-culture society. After reading about Hispanic American Heritage, American Indian History month, Black History Month, or Women's History Month, have students invent a month, week, or day to celebrate the heritage of a group of people. Alternatively, they can invent a holiday. Have them brainstorm activities to do during the celebration of their own heritage or holiday.

Ask what other holidays are celebrated that month in their cultures.

For homework, have students ask Americans in their school or community how they usually celebrate an upcoming holiday, or what their plans are this year to celebrate it. Have students report what they learn to the class.

Act out any aspect of a holiday that would add enjoyment or English learning for your class. For example, dressing for Halloween, wearing green for St. Patrick's Day, decorating eggs at Easter time, having a grab bag at Christmas/Hanukkah/Kwaanza; lighting Hanukkah or Kwaanza candles, singing holiday songs, playing a holiday game, preparing and eating special foods, making valentines, memorizing a poem, and so forth. Be aware of various politically correct *do's* and *don't's* so you do not offend any individual or groups of students, or transgress your school's policies.

## This Is Your Page

This page is written by readers of *Easy English NEWS*. Your students can relate to the ideas from their own experience. These stories are often easy enough for beginners.

After reading a story, ask comprehension questions: *Who, What, Where, When, and Yes/No* questions for beginners. Follow these by getting students involved: *Has this ever happened to you? What would you do if this happened to you?*

*What can you learn from this? Which is your favorite story? Why?*

Have students work in small groups to create and act out very short skits based on the stories. Encourage students to write and illustrate stories about their own experiences that might be of interest to other readers. Make a class newspaper, and distribute it to students, teachers, and others in your school.

## How to write for *Easy English NEWS*

Readers may send their best work to *Easy English NEWS*. We pay \$15 for every story we publish, but we cannot publish them all, so to

avoid disappointment, make sure students understand that. Send stories by Email (preferred), fax, or mail. You can mail several students' stories to us in one envelope but we read each story individually, and handle it individually, so *each story must have the author's name and address written on it*. We'd like to know the native country too, please. We don't have the staff to acknowledge mailed or faxed submissions unless we publish them, which could take up to 18 months. We will acknowledge the receipt of Emailed submissions.

Stories we publish must:

- be original work by a reader of *Easy English NEWS*.
- be of interest to our readers.
- be 100-300 words in length.
- not be similar to a story we have published before.
- reflect the writer's best effort.

We will cut, rearrange, and correct writers' grammar, without altering the intention of the writer, so that stories are understandable to our readers and fit the space.

Best bets: True, first-person stories that tell of *one* incident, with details, of a problem with English, culture shock, getting a job, fear, misunderstanding, embarrassment, danger, visit to a national landmark, trouble with agencies, police, etc., that our immigrant readers can relate to or learn from.

We don't publish: stories that have no relevance to immigrants' experiences here; stories written for some other purpose that don't fit our guidelines; students' poetry, opinion, or college entrance essays, opinion essays, etc.

We don't have a need for stories that cover two or three years: "I came to the U.S. and didn't speak English. It was terrible. Now I speak English and have many friends." These stories are wonderful, and we have published many of them. We are now looking for details that make each story different from the others.

Please explain to students that we receive hundreds of stories per year. We can't publish them all. It is not a reflection on their story that we don't choose it.

Sometimes a story gets separated from the address of the writer, or the writer has moved since sending in a story. So if a student sees his or her story in the paper, and has not received a check for \$15 from us, please have him or her Email, write, or call us (888-296-1090) with their story name, and their own name and address.

## Ask Elizabeth

Elizabeth Claire has a Masters Degree in Teaching English as a Second Language, plus expertise in a variety of fields such as human relations, communication, American culture and history, nutrition, small business startups, grammar, manners, shopping, scams, and much more. And what she doesn't know, she'll find out—except legal and medical advice. Topics on this page vary in response to readers' questions. Send in questions by Email. The most relevant questions for our readers will be printed with answers.

Procedure: Read the reader's question aloud to the class. Before reading Elizabeth's answer, have students take time to give their own answers. Then have students read Elizabeth's answer. Have students compare solutions to the problem, and talk about similar problems they or friends might have.

Activity: "Ask an Expert" Ask students if they are experts in any field, or would like to be an expert. (Some fields of expertise for young people might be "playing soccer;" "cooking eggs;" "getting lost;" "training a dog;" "driving or repairing a car" ; "getting good grades;" "shopping for a car; vegetables, meat, jeans, bargains, etc.;" "doing homework;" "studying for a spelling test;" "cleaning a house;" "making a pie;" and so on.)

The "expert" tells the topic, and the other students prepare questions to ask the "Expert." The Expert has (60) seconds to make up answers. They are allowed to "fake it" when they don't know the answer.

## Ask a Speech Coach: Gene Zerna

Gene Zerna is the author and producer of *Master Spoken English*, a 5-DVD program in accent modification. He has prepared actors for the stage, as well as ESL students for public speaking. This occasional column focuses on common problems new speakers have with English sounds and intonation.

This is for classroom practice to help students gain confidence in their pronunciation and voice. If the element being coached is relevant to your students, use the practice words and sentences for several minutes a day and repeat daily over a period of several weeks in order to effectively train lips, tongue, and vocal muscles in the production of new sounds.

## America the Beautiful

There is not much text on this page. Much of the information can be absorbed through photos, maps and charts. Readers will learn facts about the land, waters, farms, industries, natural wonders, national parks and tourist attractions in the country.

Bring in additional visuals and information about the topic that would be of interest to your students. Ask students to bring in related photos or pictures of their native countries. Relate the article to your own area—Ask questions such as *How many miles away is (the East Coast)? How is this place similar to where we live? How is it different? How is it similar to a place in your home country? Do you want to go there some day? What would you want to see?*

Use the maps to help students locate their own state and the features being illustrated. Wall charts will work better for instruction if you have access to them. Use charts to practice reading of large numbers, and making comparisons.

Extension activity: Have the class plan an imaginary trip to one of the locations in the article. Suggest ways to research this: Search the Internet for the location and the sights to see; search each Internet site for more information. Using Travelocity or Expedia.com find out the best air routes, connecting flights, and fares to that place. Check prices at a variety of hotels at the place. Calculate costs of getting there with a friend, or with the family. Plan a week's activities at the location.

## Heroes and History

This page features either events and heroes “every American school child knows,” or American heroes who were immigrants.

Find out what your students already know about the topic. Have them tell about any similar events or heroes in their native countries.

Choose a reading technique appropriate to your students' ability and interest level, then ask comprehension questions, opinion questions, and culture-sharing questions.

Bring in additional visuals, videos, DVDs posters etc. to enhance the experience of the history. Have students find out more about the hero at the library or on the Internet. Create a time line to show where the event fits in with other important events in history.

Discuss how the event or hero's accomplishments may have affected their lives.

## Graphs, Charts, and Maps

We include graph, chart, or a map each month to help readers gain complex data through visual means without a lot of written language. Point out any key supplied, and have students understand that a number in a graph or chart may represent a number of *thousands* or *millions*.

Ask specific questions that students can answer directly from the map, chart or graph. Then ask questions that involve comparing and analyzing: *Which x is the most \_\_\_\_? Which is the least \_\_\_\_? How many x's are \_\_\_\_? What is \_\_\_\_ next to ?*

Ask questions where students have to bring in prior knowledge or conjecture: *Why do you think x has the most y?*

## Idiom Corner

Explain that an idiom is a group of words that has a special meaning. The pictures illustrate what the words alone make you think, but the meaning of the idiom is entirely different. Have students read the definitions and sample sentences to get an understanding of the idioms. Call out definitions at random, and have students tell you the idiom. Ask students to create additional sentences (orally) using the idioms. Correct any sentences so students can fine-tune their sense of when and how to use the idioms.

Have the students write the correct idioms in the practice sentences. Point out that they may need to change verb tenses or pronoun forms. Have students draw a picture to illustrate the true meaning of an idiom, not the one it seems to mean.

Encourage students to listen for idioms in the speech of people around them, or in movies, news reports, etc. Have them keep a list in a notebook. Encourage students to use idioms in situations where the idioms are appropriate. Caution them that idioms must have “all their parts” to sound right in English. Have them share similar idioms from their own language.

## Funny Stuff

People generally laugh when some tension is released. People from different cultures do not experience the same tensions, so the same things are not funny. For that reason, humor is usually the last thing a person understands in a new language. For example, married people in many cultures may easily relate to mother-in-law jokes, but unmarried people don't think they are as funny (nor do mothers-in-law). Renters may laugh at landlord jokes, but people who have lived in government-owned apartments won't have the same sense of resentment.

Choosing jokes for *Easy English NEWS* is not easy, as the joke has to be short; not a play on words; politically correct, that is, not make fun of any ethnic group, race, gender, older people, males, females, poor people, body infirmity or condition such as baldness or obesity, and must be clean, and not make drunkenness or addiction a laughing matter. The joke must pass our laugh test. This doesn't guarantee it will pass the students' laugh test, as humor often doesn't translate.

If your students don't get the joke, first make sure they understand each word. Explain any

stereotypes, and expectations that contribute to the point of the joke.

Have students practice telling the joke, using proper intonation, and timing. Ask them to tell the joke to several people, and then to report reactions to the class. Have them interview the person they told the joke to, and ask questions such as: *Do you think this joke is funny? Why or why not? Have you heard this joke before?*

Have students tell jokes from their own culture. If necessary, have them explain why people think the joke is funny. Additional help with American humor can be found in *What's So Funny? An Introduction to American Humor* by Elizabeth Claire (Delta Systems).

## Movie and video review (occasional)

In this column, we give a plot summary of a movie we think ESL students would enjoy. If you have any suggestions for these (recent or classic), please pass them on to us. You can use snippets of these DVDs or videos in your classroom, but the benefit to the student will be to borrow or own a movie that they can play repeatedly at home.

Demonstrate the value of focusing on a short scene, maybe 3 to 5 minutes, and replaying it until they have “slowed down” the flood of language. Using movies with closed captions is valuable. We will review movies that have been popular in the U.S., with worthwhile values, dramatic action story lines that are easy to follow, and that avoid violence, nudity, sex, crime, and off color language. Heavy British accents or difficult dialects would not work for our students.

## Crossword Puzzle

Our crossword puzzle is “handmade” and designed to be ESL-friendly. Most of the words

are useful, high-frequency words known to second-year students.

Important note: A crossword puzzle is not a test, and should not be assigned as one. It's supposed to be a fun challenge, but if your students aren't ready for it, you'll need to help a bit. If your students have never done a crossword puzzle before, show them how. Either draw a piece of the grid on the blackboard or create an overhead transparency of the crossword grid to show how a puzzle is worked out. Work through an entire puzzle with the class. Suggest they use capital letters, and pencils, not pens!

Show students how the letters *down* will help them with words *across*, and vice versa. Show them that they can skip the definitions they don't know, and move on to the next ones. Later, they come back, and with some words filled in, they will have letter clues to help them. Looking at the answer too soon defeats the purpose, but checking answers when they have exhausted all possibilities makes sense for learners.

Teach terms that are often used in crossword clues, such as *opposite*, *initials*, *abbreviation*, *short form*; *same as 14 across*; *past form*; *plural of*.

Have students work on the puzzle individually or with a partner. Give them a time period to share and compare answers (15-20+ minutes). After that, put two groups together, and let them share answers. Then let students check their words against the answers on page 11.

Expand on vocabulary, if needed, with sample sentences. Most people doing puzzles for fun check the answers at some point. This isn't cheating, it's learning. You can encourage students to work on all the clues they can get on their own, first, and take pride in resisting

peeking at the answers too soon. Sometimes we just can't avoid using a low-frequency word which ESL students probably don't know. You can supply the answers to definitions of these words at the outset, if the cross definitions won't help them.

## Let's Talk About It

There are three types of questions in this section. The first type helps students focus on gathering important facts from each article. The second asks students to express their opinions. The third type gives students a chance to share native culture with the group. Answers to the fact questions can be verified in the articles. Opinion and sharing questions have no set answers.

American education develops students who can form opinions, express opinions and give reasons for their opinions with confidence when interacting with people who hold different opinions. This may be unheard of in some students' home cultures where teachers are considered "the fountain of knowledge" and whose opinions are considered the only valid ones. Students who have never expressed opinions before need help in valuing their point of view. Help students learn to support their opinions by offering other facts they know, and their personal experience. Talk about the common saying, "Everyone is entitled to his (or her) own opinion."

Use the culture-sharing questions to develop an international atmosphere in your class, and an appreciation for other cultures. Point out that esaying, "It seems to me..." before giving an opinion is polite, allowing others to have it seem otherwise to them.

Some of the questions may lend themselves to debate. Help students express their own ideas clearly and listen to others' opinions with an open mind. Encourage them to switch roles and

argue for an opinion *opposite* the one they have. That will help them to see things from others' view points.

Select a few of the questions for students to answer in writing. Have them work in small groups to read each others' answers, and help each other correct and edit their writings. Have students turn in their best writing for you to grade and save in a portfolio.

## How to Work with the Activity Pages

Pages 15 to 24 of this **HOW TO** booklet may be photocopied for your class.

**Self Evaluation:** After you have completed the month's issue of *Easy English NEWS*, have students evaluate their own participation and progress. You can collect these for student portfolios and get a better insight into your students' progress and interests than merely through the quizzes.

**Compare:** This Venn Diagram allows comparisons of many sorts. For example the title may be "Holidays in April". The left circle can be "only in the United States" and the right circle can be "only in my home country." The overlapping part in the middle would be the holidays that are in both countries. Or it may be "Who can vote?" "Republicans and Democrats' Ideas for government."

### **Who, what, where, when, how, and why?**

This is usually appropriate for the *Heroes and History* article, or sometimes the front page news story. Students search for the details and write them in.

**People, places, events, and dates:** This is more of a self evaluation and personal opinion page. Which were important to the student?

**Before reading/after reading** Distribute these pages to the class before reading a major

article. Have students talk about what they know about the topic and what they want to know. Have them fill in the top part of the paper. Later, after reading the article, have students write what they learned and still want to learn.

**Facts and Opinions** This may be used with one article or with the entire paper. Have students write down facts they learned that they or others have an opinion about. Fact: 20 people want to be elected president. Opinion: x is the best candidate.

### **Problems and solutions**

This activity will be useful for certain articles such as those on Earth Day, pollution, water shortages, climate change, smoking deaths, etc.

**Time Line** For articles such as *Heroes and History*, or *Women's* (or *African American*, etc.) *History Month*, have students get a sense of the order in which things happened.

**Then and Now** is similar, but compares today's culture, laws, customs with those of a particular time in the past.

**For and Against** use this with articles about some national debate. Have students formulate a proposed action and then brainstorm the reasons for it and against it. They don't have to come to a conclusion, just to see the complexity that lies in many issues.

Encourage students to write "news stories" about people and events in their own schools, workplaces, or neighborhoods. Photocopy their stories, and print them in a student newspaper.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Easy English NEWS Self-Evaluation

1. The articles I liked the most were this month were:

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2. Some interesting or useful things I learned this month were:

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3. After reading *Easy English NEWS* this month, I want to know more about:

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4. An article i did not like was

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because \_\_\_\_\_

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6. Some new words that are important to me are:

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7. My effort in reading *Easy English NEWS* this month is:

A B C D F

8. I understood about \_\_\_% of the newspaper this month. (circle the number)

10% 20% 30% 40% 50%  
60% 70% 80% 90% 95% 100%

9. Ways I can improve my English this month:

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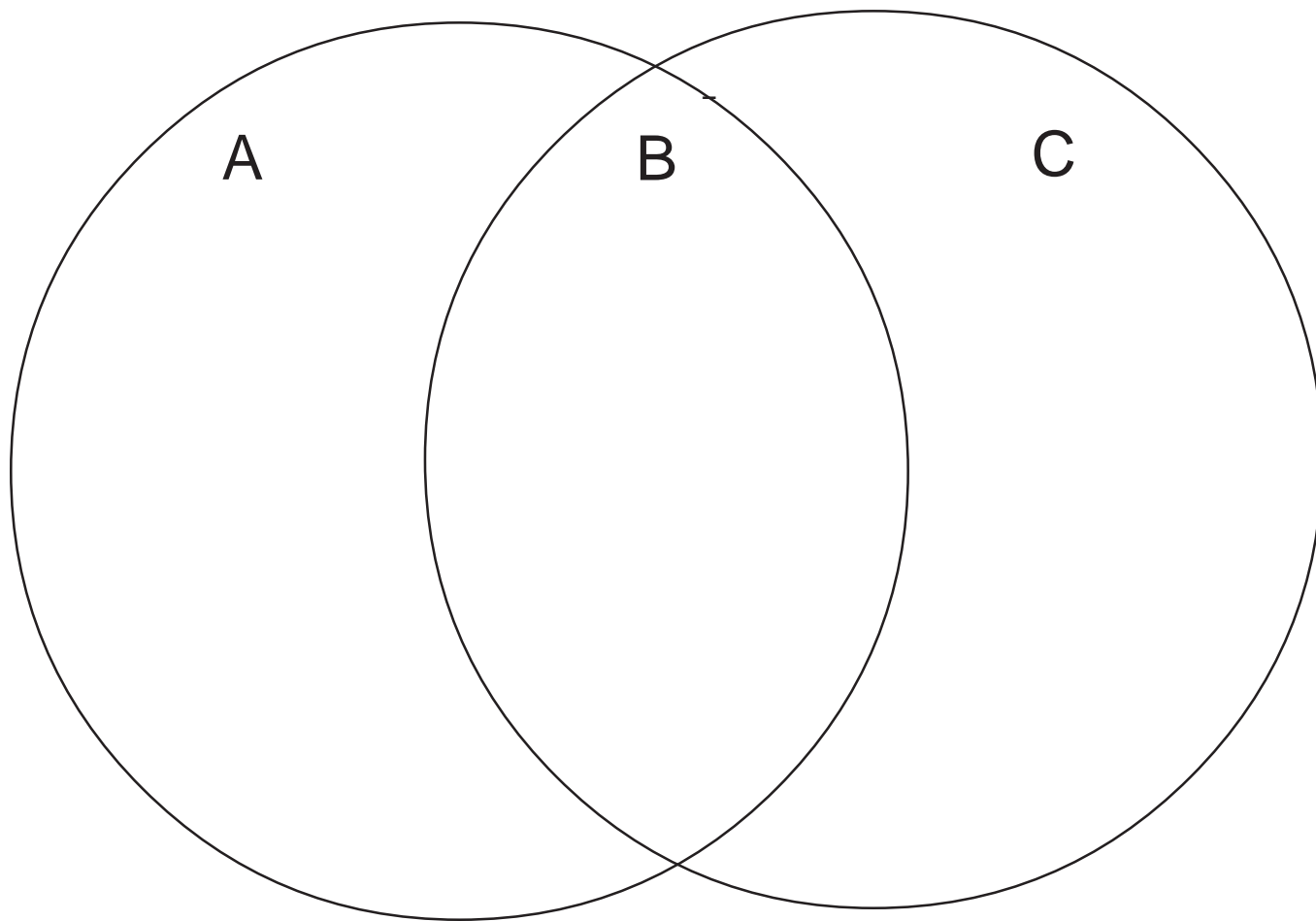
10. Other comments

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## Compare



A: Only in \_\_\_\_\_

B: In both \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_

C: Only in \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Who, What, Where, When, How, Why?

Story Title \_\_\_\_\_

1. Who or what is the story about?

\_\_\_\_\_

2. What happened?

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Where did it happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

4. When did it happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

5. How did it happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

6. Why did it happen?

\_\_\_\_\_

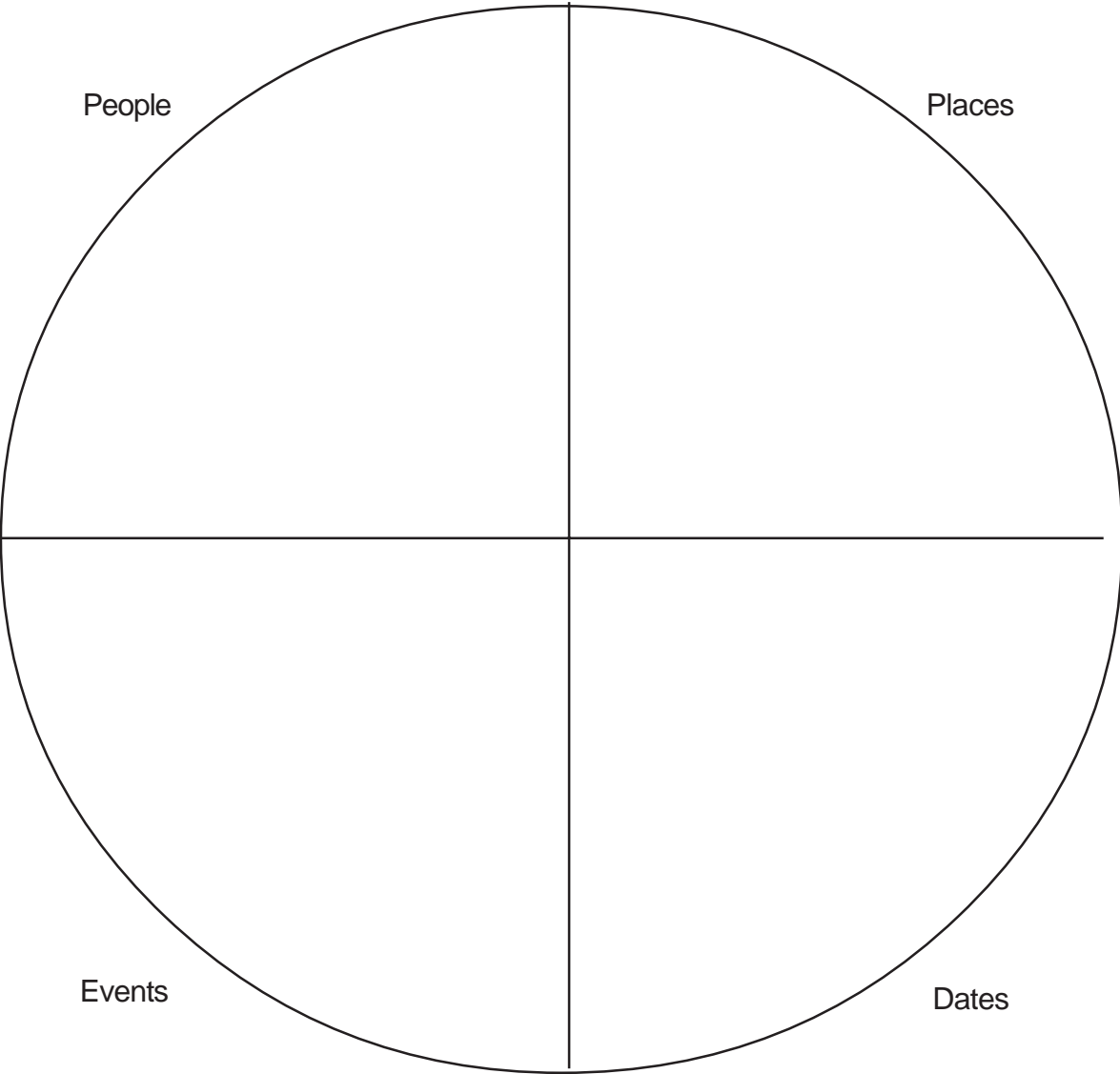
7. Does it affect you? How? Why?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

# People, Places, Events, and Dates



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Title of story \_\_\_\_\_

***Before Reading***

1. What I know about this topic:

2. What I want to know about it:

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***After Reading***

3. What I learned:

4. What I still want to know

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Facts and Opinions

Story \_\_\_\_\_

Fact

Opinion

Fact

Opinion

Fact

Opinion

Fact

Opinion

Fact

Opinion

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Problems and Solutions

**Story** \_\_\_\_\_

### Problem

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### Solutions

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Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## Time Line

**Story:** \_\_\_\_\_

What happened first?

What happened next?

And then?

And then?

And then?

What happened last?

What do you think will happen in the future?



Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## For and Against

Story \_\_\_\_\_

Topic \_\_\_\_\_

<b><u>For</u></b>	<b><u>Against</u></b>