

# Elizabeth Claire's E-News - December 2009:

## Happy Holidays!

Hello All, and welcome, New Readers!

(I hope you have been enjoying these emails, but in case it doesn't meet your needs, you can unsubscribe at any time: [Unsubscribe.](#))

The New York State TESOL conference has come and gone, and back to work! (not that giving a workshop and running a booth isn't work, but it's out there with ESL teachers, my favorite people in the world, so it was mostly fun.)

Thank you, those who signed up for the E-News at the conference. I very much enjoyed speaking with you and hearing the various situations ESL teachers are facing these days.

## This month's E-News Contents:

[Where did all those English words come from?](#)

[December special: Half Price Classroom Teacher's ESL Survival Kit #2](#) (a great holiday gift to your favorite classroom teacher! Or yourself)

[Coming Attractions in December's \*Easy English NEWS\*](#)

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## Where did all those English words come from?

Last month I wrote about the impossibility of knowing exactly how many words were in the English language, with The Oxford Dictionary of English listing 616,500 word-forms.

Many other languages get along without so many synonyms for the same concept.

However, each synonym has its own shade of meaning that lets English speakers express many ideas more precisely. And it *does* certainly challenge the person learning English.

There are several reasons for English's big vocabulary:

English users are "relaxed" about English. There are no universities or academies that keep foreign words out of English. Foreign words, invented words, slang, and new meanings for old words assure that English will grow constantly.

In fact, thousands of new words enter English every year. English users are also playful, and enjoy giving old words new meanings.

Another reason is that English has "bumped into" many other languages. The British Isles were invaded by Romans, Vikings, and the Norman French. Christianity brought in Latin. Scientists borrowed words made from Greek and Latin roots.

Then English sailors and adventurers went about exploring and colonizing other lands: North America, Africa, Australia, India. They brought back words along with other goods.

**Fundamentally, English is classified as a Germanic language. However, half of its vocabulary is French. A good part of the rest is from other languages.** Britain was a world empire for several hundred years, from the 1500's to the late 1900's, having possessions in America, South America, the West Indies, the East Indies, Australia, India and Asia. The language came in contact with many other languages and concepts. And took!

I got carried away with the research for this, so I'm posting it at the website.

[CLICK HERE](#) to see a grand printable list of words that English has borrowed from Latin, Greek, French, Spanish, Italian, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Arabic and a half dozen other languages. You'll wonder how those Anglo Saxons were able to talk about anything at all before they had these words.

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## Holiday Sale!

### Half Price on Classroom Teacher's ESL Survival Kit # 2.

**Announcement: We got our rights back to the Classroom Teacher's ESL Survival Kits! To celebrate our ownership of this long-time favorite, (and updating it and republishing it ourselves) and to show our appreciation to you, we are offering it at half price.**

**The usual price for Survival Kit # 2 is \$35. Until December 18, the price will be a low low low \$17.50.**

If you already own a copy, this will make a great gift for a classroom teacher (maybe you got her name in a grab bag or secret Santa). And if you don't have your own copy, quick, give yourself a gift. This low price is good for just one month.

[Click here](#) for more information and to order.

## Easy English NEWS for December 2009

- December's current events feature article is "**Will Congress Reform the US Health Care System?**" (I had wanted to write about this in September, then October, then November, but alas, no bill. So its been the news long enough for our students to wonder what is happening, and be in time with the background to talk about it when and if the bill passes.)
- Life in the U.S.A. **Shopping for clothes, part 2**-- vocabulary related to places to buy clothing and conversations for returning items.
- **Events in December covered in Easy English NEWS are:**
  - **Wright Brothers Day**
  - **Hanukkah**
  - **Bill of Rights Day**
  - **Winter begins**
  - **Christmas**
  - **Kwanzaa**
  - **Who is Santa Claus**
  - **New Year's Eve**

*Ask Elizabeth* features "**How much to tip**" various service people (and hopefully, those of our readers who are service people will get appropriately tipped.)

*Dr. Majid Ali* writes of **the role of oxygen in our body's health...and the job of anti oxidants to slow down the aging process.**

### *America the Beautiful*

was suspended this month in deference to winter-- We posted tips for readers for keeping warm, dry, and safe in a new, colder environment.

*Heroes and History* features **The Bill of Rights**-- why they came to be, what they are, the Miranda Warning, and examples of peaceful protest.

A special fun feature is **Animal Language**, to provoke discussions of how animals sound different to different languages; animals seem to have different character in different cultures. Includes a short clip on the ways people are described (and insulted or praised) by comparison with animals.

Plus the regular features: This Is Your Page (readers' stories), Funny Stuff, Idioms, the Crossword Puzzle, Let's Talk about It, and Word Help.

[Click here to learn more about Easy English NEWS.](#)

**Did you miss our previous E-News? They are stored for your convenience at our website. [Click here.](#)**

Subscribers to our 12-page monthly newspaper, *Easy English NEWS* receive a monthly teacher's guide with background information on the stories and three reproducible quizzes.

[Click here for this month's Teacher's Guide.](#)

Also available free at the website is a printable

**24-page HOW TO Use Easy English NEWS in your ESL Classroom.**

This is a comprehensive guide, showing techniques to use with beginning students, intermediate, and advanced, and with 10 reproducible, generic student activity sheets including self evaluations that you can use each month. [Click here for the HOW TO.](#)

Your comments are most welcome. [Click here to send a message.](#)

*Till next time,*

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