

Prepositions are your friend! Far from being difficult to use or understand, they bring detail and clarity to whatever you write or say.

For instance: say you wanted us to meet, I could reply with "I will meet you". Now this is a perfectly good sentence consisting of a subject (I), a verb (will meet) and an object (you). The problem is that it leaves out a lot of the important details, like where and when. I could use adverbs to give you that detail; I will meet you downstairs now. But you might wonder where downstairs.

Instead I can use a preposition followed by an article (optional), adjective(s) (again optional) and a noun to describe when and where. This construct is called a prepositional phrase. So let's create a couple of prepositional phrases.

### Inside this issue:

Consult the English Oracle	1
Learning Strategies	2
Culture Corner	3
Asean Corner	4
Bits and Pieces	5



in the common room (where)  
in fifteen minutes (when)

So now my sentence reads: *I will meet you in the common room in fifteen minutes.*

Ok, but what about if you are unsure of where the common room is, in which case I can help to clarify it by adding another prepositional phrase:

*I will meet you in the common room on the 7th floor in fifteen minutes.*

In fact we can keep adding them until the other person understands.

Study the sentence below and see if you can work out the number of prepositional phrases there are:

*I will meet you outside the Mcdonalds in Siam square in central Bangkok at 10 am on Sunday the 14th of November.*



By Kevin Kirk



# Learning Strategies

## The Vocabulary Learning Tips

### Tip One: Read Read and Read !!

Most words are learned from context. The more words you're exposed to, the better vocabulary you will have. While you read, pay close attention to words you don't know. First, try to figure out their meanings from context. Then look the words up. Read and listen to challenging material so that you'll be exposed to many new words.



### Tip Two: Improve your context skills.

Research shows that the vast majority of words are learned from context. To improve your context skills pay close attention to how words are used.



### Tip Three: Practice, practice, practice.

Learning a word won't help very much if you promptly forget it. Research shows that it takes from 10 to 20 repetitions to really make a word part of your vocabulary. It helps to write the word - both the definition and a sentence you make up using the word - perhaps on an index card that can later be reviewed. As soon as you learn a new word, start using it. Review your index cards periodically to see if you have forgotten any of your new words.

### Tip Four: Make up as many associations and connections as possible.

Say the word aloud to activate your auditory memory. Relate the word to words you already know. For example, the word GARGANTUAN (very large) has a similar meaning to the words gigantic, huge, large, etc. You could make a sequence: small, medium, large, very large, GARGANTUAN. List as many things as you can that could be considered GARGANTUAN: Godzilla, the circus fat lady, the zit on your nose, etc. Create pictures of the word's meaning that involve strong emotions. Think "the GARGANTUAN creature was going to rip me apart and then eat me!"

### Tip Five: Use mnemonics (memory tricks).

For example, consider the word EGREGIOUS (extremely bad). Think EGG REACH US - imagine we've made a mistake so bad that they are throwing eggs at us and a rotten EGG REACHes US. Such funny little word pictures will help you remember what words mean, AND they are fun to make up. Also, find out which learning style suits you best. Everyone learns differently!



By Traisuda

Adapt from: [http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/vocabulary\\_tips.htm](http://www.sheppardsoftware.com/vocabulary_tips.htm)



# Culture Corner

## Gift Giving Etiquette in the Philippines



### General Guidelines



Giving gifts, particularly flowers and food, is especially popular in Filipino business culture. Moreover, exchanging gifts is an essential step in solidifying business ties.



Once a contract has been signed, prepare to give your new partners a gift of greater value. These gifts include dinner at a fine restaurant, for men, and perfume for women. Whatever you decide, avoid being so extravagant in your selection that your gift is perceived as a bribe.

When you are invited to a Filipino home, bring a gift of flowers, candy or chocolates. Another option is to arrange to have these items sent before your arrival. Avoid bringing alcohol or heavier foods as these gifts may imply that the hospitality is inadequate. Allowances are made, however, for a specialty dish or food that is unique to your home region. Be sure to send a thank-you note afterwards; another small “thank-you gift” is also a thoughtful gesture.

At Christmas, you will be expected to give a small, modest gift to practically everyone you encounter in a business context. This includes everyone who works for you and all service personnel you depend upon regularly.

When you receive a gift, follow the Asian custom by not opening it in front of the giver. Instead, wait until you are alone.



- At weddings, guests will sometimes use pins to attach money typically bills in small denominations--to the clothing of the bride and groom.

### Appreciated Gifts

- a gift item related to the country or city you inhabit
- fine pens
- stationary imprinted with your company logo
- dinner at a fine restaurant
- whiskey [for men only]





# Asean Corner

## Chinese Lunar New Year's Day in the Philippines

Chinese New Year is considered to be the most important festival for the Chinese community in the Philippines. It does not follow a fixed date in the Gregorian calendar, which is widely used in many countries. The celebration stretches over about 15 days with a variety of observations each day.

### What do People Do?

The Filipino-Chinese community in the Philippines celebrates the Chinese New Year every year in the hope of attracting prosperity, closer family ties and peace. Most Filipino-Chinese families clean their homes thoroughly, prepare lucky money in red envelopes, serve sweet foods and display various foodstuffs and fruit on a table, which is believed to invite good fortune. People also participate in the parades and Dragon dances that are organized in China Towns in different cities in the Philippines.



### Public Life

Chinese New Year is not an official holiday in the Philippines so all establishments remain open. However, some streets in several China Towns in different cities may be closed to honor this celebration.

### Background

Small Chinese communities have existed in the Philippines since the Spanish regime, which lasted for more than 300 years dating back from the 16th century. As time progressed, the Chinese communities grew due to intermarriage among Filipino natives and with other races, including the Chinese. As the population grew, so did the grandeur of the Chinese New Year celebration.



Lawmakers have proposed making the Chinese New Year a legal public holiday. However, there is still a debate going on about whether adding another holiday in the Philippines could be detrimental to the economy, due to the increasing holiday incentives. The *Republic Act 9492* dictates that for every legal non-working holiday, all working establishments should give incentives or overtime pay to their employees.

### Symbols

The mythological Chinese dragon is the main symbol of Chinese New Year. Other symbols include firecrackers that are believed to drive off bad luck and the *Tikoy*, a Chinese sticky sweet treat that symbolizes the attraction of good luck.



By Napassawan



# Bits and Pieces

## Teflon Pans and Cancer: Is There a Link?

I've heard that using Teflon nonstick pans for cooking can cause **cancer**.  
Is that true?

Tremendous confusion exists on this topic, but we're happy to report this belief is FALSE.

According to the findings of a 2006 Environmental Protection Agency scientific advisory panel, the primary chemical used to make Teflon -- perfluorooctanoic acid or PFOA -- is a "likely human carcinogen." But that applies only to PFOA that has been emitted into the environment.

"The link between Teflon cookware and cancer is an entirely different subject," says Robert Wolke, professor emeritus of chemistry at the University of Pittsburgh and author of the two-part book series *What Einstein Told His Cook*. "There is no PFOA in the final Teflon product, so there is no risk that it will cause cancer in those who use Teflon cookware."

That said, Wolke warns, "heating a Teflon pan to 500 degrees or more" (as happens when we leave empty pans on high heat by mistake) can result in smoke and gases that can cause flu-like symptoms in humans and kill pet birds.

So keep an eye on your stovetop and keep your smoke alarms in good working order.



<http://www.webmd.com/cancer/features/teflon-pans>