



LANGUAGE LINKS

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What's happening this week?

LEARNING STRATEGIES

SONGKRAN

is the traditional Thai New Year and has been celebrated according to the Thai solar calendar since ancient times. In most parts of the country, Songkran extends over a period of 3 days starting on April 13 every year.

THE SIGNIFICANCE OF SONGKRAN

April 13 is Maha Songkran Day, or the day marking the end of the old year; April 14 is Wan Nao; and April 15 is Wan Thaloeng Sok, the day on which the new year begins.



At this time, people from rural areas who work in the city usually return home to celebrate the festival. Thus, when the time comes, Bangkok temporarily turns into a deserted city.

The Songkran tradition is recognized as a valuable one for Thai society. The value for families is that it provides the opportunity for family members to gather together and pay respect to their elders. This is done by pouring scented water onto their hands and presenting them with gifts. The elders in return wish the youngsters good luck and prosperity. Also, merit making to honour ancestors is performed.

In the afternoon, after performing a bathing rite for Buddha images and monks, the celebrants, both young and old, joyfully splash water on each other.

How to Improve Your English

Learning English is a process. You should be continually improving your English, and the following list contains some strategies that will help you to do so.

1. Remember that learning a language is a gradual process.
2. Define your learning objectives early: What do you want to learn and why?
3. Make learning a habit. Try to learn something every day. It is much better to study (or read, or listen to English news, etc.) for 10 minutes each day than to study for 2 hours once a week.
4. Remember to make learning a habit! If you study each day for 10 minutes, English will be constantly in your head. If you study once a week, English will not be as present in your mind.
5. Choose your materials well. You will need reading, grammar, writing, speaking and listening materials
6. Vary your learning routine. It is best to do different things each day to help keep the various relationships between each area active. In other words, don't just study grammar.
7. Find friends to study and speak with. Learning English together can be very encouraging.
8. Be patient with yourself. Remember learning is a process – speaking a language well takes time.
9. Communicate! There is nothing like communicating in English, and being successful. Having your friend on the other side of the world understand your email is fantastic!
10. Use the Internet. The Internet is the most exciting, unlimited English resource that anyone could imagine, and it is right at your fingertips.

Adapted from: <http://esl.about.com>

Usana



Culture Corner



Do's & DON'TS IN CHINA!

- Do not use large hand movements. The Chinese do not speak with their hands. Your movements may be distracting to your host.



- Personal contact must be avoided at all cost. It is highly inappropriate for a man to touch a woman in public.
- Do not point when speaking.



- To point, do not use your index finger; use an open palm.
- It is considered improper to put your hand in your mouth.
- Always arrive on time or early if you are the guest.
- Do not discuss business at meals.
- Do not start to eat or drink before the host has started.



- As a cultural courtesy, you should taste all the dishes you are offered.
- Sample dishes only; there may be several courses.



- Never place your chopsticks straight up in your bowl. By doing this, you will remind your host of joss sticks, which connote death.



- Do not drop chopsticks; it is considered bad luck.
- Do not eat all of your meal. If you do, the Chinese will assume you did not receive enough food and are still hungry.



Here's the Answer...

Can, Could, Couldn't or Be Able To?



I don't know when to use *can*, *could*, *couldn't* or *be able to*. Can you explain?



- To talk about ability or possibility in general, we usually use *can* (for the present) or *could* (for the past):

I *could* run 10 miles a day when I was young.



- We can use *be able to* to refer to the past, the present or the future:



I *will be able to* run 10 miles a day if I practise enough.

- To refer to a particular past situation, we use *was/ were able to*. We **don't** use *could* (but *couldn't* is possible).

Even though the restaurant was crowded, we *were able to* find a table.



We *weren't able to/couldn't* find a table because the restaurant was too crowded.

- We use *can* or *could* to ask for permission to do something:



Can I ask you a quick question?

Could I borrow your suntan oil, please?



Source: Tayfoor, S. 2004. *Common Mistakes at First Certificate and How to Avoid Them*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

FUN WITH ENGLISH

No. 2

Word association

Underline two of the words on the right which are associated with, or are part of, the word on the left. Number 1 has been done for you.

- | | | |
|----|------------|---|
| 1 | BABY | inspire, <u>cut</u> , <u>dummy</u> , creeping, barn |
| 2 | DENTIST | meat, toothache, skirt, denture, bore |
| 3 | LAW COURT | sentence, dumb, judge, wall, sing |
| 4 | SEWING | pattern, stick, tug, stitch, saxophone |
| 5 | TRAIN | lucky, compartment, spare, luggage rack, trap |
| 6 | OFFICE | stable, mincer, gem, filing-cabinet, typist |
| 7 | PHOTOGRAPH | duck, slides, snapshot, ruler, whisper |
| 8 | SEASIDE | bath, stranded, beach, cough, deckchair |
| 9 | FUNERAL | coffee, widow, bride, duster, cemetery |
| 10 | BIRD | pigeon, trunk, beak, nib, foxglove |
| 11 | TENNIS | like, net, offside, umpire, Wembley |
| 12 | JACKET | wear, rusty, lapel, smile, crooked |
| 13 | RIVER | fly, bank, mining, Danube, cellar |
| 14 | NEWSPAPER | circulation, backside, lettuce, editor, reduction |
| 15 | BED | headboard, ponytail, slim, blanket, madness |
| 16 | CAR | slip, tired, bonnet, deck, radiator |
| 17 | CAT | purr, swan, bark, paw, river |
| 18 | HOUSE | sob, landing, wind, mortgage, tenor |
| 19 | CARDS | joking, clubs, dark, clover, shuffle |

Answer no. 1

- | | | | |
|----|---|-----|---|
| 1. | c | 6. | c |
| 2. | b | 7. | a |
| 3. | c | 8. | d |
| 4. | a | 9. | d |
| 5. | b | 10. | b |

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