



LANGUAGE LINKS

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Here's the Answer



Should I write 'a number of people is' or 'a number of people are'?



Although the expression 'a number' is strictly singular, the phrase 'a number of' is used with plural nouns and plural verbs.

Example: *A number of people are waiting for the bus.*



This is **not** the case with 'the number', which is still **singular**. For Example: *The number of people here has increased since this morning.*



'It is raining.' In this sentence there is no reference to what 'it' is. Is the sentence grammatically correct?



There is nothing wrong with sentences of this type. Grammar books give different names to 'it' used in this way: the *Oxford English Grammar* by Sidney Greenbaum calls it 'prop' it.

'Prop' it (or 'empty' it) is often used as a meaningless subject. It is particularly frequent in expressions referring to **weather** and **time**:

It's really hot in here.

It's a bit late now.



'Prop' it also occurs in some idiomatic expressions:

I can't make it tomorrow.

I'm just taking it easy.



Source: <http://www.askoxford.com> (adapted)

Napassawan



Culture Corner

CHINESE DINING CUSTOMS



TABLE MANNERS

The main difference between Chinese and Western eating habits is that unlike the West, where everyone has their own plate of food, in China the dishes are placed on the table and everybody shares. If you are being treated by a Chinese host, be prepared for a ton of food. The Chinese are very proud of their cuisine and will do their best to show their hospitality.



Sometimes Chinese hosts will use their chopsticks to put food in your bowl, or on your plate. This is a sign of politeness. The appropriate thing to do is to eat the whatever-it-is and say how yummy it is. However, if you prefer, you can just say a polite 'thank you' and leave the food there.

EATING NO-NO'S



Don't stick your chopsticks upright in the rice bowl. Instead, lay them on your dish. The reason for this is that when somebody dies, the shrine to them contains a bowl of sand or rice with two sticks of incense stuck upright in it. So if you stick your chopsticks in the rice bowl, it looks like this shrine and is equivalent to wishing death upon a person at the table!



Make sure the spout of the teapot is not facing anyone.



It is impolite to set the teapot down with the spout facing towards somebody. The spout should always be directed to where nobody is sitting, usually just outward from the table.

<http://www.executiveplanet.com/business-culture-in/132272513543.html>



Piyaporn

LEARNING STRATEGIES

The best strategies and techniques for learning English (continued)

Increase Your Vocabulary

- ⇒ Choose one vocabulary book.
- ⇒ Don't worry if you can't understand it the first time.
- ⇒ Do not check the meaning of words: check how to use them.
- ⇒ Begin a second time (review and study).
- ⇒ Keep going until you remember all the vocabulary.

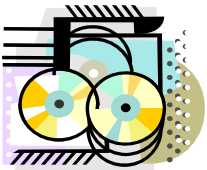


Practise at a Low Level

- ⇒ Practising English at a low level is very important, as understanding difficult material takes a lot of time.
- ⇒ Learners need English knowledge input, which means a lot of reading and listening.
- ⇒ Choose easy material: learning will be more enjoyable.

Immerse Yourself in English.

- ⇒ Go to your teacher's office and ask her to check your English.
- ⇒ Have conversations with your teacher.
- ⇒ Be positive.
- ⇒ Have a partner join you in learning English.



Another Way to Immerse Yourself in English

- ⇒ Choose one movie or CD.
- ⇒ Watch it and listen to it.
- ⇒ Write down sentences and phrases.

Input

- ⇒ Watch a movie.
- ⇒ Listen to music.
- ⇒ Read a book.



Output

- ⇒ Have conversations.
- ⇒ Write down your ideas.



Summary

- ⇒ Find your appropriate method.
- ⇒ Keep practising English.
- ⇒ Balance the study of all four skills.
- ⇒ Have enough time for input.
- ⇒ Have enough time for output.
- ⇒ Keep using your English.



Adapted from <http://opinion.nucba.ac.jp>

Usana

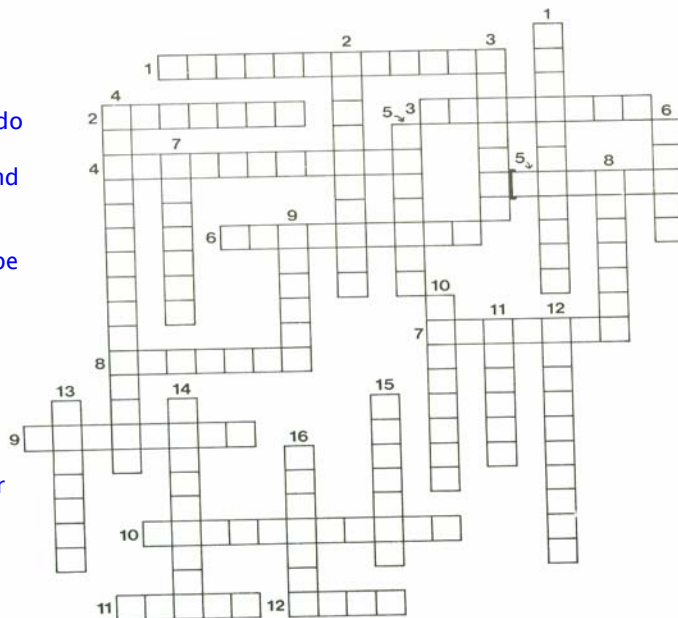
FUN WITH ENGLISH

No.4 Hobbies and pastimes

Fill in the following crossword. Each answer is a hobby or pastime.

Across

- 1 An outdoor activity for those who like running and map reading.
- 2 Not on land.
- 3 A useful activity which some people can do at the same time as watching TV.
- 4 An interest in the ancient world. May spend weekends digging somewhere.
- 5 A popular card game.
- 6 An activity which is never finished. Can't be done in a flat.
- 7 You need a loom to do this properly.
- 8 A good way to spend the weekend. But not as comfortable as a hotel!
- 9 A creative hobby. You may even sell one or two of the things you create.
- 10 An indoor game for 2-4 players. (2 words)
- 11 Most people are interested in this whether they play an instrument or not.
- 12 A relaxing activity. You may spend hours on your head!



Down

- 1 All you need is a camera.
- 2 A relaxing activity, mainly done by women. Could be called painting with wool, nylon, etc.
- 3 It's the closest thing to being a bird.
- 4 A hobby which can also be a good investment. (2 words)
- 5 A good way to keep fit, and of getting around.
- 6 A popular board game. Often takes hours.
- 7 A popular hobby where the thing you make disappears once you make it.
- 8 If you do this then you'll know how to do the rumba, samba, etc.
- 9 You need an animal to do this.
- 10 A popular summer pastime - especially when the weather is warm.
- 11 A pastime for those who fancy themselves as Richard Burton and Elizabeth Taylor.
- 12 A winter pastime. Can be done indoors or out-of-doors. (2 words)
- 13 A famous Chinese game, played with tiles. (2 words)
- 14 An indoor game with balls.
- 15 A relaxing, outdoor hobby where you sit for hours before anything happens.
- 16 A creative hobby using clay.

From : Test Your Vocabulary 2, Peter Watcyn-Jones

Answers no.3

dartboard	6	dice	10
tennis racquet	3	figure skate	13
badminton-racquet	8	ski stick	1
air pistol	4	shin pad	14
golf club	12	dumbbell	9
tent	2	shuttlecock	15
chess set	11	binoculars	5
		ice hockey stick	7

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