



LANGUAGE LINKS

December 13, 2011

Language Links is an internal publication of the Devawongse Varopakarn Institute of Foreign Affairs, Office of the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs <http://www.mfa.go.th/web/2791.php>

How to improve your English skills

Learning is a skill and it can be improved.

Your path to learning effectively is through knowing

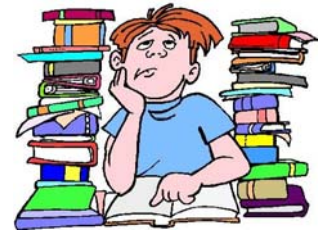
- yourself
- your capacity to learn
- processes you have successfully used in the past
- your interest, and knowledge of what you wish to learn



Motivate yourself

If you are not motivated to learn English you will become frustrated and give up. Ask yourself the following questions, and be honest:-

- Why do you need to learn/improve English?
- Where will you need to use English?
- What skills do you need to learn/improve?
(Reading/Writing/Listening/Speaking)
- How soon do you need to see results?
- How much time can you afford to devote to learning English.
- How much money can you afford to devote to learning English.
- Do you have a plan or learning strategy?



Set yourself achievable goals

You know how much time you can dedicate to learning English, but a short time each day will produce better, longer-term results than a full day on the weekend and then nothing for two weeks.

Joining a short intensive course could produce better results than joining a course that takes place once a week for six months.

Here are some goals you could set yourself:-

- Join an English course - a virtual one or a real one (and attend regularly).
- Do your homework.
- Read a book or a comic every month.
- Learn a new word every day.
- Visit an English speaking forum every day.
- Read a news article on the net every day.
- Do 10 minutes listening practice every day.
- Watch an English film at least once a month.



REFERENCE:

<http://www.learnenglish.de>

Usana

Culture Corner



FUN Trivia

"The way in which emotions are displayed in gesture can vary greatly from culture to culture. Even the most simplistic gesture can cause outrage if exhibited in the wrong setting. This quiz looks at the hows and whys. Good luck!"

1. The "OK" sign made by forming a circle with your thumb and forefinger is generally used by Britons and Americans to tell each other that everything is fine. What less flattering symbol would a Kuwaiti take this gesture to be?

- ☐ A destructive black hole
- ☐ The evil eye
- ☐ Poverty in life
- ☐ Their emptiness in love



The correct answer is "The evil eye"

Although this would not necessarily be offensive to the Kuwaiti (or other inhabitants of the Middle-East) it would not win you many friends as you would then be associated with evil.

On the other hand if you were to make the "OK" gesture to a German, Turk or Greek this may be very offensive. The circular shape made suggests to the recipient that they are a part of the body which may resemble that shape and, by association, are homosexual.

Nevertheless, the gesture continues to have the same positive meaning in both Britain and the USA. It is often used to compliment a meal as eating with a mouthful is seen as rude in these westernised cultures. It is also a common gesture in scuba diving to tell others you are fine as the "thumbs-up" is taken to mean "ascend".

2. When both middle and index fingers are held up in the USA it is seen as representing "V for victory" regardless of whether your palm is facing towards or away from you. However, in the UK, what is the intention of a person doing "the V-sign" with the back of their hand pointing towards you?

- ☐ To insult you
- ☐ To invite you for dinner
- ☐ To propose to you
- ☐ To attempt to sleep with you



The correct answer is "To insult you"

In the UK, when "the V-sign" is made with your palm facing the person you are signalling to you are again displaying "V for victory". Americans must be careful when visiting the UK or Australia to have their hand facing the right direction so not to offend the locals as George Bush Senior did during his visit to Australia in 1992.

Likewise one of the most widely recognised hand gestures in the world is the raising of the middle finger (also known as "the finger"). This causes serious offense in most cultures it is displayed to. In the Middle-East a common insult is a variation of "the finger" as it is inverted to suggest that the recipient is impotent.

Source: <http://www.funtrivia.com/playquiz/quiz31230423c0d88.html>

Here's the Answer...

1. Which is correct 'on holiday' or 'for a holiday'?

You can use 'for' or 'on' with holiday and both would be correct. You can also drop the article 'a' when using 'on' (the third sentence below). Look at these three sentences, **all of which are correct**:

1. I went there **for a** holiday.
2. I went there **on a** holiday.
3. I went there **on** holiday



2. The phrase, "for free", is heard a lot these days. What is the grammatical explanation?

You are right that this is a redundant preposition. It could be that people confuse it with 'for nothing' - 'You can get them for nothing' - which is correct. However, as you have remarked, the use of 'for free' is creeping into our usage. Time will tell if it becomes an accepted usage but for the moment you can safely say that the preposition is redundant and therefore **'free' should be used without 'for'**, e.g., 'buy one and get one free' rather than 'buy one and get one for free'.



3. Can we say I arrive to work at 9 o'clock or do we need to use "at"? or do we need to use "for"? Thank you

'Arrive' can be followed by several prepositions depending on what is following, look at these:

- I **arrived for** work in the morning. (arrive + for where 'work' is a task or job to undertake)
- I **arrived at** work in the morning. (arrive + at where 'work' is a place)
- I **arrived in** time to see her. (arrive + in time where there is a temporal aspect)

So, in terms of your question, I would say that you can use 'for' or 'at' depending on what sense you want to give 'work' (a place or a task).

http://www.english4today.com/englishgrammar/grammarfaq/grammar_category.cfm?tid=8



Napassawan

Learn English Mistakes

Common Mistakes and Confusing Words in English

Let's face it, English can be confusing. A lot of words are similar but with different meanings. It is almost impossible to avoid making mistakes in English, but if you can understand these explanations, you might be able to avoid making these ones.

"How do you do?" vs "How are you?"

How do you do?

This is **not** a question. It is another, very formal way of saying "**Hello**." It is also very British.

The correct response is: "Pleased to meet you." or "How do you do." or just "Hello."

We only really use it the **first time** we meet someone.

How are you?

This is a question, but the person asking it doesn't really want to know the truth about your aching back or headache.

A polite response is: "I'm fine thanks. And you?"

Shaking Hands



When meeting someone formally for the first time, we shake their hand and say "How do you do?" or "Pleased to meet you."

"How do you do?" isn't really a question, it just means "Hello".



When young people meet informally they sometimes say "Give me five!" and slap their hands together (high five).

Generally we do not shake hands with people we know well.

REFERENCE:

<http://www.learnenglish.de/mistakes/howdoyoudovshowareyou.htm>

EDITORIAL TEAM

Editor : Mr. David Rogers

Editorial Team : Ms. Usana Wongnarkpet
Ms. Napassawan Phromsumphun
Ms. Piyaporn Juntarat

Production : Ms. Raevadee Tantayavit