



Dear Colleague,

Happy New Year! January is the month named for Janus, the Roman god with two faces. Janus was the god of doorways; of people coming in and going out. Which seems symbolic right now. New students often arrive in January. We leave last year behind and look towards the new year. It is a good time to talk about hopes, dreams, and especially goals. These can be fruitful conversation starters in your classroom. Encourage your students to be practical with their goals but also to dream a little bit when thinking about the future. Enjoy this time of exploration and have a great month!

*Carol Brigham*

### A Brand New Treatment (pages 1 and 9)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell what sickle cell disease is. They will be able to tell the difference between an illness from bacteria and viruses and a genetic disease. They will be able to tell the ways to treat sickle cell disease and the new treatments for sickle cell disease.

**Procedure:** Find out what your students know about genetic diseases. Ask students questions such as: *What are your genes? Where do your genes come from? What is a genetic disease? How does someone get a genetic disease?* Read the article at a pace appropriate for your students, stopping to discuss medical terms or other complex thoughts.

The new treatments are groundbreaking for sickle cell disease. Before this genetic treatment, a bone marrow transplant was the only cure for sickle cell disease, but it was not an option for everyone. Part of the struggle with bone marrow transplants is being able to find a match and worrying about rejection. This new technology allows for a person to be a donor for themselves. Doctors are very hopeful about this technology and what it can be used for in the future. But this also brings up an ethical question about using technology to change DNA. Ask students questions such as: *Do you think this treatment is a good thing? Why or why not? What problems might come from changing someone's*

*DNA? The FDA says this treatment is safe; do you believe them? Why or why not?*

If it is appropriate for your students, have a debate where your students take sides. Some of them can be for the treatment, some of them can be against the treatment. They can argue why they are for or against and give examples that support their stance.

### Classified Advertisements (pages 1, 5, and 10)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to list common abbreviations in classified ads and describe what the abbreviations mean. They will be able to tell where they can find classified ads.

**Procedures:** Ask students who are looking for jobs where they look for job postings. Have them discuss the types of things they see in job listings and what things confuse them. Read the article. Take the two sample ads from the newspaper and work through them together. Have students describe what the ads are saying before they read the descriptor paragraphs in the article.

Have students pick out abbreviations from the lists that they have seen before and describe how they could use them. Also have them identify abbreviations that are not familiar to them. Discuss where they may be able to use these new abbreviations.

Bring in a classified ads section from a local newspaper or look on a local job board for examples. Have students read through them and discuss what the ads are saying. Have students choose which ads sound like a good fit for them. Have them practice responding to the ad.

### Events in January (pages 2 and 3)

**New Year's Day:** Ask what students did on New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. What did they do in their home countries for the New Year? Talk about resolutions and setting goals.

Have students brainstorm a list of goals they have for the year 2024. Help students see the importance of measuring

their goals; rather than say "I will learn more English this year," they can say, "I will pass a (certain) test by June 30," or "I will learn 500 new words by May 1." This helps them see if they are on track to reach their goal. Teach students how to state their resolutions in an affirmative way; rather than say "Stop being mean to my little sister," they might word it as "Do something kind for my little sister every day."

**The Calendar:** The calendar is always a good January topic as there are many differences between cultures. Ask students questions such as: *What other calendars are used in your home country? When is the New Year on that calendar? How many days are in the year in that calendar? Is it a lunar calendar? What important holidays are celebrated in your home country in January?*

**Orthodox Christmas:** Students from Eastern Europe will likely be familiar with this holiday. Invite them to tell the class about any customs or traditions they have seen or know about. Otherwise, have an Orthodox Christian come to your classroom to tell about the holiday.

**Betsy Ross's Birthday:** Even though most historians now think Betsy Ross did not sew the first American flag, it is good for students to learn the stories from American History. It is also good for them to learn what legends are and that some American stories are legends.

**Martin Luther King Jr. Day:** Ask students what they already know about Martin Luther King Jr. Explain the abbreviation for *junior*, the son of a man with the same name. Have students watch clips of the March on Washington in 1963 and his speech on **YouTube.com** (search "I have a dream"). Ask questions such as: *What are civil rights?* (Equal rights in employment, education, housing, voting, marriage.) *Which groups have won rights? Which groups have not?* (Consider Black people, 18-year-olds, women, people with disabilities, elderly people, immigrants, illegal immigrants, felons, same-sex couples, transgender people, children, unborn children, animals.) Have students tell about the civil rights heroes of their home countries. Ask students what *they* would like to improve or change.

**The State of the Union Address:** Students will be able to explain the speaker, the audience, and the purpose of the State of the Union Address. Have students read the article, (point out that the photo is from last year). The date wasn't set when we went to press, but might be set when you are reading this, so let students know and be ready to watch the address on TV or online. You can record the address and play the opening part of it to students the next day, or show it to students from [www.whitehouse.gov/sotu](http://www.whitehouse.gov/sotu). Ask students: *What topics do you think President Biden will talk about? What topics would you talk about? What do you think the current state of the U.S. is? Why?*

**This Is Your Page (page 4)**

Read the stories and have students relate similar stories from their own lives. Which story did they like the best? What stories would they want to share with other newcomers to the U.S.? Ask: *Has anyone ever had trouble pronouncing your name? How did they try to say it? Have you ever had problems ordering something from a menu? What happened? What were your first few weeks in the U.S. like? How are the names of foods here in the U.S. the same or different than in your home country? Have you ever had a time when someone gave you wrong information? What happened?*

**Ask a Speech Coach: /sh/ and /zh/ (page 5)**

Recognizing the difference between /sh/ and /zh/ is a challenge for many English language learners. This is made much more difficult due to the many ways of spelling each sound in English.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to hear and pronounce the difference between the sounds /sh/ and /zh/. They will be able to tell ten words that contain the sound /sh/ and ten words that contain the sound /zh/.

**Procedures:** Read the article out loud and practice the sentences. Have students create their own sentences using the words in the article. Invite them to read their sentences to the class. *Can anyone make and read a tongue twister?*

**Primary Elections and Caucuses (page 6)**

**Objectives:** Students will be able to explain the purpose of the primary elections. They will be able to explain the difference between a primary election and a caucus, and be aware that three Democrats and seven Republicans are running for president. (Note the number of

candidates may change by the time you are reading the article with students.)

**Procedures:** Find out what students already know about the candidates and past debates (from news in their own language, from past issues of *Easy English NEWS*). Read the article and clarify understanding. Have students act out some of the procedures to help show the differences between a primary election and a caucus. Each state has different rules about assigning delegates, but here's an exercise to help students understand the general premise:

**For a primary election:** Have students name four or five well-known movie or TV stars, or characters, or superheroes. Write the names on the board. Give a small piece of paper (a "ballot") to each "voter". Have students vote for their favorite candidate by writing their votes on the papers. Have them drop their votes into a "ballot box." Point out that this is a secret ballot, and no one has to tell another person how they are voting. After everyone has voted, count the ballots for each candidate and write the total for each candidate on the board next to their names.

**For a caucus:** Write the names of the same stars on separate large pieces of paper. Post these around the room. Have students who have a favorite star give a short talk about why their star is the best. Have students walk ("vote with their feet") to the part of the room with the name of the star they want to vote for. Students can try to convince others to join their group. Point out that this ballot is not secret and anyone can see who other voters vote for. Write the names and numbers of votes for each candidate on the board.

Locate Iowa and New Hampshire on a wall map. Then locate the next two states who have primaries or caucuses: South Carolina and Nevada. Let students know that the results from these first states are important. If a candidate doesn't do well in the early primaries, he or she may drop out of the race.

**Heroes and History: Sandra Day O'Connor (page 7)**

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell some of the difficulties O'Connor had after she graduated with honors from law school, and tell how she finally got a job in a law office. They will be able to explain the purpose and power of the Supreme Court. They'll be able to tell what O'Connor's mission was after she retired from the Supreme Court and explain what civics education is.

**Preparation:** Go to [iCivics.org](http://iCivics.org) yourself to see if the resources are at a language level suitable for your students' age and English levels. Set up goals for your students' awareness of their rights and responsibilities as members of U.S. society. Whether or not they will become citizens, they should know how the U.S. government works.

**Procedures:** Discuss the function of the Supreme Court and the important decisions the court makes that determine "the law of the land." Explain that since 1789, there had only been men on the Supreme Court. (Today, there are four women and five men).

Read the article and discuss the pictures. Explain the meaning of civics (and its relationship to civilization [living in a city]). Elicit from students what they already know about the U.S. government elections, laws, local mayor, state governor, president, vice president, etc. What would they like to know more about?

Ask students why they think it is important to study civics. Point out that new immigrants sometimes know more about American history and government than people born here, because they must study history and government in order to pass the citizenship test.

What do they know of civics education in their home countries? How does a study of history and government make a people strong?

**ANSWERS**

- |                        |                   |
|------------------------|-------------------|
| 1. d                   | 16. F (Southern)  |
| 2. b                   | 17. F (Reagan)    |
| 3. a                   | 18. F (Democrats) |
| 4. c                   | 19. F (Iowa)      |
| 5. b                   | 20. T             |
| 6. b                   | 21. H (retired)   |
| 7. a                   | 22. D (candidate) |
| 8. b                   | 23. J (donate)    |
| 9. d                   | 24. C (expensive) |
| 10. a                  | 25. A (virus)     |
| 11. F (New Year's Day) | 26. E (junior)    |
| 12. F (sun)            | 27. B (utility)   |
| 13. T                  | 28. F (eloquent)  |
| 14. T                  | 29. I (swollen)   |
| 15. F (nonviolence)    | 30. G (salary)    |

## January 2024 Quiz I

Choose the best answer. Write its letter on the line in front of the number.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Where do genetic diseases come from?
- a) viruses
  - b) bacteria
  - c) cold temperatures
  - d) gene mutations
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Where do people get their genes?
- a) from a doctor
  - b) from their parents
  - c) from the store
  - d) from their blood
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. What part of a person's blood takes oxygen from the lungs to other parts of the body?
- a) hemoglobin in red blood cells
  - b) white blood cells
  - c) plasma
  - d) platelets
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. What shape is a normal red blood cell?
- a) C shaped
  - b) square
  - c) round
  - d) triangle
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. What shape is a sickle cell blood cell?
- a) round
  - b) C shaped
  - c) square
  - d) triangle
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Where have classified ads been printed for hundreds of years?
- a) Craigslist
  - b) newspapers and magazines
  - c) Facebook
  - d) books
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. What did people use to keep classified ads shorter?
- a) abbreviations
  - b) words
  - c) sentences
  - d) capital letters
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. What is the abbreviation for as soon as possible?
- a) VSP
  - b) ASAP
  - c) NOW
  - d) SOON
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. What does WFH mean?
- a) write for hours
  - b) when frogs hop
  - c) work for hire
  - d) work from home
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Who was the first female U.S. Supreme Court justice?
- a) Sandra Day O'Connor
  - b) Elena Kagan
  - c) Ruth Bader Ginsburg
  - d) Amy Coney Barret

## II. From Here and There

**True or False?** Write “T” for true and “F” for false. If the sentence is *false*, *make it true*. Write a word to replace the underlined word.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Many Americans make resolutions on Martin Luther King Jr. Day.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. The calendar we use every day is based on the moon.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Orthodox Christians use the Julian calendar.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. organized a bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama in 1955.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. King taught the boycotters to use violence to change the laws.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Some governors of Northern states vowed that they would never let segregation end.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. President Biden nominated Sandra Day O’Connor for Supreme Court justice.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The two major political parties in the United States are the Republicans and the Liberals.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. The first caucus will be in the state of Florida on January 15.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. Sandra Day O’Connor founded iCivics.org to help teach Americans civics.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## III. Building Vocabulary

Write the best word to complete each sentence. Write the letter of that word on the line in front of the number.

### Word List

- |              |             |
|--------------|-------------|
| A. virus     | F. eloquent |
| B. utility   | G. salary   |
| C. expensive | H. retired  |
| D. candidate | I. swollen  |
| E. junior    | J. donate   |
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. My dad \_\_\_\_\_ from his job when he was 65 years old.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Each political party must nominate a \_\_\_\_\_ for president.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. In January, many people clean out their houses and \_\_\_\_\_ things they do not need anymore.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Something that costs a lot of money is \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. A \_\_\_\_\_ makes people sick.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. The word \_\_\_\_\_ comes after the name of a man who has the same name as his father.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. The electric bill and the gas bill are \_\_\_\_\_ bills.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. I want to be an \_\_\_\_\_ speaker like Martin Luther King Jr.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. When I walk a lot, my feet get \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. The amount of money someone makes in a year is his or her \_\_\_\_\_.