



Dear Colleague:

Whew, at this writing, our office seems to be dodging a wet bullet named Florence. But our neighbors in South and North Carolina and Georgia are in dire straits as we go to press. Send thoughts of healing; donate to the Red Cross or other ways to help the survivors.

There's so much politics in the news...a good time for lessons about government and how it works (or is supposed to work.)

### Midterm Elections (pages 1 and 5)

The divisions in the country portrayed by the media are depressing. I watch many TV news channels; I get many news reports, and I listen to people discussing politics. The main thing I notice is that most folks are not able to tolerate the others' point of view. Our representatives in Congress seem to be toeing party lines, and not compromising. Each side is sure it is right and the other side wrong. The media pundits misrepresent one side as above reproach and the other side as evil incarnate. There's a quantum physical aspect to this inability to change: When a person adopts an opinion, the nervous system puts up sub-molecular barriers to facts that would alter the opinion. Discussions often seem to be fruitless...facts can't penetrate. Which explains the red and blue conversations on page one: *Can't hear you.*

I have no reporters on the field, and no first hand access to "truth." I'm an ESL teacher/writer trying to get some vocabulary and information about our country across so students can understand the conversations around them. There's no room to present enough facts to support debates in the class or help students make up their own minds.

But it's a good time to talk about how a republic works: the people elect representatives to make laws for them. (This is different from a *democracy*, in which people directly make the laws.) Students will need to know what is at stake in the election: immigration reform, a wall at the border, the economy, jobs, spending on health and education, climate change, the national debt, personal security, military preparations, international relations, suspicions of Russian interference in the

2016 election, all the way to the widely spreading (on left wing side) idea of impeaching the president.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell the purpose of Congress, tell the numbers in the House of Representatives and the Senate, and give the names of the two main political parties. They will be able to tell when Election Day is, who their current representative and senators are, who is running for office in their district, plus any candidates running for the Governor or the Senate in your state. They will be able to list some of the issues.

**Preparation:** Bring to class some props such as mailings from candidates and parties, political brochures, photos, and candidates' ads cut from newspapers.

**Procedure:** Before distributing *Easy English NEWS* to your students, find out what they already know about U.S. government. Ask questions such as: *Who makes the laws in your home country? How did they get those jobs? Who can vote in elections in your home country?*

*Who is president of the United States? What city is the capital of the United States? Who is the governor of this state? Who is the mayor of this city? Who makes the laws for the United States? Who are the senators from this state? Who is the representative from this district? (Or, from your district?) How did those people get their jobs?*

Bring up any state or local issues that might be important to your students that will be decided by the next office holders. Use a large wall map of the United States to locate your state and name the states around it. Ask questions such as: *How many states are there? In which states do you think the most people live?* (Use the numbers of representatives on the chart: California, Texas, New York, Florida, Illinois, Pennsylvania.) Review September's article on the Constitution. Ask students to tell about any campaign commercials they have heard on the radio or seen on TV, in ads in a newspaper or signs on the street.

Distribute the newspapers and direct students' attention to the photo on the front page. *Who is this? What is he a candidate for? Why do you think he wants*

*to be elected?* Find out if and when a candidate will be speaking in your area, and encourage students to go...not that they will understand necessarily, but to be witness to the process of a campaign.

Refer to the chart and the map on page 5, and ask questions such as: *How many representatives does our state have in Congress? Which states in the U.S. have the most representatives?* Let students know who your senators are and their representative in Congress.

**Register to vote** (page 10) Explain where in your community a citizen can register to vote. Print out a registration form for your state to practice registering. Stress that they may not register if they are not citizens. Strongly urge those who are citizens to register and to learn the issues and candidates. Have them use Google to find out where they are supposed to vote. ("Their address, where do I vote?")

### Don't break the law! (pages 1, 9, and 11)

Students may come from societies that have very different concepts of law, different ways of making laws, and different kinds of punishments for breaking laws. In some countries, the law is not the highest value; a person's social position is. So there are laws in those countries that do not affect the leaders or the very wealthy. In the The U.S. citizens make the laws indirectly through elected representatives. In some Islamic nations, many laws are based on the Qu'ran and the actions of Mohammed. In some countries, bribery is customary, so for a price, a person can break a law without punishment. (Point out that offering a bribe in the U.S. is a crime. If a person is caught giving or taking a bribe there are serious consequences.)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell the different levels of government (federal, state, county, and town/city,) and at least ten laws that affect their own lives. They will be able to tell some consequences of breaking a law. They will be able to tell several rights that are protected by law, several laws that protect disabled people, and several laws that provide for equal treatment. Point out that laws that protect freedoms have a limit. "You have the right to swing your fist, but your right to swing your fist stops where my nose begins."

Examples: 1. A business may not sell toys that can easily hurt a child. 2. A person may freely practice his or her religion, but they may not break any laws doing it. A religion may not endanger a person's life or liberty. 4. Landlords may not refuse to rent to a person because of his or her race, religion, or sexual orientation.

**Procedure:** Pre-teach vocabulary, and have students read the article. Have students listen to the audio reading of the article. Then divide the class into various sized groups, ranging from one to eight. Give these instructions:

*You and 300 others are starting a new country on an island. You are one of the leaders who will make laws for the country. What laws will help make a good society? Vote on the laws. Decide on punishments for each law if someone breaks it. Have a member of each group read the laws their group has made. Discuss.*

Ask questions such as: *Where did you get your ideas for your laws? Did everyone in the group agree on the laws? Would it be better to have a king or dictator make the laws without asking the people?*

## Events in October (pages 2 and 3)

Have students find the dates for each of the events in October and write those in the calendar on page 2. Elicit any school events, and personal events such as birthdays and anniversaries, and have them enter those as well. Note any October holidays students celebrate in their home countries.

**Columbus Day** Find out what students already know about Christopher Columbus. Ask questions such as *Why is Columbus famous? What was he looking for? Why?* (Point out that other people [Irish, Vikings, etc.] had discovered America too, but had not started masses of people moving here.) *What were some good results of Columbus's discoveries? What were some harmful results?*

Use a world map to show Columbus's route from Spain south to the Canary Islands. Ask questions such as: *How was Columbus's voyage different from your travel to the United States?*

*The U.S. was a "New World" to you when you came. What did you discover here? What things did you send home to your home country?* Discuss the recent feelings of anger toward Columbus and the desire of some groups to take down statues that honor him. *Should we judge people by today's rules or by the rules of the time in*

*which they lived?*

Also this month: The last half of Hispanic-Heritage Month. (I included it for the many schools who start their program in October, even though we had an article on it in September). October is an important month for other European nationalities as well: It's German-Heritage Month, Italian-Heritage Month and Polish-Heritage Month.

Have a "heritage week" in your class, with members of each nationality explaining and showing something about their home country, music, art, government, food, language, and traditions.

## This is your page (page 4)

Read and then talk about the stories and have students relate any similar experiences. Ask questions such as: *Have you had any interesting things happen on a plane you were traveling on? What words have you gotten confused in English? Why is it importance to have good credit? What are some rules when you take a test? What difficulties have you had in a restaurant?*

Teach some American gestures and their meanings: A-OK; flirtatious wink; salute; hands on hips, hands folded in front of the chest; waving hello, waving good bye, shrugging one's shoulders, and so forth. Have students demonstrate gestures from their native language/culture.

## Register to vote (page 10)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to say who is able to vote; where a voter can register, and the deadline in your state for registering. They will be able to tell who may not vote. **Procedures:** Discuss the process of voting in students' home countries. Discuss how to prepare to vote if one is a citizen, and the citizen's duty to understand the issues, know the candidates, and go out to vote.

## Keeping schools safe (page 6)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell why there are lockdown drills, and be able to participate in them appropriately. **Procedure.** If your school has lockdown drills, be sure all of the English language learners have lessons about them and understand the instructions that may be given in other classes. A lockdown has the potential to traumatize students who don't understand what's going on, so be pro active, and teach the lesson early in the year. Discuss bullying, what it is, how to prevent it, how to report it, how to stand up for someone who is being bullied, and the penalties in your school for those who

bully.

## The Salem Witch Trials (page 7)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell the story of the Salem witch trials. They will know where and when this horror happened, and how it started. Students will be able to discuss the existence of false beliefs and the dangers of false accusations. They will understand the reference President Trump makes when he says the investigation into his collusion with the Russians to get elected is a *witch hunt*.

**Procedure:** Read the article. Listen to the audio recording available at our website. Have students locate Massachusetts on a wall map. (The village of Salem is now named *Danvers*.) Ask questions such as: *What would cause people to believe in witches?* (No scientific explanation for bad events; everyone else believed in witches.) *What evidence did the judges and juries listen to, to find 19 people guilty of being witches? How soon did they hang the people? Was there a possibility of an appeal to a higher court? Did the accused people have attorneys? Did anyone cross examine the witnesses? What protections does our Constitution have that would prevent such killings?* (Accused may have an attorney, may appeal a verdict, etc.) For older and advanced students, follow the news to see if the investigations by special counsel Robert Mueller into possible collusion by President Trump's campaign with Russians is a witch hunt or a proper investigation.

## ANSWERS

- |                   |                         |
|-------------------|-------------------------|
| 1. d              | 16. F (Democrats)       |
| 2. c              | 17. T                   |
| 3. a              | 18. F (Massachusetts)   |
| 4. d              | 19. F (innocent people) |
| 5. a              | 20. F (pill)            |
| 6. a              | 21. H (criticize)       |
| 7. b              | 22. E (evidence)        |
| 8. a              | 23. I (petition)        |
| 9. b              | 24. A (deport)          |
| 10. d             | 25. C (treason)         |
| 11. F (1492)      | 26. B (expert)          |
| 12. F (west)      | 27. F (felony)          |
| 13. T             | 28. D (voyage)          |
| 14. F (Halloween) | 29. J (duty)            |
| 15. T             | 30. G (discriminate)    |

## October 2018 Quiz I

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. In the United States, laws are made by
- a) the king of the U.S.
  - b) candidates for office.
  - c) the president.
  - d) representatives of the people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The House of Representatives is part of
- a) the Senate.
  - b) the White House.
  - c) Congress.
  - d) every state.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. One job of Congress is to
- a) make laws.
  - b) elect the president.
  - c) choose state governors.
  - d) run for election.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. States with a small population
- a) have the most representatives.
  - b) have no representatives.
  - c) have at least two representatives.
  - d) have at least one representative.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. There are \_\_\_\_\_ senators from each state with a total of \_\_\_\_\_ U.S. senators .
- a) 2, 100
  - b) 50, 100
  - c) 100, 2
  - d) 1, 50
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. "A nation of laws" means that
- a) laws are equal for all people.
  - b) everyone can break laws.
  - c) there are too many laws.
  - d) there are only national laws.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Time in jail or a fine are
- a) ways to break a law.
  - b) punishments for breaking a law.
  - c) rewards for breaking a law.
  - d) excuses for breaking a law.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Many laws in the United States are based on
- a) Judeo-Christian principles.
  - b) Muslim principles.
  - c) Hispanic principles.
  - d) United Nations principles.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. In the U.S., a person may
- a) have only one occupation.
  - b) have any religion or no religion.
  - c) not criticize the government.
  - d) have more than one wife.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Police may not search a person's house
- a) unless the person has broken a law.
  - b) unless they pay a bribe.
  - c) unless they have an attorney.
  - d) unless they have a warrant from a judge.

## 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. Columbus reached America on October 12, 1942  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Columbus was looking for a way to get to the East by sailing south.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. North and South America are continents.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Children go trick-or-treating on the United Nations’ Birthday.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Before you can vote, you must register.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The two major political parties in the United States are the Republicans and the Socialists.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. The government may not keep people in jail without a hearing before a judge.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. The Salem Witch trials happened in Salem, New York.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. In 1692, Salem hanged 19 witches.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. A patient may need to swallow a pillow.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 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. deport   | F. felony       |
| B. expert   | G. discriminate |
| C. treason  | H. criticize    |
| D. voyage   | I. petition     |
| E. evidence | J. duty         |
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. In the U.S. people may freely \_\_\_\_\_ the government or the president.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. A person may show \_\_\_\_\_ in court about a crime.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. Many people signed a \_\_\_\_\_ to change the law about immigration.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. The government may \_\_\_\_\_ an immigrant who breaks the law.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. If a person helps a country’s enemies, it is a crime called \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. A person who knows a lot about a subject is an \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. A person who commits a \_\_\_\_\_ may lose the right to vote.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Columbus’s first \_\_\_\_\_ to the “New World” took 33 days.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. Something you must do because of your position or job is your \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. It is against the law for an employer to \_\_\_\_\_ against a person because of his race, gender, or religion.