



Dear Colleague:

Last month we were very excited to welcome Richard Lederer, renowned author, speaker, and teacher. He is best known for his books on word play and the English language. Mr. Lederer's article "Why is English spelling so crazy" is bound to strike a note and get a chuckle from your students. Don't miss the five extra quizzes at our website. Go to [Elizabethclaire.com](http://Elizabethclaire.com); *Easy English NEWS*, then EEN tests, then choose February Cloze Tests.

*Lynn Corigliano*

### Census Results (pages 1 and 9)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to name several states with the highest populations and states with lowest populations. They will be able to give two reasons why the state population numbers are important. They will be able to explain why election districts are redrawn every 10 years.

**Procedures:** Before reading the article, direct attention to a map of the United States. Ask students to guess which state they think has the most people and which has the least. Ask them why they think that and why they think these numbers are important. After reading the article, point out the western and southern states that have grown in population: California, Texas, Florida, Nevada, and the states in the north that have grown the least: Wyoming, Maine, New York so they see that the concentration of population growth is related to geography. Ask why they think Louisiana is the only state that has lost population. (Many people left after Hurricane Katrina and didn't return.)

Point out that the number of representatives in the House of Representatives in Congress doesn't change, so the same number (435) must be divided among all the states fairly. Do the math on the board: Have a student come to the board to divide the total population by 435 to see how many people there are for each representative. Explain that every state must have at least one representative. Some states will lose representatives and other states will gain representatives based

on their new population. Remark that this is why it was so important to have everyone in our state counted last April!

Have students look at the chart in blue on page 11 to see if their state has gained or lost representatives.

### Trial by Jury (pages 1 and 10)

This article follows last month's article on what happens when a person is arrested. Review information in the January article to lead in to this article.

Ask students what they already know about American trials. Some may have watched court TV programs, or seen movies with trials. *What rights do accused people have? What if a person has no money for an attorney? (What does a trial attorney cost? (\$250 an hour in NJ, last we checked.) Why do you think a person needs an attorney in a trial? (Educated English speakers often do not use an attorney in small cases.) What other people are important in a trial?* The article is dense with vocabulary, so don't try to rush it all in one session. Draw a schematic of a courtroom on the board, with stick figures in place (*judge, witness, defendant, attorneys, prosecutor, jury, security officer, etc.*) The concepts are important but abstract.

Have a role play, after reading the article, with one student accused of a crime (sleeping in class, for example), and appoint students to the roles of defendant, defense attorney, prosecutor, jury, judge, and witnesses.

Trials are public, so if there is any way you can take your class (or send) to watch a court trial, this lesson will be less abstract. Talk about Legal Aid attorneys who are assigned to cases where a defendant cannot afford a lawyer. Discuss the oath to *tell the truth, the whole truth and nothing but the truth*. Explain *perjury* and its consequences.

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

**Calendar:** Elicit from your students any special days celebrated in their country in February. Also, ask who has a birthday, anniversary, or other celebration

in February. *What school events will take place in February?* Have students write these directly on the calendar.

**African-American History Month** (also called Black History Month) The concept of a month to focus on an ethnic group's history might be unusual to your students. Let them know that other months are also set aside for various groups (March being Women's History Month, May being Asian American History Month, for examples). Point out that 40 years ago, there were almost no black news reporters, TV programs, mayors of cities, presidential candidates, CEO's, etc. Now Oprah Winfrey is one of the richest women in America, Barak Obama is president, and many black TV and movie stars abound. The article on Scott Joplin on page 7 makes the concepts more personalized.

**Chinese New Year** Have an Asian student or a visitor to your class speak about his or her customs on Lunar (Chinese) New Year. Talk about the foods that are eaten because their names have other meanings. *Which customs for Chinese New Year are interesting? Which would you like in your new year celebration? Do you have a special time for cleaning up your whole house? For paying back money that you owe to people? Is this a good New Year's custom? Why? Are there good luck foods in your culture?*

**Groundhog Day** This holiday has a very long history. It came to America with the German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania. In their homeland, Germans used to watch for badgers to come out of their homes on this date. (February is much milder on the European continent, apparently) They chose the groundhog here, as they were plentiful. Ask students what animals they have seen in the U.S that they don't have in their native country. Read the article, and check for comprehension. Ask what legends they have in their native country regarding the weather or animals. Watch the segment from the movie *Ground Hog Day* where the Punxsatawney city fathers take the groundhog out of his home and announce to the world "the groundhog's prediction."

**Susan B. Anthony Day** This day is not a holiday, but it's a great February birthday to know about. Susan B. Anthony led her

“troops” through a long and painful struggle, taking 40 years of her life, and having only two states where women had the right to vote by the time she died. Susan B. Anthony voted in an election in 1873, and then was tried as a criminal for breaking the law, and found guilty.

**Valentine’s Day** Elicit what students do in their home country on this day. *Who gives cards or gifts to whom? What kind of gifts are usual?* Have people tell how they met their spouses or sweethearts. Teach them the poem, *Roses are red; Violets are blue; Sugar is sweet, And so are you.* Explain that many Valentine cards have “plays on words.” such as “Bee my Honey.” And that some Valentine cards are insulting, so they should be sure they understand a card’s meaning before sending it to a friend.

**Presidents’ Day** Ask students questions such as: *Whose face is on the dollar bill and the quarter? Whose face is on the five-dollar bill and the penny? What do you know about these men?* List the facts they know on the board. Then read the article and list other facts. *Why was George Washington called the “father of his country?” Why was Lincoln important in American history?* Look through an atlas to find cities with the names Washington or Lincoln. *Are there schools or streets in your area with these names? Who is the “father” of your country? In what other ways are these two presidents remembered? In what ways do people in your home country remember heroes?*

**Super Bowl Sunday** By the time you are reading the article, the game will be upon us (or over). Find out which teams are playing (have played.) If you have no football expertise, bring in a guest who has such expertise, to draw a gridiron (football field) with the yard lines and goals marked, and have them explain the process of the game. Some vocabulary items: *team, offense and defense, pass, run, down, touchdown, first down, goal, play, flag on the play, penalty, quarterback, huddle, tackle, field goal, goal posts, referee, fans.*

### **This is your page (page 4)**

Have students guess what the stories will be about by reading the titles. List their guesses. Then have students read the stories to see if they fit the titles. Relate the stories to the students’ own lives.

### **Why is English spelling so crazy? Richard Lederer (page 5)**

**Objectives:** Students will feel validated in their frustration with spelling and reading English. They’ll be able to give two reasons that spelling English is not phonetic. They will be able to explain the concept of silent letters and identify silent letters in certain words.

**Procedures:** Read the poem aloud to the students while they follow along. They will need to hear the correct pronunciation. Ask students if reading and spelling in their native language has such difficulties, and to explain. Have students tell about any difficulties in writing in their own language. For the exercise, pronounce the words and ask students to identify the silent letter in each one. Elicit other words with silent letters. Point out that it wouldn’t be possible to change spellings to agree with the sound because different English speaking countries would have different spelling systems and we would lose the ability to read each other’s literature and news.

### **Dr. Ali: Blood pressure (page 5)**

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell what the upper number and lower number mean in a blood pressure reading. They will be able to tell what normal blood pressure is and tell three dangers of long-term high blood pressure. They’ll be able to explain the “white-coat syndrome.” They’ll be able to tell the three different kinds of blood vessels.

**Procedures:** Elicit from your students what they already know about blood pressure. Ask questions such as: *What is blood pressure? What is normal blood pressure? Do you know anyone with high blood pressure? What do they do about it?* Have students look at the diagram of the body. Point out that the arteries are shown in red and the veins are shown in blue. Teach the mnemonic: Arteries Away, Capillaries Connect and Veins bring it back.

### **America the Beautiful (San Francisco (page 6)**

**Objectives:** Students will be able to name three famous tourist attractions in San Francisco. They will be able to explain why there are cable cars and why cars have to park with their wheels turned in to the curb, and why it is often foggy.

**Procedures:** Locate California and then San Francisco on a wall map. Consult the media specialist at your school for visuals

on San Francisco. Ask students if anyone has ever visited or lived in San Francisco. Have them bring in any pictures or mementos they may have. Ask students to take turns reading the captions. Have students describe what they see in the pictures. Call out the captions at random. Have students locate the picture that the caption refers to. Locate the San Andreas Fault on the map of California.

### **Heroes and History: Scott Joplin (page 7)**

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell how Scott Joplin learned to play when his family had no money for lessons. Students will tell how he didn’t give up even when confronted with many obstacles. They will tell how he was recognized long after his death. They will be able to recognize ragtime music.

**Procedures:** Find the **YouTube** selection of Bach Scholar playing Scott Joplin’s “The Entertainer.” Ask students if they have heard it before. Play part of Bach scholar’s other Scott Joplin’s rags. Ask what they can say about the music. How are the pieces alike? Explain that the beat is on the note that is usually not stressed. This is “ragged time.” Ask their opinion...Do they like this kind of music? Then read about the “King of Ragtime.” Joplin died without money or fame. *What made him become famous in 1970, long after he died?*

## **ANSWERS**

- |                           |                    |
|---------------------------|--------------------|
| 1. a                      | 16. T              |
| 2. c                      | 17. F (vote)       |
| 3. c                      | 18. F (English)    |
| 4. d                      | 19. F (after)      |
| 5. d                      | 20. F (high)       |
| 6. b                      | 21. F (foggy)      |
| 7. c                      | 22. D (dreadful)   |
| 8. a                      | 23. H (testify)    |
| 9. a                      | 24. C (prosperous) |
| 10. d                     | 25. B (impartial)  |
| 11. F (African)           | 26. A (audience)   |
| 12. F (New Year)          | 27. E (artery)     |
| 13. F (Valentine’s Day)   | 28. G (beware)     |
| 14. T                     | 29. J (euphemism)  |
| 15. F (George Washington) | 30. I (unanimous)  |

## February 2011 Quiz I

Choose the best answer. Write its letter on the line.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. The government agency that counts the number of people in the United States every ten years is the
- a) Census Bureau.
  - b) FBI.
  - c) Congress.
  - d) Senate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. The parts of the country with the greatest growth in population are
- a) the North and Northwestern states.
  - b) the Eastern states.
  - c) The south and western states.
  - d) The central states.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. The states with the largest number of people are
- a) New York and New Jersey.
  - b) Vermont and Wyoming.
  - c) California and Texas.
  - d) Florida and Illinois.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. The number of representatives a state has depends on its
- a) need for government services.
  - b) number of senators.
  - c) political parties.
  - d) number of people.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Each congressional district for the next Congress will have about
- a) two senators
  - b) one state
  - c) 435 people
  - d) 700,000 people
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. An accused person is presumed innocent until
- a) the trial.
  - b) he or she is proven guilty.
  - c) the prosecutor says he is guilty.
  - d) a witness testifies.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. A defense attorney tries to show that the accused person
- a) committed the crime.
  - b) may see the evidence.
  - c) was not responsible for the crime.
  - d) should go to jail.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. The job of jurors is to decide
- a) if an accused person is guilty or not guilty.
  - b) which questions an attorney may ask.
  - c) the sentence for the accused person.
  - d) which witnesses may testify.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. The judge makes rules for the trial and decides
- a) which evidence the jury can see.
  - b) decides if the prosecutor is guilty or not guilty.
  - c) how many people should be on the jury.
  - d) how long the jury can deliberate.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. If the jury's verdict is guilty, then
- a) the defendant is free.
  - b) the prosecutor is free.
  - c) the judge will sentence the defense attorney.
  - d) the judge will sentence the accused person (defendant).

**II. From Here and There**

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

- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. February is Chinese-American History Month.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Chinese people and some other Asians pay their debts before the Super Bowl.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Groundhog Day is a special day for lovers and sweethearts.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. George Washington was elected the first President of the United States.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. People called Abraham Lincoln “the Father of his Country.”  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. Abraham Lincoln freed slaves in the Southern states by writing the Emancipation Proclamation.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. Susan B. Anthony was arrested for trying to play the piano.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Almost every letter in the Spanish alphabet can be silent.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. Scott Joplin received a Pulitzer Prize for his music before he died.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. A blood pressure reading of 150/90 is low.  
\_\_\_\_\_

**III. Building Vocabulary**

Write the letter of the word that will make the sentence true.

**Word List**

- |               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| A. audience   | F. foggy     |
| B. impartial  | G. beware    |
| C. prosperous | H. testify   |
| D. dreadful   | I. unanimous |
| E. artery     | J. euphemism |

- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. San Francisco is surrounded on three sides by water. It’s often \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. Something that is terrible is \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. A witness may \_\_\_\_\_ in court about a crime he or she saw.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. A year filled with good fortune is \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. An \_\_\_\_\_ jury can judge a case fairly without prejudice.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. The people who listen to or watch a show are the \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. A blood vessel that takes blood away from the heart is an \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. To \_\_\_\_\_ of something is to watch out for a danger or difficulty.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. A polite word for something people don’t like to talk about is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. An decision that everyone agrees on is \_\_\_\_\_.