



Dear Colleagues:

Welcome back to a new school year. Welcome to all our new subscribers. There are many types of teacher support that come with your subscription: *Word Help*, and *Let's Talk About It* are directly in the pages of *Easy English NEWS*. This monthly guide gives background information, objectives and procedures for the major articles, plus three reproducible quizzes. In addition, we offer a FREE 24-page booklet, "How to Use *Easy English NEWS* in your ESL classroom." You can print it out at our website. We can send you a printed copy for \$3 to cover handling and postage. The "How to" booklet will make your life easier with tips for using the various types of articles with different ESL levels. It also features nine reproducible generic reviews and a self-evaluation page for students.

Each month, my website will have six cloze exercises (fill in the blank) based on the current month's articles, and a "which word doesn't belong" exercise. These are also free and will show up on the website by the fifth of the month. Let me know what's missing. (I want to become irreplaceable!)

## The national debt (pages 1 and 5)

Well, the debt crisis kept some of us glued to our TV's over the summer, while others blissfully had no idea of the prospect of imminent default and downgrading of our credit rating. Do our students need to know this? Probably the more advanced and upper grades. Let the younger ones sleep peacefully for a while longer.

My aim in this article is to present some basic concepts and vocabulary so students can handle talking about any effects the budget cutting will have on their education, employment, spending, loans... **Preparation:** Read the article in advance and bring in any updated news headlines. Take some time to watch the debt clock clicking away at <http://www.usdebtclock.org>.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to tell what a *deficit* is, and distinguish it from a *debt*. They will be able to tell why

Congress worked all summer to pass a bill to raise the debt ceiling, and tell one simple difference of opinion between the Republicans and Democrats. And hurray! Students will be able to read numbers in the billions and trillions. **Background:** The various bank failures, bail outs, stimulus bills, home foreclosure assistance, expenses for security, the prescription drug plan, Medicare, costs of two wars for nine years, and other expenses could not go on forever. The Tea Party movement helped elect conservative members of Congress in 2010. This put Republicans in control of the House of Representatives, but not in control of the Senate (or of the Tea Party members). Some Tea Party members took an oath that they would not vote to raise the debt ceiling, and that caused the summer showdown.

The debt ceiling is supposed to keep government spending down, but Congress has raised it 74 times since 1968. There was a huge and long-lasting dramatic debate over the summer, with plans and counter plans, deadlines and scary predictions. Democrats said it's important to increase taxes on the richest Americans in order to help lower the debt. They would not cut programs like Medicare or Social Security or the military. The Republicans refused to consider tax increases. They said, "If we increase taxes, that will just lead to more spending. We have to cut. And we want a balanced budget amendment." (Next month's *Heroes and History* will be the story of the original Boston Tea Party to give some background.)

**Procedures:** Find out what information students have picked up from news in their home language or other sources. Ask questions such as: *What happens when you need something but can't pay for it?* (People borrow money and use credit cards.) *Does a credit card have a credit limit? What happens if a person goes over their credit limit? Where does the U.S. government get its money?* (Income taxes, corporation taxes taxes on luxury items, customs duties, Social Security taxes, fees for services and licenses such as those for citizenship applications, etc. *What does the U.S. government spend its money on?* (Military, Social Security, Medicare, Prescription Drug plan, government workers, FBI, Border Patrol,

NASA, weather forecasts, emergencies (FEMA) unemployment insurance, salaries for Congress, national parks, national highways, regulations, collecting taxes... Elicit meanings of words such as *debt*, *ceiling*, *limit*, *interest*, *borrow*, *lend*, *downgrade*, *essential compromise*. Have the students read the article silently, and then discuss it using the questions in *Let's Talk About It*. Have them view the **debt clock**. *What was the compromise made by Democrats and Republicans? What happened the next day?* (Stock market dropped.)

## Immigration (pages 1, 10, and 11)

Shortly after the debt crisis news, Congress may turn its attention to the immigration issue. Alabama has a new anti-immigrant law (see caption on page one), which could be capturing the news. As for Congress: the ideas don't change much...There are special interests on both sides of the immigration question, and members of Congress don't want to hurt or anger their best contributors or biggest blocs of voters.

Immigration is a very sensitive subject for many of our students. Don't ask students if they are here legally or ask questions that may cause embarrassment. Use judgement in eliciting opinions; it might be better to just gather facts and build vocabulary. If it is problematic, assign the reading for homework and omit discussion in class.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to differentiate between legal and illegal ways of coming into the U.S. They will be able to describe the provisions in the new Alabama law that goes into effect September 1. They will be able to explain the points of view of: current legal immigrants, employers, American workers, landlords, store owners. **Procedures:** Have students locate Alabama on a wall map. Find out what they already know about immigration. Answer the questions in *Let's Talk About It* on page 11.

## Events in September (pages 2 and 3)

Have students find the dates for each of the events in September and write those in the calendar. Also have them write in

any school events, and personal events such as birthdays and anniversaries. Ask what holidays are celebrated in their home countries in September.

**Labor Day** Ask students which day is Workers' Day in their home countries. (In most it will be International Workers Day May 1) *What happens on that day? How is Labor Day celebrated here in the U.S?* Elicit what students know about unions. *What is the purpose of a union?* Point out Unions obtained more pay for workers, fewer hours, and safer working conditions. However, many factories moved to places where they could get cheaper labor. That sent a large percent of America's manufacturing jobs out of the country.

Have students look at the labels on their clothing, shoes, notebooks, handbags, wallets, and other items. *Which of the items were made in the U.S.? Where were others made? What difference does this make in American jobs?*

**Ramadan** Ask students if they celebrate Ramadan or if they know anyone who does. Have them explain if their celebration in America is different from the one in their native country. If there are no Muslims in your class, invite a Muslim to class to explain what Ramadan means to him or her, and what they do during the month.

**Grandparents' Day** Ask questions, depending on the age of your students, such as *Where are your grandparents? Do you see them often? Do you write or call them? What did you learn from them? (Are you a grandparent? What can you do for your children? What family history do you want them to know?)* Ask students to work in small groups of two or three telling stories they heard from their grandparents. Draw a simple family tree on the board (maybe your own.) Have students draw their family trees. Review names for extended family members: *aunt, uncle, cousin, niece, in-law, step-, foster- half-, great grand-, ancestor, descendent*, as well as words like *deceased*, and *passed away*.

**Patriot Day** This day is a memorial to those who died on 9/11/2001. Elicit students' knowledge and/or memories about the events of 9/11. Locate Manhattan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, and Iraq on a wall map. Depending on the age of the students, suggest that they search for videos of the 9/11 attack at **Youtube.com**.

**Hispanic Heritage Month** Explain the meaning of *Latino*, and its synonym *Hispanic*. Use a world map to help students learn the names of countries where Spanish is spoken, and the areas of the U.S. that

were originally owned by Spain (Florida) and Mexico (southwestern states and Texas.) Have students locate and list place names in the U.S. that are Hispanic. (Hint: Look for *El, Las, Los, Las, San, Santa* in place names or endings such as *-ado, -edo, -ido, -on*, and *-ona*. Bring in Latino foods to sample; play Spanish music. Have a student or guest come in to teach Hispanic proverbs, dances or songs.

**Constitution Day** Download the **Constitution in Simple English** from my website **elizabethclaire.com** for high school and adult students. Discuss the proposed amendment for a balanced budget, and find the article that tells how to pass an amendment. (2/3 majority in both houses and 3/4 of states to agree.)

**Rosh Hashana** Ask any Jewish students in your class (or invite a Jewish person to your class) to explain the practices and meanings of Rosh Hashana. Bring in potato latkes and applesauce to sample.

**Hurricane Season** If your area is prone to hurricanes or tornados, its a good time to have students be prepared. They should know the warning signs, TV station channels, sirens, etc. Download and make copies for your students of the **Hurricane Safety in Simple English** booklet at my website. **Elizabethclaire.com** Have students know the evacuation routes, and encourage them to have a talk with their family so if people are separated, they know whom to contact later.

**Presidential debates.** Encourage high school and adult students to watch a bit of the debates this month to see the faces of the people who want to be chosen as the Republican nominee for president. In upcoming issues of **Easy English NEWS**, there will be articles on various concepts: political parties, candidates, primary elections, caucuses, conventions, issues and the electoral process.

### This Is Your Page (page 4)

Read the stories and discuss any similar stories the students want to tell.

### Dr. Ali: Your Health A good night's sleep (page 5)

Elicit from students what they know about sleep. *What is the purpose? How many hours is enough? What types of things keep you awake? Which foods make you sleepy? Do any foods keep you from sleeping?* Remind students that Dr. Ali's suggestions are not medical advice, and that the information is not meant to substitute for seeing their own health

practitioner.

### Levels of education in the U.S.

**Objectives:** Students will be able to talk about their educational level and to explore options for higher education opportunities after high school graduation. **Procedures:** Talk about credit needed for graduation at your school. Explore the areas that are important to your students. Point out that there are grants and loans for low-income students. Make sure your students know that government grants are reserved for citizens and legal residents.

### Heroes and History: Dr. Jonas Salk & the polio vaccine (page 7)

**Objectives:** Students will be able to explain what polio was, why Dr. Salk wanted to find a vaccine, and what the results of his vaccine were.

**Procedure:** Elicit any knowledge of polio or infantile paralysis from your students. Tell any stories from your own childhood about acquaintances who had contracted polio. Point out that Jonas Salk was the son of immigrants from Russia. *What was Jonas Salk's goal? What obstacles did he face? How did he overcome the difficulties?* Read the article in pairs or groups, having students take turns. Then discuss the story one paragraph at a time to assure comprehension. Use the questions in *Let's Talk About it*.

### ANSWERS

- |                   |                               |
|-------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. d              | 16. F (3-5)                   |
| 2. b              | 17. T                         |
| 3. a              | 18. F (polio)                 |
| 4. b              | 19. F (Federal Reserve Notes) |
| 5. d              | 20. F (remember)              |
| 6. c              | 21. A (bonds)                 |
| 7. a              | 22. D (glitch)                |
| 8. b              | 23. E (evacuate)              |
| 9. a              | 24. J (refresh)               |
| 10. d             | 25. H (message)               |
| 11. F (Monday)    | 26. G (debate)                |
| 12. F (hurricane) | 27. B (temporary)             |
| 13. T             | 28. C (paralyzed)             |
| 14. F (Jewish)    | 29. I (reflexes)              |
| 15. F (2001)      | 30. F (harvest)               |

## September 2011 Quiz I

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

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <p>_____ 1. The income for the United States this year will be about</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) \$220,000.</li> <li>b) \$2,200,000.</li> <li>c) \$2,200,000,000.</li> <li>d) \$2,200,000,000,000.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 2. The government does not have this much money, so it has to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) find it.</li> <li>b) borrow money.</li> <li>c) spend more money</li> <li>d) lend money to China.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 3. The debt per <i>taxpayer</i> is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) \$130,000.</li> <li>b) two point two trillion dollars.</li> <li>c) \$14,000,000,000,000.</li> <li>d) also called a deficit.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 4. A debt ceiling is</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) a limit on how much the government may spend.</li> <li>b) a limit on how much the government may borrow.</li> <li>c) a limit on how much the government may collect in taxes.</li> <li>d) the roof of the capitol building.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 5. Who may raise the debt ceiling?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The House of Representatives.</li> <li>b) The Senate with the House of Representatives.</li> <li>c) The President alone.</li> <li>d) Congress and the President.</li> </ul> | <p>_____ 6. _____ sets the number of immigrants that can come to the country each year.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The state of Alabama</li> <li>b) The Border Patrol</li> <li>c) Congress</li> <li>d) The president</li> </ul> <p>_____ 7. Who wants illegal immigrants to stay?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Businesses who hire them.</li> <li>b) American workers who need jobs.</li> <li>c) The Border Patrol.</li> <li>d) Arizona and Alabama governments.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 8. It's hard to make 12 million illegal immigrants leave the U.S. because</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) they came here with visitors' visas.</li> <li>b) the government can't find them all.</li> <li>c) they don't have jobs.</li> <li>d) they can vote against such a law.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 9. Alabama's new immigration law says that it is a crime to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) rent an apartment to illegal immigrants.</li> <li>b) hire legal immigrants.</li> <li>c) pay good wages.</li> <li>d) have a path to citizenship.</li> </ul> <p>_____ 10. The federal government says that</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) states must have their own immigration laws.</li> <li>b) illegal immigrants must work for lower wages.</li> <li>c) police must stop everyone to ask for their immigration papers.</li> <li>d) states may not have their own immigration laws.</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

## 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. Labor Day is the first Tuesday in September.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. A tornado is a very strong tropical storm.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. About 16% of people in the United States are Hispanic.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Rosh Hashana is a Muslim holiday.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Patriot Day is a memorial for the people who died on September 11, 2011.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 16. The Head Start Program is for children age 6-7 years old. \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 17. A person in the first year of high school or college is called a freshman.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 18. Dr. Jonas Salk created a vaccine against the disease small pox.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 19. U.S. bills are now called Silver Certificates.  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_ 20. After a good night’s sleep we can learn better and forget more.  
\_\_\_\_\_

## 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. bonds     | F. harvest  |
| B. temporary | G. debate   |
| C. paralyzed | H. message  |
| D. glitch    | I. reflexes |
| E. evacuate  | J. refresh  |
- \_\_\_\_\_ 21. The government can print and sell \_\_\_\_\_ in order to borrow money.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 22. An error that is made by a computer is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 23. If there is a hurricane, a family may have to \_\_\_\_\_ their home.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 24. Sleep lets you \_\_\_\_\_ your body and mind.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 25. Information that you get in a letter, email, or by telephone is a \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 26. Candidates for president \_\_\_\_\_ each other on TV to help viewers learn their ideas.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 27. Something that does not last a long time is \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 28. Some people who had polio became \_\_\_\_\_.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 29. You need good \_\_\_\_\_ to drive a car in heavy traffic.
- \_\_\_\_\_ 30. Autumn is a time when farmers \_\_\_\_\_ their crops.