



**Welcome to the Answer English February English Class.**

This month's class includes:

Fun Jokes to Match

Story Time Joke: Letter to an ex

Topic of the Month: Fawlty Towers

Idiom of the Month: Can of Worms

Phrasal verb: Break Down

News Article (Intermediate level): Eddie Anguish

News Article (Advanced level): Green Church

Film Review: Sicko

**Fun Jokes to Match**

*Match each joke beginning (1 to 6) with its ending (A - F).*

1. What gets wet the more you get dry?
2. Doctor, doctor, I keep lying.
3. Get out of my house. You've broken all my plates.
4. My uncle is a millionaire but he never washes.
5. What do you say to a cow that is standing in front of your car?
6. What breaks when you say it?

- A) Moo-ve over.
- B) Silence.
- C) Thanks. I've had a smashing time.
- D) He must be filthy rich.
- E) That's not true.
- F) A towel.

To see if you matched the Fun Jokes correctly check the Answers at the End of the class.

## **Story Time Joke: Letter to an ex**

My Dearest Susan, sweetheart of my heart. I've been so sad since I broke off our engagement. Simply devastated. Won't you please consider coming back to me? You hold a place in my heart that no other woman can fill. I can never marry another woman quite like you. I need you so much. Please forgive me and let's make a new start. I love you so.

Yours always and truly, John.

PS. Congratulations on winning the lottery.

## **Topic of the Month: Fawlty Towers**

One of Britain's top comedy TV hit series is *Fawlty Towers*. It was first shown in the 1970s, but it continues to be as popular as ever. *Fawlty Towers* became an enormous success and was recently voted number one in a poll of the top 100 British comedy shows. Let's have a look at it.

### **Basil Fawlty** (*played by John Cleese*)

The star of the show is Basil Fawlty. He is the hotel manager from hell, He's rude to the guests, he's sarcastic to everyone, and he physically attacks his staff. The only people who aren't insulted or humiliated are those with a title (Lord or Lady) because Basil is a terrible snob. The biggest thorn in Basil's side is his wife Sybil.

### **Sybil Fawlty** (*played by Prunella Scales*)

Sybil Fawlty is Basil's wife. She has a distinctive laugh (strangely similar to "someone machine-gunning a seal") and makes endless phone calls to her friend Audrey. She knows how to control her manic husband, and one sharp "Basil!" is all it takes to bring him to heel. Sybil enjoys socialising with the guests, and ordering Basil around.

### **Manuel** (*played by Andrew Sachs*)

Manuel is the hotel waiter. He is a walking disaster and was only hired by Basil because he was so "cheap". He has a poor command of English. However, despite suffering under Basil, Manuel remains loyal and devoted.

### **Polly** (*played by Connie Booth*)

Polly, the waitress, is really an art student. She is the only sane member of the team. She has an impressive ability to think on her feet. She's always on hand to help Basil, whether it's impersonating Sybil or hiding dead bodies in laundry baskets. Basil couldn't cope without her.

## **The real Fawlty Towers**

Not many people know that *Fawlty Towers* is actually based on a real hotel. One day in the 1970's, a group of English comic actors (John Cleese, Terry Gilliam, Graham Chapman, Eric Idle, Terry Jones and Michael Palin – better known as the comic team "Monty Python's Flying Circus") visited the Gleneagles Hotel, in Torquay, southwest England. The group was staying there during the filming of an episode of Monty Python, the hilarious 70s TV series.

But this fact didn't impress the hotel's owner, Donald Sinclair. Sinclair's behaviour wasn't very hospitable at all: he threw a bus timetable at one of the guests and criticised Terry Gilliam's table manners. Believing that Eric Idle's suitcase contained a bomb, Sinclair hid it behind a garden wall. John Cleese described Sinclair as "the most wonderfully rude man I have ever met".

In fact, Cleese was so inspired by Sinclair's rudeness that he decided to write a series based on the experience. The character of Basil Fawlty, played by Cleese, is modelled on Sinclair. Now the original Hotel Gleneagles has decided to celebrate its association with the show. The hotel recently had a 1.5 million-euro renovation. Actress Prunella Scales, who played Basil's wife Sybil, attended the hotel's reopening party as the guest of honour.

The present hotel owner, Brian Shone, is proud of the connection with the TV series, even though Basil Fawlty was the worst hotel owner in the world. "We decided Hotel Gleneagles is always going to be famous for inspiring *Fawlty Towers* so, rather than be embarrassed about what has happened, we have chosen to capitalise on it. You cannot get rid of the spirit of Basil."

And the guests certainly seem to be embracing the connection. Manager Sue Pine said "It is quite bizarre. Every day you sit in reception and they come in by the coach-load from America, Germany and Holland to see you. We have a big poster in reception and they all have their photo taken beside it."

Luckily, they won't be yelled at by Basil, or have their dinner orders mixed up by the Manuel. In fact, today's guests can expect a much nicer (and safer) experience at the hotel.

### **Idiom: Can of Worms**



#### **Open up a can of worms**

To create unnecessary complications or problems; to start discussing something that is better not to discuss.  
"When management offered to discuss working hours, they really opened up a can of worms – there were arguments ever day after that."

## Phrasal verb: Break Down



## News Article (Intermediate level): Eddie Anguish

*Spice Girl gives birth and causes controversy.*

Former Spice Girl Mel B has had a baby girl. She is the third of the Spice Girls to have a baby after Victoria Beckham and Geri Halliwell. The baby is called Angel Iris Murphy Brown. Mel B says that the girl's father is actor Eddie Murphy. Mel B had a relationship with the actor in the past. The relationship has now finished. Murphy has questioned the fact that the baby is his. He has asked for a DNA test to confirm it. However Mel B is convinced that Murphy is the father. She said "She is called Angel because she is my little angel, Iris was the name of my grandmother and Murphy because he's the dad."

## News Article (Advanced level): Green Church

*"Thou shalt use a toaster." Church of England goes green.*

The Church of England is set to publish a set of green commandments today aimed at persuading Christians to help save the planet. These commandments are contained in a pocket-sized booklet entitled *How many light bulbs does it take to change a Christian?*, and they instruct believers that they have a moral obligation to look after and take care of God's creation.

This booklet was published as part of the Church's "Shrinking the Footprint" campaign, which is a response to the General Synod's decision to focus the church in a more environmentally-friendly direction. Dr Rowan Williams, the Archbishop of Canterbury, said, "There are many small steps that each of us can take to lighten the load on our planet, and this guide gives some practical examples of where each of us can start. I commend it to all Christians looking for ideas and inspiration on what they can do to make a positive difference for the environment."

Among the lifestyle changes suggested in the booklet are: organising a car-sharing scheme for people travelling to Sunday worship, holidaying locally and using a toaster instead of a grill.

## **Film Review: Sicko**

Michael Moore's latest film is *Sicko* (which premiered at Cannes on the day that Moore admitted to being Kenefick's "guardian angel"). *Sicko* is directed by Moore and is a documentary about the highly-profitable American health care industry. The film investigates the US healthcare system with a focus on the behaviour of large health insurance companies. Its main message is that the present US health-care system is designed to maximise profit by minimising the care delivered to patients.

The stories include those of people who died because the insurance company refused treatment, or others who had to pay large bills after receiving treatment.

One scene shows a clip of Dr Linda Peeno, a former medical reviewer for a health insurer, saying that her job was to save money for the company by denying necessary operations. Also during the film, the American system is compared to those in Canada, Britain and France, which have free and full coverage for their citizens.

## **Michael Moore**

Michael Moore was born in Flint, Michigan April 23 1954. He studied journalism at the University of Michigan-Flint. His first film was *Roger & Me* (1989). His first big hit was *Bowling for Columbine* (2002), which was an attack on the gun lobby in the States and the NRA (the National Rifle Association), and the even bigger hit *Fahrenheit 9/11* (2004), which made fun of President Bush.

**Answers to Jokes:** 1F 2E 3C 4D 5A 6B