

Welcome to the *Answer English* January 2007 English Class.

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Jokes to Match

Match each joke beginning (1 to 8) with its ending (A-H).

1. What do you get if you cross a sheep with a kangaroo?
2. What do you call a lazy skeleton?
3. Why is an elephant large, grey and wrinkly?
4. How do you start a teddy bear race?
5. What does a pelican have in common with the Water company?
6. What do you call a blind dinosaur?
7. What lies in a pram and wobbles?

8. What do snowmen like on their burgers?

A: Ready, teddy, go!

B: Chilli sauce.

C: Doyouthinkhesawus.

D: A woolly jumper.

E: They both have large bills.

F: A jelly baby.

G: Because if it were small, white and smooth it would be an aspirin.

H: Bone idle.

To see if you matched the Fun Jokes correctly check the [Answers](#).

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Story Time Joke: Irritating Taxi Driver

Sam walks into a bar and asks for a beer. As he's drinking, another man comes in and orders a glass of water. Sam decides to leave after his first beer, but as he's going out, he notices the other man leaving too. Sam goes to another bar and asks for a beer, but the same guy comes in too. This happens twice more and eventually Sam starts to **freak out**. Who is this guy? Sam wonders. Finally, Sam has **had enough** and says to the man, "Who are you and why are you following me around?"

And the guy replies, "I'm your taxi driver."

Glossary

to freak out

phr vb

to become very frightened

to have enough

exp

if you have "had enough", you are tired of a situation and want to change it

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Situation: New Year's Resolutions

What was 2006 like for you? Do you have any personal objectives for 2007? It's traditional in many English-speaking countries to make "New Year's resolutions". These are like promises to do something better the following year. Here are some typical New Year's resolutions.

Jobs

New Year is typically a time for thinking about changing your job, especially if you feel you're stuck in a rut.

Body

New Year is also the time to do something about your body, especially after all the big eating over the Christmas period.

Money

New Year is also a time to get your finances in order, and to act on that advice your father gave you about always saving 10% of your salary.

Habits

New Year is also seen as the perfect opportunity to give up all those bad habits such as smoking, drinking too much and forgetting to brush your teeth.

Courses

The New Year is also seen as the ideal time to learn something new. How about a language course, a computer course, or a wine tasting course?

Love

New Year is also the perfect time to reflect on your love life. Are you happy being single and lonely? Is your partner right for you? Now's the time to change.

Trips

New Year is also the chance to plan all those great holidays you're going to have. So, get out that atlas and start choosing destinations.

Self-Organization

Fed up of never knowing what you're supposed to be doing? Tired of missing appointments? New Year is the perfect time to get your life in order.

Home

The New Year is also time to think about moving house. Tired of that tiny apartment with no light? Well, now's the time to look for that luxury, dream house in the country with a garden and three floors.

Socialising

Finally, the New Year is the perfect time to reflect on your personal acquaintances. Now's the chance to choose a new circle of friends, and start hosting those really sophisticated dinner parties you always wanted to have.

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Dialogue: Two friends make resolutions

Paul: So, have you made any New Year's resolutions yet?

Jane: Oh, yes. I've got lots of plans for 2007.

Paul: Go on then.

Jane: Well, for a start I'm going to cut down on all this going out till late at night. I'm going to set a limit of 12 at night for Fridays and 1 for Saturdays. That way I can enjoy the weekend more.

Paul: Sounds like a good idea. What else?

Jane: Well, I'm also going to drink less. It's going to be one glass of wine per night or two maximum.

Paul: Very sensible.

Jane: Oh, and no more smoking.

Paul: Well, you're in luck there cos the government are going to make the smoking ban complete now.

Jane: What, you mean absolutely no smoking?

Paul: Yeah, that's right.

Jane: Well, that's good news then.

Paul: Hey, there's a party tonight. Fancy coming?

Jane: What time does it start?

Paul: About 2am. Come on, it'll be fun.

Jane: No, sorry it's too late for me.

Paul: Oh, come on, it's still not 2007.

Jane: Oh, yeah. That's true. OK, where is it?

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Idiom of the Month



A cold fish

A person who isn't very friendly and who doesn't show any emotions.

"Sandra never shows her feelings. But her mother was a cold fish too, so that's probably where it comes from."

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Phrasal Verb of the Month

TAKE AFTER SOMEONE TO LOOK LIKE OR ACT LIKE SOMEONE (USUALLY IN REFERENCE TO YOUR PARENTS)



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News Article (Intermediate level): Paying Prisoners

The UK government will pay foreign prisoners to go home.

The government will give prisoners between £500 and £2,500 to go home. One home official said, "It costs £37,000 a year to keep someone in prison. This new measure is a lot cheaper than keeping them in prison. The support will take the form of education, accommodation, medical care, training or assistance with starting a business." The money will be offered to prisoners from outside the European Economic Area. But not everyone agrees with this. Critics say the government is bribing foreign prisoners. There are currently 79,819 prisoners in the UK. The limit is 80,053. The government has just approved a plan to increase the number of prisoners in each cell.

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News Article (Advanced level): Offensive Toilet

A work of art sparks a national debate in Italy.

A toilet which flushes to the sound of Italy's national anthem has been impounded by police in northern Italy, sparking a great patriotic debate. The offending toilet was the creation of two local artists and was on display at the Bolzano Museum of Modern Art. This has led many to ask questions: Who owns the national anthem? Is it unpatriotic to play it in a context in which it could be ridiculed?

Prosecutors say the anthem is a national emblem which should be protected and should never be open to ridicule. They also argue that the symbolism of playing the anthem while flushing a toilet is an offence to the nation. They point to a decree issued this year by the former government of Silvio Berlusconi which defined the national anthem as an emblem and the property of the state.

Defence barristers for the museum argue that while the anthem does have patriotic and sentimental value, it is not a national symbol. Is this the start of a serious debate? Or is it just a flash in the pan?

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Film: The Queen

A fascinating study of character, tradition and political reality in late twentieth century Britain.

Shocking news

It's 1997 and Great Britain has a new, young and promising prime minister, Tony Blair. Glamorous Princess Diana is socialising in Paris with her new Egyptian boyfriend. Meanwhile, the steady and respectable 72 year old Queen Elizabeth is holidaying in Balmoral Castle – the Royal Family's estate in Scotland. What happens next will shake the nation. News arrives that Princess Di and Dodi Fayed have been killed in a Paris car crash. The nation goes into shock.

Steven Frear's new movie *The Queen* takes these dramatic events as its inspiration. *The Queen* is a fascinating study of character, tradition and political reality in late twentieth century Britain.

A film with a difference

Traditionally, the kings and queens we see on the big screen are historical figures. However, *The Queen* is unusual because the Queen herself is still a living monarch. It's a bit strange at first to see such a familiar character played by an actress, but Helen Mirren does a fantastic job of playing this fascinating figure.

Michael Sheen plays Prime Minister Tony Blair. Much of the movie is concerned with the tensions between these two clever (and often conflicting characters), each with their own political and personal agendas.

Reactions

Eventually, the British public become angry that the royal family is not showing enough sympathy in

the days after Diana's death. The royal family remain on holiday in Balmoral while the wreaths left at the gates of Buckingham Palace pile up. Blair, with the support of Prince Charles, tries to convince the Queen to return to London to share the sadness of the British Public. But the Queen sees no reason to break with tradition, since Diana is no longer “part of the family”. Eventually, it is Blair who manages to break the royal ice and exert his will. Whether you are a fan of the monarchy or not, *The Queen* is a fascinating insight into the relationship between power, privilege and tradition.

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Answers:

1D 2H 3G 4A 5E 6C 7F 8B

Thank you. We hope you enjoyed this month's English Class with *Answer English*.