

Inside This Issue

American Music

The story of American music is an exciting one of intersecting and cross-fertilizing cultures. Immigrants to the US have brought their music with them, and have composed and performed within their home-country traditions. But they also created brand new musical forms and styles as a result of different musical traditions blending and informing each other. Jazz, rock and roll, gospel, and rap music are all outcomes of this blending of cultures. Each has been heavily influenced by Christian religion and European and African musical forms.

Many of the 17th-19th century settlers in this country (from Ireland, Scotland and England) were deeply religious people, and brought their religious songs (hymns) with them in their heads. Wherever they moved — south and west — they carried their religious music. The hymns, how they were sung, and the harmonies they used slowly changed as the hymns spread from person to person in small towns. Many of the people could not read (words or music); they learned the hymns by a technique called lining out — one person would sing a line of the hymn, then the group would repeat it. By the 18th century, someone had invented a new way to write down this music — shape-note notation — so that non-reading people could read it. (If you have seen the movie *Cold Mountain*, you have heard this kind of shape-note singing.) In this way, the European, Christian influence on American music was laid.

The African influence came with the slave trade. Slaves brought instruments that were new to Europeans. The banjo, for example, a key part of American folk, bluegrass, and country music was brought to this country by African slaves.

African slaves influenced the very core of American music. Music in 17th-19th century Africa was typically made by singers and instruments together. Songs were made of short rhythm and melody patterns. Clapping hands and drumming were popular ways to add to the rhythm. A call and response form was common — a leader sang a question and the group answered. (This differed from the European lining out, in which the group repeated the leader's line, but the forms may have been similar enough to feel familiar to both groups and encourage sharing.)

The European and African influences met and mingled. Slave owners hoped that Christian faith and the promise of a better life after death — a basic Christian belief — would make the slaves accept their lives more easily. The black (or "Negro") spirituals combined Christian words and concepts, a blend of African and European musical styles, and the deep sadness and struggle of an oppressed people. The songs were so beautiful and heartfelt that some people mistakenly pointed to them as "proof" that the slaves were happy. In the mid- to late-1800s in the US, groups

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Easter Eggs and Bunnies

The *egg* is an ancient symbol of new life. Long before Jesus lived, eggs were a traditional springtime gift. For Christians, the egg is a sign of the new spiritual life that Jesus promised his believers.

The *hare* (like a large rabbit) was an ancient symbol of the moon and the goddess Eostre. Hares are born with their eyes open. The full moon is said to be the open-eyed watcher of night.

In the US, the rabbit (similar to a hare but more common here) has replaced the hare as a central image of Easter. Children call rabbits “bunnies,” so we have the Easter Bunny.

Unlike Christmas’ Santa Claus (about whom there is agreement), there is no one standard Easter Bunny. Is it a male or female? Rabbit-size or human-size? Does it wear clothes? How does it get into the house? Does it bring baskets filled with eggs, or does it hide eggs for children to find? Does it bring its own eggs or use the eggs the children decorated? What do *you* think?

And why does an Easter bunny, a mammal, brings Easter *eggs*? The story goes that a German woman had hidden eggs in her garden for children to find. As they looked, a hare hopped by. The children thought the hare had laid the eggs...and a legend was born.

Easter

Easter is perhaps the most important Christian holiday of the year. While Christians celebrate the *birth* of Jesus on Christmas, at Easter, they remember his death and the story of his *resurrection* (coming back to life). Christians believe that Jesus, the Son of God, rose from the dead, offering spiritual *rebirth* (new spiritual life) to all his followers. Here is the Easter story:

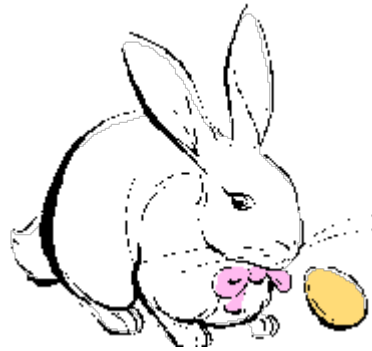
Jesus had become a powerful teacher and leader. Although he was popular with his many followers, he angered many other people. He went to Jerusalem to celebrate Passover with his 12 *disciples* (close followers). While there, an angry group of priests and elders took Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor. The crowds wanted Pilate to kill Jesus. Pilate agreed. Jesus was nailed to a cross on a Friday, now known as Good Friday. (Some say this name comes from “God’s Friday.” Others think “Good” refers to “holy.”)

After Jesus died, his body was taken to a tomb. A large round stone was rolled in front of the opening. On Sunday morning, two of his followers, Mary and Mary Magdalene, found his tomb empty. They received a sign that Jesus was alive. His rising from the dead is the central event of the Easter celebration. According to the Bible, Jesus spent 40 days with his disciples before returning to heaven.

In many languages, the name of this holiday comes from the Hebrew word for Passover (*Pesach*). But the English name comes from the goddess of spring, *Eostre*. Eostre was honored in Germany and England in a celebration of the *vernal*

equinox (the day when both day and night are exactly 12 hours long). In Western Christian churches, Easter is the Sunday following the first full moon after March 21 (or the “ecclesiastical vernal equinox”). This year Easter is April 24.

It is traditional to dye eggs at Easter time and display them in a basket. German immigrants to the US brought this custom. To try it, buy a dye kit in any supermarket at Easter time and follow the very easy directions. Hard-boil the eggs first. Or punch a small hole in one end of an uncooked egg, piercing the yolk. Punch a larger hole (3-4mm) in the other end. Blow into the smaller hole, holding the egg over a bowl. The yolk and white will come out, into the bowl. Wash the shell carefully then dye it. It will last for years!



Good Friday (April 22 this year) is a government holiday in some states. Stores and businesses may be closed. Easter is not an official federal holiday

(although it is always a Sunday, so government offices are closed anyway). The Monday after Easter is not generally observed as a holiday in the US. Gift- and card-giving are not traditional parts of the season (but the stores will certainly try to convince you otherwise). Many families gather for Easter dinner.

More Americans of Christian belief or descent go to church on Easter Sunday than on any other day except perhaps at Christmas. If you are interested in learning about the Christian religion in the US, Easter would be a good time to visit a church. There will be many visitors there, and you would be welcome.

Passover

Passover is one of the most important Jewish holidays in the year. Passover begins on the 14th day of the month of Nisan in the Jewish calendar. This year it starts on April 19 (but note that in the Jewish calendar, days start at sunset, so observation of Passover will begin at sunset on April 18). At Passover, Jews remember the story of their *exodus from* (going out of) slavery in Egypt 3000 years ago:

The Israelites were slaves in Egypt when God ordered Moses to lead them to freedom. God sent a series of plagues to the land — frogs, disease, locusts, and more. Each time, God stopped the plague when the *Pharaoh* (king, pronounced “FAY-roh”) promised to let the Israelites go free. But each time a plague ended, the Pharaoh broke his promise. Finally, Moses announced that the next plague would be the killing of all first-born children in Egypt. He told the Israelites to put some blood of a lamb on the door posts of their homes.

This would be the signal to God to “pass over” their house and not kill their first-born children. This time, the Pharaoh finally told the Israelites to go free. The people traveled toward the Red Sea. When they got there, the Pharaoh’s army (sent by the Pharaoh who had, again, changed his mind about freeing them) was close behind. The water parted so that the Israelites could cross through to safety. It closed again when Pharaoh’s army was crossing, drowning them all.

For several thousand years, the story of Passover has been told in this spring season. It is a story of the re-birth of life and of a people who find new political freedom and unity. At Passover, many Jews remember people of all religions around the world who still do not live in freedom.

Passover lasts seven or eight days (depending on the type of Jewish group). Throughout Passover, Jews eat no food that has leavening (like yeast) in it. They may go to religious services on the first evening of Passover, then return home for a *seder*. A *seder* is a dinner, and an important, ceremonial part of observing Passover. It is not simply a family holiday meal. A *seder* includes many special symbolic foods (see below). The youngest person at the table asks a series of four questions about the meaning of Passover. The Passover story is told, along with prayers and songs of praise to God.

If you are not Jewish, you will not be expected to do any thing special during the Passover week. If you live in a town with many Jewish families, public schools may be closed for the first day or two of Passover. But most businesses and government agencies are not closed. For the first one or two days of Passover, many Jews, even those who are not very religious, will follow tradition. They may not be at work or school. In some Jewish families, inviting non-Jews to a *seder* is part of the tradition of telling the Passover story to those who do not know it. Go, if invited.

The Symbolic Foods of a Seder

This Food:	Symbolizes:
Matzah (unleavened bread)	The Israelites’ quick departure, leaving no time for bread to rise
Lamb bone and egg	Festival sacrifice
Mild bitter greens (parsley or lettuce) dipped in saltwater	The Israelites’ tears, the sea, and springtime
Bitter herbs (like horse-radish)	The bitterness of slavery
Charoset (nuts, fruit, and wine)	Brick mortar used by slaves

Birthday Biography: Ella Fitzgerald

My personal favorite jazz singer is Ella Fitzgerald, who was born on April 25, 1917 in Virginia. She moved to Yonkers as a young teenager and, when her mother died in 1932, to Harlem, a center of African American arts. When she was 15, she entered a talent contest at the Apollo Theater (a famous performance hall in Harlem). She had prepared a dance routine for the contest, but the two girls ahead of her, both dancers, were so good she lost her nerve. At the last minute, she decided to sing instead. She won first prize.

She started singing with several big bands. But at the age of 21, she recorded a children’s song, “A-Tisket A-Tasket” which became a huge hit and began her career as a solo vocalist.

Fitzgerald did amazing things with her voice. She had a three and a half octave range (think about that!). Her voice was clear and warm, her music uplifting and hopeful. One critic said she could make a military march sound like a love song. She made scat singing popular — singing wordless syllables to jazz melodies. She recorded the works — in collections she called “Songbooks” — of many American (and other) popular songwriters, including Cole Porter, Rogers and Hart, Duke Ellington, and George and Ira Gershwin.

Parent-Teacher Conferences

In the spring, schools plan for fall. Many elementary and middle schools have *parent-teacher conferences* to discuss these plans. If you think your child should have some extra services from the school (like more training in English, extra challenges or help, an assessment of special needs, or help in social areas) this is a good time to ask. Most schools welcome suggestions and involvement from parents. Remember that the school must be concerned with the well-being of all the children in the school. But it is perfectly acceptable to make your ideas known. Here are some practical tips:

- ♦ **It is best for both parents to go to the parent-teacher meeting, if possible.** Ask the teacher to try to schedule some meeting times that allow for parents' work schedules. You will both have a better sense of your child's school experience, and the teacher will appreciate your support and interest.

- ♦ **Be sure you understand all the teacher tells you.** If the teacher talks about standardized test scores, be sure you understand what the tests measure, what the scores mean, and what the school does with the scores. If she/he talks about putting your child into a particular group based on academic level (such as a reading group or track) be sure you understand what this means. Some international

The Rules of Baseball

April brings the opening of the season for professional, or major league, baseball. Countless fans attend the games or listen to them on TV and radio throughout the summer. Most Americans, even unathletic ones, understand and have played baseball (or its cousin, softball). Here are enough rules to help you watch your first game. If you have more questions, ask any American!

- ♦ Two teams of nine players take turns being *up at bat* and *in the field*. An *inning* is one cycle of turns (Team A is up at bat, then Team B is up at bat). A game has nine innings.

- ♦ A baseball field has a *diamond* and an *outfield*. The diamond is the runway connecting four corner bases: home plate, and first, second, and third bases. The outfield is the space outside of the diamond.

- ♦ The team that is *in the field* has one player in each position: *pitcher* (who throws the ball to the batter on the other team), *catcher* (who is behind the batter at home base), first, second, and third *basemen* (one at each base), *short stop* (who stands between second and third base), and three *outfielders* (who stand far back, *out in left*, center, and right field).

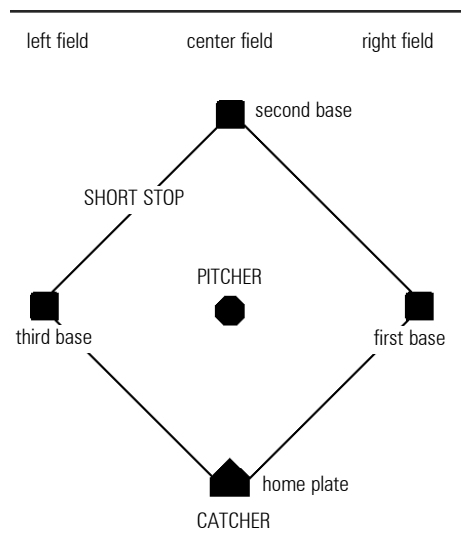
- ♦ While the batter who is *up at bat* stands beside home plate, the pitcher must throw the ball directly over home plate at a height that falls between the batter's knees and shoulders. If the ball is outside this target

area, the batter should not swing at it; it's called a *ball*. If the pitcher throws four such balls to one batter, the batter gets to walk to first base without interruption. If the ball is inside the target area, the batter should swing at it. If he swings and misses, it's called a *strike*. If the batter does not swing at a ball that is in the target area, it's also considered a strike. If he gets three strikes in one turn, he has *struck out* and his turn is over. If he hits the ball in such a way that it goes high in the air, it's called a *fly ball*. If the other team catches a fly ball before it touches the ground, the batter is out and has to leave the field.

- ♦ If the batter hits the ball, he tries to run to each base before the other team can throw

the ball there or touch the batter with the ball. He tries to run to as many bases as he can. Most often, he will only *get to first base* before the other team gets the ball there. If it is a close race, the batter stops at first base, and the next batter takes a turn. If the ball gets to the base before the batter, the batter is out and he leaves the field.

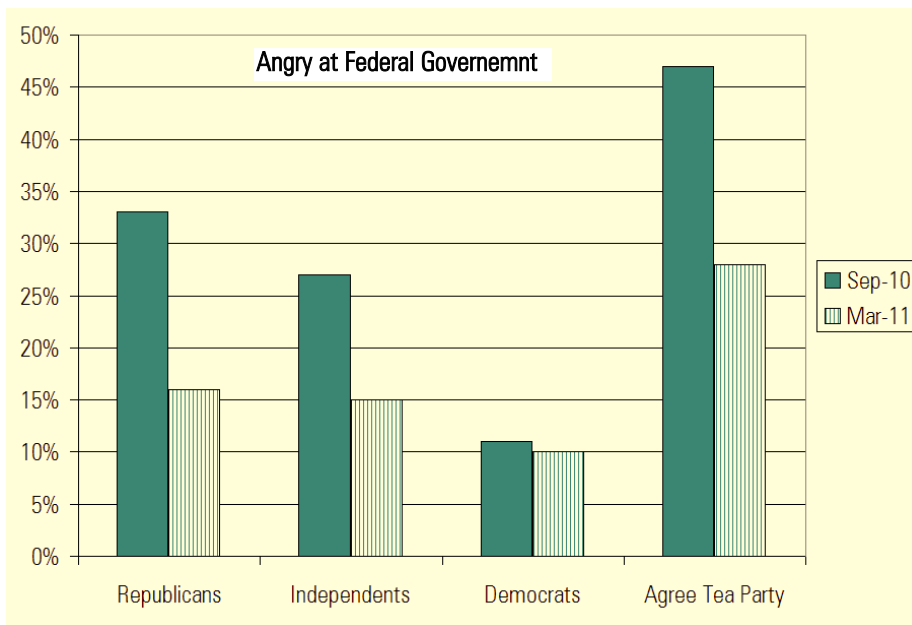
- ♦ When the next batter starts to run to first base, the first player runs toward second base. The player on second base runs toward third. The player on third runs to home base. A batter scores a *run* (a point) when he gets back to home plate. Players in the outfield try to get the ball to a base before a batter gets there. If they succeed, the batter is out.



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Less Angry, More Frustrated

Those in the federal government might be feeling a little better these days. The latest survey from the Pew Research Center (people-press.org) shows the level of “anger toward the federal government” to be lower among Republicans and Independents, and among those of any party who agree with the Tea Party ideas, as compared to levels in September 2010. A steady 22% say they are “content” with the federal government. On the issue of compromise, 54% say they like elected officials who “stick to their positions” while 40% like those who make compromises with people they disagree with. Sticking to positions was especially preferred by Republicans (63%) and those who agree with the Tea Party (69%), compared to Independents (53%) and Democrats (48%).



continued from page 4
THE RULES OF BASEBALL

- ♦ Sometimes, of course, the batter can get to second or third base, or even all the way around to home plate before the ball catches up with him. This is called a *home run*, or a *homer*. If a batter gets a home run when the *bases are loaded* (there is a player from his team on first, second, and third base when he steps up to bat), it is called a *grand slam*. All four batters score runs in that turn.
- ♦ A player is allowed to run from one base to another in between batters' turns up at bat. If he gets to the new base before the other team throws the ball there, he has *stolen the base*.
- ♦ When players on the team at bat have had three outs, the other team comes up to bat. The team with the most points at the end of nine innings wins.
- ♦ There are two Major Leagues in professional baseball — the National League and the American League. During the Major League season (April through September), teams compete mostly against other teams in their league. Then, each League has a series of play-off games within Divisions, in what is called the “Pennant race.” The winners of each League’s Pennant race then compete against each other in a seven-game “World Series.”

parents ask a friend whose English is very good to come to the conference with them.

- ♦ **If you have complaints about something the teacher does, think ahead about how to discuss it.** Have one or two specific examples in mind to discuss. Give the teacher time to explain his/her views. Remember that, in the American system, you and the teacher are partners in your child's education. Explain what schools are like in your own country, if it seems important. Make specific suggestions if you can. Then, wait a week or two to see if the situation improves. If it does not, talk to someone else in the school, like the guidance counselor, the principal, or the headmaster. But start with the teacher.

- ♦ **Say something positive about the teacher and/or the school.** Americans like an open expression of thanks. If you are pleased with how school is going, this will be easy. If you are unhappy, saying something positive will help the teacher be more willing to listen to your criticism.

- ♦ **Ask for test records, work samples, reading lists, or curriculum descriptions,** if you think they will be helpful when you go back to your home country. Do this each year, even if you will not be returning home for some time. Your home school will appreciate having such clear information about what your child has studied.

Getting Help On Line

You probably already turn to the internet for lots of information in your daily life. Have you noticed that the boundary between what is "personal" help and "on-line" help is blurred nowadays. For example, here are some sites that teach you — through words or video how to do a long list of things:

www.wikihow.com: click on Learn and then choose one 80,000 how-to articles in 19 categories — how to photograph the moon, how to win at tic tac toe, how to get your children away from TV.

Find similar information at Find **www.answers.com** and **ehow.com**. These are fairly traditional "on-line" help sites.

But sometimes you need help with your own, specific, unique problem, and general help isn't enough. I have been happy lately using "chat support" instead of telephone support for on-line banking and computer problems — you type questions about your specific problem and a real person types back an answer.

Or try **www.justanswer.com**. They have a staff of "experts" in law, medicine, electronics, plumbing, and much more. You pay for this help — the faster and more detailed answer you need, the more it costs. We have had good results getting a dishwasher fixed and some legal advice this way. As always, be careful and sensible,

continued from page 1
AMERICAN MUSIC

of Christian teachers traveled from town to town to hold revival meetings. They taught about the Bible and Christianity. The crowds were big and the emotions high. Religious singing was an important part of these meetings. Many of the songs from this time — gospel songs — are still heard today (the Gospel refers to four books of the Christian Bible). Usually the meetings were outside, so blacks were not kept away. Soon, African Americans sang these — and their own — gospel songs as their own, in their own style.

The period from the end of the Civil War (1865) to World War I was when African Americans were now "free" but often poor and discriminated against. They lived mostly in the south, away from whites. In this place and time were born the blues and jazz.

The blues are clearly rooted in African-American culture. The notes of the scales in blues are found in African music. And the words about sadness, bad luck, and oppression clearly come from the black experience. But European-American individualism affected this musical form — the blues are usually sung by a single person, the music is non-religious, and the words focus on individuals' problems. African music, in contrast, was usually more social, sung in groups, and focused on less personal problems.

The 20th century has seen many kinds of jazz — Dixieland, big band, boogie woogie, to name just a few. Jazz began as instrumental music; jazz singing came later (see sidebar on page 3 for a biography of Ella Fitzgerald, one of the great jazz singers). Rhythm and improvisation (inventing new ways of playing the music every time it is performed) were central to jazz.

Ragtime music, written for piano, is an interesting combination of African and European influence. The first composers of ragtime were black. The rhythm that is so important in ragtime is clearly African. And the music grew out of black dance music of the time. But there were European influences too. The piano was European, not African. And improvisation — the most important part of jazz — was not part of ragtime. In fact, Scott Joplin (the most famous ragtime composer) wrote, "...ragtime is destroyed by careless or imperfect [playing], and very often good players lose the effect entirely, by playing too fast." This was music that combined European classical and jazz sensibilities.

Rock and roll, too, was born in the intersection of African and European cultures. Early rock and roll singers were black (Chuck Berry, Little Richard, Fats Domino) and white (Elvis Presley, Buddy Holly, the Everly Brothers). The form borrowed from both African culture (12-bar blues, rhythm) and European culture (guitars and a country-western style). The music sold well to both black and white audiences.

In rap music, it is easy to see the African influence on this urban American music too. Choral and solo "praise poetry," sung with or without drum accompaniment, is native to Zulu and Basotho music.

American music is exciting on its own. But I find it especially moving as a metaphor for the things that happen when cultures meet and mix.

Phishing and Tax Scams

The US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) recently released several warnings about tax scams (illegal attempts to get your money or personal financial information). When someone tries to steal this information over the Internet, it is called *phishing* (pronounced *fish-ing* — as in “fishing for information”). The thief uses your information to take money from your bank account, buy things with your credit card, or damage your credit rating.

In one scheme common at tax time, you might get an email apparently from the IRS (like “tax-refunds@irs.gov” or “admin@irs.gov”). Perhaps it will be from the Taxpayer Advocate Service (which is a real service, part of the IRS). Or perhaps it will mention the Making Work Pay program (which is real). The message says you are eligible for a refund or credit and asks for your bank account information. You are directed to a website that is almost identical to the real IRS one, but is really a fake. Here, you are asked for personal and financial information that the real IRS page does not require (like your credit card number, mother’s maiden name, and/or other personal information). These messages are scams. The IRS never sends unsolicited (unrequested) emails to people about tax matters. The only way to get a tax refund is by filing a tax return.

One scam involves telephone calls in which the caller tells you that you can get a big rebate (refund) for filing taxes early. He asks for your bank account information “for direct deposit of the rebate.” Don’t give it! The IRS does not give rebates for early filers and does not gather bank information by telephone. Another scam is an email that contains your name and tells you that your tax return will be *audited* (reviewed for accuracy by the IRS). It asks for personal and account information. Again, the IRS does not send unsolicited information about audits or other tax-related matters by email. Yet another comes via fax with an official-looking form and asks you to fax back your bank details and mother’s maiden name. Don’t — the IRS does not ask for this information!

And here’s another one: an email addressed to businesses and accountants (but that might interest anyone) promising information about “Changes to Tax Law.” When you click on their link, you actually download malware that can damage your computer or allow the thief to get access to your information. And one more — you could get a telephone call from someone who says he is an IRS employee. He says the IRS sent you a check but you never cashed it, and asks for your bank account number. The IRS does not follow up on uncashed checks.

The IRS recommends:

- ♦ Be skeptical of email or letters you are not expecting. Verify before replying.
- ♦ Do not tell anyone your PIN or secret passwords; legitimate organizations do not need or ask for this information.
- ♦ If you get an email that makes you suspicious, do not follow its links; instead, go independently to the IRS site — **www.irs.gov**.
- ♦ As is always the case, never open an attachment to an email unless you are very sure what it is; it may contain a computer virus.
- ♦ Shred paper documents with financial information on them before discarding.
- ♦ If you think you have encountered one of these schemes, contact the IRS hotline set up for this purpose: 1-800-366-4484. Read more at **www.irs.gov**.

Tips for Hiring Someone to Prepare Your Tax Return

- ♦ Be cautious of tax preparers who claim they can obtain larger refunds than other preparers.
- ♦ Avoid preparers who base their fee on a percentage of the amount of the refund.
- ♦ Use a reputable tax professional who signs your tax return and provides you with a copy for your records.
- ♦ Consider whether the individual or firm will be around to answer questions about the preparation of your tax return after the return has been filed.
- ♦ No matter who prepares your tax return, you, are ultimately responsible for all of the information on your tax return. Therefore, never sign a blank tax form.
- ♦ Find out the person’s credentials. Only attorneys, certified public accountants and enrolled agents can represent taxpayers before the IRS in all matters including audits, collection and appeals. Other return preparers may only represent taxpayers for audits of returns they actually prepared.
- ♦ Find out if the preparer is affiliated with a professional organization that provides its members with continuing education and resources and holds them to a code of ethics.
- ♦ Ask questions and get references.

[adapted from www.irs.gov]

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Newcomer's Almanac is published monthly by The Interchange Institute, for people who have recently moved to the United States. Its goal is to promote international understanding by providing information about the American holidays, customs, values, social issues, and language that often confuse and surprise newcomers. It is written by Anne P. Copeland, PhD, who is a clinical psychologist and the Director of The Interchange Institute. She is an American and has lived and worked overseas with her family.

The Interchange Institute is a not-for-profit organization that studies the impact of intercultural transitions on individuals, their families, and the organizations for which they work. From the results of this research, the Institute offers seminars and workshops, produces publications, and provides consultative services to the international newcomers, their organizations, and to host communities, recognizing that change and insight on both sides facilitates smooth transition.

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That Crazy English: Baseball Idioms

American English is rich in idioms from the game of baseball. Read the Rules of Baseball on pages 4-5 to understand these better:

For years she watched the committee do its work without helping; now it's her turn *up at bat*.
(*For years she watched the committee do its work without helping; now it's her turn to do the work and be the leader.*)

It began as a friendly chat but then he started to *play hardball*. (*It began as a friendly chat but then he started to ask difficult questions and make hostile remarks.*) (Professional baseball is played with a hard, small ball. The game of "softball" uses a larger, softer ball.)

When she suggested hanging balloons from the ceiling, they thought she was *out in left field*.
(*They thought hanging balloons was nonsense, inappropriate, and/or unrealistic.*)

He never seemed to know *who was on first*. (*He never seemed to know what was going on around him.*) (This refers to "being on first [base.]")

He went to job interview after job interview, but each time, he *struck out*. (*He looked many places for a new job, but never found one.*)

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

HOMEWORK

Read *The Rules of Baseball* on page 4 and 5. Mark each of the following sentences True or False. Change all the sentences you mark False to make them correct.

- | | True | False |
|---|--------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1. After one team has gotten three strikes, one inning is over . the other team is up at | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. A player who makes a grand slam earns four points for his team. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. The final game of the season is the Pennant Race. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Batters usually have time to run past first base after they hit the ball. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. If a batter hits a fly ball and the other team catches it before it hits the ground, it is considered a strike. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. The only way to get a strike is to swing at a ball and miss. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 7. If a player steals a base, he is out. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 8. If the pitcher throws a ball outside the target area four times to one batter, the batter may walk safely to first base. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 9. A short stop stands between first and second base. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 10. It is possible for a player to be on third base when no player is on first or second base. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 11. It is good to hit a homer when the bases are loaded. | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

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WITH A PEN

1. Read *The Rules of Baseball* on pages 4-5. Write the rules to a popular sports game in your home country. How does the game begin and end? Do the players have different jobs?

2. Read *Passover* on page 3. Write a description of the food (and its symbolic meaning) served at an important holiday in your country.

3. Read *That Crazy English* on page 8. Write a list of three idioms in your home language that are based on a sport. Translate them into English and explain what they mean.

4. Read *American Music* on pages 1 and 6. Write the words of a folk or traditional song from your home country — first in your home language, then translated into English.

5. Read *Easter Eggs and Bunnies* on page 2. Think of an animal or mythical character that is associated with a holiday in your home country. Is there ancient meaning or symbolism to the creature? Write a brief paragraph to describe it.

TAX VOCABULARY

Read *Paying US Taxes* and *Tips for Hiring Someone to Prepare Your Tax Return* on pages 6 and 7. Below is a simplified copy of the beginning of the US income tax form, followed by some vocabulary words. Complete the form for yourself or an imaginary friend. Then pick the correct meaning of each word, in the context of a tax form.

1040		Department of the Treasury — Internal Revenue Service		2010	
U.S. Individual Income Tax Return					
Label	Use the IRS label. Otherwise, please print or type.	L A B E L H E R E	Your first name and initial	Last name	Your social security number
			If a joint return, spouse's first name and initial	Last name	Spouse's social security number
			Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see page 19.		
			City, town or post office, state and ZIP code. If you have a foreign address, see page 19.		
▲ Important! ▲ You must enter your SSN(s) above.					
Filing Status	1 <input type="checkbox"/>	Single			
	2 <input type="checkbox"/>	Married filing joint return (even if only one had income)			
	3 <input type="checkbox"/>	Married filing separate return.			
	4 <input type="checkbox"/>	Head of household (with qualifying person) If the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent, enter this child's name here.			
	5 <input type="checkbox"/>	Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child (year spouse died)			
Check only one box.					

word	meaning (a)	meaning (b)
1. return	go back	form for paying taxes
2. postmarked	received by the IRS	received by the Post Office
3. refunds	taxes you overpaid	extra taxes you owe
4. filing	tax-paying	making smooth
5. cautious	trusting	careful
6. reputable	known for honesty	famous
7. ultimately	in the end	partially
8. audit	official check on accuracy	trial for wrong-doing
9. affiliated	friendly with	connected to officially

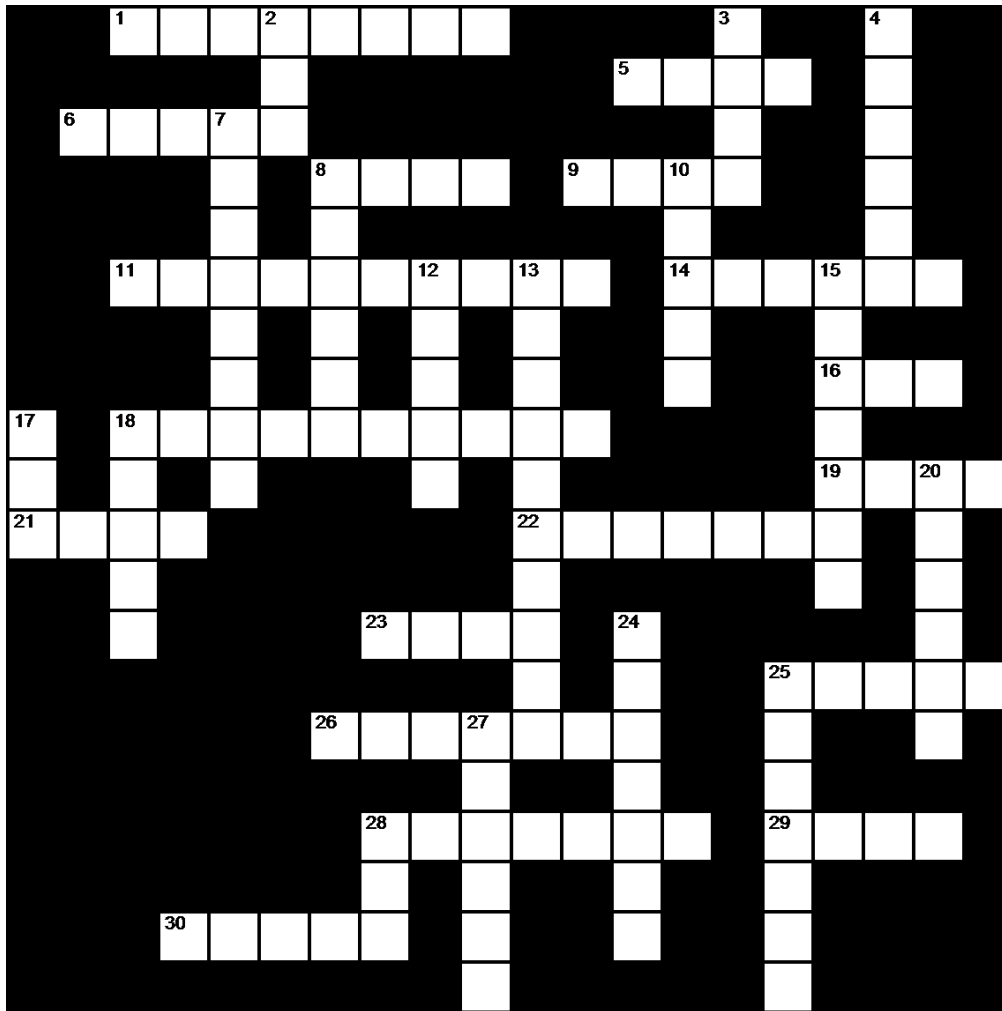
BASEBALL IDIOMS

Read *That Crazy English* on page 8. Re-write these sentences using a baseball idiom:

1. I tried to make a reservation at many restaurants but did not succeed.

2. Their new tax proposal is completely absurd.

3. It's your turn to lead the group in the direction you think is best.



Across

1. to play ____; to be harsh and difficult
5. ____ Fitzgerald was one of the greatest jazz singers.
6. ____-note notation helped people who could not read to learn music.
8. to be out in ____ field; to have unusual or silly ideas
9. fraud; illegal activity to get someone's money or information
11. You can pay a real "expert" to help you on line at ____ .com.
14. ____ music grew out of religious touring groups singing in tents.
16. Federal income ____ returns must be mailed by April 15.
18. meeting, as between parents and teachers
19. A baseball player gets a run (point) when he gets back to ____ plate.
21. ____ Friday, the day Jesus died.
22. Always be nice to the people at the Internal ____ Service (IRS).
23. religious song
25. It is legal to ____ a base in baseball.
26. American music is heavily influenced by European and ____ musical forms.
28. baby rabbits

29. acronym of Volunteer Income Tax Assistance program
30. Not to "know who is on ____" is to be confused.

Down

2. color (as in eggs)
3. a grand ____, a huge winner
4. If a baseball batter swings at a ball and misses, it is called a ____.
7. internet-based scam to steal private, financial information
8. professional, or Major ____ Baseball
10. Many Americans are less ____ at the federal government than they were in September.
12. a Passover meal
13. Tax refunds come faster if you use ____ filing.
15. the baseball player who throws the ball to the batter
17. an ancient symbol of new life
18. Jesus died on a ____.
20. unleavened bread
24. A parent-teacher conference is a good time to talk about a ____ if you have one.
25. Eating bitter herbs at Passover is a reminder of the bitterness of ____.
27. one ninth of a baseball game
28. the stick baseball players use to hit the ball

OUT AND ABOUT

1. Read *The Rules of Baseball* on pages 4-5. Watch at least 2 innings of a baseball game (on TV or in a playground). Observe a strike, a fly ball, an out, and a ball. Identify the pitcher, catcher, and short stop.

2. Read *Tips for Hiring Someone to Prepare Your Tax Return* on page 7. Practice listening to recorded announcements on the telephone by calling 1-800-829-1040 (it will be a free call), using a touch tone telephone.

3. Read *Easter Eggs and Bunnies* on page 2. Look at the different images of an Easter bunny in your community — are they male or female? clothed or not? large or small?

4. Read *American Music* on pages 1 and 6. At a public library, look for a CD of one or more of the kinds of music described.

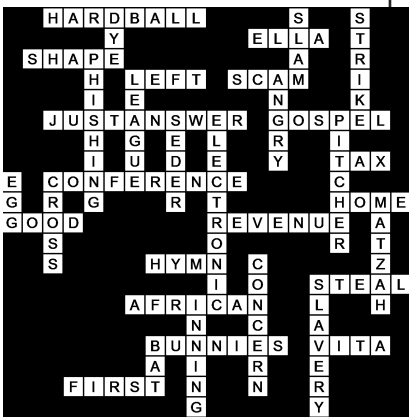
5. Read about *Passover* on page 3. In your supermarket in the days before April 18, look for special Passover foods.

IF YOU USE THE WEB

1. Read *The Rules of Baseball* on pages 4 and 5. Go to www.mlb.com to find a list of teams and their schedules. Click on *Schedule* then *Team-by-Team Schedule*. Pick the team closest to where you live in the US as "your team." Answer these questions:

- ♦ What teams will your team play in April?
- ♦ What home games will be played on a Sunday in July?

2. Read *Read Tips for Hiring Someone to Prepare Your Tax Return* on page 7. Go to www.irs.gov/localcontacts/index.html and click on the state where you live. Where is the closest place to get help with your taxes? What services are provided there? When is the



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WITH A FRIEND

1. Read the articles about taxes on pages 6 and 7. Describe to a partner how the government in your home country gets the money it needs. How is this process different from in the US? Discuss any things an individual has to pay for in the US that are provided free in your home country.

2. Read *Parent-Teacher Conferences* on pages 4 and 5. With a partner, take the role of a parent or a teacher. Pretend you have just started a parent conference. Parent role: Pretend you are worried that your child is not working hard enough and is getting too much praise for work that is not perfect. Teacher role: Pretend you are worried the parent is too strict with her/his child and you want to show what a well-rounded student the child is. Talk together for 2-3 minutes then switch roles. Which role was easier for you? Why?

MUSIC VOCABULARY

Read *American Music* on pages 1 and 6.

Match the type of music with the word or phrase that is associated with it.

- | | |
|---------------|------------------------------|
| 1. spirituals | a. improvisation |
| 2. gospel | b. outdoor religious meeting |
| 3. jazz | c. church |
| 4. hymn | d. dancing |
| 5. ragtime | e. slavery |

Which instrument would you use to play each kind of music?

- | | |
|-----------|------------------|
| 6. banjo | a. ragtime |
| 7. piano | b. spirituals |
| 8. guitar | c. bluegrass |
| 9. voice | d. rock and roll |

What does each of these music words mean?

- | | |
|-------------|-------------------------------------|
| 10. harmony | a. order of sounds that make a tune |
| 11. melody | b. pattern of beats and accents |
| 12. rhythm | c. combination of sounds |

ANSWER CORNER

Understanding What you Read

2. T
3. F The final game ... is in the World Series.
4. F Batters usually do not have time...
5. F If a batter hits a fly ball ... the batter is out.
6. F One way to get a strike is to ...
7. F If a player steals a base, he is not out.
8. T
9. F A short stop stands between 2nd and 3rd base.
10. T
11. T

Tax Vocabulary

- 1b 2b 3a 4a 5b 6a 7a 8a 9b

Baseball Idioms

1. I tried to make a reservation at many restaurants but I struck out.
2. Their new tax proposal is out in left field.
3. It's your turn up at bat.

Music Vocabulary

- 1e, 2b, 3a, 4c, 5d, 6c, 7a, 8d, 9b, 10c, 11a, 12b