

What's Happening in the Newly-Elected Congress?

As you know if you have been following US politics, the Republicans won some new Congressional seats in November, especially in the House of Representatives.

A number of these Republicans are members of the Tea Party movement – not a formal political party but rather an affiliation of local and national groups that share a commitment to reduced government spending and influence, opposition to many forms of taxation, a reduction of the national debt and budget deficit, and an interpretation of the US Constitution in line with the “original intent” of its authors.

While there is no formal leader of the Tea Party movement, Sarah Palin and Dick Armey are two of its symbolic leaders. The Tea Party endorsed (and financially supported) about 130 Republican candidates in the 2010 mid-term elections, sometimes in opposition to “established,” or non-Tea Party Republicans. About one third of these won seats in Congress.

Now the House of Representatives has a Republican majority (some of whom favor the Tea Party, some not). They have passed several high-profile bills, including a budget that includes cuts in many government programs, and the repeal of the Obama-era health reform system. All bills have to be passed both by the House and the Senate, however. As the Senate still has a

Democratic majority, these House bills are unlikely to become law without some kind of change.

In the case of the budget, if the House, Senate and President Obama cannot find a compromise by March 4, the federal government’s “non-essential services” will shut down until they do. Many US government employees will be put on *furlough*, or temporary un-paid leave. (A several-day shutdown of the federal government happened in 1995 until President Bill Clinton and the Republican-controlled Congress could find a compromise budget.)

While the House Republicans appear united on many of these bills, a close look at the views of Republican voters reveals an interesting difference between those who agree with the Tea Party and those who do not.

According to a recent poll by the Pew Research Center, about half of Republicans and Independents who say they “lean Republican” say they agree with the Tea Party ideas. That adds up to 17% of Americans in general. The rest of the Republicans/Independents who lean Republican either have no opinion about the Tea Party (20% of the American whole) or disagree with it (3%). 47% of Americans

continued on page 4

What's Happening in the Newly-Elected Congress?	1
St. Patrick's Day	2
St. Pat's Symbols	2
Spring Cleaning	3
Biography: Ira Glass	3
How Old Are You?	4
Summer Camps	5
Hurry Up - Wait a Minute!	6
Hi, I'm Rick: Informality in the US	6
That Crazy English: Hair!	8

Compliments of

Boston University CELOP Program

Distribution restricted per terms of educational site license.

Copied with permission of
The Interchange Institute
under terms of
Current Site License

St. Pat's Symbols

You will see many signs of St. Patrick's Day this month. Some are symbolic of St. Patrick's teaching, but many are important simply because they are Irish:

Shamrocks. St. Patrick used a shamrock (three-leaf clover) to illustrate the Trinity, a core aspect of Christianity. The Trinity refers to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, three who are One. A four-leaf clover is sometimes seen too, a good luck symbol.



Little Men in Hats. These men in green clothes are a modern-day blend of the 19th century Irish farmer and the *leprechaun* (fairy) (pronounced LEP-ra-kon) that is said to live in Irish forests.



Pot of Gold. If you catch a leprechaun, he will offer you a pot of gold for his freedom. But be careful — he usually escapes before you get the gold!



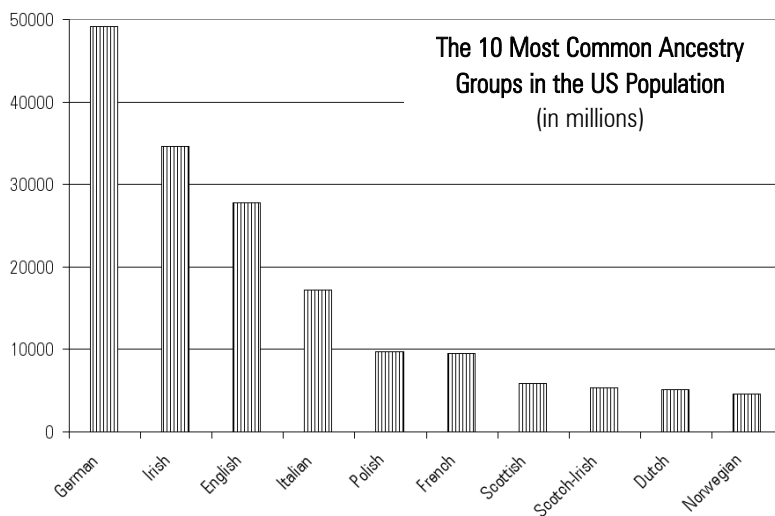
Pipes, Fiddles, and Harps. The harp is an Irish symbol of sorrow and joy. These two emotions have inspired Irish writing and music for centuries.



St. Patrick's Day

On March 17, many Americans — including non-Irish people — celebrate St. Patrick's Day. In the fifth century, Patrick was a bishop of the Catholic Church. He brought Christianity to Ireland through his teaching.

Why do Americans celebrate an Irish saint? Probably because of the large immigration from Ireland to the US. Some say that on St. Patrick's Day, "Everybody is a little bit Irish." In fact, today, almost 35 million Americans claim some Irish ancestry (see the chart below). This is a

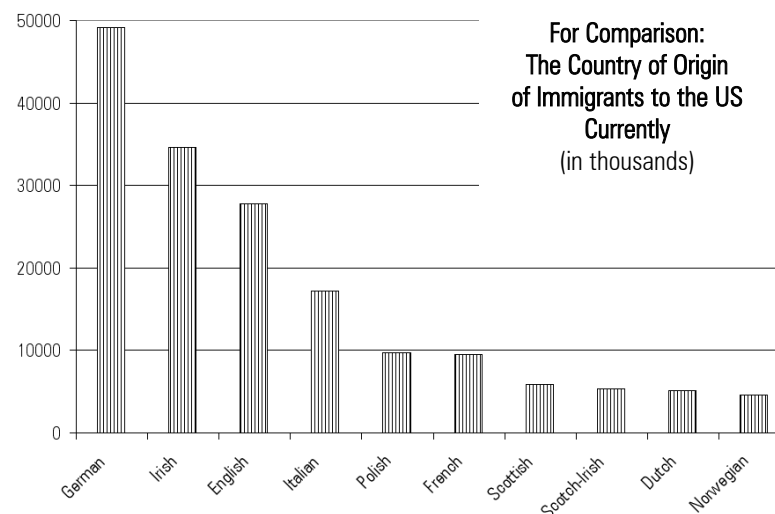


lot bigger than the current population of Ireland! While Irish-Americans can be either Catholic or Protestant, celebration of St. Patrick's Day is usually seen as an act of connection to the (mostly Catholic)

Irish Republic. In the US, St. Patrick's Day is a non-religious celebration of Irish culture. The spirit is one of fun and friendliness. You do not have to be Irish to join in.

Your children may tell you that they are supposed to wear something green that day. It's not a real school rule, but wearing green is a way of showing appreciation of Irish culture — its spirit, its music, its writing. But you will not offend anyone if you do nothing.

On St. Patrick's Day, you'll see parades, especially in cities with a large Irish-American population. Many bars, especially Irish-style pubs, have special celebrations. If you are offered a green beer, don't panic — it's just green food coloring.



Gifts and cards are not part of the tradition of this day (although you will find plenty of green items to buy if you want to). St. Patrick's Day is not a legal or business holiday.

Source for both charts on this page: US Census Bureau

Spring Cleaning

Writing advice about cleaning products does not come naturally for me. Frankly, I use the same cleaning stuff my mother used when I was a little girl, because I get overwhelmed by all the new choices in the store. So how is an international newcomer supposed to choose? To write this article, I spent a lot of time on line and in the library. I talked with professional cleaners. And I went to supermarkets with you in mind. (This seemed better than trying the products myself plus I learned some new things!) Here is some general information.

Dishes. First, be sure to buy the right type of soap. *Automatic dishwasher detergent*, for dishwashing machines, comes in both powder and liquid gel form. On the store shelf, *dish washing liquid* (for washing dishes by hand in the sink) may be right next to the automatic dishwasher detergent. The two kinds of liquids are easy but dangerous to confuse. Detergent for dishwashers will say (in tiny, hard-to-read print) something like “automatic dishwasher” or “machine dishwasher.” Never use hand-washing detergent in a dishwasher. It will make too many suds and overflow. And never use dishwasher detergent to wash by hand — it is too strong.

The better dishwashing liquids have suds (bubbles) that last longer. The brands that cost the least may not be the best choice. You may need more soap to get the same amount of suds. For automatic dishwashers, some people find it hard to get all the liquid gel out of the bottle, so they prefer the powder. You may not have to fill the dishwasher cup with detergent — try using less.

Glass and Mirror Cleaners. These usually come in a spray bottle. Many brands come

with vinegar or ammonia added. The ammonia ones may work better but some people don't like the smell. They prefer the ones with vinegar. Try making your own: four tablespoons lemon juice to one gallon water.

Cleansers. Cleansers are designed to clean stains, dirt, and spots from sinks, chrome, bathtubs, and counters. There are powder and liquid cleansers. Liquid ones were invented in the 1970s to be gentler than the powders. Powders now, however, can be just as gentle. Still, rub gently and carefully.

Floor Cleaners. If you come from a country in which kitchen and bathroom floors have drains, you may feel you are not getting your floors here clean. Use different products for floors that are wood, tile, or linoleum. Or plain water may be best. Some products claim that no rinsing is necessary. But with time, you may see a film on the floor.

Bathroom Cleaners. Your store will have many choices of products designed to clean the bathroom walls, tubs, showers, and basins (sinks). Two problems are common here. One is *scum*, a build-up of soap. The other is *mildew*, or mold that grows in warm, wet areas. Yuk. Other products are just for cleaning toilets.

All-purpose Cleaners. Finally, there are many products that claim to be for “all purposes.” These include a combination of different cleaning ingredients, each for a different problem. The ones to pour are usually stronger than the ones to spray. You may find one of these will work fine in the bathroom, for floors, and in the kitchen too.

Birthday Biography: Ira Glass

The host and producer of the public radio show *This American Life*, Ira Glass, was born on March 3, 1959. He began his radio career as an intern at National Public Radio (NPR) and, over time, has worked on many of its national shows. He started hosting and producing *This American Life* in 1995, from Chicago. It is now available nationally via Public Radio International (a competitor to NPR, both of which develop programs for public radio).

I encourage you to give *This American Life* a try. Each hour-long show is divided into 3-4 Acts, or segments, on a common theme. For example, shows have focused on summer camp, what people will do for money, college life, elections, memories, the Iraq war, the health insurance industry, the financial crisis. Maybe that list doesn't “grab you” but the producers do an excellent job of making each topic both interesting and understandable. A particularly impressive series of shows focused on explaining the recent mortgage and banking crisis in ways that normal people could understand.

The show is broadcast Saturday afternoons, but I listen on a free podcast, available from iTunes or www.thisamericanlife.org.

Happy Birthday, Ira.

Question from a Reader: How Old Are You?

Q: I am surprised, when Americans are so willing to speak to strangers in the elevator and in stores, that there are some questions we should not ask - like "how old are you?" In Japan we need to know someone's age so we know how to talk to them properly.

A: Americans tend to think of themselves as very open and willing to talk about anything, part of their self-image of honesty and directness. But you're right, there are topics that feel too intimate to many Americans.

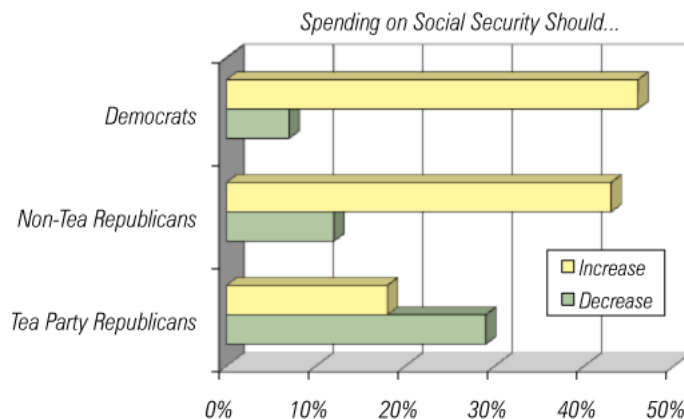
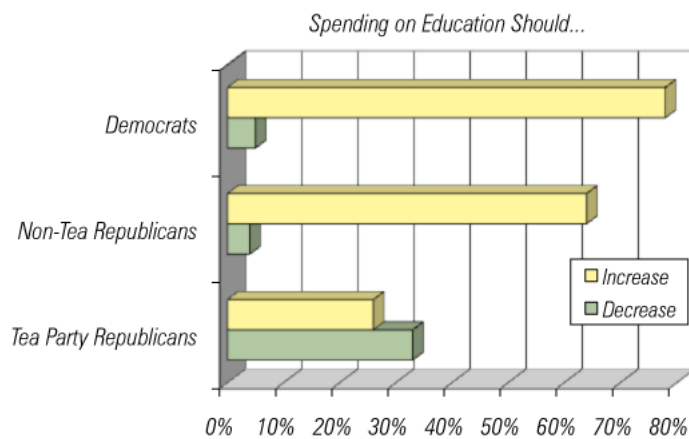
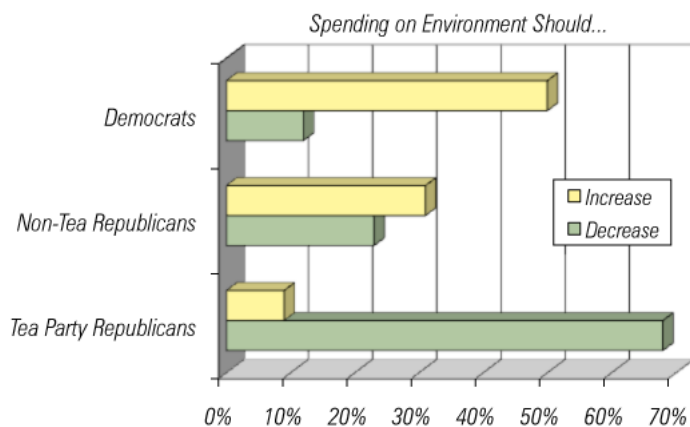
Asking about someone's age is OK only if the person is clearly younger than 21 or older than about 90! Remember that in the US, youth is highly valued; respect for older people is not so obvious. So if you have to guess someone's age, guess low.

In the US, unless someone is very different from you in age (say, 20 years or more), your social relationship and your language with that person will not be very influenced by age. For example, I am "50-something" (see — I won't even tell you!). I am on a committee with two other women. One is 30-something, the other a little older than I am. I do not think there is a hierarchy among us that is age-based.

continued from page 1

are Democrats or "lean Democrat" and 13% say they have no party leaning or affiliation at all.

So how do these groups line up in their views about current social issues? In the case of health care, 66% of Tea Party voters and 34% of the non-Tea Party Republican voters think health care spending should decrease, compared to only 10% of Democrats – we might call that general agreement among Republicans. But on a number of other important social issues, the non-Tea-Party Republicans' views are closer to the Democrats':



Summer Camps

US school children have a 10-12 week vacation in the summer. This schedule began many years ago to allow children to help with their families' summer farming jobs. Over the years, families moved to the cities, but the school calendar stayed the same.

Do not assume that your neighborhood will be filled with friends for your children. In some neighborhoods, children spend their days at home. But many families in the US send their children to a summer day camp or sleepover camp, especially if both parents have jobs. Children at day camps return home each afternoon. At sleepover camps, children (usually age 8 or older) stay for one to several weeks at a time, sleeping in cabins or tents. Here is some information about day camps:

- ♦ Registration for many day camps is in the spring. Sign up now, or the camp you want may be full.
- ♦ The phrase *day camp* refers to any summer program. It may or may not include activities that you think of as "camping," like nature and outdoor living. Many day camps offer a mixture of sports, games, crafts, and music. Other day camps focus on one activity, like soccer, computers, gymnastics, or art. These camps usually offer lessons, coaching, and a lot of practice time in the special activity. Many children go to one of these special camps for a week or two. Then they go to a camp with a broader mixture of activities.
- ♦ Most day camps start between 8 and 9am, but the ending time varies widely. They may end at 12 or mid- or late afternoon. Pick one that fits your schedule and your child's age.



- ♦ Some day camps serve lunch. At others, children bring their own lunches. Ask about this if you want your child to eat (or not eat) particular foods.
- ♦ Most camps hire high school and university-age *counselors* (group leaders) to work directly with the children in small groups. Some also hire adults (like school teachers) to supervise the younger counselors closely. It is especially important for very young children to have adults involved in their day camp life.
- ♦ Some camps are at public parks or school playgrounds, so there is an emphasis on outdoor games and simple crafts. Other camps offer horse-back riding, video movie making, computer lessons, pottery, or musical instrument lessons — these need special facilities. Be sure to understand how often your children will be able to do the activities that interest them most.
- ♦ Some day camps have a schedule that all children in a group follow. Others offer each child a choice of what to do each hour. Some day camps separate boys and girls. Others have mixed-sex groups. Some separate children by age, others by activity or interest.
- ♦ Day camps cost from about \$60 to several hundred dollars per week. Camps may also offer bus transportation at an extra cost. The more expensive camps should offer more and older counselors and more special activities.
- ♦ Most day camps have a springtime Open House or a written brochure that describes their program and the cost.

11 Questions to Ask a Day Camp

Here are 11 questions to ask:

Is the camp well organized?

- ♦ Did the camp return your telephone calls promptly?
- ♦ Did they send a brochure when you asked for one?
- ♦ Is their registration process well-run and fair?
- ♦ Was the open house useful?

If any of these answers is "no," watch out. The camp will probably not be better organized in the summer when hundreds of children are there!

Is the camp safe?

- ♦ How many counselors will your child have?
- ♦ How many adults will be at the pool when your child is swimming?
- ♦ What are their safety rules for sports activities like gymnastics and football?
- ♦ If English is new for your child, will there be any counselors who speak your language?

If you are worried, talk to the camp director. Having more information may be helpful.

Will my child have fun?

- ♦ What activities does the camp offer? How often will your child do the activities that sound most fun?
- ♦ Will your child have any choice in what to do?
- ♦ What happens if your child does not want to do what the rest of the group is doing?

Hi, I'm Rick: Informality in the US

Not long ago, I got on a small commercial airplane. A young man stood at the bottom of the stairs, helping us onto the airplane. He got in, closed the door, and said, "Hi, I'm Rick and (pointing to the front) up there is my buddy Bill." He reviewed the safety instructions, then sat down in the pilot's seat and flew the plane.

Another day, I sat at a hotel restaurant with family members who had gathered for an uncle's funeral. Our waiter greeted us, "Howdy folks, My name is Jeff. What brings y'all to sunny Houston on this glorious day?"

My daughter's teacher sat on the edge of her desk, one hand in her pocket and a Coke in her other hand during her Welcome speech at Open House.

Did the pilot think I would feel more comfortable if he acted like my "friend?" Did the waiter think his welcome would be, well, welcome? Did my daughter's teacher think we would judge her as more competent if there were less social distance between parent and teacher? Apparently yes, because it is quite common in the US to be informal and use first (given) names with each other. Newcomers may find this habit to be strange, disrespectful, or impolite.

This informality reflects the American value placed on

Hurry Up — Wait a Minute!

Do you think Americans rush around all the time? Are they always too busy? Too fast? Don't know how to relax?

Or...do you think Americans seem lazy? Does it take them too long to do the simplest thing? Do you wish they would be less sloppy and work harder?

Chances are good that you answered "yes" to one of these groups of questions.

Depending on which country you are from and where you live in the US, you may feel that the pace of life in the US is, well, odd. Researchers at California State University have studied the pace of life in different parts of the world and in different parts of the United States.



My favorite part of this research project is the way the researchers measured "pace of life." Research assistants went to 31 cities around the world and measured three things:

- ♦ the accuracy of clocks on downtown bank buildings,
- ♦ how long it took people to walk 100 feet on a clear summer day on an uncrowded street, and
- ♦ how long it took postal clerks to sell a stamp for a letter, paid for with a paper bill.

The three measures tended to go together. That is, a country with accurate clocks also tended to have fast walkers and fast stamp sellers. (The exceptions to this rule are interesting, though — see the Box on this page. Why are Romanian clocks so accurate and Dutch ones relatively inaccurate? Do people in Austria really walk so much more slowly than they work, and Kenyans do the opposite?)

Sometimes the difference in rankings was tiny — a few seconds difference in many cases.

And sometimes it was hard for the researchers to know when to begin and

Pace Around the World

	Overall Pace	Walking Speed	Postal Speed	Clock Accuracy
Switzerland	1	3	2	1
Ireland	2	1	3	11
Germany	3	5	1	8
Japan	4	7	4	6
Italy	5	10	12	2
England	6	4	9	13
Sweden	7	13	5	7
Austria	8	23	8	3
Netherlands	9	2	14	25
Hong Kong	10	14	6	14
France	11	8	18	16
Poland	12	12	15	8
Costa Rica	13	16	10	15
Taiwan	14	18	7	21
Singapore	15	25	11	4
USA	16	6	23	20
Canada	17	11	21	22
South Korea	18	20	20	16
Hungary	19	19	19	18
Czech Republic	20	21	17	23
Greece	21	14	13	29
Kenya	22	9	30	24
China	23	24	25	12
Bulgaria	24	27	22	17
Romania	25	30	29	5
Jordan	26	28	27	19
Syria	27	29	28	27
El Salvador	28	22	16	31
Brazil	29	31	24	28
Indonesia	30	26	26	30
Mexico	31	17	31	26

continued on page 7

continued from page 6

stop the clock. In Japan, for example, postal clerks wrapped the single stamp in a little package and wrote out a receipt, adding to its total time.

Still, it is interesting to look at the various scores. Notice that Switzerland got the highest overall score. The US was about in the middle. Indonesia and Mexico score in the most laid-back direction.

Next, these California-based researchers turned their attention to 36 cities in four regions of the US. In each region, they studied three large cities (population greater than 1.8 million), three medium size ones (850,000-1,300,000), and three smaller ones (350,000-550,000).

They measured:

- ♦ how long it took people to walk 60 feet on a main downtown street, on a clear summer day during business hours,
- ♦ how long it took bank clerks to make change for two \$20 bills or give two \$20 bills for change,
- ♦ postal clerks' talking speed (measured by asking them to explain the difference between registered mail, certified mail, and insured mail, then dividing the total number of syllables they used in their explanation by the amount of time it took)
- ♦ the proportion of people in downtown areas who were wearing a wristwatch.

In the Box on this page, a low number represents faster speed and more watches worn. The cities with the lowest (fastest) scores were all in the Northeast: Boston first, then Buffalo, NY, and New York City. The highest (slowest) scores

Pace Around the US

	Overall Pace	Walking Speed	Bank Speed	Talking Speed	Watches Worn
Boston, MA	1	2	6	6	2
Buffalo, NY	2	5	7	15	4
New York, NY	3	11	11	28	1
Salt Lake City, UT	4	4	16	12	11
Columbus, OH	5	22	17	1	19
Worcester, MA	6	9	22	6	6
Providence, RI	7	7	9	9	19
Springfield, MA	8	1	15	20	22
Rochester, NY	9	20	2	26	7
Kansas City, MO	10	6	3	15	32
St. Louis, MO	11	15	20	9	15
Houston, TX	12	10	8	21	19
Paterson, NJ	13	17	4	11	31
Bakersfield, CA	14	28	13	5	17
Atlanta, GA	15	3	27	2	36
Detroit, MI	16	21	12	34	2
Youngstown, OH	17	13	18	3	30
Indianapolis, IN	18	18	23	8	24
Chicago, IL	19	12	31	3	27
Philadelphia, PA	20	30	5	22	11
Louisville, KY	21	16	21	29	15
Canton, OH	22	23	14	26	15
Knoxville, TN	23	25	24	30	11
San Francisco, CA	24	19	35	26	5
Chattanooga, TN	25	35	1	32	24
Dallas, TX	26	26	28	15	28
Oxnard, CA	27	30	30	23	7
Nashville, TN	28	8	26	24	33
San Diego, CA	29	27	34	18	9
East Lansing, MI	30	14	33	12	34
Fresno, CA	31	36	25	17	19
Memphis, TN	32	34	10	19	34
San Jose, CA	33	29	29	30	22
Shreveport, LA	34	32	19	33	28
Sacramento, CA	35	33	32	36	26
Los Angeles, CA	36	24	36	35	13

Source: Levine, R. *A Geography of Time. Basic Books.*

came from Southern cities and cities in California.

So if you are frustrated by the American pace, it may help to realize that...it could be worse! But ...um... I live in Boston, so I gotta go.

Day Light Savings Time

Daylight Saving Time starts at 2am on the second Sunday of March (March 13 this year) and ends at 2am on the first Sunday of November (November 6).

equality in social relationships. Americans behave, at first anyway, in a very friendly way to strangers. This friendliness may feel empty to you. Think of it instead as setting the stage for an equal social relationship which may develop. Americans think, "If you and I are *on a first-name basis*, it means that we could be friends. Let's assume we are socially equal to each other."

There are some exceptions. People in a few professions are usually called by their title (like doctors, judges, military officers, and religious leaders). If someone is in your parents' generation, or is your boss, begin by being more formal. But do not be surprised if those people ask you to call them by their first name immediately.

Of course, Americans do have ways of showing differences in social relationships. People with more status (by social position, wealth, age, or sex, for example) tend to talk first, and interrupt others more. They get the attention of others more quickly. People laugh at their jokes more. Those with less status are more likely to hide or soften their anger around them. These are more silent (though just as powerful) ways of showing inequality. But what you *call* someone is very obvious. So Americans like to appear equal, and keep open the possibility of a more equal relation.

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.

Subscriptions: Please contact The Interchange Institute for information about subscription fees, site licenses, and discount rates:

The Interchange Institute
11 Hawes Street, Brookline, MA 02446
Tel. 617.566.2227 Fax 617.277.0889
www.interchangeinstitute.org
email: newcomer@interchangeinstitute.org



The
Interchange
Institute

Copyright 2011.
Anne P. Copeland.
All rights reserved.
No photocopying
allowed except under
terms of site license.

That Crazy English: Hair!

Who knew the English language was so tuned in to people's hair??

He took me on a *hair-raising* drive around the mountain on his motorcycle. (*He took me on a very frightening drive around the mountain on his motorcycle.*)

I am *within a hair's breadth* of being finished with my project, then I will be able to join you. (*I am very close to being finished with my project, then I will be able to join you.*)

Please *stay out of my hair* while I finish preparing my tax returns. (*Please leave me alone and do not talk to me while I finish preparing my tax returns.*)

He was very nervous during the job interview but later that night, he *let his hair down* and people got to know him a bit. (*He was very nervous during the job interview but later that night, he relaxed and became more informal, and people got to know him a bit.*)

I say you owe me \$100 and you say you owe me \$99.99. Let's not *split hairs*. (...*Let's not argue over a very small difference.*)

When I started to cross that wobbly bridge, my *hair was standing on end*. (*When I started to cross that wobbly bridge, I was very scared.*)

My old computer is making me *tear my hair out*. (*My old computer is frustrating me.*)

SPEAKING NUMBERS

HOMEWORK

Read *Hurry Up - Wait a Minute!* on pages 6 and 7. To speak aloud the numbers like those in this article, follow these samples:

If the number is:

say:

350,000

"three hundred [and] fifty thousand"

100

"a hundred" or "one hundred"

1.8 million

"one point eight million"

1,300,000

"one million three hundred thousand" or "one point three million"

1500

"fifteen hundred" or "one thousand five hundred"

470

"four hundred seventy"

Write these numbers in words:

1. 830,000 _____

2. 1700 _____

3. 3.5 million _____

4. 250 _____

5. 4,375,280 _____

IDIOMS

Read *That Crazy English: Hair Idioms* on page 8. Use one of the idioms in a sentence to describe each of the following:

1. a small child making a lot of noise while his dad is trying to concentrate

2. a new neighbor finally becomes more relaxed around you

3. a man wins a contest by a very small margin

4. an airplane makes a very bumpy landing

Copied with permission of
The Interchange Institute
under terms of
Current Site License

WITH A PEN

1. Read about *Summer Camps* on page 5. Write a letter to an imaginary day camp director asking about whether they have space for your (or an imaginary) child. Ask how often your child will be able to do his/her favorite activities. Ask about any worries or concerns.

2. Read *St. Patrick's Day* and *St. Pat's Symbols* on page 2. Write a description of a holiday in which one color is very important (as green is, on St. Patrick's Day). What does the color stand for?

3. Read *Spring Cleaning* on page 3. Write a list of the ways "cleaning house" is different in the US than in your home country.

4: Read *Question from a Reader* on page 4. Write a list of questions that are uncomfortable to ask in your home country. Then write an example of what you would say if someone asked you each of these questions.

5. Read *Hi, I'm Rick* on pages 6-7. Write a list of the types of people you call by their given name in your home country.

WORDS IN CONTEXT

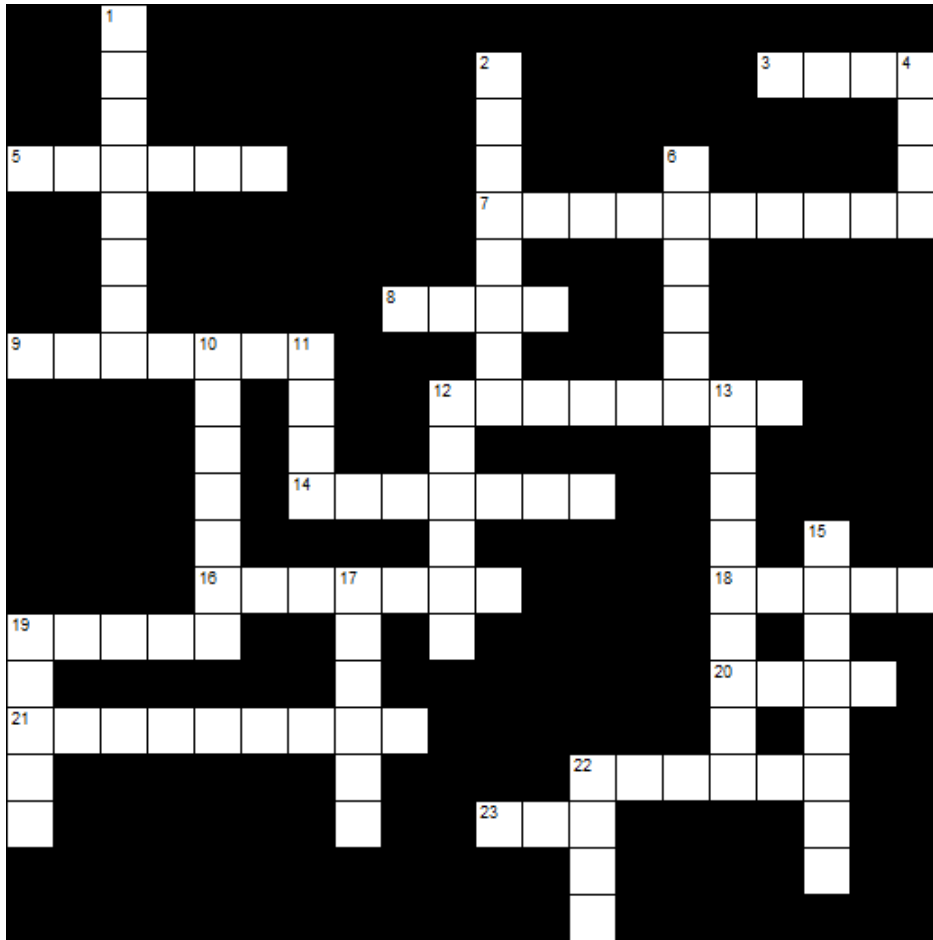
Read about *St. Patrick's Day* and *St. Pat's Symbols* on page 2. Circle the correct meaning of each word in column one:

	Paragraph	A	B
St. Patrick's Day			
1. bishop	1	religious leader, high priest	student, scholar
2. ancestry	2	family of birth, family roots	knowledge, familiarity
3. spirit	3	ghost	mood, basic sense
4. appreciation	3	increase in value	respect
5. crazy	4	insane	silly and fun
St. Pat's Symbols			
6. signs	1	billboards	reminders
7. illustrate	2	draw	teach about, make clear
8. core	2	central, basic	often misunderstood
9. blend	3	combination	picture
10. escapes	4	gets away	gets caught
11. inspired	5	caused to do good things	limited, hurt

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Read about *Summer Camps* on page 5. Mark each sentence below "True" or "False." Make corrections so false ones are true.

	True	False
a. Children usually sleep in tents or cabins at day camp.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
b. Most camps hire counselors who are between the ages of about 16 and 22.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
c. Day camps usually send a bus to pick children up at their homes, for no extra fee.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
d. Day camps always let the children decide what activities they will do during the day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
e. All day camps in the U.S. are excellent; parents do not have to be very careful in which they choose.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
f. Day camps always last all day, from breakfast to dinner time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>



Across

3. A little green man will offer you a pot of ___ for his freedom, but don't spend it till you have it in your hand!
5. the most common ancestry group in the US population
7. an elf in an Irish forest
8. build-up of soap
9. a hair's ____, a small distance
12. St. Patrick used this to teach about the Christian trinity
14. a way to listen to a radio show on an iPod
16. A hair-___ ride is a scary one.
18. ___ hairs, argue over a small difference
19. Ira ___ is the host of *This American Life*.
20. 47% Americans are Democrats or are Independents who "___ Democrat."
21. If the Congress cannot agree on a budget, all federal non-___ services will be shut down.
22. Most general day camps offer ___ as an activity.
23. The ___ Party successfully supported a number of Republican politicians in November 2010.

Down

1. Most Tea Party advocates think we should ___ our spending on the environment.
2. unpaid temporary leave from a job
4. let your hair ____, relax
6. the country of origin of most immigrants to the US today
10. ___ are usually addressed by title rather than given name.
11. an Irish musical instrument
12. Day Light Savings Time begins on the ___ Sunday of March.
13. a group leader in a day camp
15. a cleaning product that comes in liquid or powder form
17. All laws must be passed by both the US House of Representatives and the ___.
19. the symbolic color of St. Patrick's Day
22. Parents should ask a day camp what they do to keep children ___.

OUT AND ABOUT

1. Read *Hurry Up - Wait a Minute!* on pages 6 and 7. Pick a street in your US city and watch how fast people walk. Is this slower or faster than in your home? What other signs of a different pace of life do you see?

2. Read *St. Pat's Symbols* on page 2. As you walk through your town this month, try to find each of these:

- ♦ a three-leaf clover and a four-leaf clover
- ♦ a pot of gold
- ♦ a harp
- ♦ a leprechaun

2. Read *Spring Cleaning* on page 3. Go to the Cleaning Products aisle of your supermarket. Find at least three products in each of these categories:

- ♦ dishwashing liquids
- ♦ automatic dishwasher (machine) detergents
- ♦ all-purpose cleaners
- ♦ floor cleaners.

Which in each category is the least expensive?

4. Read *What's Happening in the Newly-Elected Congress* on pages 1 and 4. Read a US newspaper for three days and count the number of references to the Tea Party. What issues are they focused on?

IF YOU USE THE WEB

1. Read *Summer Camps* on page 5. Use a search engine (like www.google.com) to search for summer day camps in your community. Use “day-camp” and your town name as key words. Then try adding some activity you especially like (“crafts” or “tennis”). Anything look fun?

2. Read *Birthday Biography: Ira Glass* on page 3. Go to www.thisamericanlife.org and click on Radio Archive (top) then “Original Recipe” to hear their story about the original recipe for Coca-Cola. Or on their home page, click “Play Episode” to hear one of their most recent broadcasts. Or, if you like what you hear, click Podcast (top) to sign up to receive the show regularly.

WITH A FRIEND

1. Read *Hi, I'm Rick* on pages 6-7. Talk to a friend or partner about a time when an American was more informal than you expected. Where were you? What was this person's relationship to you? How did you feel? How do you think the American intended for you to feel? What would have been different in this situation in your home country?

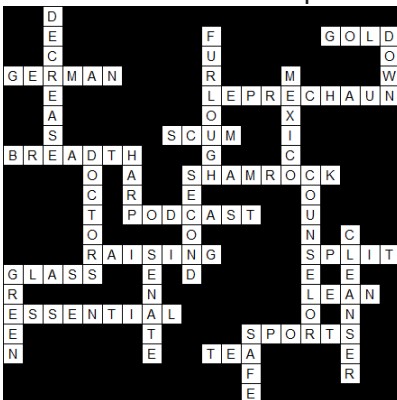
2. Read *Summer Camps* on page 5. Describe to a friend or partner what you did during school vacations as a child.

3. Read *Question from a Reader* on page 5. With a friend or partner, discuss whether you speak differently to people who are much older or much younger than you — in English, and in your home language. What about people who are a little bit older or younger? Does vocabulary differ, or other ways of communicating?

4. Read *Hurry Up — Wait a Minute!* on pages 6 and 7. Discuss whether there are any surprises in the listing of countries and US cities — do the numbers fit with your experience there? Do you find the pace of life to be faster, slower, or the same as in your home country? What would you measure to capture a difference in pace between the US and home?

5. Read *What's Happening in the Newly-Elected Congress* on pages 1 and 4. Tell a friend or partner how laws are made and budgets are decided in your home country. What surprises you about the US system? Look at the charts on page 4. How would you answer each of those funding questions?

6. Read *That Crazy English: Hair!* on page 8. Take turns with a friend or partner telling a story about what you did in the summers as a child, using one of these idioms in each sentence.



© The Interchange Institute, 2011

ANSWER CORNER

SPEAKING NUMBERS

- eight hundred [and] thirty thousand
- one thousand seven hundred (or seventeen hundred)
- three point five million
- two hundred [and] fifty
- four million, three hundred seventy-five thousand, two hundred [and] eighty

WORDS IN CONTEXT

- 1a 2a 3b 4b 5b 6b 7b 8a 9a 10a
11a

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

- F Children usually sleep at home when they go to day camp.
- T
- F Day camps may offer bus transportation, for a fee.
- F Some day camps let the children decide what activities they will do but others do not.
- F Not all day camps in the U.S. are excellent; parents should be careful in which they choose.
- F Some day camps last all day, others end at noon.