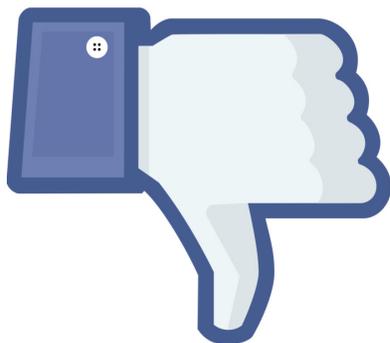


Facebook in the News

About two billion people worldwide use Facebook at least once a month. It is likely you do, too. It is no secret that information about users can be gathered from this social media tool -- when you sign up, you are asked for (though do not have to give) demographic data (like your birthdate or marital status). And your preferences and opinions can be easily guessed by the posts you Like or Share. If you click on an ad for shoes, you will see more shoe ads. So that part may not surprise or disturb you.

One recent news story that worries people (including investors in Facebook) is that personal information from people who had agreed to share their data (presumably with a psychologist) as part of "taking a personality quiz" was sold to Cambridge Analytica, who used it to offer paid political advice. (How that data was used is another story...) And worse, they also got access to personal data from the Facebook *friends* of those who had agreed to take the personality quiz -- but these friends had never said OK. And it's not just a few people. Data from 50 million users were sold.

Mark Zuckerberg (Facebook's founder) has apologized. The Federal Trade Commission is investigating. At the time of this writing, Facebook has lost 14% of its value. And many users are exploring, with dismay, just how much of their personal data is stored by Facebook. If you use Facebook (even a little bit), you might find it interesting to check it out:



Which other social media sites have access to your Facebook information? In Facebook, go to Settings/General, then click on "Apps" (in the left column) to see your list. (I had 15 -- like TripAdvisor and Pandora.) You can Remove these (although it may change how you sign in to these sites or interact with them). You might also want to look at the "Ads" section. You will get ads for sure, but you can choose whether to have them tailored to your preferences or not. And of course, check your basic Privacy settings that control who can see your posts, list of Friends, and more.

Still curious? You can download every action you've ever taken on Facebook (events, posts, photos, messages). At the Settings/General page, click "Download a copy of your Facebook data." Follow the instructions and in a few minutes you'll get an emailed list of every little thing you ever did on Facebook...

Finally, it seems Facebook Messenger may have a record of every cell phone call or text message you've sent, especially if you're an Android user. (To check it out, in Messenger, click on your profile photo in the top left corner, tap People, and check to see if "Sync Contacts" is on or off.) Android asks users to

allow importing their phone contacts in order to use Messenger or Facebook Lite, but users may not have understood that their calls and texts would then be tracked. You can turn this feature off and Facebook says it will then delete the information.

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English at Large

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"Messages? Oh, there have been lots and lots of messages, but none for you."

This cartoon is **aggressive**. The secretary insults the man by saying that he is less popular (and so, less important), than others in the office.



"There's nothing wrong with the phone; you're trying to call your office with the TV remote."

This cartoon is **defensive**. People who are confused or anxious about new technologies will enjoy laughing at this man — they are laughing at themselves.



"With all that's happening in Washington lately, deciding who's naughty and who's nice is not as simple as it used to be."

This is a **social criticism** cartoon about unethical politicians. It also requires knowledge of social references to Santa Claus and a famous children's song that says: "[Santa's] making a list and checking it twice. He's going to find out who is naughty [bad] and nice" - only nice children will get gifts from him.

What's So Funny??

A researcher asked people around the world to tell him the funniest joke they knew. He got 40,000 jokes and 1.5 million votes. Here's the winner:

"Two hunters are out in the woods when one of them collapses. He's not breathing and his eyes are glazed, so his friend calls 911. 'My friend is dead! What should I do?' The operator replies, 'Calm down, sir. I can help. First make sure that he's dead.' There's a silence, then a loud bang. Back on the phone, the guy says, 'Ok, now what?'"

Really, I'm going to guess that maybe you don't find this so funny. (In today's news climate, I find it sort of creepy, although I do "get it.") Let's take a look at what makes people laugh around the world, and then I'll return to this joke.

Let's start with this American classic joke: *How many psychologists does it take to change a lightbulb? One, but it has to want to change first.*

Is that funny to you? Chances are, not. To find it funny, you must be familiar with four different aspects of US culture:

1) the "lightbulb joke" theme that was popular in the US many years ago. The original lightbulb joke was this: *How many dummies does it take to change a lightbulb? Three — one to hold the lightbulb and two to turn the ladder around and around.* Then came many variations, substituting other groups of people for "dummies" and other silly answers (keep reading for more).

2) the fact that the word *change* has two meanings: *to replace* (as in an old lightbulb for a new one), and *to alter one's way of being*.

3) the idea, known to people familiar with popular psychology (but maybe unknown to others), that psychologists can help a person

change only if the person wants to change.

4) a preference for humor that involves teasing others, in this case, psychologists.

It is not a surprise that international newcomers usually do not laugh at this joke.

Humor is important in most cultures. But people in different cultures vary in what they find funny. Some of the most common types of humor are:

- **Aggressive:** In international comparisons of humor, Americans tend to like aggressive humor more than people from many other countries. Aggressive humor is a way to say unkind things in a socially acceptable way. It often involves *putting down* (insulting) a person or some group — a profession (lawyer and clergy jokes are the most popular), a rival team, or the opposite sex, for example. You may hear jokes about an ethnic or racial group in the US, but these are considered very inappropriate.

Jokes about different regions in the US are generally more acceptable because there is very little real aggression being communicated. For example, in Boston, we hear: *How many Californians does it take to change a lightbulb? Just one, and have a nice day.* (This teases Californians about being superficially nice — Bostonians think this is worth teasing...)

And this one: *How many New Yorkers does it take to change a lightbulb? It's none of your business, and have a nice day.* (Bostonians' stereotype of New Yorkers is that they may try to be nice but they are rude.)

Americans especially tend to like aggressive jokes that put down intellectuals. They are showing their deep value that every person

— not just very smart or very rich ones — can succeed in the US.

- **Defensive:** A very different kind of humor is the defensive kind. People find defensive humor funny when they are nervous or anxious about something. You will hear jokes in the US about dentists, death, or complicated new technologies, for example. The humor, and its release, serves to lessen anxiety. Some jokes are both aggressive and defensive, as when people joke about groups of people who make them nervous — like psychologists in the light bulb joke. Humor about the opposite sex and about racial and ethnic groups tend to be in this category — they are a put down, but they also show the speaker's worries.

Jokes about oneself may also be defensive — I'll make a joke about myself before you do it for me!

- **Social Criticism:** Cultures may also use humor to comment on social changes and values. Jokes about workplace rules, new social norms, health care, and politics are common in the US today. If you follow the news and popular culture carefully, you may understand these jokes. But they often include some historical or cultural reference that you may not understand.

How about this one: *How many computer programmers does it take to change a lightbulb? None, they won't do it; lightbulbs are hardware.* This joke is a put down of computer programmers (aggressive). But it also is a joke about how rigidly people define their jobs (social criticism).

- **Intellectual:** Another very popular kind of humor in the US falls in the "intellectual" category. This does not mean that the humor is very intellectually sophisticated. Rather, this category refers to humor based in word meaning, absurdity, double meanings, or twists in logic.

Unless you understand the subtle meanings of the words, these jokes will not be funny. The psychologist joke about changing a light bulb is an example of this.

Intellectual jokes may be especially difficult for international newcomers to understand because they require knowing the details of the language and the culture.

So let's go back to the "funniest joke in the world." It fits in a few categories. It's aggressive (a man kills his friend). It's defensive (we are anxious about how we might mis-understand someone's instruction). And most important, it's intellectual, requiring understanding that the phrase "make sure..." has two meanings: *to see if it's true* and *to make it happen*. The 911 operator means "see if it's true that he's dead" but the caller thinks he means "make it happen." It's hard for me to believe that this word play, central to the joke, translates into other languages. What do you think?

If English is new for you, or if you don't know the details and history of US culture, or if you have a different view about what is funny, you may feel confused about the American sense of humor. You may miss your home country's type of humor, and feel disappointed when you try to share it with an American. When you are with others who seem to be having fun, you may feel left out and sad. If that happens, it would be a good time to rent a comedy movie in your language, or tell some jokes to people who understand your culture.

I'd love to hear your favorite jokes, from your home country. Write me an English translation and send it to newcomer@interchangeinstitute.org. I'll let you know if I need some help understanding it! (And tell me if you liked the hunter joke...)

Word Play

Here are some lines I got from the internet that supposedly really appeared in church newsletters. (I sort of doubt it...but see what you think.) Can you identify the type of humor in each one?

Ladies, don't forget the rummage sale. It's a chance to get rid of those things not worth keeping around the house. Bring your husbands.

The peacemaking meeting scheduled for today has been cancelled due to a conflict.

Miss Charlene Mason sang "I Will Not Pass This Way Again," giving obvious pleasure to the listeners.

For those of you who have children and don't know it, we have a nursery downstairs.

Eight new choir robes are currently needed due to the addition of several new members and to the deterioration of some older ones.

The head of the Sunday School will deliver his farewell retirement message after which the choir will sing: "Break Forth Into Joy."

The ladies of the Church have cast off clothing of every kind. They may be seen in the basement on Friday afternoon.

The high school class will be presenting Shakespeare's Hamlet in the church basement Friday at 7pm. The congregation is invited to attend this tragedy.

Paying US Taxes

The annual deadline for paying federal (and state) income taxes is traditionally April 15. In 2018, however, April 15 falls on a Sunday. That would usually push the deadline to the next day, but April 16 is Emancipation Day (a holiday marking the end of slavery, observed in Washington, DC, home of the IRS). So the deadline this year is April 17.

♦ Go to www.irs.gov to:

- learn about electronic filing (90% Americans file electronically); refunds come faster if you file this way; see www.irs.gov/Filing
- download paper forms, instructions, and publications,
- find out when you will get your refund (if any).
- find the location of an IRS office near you, where you can ask questions in person (at www.irs.gov/uac/Contact-Your-Local-IRS-Office-1).

♦ Or you can get paper forms and instructions at post offices and libraries, or by calling the Internal Revenue Service at 1-800-TAX-FORM (1-800-829-3676) any time. They will mail you forms, instructions, and publications, or tell you how to download them to your computer. Listen in English or Spanish

♦ Visit the IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) Program (for people with incomes less than \$54,000/year, and for people with disabilities or limited English) or IRS' Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) (for people age 60+). Find a VITA site by calling 800-906-9887 or by going to irs.treasury.gov/freetaxprep

Phishing and Tax Scams

Around tax time, watch out for *phishing*, or internet-based tax scams (illegal attempts to get your money or personal financial information) (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.

For example, you might get an email that looks like it is from the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) - like “tax-refunds@irs.gov” or “admin@irs.gov”. 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) email to people about tax matters.* The only way to get a tax refund is by filing a tax return.

Other scams involve telephone calls in which the caller offers you something wonderful - for example, a big *rebate* (refund) for filing taxes early. He asks for your bank account informa-

tion “for direct deposit of the rebate.” Or he says that the IRS sent you a check but you never cashed it, and asks for your bank account number. Don’t give it! The IRS does not give rebates for early filers, does not gather bank information by telephone, and does not follow up on un-cashed 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.
- ♦ Don’t be fooled by a local area code. With Voice over Internet Protocol, the caller could be anywhere in the world.

Here is more information: www.irs.gov/uac/report-phishing. Forward any suspicious email to phishing@irs.gov.

How Much Tax Do We Pay?

Here, from the OECD, are the tax rates for a single wage earner with no children. The number is the average all-in personal income tax rate for a person earning an average wage.

Belgium	42.0	France	28.9	Slovak Republic	23.0
Germany	39.7	Norway	28.4	Japan	22.0
Denmark	36.1	Portugal	28.3	Spain	21.5
Austria	34.9	Turkey	27.5	Ireland	19.7
Hungary	34.5	United States	25.6	Estonia	18.4
Slovenia	33.3	Sweden	24.7	New Zealand	17.6
Italy	32.6	Australia	24.1	Switzerland	17.4
Finland	30.9	Poland	23.7	Israel	17.3
Luxembourg	30.7	United Kingdom	23.4	Korea	13.8
Netherlands	29.9	Canada	23.4	Mexico	10.3
Iceland	29.1	Czech Republic	23.3	Chile	7.0

Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences

Are you satisfied with your children's education? Do you hope something will be different next year? In the spring, schools plan for fall. Many schools have parent-teacher conferences to discuss these plans. If your school does not, you may ask to meet with the teacher anyway.



be sure you understand what this means. It is fine to ask the teacher to talk more slowly, and to repeat what she/he has said. Some international parents ask a friend whose English is very good to come to the conference with them.

If you think your child should have some extra services from the school (like more training in English, extra challenges in their strongest subjects, an assessment of special needs, extra help for their weakest subjects, or help in social areas) this is a good time to ask. You should be able to talk about your concerns at any time. But this is one of the times the school actually invites your input. Most schools welcome suggestions and involvement from parents. You should be respectful of the school's professional judgment. Remember that they 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. It is common for international and American parents to leave a school conference without really understanding the meaning of what the teacher has said. 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)

- ♦ If you have complaints about something the teacher does, think ahead about how to discuss it. Americans certainly talk about their concerns with teachers, and you can too. 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 considered partners in your child's education. Explain what schools are like in your own country, if it seems important. Make it clear that you understand this is an American school, but that you think it would be helpful to explain your child's school history (and future, if you will be going home soon). Make specific suggestions if you can. Then, wait a week or two to see if the situation improves. If it does not, it is fine to talk to someone else in the school about your concern. You might try 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 with the school, 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.

Volunteering in the US

Many international newcomers volunteer their time while living in the US, where volunteering is quite common: to meet people, to give back to their community, to help others, to use their professional skills when they cannot work here, and/or to learn new skills. Here are some web sites to help you find the right place to volunteer:

www.volunteermatch.org

Volunteer Match helps volunteers find opportunities with nonprofit organizations in the US. Search by location and type of work. Sign up as a member to receive emails about new opportunities that match your search criteria.

[Idealist.org](http://www.idealst.org)

Idealist has links to volunteer, internship and job opportunities from nonprofit organizations around the globe. Search for organizations according to your interests and location.

www.allforgood.org

Allforgood claims to be the largest online database for volunteers. Search by location and interest.

www.catchafire.org

Catchafire specifically matches professionals who would like to volunteer with organizations that need their skills, like finance, graphic design, budgeting, writing or data analysis.

Many community groups do not advertise opportunities, but do welcome volunteers. If there is an organization in your neighborhood that interests you, call or visit them, and offer your services.

Birthday Biography: J. Robert Oppenheimer

As Mark Zuckerberg and others discuss the deep political and social implications of Facebook, we might consider the views of someone else who helped develop a powerful tool then had some misgivings.

The “father of the A-bomb,” J. Robert Oppenheimer, was born on April 22, 1904, in New York City. He had an elite education (Harvard University, Cambridge University in England, and Göttingen University in Germany) as a theoretical physicist. His travels and life experience also gave him a political education, including involvement in various Communist organizations.

Despite this political involvement, in 1941 he was asked to be the scientific director of The Manhattan Project, to build an atomic bomb. He helped select Los Alamos (New Mexico) as the secret site for the project’s laboratory — it was isolated yet accessible, and its climate allowed construction all year long.

The group ran its first test on July 16, 1945. Oppenheimer later said that at the moment of the blast, a line from the [Hindu sacred text] *Bhagavad-Gita* came to his mind: Krishna, trying to persuade the Prince that he should do his duty, said, “I am become death: the destroyer of worlds.”

After the war, many people wanted to know Oppenheimer’s thoughts on the moral aspect of the atomic bomb. He said, “In some sort of crude sense, which no vulgarity,

[continued on page 7](#)

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.

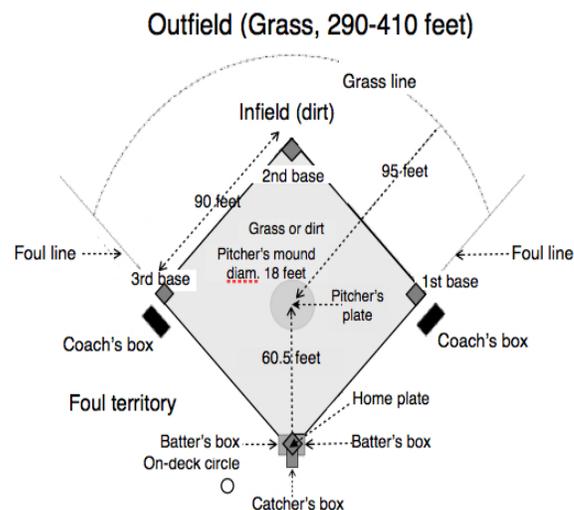
- ♦ If the batter hits the ball, he tries to run to each base before the other team can throw the ball there or touch the batter with the ball. He tries to run to as many bases as he can. Most often, he will only get to first base before the other team gets the ball there. If it is a close

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.

- ♦ Sometimes, of course, the batter can get to second or third base, or even all the way



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Special Counsel Investigation

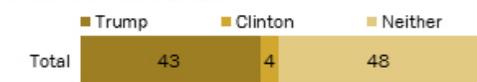
Robert Mueller is the head of the Special Counsel Investigation into whether Russia interfered with the 2016 presidential election and if so, whether there was any *collusion* (cooperation) between Russia and anyone in the Trump campaign. Mueller, a Republican, was Director of the FBI from 2001-2013. See the two charts below for a current assessment of this work by the American people: 61% say they are “very” or “somewhat” confident Mueller will be fair. (46% of Republicans or Republican-leaning Independents feel this way, compared to 75% Democrats or Democratic-leaning Independents.) Notice a large party difference in views about which candidate would have benefitted from any Russian influence.

Most Americans are very or somewhat confident Mueller’s probe will be fair

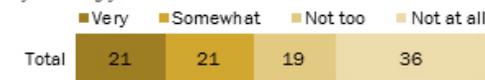
% who are ___ confident that special counsel Robert Mueller will conduct a fair investigation into Russian involvement in the 2016 election



% who say Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election benefited ___ campaign



% who are ___ confident that the Trump administration will make a serious effort to prevent Russia from influencing future U.S. elections

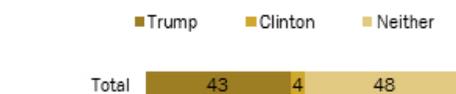


Note: Don't know responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

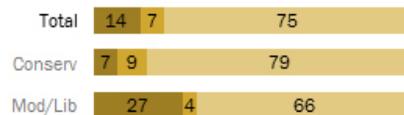
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Wide partisan gap in views of impact of Russian efforts to influence election

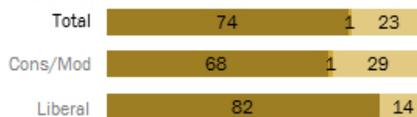
% who say Russian efforts to influence the 2016 election benefited ___ campaign



Among Rep/Lean Rep



Among Dem/Lean Dem



Note: Don't know responses not shown. Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted March 7-14, 2018.

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[continued from page 6](#)

no humor, no overstatement can quite extinguish, the physicists have known sin, and this is a knowledge they cannot lose.”

He was active as a scientific advisor to the government and an advocate for international control of atomic energy during the Cold War with the Soviet Union.

As he reflected on the bomb and loss of life in Japan, he said: “If atomic bombs are to be added to the arsenals of a warring world... then the time will come when mankind will curse the name of Los Alamos and Hiroshima. The peoples of this world must unite, or they will perish. This war, that has ravaged so much of the earth, has written these words. The atomic bomb has spelled them out for all men to understand.”

After the War, as Chairman of the General Advisory Committee to the Atomic Energy Commission, he strongly opposed work on the hydrogen (H)-bomb (although he later changed his mind).

At least in part because of his earlier involvement with Communist organizations and his public statements during the Cold War, he lost his security clearance in 1953, at the peak of the anti-Communist period in the US. Without a security clearance, he could not work effectively in the government, so he returned to academic life, at Princeton University. There, he continued his influence in the world of theoretical physics.

Happy Birthday, Dr. Oppenheimer.

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THE RULES OF BASEBALL

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.”

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 page 6 to understand these better:

The first book he wrote was good but the next one was a *grand slam*. (*The first book he wrote was good but the next one was a huge success in every way.*)

We need a *power hitter* for this project. (*We need our strongest person for this project.*)

He was trying to sell her his old computer but he *couldn't get to first base*. (*He was trying to sell her his old computer but she was not at all interested.*) (This idiom is also used to refer to a man who is unsuccessful in winning a woman's affections.)

Hey! That question was really a *curve ball*. (*Hey! That question was very tricky.*) (In baseball, if a pitcher throws a ball in a special way, it will seem to curve away from home plate then back again into the strike zone, making it very difficult to hit.)

She is waiting to hear whether she has been accepted to all the schools she applied to. So far she is *batting a thousand*. (*...So far, she has been accepted to all those she has heard from.*) (In baseball, a player's number of hits divided by number of times at bat is his "batting average." "Batting a thousand" (an average of 1.000) means never missing.)

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

Read *The Rules of Baseball* on page 6. 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 <i>the other team is up at bat.</i> is over. | <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"/> |

HOMEWORK

WITH A PEN

1. Read [The Rules of Baseball](#) on pages 6. 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 [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.

3. Read [Word Play](#) on page 3. Re-write each church newsletter quote to make the meaning clearer (though unfunny).

4. Read [What's So Funny??](#) on pages 2 and 3. Write two funny jokes from your home country, first in your home language then in English. What kind of humor does it use? Do you think it will be funny to an American? If not, why not?

5. Read [Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences](#) on page 5. Think back to when you were a child. Write an imaginary conversation that might have happened between one of your primary school teachers and one of your parents. What would the teacher have said about you? What questions would your parent have asked?

TAX VOCABULARY

Read [Paying US Taxes](#) on page 4. 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. Pick the correct meaning of each word, in the context of a tax form.

1040		Department of the Treasury — Internal Revenue Service																			
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																		
	If a joint return, spouse's first name and initial	Last name	Your social security number																		
	Home address (number and street). If you have a P.O. box, see page 19.		Spouse's social security number																		
	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.																		
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: left;">Filing Status</th> <th style="width: 30px;"></th> <th style="width: 50%;"></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Single</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Married filing joint return (even if only one had income)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Married filing separate return.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Head of household (with qualifying person) If the qualifying person is a child but not your dependent, enter this child's name here.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td style="text-align: center;"><input type="checkbox"/></td> <td>Qualifying widow(er) with dependent child (year spouse died)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>				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)
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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

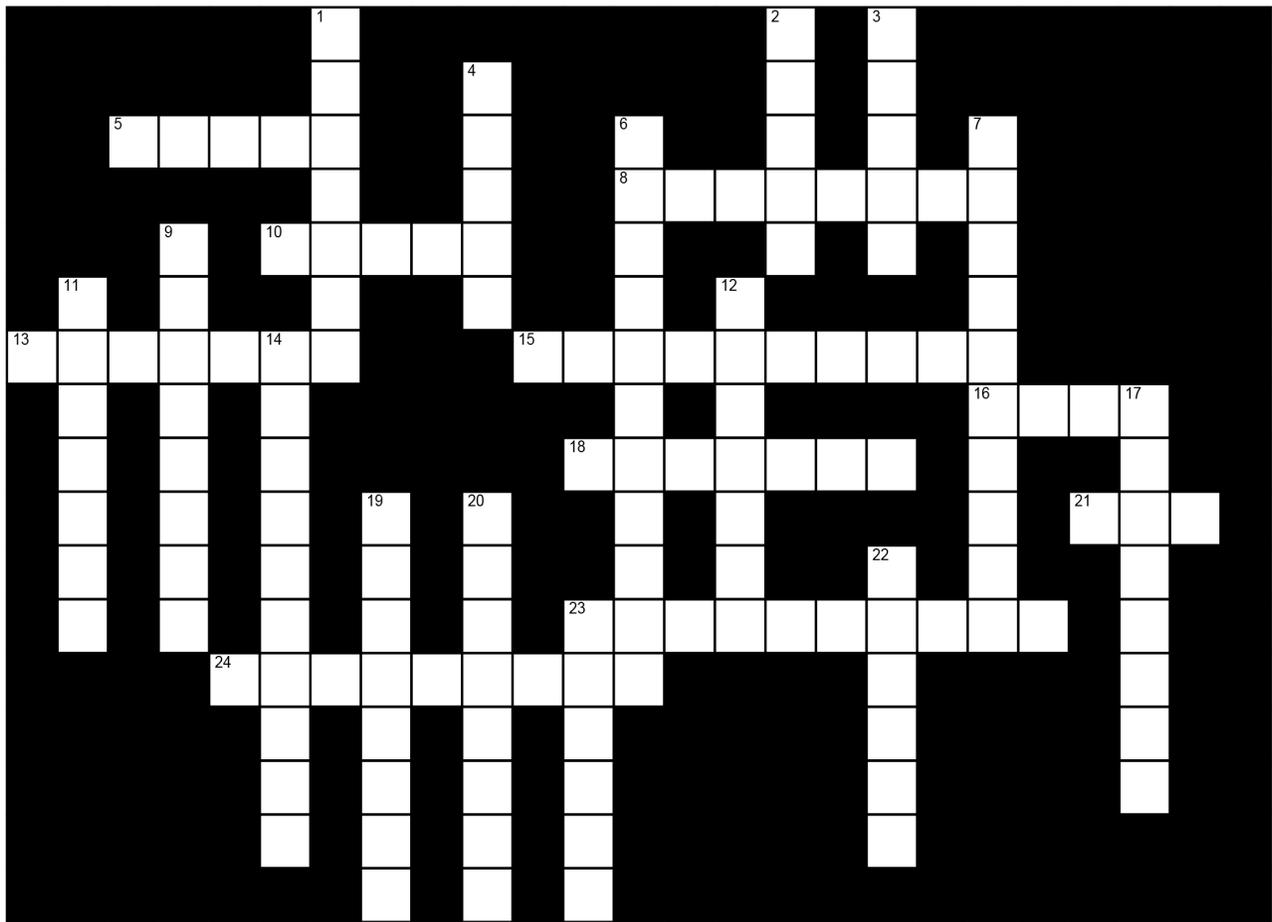
BASEBALL IDIOMS

Read [That Crazy English](#) on page 8. Re-write these sentences using a baseball idiom:

1. The exam included too many obscure questions; it wasn't fair.

2. So far I have guessed the winner of every election in my life; I'm doing well.

3. He's too new at this job. For this client we need a real professional.



Across

- 5. a ___ ball, an unfair and unexpected comment
- 8. internet-based tax scam
- 10. A baseball player earns a point for his team when he returns to the home ___.
- 13. person who throws a baseball to be hit by the other team
- 15. A parent-teacher ___ is a good time to learn about your child's progress in school.
- 16. a grand ____, a huge success
- 18. Most Republicans think any Russian election interference did not have much ___ for either candidate.
- 21. to have a turn up at ____, to be the leader
- 23. Many jokes are based on social ___ that newcomers may not understand.
- 24. Many Americans ___ their time to an organization they care about.

Down

- 1. Most Americans think Special Counsel ___ will be fair.
- 2. get to ___ base, get started
- 3. The IRS never sends ___ to people about tax matters.
- 4. a ___ hitter, a very strong player
- 6. father of the A-bomb
- 7. Americans tend to like ___ jokes.
- 9. Two billion people use ___ at least once a month.
- 11. a baseball field
- 12. Don't ignore the Internal ___ Service.
- 14. Most people use ___ filing for their income taxes.
- 17. Intellectual jokes are based on word play, absurdity and double ___.
- 19. batting a ____, winning every time
- 20. Be sure to check your privacy ___ in Facebook.
- 22. one ninth of a baseball game
- 23. The only way to get a tax ___ is by filing a tax return.

OUT AND ABOUT

1. Read [The Rules of Baseball](#) on page 6. 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 [Facebook in the News](#) on page 1. If you are a Facebook user, check out your settings as described in the article. If you are not, talk with someone who is. Are they (you) concerned about the privacy issues? Surprised? Planning to change anything about their/your Facebook usage?
3. Read [What's So Funny??](#) on pages 2 and 3. When you hear a joke, a comedian's line or a friend's funny story during your week, try to describe what kind of humor it uses - aggressive, defensive, social criticism and/or intellectual.

IF YOU USE THE WEB

1. Read *The Rules of Baseball* on page 6. Go to www.mlb.com to find a list of teams and their schedules. Click on Schedule. Pick the team closest to where you live in the US as "your team." Can you go??
2. Read *Birthday Biography: J. Robert Oppenheimer* on pages 6 and 7. Watch Oppenheimer reflect on the meaning of his work here: www.youtube.com/watch?v=lb13ynu3lac
3. Read *Volunteering in the US* on page 5. Go to each of the sites listed in the article, pretending that you are looking for a volunteer opportunity. Enter your zipcode, your interests, your skills, and see who needs you. Anything interest you??

WITH A FRIEND

1. Read the articles about taxes on [page 4](#). 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 *Spring Parent-Teacher Conferences* on page 5. With a partner, take one of the following roles of a parent or a teacher. Pretend you have just started a parent conference.

Parent: Your daughter Anna is in fourth grade. When you see her teacher, the teacher always smiles and says what a wonderful student Anna is. So you were surprised when Anna did not get all A grades on her latest report. You have increased the amount of time Anna must spend on her homework, but you plan to ask the teacher to be more strict, and to give you more honest feedback about Anna's work.

Useful Phrases

There is one thing I wanted to discuss with you...

I see what you mean. But from my point of view...

My most important goals for Anna are...

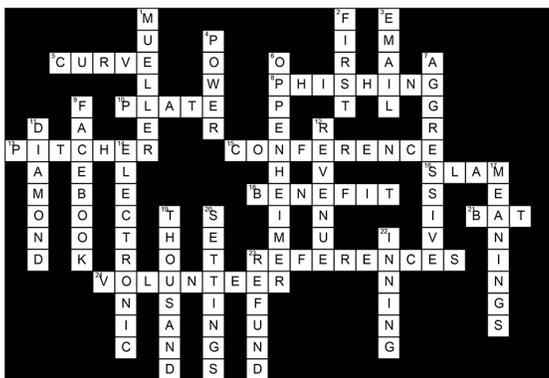
Did you know that Anna...

I appreciate that you...

Teacher: Your student Anna is a delightful child. She seems happy, has many friends, works hard, and seems to be learning well, even though she has just been speaking English for one year. But in the past few weeks you have noticed that Anna seems tired and sad. You plan to ask her parents to relax a little and not be so strict with Anna.

Talk together for 2-3 minutes then switch roles. Which role was easier for you? Why?

3. Read about *Phishing and Tax Scams* on page 4. Compare the issue of fraud and cheating, and how to protect against it, in the US and your home country.



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

Baseball Idioms

1. The exam included too many curve balls; it wasn't fair.
2. So far I have guessed the winner of very election in my life; I'm batting a thousand.
3. He's too new at this job. For this client we need a power hitter.

Tax Vocabulary

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



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