

Presidential Election Already???

You might be asking yourself, “Why are we hearing about Presidential candidates when the next Presidential election is not till November 2020?” Good question!

Let me start with a brief overview of the election system. At least traditionally, the first step is for each Party to pick one candidate: one Republican and one Democratic candidate will be officially chosen at a national Party convention in Summer 2020. Then this pair of candidates will campaign against each other till the November 2020 election.

President Trump announced his candidacy to be the Republican candidate shortly after his inauguration in 2017. It is possible that other Republicans will campaign against him for the nomination. In history, only one *elected* President (Franklin Pierce) ever lost his bid to be his party’s nominee for re-election (in 1856). Other incumbent presidents have not been chosen by their party for a second term, but none of them had been elected to their first term -- rather, they started as Vice Presidents and became President after the death of the

elected president. (This happened four times, all in the 19th century.)

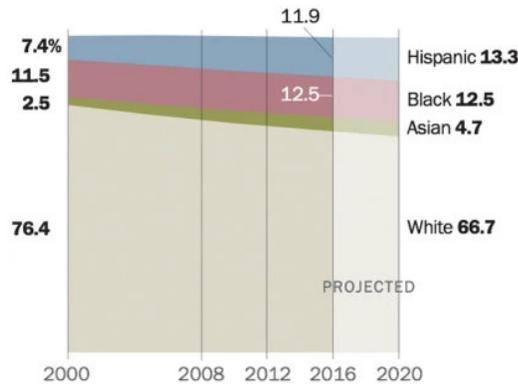
So, you might repeat, “Why is this starting now??” Because the battle to get the Party nomination is fierce. The Party organizations in each state will send delegates to the summer 2020 national convention. How those delegates vote is determined, in most cases, by a series of state elections called “primaries” (or, in a few states, “caucuses”). The first of these will be held early in 2020 (yes, about a year from now). Winning the first few races (Iowa and New Hampshire) gives candidates a lot of

visibility, so they often begin their campaigning there.

Already, lots of Democratic candidates are “testing the waters” (hinting that they might run, to see the reaction) and, at the time I am writing, 12 have “thrown their hats in the ring” (announced that they are candidates). A look at the diversity of this group of 12 is pretty interesting, especially in light of the changing demographics of the US population (see chart on this page):

Hispanics projected to become largest minority group in electorate in 2020

% of eligible voters by racial and ethnic group



Note: Eligible voters are U.S. citizens ages 18 and older. Whites, blacks and Asians are single-race non-Hispanics. Hispanics are of any race. Asians include Pacific Islanders.
Source: Data from 2000 to 2016 from Pew Research Center analysis of 2000 decennial census and 2008, 2012 and 2016 American Community Survey (IPUMS). Data for 2020 from Pew Research Center projections of the electorate based on U.S. Census Bureau 2017 population projections.

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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.



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Little Men in Green 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.



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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!



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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.

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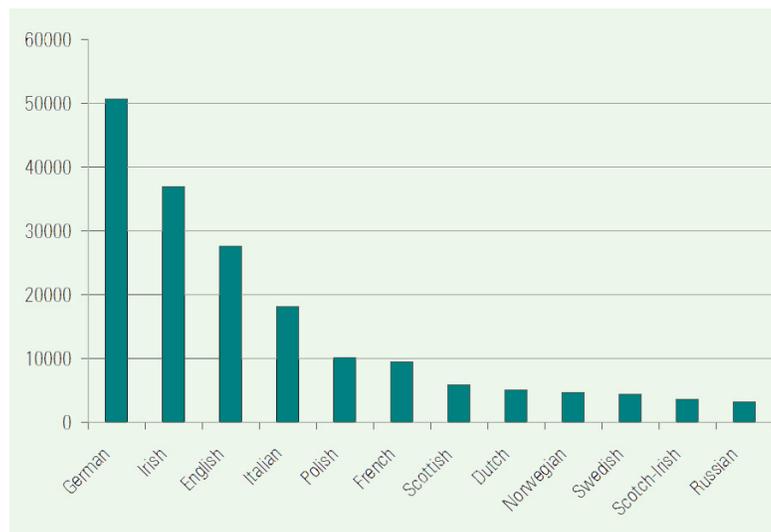


St. Patrick's Day

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 37 million Americans claim some Irish ancestry (see the chart below). This is a lot bigger than the current population of Ireland!

National Ancestry of US Americans



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.

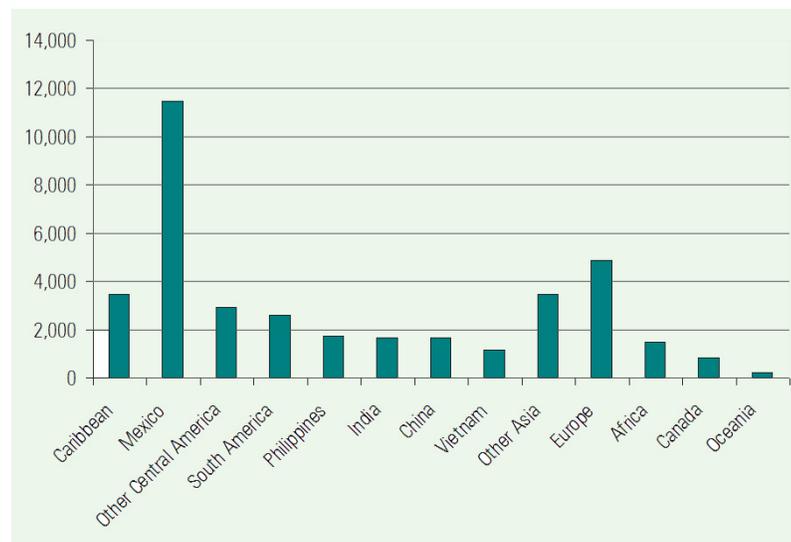
Your children may tell you that they are supposed to wear something green that day. It's not a real school rule, but wearing green is a way of showing appreciation of Irish culture — its spirit, its music, its writing. But you will not offend anyone if you do nothing.

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.

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Country of Birth of US Immigrants



continued from page 1

Five women/seven men. About one third are people of color. There are several current or past members of Congress, two mayors, a business entrepreneur and a spiritual guide. An openly gay man. A 77-year-old and a 37-year-old. A big range from moderate to very progressive ideas. At least one who is not Christian.

In contrast, of the people who have served as President of the US in its history, all were men, all but one were white, and all were Christian.

But, *again* you ask, “Why are these candidates announcing their plans so early?” A lot of attention (and money) comes to candidates who enter the race early. Candidates need to build a power (and money) base to win. The sooner they get loyalty (and money) from voters, and commitments (and money) from groups, the stronger this power base will be.

Did I mention money? In the 2016 election, the candidates spent more than \$2.4 billion on their campaigns, You have to start early to spend that much money. To match the 2016 rate, candidates will need to spend \$20 million/month; or \$666,666/day...

There are rules about how much

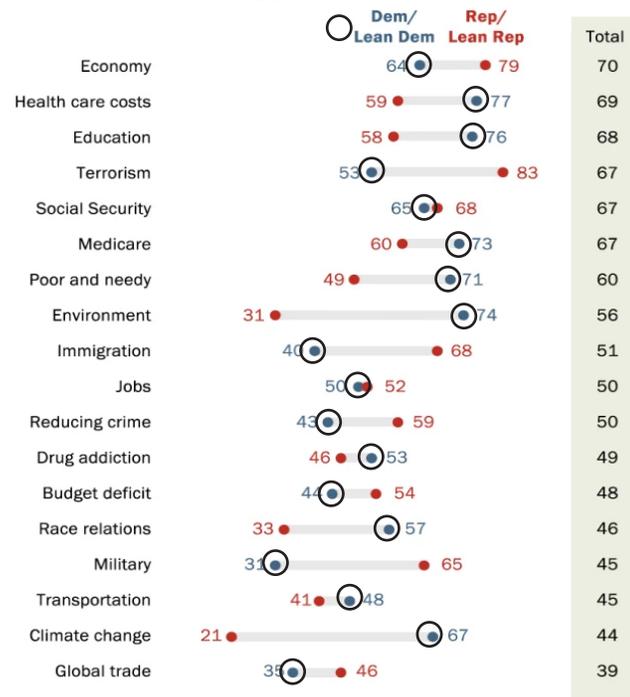
individuals can donate, and there are government programs to limit spending. There are also lots of ways to avoid these rules and programs; I’ll write more about campaign finance closer to the election.

Meanwhile, the candidates will be trying to address the issues of most importance to American voters. See the chart on this page -- the longer the bar, the more different the parties are from each other.

You will learn a lot about the US during this election season. It’s not always pretty. Hold on tight.

Partisans far apart on the importance of many issues, including the environment and strengthening military

% who say ____ should be a top priority for Trump and Congress this year



Source: Survey of U.S. adults conducted Jan. 9-14, 2019.

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Day Light Savings Time

For most of the US (except Hawaii and most of Arizona), Daylight Saving Time starts at 2am on the second Sunday of March (March 10 this year) and ends at 2am on the first Sunday of November. Set your clock forward one hour to begin Day Light Savings Time. Using the double meaning of words, we remind ourselves of which direction to turn the clock by saying, “Spring [jump] forward, Fall [tumble] back.”



Birthday Biography: Harry Houdini

The “world’s greatest magician” was born as Ehrich Weisz on March 24, 1874, in Budapest, Hungary. He immigrated to Wisconsin with his parents when he was a toddler, and lived most of the rest of his life in the US.

As a boy, Ehrich (Ehie to his friends) admired the French magician Jean Eugène Robert-Houdin. When he started performing in public, he added an i to Houdin, Americanized his nickname, and the world came to know Harry Houdini.

He performed simple card and magic tricks at small museums and theaters. On this route he met his wife, Bess, and the two performed together as The Houdinis.

Soon, his trademark act became one of escape — first from handcuffs, then underwater packing crates, milk containers, prison cells and straitjackets. He jumped off bridges while bound in ropes and just when people were sure he had drowned, he emerged, free and smiling. He joined a vaudeville show, a new and popular traveling music and theater company, and was soon an international sensation.

Seances were also popular in that day — people would claim to be able to communicate with the dead. Houdini used his knowledge of magic to discredit many spiritualists of his time.

Happy Birthday, Mr. Houdini.

Learn English and Clean Your House at the Same Time

In case you do not love spring cleaning, here is a way to make it better. These English-teaching sites all focus on spring and cleaning language exercises. Now you will be clean and grammatically smart all at the same time!

www.englishandculture.com/blog/bid/91316/Infographic-How-to-Clean-Your-House-in-English

This blog is written by a friend and colleague of mine. Sign up and you will get regular short, timely ways to practice your English. On this particular day, she shows you spring cleaning vocabulary.

www.elcivics.com/worksheets/spring-vocabulary.pdf

Here is a worksheet to practice vocabulary about springtime topics. Go to their home page to get free worksheets on other topics.

drewsesfluencylessons.com/2-advanced/cleaning-the-house/

This is a list of spring-cleaning idioms.

www.eslmadeeasy.ca/2015/04/april-topic-spring-cleaning.html

This site includes a list of links to even more sites that use the topic of 'spring cleaning' to help you practice English - listening, reading, vocabulary, and even a history of why we clean our houses in the springtime.

Happy Cleaning and Speaking!

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.

Washing Dishes. First, be sure to buy the right type of soap. Automatic dishwasher detergent (for dishwashing machines) comes in powder, pod and liquid gel form. Dishwashing liquid is for washing dishes in the sink. Don't get them mixed up! On the store shelf, dishwashing liquid 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 and may hurt your skin.

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 or pods. 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.

Cleaners. Cleaners are designed to clean stains, dirt, and spots from sinks, chrome, bathtubs, and counters. There are powder and liquid cleaners. 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 prod-

ucts 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.

Question from Reader: Taboo Topics

Dear Editor: Please write us a list of “taboo topics” that we should avoid when talking with Americans.

Americans tend to think of themselves as very open and willing to talk about anything, and sometimes tell you more than you want to know about their lives and thoughts. This is part of their self-image as honest and direct. But there are topics that feel too intimate to many Americans, so I think you are right to ask this question. Here are a few trouble spots:

- ♦ “How old are you?” This question 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 with that person will not be very influenced by age. For example, I am “60-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.
- ♦ “How much did you pay for that?” This may surprise you, since it seems so many Americans are so gracelessly focused on money — how to get more, who will pay for what, etc. But it is better to let them tell you than for you to ask. Never ask how much money an American earns, or how much a house or car cost. For less expensive things, you could say, “I’ve been looking around for the best price for one of those — I saw one advertised for \$29 — do you think that’s a good price?”
- ♦ “What religion are you?” This question may surprise many Americans, because it is

usually not asked so directly. You might find this odd, as the US is such a religious country. But because some religious groups have been discriminated against, a first American reaction might be one of suspicion — “Why do you want to know??” However, if you have gotten to know someone fairly well, it would be fine to say, “I am very interested in religion in American. Would you be willing to answer some questions for me?” I think most Americans will then be happy to discuss religion in general and, perhaps, their own religion.



- ♦ “Your [nose is so straight] or [shoulders are so broad] or [hair is so curly].” Even if you mean to be saying something nice about how someone looks, comments about physical appearance will feel quite personal to Americans, especially to someone of the opposite sex. And be careful — what you think is a compliment may not feel that way to them.
 - ♦ “That politician is really [great] or [awful], isn’t he?” Americans may not talk about politics as much as you expect. This is part of their not wanting to be confrontative about ideas. That is, Americans tend not to want to get in a discussion where people disagree with each other. You may feel that talking about ideas and political issues is not very personal. But Americans tend to feel very connected to their ideas — if you disagree with their political views, it will feel like a criticism of them.
- And what if someone asks you a question that you think is too intimate? Try this: Smile, and say, “It’s so interesting to me that you would ask that because, you know, in my country, we don’t ask questions about [age/religion/politics/whatever] to someone we do not know well.” If you’re lucky, you can change the subject to talk about cultural differences. Or... the weather.

Some Facts about the US-Mexico Border

Here is some background information to help you understand the US-Mexico border debate:

- ♦ The border between the US and its southern neighbor runs along four US states (California, Arizona, New Mexico and Texas) and 39 Mexican municipalities.
- ♦ The Rio Grande (River) forms 1,260 miles of this border, from the Gulf of Mexico to El Paso, Texas. The border also crosses through several deserts and cities.
- ♦ The length of the border is measured differently by different government agencies -- you may see numbers from 1900 to 1991 miles. Agencies differ in how they measure the twists and turns of the Rio Grande and in whether they include the international water boundaries (18 miles into the Pacific Ocean and 12 miles in the Gulf of Mexico). Most agencies say the border is 1954 land miles long.
- ♦ There is currently some kind of *tactical infrastructure* (fence, sensors, roads) along 654 miles of the border.
- ♦ There are 48 *border crossings* along the border - places where customs officials process everyone passing in either direction. There are about 350 million documented passes each year - 50 million of these are at the Tijuana-San Diego crossing alone.

11 Questions to Ask a Day Camp

Here are 11 questions to ask:

Is the camp well organized?

- 1) Did the camp return your telephone calls promptly?
- 2) Did they send a brochure when you asked for one?
- 3) Is their registration process well-run and fair?
- 4) 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?

- 5) How many counselors will your child have?
- 6) How many adults will be at the pool when your child is swimming?
- 7) What are their safety rules for sports activities like gymnastics and football?
- 8) 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?

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

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.

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 Sidebar on this page. Why are Romanian clocks so accurate and Dutch ones relatively inaccurate, compared to their walking and postal speed? 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 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.

The fastest-paced cities were all in the Northeast: Boston first, then Buffalo, NY, and New York City. The slowest cities were in the South and 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.

Pace of Life Around the World

From the research study described to the left, countries are listed here in order of overall pace, from fastest (Switzerland) to slowest (Mexico)

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

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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The Interchange Institute
Tel. 617.566.2227
www.interchangeinstitute.org
email: newcomer@interchangeinstitute.org



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That Crazy English: Quadruple Negatives

What does this sentence mean: "*The Supreme Court refused to stay a federal judge's order invalidating the state's law.*" What?? Did the Supreme Court approve or disapprove?? I had to get out a calculator to figure it out, using the arithmetic rule that "two negatives make a positive" ($-2 \times -2 = +4$), which is how it works in standard English. The Court *refused* (negative) to *stay* (or postpone - that's negative) a federal judge's *order* (positive) *invalidating* (negative) the state's law. That's four negatives -- so the Court approved. Yikes.

In other languages, and in some American dialects, double negatives intensify the negative meaning rather than cancelling each other out -- "I'm not doin' *nothing* to help him" in slang (with "not" and "nothing" both negatives), means "I'm doing absolutely nothing to help him," not "I'm doing something..." How confusing. See en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Double_negative for a detailed look at this prickly rule in lots of different languages.

If you are trying to speak standard American English, use the double-negatives-cancel-each-other rule:

Do *not unbuckle* your seat belt = Buckle your seat belt.

I did *not misunderstand* you = I understood you.

There is *no way* you can *miss* our house = You will see our house.

Never forget your family = Remember your family.

She will *not take 'no'* for an answer = She wants you to say 'yes.'

The teacher told the students *not to forget to cancel* their subscriptions = The teacher wants the students to cancel their subscriptions.

SPEAKING NUMBERS

Read *Hurry Up - Wait a Minute!* on [page 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 [and] seventy"

Write these numbers in words:

- 830,000 _____
- 1700 _____
- 3.5 million _____
- 250 _____
- 4,375,280 _____

Now write these numbers in numerals:

- twenty-five hundred _____
- six hundred and ninety-two _____
- eight million five hundred thousand _____
- six point eight million _____

DOUBLE NEGATIVES

Read *That Crazy English: Quadruple Negatives* on page 8. Write three phrases using a double negative, and then re-write them to say the same meaning but without the double negative. Which is easier to understand?

- _____
- _____
- _____

HOMEWORK

WITH A PEN

1. Read about *Summer Camps* on [page 6](#). 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 4](#). Write a list of the ways "cleaning house" is different in the US than in your home country. Which products or tools do you have at home but not here? Here but not at home?

4. Read *Question from Reader: Taboo Topics* on [page 5](#). Write a list of questions or topics that would be impolite to ask/discuss in your home country. Now write a list of questions you have been asked in the US that surprised you.

5. Read *Presidential Election Already???* on [pages 1 and 3](#). On [page 3](#), see the chart of issues of concern to American voters. Write a list of 10 issues citizens of your home country worry about. How many of those are on the US list?

WORDS IN CONTEXT

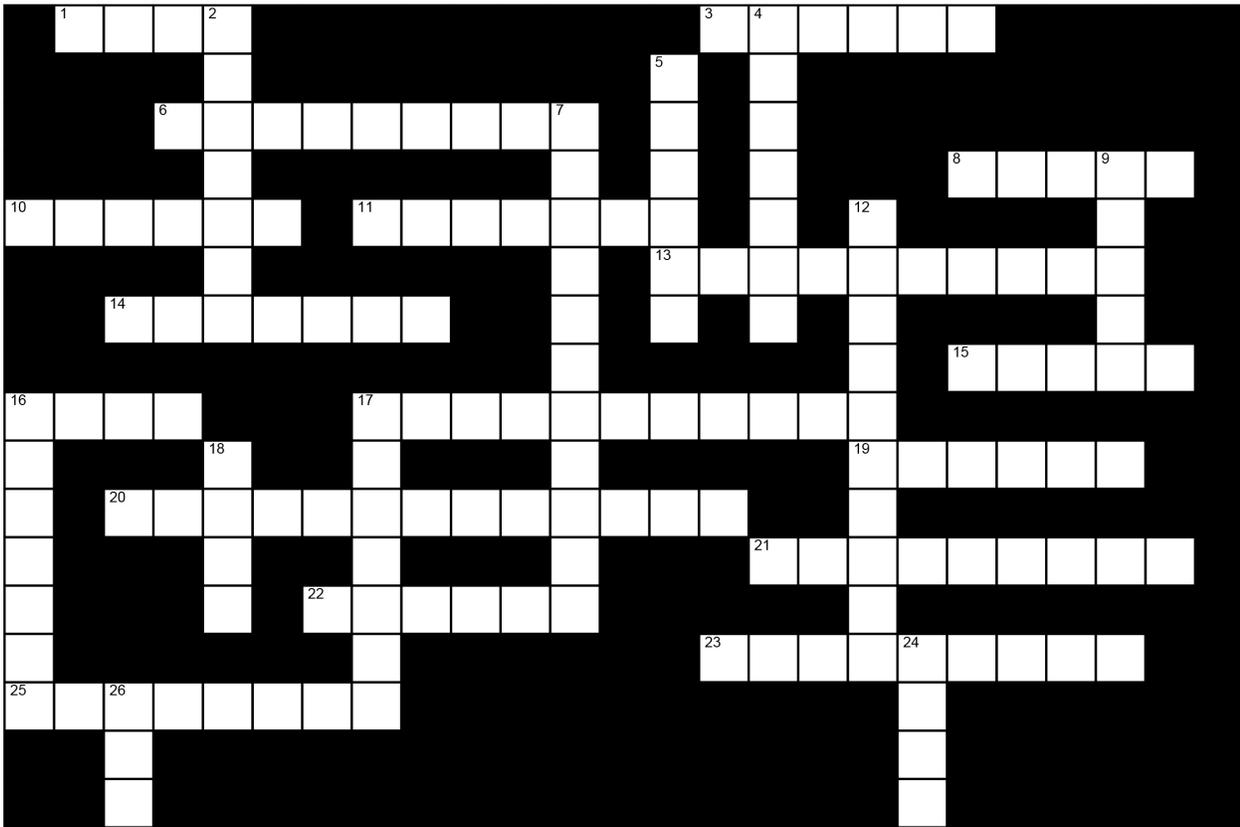
Read about *St. Patrick's Day* and *St. Pat's Symbols* on [page 2](#). Circle the correct meaning of each word in column one:

	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 6](#). 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

- 1. traditional irish instrument
- 3. mold that grows in warm, wet areas
- 6. ___ will be the largest minority group of voters in 2020.
- 8. Most Americans think it is rude to comment on someone's ___.
- 10. the largest national ancestry group in the US
- 11. world's greatest magician, Harry ___
- 13. Republicans and Democrats will choose their final nominee at a national ___.
- 14. Many young children spend time at ___ (two words) in the summer.
- 15. Glass and mirror cleaners usually come in a ___ bottle.
- 16. bubbles
- 17. very liberal
- 19. Many day camps offer a variety of activities, like sports, music, games and ___.
- 20. Republicans and Democrats disagree most about the importance of ___ (two words)
- 21. four times
- 22. Don't confuse dishwashing ___ with automatic dishwasher detergent.
- 23. group leader at children's summer camps
- 25. a three leaf-clover

Down

- 2. state-wide election to pick a party's nominee
- 4. the country with the fastest walking speed
- 5. the country of birth of the largest number of immigrants to the US today
- 7. the country with the highest clock accuracy
- 9. the country where it took a postal clerk the longest to complete a task
- 12. little green man with a green hat
- 16. Day Light ___ Time begins in March
- 17. a saint who brought Christianity to Ireland
- 18. "throw your hat in the ___," announce you will run for political office
- 24. build-up of soap
- 26. Generally, don't ask Americans about their ___ unless they are very young or very old.

OUT AND ABOUT

- 1. Read *Hurry Up - Wait a Minute!* on [page 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 before or on March 17, try to find a picture of each of these: a three-leaf clover and a four-leaf clover, a pot of gold, a harp, a leprechaun.
- 3. Read *Spring Cleaning* on [page 6](#). Go to the Cleaning Products aisle of your supermarket. Find at least one product in each of these categories: dishwashing liquids, automatic dishwasher (machine) detergents, all-purpose cleaners.

IF YOU USE THE WEB

1. Read *Summer Camps* on [page 6](#). Search on line for summer day camps in your community, using “day-camp” and your town name as key words. Then try adding some activity you especially like (“crafts” or “tennis”). Anything make you wish you were a child again?

2. Read *Day Light Savings Time* on [page 3](#). Watch this video about the complexities of this custom: www.youtube.com/watch?v=84aWtseb2-4

3. Read *Some Facts about the US-Mexico Border* on page 5. Watch www.youtube.com/watch?v=j5l31SHTIW4 to see photographs of the border.

WITH A FRIEND

1. Read *Presidential Election Already??* on [page 1](#) and 3. Describe to a partner or friend how people in your home country become its leaders. If there are elections, how do these work? If not, how do new leaders get chosen or appointed? Then look at the chart of topics on page 3. Pick one topic and explain to a friend or partner why you think it is (or is not) important. It can be challenging to talk about political issues with people whose views are different from yours. Using the phrases in the box to the right, practice talking about a controversial subject.

2. Read *Summer Camps* on [page 6](#). Describe to a friend or partner what you did during school vacations as a child. Were there organized activities or more informal ones? Who supervised younger children - family members, siblings, paid helpers?

3. Read *Hurry Up — Wait a Minute!* on [page 7](#). Discuss whether there are any surprises in the listing of countries in the Sidebar. 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?

4. Read *Spring Cleaning* on [page 4](#). Describe to a friend or partner some kind of home-related activity you do every year in your home country. Who does the work? Why is it necessary? What special tools or products do you need? What would a newcomer need to know?

Phrases for Discussing Controversial Topics

I see what you mean, and at the same time, I wonder if...

Hm, my experience is quite different. Could you talk to me a bit more about...

Have you ever had the chance, as I have, to...

Really? Wow, that's so different from how it seems to me. I wonder how our views could be so different.

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
- 2500
- 692
- 8,500,000
- 6,800,000

WORDS IN CONTEXT

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

UNDERSTANDING WHAT YOU READ

- 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.



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