

THE ESL LINK

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Save the Date!

The next SOCEM training conference - Gathering XIV - is scheduled for Saturday October 28, 2017 at Trinity Church, Streetsville.

There will be an inspiring keynote address as well as many workshops to choose from. Please save the date to be part of this exciting training and networking event!

Are you interested in grammar topics?

Check out [this site](#) for stimulating grammar topics such as how to write a descriptive paragraph, what is a figure of speech, how to use an apostrophe, and much more. Scroll down to the bottom to sign up for a Grammar Tip of the Day daily email.

The Beautiful Aroma of Christ in ESL Ministry

Keith Montgomery

*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy
(Hebrews 12:14a)*

One of the most beautiful qualities of ESL facilitators is their ability to embrace a vast array of people of diverse cultural backgrounds and personalities. ESL workers remind me of a poster that I saw on one of our church classroom walls which said, "Blessed are the flexible, for they shall not be bent out of shape!"

Ironically, the flexibility that we have with our learners does not always necessarily translate into flexibility with our facilitating peers. Issues can sometimes arise among ESL ministry team members that can create tension and disunity, leaving an unidentifiable sense among our learners that something just does not feel right within the room.

The Bible tells us:

*We are the aroma of Christ to God among those who are being saved
(2 Corinthians 2:15)*

We either carry a pleasing fragrance, or we fail to do so. It is not possible to

cover up the 'smell' of interpersonal friction and disunity amongst an ESL ministry team.

Some examples of problematic behaviours include: becoming 'defensive' while being offered constructive feedback regarding presentation; disregarding a team coordinator's direction; unwittingly projecting an air of 'superiority' over learners; showing favouritism toward certain learners; or sometimes certain personalities amongst the team simply clash. What do you do if your ESL ministry is emitting the barnyard odour of conflict?

First, you need to appreciate that friction is natural, even among Christians. If your ministry is growing and moving forward, change will inevitably create a certain amount of discomfort and friction. You should therefore expect it!

Secondly, while the implementation of well thought through written guidelines may be beneficial as an anchor point for future discussion, my

suggestion is that you seek to discern the root of the issue itself from a pastoral perspective. The pastoral approach to conflict asks “why” questions: Why are we experiencing this friction? Why is a certain facilitator not open to direction or feedback? etc.

Possible answers to your “why” questions may include: sin, emotional insecurity (the need for control and power), poor communication, differing yet effective ministry styles, or basic personality differences. You will also want to discern if the tension may be the result of other unresolvable tensions within a person’s life (work or family). Or maybe you will discover that the root of the problem is the result of a flaw within your ministry structure itself (we need to remain humble here).

Whenever there is any sort of friction or conflict requiring intervention, a practice that I have employed effectively over my years of ministry has been to include, with each party’s permission, a mutually respected third party in the conversation. This third person could be a respected church pastor, or a senior member of your church or ministry team that both parties already regard highly. Believe it or not, some of my most effective third party participants have been aged 80 or older! You will be amazed at how people will keep themselves from degenerating into childish talk or action whenever someone whom they mutually respect is sitting in on the conversation with them.

Above anything else, be certain to ask God to bless you with insight and wisdom as you strive to lead and / or work alongside your ESL ministry team members as the unified, pleasing aroma of Christ. As Romans 12:18 says, “If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone.” We should do our part to strive for peace.

Resources for ESL Summer Lessons

Is your program continuing through the summer? Here is an assortment of ideas and lesson plans based on topics to do with the summer. Let these be a springboard for further ideas.

[Summer Worksheets](#) (beginners’ level)

CANADA DAY

<http://eslcorner.settlement.org/canadian-citizenship-and-culture/canadian-culture/canada-day>
http://www.eslholidaylessons.com/07/canada_day.html
http://bestofthereader.ca/Ebooks/Canada_print.pdf (a series of stories about Canada with accompanying activities; beginners’ level)

TRAVEL AND HOTELS

Beginner dialogues:

<http://www.eslfast.com/robot/topics/travel/travel.htm>
<http://www.eslfast.com/robot/topics/hotel/hotel.htm>

Intermediate speaking activities:

http://www.tefl.net/esl-lesson-plans/TBW_Holidays-HolidaysAndHotels.pdf

CAMPING

Conversation questions:

<http://www.eslconversationquestions.com/camping/>
http://teflpedia.com/Camping_conversation_questions

Camping themed questions:

<http://www.eslteachersboard.com/cgi-bin/lessons/index.pl?read=3179>

Summer safety tips (can construct ESL lesson plans based on these authentic reading materials):

<http://www.healthvermont.gov/health-environment/climate-health/hot-weather>
<https://www.getprepared.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/sfttps/tp201407-en.aspx>
<http://healthycanadians.gc.ca/eating-nutrition/safety-salubrite/seasonal-food-aliments-saisonniers/summer-safety-salubrite-ete-eng.php>
<http://www.cdc.gov/family/kids/summer/>

Cottage culture:

[A lesson on Canada's wilderness cottage culture](#)

Summer Activities Conversation Sheet

1. Do you like swimming? Do you like going to the beach?
2. Where have you gone swimming in Canada? Can you name some beaches in or around Toronto?
3. What activities do you engage in when you are at a beach?
4. Which is more common in your home country: swimming in a pool or at sea?
5. Have you gone camping in Canada? If you have, tell us your experience.
6. Have you talked to friends who have gone camping? Do you think you'll like it? Why or why not?
7. Do you know how to pitch a tent and how to light a fire?
8. Where can we go camping in Canada?
9. What dangers might we encounter while camping? What are the most important things to remember?
10. Do you like going on a picnic? Where do you usually go? (*over*)

(Summer Activities cont'd)

11. What do we need to bring for outdoor activities such as picnics?
12. Have you been at a barbecue in Canada? What kind of food did you have?
13. Is barbecuing the same or different in your home country? For example, the kinds of food, the number of people cooking, etc. Talk about your experiences.
14. Have you ever stayed at a cottage in Canada? Tell us your experience.
15. What kind of weather is best for hiking? Do you like to go on hikes?
16. Where are some famous hiking trails in or near Toronto?
17. Do you know the following Canadian outdoor sports?
Have you tried any of them?
a) canoeing b) kayaking
c) rock climbing d) bungee jumping
18. What other summer outdoor activities have you enjoyed?
19. Read the following quotes. Which ones do you agree with? Which one do you like most?
 - a. "Twenty years from now you will be more disappointed by the things that you didn't do than by the ones you did do."
~Mark Twain
 - b. "A mind that is stretched by a new experience can never go back to its old dimensions."
~Oliver Wendell Holmes
 - c. "It is only in adventure that some people succeed in knowing themselves."
~Andre Gide
 - d. "You can discover more in an hour of play than you can in a lifetime of conversation."
~Author unknown
 - e. "Do not look to the ground for your next step; greatness lies with those who look to the horizon."
~Norwegian Proverb

Meet the King and the Queen!

(Beware: this is a grammar article)

Timo Posti

I like to use metaphors when teaching grammar. I use a 'royal relationship' to teach my students subject-verb (S-V) agreement in sentences. Let's dive into some grammar.

First of all, every sentence has a subject and a verb. Second, the subject and the verb need to agree. Back to the 'royal relationship', the king and the queen: if the king (the subject of your sentence) and the queen (the verb in your sentence) agree together, then your sentence is peaceful. Think of S-V agreement as a royal relationship. If they don't agree, then, "There's a problem". Look at these examples:

Example 1: *The children are* playing together peacefully. (S "**The children**" agrees with V "**are**")

Example 2: *The children is* playing together peacefully. (There is no S-V agreement here because the plural subject "children" must be followed by the plural verb form "are").

Just as the relationship between the king and the queen is important to the stability of their kingdom, so also is the agreement between the subject and the verb in a sentence. =In order for us to have S-V agreement, we need to know the subject (the king) very well: is it singular (child) or plural (children)? Furthermore, uncountable nouns, such as "politics" and "peace" are treated the same way as singular nouns:

Example 3: *Politics is* not the best topic for discussion if *peace is* your goal.

S-V agreement can become complicated as we use longer subjects such as the underlined subject in the example below (the first "are" is a part of the subject while the second one is the verb):

Example 4: *What the best ways to study are are* yet to be determined. The subject is "ways", plural.

Sometimes the singular subject is an expression that has two items joined by a *conjunction* (fish and chips, bacon and eggs):

Example 5: *My bread and butter is* driving a transport truck. ("Bread and butter" refers to this person's means of livelihood taken as one thing, thus singular.)

When you use a *preposition* such as *with*, you need to think what your subject really is:

Example 6: *My father, together with my mother, is* driving to Florida now. (**My father** is the subject. If you said "my father and my mother", the verb would be "are", plural.)

In conclusion, don't get stressed out if the king and the queen don't always agree. You just need to get to know the king a little bit better and then the queen will smile once (as a singular verb) or more than once (as a plural verb). No, I'm not crazy! Teaching English syntax requires metaphors, songs, games or some tasty food in order to make it more palatable.

Editor's Note: See the following links for more examples, including complicated cases:
[Tricky Cases of Subject-Verb Agreement](#)
[Subject-verb Agreement](#)

Subject-Verb Agreement Quiz

Choose A or B

1 a. My family lives in Canada.	b. My family live in Canada.
2 a. This stuff is heavy.	b. These stuff are heavy.
3 a. Twenty miles are too long for a student to walk.	b. Twenty miles is too long for a student to walk.
4 a. The Bahamas are a popular destination.	b. The Bahamas is a popular destination.
5 a. The police in our city are trustworthy.	b. The police in our city is trustworthy.
6 a. Most of the money are here.	b. Most of the money is here.
7 a. Each of the cars is new.	b. Each of the cars are new.
8 a. Neither of the rooms are clean.	b. Neither of the rooms is clean.
9 a. This pair of jeans are dirty.	b. This pair of jeans is dirty.
10 a. These glasses are new.	b. These glasses is new.
11 a. <i>The Stars and Stripes</i> fly over the courthouse.	b. <i>The Stars and Stripes</i> flies over the courthouse.
12 a. These French fries are cold.	b. These French fries is cold.
13 a. A hamburger with French fries costs seven dollars.	b. A hamburger with French fries cost seven dollars.
14 a. Nobody admit to breaking the window.	b. Nobody admits to breaking the window.
15 a. What impress me most is his honesty and compassion.	b. What impress me most are his honesty and compassion.
16 a. There is more than one bicycle outside the library.	b. There are more than one bicycle outside the library.

Answers

ADDITIONAL CHALLENGE: ONE OF THESE ANSWERS IS WRONG. DO YOU KNOW WHICH ONE?

- | | | |
|--|--|---|
| 1. a ('family' is a unit, a singular collective noun) | 6. b ('money' is an uncountable noun and treated as singular) | 12. a ('French fries' is the subject and is plural) |
| 2. a ('stuff' is an uncountable noun treated as singular) | 7. a (indefinite pronouns such as 'each' are treated as singular; 'each' is the subject) | 13. b ('A hamburger with French fries' are two items and take a plural verb) |
| 3. b ('twenty miles' can be replaced by 'this distance' and is singular) | 8. b (indefinite pronouns such as 'neither' are treated as singular; 'neither' is the subject) | 14. b ('nobody' is an indefinite pronoun which takes a singular verb) |
| 4. b (we are treating 'the Bahamas' as one place so it is singular) | 9. b (the subject is 'pair' which is singular) | 15. b ('what impress me most' is a noun clause the verb for which is dependent on what comes after; compare 'here is some money' and 'here are some coins') |
| 5. a ('the police' implies different people of the police force and is treated as a plural noun) | 10. a (the subject is 'glasses' which is plural) | 16. a ('more than one bicycle' is singular) |
| | 11. b (<i>The Stars and Stripes</i> is the name of one flag so it is considered a singular subject) | |



Do you need some stimulation regarding ESL teaching?

Check out the most recent issue of the TESL Ontario magazine for ideas and a good read:

Inside this Issue

- *Learner in the Centre*
- *Split storytelling: One technique for enhancing the "joyful" factor in the classroom*
- *Lessons from Western's symposium on teaching and learning vocabulary in another language*
- *Manipulating online video resources to enhance learning*
- *Teaching Canadian history for English language learners*
- *Teacher to teacherpreneur: How to monetize your professional skills*
- *The leaves of the Canadian polycultural tree*
- *Language is the key*

To access the current edition click [here](#).
To download full issues, click [here](#).