

English support
Business House (PO Box 621)
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News & Tips
from

English support

NB: If you received this newsletter by e-mail, it is (hopefully) because you have expressed a wish to do so. If this is not the case, and/or you do not wish to receive it in future – *please let us know!*

No. 9 – July 2005

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Dear friends

We have a new date for our little “seminar” [*Do you speak “danglish”?*]. It has now been fixed for **Thursday 8th September**. My thanks to all of you who helped choose the date by telling me when you could/could not come! If there is one thing I have learned from this little exercise, it is that there are a lot of people out there who see this newsletter, but *who are not on my mailing list!*

English support invites you to a seminar...

Do you speak “danglish”?

Globalisation means that more and more business is conducted in English. Not only business letters, but marketing materials, including web pages, are produced in English. But when we write in a foreign language, it is all too easy to be influenced by our mother tongue. Come and hear Lawrence White on where Danes (and others) often go wrong in English, how to do better, and where to go for help – *no prizes for guessing that one!* Lots of good tips to take home.

TIME: 3 – 5 pm, Thursday, 8th September 2005. PLACE: Business House, Roskilde

Please note: This seminar is FREE for all business associates of Business House, members of Roskilde Business Associations – and all you lucky people who are on the *English support* mailing list. Everybody else gets to pay DKK 350.00 + VAT – so you see, it really *does* pay to be on the mailing list! *But space is limited, so if you want to come, please let us know.*

You must register for the seminar on www.BusinessHouse.dk.

Punctuation

Last month we looked at how punctuation in English is used to show the way the written word should be *spoken*. But there are a couple of other things that often go wrong:

Capital letters. Unlike most other European languages, we use capital letters for the *names* of the days of the week, months of the year, and special days and times of year (e.g. *Easter, New Year's Eve*). We also use them for *titles* (e.g. *Mr, Mrs, Sir, Buddha, Christ*) including *job titles* (e.g. *Managing Director*). And any word *derived* from a proper noun (or title) also has a capital letter (e.g. *Italian, Londoner, Marxist, Buddhist*). And, of course, so does the pronoun: *I*.

Accents and apostrophes. English does not have accents (except in French expressions like *à la carte*), but we do use the apostrophe rather a lot. Some non-native speakers mix them up and use the acute accent ['] where they should use the apostrophe [']. A spelling checker can help here.

Dashes and hyphens. Hyphens [-] are used in word division and compound words (like *X-ray*). Dashes [–] connect two parts of a sentence [HTML code: [–](#)] – *with spaces on both sides*.

Please turn over!

From the workshop...

Ads, adverts and advertisements

The abbreviations commonly used for “advertisement” are “advert” [not in US English] or “ad”. Yet the form “**add.**” is not at all unusual on web sites written by non-native speakers. This can be an abbreviated form for words like “addendum” or “address”, but *never* for “advertisement”.

Funny and fun

The word “fun” in English is an uncountable noun. You might go to a party and *have fun*. Afterwards you might say: *It was (a lot of) fun*.

The word “funny” is an adjective and in modern English its meaning is quite separate from the noun “fun”. If something is “funny”, it either makes you laugh or smile, or it is strange, surprising, puzzling or weird.

So using “funny” to describe the party you enjoyed would sound, well, “funny” – unless, of course, you go on to explain what it was that was so funny about it...

If you need an adjective for “fun”, use a word like “enjoyable”.

Diaries and dairies

Last month I mentioned *customers* and *costumers*. Another pair of words that often get mixed up is *diary* and *dairy*.

Again, *Word*'s spelling checker will not catch the mistake, so take care with these two!

Exciting and exiting ...

A simple spelling mistake can lead to strange sentences like: *There were a lot of **exiting** buildings in London*. I wonder where all those buildings were off to! ☺

Exciting and excited

A common grammar mistake is to use the wrong adjectival form from a verb. People write things like: *I was **exciting** to see the Tower of London*, or: *It was **excited** to see the Tower of London*.

What is going wrong here is really the same as we talked about in *News & Tips* No.1 under the heading: *Are you specialised or specialising?* “Exciting” is the *active* form, while “excited” is *passive* in meaning. So it all depends on who or what is doing the “exciting” – and to whom!

Similar problems are often found with words like *interested/interesting* and *annoyed/annoying*. So quite a lot of people write about how “interesting” they are [which, of course, they may well be!], when what they really wanted to say was how *interested* they were.

Fluent and fluid

Another pair of words that got mixed up this month was “fluent” and “fluid”. The latter can also be a noun, but when used as an adjective, it refers to *liquids with low viscosity*, while “fluent” is used of *people with high fluency* (e.g. in a language). Both words contain the basic idea of “flowing easily”, which is why other languages often have just one word for both meanings.

Advertisement

Don't forget to register for the seminar (Thursday, 8th September) on www.BusinessHouse.dk!

Look forward to seeing you then!

Best wishes

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