

Clarity, Simplicity, and Details

by Carl Phillips

Once you enroll at Approach, you are asked to do a lot of writing. Not only are you asked to do this in Writing class, but also in Grammar and Vocabulary (writing sentences), Listening (transcribing what you hear), Reading (summarizing what you have read), and even Portfolio Development (journal entries). In addition, there are electives which require writing. Finally, there is the monthly school-wide Writing Contest. I have observed that a major problem in both beginning and advanced English learners is keeping their sentences simple, clear, and correct in details (punctuation, spelling, and capitalization).

First, many students tend to write run-on sentences. In this type of sentence, it is sometimes unclear where one sentence ends and the next one begins. Not only does this make the sentence cumbersome to read, it also many times makes the actual meaning of the sentence ambiguous. The goal here when you are learning English is to be able to communicate your ideas **clearly!**

As a general rule, try to keep your sentences as short as possible. You shouldn't try to make long sentences, with multiple clauses, until you are comfortable and confident in your ability to write simple, effective, concise, economical sentences. You should make sure that your word sequence is correct as well. Make sure that you are clear in your use of subject, object, and possessive pronouns. The best writers are the ones

who get their point across as directly as possible. (I would recommend you pick up a copy of E.B. White's "The Elements of Style", which is a tiny, inexpensive book that will help you to write effectively.)

Finally, check your writing for details. If you are using a computer you can, of course, do a "Spell-Check." If not, use a dictionary. Once you've done that, make sure that you haven't used a homonym (a word that sounds the same) that is incorrect. (Watch out for its/it's, there/their/they're, etc.) Make sure that all sentences have a period at the end, that all sentences begin with capital letters, and that all proper names are capitalized. (You would not believe how many sentences we see that don't begin with capitals and how many times people don't capitalize "The United States.") Check for use of commas, colons, semi-colons and quotations marks; and make sure to use the standard American "/" quotation markings.

As a really nice "touch"- please make sure your writing is legible. This is particularly important in compositions for promotion and the monthly Writing Contest. Be honest about your handwriting. If you don't write neatly (and I know I DON'T), then use a computer, and get a print-out. All the teachers really appreciate seeing a composition that is neat. Part of our evaluation of writing is presentation, and part of presentation is neatness.

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February 2007 Writing Contest Winners

The topic of the February writing contest was "What is love?"

The winner is Ji-Yeon Kim. She compared three stages of love to three stages of riding a motorcycle. The first stage is starting the motorcycle when people feel brave and altruistic. The second is speeding up, the happiest moment in love. And finally, controlling speed, when the couple meet some obstacles.

Second place is Yasuko Shingu who focused on three types of love; familial, friends and self. She compares family love to caring for a plant, and friendship to a scene from a book by Antoine de Saint-Exupery, where a prince takes care of a rose.

Third place is Assitan Sylla who chose platonic love as a subject and uses an example of two people she knows who are both married but have been friends since childhood.

1st Place:
Ji-Yeon Kim
(WR200)



2nd Place:
Yasuko Shingu
(WR200)



3rd Place:
Sylla Assitan
(WR400)



Honorable Mentions:

Byol-Nim Yim
Jessica Buffone
Ticiania Furtado



Evacuation Day

Around the country and in many parts of the world, March 17th is best known as the date for Saint Patrick's Day. But in Boston, March 17th is also Evacuation Day.

At one point at the beginning of the Revolutionary War, British forces were unable to move beyond the city of Boston. They were cornered by the Continental Army (Colonial American troops) who were surrounding the city. For nine months the occupying Redcoats failed to launch an offensive outside the city limits.



During the winter, Colonel Henry Knox and his men captured powerful cannons from the British at Ticonderoga in upstate New York,

and by March had hauled them all the way to the outskirts of Boston. General George Washington, who was commanding the army from Boston, strategically placed the cannons on top of Dorchester Heights which overlooked Boston Harbor and aimed them directly at the British ships anchored below. Immediately, a deal was struck between Washington and British General William Howe. Washington promised that the British fleet could leave Boston Harbor unmolested if Howe promised that Boston would not be burned to the ground by the exiting British soldiers. In all, 9000 officers and troops and over 1000 American colonists loyal to the King of England **evacuated** Boston never to return. All of this was accomplished without firing a single shot.

by Brian Smith

Happy Evacuation Day!



How to Build Better Vocabulary Effectively

by Tulin Polati

I would like to give some information about learning how to build a better vocabulary. As an international student, I have been studying for the TOEFL and GRE tests for a long time, if you are studying for specific exams such as the TOEFL, GRE, GMAT, you definitely need to learn more intense academic vocabulary for those exams. To learn thousands of words is not fun but you should choose the best way that works for you. Therefore, building a better vocabulary helps you to improve different aspects of your English language skills effectively.

Here are a couple of approaches which I have tried to build vocabulary effectively.

- **Get a notebook** - This is the most important thing you can do. When you come across new vocabulary, you need to be able to write it down. Your notebook should be small enough to be carried around but big enough to enable you to categorize the words you find.
- **Write down any new words you come across** - Write them down and also write what they mean.
- **Use word cards** - Write the new word that you wish to learn on one side of a 3 x 5 card. On the other side, copy the phrase you read or heard in which the new word is used. Then try to use the word in an original sentence. This procedure will help you to reinforce the word and retain it. Once you have built up a collection of cards, try to classify them. You can put them into groups under one heading, such as words to do with family, work, sport, transport, the world, education, etc.

- **Get a dictionary** - It is, of course, necessary for you to have a dictionary. I recommend that you have an English-English dictionary.
- **Use the dictionary** - when you lookup a word in the dictionary, find out all you can about the word. Is it a noun or a verb? What are the other forms of the word? How is the word used in sentences?
- **Use labels** - A good way to help yourself remember new words is to label things. Use Post-It labels to identify objects around the house or on your wall so that you will see them all the time.
- **Use newspapers and magazines** - When you read an article in an English newspaper or magazine, you should try to guess new words what they mean and then look up those words in the dictionary.
- **Use pictures** - Collect pictures from newspapers or magazines that you find interesting. Try to describe everything in each picture, such as: names of objects; features of people; what people are doing / have done / intend to do; expressions on people's faces; adjectives which describe things in the picture, etc.
- **Cultural translation activity** - You will find that very often English words are difficult to translate into your language because of differences in cultures. The best way is to try think in English instead of your own native language.
- **Study and Review regularly unless you forget everything.**

Email your questions or stories to:

alex@ApproachUSA.com



by Brian Smith

A Little Bit of History

St. Patrick's Day

In 1841 there were over eight million people living in Ireland, but because of famine and emigration over the years, the population has been reduced to about three and a half million. Roughly 70 million people in the world today, however, claim to be of Irish descent - 40 million of which live in the United States. And though more than half of the island's population vanished, most of those who survived and moved on to a new life in distant lands were able to flourish and maintain the traditions of their ancestral homeland almost as well as the descendants of those who stayed. One of those traditions, and probably the most important, is St. Patrick's Day. St. Patrick's Day is a national religious holiday in Ireland and an unofficial secular holiday in the United States, Canada, Australia, and many other countries throughout the world. It marks the anniversary of the death of

Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland, who died in AD461 on March 17th. Every year on the 17th of March there are parades (over 100 in the US), speeches, and parties in many cities. People wear green articles of clothing

all day, drink green beer, eat corned beef, cabbage and potatoes, and they go to church – not necessarily in that order. All of this is done to honor one man - St. Patrick. Well, who was this venerable man, and why is he held in such high esteem?

Saint Patrick was born Maewyn Succat in Roman-occupied Britain (now Scotland) in AD389. His father was Calpurnius, a Roman-British officer. At the age of 16 he was kidnapped by

Irish pirates and sold into slavery. For six years he was forced to work as a shepherd in Ireland. Legend has it that he dreamed of seeing God who instructed him in how to escape from his bondage. He did indeed escape back to Britain, but then moved to France, became a Catholic priest, took the name Patrick, and studied for 12 years under St. Germain, the Bishop of Auxerre. Since he spoke the Celtic language and was familiar with the pagan rituals (e.g., human sacrifice) performed by the Irish Druids, the Pope assigned him the arduous task of converting the heathens of Ireland to Christianity. Though not the first Catholic missionary on the island (he replaced Palladius), he was the most successful, almost single-handedly converting the entire population to Christianity. One of his techniques was using Ireland's national symbol, the three-leafed shamrock as a metaphor to explain the Holy Trinity. In the 20 years he spent evangelizing in Ireland he was arrested on several occasions but escaped each time. He worked tirelessly and set up innumerable schools and churches throughout the country.

One of the myths associated with St. Patrick is that he "drove the snakes out of Ireland." Biologists have determined that there were no snakes on the island at the time. Serpents were a symbol of paganism, and it was paganism, not snakes, that he drove out of the country. Another myth is that he reached the status of sainthood, as his title would imply. He was, in fact, never officially canonized by the Vatican and never did become a saint. St. Patrick's Day is celebrated by people all over the world whether they are Irish or not. It's a fun holiday for everyone, but watch out for the Leprechauns.



"Facts" about Leprechauns

- Leprechauns are all under three feet tall.
- Leprechauns are shoemakers and are often drunk.
- Leprechauns are self-appointed guardians of an ancient treasure left by the Vikings.
- Leprechauns carry two leather pouches – one contains a silver coin, the other a gold coin.
- A Leprechaun can give away the silver coin, but it always returns to him.
- A Leprechaun uses the gold coin to bribe his way out of trouble, but it turns to leaves or ashes once he gives it away and is out of sight.
- If you catch a Leprechaun, he will grant you a wish if you agree to let him go.
- If you catch a Leprechaun, you must never take your eye off him or he will disappear instantly.

A Blessing From Saint Patrick

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back,
May the sun shine warm upon your face,
The rains fall softly upon your fields,
And until we meet again,
May God hold you in the palm of His hand.





Jokes

by Nadia

From www.hicards.com

How many seconds?

The teacher said, "Now class, we know there are 60 seconds in a minute, 60 minutes in an hour, 24 hours in a day, and 365 days in a year, so who can tell me how many seconds there are in a year?" All the kids looked baffled by the question except Rufus, who raised his hand and waved it excitedly. "Yes, Rufus, how many seconds are there in a year?" the teacher asked. Replied Rufus, "Twelve, m'am. January second, February second, March second..."

Just a minute

Little Jimmy was laying in the middle of a meadow on a warm spring day. Soon, he began to think about God.

"God? Are you really there?" Jimmy said out loud. To his astonishment a voice came from the clouds. "Yes, Jimmy? What can I do for you?"

Seizing the opportunity, Jimmy asked, "God? What is a million years like to you?"

Knowing that Jimmy could not understand the concept of infinity, God responded in a manner to which Jimmy could relate, "A million years to me, Jimmy, is like a minute."

"Oh," said Jimmy. "Well, then, what's a million dollars like to you?"

"A million dollars to me, Jimmy, is like a penny."

"Wow!" remarked Jimmy, getting an idea. "You're so generous...can I have one of your pennies?"

God replied, "Sure thing, Jimmy! Just a minute."



Sing on the bus

Sign on a bus says:

"When you exit this vehicle, please lower your head and watch your step.

If you fail to do so, please lower your voice and watch your language. Thank you."

Poem of the Month



The Leprechauns are Marching

The Leprechauns are marching,
They're marching down the hall,
They're marching on the ceiling,
They're marching on the wall.
They're marching two by two,
And now it's four by four,
You say you still can't see them?
Move back! Here come some more!

The leprechauns are marching,
I think it's three by three.
Just close your eyes and try now
To visualize with me.
Their merry little feet
Will never miss a beat.
They're very tricky fellows.
Look out! They're under the sheet!

Leprechaun

Leprechaun, leprechaun,
fly across the sea
And fetch an emerald
shamrock for you and me.
Do not bring a nettle
or a thistle for a joke,
But bring an Irish shamrock,
for we are Irish folk.
And you and I, my leprechaun,
will wear the shamrock gay,
And match it with an Irish smile
upon St. Patrick's Day!

March Birthdays

7	Chang Sob	Kwon
9	Aparecida	Santos
10	Juan Bernal	
11	Assitan Sylla	
18	Mayumi Kinoshita	
19	Hyun Sook	Park
19	Joselene	Covil
19	Renata Iwicka	
21	Maria Herlinda	Borges
21	Sonja Krstic	
22	Evren Firat	
22	Ludiano Farizel	
24	Stoil Stoyanov	
26	Bianca Mendes	
28	Ronaldo	de Souza

<http://www.poemsforfree.com/poetry.htm>

February Activities Scrapbook



Thiago "chillin" during International Lunch..



Star listening to Carl's explanation of participial phrases as Hy un Sook looks on.



Byung Chul is excited about tasting all the different foods the students brought for International Lunch.



Sherwood was so hungry during the party he needed two hands to hold all the food!

"The best part of the activities is to be together with students from all over the world."



Jiyeon waiting in line for food. She can't wait to eat!



Approach students enjoying their lunch.



Sylvia and Phillippe having a serious discussion!



Jessica Buffone studying hard before she returns to Argentina.



by Luciana Sarra

BBC's 50 Places to Visit Before You Die

Hong Kong, is one of the two special administrative regions of the People's Republic of China, along with Macau. Comprised of over 260 islands, the territory is located on the eastern banks of the Pearl River Delta, facing the South China Sea in the south and bordering Guangdong province in the north. Hong Kong was a Crown colony of the United Kingdom from 1842 until the transfer of sovereignty to the People's Republic of China in 1997. The Sino-British Joint Declaration and the Basic Law of Hong Kong stipulate that Hong Kong will operate with a high degree of autonomy until at least 2047, fifty years after the transfer. Under the policy of "one country, two systems", the People's Republic of China is responsible for the territory's defence and foreign policy, while Hong Kong maintains its own legal system, monetary system, customs policy, cultural delegation, international sports teams, and immigration policy.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hong_Kong



Yosemite National Park is a national park largely in Mariposa County, and Tuolumne County, California, United States. Yosemite is visited by over 3.5 million visitors each year. Designated a World Heritage Site in 1984, Yosemite is internationally recognized for its spectacular granite cliffs, waterfalls, clear streams, Giant Sequoia groves, and biological diversity. About 89% of the park is designated Wilderness. Yosemite is one of the largest and least fragmented habitat blocks in the Sierra Nevada, and it supports a diversity of plants and animals. Of California's 7,000 plant species, about 50% occur in the Sierra Nevada and more than 20% within Yosemite. There is suitable habitat or documented records for more than 160 rare plants in the park, with rare local geologic formations and unique soils characterizing the restricted ranges many of these plants occupy.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yosemite_National_Park

Hawaii became the 50th state of the United States on August 21, 1959. It is situated in the North Pacific Ocean, 2,300 miles (3,700 km) from the mainland. In dialects of American English, "Hawaii" is pronounced at least three different ways. Hawaii was first inhabited in roughly AD 1000, by Polynesian settlers who came from islands in the South Pacific, most likely the Marquesas. For nearly 800 years, the people of Hawaii lived in a complex caste society governed by various warring chiefdoms and an extensive system of religious and social taboos called the kapu system. British explorer James Cook chanced upon the Hawaiian archipelago in 1778 in what is commonly assumed to be the first European contact with Hawaiians; however, substantial evidence exists of earlier Spanish visits to Hawaii. <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Hawaii>



Monthly Special - March

by Carl Phillips



March is the third month of the year in the Gregorian Calendar and one of seven Gregorian months with the length of 31 days. In ancient Rome, March was called Martius, so named after Mars, the Roman god of war.

March was originally the first month of the Roman calendar before the winter months of January and February were added about 700 BC by King Numa Pompilius. The numbered year began on March 1 in Russia until the end of the fifteenth century. Great Britain and her colonies continued to use March 25 until 1752, the same year they finally adopted the Gregorian calendar.

In Finnish, the month is called maaliskuu, which originates from maallinen kuu meaning earthy month. This is because in maaliskuu earth started to show from under the snow. Historical names for March include the Saxon term Lent-

monat, named for the equinox and eventual lengthening of days and the eventual namesake of Lent. The Saxons also called March Rhed-monat (for their goddess Rhedam); ancient Britons called it hyd-monath (meaning loud or stormy).

Events in March

- Saint David's Day (March 1)
- Saint Patrick's Day (March 17)
- Saint Joseph's Day (March 19)
- Norouz: New Year's Day in Iran and several other countries. A holiday in Turkey, Japan, and Central Asian countries as well.
- Good Friday (some Friday between March 20 to April 23)
- Easter (some Sunday between March 22 to April 25)
- Women's History Month (United States)
- American Red Cross Month

- The wearing of a Martenitsa in Bulgaria and Mărțișor in Romania (March 1)
- Fire Prevention month (The Philippines)
- Pakistan Day - March 23.
- International Women's Day - March 8

Trivia

- March in the Northern Hemisphere is the seasonal equivalent to September in the Southern Hemisphere (and vice versa).
- March begins on the same day of the week as February, excepting leap years, and as November every year.
- There is an adage that March "comes in like a lion, but goes out like a lamb", referring to the weather that some regions experience during the month.
- March's birthstone is aquamarine for Pisces and diamond for Aries.
- March's birth flower is the jonquil.

Retrieved from en.wikipedia.org/wiki/March

Tips of the Month from Our Teachers



Common Mistake

by Luciana Sarra

Using the Word Drastic:

If you don't know how to use the word "drastic," here is a valuable tip: "Drastic" means "severe" and generally has negative or frightening associations. Drastic measures are not just extreme, they are likely to have harmful side-effects. Don't use "drastic" or "drastically" in a positive or neutral sense. A drastic rise in temperature should be seen as downright dangerous, not just surprisingly large. Often when people use phrases like "drastic improvement," they mean "dramatic" instead.

wsu.edu/~brians/errors/drastic.html



Movie Reviews

by Brian Smith

The Natural (1984) *Starring: Robert Redford, Robert Duval, Glenn Close, Kim Bassinger*

Americans play a great variety of sports, but no sport touches us emotionally or historically the way baseball does. Baseball is part of our spirit, our culture, and our language. In *The Natural*, Roy Hobbs (Redford) is the embodiment of the never-say-die attitude baseball instills into the American psyche. Our romantic hero faces the ups and downs of athletic glory, and through him we see how persistence can overcome tragedy.

Fear Strikes Out (1957) *Starring: Anthony Perkins, Carl Malden*

Throughout his life, Jimmy Piersall (Perkins) has been trying to measure up to his father's expectations, but every time he thinks he's reached a level of "acceptability", his father (Malden) sets the bar a little higher. Jimmy is a talented young baseball player, but never good enough in the eyes of his tyrannical father. The constant pressure his father puts on him eventually pays off and Jimmy is chosen to play for the Boston Red Sox. But by the time his physical skills have matured, his mental health has deteriorated and eventually he has a nervous breakdown. This true story is actually less about baseball than it is about facing your fears and coming back from defeat.



Monthly Activities

by Andrew Haynes

Witness to a Massacre

In this short play presented by The Freedom Trail Foundation, Richard Palmes, the man John Adams called "the most material witness to the Boston Massacre," presents his version of the notorious event. The show will be followed by questions and discussion. This event is one in a series of events designed to commemorate the 237th anniversary of the Boston Massacre. This event also takes place on Friday, March 2 at 2 pm and Monday, March 5 at 11 am and 2 pm.

Location: Old State House, 206 Washington Street, Boston

Nearest T Station: State Street

Ladies of the House

Learn about women's lives throughout the Oti's House's history. Discuss daily life and social expectations for Sally Oti, a wealthy congressman's wife in 1800, Mrs. Mott, a ladies' physician in the 1830s, and the boardinghouse run by four sisters in the 1860s. Join us for this special tour in celebration of Women's History Month. Refreshments included.

Location: Oti's House Museum, 141 Cambridge St, Boston

Time: 11:00 AM-1:00 AM

Nearest T Station: Govt Center or Charles/MGH

Trial of the Century

Watch patriot lawyers John Adams and Josiah Quincy defend the British soldiers accused of murdering Bostonians while Samuel Quincy prosecutes inside the historic Old State House. Self-defense or cold-blooded murder? You decide as audience members are invited to act as jurors for this celebrated case. Program led by rangers from the Adams National Historical Park.

Admission: Free with museum admittance

Time: 11:30 AM and 2:30 p.m.

Location: Old State House, 206 Washington Street, Boston

St Patrick's Day 5K Race / Walk

5K Race and Walk starts and ends at South Boston Boys & Girls Club, corner of F and West Sixth Street. All proceeds benefit South Boston Boys & Girls Club. First 400 to register receive 100% cotton Beefy T Long Sleeve Official Race T Shirt. Refreshments, Waterstop, Digital Clock Timer, Raffle Prizes. Held on Parade Day, prior to the Parade.

Location: South Boston Boys & Girls Club, 230 West 6th Street, South Boston 617.268.4301

Time: 10:00 AM-11:00 AM

Nearest T Station: Red Line - Broadway or Andrew

<http://www.cityofboston.gov/calendar/calendar.asp>

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