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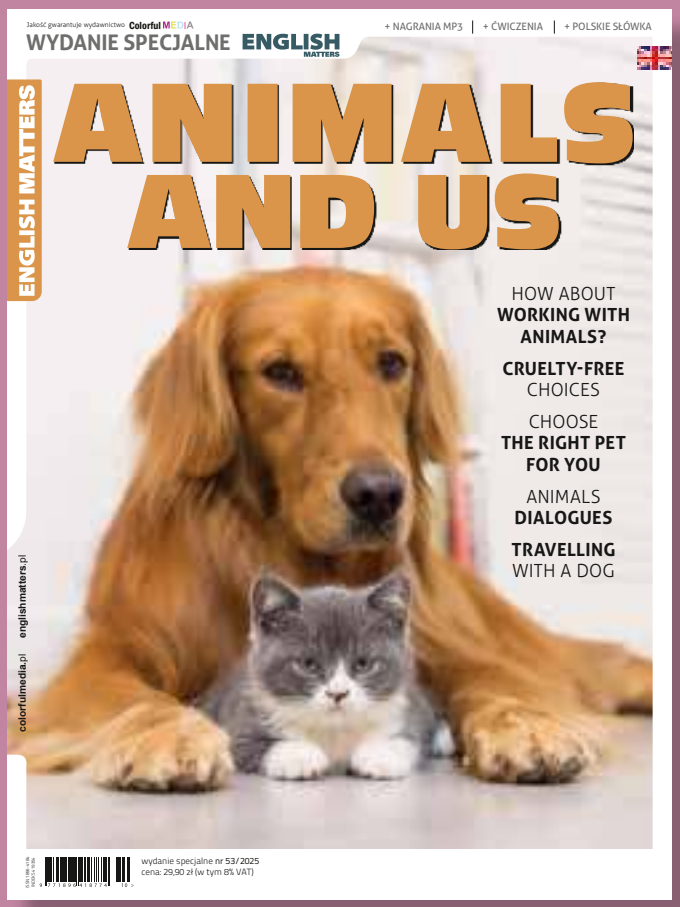

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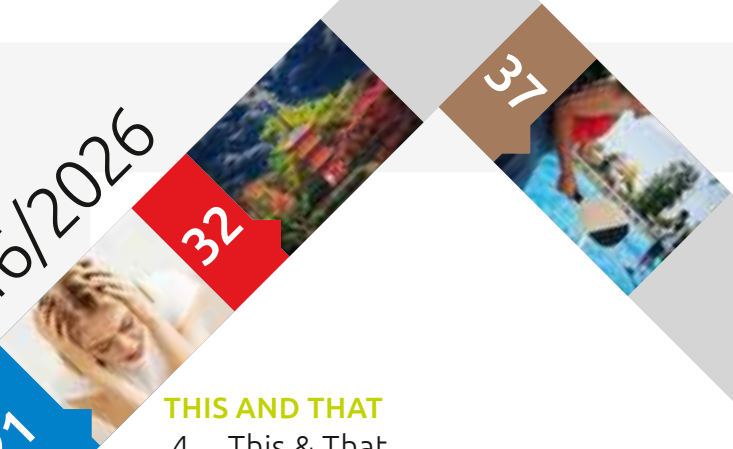

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PEOPLE AND LIFESTYLE

This time, *English Matters* would like to introduce you to Dr Dawid Myśliwiec, a chemist who has been popularising knowledge and fighting scientific fake news for ten years, and is the creator of the YouTube channel "Naukowy Bełkot."

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by Agnieszka Fortuna

YUKI-ONNA, OR THE SNOW WOMAN

A blizzard swept through the mountains as old Mosaku and his apprentice Minokichi sought shelter in a hut. In the dead of night, Minokichi awoke to see a woman in white – skin like snow, hair dark as midnight – glide soundlessly inside. She leaned over Mosaku and breathed upon him; frost bloomed on his face. Then she turned to Minokichi.

"Young one," she whispered, "I spare your life, but speak of this night to no one." Her voice faded like wind, and she vanished.

Years later, Minokichi married a gentle woman named Oyuki. Her beauty was strange – pale, serene, almost unreal. They lived happily and had children, until one snowy night he told her of the spirit who once spared him. Oyuki froze.

"I warned you never to tell," she said softly, her eyes glimmering with icy light. Snow swirled through the room as her body faded to mist.

"For the sake of our children, I will not take your life… but remember, the snow never forgets."

At dawn, only Minokichi remained – and a trace of snow where Oyuki had sat.

Yuki-onna is one of the most famous Japanese folk tales and a classic story told during the winter season. Yuki-onna belongs to the group of *yōkai* – supernatural beings that represent natural forces and human emotions. She frequently appears in art, film, anime, kabuki plays, literature and children's books – a sign of her lasting symbolic power. Her tale symbolises the delicate balance between life and death, warmth and cold, love and fear. The moral of the story is a warning about respect and humility before nature: promises must not be broken, and human warmth must never forget how fragile it is in the face of nature's icy power.

blizzard | zamieć śnieżna, śnieżyca
to sweep through sth | przemknąć przez coś, przetoczyć się przez coś (o burzy, wichurze)
apprentice | uczeń, praktykant
to seek shelter | szukać schronienia, ukryć się
hut | chata, szałas
in the dead of night | w środku nocy, w głębokiej nocy
to awake | obudzić się
to glide | szybować, sunąć, ślizgać się
soundlessly | bezszelestnie, bezgłośnie
to lean over sb | pochylać się nad kimś
to breathe upon sb | dmuchnąć na kogoś
frost | szron, mróz
to bloom on sth | rozkwitać, zakwitać na czymś
to turn to sb | zwrócić się do kogoś
to whisper | szepnąć, szeptać
to spare sth | oszczędzić coś (np. życie), darować coś
to fade | gasnąć, zanikać
to vanish | znikać, rozpływać się
pale | blady
serene | pogodny, spokojny
to freeze | zamarzać
to warn sb | ostrzegać kogoś
to glimmer with sth | migotać, połyskiwać, iskrzyć się czymś
to swirl | wirować, kłębić się (np. o dymie, mgle)
for the sake of our children | dla dobra naszych dzieci
at dawn | o świcie
to remain | pozostawać, zostać
a trace of sth | ślad czegoś
folk tale | opowieść ludowa, baśń, podanie ludowe
natural forces | siły natury
to appear | pojawiać się
lasting | trwały, długotrwały
warmth | ciepło
humility | pokora
fragile | kruchy, delikatny

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JANUS WORDS: THE TWO-FACED TRICKSTERS

Janus [ˈdʒeɪ.nəs], the Roman god of beginnings and endings, had two faces – one looking forward, the other back. He presided over doorways, gates and change itself. And, much like the god, Janus words face both directions at once. In linguistic terms, they're known as auto-antonyms or contronyms – but "Janus words" certainly sounds more mythic, doesn't it? A Janus word is one that carries two opposite meanings, depending entirely on context. Take dust, for example. To dust can mean to remove fine particles – She dusted the mantelpiece before guests arrived – or to sprinkle them on – He dusted the tiramisu with cocoa powder. No wonder cleaning – or baking – feels so ambiguous. Another classic is fast. It can mean quick – The runner shot past, fast as lightning – or firmly fixed – The ship was held fast against the rocks. So something can move fast, or be so fast it can't move at all. English, it seems, is never quite content to face in only one direction.

two-faced | dwulicowy, o dwóch twarzach
trickster | oszust, kanciarz
to look forward | patrzeć w przyszłość; oczekiwać czegoś
to look back | patrzeć wstecz; wspominać przeszłość
at once | jednocześnie, naraz
in linguistic terms | w terminologii językowej, pod względem językowym
auto-antonyms | auto-antonimy (słowa mające przeciwstawne znaczenia)
contronyms | kontronimy
certainly | z pewnością, na pewno
depending on sth | w zależności od czegoś
take X | weźmy X, rozważmy X
dust | *tu:* ścierać kurz; posypywać (np. cukrem)
to remove sth | usuwać coś
particle | cząsteczka, drobina
mantelpiece | półka nad kominkiem
to sprinkle on sth | posypywać coś
no wonder | nic dziwnego, nie ma się co dziwić
ambiguous | niejednoznaczny, dwuznaczny
to shoot past | przemknąć, przelecieć obok
lightning | błyskawica, piorun
firmly fixed | mocno umocowany, stabilnie zamocowany
to be held fast against sth | utknąć na czymś
to seem | wydawać się

WARTO ZAPAMIĘTAĆ!

trickster
oszust, kanciarz

MUSHROOM COFFINS: A FUNGI WAY TO GO

If you thought the afterlife couldn't get any greener, think again – mushroom coffins are sprouting up as the latest trend in eco-friendly farewells. Made from mushroom mycelium, they promise to help you decompose with dignity and rest in peas. One pioneering company behind this trend is Loop Biotech (based in the Netherlands) with its "Living Cocoon" coffin grown from mycelium. The idea is simple: instead of lying in a box that lasts longer than most dynasties, you're gently wrapped in a coffin that *eats you back into the ecosystem*. Within weeks, the mycelium gets to work, turning your remains into rich soil – talk about a *growth opportunity*! Supporters say it's a grave improvement on traditional burials and a spore-tacular way to give back to Mother Earth. Skeptics, however, are still warming up to the idea of being recycled by fungi – perhaps they need more time to digest it. In short: mushroom coffins might not be everyone's cup of compost, but for those who want to leave no trace – only truffles – it's a truly down-to-earth exit strategy.

coffin | trumna
afterlife | życie pozagrobowe
to sprout up | wyrosnąć, wypuścić pędy
farewell | pożegnanie
mushroom mycelium | grzybnia
to decompose | rozkładać się, ulegać rozkładowi
with dignity | z godnością
to rest in peas | spoczywać w groszku (celowa gra słów bazująca na: rest in peace – spoczywać w pokoju)
instead of sth | zamiast czegoś
wrapped in sth | zawinięty w coś, owinięty czymś
remains | szczątki (ludzkie)
soil | gleba, ziemia
growth opportunity | możliwość rozwoju, szansa na wzrost
supporter | zwolennik, orędownik
grave | grób
improvement on sth | ulepszenie, poprawa czegoś
burial | pochówek, pogrzeb
spore-tacular | zarodniowy/sporowy (celowa gra słów bazująca na spectacular – spektakularny)
to digest sth | trawić coś
not be one's cup of tea | nie być w czyimś guście, nie być dla kogoś interesującym (*tu:* gra słów – wymiana "tea" na "compost")
down-to-earth | *tu:* praktyczny

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Sound & Speech

by Kamil Drożdżyk

THE *T* TRINITY

It's time to switch things up – in this issue, we'll take a closer look at the letter *t* and the three common pronunciations of this consonant. Ready to learn the secrets behind the tricky *t*? Let's go.

The Voiceless Alveolar Stop

The most common pronunciation of the letter *t* is simply /t/. The phoneme, known as the voiceless alveolar stop, is a consonant produced by stopping the airflow with your tongue at the ridge just behind your teeth. It can appear at the beginning (time /taɪm/, tooth /tuːθ/), in the middle (study /ˈstʌdi/, hotel /həʊˈtɛl/), and at the end of words (start /stɑːt/, part /pɑːt/). To make the sound, open your mouth slightly, raise the tip of your tongue behind your top teeth, and let out a quick puff of air. Simple, right?

The Glottal Stop

Unfortunately, it gets a bit more complicated with the next variant, as the letter *t* can also be pronounced as the glottal stop, represented in the International Phonetic Alphabet as /ʔ/. Here's the kicker – even though the glottal stop might be represented by a *t*, it sounds like a brief pause or a sudden cut-off. How is that possible? If you've ever surprised a native speaker, they might've reacted by asking *what?* pronounced more like *wha?*, with the letter *t* appearing to be silent. Technically, however, it's not silent, as the final sound of the word *what* pronounced with a glottal stop is /ʔ/.

Another example: if you're tapped into the internet culture, you're probably familiar with the running joke that whenever a person speaks with a British accent around foreigners, they get bombarded with the exaggerated pronunciation of the phrase *bottle of water*, and it sounds something like *bo'uh of wo'uh*. This pronunciation is a prime example of the glottal stop in action. The glottal stop usually appears when the letter *t* is surrounded by vowels (variet**y** /vəˈraɪəʔi/, wa**t**er /ˈwɔːʔə/), but it's also common for it to replace the letter *t* placed between a vowel and a consonant (ba**t**man /ˈbæʔmən/, se**tt**le /ˈsɛʔl̩/).

The /ʔ/ sound can also appear at the end of words, such as in the aforementioned *what* (/wɒʔ/). The letter *t* is commonly pronounced as a glottal stop in connected speech as well. In a casual conversation, it's natural for a native speaker to pronounce the phrase *at work* as /æʔ wɜːk/, rather than /æt wɜːk/.

To make the glottal stop, stop the airflow low in your throat. It might be difficult to produce on its own, but try the pronunciation in words. It almost sounds like a pause in a word.

The glottal stop is very common in many British English accents, but it can also be heard in certain American accents as well – for example, it's pretty standard for an American to pronounce *mountain* as /ˈmaʊʔn̩/.

However, remember that the glottal stop, despite being quite popular, is never the 'default' pronunciation of the letter *t*, and you won't find it in a phonetic transcription in a dictionary. It's simply a habitual feature of some native accents. All words which can be said with a glottal stop can also be pronounced with the audible variant of *t*: the voiceless alveolar stop.

The Flap T

We've mentioned the (slightly tired at this point) *bottle of water* joke, but it's not only the British that have their own quirks when it comes to *t* – so do Americans. Instead of the glottal stop,

0 trinity | trójca
consonant | spółgłoska
1 voiceless alveolar stop | spółgłoska zwarta dziąsłowa bezdźwięczna
airflow | strumień powietrza, przepływ powietrza
in the middle (of sth) | w środku (czegoś)
slightly | nieznacznie, odrobinę
to raise sth | podnieść coś
to let out sth | wypuścić coś (np. powietrze, dźwięk)
glottal | krtaniowy, głośniowy (dotyczący głośni)

unfortunately | niestety
kicker | haczyk, zaskakujący/decydujący element
even though | po/mimo że, chociaż
cut-off | odcięcie
2 however | jednakże, aczkolwiek
to be tapped into sth | mieć dostęp do czegoś, *kolokw.* być na bieżąco, "siedzieć" w czymś
to be familiar with sth | być zaznajomionym z czymś
running | *tu:* znany
exaggerated | przesadzony, wyolbrzymiony

prime example | doskonały przykład
to appear | pojawić się, wydawać się (jakimś)
surrounded by sth | otoczony przez coś
vowel | samogłoska
to replace sth | zastąpić coś
the aforementioned | wyżej wspomniany, wyżej wymieniony
3 despite sth | po/mimo czegoś
default | *tu:* domyślny, standardowy
audible | słyszalny
when it comes to X | jeśli chodzi o X, jeżeli mowa o X
instead of sth | zamiast czegoś

1 2 3

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they prefer the so-called flap *t*, of which the official IPA symbol is /ɾ/ (though sometimes simply the symbol /d/ is used instead). In the simplest terms possible: Americans tend to make their *t*s sound like something between a rolled *r* and a *d*.

Similarly to the glottal stop, the flap *t* usually occurs when the letter *t* appears around vowels (be**tt**er /ˈbɛɾər/, wa**t**er /ˈwɔɾər/). It can also be heard when the letter *t* appears behind an *r* and is followed by a vowel (thir**t**y /ˈθɜɾi/, for**t**y /ˈfɔɾi/), and when the letter *t* is tucked between a vowel and an *l* (little /ˈlɪɾl̩/, bottle /ˈbɑɾl̩/). Another common point between the glottal stop and the flap *t* is the fact that they're both heard in connected speech. An American might pronounce *work it out* as /wɜrk ɪɾ aʊɾ/ instead of /wɜrk ɪt aʊt/.

To make the sound, open your mouth a little bit and gently tap the ridge just behind the top teeth with the tip of your tongue and let the air out. If it sounds like a quick *d* with a hint of a rolled *r*, you got it.

Even though the flap *t* is most common in North America, it can also be heard in some British accents, as well as in Scotland, Ireland, Australia, and even South Africa.

4

Just like the glottal stop, the flap t doesn't usually appear in dictionaries. Think of it as an 'unofficial' way to pronounce some *t*s, commonly used in casual speech.

Note: Keep in mind that neither the glottal stop nor the flap *t* can ever appear in a stressed syllable at the beginning of a word. Words such as *attack*, *attain*, or *attract* are always pronounced with the voiceless alveolar stop: /əˈtæk/, /əˈteɪn/, /əˈtrækt/.

4 so-called | tak zwany
flap t | spółgłoska uderzeniowa dziąsłowa
though | chociaż, jednak
to be followed by sth | po którym następuje coś
tucked between sth and sth | umieszczony między czymś a czymś
connected speech | mowa naturalna, płynna, ciągła (w której słowa ulegają elizji)
hint of sth | nutka czegoś, odrobina czegoś, cień czegoś (np. hint of sadness – nutka smutku).
5 keep in mind that | pamiętaj, że; miej na uwadze, że
neither... nor... | ani... ani...

5

battery /ˈbætᵊri/, /bæʔ(ə)ɹi/, /ˈbæɾ(ə)ɹi/ bateria

beetle /ˈbiːtəl/, /ˈbiːʔəl/, /ˈbiːɾəl/ żuk

betting /ˈbɛtɪŋ/, /ˈbɛʔɪŋ/, /ˈbɛɾɪŋ/ zakład

lottery /ˈlɒt(ə)ɹi/, /ˈlɒʔ(ə)ɹi/, /ˈlɑɾ(ə)ɹi/ loteria

otter /ˈɒtə/, /ˈɒʔə/, /ˈɑɾəɹ/ wydra

scatter /ˈskætə/, /ˈskæʔə/, /ˈskæɾəɹ/ rozrzucać, rozsypywać

whittle /ˈwɪtəl/, /ˈwɪʔəl/, /ˈwɪɾəl/ strugać, ciosać

The match was a great /greɪt/ battle /ˈbæɾəl/. I hope you're not bitter /ˈbɪɾəɹ/ because of your loss!

bitter | *tu:* rozgoryczony

Oh, stop /stɒp/ your nitwittery /nɪtˈwɪʔəri/. Of course I'm not /nɒʔ/ bitter /ˈbɪʔə/. It was indeed a fantastic /fænˈtæstɪk/ battle /ˈbæʔəl/.

nitwittery | *tu:* głupie zachowanie, wydurnianie się
indeed | w rzeczy samej

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Science in a New Light – "Naukowy Bełkot" (Scientific Gibberish)

by Hanna Danielczak-Ziadi

In a world full of information – some valuable, but also some that's completely trivial, unnecessary, or even disruptive to our everyday peace of mind – it's worth seeking out news sources that have been checked, verified and, importantly, are presented in an accessible way. For this reason, *English Matters* would like to introduce you to Dr Dawid Myśliwiec, a chemist who has been popularising knowledge and fighting scientific fake news for ten years, and is the creator of the YouTube channel „Naukowy Bełkot". Let's find out together what this is all about...

valuable | cenny, wartościowy
disruptive | *tu:* destrukcyjny, zakłócający spokój
worth sth | wart/y czegoś
to seek out sth | szukać czegoś
scientific | naukowy

BIOPIC NOTE

Dr Dawid Myśliwiec – a chemist who has spent 10 years popularizing knowledge and fighting scientific fake news. He has published over 400 videos on his YouTube channel, which have collectively garnered 120,000,000 views.
His channel, *Uwaga! Naukowy Bełkot* (Attention! Scientific Gibberish), is a place where one can find comprehensive materials explaining broad topics in natural sciences, shorter videos featuring scientific trivia, and a podcast called *Przegadana godzina* (Over-talked Hour).
The author of two bestselling books, *Przepis na człowieka* (The Recipe for a Human) and *7 cząsteczek* (7 Molecules), he is present on the shelves of over 60,000 readers. Privately, he is a fan (or fanatic) of sports, especially basketball, biathlon, and Formula 1.

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The yellow duck in the Naukowy Bełkot (Scientific Gibberish) channel's videos first appeared in 2015. It was brought back from Bydgoszcz, where Dr Myśliwiec made his debut at a TEDx conference (yellow ducks were handed out as gadgets by one of the event's sponsors). Since then, whenever the duck wasn't visible in a video, viewers would ask, 'Where's the duck?' So the duck became an indispensable element of Scientific Gibberish videos' set design.

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EM: What is Naukowy Bełkot? Is it a foundation, an association, or a company? When was it established, and who were its founders? Where did the idea for its creation come from, and what is its main mission?

Dawid Myśliwiec: "Naukowy Bełkot" was founded eleven years ago as a YouTube channel – and it actually started by chance. As a chemistry student, I gave popular science lectures as part of the Lublin Science Festival. After one of my presentations, a participant approached me and said that he would gladly watch what I was doing in the lecture hall on the internet. That's when it dawned on me that it could be a good idea. So, in 2014, I uploaded the first video – recorded with a phone.

Today, it's a large project that has developed significantly, both in terms of equipment and the team. I co-create it with my wife, Monika Chylińska. We both previously worked in scientific units, so education and science are very close to us. Monika handles the operational side of the channel and the company, allowing me to focus on creating videos and writing books.

EM: For the benefit of those who may not be familiar with your work yet, I'll also ask right away: what is the difference between the material presented on "Uwaga! Naukowy Bełkot" (Attention! Scientific Gibberish), and "Wyłącznie Naukowy Bełkot" (Exclusively Scientific Gibberish)? And what is the so-called "Przegadana Godzina" (Chatted Hour)?

DM: On "Uwaga! Naukowy Bełkot" we publish longer materials, often analysing bigger issues. "Wyłącznie Naukowy Bełkot" on the other hand, features shorter formats, sometimes based on a single publication or scientific curiosity. This channel is currently a bit "dormant," but we intend to change that. "Przegadana Godzina," however, is a podcast where we take a looser approach to the topics. We still stick to science, but in a format that is more chatty – hence the name. We've neglected this format a bit recently, but we would really like to return to regular recordings.

EM: Where do you draw inspiration and ideas for new episodes from?

DM: From life! We have a whole list of topics waiting in line – enough to last for the next few years, easily. Ideas come to us from books, media reports, from our Viewers and Patrons, and recently also from our children, who inundate us with questions. At first glance, they seem simple, but when you delve into them, they're not trivial at all.

EM: What gives you the greatest joy and satisfaction when working on the podcasts, and what is the most difficult part of preparing the material? How long does the preparation of an average episode usually take?

DM: The longest and most important stage is research. I've been cooperating with Dr Anna Mleczko and Dr Patrycja Jakubek-Olszewska for years. Once a week we meet online – they in Poznań and Warsaw, us in Lublin – and discuss what we have managed to establish. The result is truly extensive notes for the script, which are sometimes similar in length to an undergraduate thesis.

Then comes the writing – every film script comes from my hand. After reading the notes and having research conversations, I sit down and put the story together. The script is checked by Ania and Patrycja for factual accuracy, as well as by Monika – together we make corrections, simplify, and sometimes cut things out. Next comes the recording and editing stage, which involves our editor Adam Myśliwiec and graphic designer Monika Waryszak.

It's hard to talk about work-life balance here – many conversations in our house revolve around the current episode topics. But that also brings enormous satisfaction.

EM: Is knowing foreign languages helpful for finding materials and inspiration for the podcasts?

DM: It is absolutely essential! The language of science is English. All reputable scientific publications are published in this language – without knowing English, it would be impossible to prepare reliable analyses. So, knowledge of English is key to our work.

EM: Could you recommend a few podcasts that someone hearing about your channel for the first time could start watching? On a related note, I'd like to ask if your channel also features materials concerning, for example, the influence of learning foreign languages on the brain?

DM: We are particularly proud of our longer films – for example, the episode about autism, or chemical weapons at the bottom of the Baltic Sea. It's worth checking out these latest productions, as they

1 established | założony
founder | założyciel
actually | *tu:* właściwie
by chance | przez przypadek
lecture | wykład
to approach sb | podejść do kogoś
to dawn on sb | zaświtać komuś w głowie, olśnić kogoś
to upload sth | wrzucić coś na stronę
in terms of sth | pod względem czegoś
previously | uprzednio, wcześniej
to handle sth | zajmować się czymś
to allow sb to do sth | pozwalać komuś na z/robienie czegoś
to focus on sth | skupić się na czymś
to be familiar with sth | być zaznajomionym z czymś, znać coś, orientować się w czymś

1

so-called | tak zwany
2 issue | *tu:* kwestia, sprawa
on the other hand | z drugiej strony
currently | obecnie, aktualnie
dormant | *tu:* nieaktywny
to intend to do sth | zamierzać coś zrobić, mieć zamiar coś zrobić
looser | luźniejszy, swobodniejszy
approach to sth | podejście do czegoś
to stick to sth | trzymać się czegoś
chatty | gadatliwy, rozmowny
hence | stąd, dlatego, w związku z tym
to neglect sth | zaniedbywać coś
to inundate us with sth | zasypywać, zalewać czymś
at first glance | na pierwszy rzut oka
to seem | wydawać się

2

to delve into sth | zagłębiać się w coś
at all | w ogóle
average | przeciętny
extensive | obszerny
undergraduate thesis | praca licencjacka, praca dyplomowa (na studiach I stopnia)
3 factual | oparty na faktach
accuracy | dokładność, precyzja, poprawność
to involve sth | wiązać się z czymś, obejmować coś
to revolve around sth | obracać się wokół czegoś
reputable | renomowany
reliable | rzetelny
on a related note | przy okazji
concerning sth | dotyczący czegoś
influence of sth on sth | wpływ czegoś na coś
at the bottom of sth | na dnie czegoś

3

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represent the standards we will be striving for in the future. The episode about bees or the scariest virus that we all carry could be a good start. If you look closely, on our second channel (Wyłącznie Naukowy Bełkot) you will also find episodes related to learning foreign languages...

EM: You have many subscribers, which we sincerely congratulate you for. What, in your opinion, causes Naukowy Bełkot to enjoy such great interest?

DM: I think, above all, that we treat our viewers seriously. We don't dumb down the content – we try to speak simply, but not too simply. We see that the audience values a serious approach and eagerly engages with more complex topics. The second thing is continuous development – we invest in equipment and the team, we refine our research and narrative skills, but also our technical infrastructure. After years, the effects are visible. And we talk about things that genuinely interest us, so we don't have to force any fake enthusiasm.

EM: What is currently the greatest challenge for science?

DM: Probably the growing popularity of pseudoscience and conspiracy theories in the age of generative AI, and consequently, the decreasing public trust in scientists. Yet, science, despite its flaws, is a self-correcting creation. It's a living organism that changes and evolves, expanding our knowledge every year.

EM: What is most difficult for a scientist who wants to bring the public closer to the secrets of their field?

DM: Specialisation. Today's scientific teams deal with very narrow areas of knowledge, and it can sometimes be difficult to explain their work simply. Added to this is the so-called "curse of knowledge" – after years of work, the researcher considers their topic to be obvious, which is not always the case. And this is where the role of science popularisers comes in – we place the issues in a broader context, translating them into a more accessible language, but without excessive simplification.

EM: Are your podcasts available – or will they be – in different language versions?

DM: Not for now, but I think with the development of AI, YouTube itself may soon offer such solutions.

EM: Do you plan to expand your activities in the future, for example, by broadening them to include topics diverging from bringing science closer to the public?

DM: We want to stick to science, although we are increasingly thinking about content for children. Monika and I co-wrote a popular science book for the youngest, Lelony Discover Why the Sky is Blue. We would like to pursue this direction in the future and create an "offshoot" of Naukowy Bełkot aimed specifically at children.

EM: Is there anything else you would like to share with our readers?

DM: Just this, probably: if someone gives easy and unambiguous answers or solutions to a complex question or problem, they are likely opting for numerous over-simplifications. Because the truth is that sooner or later, when considering almost any scientific issue, we will come to the conclusion that "it's complicated"...

EM: Thank you for your time.

4 to strive for sth | dążyć do czegoś, starać się o coś
related to sth | związany z czymś
above all | przede wszystkim
to dumb down sth | *pej.* upraszczać coś, trywializować coś
eagerly | chętnie
visible | widoczny, dostrzegalny
genuinely | autentycznie, naprawdę
decreasing | malejący
despite sth | po/mimo czegoś
flaw | wada, niedoskonałość
to expand sth | poszerzać coś
to deal with sth | mierzyć się z czymś
5 so-called | tak zwany
curse | przekleństwo
obvious | oczywisty
to come in | wkraczać
excessive | nadmierny
to include sth | włączyć coś
diverging from sth | odbiegający od czegoś
although | chociaż
increasingly | *tu:* coraz częściej
to pursue sth | kontynuować coś, pójść w jakimś kierunku
offshoot | odnoga
unambiguous | jednoznaczny, niedwuznaczny
numerous | liczny
over-simplification | zbytnie uproszczenie

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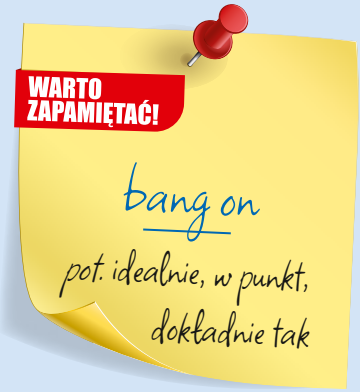
FOCUS ON LANGUAGE
Science

by Kamil Drożdżyk

As observed by Dr Dawid Myśliwiec, English is the language of science. Being able to effectively search for and understand journals, blog posts, videos and various other media in English is a much-needed skill, if doing your own research is what you're after. Learning some entry-level science vocabulary is a great start.

to search for sth | szukać czegoś, poszukiwać czegoś
to be after sth | poszukiwać, szukać czegoś
entry-level | podstawowy, dotyczący początkowego poziomu



Nuclear Nouns

Paul: Would you mind taking the petri dish to the lab?
Mary: What's inside it? Bacteria?
Paul: You can take a look yourself – the microscope is just right there.
Mary: Wow, I can see the individual cells. It's some kind of fungus, isn't it?
Paul: Bang on. We're doing a little research on it, trying to see how fast it grows in UV light.
Mary: That's an interesting experiment. Share the report once you're done.

petri dish | szalka Petriego, naczynie laboratoryjne używane do hodowli mikroorganizmów
individual cell | pojedyncza komórka
fungus | grzyb
bang on | *pot.* idealnie, w punkt, dokładnie tak

Intelligent Idioms

not rocket science – not difficult
Many students fail calculus, but it's not rocket science.

to have something down to a science – to be exceptionally good at something
Jill is great at fractions. She's got it down to a science.

to blind somebody with science – to overuse technical terms or scientific jargon, confusing the listener
I asked the professor a simple question about gravity, and he blinded me with science.

to be on the same wavelength – to agree with somebody on something; to have a similar view
We're on the same wavelength with our boss. We all think the project is a failure.

to reinvent the wheel – to waste time creating something that has already been done
So, you're creating a free online video sharing platform? Ever heard of YouTube? You're reinventing the wheel, man.

to fail sth | oblać coś, nie zdać czegoś (np. egzaminu, przedmiotu)
calculus | rachunek różniczkowy i całkowy, *tu:* zajęcia, kurs, przedmiot np. na studiach
fractions | ułamki
to get it down to sth | sprowadzić coś do czegoś
to confuse sb | wprawiać kogoś w zakłopotanie, mylić kogoś
gravity | grawitacja
to agree with sb on sth | zgadzać się z kimś w jakiejś sprawie
failure | porażka, niepowodzenie
to waste sth | marnować coś

Scientific Adjectives

- The doctor prescribed her some new experimental antibiotics.
- The research was conducted in a methodical manner.
- To support this claim, we require more scientific evidence.
- I'm skeptical. I'll believe it when I see the fruit of their research with my own eyes.
- It was the only logical solution.

to prescribe sth | przepisać coś
evidence | dowód, dowody

Language

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Accurate Actions

- We analysed the data carefully.
- The professor described the phenomenon to the audience.
- She will conduct another experiment on Monday.
- Have you compared the qualities of the two chemical elements?
- They collected enough evidence to write a report on the topic.
- Sam measured the temperature in the lab.
- The company claims that their science division doesn't experiment on animals.
- We're still researching the new strain of the virus.
- An issue in the experiment was identified on Tuesday.
- The genius mathematician solved the problem in seconds.

phenomenon | zjawisko
to conduct sth | prze/prowadzać coś
to compare sth | porównywać coś
to collect sth | gromadzić coś
to measure sth | mierzyć coś
strain | szczep (np. bakterii)
to solve | rozwiązywać

Academic Language

Academic papers, scientific journals, and similar publications are usually written in formal, academic language. Get familiar with the most important characteristics of this style of writing:

- **impersonal writing** – to remain objective and formal, most scientific texts are written with an impersonal style. In this style it's rare to see pronouns such as *I*, *you*, *we*, etc.; instead, sentences are made impersonal using the passive voice.
  Academic: *The experiment was conducted in March 2024.*
  Informal: *I conducted the experiment in March 2024.*

- **formal wording** – in academic writing, short and colloquial phrasal verbs are often replaced with more formal synonyms; light intensifiers, such as *very*, are avoided
  Academic: *The scientists recorded the behaviour of polar bears during winter months.*
  Informal: *The scientists noted down the behaviour of polar bears during winter months.*

- **nominalisation** – verbs and adjectives are often replaced by corresponding nouns to make the text more impartial and cohesive
  Academic: The increase in temperature led to the death of the bacteria.
  Informal: The temperature increased and the bacteria died.

to get familiar with sth | zaznajomić się z czymś
instead | w zamian
passive voice | strona bierna
to avoid sth | unikać czegoś
to record sth | nagrać coś
increase | wzrost

Instruments of Science

Greg: Now, where's my magnifying glass? I'm sure I put it here, in the study, right next to the flasks.
Betty: What do you need a magnifying glass for? One of your experiments, I suppose.
Greg: Of course. I want to mix these two liquids and I need my magnifying glass to make sure I pour in precisely two millilitres of each into the test tube... Ah, here it is.
Betty: You should put your safety goggles on.
Greg: Naturally. I'll put my latex gloves on as well. Ready?
Betty: ...is that it?
Greg: Hmm, what if we heat it up? Prepare the Bunsen burner, please.
Betty: Are you sure it's safe?
Greg: We have to take the risk in the name of science.

magnifying glass | szkło powiększające
safety goggles | okulary ochronne
to heat sth up | podgrzać coś
Bunsen burner | palnik Bunsena

Branches of Natural Science

- John is interested in physics. Recently, he's been reading a lot about the Big Bang theory.
- I'm not too keen on chemistry, but the experiment conducted by our teacher was fascinating.
- Maria doesn't collect rocks for fun. She researches them for her geology project.
- Copernicus was a pioneer of modern astronomy. He proved that the Earth revolves around the Sun, not the other way around.
- A biology student from Denmark discovered a new species of fish.
- The mushroom was taken to a botany expert.

branch | *tu:* dziedzina, gałąź (nauki)
physics | fizyka
to be keen on sth | chętnie coś robić, pasjonować się czymś, bardzo coś lubić
conducted by sth | prze/prowadzony przez coś/kogoś
to collect sth | zbierać coś
to prove that | udowodnić, że
to revolve around sth | kręcić się wokół czegoś, obracać się wokół czegoś
not the other way round | a nie na odwrót
species | gatunek

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Tall Tales and Folk Heroes: American Legends

by Jonathan Sidor

What do you know about the larger-than-life characters that helped shape the spirit of the United States? Pack your bags for an adventure across the Wild West, the mighty forests, and the bustling railroads as *English Matters* takes a closer look at four legendary figures.

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What Are Tall Tales?

Tall tales are a unique slice of American folklore. These exaggerated stories, often passed down by word of mouth, paint vivid pictures of heroes who were bigger, stronger, or more resourceful than you or me. Folk heroes may or may not be real people, but they're meant to represent the hopes, values and struggles of everyday folks. This was particularly the case during the 18th and 19th centuries when the country was expanding and changing rapidly.

Interestingly, tall tales often carry a grain of truth. They're inspired by real-life hardships, from clearing dense forests to enduring harsh winters, but stretched to the point of becoming fantastical. They weren't just for fun; they served as morale boosters, inspiring communities to dream big and face challenges head-on.

Let's dive into some of the most unforgettable figures from this legendary tradition.

0 tall tales | niestworzone historie
folk heroes | bohaterowie ludowi
larger-than-life | przerysowany, przesadzony; niezwykły
mighty | potężny
bustling | tętniący życiem, gwarny, ruchliwy
railroads | linie kolejowe
1 exaggerated | przesadzony, wyolbrzymiony
passed down by word of mouth | przekazywany ustnie
vivid | żywy, barwny, wyrazisty
resourceful | zaradny, pomysłowy
struggle | walka, zmaganie się
to expand | rozszerzać się, powiększać się
to carry a grain of truth | zawierać ziarno prawdy
hardships | trudności, niedogodności
dense | gęsty
to endure sth | znosić, wytrzymać, przetrwać coś
harsh | surowy
stretched to the point of becoming fantastical | rozciągnięty do granic absurdu/aż staje się fantastyczny
morale booster | element podnoszący morale
community | społeczność, wspólnota
to dream big | mieć wielkie ambicje
to face challenges head-on | stawiać czoło nadciągającym wyzwaniom

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Paul Bunyan

WARTO ZAPAMIĘTAĆ!

to credit sb with sth

przypisywać coś komuś

Paul Bunyan: The Giant Lumberjack

Paul Bunyan's name is as big as his boots – and they're enormous! Paul is said to have been a giant lumberjack with a blue ox named Babe. Together, they roamed the American wilderness, clearing forests with a single swing of Paul's axe. Legend has it that Paul created the Great Lakes to give Babe a place to drink, and that he could cut down an entire forest in a day. It's also said that Paul's footprints formed Minnesota's 10,000 lakes, and stories describe a massive pancake griddle so large that skaters were needed to spread the butter.

Paul Bunyan embodies the pioneer spirit of America: hardworking, strong, and determined to tame the wild. While he's a fictional character, you'll find statues of Paul and Babe in towns across the northern United States. Don't miss the one in Bemidji, Minnesota – it's a whopper!

Pecos Bill: The Cowboy Extraordinaire

If you've ever wondered who tamed the Wild West, look no further than Pecos Bill. This cowboy was raised by coyotes and grew up to be the most skilled wrangler in the land. He's credited with inventing roping, riding tornadoes, and even digging the Rio Grande River with his bare hands.

Legend has it that Bill once lassoed a thunderstorm and rode it across the Texas plains, shaping the landscape as he went. His horse, Widow-Maker, was said

2 lumberjack | drwal
ox | wół
to roam | wędrować, błąkać się, wałęsać się
with a single swing of Paul's axe | jednym zamachem siekiery Paula
legend has it that... | legenda głosi, że...
footprints | ślady stóp, odciski stóp
3 massive | ogromny, wielki
pancake griddle | blacha/płyta do smażenia naleśników
skater | łyżwiarz
to spread the butter | rozsmarowywać masło
to embody sth | uosabiać coś
to tame the wild | okiełznać dzicz, opanować dzikie tereny

2

whopper | *tu: pot.* coś niespotykanie dużego
extraordinaire | nadzwyczajny, niezwykły
raised by sb/sth | wychowany przez kogoś/coś
wrangler | kowboj, jeździec
to credit sb with sth | przypisywać coś komuś
to invent sth | wynaleźć coś
roping | łapanie na lasso
to dig sth with one's bare hands | kopać coś gołymi rękami
to lasso a thunderstorm | złapać burzę na lasso
to shape sth | kształtować, formować coś

3

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to be so wild that no one but Bill could ride him without getting bucked off.

Pecos Bill's stories are full of humour and excitement, showing the untamed and adventurous side of the American frontier. While fictional, his exploits certainly make for some wild campfire stories.

John Henry: The Steel-Driving Man

John Henry's tale is rooted in strength and perseverance. An African-American railway worker known for his hammering skills, John challenged a steam-powered drill to a contest to prove that a man could outperform the machine. With his trusty hammer in hand, he won the race but tragically died from exhaustion. While a historical John Henry did exist, much of this story is likely fabricated.

John Henry's story also speaks to deeper issues of its time, like industrialisation, the belief in human grit, and the struggle for workers' rights. It's a reminder that progress often comes at a cost. Songs and poems about him have been passed down for generations, turning him into a symbol of determination.

Johnny Appleseed: The Orchard Pioneer

The tale of Johnny Appleseed is also based on a real person: John Chapman. He spent his life planting apple trees across

Pecos Bill

the Midwest, encouraging settlers to grow orchards and live sustainably.

Many of his trees were planted along trails where settlers would one day build towns. These orchards provided food and cider, making them a lifeline for early communities. Today, Johnny's legacy is celebrated in festivals, with some towns even claiming his original trees still stand.

Johnny wasn't larger-than-life in the traditional sense. His humble, nature-loving spirit captured the imagination of many *salt-of-the-earth* Americans in the 1800s. With his tin pot hat and bare feet, Johnny represents kindness, generosity and a love for the land.

Why Do These Stories Matter?

Tall tales might sound like pure fun (and they are), but they also reveal how Americans of the past viewed themselves and their world. These stories are packed with lessons about courage, creativity and the power of hard work. They also show how myths can grow from everyday life, turning ordinary struggles into extraordinary adventures.

Additionally, tall tales serve as a cultural mirror. They reflect the dreams, fears and ambitions of the people who told them, providing valuable insight into America's history and identity. So, next time you hear about a man carving rivers or racing machines, you'll know you're diving into the world of American tall tales – where anything is possible.

Vocab Builder

The term *tall tale* can be used to describe any story that's hard to believe. Here are similar expressions worth knowing:

- **Fish story:** an exaggerated story
- **Cock and bull story:** an unbelievable story used as an excuse
- **To spin a yarn:** to tell a far-fetched story
- **To stretch the truth:** to say something that isn't completely honest
- **To embellish:** to make a story more interesting by adding exciting, often untrue, elements

far-fetched | naciągany, przesadny

4 without getting bucked off | bez zrzucenia przez konia
untamed | nieokiełznany, dziki
frontier | granica
exploits | wyczyny, dokonania
campfire stories | historie opowiadane przy ognisku
rooted in sth | zakorzeniony w czymś, mający swoje korzenie w czymś
strength | siła
perseverance | wytrwałość, nieustępliwość
railway worker | robotnik kolejowy
hammering skills | umiejętności wbijania/kucia (młotem)
to challenge sth to a contest | wyzwać coś na pojedynek
steam-powered drill | wiertarka parowa, wiertło napędzane parą
to prove that | udowodnić, że
to outperform sth | przewyższać coś wydajnością, osiągać lepsze wyniki niż coś
trusty | niezawodny, wierny
to die from exhaustion | umrzeć z wycieńczenia/wyczerpania
fabricated | sfabrykowany, zmyślony
human grit | ludzka odwaga/hart ducha, niezłomność
struggle for workers' rights | walka o prawa pracownicze
to come at a cost | mieć swoją cenę

orchard | sad
5 to encourage sb to do sth | zachęcać kogoś do zrobienia czegoś
settler | osadnik
to live sustainably | żyć w sposób zrównoważony/ekologiczny
trails | szlaki, ścieżki
to provide sth | zapewniać coś, dostarczać czegoś
cider | cydr
legacy | dziedzictwo, spuścizna
humble | skromny, pokorny
6 to capture the imagination of sb | porwać/rozpalić wyobraźnię kogoś
salt-of-the-earth | prosty, uczciwy, dobry człowiek, *dosł.* sól ziemi
tin pot hat | kapelusz z cynowego garnka
generosity | hojność, szczodrość
to reveal sth | ujawniać coś
courage | odwaga, męstwo
to turn sth into sth | zamieniać, przekształcać coś w coś
ordinary | zwyczajny, przeciętny, pospolity
to reflect sth | odzwierciedlać coś
valuable | wartościowy, cenny
insight into sth | wgląd w coś
identity | tożsamość
to carve sth | *tu:* wyżłobić coś
to race sth | *tu:* ścigać się z czymś, konkurować z czymś

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Polish Taxes Explained

by Agnieszka Fortuna

Benjamin Franklin famously observed that "nothing can be said to be certain, except death and taxes", but mention taxes at a dinner table, and the mood usually sinks faster than a stone in a pond. Taxation is at the heart of how any country works, and Poland is no exception. Without taxes, schools would close, hospitals would falter, and roads would crumble – though some might say that's exactly where we are now.

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tax | podatek
except X | z wyjątkiem X, oprócz X
to mention sth | wspomnieć o czymś
to sink faster than a stone in a pond | szybko upadać, gasnąć, *dosł.* tonąć szybciej niż kamień w stawie
taxation | system podatkowy, opodatkowanie
without X | bez X
to falter | zachwiać się, załamać się
to crumble | rozsypać się, upadać

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Poland's tax system mirrors European norms in its use of VAT, progressive income tax and corporate levies, but remains distinctive for its heavy reliance on consumption taxes, generous family allowances, and simplified schemes for small businesses. Let's take a closer look at the main types of taxes that Poles encounter, and what they mean in practice.

Personal Income Tax

Personal income tax (PIT) is the most visible tax for ordinary citizens. It is progressive: the more you earn, the higher the rate. Currently, annual income up to 120,000 PLN is taxed at 12%, while any amount above that moves into the 32% bracket. There is a tax-free allowance of 30,000 PLN.

Employers deduct PIT from salaries automatically, so most employees never see the money before it goes to the state. Once a year, however, everyone files a tax return, which may result in either a refund, if too much was withheld, or an additional payment if the advance instalments fell short. Since 2019, most taxpayers can use the government's e-PIT system, which automatically prepares an online return that only needs to be checked and confirmed, with the filing deadline falling on 30th April each year.

Corporate Income Tax

Companies pay corporate income tax (CIT). The standard rate is 19%, but smaller firms and start-ups with revenues below 2 million euros may qualify for a reduced 9% rate. This distinction is intended to encourage entrepreneurship, while ensuring that larger, more profitable businesses contribute proportionately. CIT is usually calculated on annual profits and must be settled by the end of March of the following year, although companies pay advance instalments throughout the year. The Polish tax authorities have tightened their grip on corporate tax planning in recent years, making it harder for firms to shift profits abroad or exploit loopholes. Returns can be filed electronically, which is now the standard procedure.

Value Added Tax

Value added tax (VAT) is included in the price of almost everything you buy. The standard rate is 23%, though some items, such as food, books and medicines, enjoy reduced rates of 8% or even 5%. For ordinary shoppers, VAT is invisible: you simply pay it at the till without giving it much thought. For businesses, however, VAT brings extra work. They must keep track of the VAT they collect from customers and the VAT they pay on their own purchases, and then file a return to settle the difference. Since 2018, all this has been done electronically through the JPK_VAT system, which gives the tax office a very close look at company transactions. Deadlines are strict: VAT returns and payments are normally due by the 25th of the month following the settlement period.

Excise Duty

Excise duty is an extra tax placed on specific products such as fuel, alcohol, tobacco and electricity. The idea is twofold: to raise money for the state, and to make certain goods less attractive to buy, either because they are harmful (like

1 to mirror sth | odzwierciedlać coś
progressive income tax | progresywny podatek dochodowy
corporate levies | podatki od osób prawnych (od przedsiębiorstw, korporacji)
to remain distinctive | pozostać charakterystycznym, wyróżniać się
reliance on sth | poleganie na czymś, zależność od czegoś
family allowance | zasiłek rodzinny
to encounter sth | napotkać coś, zetknąć się z czymś
Personal Income Tax | podatek dochodowy od osób fizycznych (PIT)
visible | widoczny, dostrzegalny
ordinary | zwykły, przeciętny
citizen | obywatel
to earn | zarabiać
currently | obecnie, aktualnie
annual | roczny
income | dochód
tax-free allowance of X | kwota wolna od podatku w wysokości X
employer | pracodawca
to deduct sth from sth | odliczać/potrącać coś od czegoś
employee | pracownik
either... or... | albo... albo...
withheld | *tu:* potrącony
advance instalments | zaliczki (na podatek)
to fall short | nie wystarczyć, okazać się niewystarczającym
filing deadline | ostateczny termin złożenia (deklaracji), termin rozliczenia
Corporate Income Tax | podatek dochodowy od osób prawnych (CIT)
revenues | przychody
to encourage sth | zachęcać do czegoś, wspierać coś
entrepreneurship | przedsiębiorczość

to contribute to sth | wnieść wkład, przyczyniać się do czegoś
annual | roczny
settled | *tu:* uregulowany, rozliczony
although | chociaż, aczkolwiek
tax authorities | organy podatkowe, władze skarbowe
to tighten one's grip on sth | zacieśniać kontrolę nad czymś, wzmacniać nadzór nad czymś
to shift profits abroad | przenosić zyski za granicę
loophole | luka (prawna, podatkowa)
return | *tu:* zeznanie podatkowe
to be filed electronically | być składanym elektronicznie
2 Value Added Tax | podatek od towarów i usług (VAT)
included in sth | zawarty w czymś, wliczony w coś
though | chociaż, jednakże
item | *tu:* przedmiot, artykuł
at the till | przy kasie
however | jednak
to keep track of sth | śledzić, monitorować, kontrolować coś
to collect sth from sb | pobierać coś od kogoś (np. podatek od klienta)
purchase | zakup, nabycie
to file a return | składać deklarację (podatkową)
to settle the difference | wyrównać różnicę (dopłacić lub otrzymać zwrot)
3 due by X | wymagalny do X, płatny do X
following the settlement period | po okresie rozliczeniowym
excise duty | akcyza, podatek akcyzowy
fuel | paliwo
twofold | *tu:* dwuaspektowy
to raise money for sb/sth | zbierać/pozyskiwać pieniądze dla kogoś/czegoś
the state | państwo
harmful | szkodliwy

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cigarettes) or polluting (like petrol). For consumers, this tax is easy to spot: it is the reason why a packet of cigarettes or a litre of petrol costs much more than its raw production price. For businesses that sell these goods, excise duty means detailed record-keeping and regular payments to the tax office, usually each month. Like VAT, excise is reported electronically, and deadlines are strict – missing them can lead to heavy penalties. In practice, excise duty is one of the state's most reliable sources of income, though it remains unpopular with those who feel they are being punished for everyday habits.

Property and Local Taxes

Local governments in Poland collect property tax on land, buildings, and certain constructions. The amount depends on the size, use and location of the property. For homeowners, this

4 polluting | zanieczyszczający
to spot sth | zauważyć, dostrzec coś
raw | surowy, *tu:* podstawowy
detailed | szczegółowy
record-keeping | ewidencjonowanie, prowadzenie dokumentacji/rejestrów
to lead to sth | prowadzić do czegoś, skutkować czymś
heavy | *tu:* wysoki, surowy
penalty | kara
reliable | *tu:* niezawodny, pewny
sources of income | źródła dochodu
to be punished for sth | być ukaranym za coś
property taxes | podatki od nieruchomości
local taxes | podatki lokalne
amount | kwota, wysokość
to depend on sth | zależeć od czegoś

4

Did You Know?

1. Ancient Mesopotamia (around 2500 BC)
The earliest known written records of taxation come from Mesopotamia, where people paid taxes in kind (grain, livestock, or labour).

2. Polish feudal system
In medieval and early modern Poland, peasants paid taxes mostly in kind, known as danina. This could take the form of grain, livestock, honey, or compulsory labour (pańszczyzna). From the 15th century, however, the nobility (szlachta) secured near-total exemption from state taxes under the so-called "Golden Liberty," leaving the burden to fall squarely on peasants and townsfolk. As the old saying had it: "The peasant pays, the noble plays."

3. Tax evasion
In the mid-2010s, Poland was losing an estimated 40 billion PLN a year to VAT fraud – one of the highest losses in the EU at the time. Criminal groups ran the so-called "VAT carousels", setting up phantom companies to shuffle goods (often fuel or electronics) across borders on paper, reclaim VAT refunds, and then vanish. The problem became so serious that Poland introduced some of Europe's strictest anti-fraud tools, such as the split-payment system and the mandatory electronic JPK_VAT files, which sharply reduced the losses.

ancient | starożytny
grain | zboże
livestock | żywy inwentarz
labour | praca fizyczna, robocizna
medieval | średniowieczny
peasant | chłop, wieśniak
compulsory | obowiązkowy
to fall on sb | spadać na kogoś, spoczywać na kimś (o obowiązku)
squarely | bezpośrednio, w pełni, całkowicie
townsfolk | mieszkańcy miast
saying | powiedzenie, przysłowie
tax evasion | uchylanie się od płacenia podatków, oszustwo podatkowe
loss | strata
to set up sth | zakładać, tworzyć coś
to shuffle goods | przerzucać towary
to reclaim VAT refunds | odzyskiwać zwroty VAT
to vanish | znikać, ulatniać się
split-payment system | mechanizm podzielonej płatności
mandatory | obowiązkowy, nakazany

LANGUAGE POINT

avoid taxes/tax avoidance
- using legal methods to reduce how much tax you owe, e.g.: choosing Poland's flat-rate lump-sum system if it reduces your bill

evade taxes/tax evasion
- illegally trying not to pay taxes that you should pay, e.g.: by issuing fake invoices

So, as an accountant's joke sums it up:
"The difference between tax avoidance and tax evasion is about ten years in prison."

flat-rate | jednolita stawka, stała stawka, ryczałt
lump-sum | kwota ryczałtowa, jednorazowa suma
to issue an invoice | wystawić fakturę

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usually means a modest annual bill – not nearly as high as in many Western European countries. Businesses, however, often pay much more, especially if they own large commercial buildings or plots of land. These local taxes are paid directly to the municipality, usually once a year or in instalments spread across the year. Although the sums may seem small compared with income tax or VAT, they are a crucial source of funding for local services such as schools, roads and public transport.

Inheritance and Gift Tax

Poland also charges tax on inherited property or large gifts, though the rules depend heavily on the relationship between the giver and the recipient. Close family members, such as spouses, children, or parents, usually benefit from full exemptions, provided they report the transfer to the tax office within six months. For more distant relatives, or for people who are not related at all, the rates range from 3% to 20%, depending on the value of what is received. In practice, this means that inheriting a flat from a parent may cost nothing in tax, but inheriting the same flat from an unrelated friend could generate a significant bill. The system is designed to limit untaxed wealth transfers, but for many people it feels like an unwelcome burden.

Customs Duties

Although Poland is part of the European Union and enjoys free trade within the single market, customs duties still apply to goods imported from outside the EU. These charges are meant to protect European producers and ensure that imports meet common standards. For ordinary consumers, customs duty often comes into play when ordering products online from Asia or North America. What looks like a bargain at checkout can suddenly become much more expensive once duty, VAT, and handling fees are added at the border. Businesses importing goods must declare them to the customs office, pay the relevant duties and provide detailed documentation.

In the end, whatever the rate or the form, the tax office always wins. You can delay, appeal, or sigh at the deadline, but sooner or later, you pay. And if you ever forget that, don't worry – the Tax Office will be in touch to remind you.

5 **annual** | roczny
bill | rachunek
to own sth | posiadać coś
commercial | komercyjny, handlowy
plots of land | działki gruntu
municipality | gmina, samorząd miejski/gminny
spread across X | rozłożony na X
to seem | wydawać się
compared with sth | w porównaniu z czymś
crucial | kluczowy, istotny, decydujący
inheritance and gift tax | podatek od spadków i darowizn
to charge tax on sth | naliczać podatek od czegoś, opodatkować coś
heavily | *tu:* w dużym stopniu
giver | darczyńca
recipient | obdarowany, odbiorca
full exemption | pełne zwolnienie (z podatku)
provided X | pod warunkiem że X, o ile X
distant relatives | dalecy krewni, dalsza rodzina

5

to be not related at all | nie być w ogóle spokrewnionym
to range from X% to Y% | wahać się od X% do Y%, wynosić od X% do Y%
to inherit sth | odziedziczyć coś
6 **untaxed** | nieopodatkowany
burden | ciężar, obciążenie
customs duties | cło, opłaty celne
to apply to sth | dotyczyć czegoś, mieć zastosowanie do czegoś
to ensure | zapewnić, zagwarantować
to come into play | wchodzić do gry, wchodzić w życie (o przepisach)
to order sth | zamawiać coś
bargain | okazja, świetny interes
at checkout | przy kasie (w sklepie fizycznym lub internetowym, w momencie finalizacji zakupu)
handling fees | opłaty manipulacyjne
at the border | na granicy
customs office | urząd celny
to appeal | odwoływać się, apelować
to sigh | wzdychać
tax office | urząd skarbowy

6

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WARTO ZAPAMIĘTAĆ!

flashbacks

retrospekcje, przebłyski wspomnień

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD): The Facts

by Paul Martin

Trauma doesn't always end when danger passes. For people living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), their trauma can feel as real today as when it first happened. Paul Martin explores how our understanding of this prolonged suffering has developed.

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder | zespół stresu pourazowego
to pass | prze/mijać

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Aftermath

Imagine your mind replaying a terrifying moment again and again, even when you're physically safe. For many people, this is the reality of living with Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), a mental health condition that can develop in the aftermath of experiencing or witnessing a deeply upsetting event, such as a violent attack, serious accident or natural disaster.

People with PTSD often experience flashbacks, where they feel like they're reliving their traumatic event. Nightmares are also common, along with feelings of fear, guilt, or anger that seem hard to control. Many sufferers avoid places, people, or activities that remind them of what happened. Others feel constantly on edge, always ready for danger even when no threat exists.

Disorder of Memory

According to the American Psychiatric Association, PTSD affects approximately 3.5 percent of US adults each year, and an estimated one in eleven people will be diagnosed with the condition during their lifetime.

It is vitally important to emphasise that PTSD is not a sign of personal or moral weakness, and that although the condition is often misconstrued as a manifestation of extreme fear or anxiety, it can, at its core, be best considered as more a "disorder of memory". In his New York Times bestselling book The Body Keeps the Score, leading trauma researcher Dr Bessel van der Kolk explains how traumatic experiences "imprint" themselves on our brains and our memories, altering our neurochemistry and brain function, and triggering a prolonged stress response throughout the body.

PTSD alters patients' daily patterns of living, with those affected often continuing to behave as if the trauma were still occurring or on the cusp of doing so. This leads sufferers to perceive exciting new experiences through the lingering lens of past painful events, and encourages what are known as avoidant behaviours, whereby people deliberately steer clear of others, places, activities, thoughts or emotions that serve as reminders of their trauma.

1

This can involve avoiding conversations or staying away from locations or situations that trigger distressing memories, or suppressing emotions and thoughts related to the experience. Avoidance can also manifest as addiction or substance abuse. While avoidance may provide temporary relief from associated

1 **aftermath** | następstwa, skutki
to replay sth again and again | odgrywać/odtwarzać coś w kółko
in the aftermath of sth | w następstwie czegoś, w rezultacie czegoś
to witness sth | być świadkiem czegoś
upsetting | przykry, denerwujący
natural disaster | katastrofa naturalna
to experience sth | doświadczać czegoś, przeżywać coś
flashbacks | retrospekcje, przebłyski wspomnień
to relive sth | przeżywać coś na nowo
nightmare | koszmar
with feelings of fear/guilt/anger | z uczuciami strachu/winy/złości
to seem | wydawać się
to avoid sb/sth | unikać kogoś/czegoś
to feel constantly on edge | czuć się ciągle podenerwowanym, być ciągle spiętym
threat | zagrożenie
disorder of memory | zaburzenie pamięci
according to X | według X, zgodnie z X
to affect sb | dotykać kogoś, oddziaływać na kogoś
approximately | około, w przybliżeniu
adult | dorosły
to emphasise sth | podkreślać coś, kłaść nacisk na coś
weakness | słabość
although | chociaż
misconstrued | błędnie zinterpretowany, źle zrozumiany
extreme fear/anxiety | skrajny strach/lęk
at its core | w swej istocie, u podłoża
to be best considered as more a X | najlepiej rozpatrywać jako bardziej X
trauma researcher | badacz traumy
to imprint themselves on sth | odciskać się na czymś, trwale zapisywać się na czymś
to alter sth | zmieniać, modyfikować coś
to trigger sth | wywoływać, uruchamiać coś
prolonged stress response | przedłużona reakcja na stres
throughout the body | w całym ciele, w całym organizmie
daily | codzienny
pattern of living | styl życia, wzorzec życia
to be still occurring | nadal występować, wciąż się pojawiać

2

to be on the cusp of doing so | być u progu zrobienia czegoś, być blisko zrobienia czegoś
to perceive sth through the lingering lens of sth | postrzegać coś przez utrzymujący się pryzmat czegoś
painful | bolesny
to encourage sth | zachęcać do czegoś, sprzyjać czemuś
avoidant | unikowy
deliberately | celowo, umyślnie
to steer clear of sth | trzymać się z daleka od czegoś, unikać czegoś
2 **to involve sth** | wiązać się z czymś
to avoid sth | unikać czegoś
to stay away from sth | trzymać się z dala od czegoś
distressing | przygnębiający, niepokojący, wywołujący cierpienie
to suppress sth | tłumić, powstrzymywać coś
avoidance | unikanie
addiction | uzależnienie
substance abuse | nadużywanie substancji (psychoaktywnych)
to provide sth | zapewniać, dostarczać coś
temporary | tymczasowy
relief | ulga

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anxiety, discomfort or dysfunction, over time it can reinforce the sense that these reminders are dangerous, which hinders emotional processing, worsens PTSD symptoms, and can even make it more likely that sufferers inflict new trauma on others.

Shell Shock

The path to understanding and defining Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) has been a long one. During World War I, soldiers exhibiting symptoms like tremors, nightmares and confusion were often diagnosed with "shell shock," initially believed to result from physical damage caused by nearby exploding shells. However, as the war progressed, it became increasingly evident that even service members stationed far from explosions displayed similar symptoms, highlighting, for the first time, the profound role of psychological trauma.

Despite this emerging understanding, many military authorities continued to view such symptoms as signs of weakness or cowardice, although some medical professionals began to advocate for more compassionate treatment. It wasn't until after the Vietnam War that the psychological toll of combat gained broader recognition, leading to the first formal inclusion of PTSD in the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-III) in 1980.

Complexity

While PTSD is often linked to military service, it affects anyone who has endured significant trauma – be it from accidents, disasters or various forms of abuse. This broad spectrum of experiences contributes to the condition's complexity and the challenges in its diagnosis.

PTSD manifests in several forms:

Acute Stress Disorder (ASD) emerges shortly after trauma, with symptoms lasting up to a month. Early intervention can prevent its progression to PTSD.

Uncomplicated PTSD involves persistent re-experiencing of trauma, avoidance behaviours, and heightened arousal, without additional mental health complications.

Complex PTSD (C-PTSD) results from prolonged trauma, often during formative years, leading to difficulties in emotional regulation, self-perception and relationships. Diagnosing C-PTSD is particularly challenging, as individual traumatising incidents may not seem severe in isolation.

Dissociative PTSD includes symptoms like depersonalisation and derealisation, where individuals feel detached from themselves or their surroundings. This subtype is more common in those who experienced early-life trauma with limited control over their circumstances.

3 over time | z czasem, z biegiem czasu
to reinforce sth | wzmacniać, utrwalać coś
to hinder sth | utrudniać coś, przeszkadzać w czymś
to worsen sth | pogarszać coś
to inflict sth on sb | zadawać coś komuś, wymierzać coś komuś (np. ból, krzywdę)
shell shock | nerwica frontowa, szok powojenny (historyczna nazwa PTSD, zwłaszcza z czasów I wojny światowej)
to exhibit sth | okazywać, przejawiać coś
4 tremors | drżenia, drgawki
initially | początkowo
to result from sth | wynikać z czegoś, być rezultatem czegoś
physical damage | obrażenia fizyczne
shell | *tu:* pocisk artyleryjski, nabój
to progress | postępować, rozwijać się
increasingly | coraz bardziej, w coraz większym stopniu
stationed | stacjonujący, rozlokowany
to display sth | okazywać, prezentować coś
to highlight sth | podkreślać, uwydatniać coś
profound | dogłębny, głęboki
despite sth | pomimo czegoś
emerging | wyłaniający się, pojawiający się

cowardice | tchórzostwo
to advocate for sth | opowiadać się za czymś, popierać coś
compassionate | współczujący
toll | *tu:* psychologiczny koszt
combat | walka, bitwa, działania wojenne
to gain broader recognition | zyskać szersze uznanie
inclusion of sth in sth | włączenie czegoś do czegoś, uwzględnienie czegoś w czymś
military service | służba wojskowa
to endure sth | znosić, wytrzymywać coś
significant | znaczący, istotny, ważny
abuse | znęcanie się, nadużycie
to contribute to sth | przyczyniać się do czegoś, wnosić wkład w coś
Acute Stress Disorder | ostre zaburzenie stresowe
to prevent sth | zapobiegać czemuś
to involve sth | wiązać się z czymś
persistent | uporczywy, utrzymujący się
heightened | wzmożony, podwyższony
arousal | pobudzenie (np. psychiczne, fizjologiczne)
formative years | lata, w których kształtuje się osobowość
self-perception | samoocena, percepcja własnej osoby
severe | ciężki, poważny
in isolation | *tu:* w oderwaniu od całości
dissociative | dysocjacyjny, związany z odłączeniem/oddzieleniem od rzeczywistości
depersonalisation | depersonalizacja (uczucie bycia odłączonym od własnego ciała/umysłu)
derealization | derealizacja (uczucie, że świat wokół jest nierealny)
to feel detached from oneself | czuć się odłączonym od siebie, czuć się obco wobec siebie
circumstances | okoliczności

3

4

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Treatment Options

Such varied presentations often complicate diagnosis, and because symptoms like anxiety, depression, and irritability overlap with other mental health conditions, clinicians can sometimes misattribute them. Research indicates that PTSD is frequently underdiagnosed in primary care settings, with only 2–11 percent of patients having the diagnosis noted in their medical records. A British Channel 4 documentary revealed that approximately 70 percent of PTSD cases among young people in England and Wales remain untreated.

Where a diagnosis has been made and treatment provided, the journey to recovery is deeply personal. While there's no universal remedy, several evidence-based treatments have proven effective in helping individuals manage and alleviate symptoms.

Trauma-focused psychotherapies are often the first line of treatment. These include Cognitive Processing Therapy (CPT), which helps individuals reframe negative thoughts about their trauma; Prolonged Exposure Therapy (PE), which encourages gradual confrontation of trauma-related memories; and Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing (EMDR), which uses guided eye movements to process traumatic memories. These therapies aim to reduce the emotional intensity of traumatic experiences, reshape unhelpful beliefs, and support long-term healing.

Medications can also play a role, particularly when combined with therapy. Selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) are commonly prescribed to manage symptoms such as anxiety and depression associated with PTSD.

Emerging treatments are also being explored in PTSD care. In Australia, for instance, the Department of Veterans Affairs has begun funding MDMA-assisted psychotherapy for veterans with treatment-resistant PTSD. This approach combines controlled doses of MDMA, best known as an illegal party drug, with psychotherapy sessions, aiming to enhance emotional engagement and processing of traumatic memories.

Another innovative therapy is called Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS); a non-invasive procedure that uses magnetic fields to stimulate nerve cells in the brain. TMS has shown promise in alleviating PTSD symptoms by targeting areas of the brain involved in mood regulation.

Empowerment

If this article has resonated with you – whether as someone navigating the challenges of PTSD, supporting a loved one or simply seeking to understand – know that healing is possible and you are not alone.

Trauma may leave lasting imprints, but it does not define your worth or potential. As Dr Bessel van der Kolk emphasises, reconnecting with your body and emotions is a vital step toward recovery. Engaging in therapies that foster self-awareness and emotional self-regulation can empower you to reclaim control over your life. Reasserting control is possible.

Remember, too, that seeking help is a sign of strength. Actress Gabrielle Union, a PTSD survivor, shares this empowering message: "Asking for help, needing help, doesn't make you weak or less worthy of love or support or success. You can literally be anything you want to be."

Healing is not a linear journey, and it's okay to have setbacks. Be patient and compassionate with yourself or your loved one. As one affirmation from The Wellness Society reminds us: "You are allowed to struggle. You are not alone. What happened does not define you." We all deserve peace, joy and a life unshackled from the burdens of our past.

5 irritability | drażliwość, irytacja
to overlap with sth | pokrywać się z czymś, mieć coś wspólnego z czymś
to misattribute sth | błędnie przypisać coś, mylnie uznać coś za przyczynę
to indicate that | wskazywać, że
primary care settings | placówki podstawowej opieki zdrowotnej, gabinety lekarzy pierwszego kontaktu
to reveal that | ujawniać, że
to remain untreated | pozostać nieleczonym, nie być leczonym
recovery | powrót do zdrowia
evidence-based | udowodniony naukowo
to alleviate sth | łagodzić coś
to reframe sth | przeformułować coś, nadać czemuś nowe ramy/znaczenie
gradual | stopniowy
Eye Movement Desensitisation and Reprocessing | terapia odwrażliwiania za pomocą ruchu gałek ocznych
guided eye movements | kierowane ruchy gałek ocznych
to process sth | przetwarzać coś
to aim to do sth | mieć na celu zrobienie czegoś, dążyć do zrobienia czegoś
to reshape sth | przekształcać coś, nadawać czemuś nowy kształt
long-term | długoterminowy, długofalowy
healing | leczenie
serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SRI) | inhibitory wychwytu zwrotnego serotoniny (SRI) (grupa leków przeciwdepresyjnych)
prescribed | przepisany
MDMA-assisted | wspomagany MDMA

5

treatment-resistant | oporny na leczenie
approach | podejście
illegal | nielegalny
to enhance sth | wzmacniać, poprawiać, ulepszać coś
Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation | przezczaszkowa stymulacja magnetyczna
6 involved in sth | zaangażowany w coś, biorący udział w czymś
empowerment | wzmacnianie, upodmiotowienie, nadawanie sprawczości
to seek to do sth | dążyć do zrobienia czegoś, starać się coś zrobić
imprints | odciski, ślady, *tu:* trwałe piętno psychologiczne
worth | wartość
to reconnect sth with sth | ponownie łączyć coś z czymś, przywracać połączenie między czymś a czymś
7 to foster sth | wspierać, pielęgnować coś, sprzyjać rozwojowi czegoś
self-awareness | samoświadomość
to empower sb | wzmacniać kogoś
to reclaim control over one's life | odzyskać kontrolę nad własnym życiem
to reassert sth | wzmocnić coś
literally | dosłownie
setbacks | przeszkody, trudności
to be allowed to do sth | mieć pozwolenie na zrobienie czegoś, móc coś zrobić
to struggle | zmagać się, borykać się (z czymś)
unshackled from sth | wyzwolony z czegoś, uwolniony od czegoś

6

7

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PTSD in Poland: The Hidden National Crisis

Recent findings from Research in Poland and PLOS One suggest that Poland is facing an unprecedented public-health emergency around Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Nationally representative data indicates a probable PTSD prevalence of 18.8–19 percent among adults, a staggering figure, nearly five times the global average of about 3.9 percent and far above comparable Western European levels.

This striking figure has many roots - it may be related to World War II, forced displacement, and the suppression of grief and distress under Communist rule (if we analyse it from the historical point of view), but also much more commonly occurring (and terrible) causes such as different kinds of violence in relations between people as the result of severe psychological disorders (see the article in EM 115 about the dark triad); accidents and deaths in families, abortion, social exclusion and human indifference to other human beings. Note that these causes may also be related to technology and being too deeply immersed in it, which translates into the quality of people's lives and the state of their brains.

Today, the crisis is compounded by severe systemic under-investment. The Polish National Health Fund (NFZ) allocates only 3.7 percent of its budget to mental health, leaving just nine psychiatrists per 100,000 citizens and long waiting lists. Persistent stigma means that roughly 60 percent of those needing help never seek it, perpetuating a cultural cycle of silence.

Addressing this requires a comprehensive national strategy, one that acknowledges historical trauma, expands clinical capacity, and works to normalise open conversations about psychological suffering.

To sum up, please note that it is very important to recognise and treat PTSD as it can lead to very serious life-threatening situations, such as heart attacks. Even though the state does not offer much help in recognising and treating PTSD, and if you feel that the content of this article may to some degree apply to you and your situation, do not hesitate to look for help – either in private institutions dedicated to psychological health (in this case, you obviously need to have enough financial means) or, if you can't afford that, you can look for charitable foundations that can support you for free.

hidden | ukryty, schowany
to face sth | zmierzyć się z czymś, stawiać czoło czemuś
unprecedented | bezprecedensowy, niespotykany
to indicate sth | wskazywać, sygnalizować coś
prevalence | rozpowszechnienie, przewaga, częstość występowania
staggering figure | oszałamiająca/wstrząsająca liczba/wielkość
comparable | porównywalny
roots | korzenie
related to sth | związany z czymś
forced displacement | przymusowe przesiedlenie
suppression of grief and distress | tłumienie żalu i cierpienia/niepokoju
severe | poważny, ciężki
psychological disorder | zaburzenie psychiczne
social exclusion | wykluczenie społeczne
compounded by sth | spotęgowany przez coś, pogarszany przez coś
under-investment | niedoinwestowanie
to allocate sth to sth | przeznaczać coś na coś
persistent | uporczywy, trwały, ciągły
stigma | piętno, stygmat
roughly | z grubsza, mniej więcej, w przybliżeniu
to seek sth | poszukiwać czegoś
to perpetuate sth | *tu:* utrwalać coś
to require sth | wymagać czegoś
to acknowledge sth | uznawać coś, przyznawać (się) do czegoś
to expand sth | rozszerzać, zwiększać coś
clinical capacity | zdolność kliniczna (np. liczba miejsc/specjalistów w klinice)
to recognise sth | *tu:* rozpoznawać coś
to treat sth | *tu:* leczyć coś
to some degree | do pewnego stopnia
to apply to sb | dotyczyć kogoś, odnosić się do kogoś
either... or... | albo... albo...
to afford sth | pozwolić sobie na coś finansowo

If you are interested in how PTSD is shown in the movies, visit em.colorfulmedia.pl to download our movies mini-guide.

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Commonly Occurring e-mailing Mistakes

by Jonathan Moore

When writing a message in a foreign language, it is important to avoid mixing informal and formal styles of writing. Other key issues are spelling, word order, the use of articles (a/the) and apostrophes. Obviously, the process of acquiring this knowledge is an extremely steep learning curve for most non-natives.

Here is a short imaginary informal e-mail from a Frenchwoman called Maxime to her female colleagues in a multinational corporation. At first sight, it may look correct to most non-native speakers. Native speakers, on the other hand, are likely to notice a number of glaring errors.

Hi girls,
I'm organising a women meeting on Saturday evening to combat afwul loneliness related to remote working. Are you keen on gathering tomorrow at my place at 7 p.m.?
I'll buy make some salads and some hot stuff as well (salmon, chicken? Any suggestions?). If you wish to eat something else, please bring it along. Please confirm if you're going to come.

Cheers!
Maxime

0 to avoid sth | unikać czegoś
obviously | oczywiście
to acquire sth | nabywać coś
steep | stromy
learning curve | krzywa uczenia się, wyzwanie
1 at first sight | na pierwszy rzut oka
on the other hand | z drugiej strony
glaring | rażący

1

2

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Certainly, Maxime has made a gallant effort but she hasn't necessarily chosen the right style of writing in every case. Indeed, in the critical eye of a native speaker, there are as many as five errors in the first line alone. First of all, she really should have added 's to the word *women* to make it clear that she was talking about a meeting for women only (*a women's meeting*). Secondly, the word *awful* has been misspelt *afwul*. Thirdly, words like *combat* and *related to* sound a trifle too formal for such an informal message. The former should perhaps be replaced with a phrasal verb like *take away*, while the latter can simply be replaced by *of*. Plus, the definite article *the* should be inserted in front of the word *awful*, as Maxime is talking about the result of a particular situation or phenomenon. Therefore, the correct version of the subsidiary clause reads: *to take away the awful loneliness of remote working*.

In the second line, the phrase *are you keen on gathering* sounds odd. To be keen on something means to really like something, while gathering sounds too formal or archaic in this context. The former should be replaced by *do you feel like*, while the latter should be substituted by *meeting* or, better still, *meeting up*. The particle *up* adds to the informality of the sentence. Additionally, p.m. is rarely used in formal communication as it is obvious to most native English speakers that Maxime is talking about an evening hour in this case. However, to avert any confusion, she could have said *tomorrow night* (in informal English, the word evening is frequently replaced by night). Additionally, English speakers normally mention the place before the time. With this in mind, the corrected sentence would be: *Do you feel like meeting up at my place tomorrow night at 7?*

The third paragraph may confuse the reader with *buy* coming directly before *make*. Maxime should have just said *make* because it was obvious that she would have to buy the food before preparing any dishes with it. Furthermore, the verb *wish* sounds too formal in this context and should therefore be replaced by *want*. Similarly, in informal speech, native speakers of English tend to replace *eat* or *drink* with *have*. Moreover, Maxime is presumably writing to people she knows well, so *please* sounds overly polite and should be omitted. So, the fully proofread sentence is this: *If you want to have something else, bring it along*.

Finally, *please confirm* also sounds too formal. In informal speech, a native speaker would probably have said *let me know*. Technically, the use of the going to tense is permissible. However, because the message is about an almost definite plan for the immediate future, the present continuous may be a better proposition, giving the sentence: *Let me know if you're coming*.

3 certainly | z pewnością, na pewno
gallant | rycerski, mężny
indeed | w rzeczy samej
first of all | po pierwsze
to combat sth | zwalczyć coś
related to sth | związany, powiązany z czymś
a trifle | troszeczkę, odrobinę
the former | pierwszy z wymienionych
to be replaced with sth | zostać zastąpionym czymś
the latter | ten drugi, ten ostatni z wymienionych
phenomenon | zjawisko
therefore | dlatego
subsidiary clause | zdanie podrzędne
to sound odd | brzmieć dziwnie
to be substituted by sth | zostać zastąpionym czymś
p.m. = *łac.* post meridiem | po południu
to avert sth | zapobiec czemuś
to confuse sb with sth | zdezorientować kogoś czymś
furthermore | ponadto
presumably | prawdopodobnie
overly | przesadnie
omitted | pominięty
permissible | dozwolony

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Talking Your Way In: Language that Lands the Job

by Agnieszka Fortuna

Job interviews come in all shapes and sizes – from highly formal to surprisingly casual. The way you speak, listen and respond can completely change how you're perceived. These three sample interviews show what works well, what feels natural and what can go wrong. Notice how tone, politeness and attitude matter just as much as experience. Learning to adapt your language to each situation is key to making the right impression.

to land the job | dostać pracę, zdobyć posadę
job interview | rozmowa kwalifikacyjna
to come in all shapes and sizes | występować w różnych formach/rodzajach, być bardzo różnorodnym
perceived | postrzegany
politeness | uprzejmość, grzeczność
attitude | nastawienie, postawa
to matter | mieć znaczenie, liczyć się

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JOB POSITION: HEALTHCARE – NHS ADMINISTRATIVE ROLE

Interviewer: Good afternoon, Mr Lewis. Thank you for meeting with us. Have you had any experience working within the NHS?
Mr Lewis: Good afternoon. Not directly, but I've worked in patient services at a private clinic for the past three years, so I'm well acquainted with confidentiality protocols, record management and handling sensitive data.
Interviewer: Excellent. The role can be quite fast-paced. How do you handle pressure when several tasks compete for your attention?
Mr Lewis: I stay calm and organised. I prioritise, communicate clearly, and keep a polite, reassuring tone – patients pick up on stress, so professionalism is vital.
Interviewer: A sound approach. The post involves booking appointments and processing referrals. Are you confident using NHS systems like EMIS or SystmOne?
Mr Lewis: I haven't used them yet, but I'm a quick learner. I mastered new software in my previous role within a few days, so I'm confident I'd adapt easily.
Interviewer: That's reassuring. What do you value most in a workplace?
Mr Lewis: Teamwork, definitely. In healthcare, mutual support and good communication ensure patients receive the best care.
Interviewer: Absolutely – that's the kind of culture we foster here. Thank you, Mr Lewis.

healthcare | opieka zdrowotna, służba zdrowia
NHS Administrative Role | stanowisko administracyjne w NHS (National Health Service – brytyjska publiczna służba zdrowia)
within X | w ramach, w obrębie X
to be well acquainted with sth | być dobrze zaznajomionym z czymś, dobrze coś znać
confidentiality protocols | protokoły poufności, zasady zachowania tajemnicy
record management | zarządzanie dokumentacją/rejestracją
to handle sth | zajmować się czymś, obsługiwać coś
sensitive data | dane wrażliwe
fast-paced | szybki, dynamiczny, w szybkim tempie
to compete for one's attention | konkurować o czyjąś uwagę
to pick up on stress | wyczuwać stres, dostrzegać stres
vital | kluczowy, niezbędny
A sound approach. | Rozsądne podejście.
to involve sth | wiązać się z czymś, obejmować coś
to book sth | rezerwować, umawiać coś
appointment | wizyta, spotkanie
processing referrals | przetwarzanie skierowań
confident | pewny siebie, przekonany
to master sth | opanować coś, biegle posługiwać się czymś
previous | poprzedni, wcześniejszy
reassuring | uspokajający, dodający otuchy
definitely | zdecydowanie, na pewno
mutual | wzajemny
to ensure sth | zapewniać, gwarantować coś

Language Note:

Greetings and Small Talk
Interviewer:
- Thanks for coming in.
- Did you find us all right?
- Am I coming through all right? (online)
- Thank you for taking the time to meet with us.

Candidate
- Good morning, thank you for having me.
- Yes, thank you – your directions were very clear.
- I'm glad to be here.
- I really appreciate the opportunity to be interviewed for this position.

Introducing Yourself
Interviewer
- Could you walk me through your background?
- What attracted you to this role/our organisation?
- What made you apply for this position?

Candidate
- I've been working in *[e.g.: accounting] for* about [X] years.
- I started out as a [e.g.: support technician] and gradually moved into [e.g.: software development].
- What really interests me about this role is…
- I've always been drawn to organisations that value [e.g. teamwork]
- I'd say my main strengths are [e.g. attention to detail].

Did you find us all right? | Czy bez problemu do nas pan/pani trafił/a?
thank you for having me | dziękuję za zaproszenie na rozmowę
to appreciate sth | doceniać coś, być wdzięcznym za coś
Could you walk me through your background? | Czy mógłby mi pan/mogłaby mi pani opowiedzieć o swoim doświadczeniu/wykształceniu?
to apply for sth | aplikować o coś, ubiegać się o coś
accounting | księgowość, rachunkowość
gradually | stopniowo
to value sth | cenić coś
strength | mocna strona, siła

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JOB POSITION: CORPORATE / OFFICE JOB - MARKETING ASSISTANT

Interviewer: Morning, Emma. Thanks for coming in. Did you find us all right?
Jessie: Morning! Yes, thanks, the directions were spot on.
Interviewer: Brilliant. So, tell me a bit about yourself and what attracted you to this role.
Jessie: Well, I've been working in social media marketing for about two years now, mainly in a small agency. I love the creative side – content planning, brand voice – but I'm looking for a role where I can take on a bit more responsibility and learn from a bigger team.
Interviewer: Great. Could you give me an example of a campaign you're particularly proud of?
Jessie: Sure. I helped run a TikTok campaign for a local restaurant chain. It went viral – over 200,000 views – and foot traffic went up by about 30 percent that week.
Interviewer: Impressive! How do you handle tight deadlines?
Jessie: Honestly, I thrive on them. I tend to plan ahead and communicate early if something's going to slip – no last-minute surprises.
Interviewer: Good to hear. Any questions for us?
Jessie: Yes, actually – how big is the team I'd be joining, and is there much collaboration with the design department?
Interviewer: There is – you'd work closely with our two in-house designers.

to be spot on | trafić w sedno, być w punkt, być bardzo dobrym
brand voice | głos marki, styl komunikacji marki
to look for sth | szukać czegoś
to go viral | rozprzestrzenić się w Internecie, stać się hitem
foot traffic | liczba klientów/osób odwiedzających fizyczną lokalizację
to thrive on sth | rozwijać się, rozkwitać dzięki czemuś
to slip | *tu:* przeoczyć, umknąć
actually | właściwie, faktycznie, tak naprawdę
to join sth | dołączyć do czegoś
in-house designer | wewnętrzny projektant (zatrudniony na stałe w firmie)

Language Note:

Talking About Experience and Skills
Interviewer
- Can you give me an example of a time when you…?
- How do you handle tight deadlines?
- What's your approach to teamwork?
- How do you prioritise your workload?
- Tell me about a project you're particularly proud of.
- What software are you familiar with?

Candidate
- In my previous role, I was responsible for…
- One example that comes to mind is when…
- I learned to manage competing priorities by…
- I tend to stay calm and methodical under pressure.
- I'm confident using [e.g. Excel].
- I really enjoy collaborating with others and learning from them.

Strengths and Weaknesses
Interviewer
- What would you say are your key strengths?
- Is there an area you'd like to improve?
- How would your colleagues describe you?

Candidate
- I'd say I'm very detail-oriented and reliable.
- I take pride in delivering accurate work and meeting deadlines.
- One area I'm working on is delegating more – I tend to take on too much myself.
- I've been developing my [e.g. IT] skills recently.

workload | obciążenie pracą, nakład pracy
to be familiar with sth | być zaznajomionym z czymś, znać się na czymś
to come to mind | przychodzić na myśl, nasuwać się na myśl
competing priorities | konkurencyjne priorytety, sprzeczne priorytety (obowiązki, które jednocześnie wymagają uwagi)
weakness | słabość, wada, słaba strona
to improve | poprawiać, ulepszać
detail-oriented | zorientowany na szczegóły, dokładny
reliable | niezawodny, solidny
to take pride in sth | być z czegoś dumnym, szczycić się czymś
accurate | precyzyjny, dokładny
to meet deadlines | dotrzymywać terminów

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JOB POSITION: RETAIL - SHOP ASSISTANT

Manager: Hi, Ellie. Glad you could make it today. Why do you want to work in retail?
Ellie: Money.
Manager: Right… anything else?
Ellie: Not really. I just need cash for a festival ticket. My mum said I had to get a job instead of asking her for it.
Manager: Well, that's one kind of motivation, I suppose. Have you ever worked before?
Ellie: Babysat my neighbour's kid once, but he threw up on my shoes, so I quit.
Manager: I see. So, what would you do if a customer complained about something?
Ellie: Depends what mood I'm in.
Manager: And… what if you were in a good mood?
Ellie: I'd probably help them.
Manager: And if you were in a bad mood?
Ellie: I'd find someone else to deal with them. I'm not really a "customer service" person, to be honest.
Manager: That's sort of the whole job.
Ellie: Oh. Right. Well, I can try to smile more, I suppose.
Manager: That would be a start. How about teamwork? Can you work well with others?
Ellie: Yeah, as long as they don't boss me about. I don't do well with authority.
Manager: You do realise… I'd be your manager?
Ellie: Yeah, but you seem all right.
Manager: I'll take that as a compliment. Do you see yourself staying here long-term?
Ellie: God, no. Sorry – that sounded rude.
Manager: Not at all. Refreshingly honest, actually.
Ellie: Cheers. So when do I get paid?
Manager: Let's get through the interview first, shall we?

retail | handel detaliczny
instead of sth | zamiast czegoś
to babysit sb | opiekować się kimś
to throw up | wymiotować
to quit sth | rzucać coś, z/rezygnować z czegoś
to complain about sth | narzekać na coś, skarżyć się na coś
to deal with sb | mieć do czynienia z kimś, zajmować się kimś
That's sort of the whole job. | Na tym, w zasadzie, polega cała ta praca.
to boss sb about | rozkazywać komuś, rządzić kimś
to do well with sb | dobrze sobie z kimś radzić, mieć z kimś dobre relacje
to realise sth | uświadomić sobie coś, zdać sobie z czegoś sprawę
to seem | wydawać się
long-term | długoterminowy
not at all | *tu:* wcale, w ogóle nie
cheers | *tu: pot.* Dzięki

Conversation Matters

Language Note:

Motivation and Career Goals

Interviewer
- What motivates you in your work?
- Where do you see yourself in five years?
- Why are you looking to move on from your current position?
- What do you value most in a workplace?

Candidate
- I'm motivated by achieving measurable results and contributing to the team.
- I'm looking for an environment that encourages growth and learning.
- I'd like to develop my skills further and take on more responsibility over time.
- I'm keen to join an organisation where I can make a real difference.

Handling Difficult Situations

Interviewer
- Tell me about a time you faced a challenge at work and how you dealt with it.
- How do you manage conflict with colleagues or clients?
- Can you describe a situation where you had to meet a tight deadline?

Candidate
- There was a time when… but I managed it by staying organised and communicating clearly.
- I believe in addressing issues early and professionally.
- I try to focus on finding solutions rather than placing blame.

Practicalities:

Interviewer
- What's your notice period?
- Are you available to start immediately?
- What are your salary expectations?
- Are you open to working flexible hours/weekends/shifts?

Candidate
- I'm available to start from [date].
- I'm currently on a [e.g. four]-week notice period.
- I'm flexible, depending on the needs of the role.
- In terms of salary, I'm open to discussing something in line with market rates.

Closing the Interview

Interviewer
- Do you have any questions for us?
- We'll be in touch within the next week.
- It's been lovely speaking with you.
- We really appreciate your time and interest in the role.

Candidate
- Yes, I do have a few questions – could you tell me more about the team I'd be joining?
- What are the next steps in the recruitment process?
- When do you expect to make a final decision?

to achieve sth | osiągnąć coś
measurable | mierzalny
to contribute to sth | przyczyniać się do czegoś, wnosić wkład w coś
to encourage sth | zachęcać do czegoś, wspierać coś
to take on responsibility | brać na siebie odpowiedzialność, przejmować odpowiedzialność
to face sth | stawiać czoła czemuś, mierzyć się z czymś
to address sth | zająć się czymś, rozwiązywać coś (np. problem)
to focus on sth | koncentrować się, skupiać się na czymś
to place blame | obarczać winą, zrzucać winę
notice period | okres wypowiedzenia
salary expectations | oczekiwania finansowe, oczekiwana pensja
flexible hours | elastyczne godziny pracy
shifts | zmiany (w pracy)
depending on sth | w zależności od czegoś
in terms of X | pod względem X, jeśli chodzi o X
We'll be in touch within the next week. | Skontaktujemy się w ciągu najbliższego tygodnia.
a few | kilka, parę

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A Journey Along Japan's UNESCO Trail

by Agnieszka Fortuna

There's something wonderfully addictive about exploring Japan: the more you see, the more it seems to reveal. A country where tradition hums beneath the neon, where wooden shrines stand quietly beside futuristic stations. And for those of us who like our travels to carry a touch of history, Japan's UNESCO World Heritage Sites provide the perfect compass. So, let's take a journey together along this trail – shinkansen tickets in hand, bento boxes at the ready.

addictive | uzależniający
to seem | wydawać się
to reveal sth | ujawniać, odsłaniać, odkrywać coś
to hum | szumieć, brzęczeć
to carry a touch of history | nosić w sobie odrobinę historii, mieć w sobie powiew historii
shinkansen tickets | bilety na shinkansen (*pot.* japoński szybki pociąg)
bento boxes | pudełka bento (tradycyjne japońskie zestawy obiadowe na wynos)
at the ready | w pogotowiu, w gotowości, pod ręką

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Kiyomizu-dera

Kyoto: A Tapestry of Temples

Our trail begins in Kyoto, the heart of Japan's spiritual life. Once the imperial capital, the city is stitched with temples, shrines and gardens – seventeen of which are UNESCO-listed. Walking through *Kiyomizu-dera*, perched on wooden stilts above a hillside, we lean over the balcony for a sweeping view of cherry blossoms in spring or scarlet maples in autumn. Legend says that if you survived a jump from its 13-metre stage, your wish would come true. Thankfully, the practice was banned in the 19th century. A short stroll away, the Golden Pavilion – *Kinkaku-ji* – glimmers across its pond, its top floors entirely covered in gold leaf. Imagine a postcard come to life, shimmering even on a cloudy day. Kyoto is elegance, tradition, and a hint of theatre – every corner feels like a stage set.

Did you know? Kyoto was originally on the U.S. atomic bomb target list in 1945, but Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson persuaded President Truman to spare it. Stimson, who had visited the city and admired its cultural treasures, argued that destroying Japan's ancient capital would devastate relations after the war.

Nara: Deer and the Great Buddha

From Kyoto, a half-hour train whisks us to Nara, Japan's first permanent capital. In Nara Park, we're greeted by hundreds of semi-tame deer bowing politely for biscuits. Legend ties them to the gods, and they certainly seem to know it.

The real star, though, is *Todai-ji's* Great Buddha Hall. Step inside and prepare to crane your neck. At 15 metres high, the bronze *Daibutsu* is one of the largest Buddha statues in the world. The

Travel

1 tapestry | arras, gobelin
temple | świątynia
stitched with sth | *tu:* usiany czymś
shrine | świątynia
perched on sth | usytuowany, umieszczony na czymś
stilt | pal, słup (podtrzymujący konstrukcję)
to lean over sth | przechylać się nad czymś
sweeping | zapierający dech w piersiach
cherry blossoms | kwiaty wiśni
scarlet maples | szkarłatne klony
banned | zakazany
a short stroll away | w odległości krótkiego spaceru
to glimmer | migotać, pobłyskiwać, iskrzyć się
entirely | całkowicie, w całości
covered in sth | pokryty czymś
to shimmer | połyskiwać, migotać, mienić się

1

a hint of theatre | nutka teatralności, odrobina teatru
every corner feels like a stage set | każdy zakątek wygląda jak scenografia teatralna
2 originally | pierwotnie, początkowo
to spare sth | oszczędzić coś
to argue that | argumentować, że
ancient | starożytny, prastary

to whisk sb to X | porywać kogoś do X, szybko przetransportować kogoś do X
greeted by sb | przywitany przez kogoś
semi-tame | na wpół-oswojony
bowing politely for biscuits | kłaniający się uprzejmie po herbatniki, kłaniający się w oczekiwaniu na herbatniki
though | chociaż, jednakże
to crane one's neck | wyciągać szyję (aby coś zobaczyć)

2

Nara

Atomic Bomb Dome

hall itself is a feat – rebuilt in the 18th century at two-thirds its original size, it's still one of the largest wooden buildings on Earth.

Did you know? Schoolchildren on trips to Nara are often challenged to crawl through a pillar hole the same size as the Great Buddha's nostril. Pass through, and you're promised enlightenment in your next life!

Hiroshima: A Sobering Pause

Our next shinkansen carries us west to Hiroshima. Here, the UNESCO-listed Atomic Bomb Dome is not a place for light-hearted anecdotes but for reflection. The skeletal remains of the former Industrial Promotion Hall stand as a stark reminder of 6 August 1945. The Peace Memorial Park surrounding it balances sorrow with hope, a landscape designed not just to mourn but to push humanity towards peace. Travelling Japan's UNESCO trail isn't all beauty; it also carries weight – and Hiroshima ensures we don't forget that.

Did you know? Hiroshima's Atomic Bomb Dome survived partly because the bomb exploded almost directly overhead. The vertical blast crushed the building but left its steel dome and central walls standing.

Itsukushima Shrine: A Floating Gate to the Gods

A short ferry from Hiroshima takes us to, home to one of Japan's most iconic sights: the *Itsukushima Shrine*. As the boat approaches, the famous vermilion torii gate appears to float on the water at high tide – a mirage turning real. Walking

3 feat | wyczyn, osiągnięcie
to be challenged to do sth | mieć rzucone wyzwanie do zrobienia czegoś
to crawl through sth | przeczołgać się przez coś
pillar hole | dziura w filarze
nostril | nozdrze
to pass through | przejść przez, przedostać się przez
enlightenment | oświecenie
sobering | otrzeźwiający, skłaniający do refleksji
Atomic Bomb Dome | Kopuła Bomby Atomowej
light-hearted | lekki, wesoły
the former | ten pierwszy (z wymienionych), poprzedni
Industrial Promotion Hall | Hala Promocji Przemysłu
stark | *tu:* wyraźny
sorrow | smutek, żal, zgryzota
to mourn | opłakiwać, żałować
to push sb towards peace | popchnąć kogoś ku pokojowi, nakłaniać kogoś do pokoju
to ensure | zapewnić, upewnić się
overhead | nad głową, nad nami
vertical | pionowy

blast | eksplozja
to crush sth | zmiażdżyć coś
steel | stal
floating | pływający, unoszący się na wodzie
ferry | prom
sight | widok
to approach | zbliżać się
at high tide | podczas przypływu

3

Travel

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the shrine's wooden boardwalks, raised above the sea, we find ourselves surrounded by a theatre of nature and architecture. Shinto priests once forbade commoners from setting foot on the island, so worshippers would sail through the torii gate to pay their respects. Even today, the approach feels ceremonial. The sight of Itsukushima's floating gate is Japan distilled – timeless, spiritual, and a little magical.

Did you know? The great torii, standing 16 metres tall, is built from camphor wood and weighs over 60 tonnes – yet it isn't anchored. Its own weight keeps it in place.

Itsukushima Shrine

Himeji Castle: The White Heron Takes Flight

Back on the train, we glide to Himeji, where a gleaming fortress rises against the sky. *Himeji Castle*, dubbed the "White Heron," looks as if it could lift off with its sweeping white roofs. Unlike many Japanese castles, this one survived fires, wars, and even the Second World War bombings. Climbing its labyrinthine passages (intentionally confusing to deter invaders), we can picture samurai clattering up these wooden stairs. From the top, the view stretches out to the Inland Sea.

Did you know? Himeji Castle's defensive design includes loopholes for archers and stone-drop chutes – yet the castle never once saw battle.

Himeji Castle

Mount Fuji: Sacred and Sublime

What would Japan be without its most famous silhouette? A two-hour hop from Tokyo, and suddenly Mount Fuji dominates the horizon. Snow-capped and perfectly symmetrical, *Fuji-san* isn't just a postcard image: it's a sacred site, long worshipped by pilgrims and immortalised in countless woodblock prints. We lace up our boots for a hike along its

4 **boardwalk** | drewniany pomost, kładka
to forbid sb from sth | zakazywać komuś czegoś
commoner | prosty człowiek, osoba nieszlacheckiego pochodzenia

to set foot on sth | postawić stopę na czymś, wejść na coś
worshipper | wyznawca, czciciel
to pay one's respects | oddać hołd, złożyć wyrazy szacunku
distilled | *tu:* wydobywający istotę czegoś
anchored | zakotwiczony
weight | waga, ciężar
white heron | czapla biała
to glide to X | szybować do X, ślizgać się do X
gleaming | błyszczący, lśniący, połyskujący
dubbed | nazwany
to lift off | wzlatywać, odrywać się od ziemi

unlike X | w przeciwieństwie do X
to deter sb | odstraszać kogoś
to clatter up sth | wbiegać po czymś z łoskotem
loophole | otwór, luka
archer | łucznik
stone-drop chute | zsuwnia/zsyp do zrzucania kamieni
snow-capped | ośnieżony
countless | niezliczony
woodblock prints | drzeworyty
to lace up one's boots | zasznurować buty

4

Travel

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Mount Fuji

Toshogu Shrine

5 slope | zbocze, stok
to attempt sth | s/próbować czegoś, podejmować próbę czegoś
stratovolcano | stratowulkan
stacked on top of one another | ułożony jeden na drugim, piętrzący się
to head north | kierować się na północ, jechać na północ
riot of colours | bogactwo, feeria barw
ornate | ozdobny, bogato zdobiony
to dazzle with sth | olśniewać czymś
vivid | żywy, jaskrawy
carvings | rzeźby, rzeźbienia
"see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" monkeys | małpy 'nie widzę nic złego, nie słyszę nic złego, nie mówię nic złego" (tzw. trzy mądre małpy będące symbolem japońskiego przysłowia)
mossy | omszały, pokryty mchem
to feel the hush of history | poczuć ciszę/spokój/ducha historii
to fuse together | łączyć się ze sobą, zlewać się w jedno
in one sweep of the eyes | w jednym spojrzeniu
to require sth | wymagać czegoś
artisan | rzemieślnik, rękodzielnik
to criss-cross sth | przecinać coś wzdłuż i wszerz, przejeżdżać przez coś w różnych kierunkach
preserved | zachowany, zakonserwowany
scattered across X | rozrzucony po, rozsiany po X
bento wrappers | opakowania/papierki po bento (japońskich zestawach obiadowych)
to rustle | szeleścić
to flash by | przemknąć, mignąć, szybko przelecieć
to realise sth | uświadomić sobie coś, zdać sobie z czegoś sprawę

lower slopes. Even if we don't attempt the full climb, the surrounding Five Lakes region offers stunning views. Mount Fuji is Japan's heartbeat – calm, majestic, and quietly reminding us it is still very much alive.

Did you know? Mount Fuji is a stratovolcano, built from the remains of older volcanoes stacked on top of one another. At its base is ancient *Komitake*, covered by *Ko-Fuji* ("Old Fuji"), and topped by *Shin-Fuji* ("New Fuji"), which last erupted in 1707.

Nikko: Where Shoguns Sleep

Heading north from Tokyo, we arrive in Nikko, where forested hills hide a riot of colours. The UNESCO-listed shrines and temples here are the most ornate in Japan.

Toshogu Shrine, final resting place of *Tokugawa Ieyasu*, the shogun who unified Japan, dazzles with gold leaf, vivid carvings, and the famous "see no evil, hear no evil, speak no evil" monkeys. Walking through the mossy cedar avenue, we feel the hush of history. Nikko is where nature and art fuse together, the sacred and the spectacular in one sweep of the eyes.

Did you know? The lavish *Toshogu Shrine* complex required over 15,000 artisans to build in the 17th century.

The End of the Line

From Kyoto's golden reflections to Fuji's soaring peak, from Hiroshima's quiet lessons to the floating gate of Miyajima, we've criss-crossed a country where heritage is not just preserved but lived. Of course, Japan has many more UNESCO sites, scattered across its islands – from the ancient villages of Shirakawa-go to the wild forests of Yakushima – but this trip could only take us so far. And as the shinkansen hums back towards Tokyo, bento wrappers rustling and landscapes flashing by, we realise: the journey itself, much like Japan, is endlessly worth repeating.

5

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From the Backyard to the Big Leagues: America's Coolest New Sports

WARTO ZAPAMIĘTAĆ!

to takie turns
zmieniać się

by Jonathan Sidor

What do Americans do for fun these days? While traditional pastimes still dominate the scene, a wave of trendy new games has taken the US by storm. From fast-paced activities to social backyard games, dive into America's modern favourites with *English Matters*.

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POBIERZ CZYTNIK KODÓW: COLORFULMEDIA.PL/CZYTNIK

A New Era of Sports

Unlike traditional sports that often require large teams, expensive gear, or a steep learning curve, these trendy games are known for being accessible, fun and easy to pick up. Many of them started as casual hobbies but quickly grew into competitive leagues, complete with tournaments and dedicated fanbases. Whether you're after something social or a sport with a bit of flair, there's a good chance one of these is your perfect match.

Pickleball

Pickleball: The Game Everyone's Talking About

Pickleball has become a national obsession in the US, often described as a mix of tennis, badminton and table tennis. Played on a smaller court than tennis, it involves hitting a lightweight plastic ball over a net using paddles. The game is quick, simple and suitable for people of all ages.

How does it work? Pickleball can be played as singles or doubles. The goal is to score points by serving and returning the ball until your opponent can't hit it back. Because the court is smaller, players don't need to cover as much ground, making it less physically demanding than tennis. However, don't let its simplicity fool you; the game requires quick reflexes and strategy.

1

0 **backyard** | podwórko
to take sth by storm | zdobyć coś szturmem, podbić coś
fast-paced | szybki, dynamiczny
1 **unlike X** | w przeciwieństwie do X
to require sth | wymagać czegoś
gear | sprzęt, wyposażenie
steep learning curve | stroma krzywa uczenia się
to pick up sth | nauczyć się czegoś, podłapać coś
competitive league | liga turniejowa
complete with sth | zawierający coś
tournament | turniej
dedicated | zaangażowany, oddany
fanbase | baza fanów, grono fanów
whether | czy
to be after sth | szukać czegoś
with a bit of flair | z odrobiną polotu
to involve sth | *tu:* polegać na czymś
lightweight | lekki
net | siatka
paddles | krótkie rakietki
suitable for sb | odpowiedni, nadający się dla kogoś
to be played as singles or doubles | można w niego grać pojedynczo lub w parach
to score points | zdobywać punkty
to cover sth | zajmować coś, obejmować coś (o powierzchni)
physically demanding | wymagający fizycznie
however | jednak/że
don't let its simplicity fool you | nie daj/cie się zwieść jego prostocie

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Spikeball

One reason for pickleball's success is its accessibility. You'll find courts in parks, community centres and retirement villages across the US. It's an excellent way to stay active, and its friendly nature makes it a great social activity. Professional leagues have emerged, and pickleball tournaments now attract big crowds and sponsorships. If you're visiting the US, don't be surprised if someone invites you to a match.

Spikeball: The Beach and Backyard Craze

Spikeball is another fast-growing sport in America, often spotted on beaches, college campuses, and parks. Imagine volleyball, but with a circular net on the ground instead of a traditional court. Teams of two take turns spiking the ball onto the net, trying to outmanoeuvre their opponents.

What are the rules? The game begins with a serve, and players alternate hitting the ball off the net. The opposing team then has up to three touches to return it. The catch? The ball must bounce off the net – not hit the ground. Points are scored when the opposing team fails to return the ball.

Spikeball's charm lies in its portability. The equipment is lightweight and can be set up almost anywhere, making it ideal for picnics and trips to the beach. It's also highly engaging, requiring teamwork, agility and quick thinking. Competitive Spikeball leagues are popping up across the country, and it's even been featured on TV. Whether you're playing for fun or for keeps, Spikeball is a blast.

2

Cornhole: The Classic Lawn Game with a Competitive Twist

Cornhole, a quintessential American backyard game, has risen from casual barbecues to the national stage. It involves tossing small beanbags onto a raised wooden board, aiming for the hole at the top. While it may seem straightforward, cornhole has become a competitive sport with leagues, championships and heavy competition.

It works as follows. Players take turns throwing beanbags at the board from a set distance. Scoring isn't rocket science: one point for landing the bag on the board and three points for getting it through the hole. The first team to reach a set score – usually 21 – wins.

Cornhole's laid-back nature makes it perfect for social events. You'll find it at tailgate parties, weddings and even pubs. But don't be fooled by its simplicity – precision and strategy come into play at higher levels of competition. The American Cornhole League (ACL) has brought the sport to national television, and it's now a common sight for many Americans.

Axe Throwing: Unleash Your Inner Lumberjack

More daring Americans are turning to axe throwing. What started as a niche activity has grown into a nationwide phenomenon, with axe-throwing venues popping up in cities across the US.

3

2 accessibility | dostępność
community centres | ośrodki społecznościowe, centra lokalne
retirement villages | osiedla dla emerytów
to emerge | wyłaniać się, pojawiać się, powstawać
to attract sb | przyciągać kogoś
crowd | tłum
craze | szał, moda
volleyball | siatkówka
circular | okrągły, kolisty
instead of sth | zamiast czegoś
to take turns | zmieniać się
to spike sth onto sth | odbijać/zbijać coś z góry na coś
to outmanoeuvre sb | przechytrzyć kogoś
to alternate sth | stosować/robić coś naprzemiennie
The catch? | Jaki jest haczyk/trik?
to bounce off | odbijać się od (czegoś)
to fail | ponieść porażkę, nie udać się
portability | przenośność, łatwość przenoszenia
to be set up | być rozstawionym
agility | zwinność
to pop up | pojawiać się nagle
to play for fun/for keeps | grać dla zabawy/grać na poważnie
blast | *tu:* świetna zabawa, frajda
3 lawn | trawnik
quintessential | *tu:* typowy; istotny
to involve sth | obejmować coś, wiązać się z czymś
to toss sth onto sth | rzucić coś na coś
beanbags | woreczki z fasolą
raised | podniesiony, uniesiony
to aim for sth | celować w coś
to seem | wydawać się
straightforward | prosty, nieskomplikowany, łatwy
to throw sth at sth | rzucić czymś w coś
from a set distance | z ustalonej/określonej odległości
It's not a rocket science. | To nie jest skomplikowana sprawa/fizyka kwantowa.
laid-back | wyluzowany, swobodny
tailgate party | piknik z jedzeniem wykładanym na otwartych tylnych drzwiach samochodu, impreza plenerowa
wedding | ślub
to come into play | wchodzić w grę
sight | *tu:* widok
axe throwing | rzut siekierą
to unleash sb | uwolnić kogoś
inner | wewnętrzny
lumberjack | drwal
daring | śmiały, odważny
phenomenon | zjawisko
venue | miejsce, obiekt, lokal (gdzie odbywa się wydarzenie)

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The sport's kind of like darts. It involves throwing a small axe at a wooden target, aiming to hit the bullseye. Players stand a set distance from the target and take turns throwing their axes. Points are awarded based on where the axe lands on the target, with the bullseye scoring the most. Games are often played in rounds, with the highest score winning.

Axe throwing is all the rage because it offers a mix of skill and adrenaline. It's highly social, with venues typically combining the sport with food, drinks and music. Many Americans enjoy it as a fun night out with friends or a way to blow off steam. Competitive leagues and tournaments are also popping up, proving that axe throwing isn't just a passing fad.

Why Are These Sports So Popular?

What's the secret behind the success of these modern sports? For one, they're incredibly accessible. You don't need to be a jock to pick up a paddle, toss a beanbag, or throw an axe. Another reason is their adaptability. Whether you're looking for a casual game with friends or something more serious, these sports cater to your level. So embrace your sense of novelty and give one of these a try today.

As Seen on TV

Spikeball's roots actually stretch as far back as the '80s, but it gained national exposure thanks to an aspiring entrepreneur pitching it on a 2015 episode of *Shark Tank*.

Cornhole

Axe Throwing

The US version of the UK's *Dragon Den*, *Shark Tank* is a reality TV show where small business owners and inventors present their ideas to a panel of wealthy investors, aka sharks, in hopes of securing funding.

Other products you may be familiar with that got their start on *Shark Tank* include the Scrub Daddy sponge, LARQ bottle and Ring doorbell.

4 darts | rzutki, strzałki
to hit the bullseye | trafić w sam środek tarczy, trafić w dziesiątkę
to stand a set distance from sth | stać w ustalonej odległości od czegoś
to be awarded | zostać nagrodzonym, zostać przyznanym
to be played in rounds | być rozgrywanym w rundach/turach
to be all the rage | być bardzo modnym, być na topie, robić furorę
to combine sth with sth | połączyć coś z czymś
to blow off steam | wyładować się, dać upust emocjom
proving that | dowodząc, że

4

passing fad | przemijająca moda, chwilowa moda
incredibly | niewiarygodnie, niezwykle, niesamowicie
jock | *pot. pej.* sportowiec; koks (zwłaszcza o młodym chłopaku; stosowane przez osoby, które nie lubią sportu)
to look for sth | szukać czegoś
casual | *tu:* okazjonalny
to cater to sth | zaspokajać coś, wychodzić czemuś naprzeciw
to embrace sth | przyjąć coś (np. nową modę)
sense of novelty | poczucie nowości, element nowości
to give sth a try | spróbować czegoś, wypróbować coś

5

roots | korzenie, pochodzenie
actually | właściwie, tak naprawdę
to stretch as far back as X | sięgać aż do X (w czasie), rozciągać się aż do X
to gain national exposure | zyskać ogólnokrajową rozpoznawalność
aspiring | aspirujący, początkujący
entrepreneur | przedsiębiorca
to pitch sth on sth | prezentować coś w programie X
5 wealthy | zamożny, bogaty
aka = also known as | znany również jako
securing funding | pozyskiwanie funduszy/finansowania
to be familiar with sth | być zaznajomionym z czymś
Shark Tank | amerykański program telewizyjny, w którym przedsiębiorcy prezentują swoje pomysły bogatym inwestorom w celu pozyskania finansowania
to include sb/sth | zawierać kogoś/coś, obejmować kogoś/coś
the Scrub Daddy sponge | gąbka Scrub Daddy
LARQ bottle | butelka LARQ
Ring doorbell | dzwonek do drzwi Ring

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Learn English Watching Movies

Final Destination

by Hanna Danielczak-Ziadi

A thrilling, timeless classic of Canadian-American production... Final Destination, is classified as a horror/thriller. The first instalment in the series was released in the year 2000 and stars Devon Sawa, Ali Larter, Kerr Smith, Chad Donella, Sean William Scott and others. It was directed by James Wong. Check out this iconic work in its original English version, for example, on the HBO Max platform. So far, six parts of the series have been released, with the newest, titled Bloodlines, coming out in 2025.

- **I saw it take off.** Widziałem jak startuje.
- **The cabin it starts to shake, right? And the left side blows up.** Kabina zaczęła się trzęść, ok? A lewa strona wybuchła.
- **And then the whole plane explodes.** A potem wybuchł cały samolot.
- **And it was so real. Just like how everything happens, you know?** I było to takie rzeczywiste. Tak jakby działo się to naprawdę, rozumiecie?
- **Whoa, we got thrown off the plane.** O kurczę, zostaliśmy wyrzuceni z samolotu.
- **We blow, what, a half a day in Paris…all because Browning has a bad fucking dream?** Straciliśmy, ile, pół dnia w Paryżu…wszystko dlatego, że Browning miał pieprzony koszmar?
- **But wait, "the plane, it's gonna blow up, it's gonna blow up"!** Czekajcie, „samolot wybuchnie, samolot wybuchnie".
- **Hey, fuck you, Horton.** *wulg.* Hej, odwal się/odpieprz się, Horton.
- **Get off him.** Zostaw go.
- **There they go, here we stay.** Oni lecą, my zostaliśmy.
- **You're paying for my trip.** Zapłacisz za moją podróż.
- **I wish you were on that plane.** Chciałbym, żebyś był na pokładzie tego samolotu.
- **I saw it. I saw it happen. I saw the plane explode.** Widziałem. Widziałem jak to się stało. Widziałem jak samolot eksploduje.
- **Shh... please... you'll wake the dead.** Cii... proszę... obudzicie zmarłych.
- **If he was pulling at the wire, he wasn't trying to kill himself.** Jeśli szarpał drut, nie próbował się zabić.
- **It was an accident.** To był wypadek.
- **In death, there are no accidents. No coincidences. No mishaps. And no escapes.** Dla śmierci nie ma żadnych wypadków. Żadnych zbiegów okoliczności. Żadnych nieszczęśliwych przypadków. I żadnych ucieczek.
- **What you have to realise is that we are all just a mouse that a cat got by the tail.** Musicie zdać sobie sprawę, że jesteśmy wszyscy tylko myszami trzymanymi przez kota za ogon.
- **Does it mean that if you figure out the design, you could cheat death?** Czy to znaczy, że jeśli odkryjesz plan, możesz oszukać śmierć?
- **Alex, you've already done that by walking off the plane.** Alex, ty już to zrobiłeś wychodząc z samolotu.

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Rack Your Brain

by Kamil Drożdżyk

1. True or False

a. According to legend, Paul Bunyan had a blue deer called Babe.
b. Kyoto was hit with an atomic bomb in 1944.
c. Pickleball incorporates elements of tennis, table tennis and badminton.
d. Some of the American tall tales are based on real people and events.
e. Mount Fuji is considered a sacred place.

Answer Key: a. false; b. false; c. true; d. true; e. true

2. Fill in the gaps with the correct word.

folk, net, exploit, heritage, word

a. Tell me more about Polish ____ heroes.
b. The story was passed on by ___ of mouth.
c. I aimed for the back of the court, but the ball hit the ___.
d. Japan is a country of rich _____.
e. It's just an urban myth – his extraordinary _____ was exaggerated.

Answer Key: a. folk; b. word; c. net; d. heritage; e. exploit

3. Connect the words to create common collocations.

rocket, camphor, campfire, bare, cherry

a. ...hands
b. ...stories
c. ...science
d. ...wood
e. ...blossom

Answer Key: a. bare; b. campfire; c. rocket; d. camphor; e. cherry

4. Explain the meanings of idioms and phrases found in the articles.

a. to take sth by storm
b. to crane one's neck
c. to set foot on
d. to come at a cost
e. salt of the earth

Answer Key: a. to quickly become very successful; b. to stretch your neck in order to see or hear something better; c. to enter or arrive somewhere; d. to have negative consequences; e. a helpful, kind, and generous person

5. Which Japanese city was struck by an atomic bomb in 1945?

a. Tokyo
b. Osaka
c. Sapporo
d. Hiroshima

Answer: d

6. According to the tall tale, how did John Henry's story end?

a. He defeated the machine and pushed back industrialisation.
b. He defeated the machine but died from exhaustion.
c. He lost the competition and became an advocate of industrialisation.
d. His hammer broke and he acknowledged the importance of machines.

Answer: b

7. Which American TV programme popularised spikeball?

a. Shark Tank
b. American Idol
c. Family Feud
d. Who Wants to Be a Millionaire?

Answer: a

8. What makes s,pikeball different from other net and wall games?

a. The ball has to hit the net, which is considered a foul in many other sports.
b. The game is played exclusively indoors, unlike beach volleyball or tennis.
c. Spikeball is played with a special type of racket, longer than a typical tennis racket.
d. Players can only touch the ball with their feet.

Answer: a

9. Which of these statements about Himeji Castle is not true?

a. The castle has a labyrinthine design.
b. The castle offers a view of the sea.
c. The castle is battle-tested.
d. The castle survived World War II bombings.

Answer: c

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ENGLISH MATTERS

Prenumerata

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- **przelew na konto**
  dokonaj wpłaty – szczegóły poniżej

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adres:
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2. numer, od którego ma zaczynać się prenumerata
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przykładowy tytuł przelewu:
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Łączną kwotę obliczysz, mnożąc 121,90 zł przez liczbę osób.

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Prenumerata realizowana jest za pośrednictwem Poczty Polskiej.
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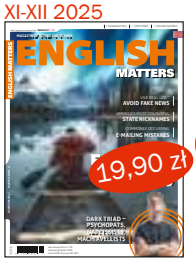
Numery archiwalne i wydania specjalne

Numery archiwalne **English Matters**

nr 115
XI-XII 2025

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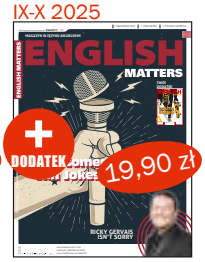
nr 114
IX-X 2025

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19,90 zł

nr 113
VII-VIII 2025

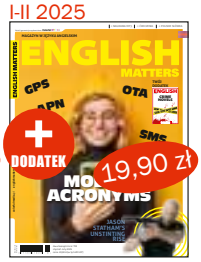
19,90 zł

nr 112
V-VI 2025

19,90 zł

nr 111
III-IV 2025

19,90 zł

nr 110
I-II 2025

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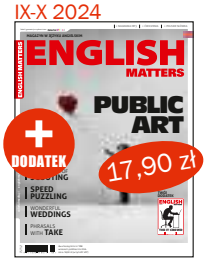
nr 109
XI-XII 2024

17,90 zł

nr 108
IX-X 2024

+ DODATEK
17,90 zł

nr 107
VII-VIII 2024

17,90 zł

nr 106
V-VI 2024

17,90 zł

nr 105
III-IV 2024

17,90 zł

nr 104
I-II 2024

17,90 zł

nr 103
XI-XII 2023

16,90 zł

nr 102
IX-X 2023

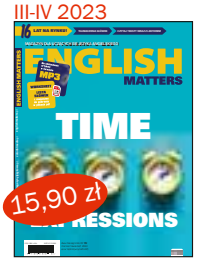
16,90 zł

nr 101
VII-VIII 2023

16,90 zł

nr 100
V-VI 2023

16,90 zł

nr 99
III-IV 2023

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nr 98
I-II 2023

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15,90 zł

nr 97
XI-XII 2022

15,90 zł

nr 96
IX-X 2022

+ DODATEK
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VII-VIII 2022

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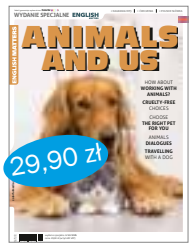
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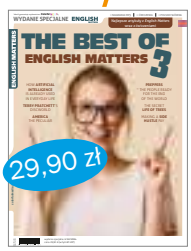
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29,90 zł

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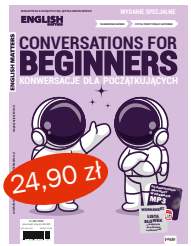
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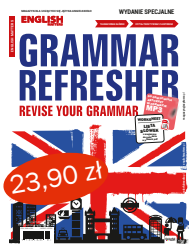
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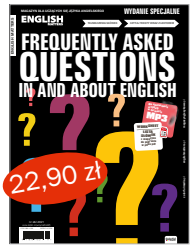
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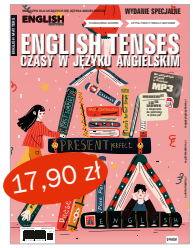
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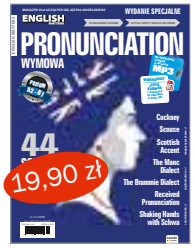
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