

Highlights

- Midterm
- Birthdays
- Manners
- Grammar

The ELI Weekly

*The Weekly Newsletter of
the English Language Institute
Volume 107, Issue 7
October 10, 2008*

Midterm

Have a quiet weekend!

Folks, this weekend, we don't have any weekend activities scheduled. Believe it or not, we are coming fast upon the halfway point in the semester! Next week, many of your teachers will be holding Midterm Exams, so we want to give you a chance to study a bit more this weekend, just in case!

Notes from the Office

- **Holidays and RTS Bus Service--** Students, remember there is no campus service:
- November 11 (Tuesday, Veterans' Day)
 - November 27-28 (Thursday/Friday, Thanksgiving Holiday)
 - December 22-January 1, 2008-09 (Christmas Break)
- Also, campus service is reduced on October 24 (Friday, UF Homecoming)

These changes can be accessed on the RTS website www.go-rt.com. You can also sign up on the RTS website to have alerts sent to your email for any route changes, additions or cancellations.

The Next Trip

Next weekend, going down to the **Cedar Key Seafood Festival**, just 50 miles from Gainesville down on the west coast of Florida. Details about the trip will be on the Activities Board and in next week's *Weekly*.

Birthdays

The following are ELI Birthdays for the week of October 10-16:

Students:
October 11: Maryam Alfeaim
October 13: Priscilla Delfino
October 13: Hye Moon Kim
October 15: Corina Ficano
October 15: Hee Kyoung Seo

Staff:
None this week!

Manners and Culture

Q: What is the most important holiday in the US?

A: Well, that's a tough question, mainly because there are so many holidays that hold special meanings to

so many people. It would be fair to say, though, that our biggest family holiday, the one that has the most people celebrating it and going to visit their families and their friends, is Thanksgiving. It's a big feast day that isn't specially linked to any one religion or set of beliefs. It really shows in the travel industry—the week of Thanksgiving is always our busiest travel period of the year.

Q: Why can't we talk about politics and religion in a public setting? I think it prevents forming sound public opinion.

A: We can. There's a big difference, though, between a *public* setting and a *social* setting. This is a very diverse country with a huge number of religious and political beliefs—some very passionate. Culturally, we have an understanding that in social settings, especially more formal ones in which the people don't know each other well, that we don't tend to talk about things that might provoke loud disagreement and hurt feelings. This is not to say, however, that we never talk about these things at all. When people have less social distance and they know each other well, there may be some pretty spirited political discussion. And, in settings where there is a clear understanding that it's

appropriate, such as at church, mosque, temple, or similar venues, there can be a great deal of discussion about religion.

For folks like ELI students, who are trying to feel their way through the culture from a fresh perspective, there is also the social convention of asking if it's okay. That is, saying something like, "Do you mind if I ask you about your opinion of..." When you do this, however, it is considered very rude to a) express strong disagreement with whatever the person answers, and b) to become visibly hurt or upset if they choose not to discuss it at all.

Q: What can I say to my teammates at the end of a game to encourage them for the next game?

A: It depends on whether or not you won, really. If you did, then something like, "Good game! Let's keep it up!" would be appropriate. If you didn't, then I would say something like, "We'll get 'em next time!"

Grammar

Q: How do you know when to use 'what' or 'that'. For example: I don't know what to do, or I don't know that to do. In my language, we use the same word for 'what' and 'that'.

A: Oh, good one! In this case, it's a question of whether you are talking about "the thing" (what) or "the fact" (that). In the example that you gave, you don't know the thing to do—you can't really "do" a fact. So, you should use "what" to express it. On the other hand, if you say, "I didn't

know that you were such a good dancer," you are saying that this is a fact which is new to you. So, you use "that" to express it.

Q: What's the difference between slang and idiom?

A: Probably formality and degree of permanence more than anything else. Slang tends to refer to expressions and constructions that are either fairly new to the language or that are used only in the most informal of language.

Quote of the Week

You can make more friends in two months by becoming interested in other people than you can in two years by trying to get other people interested in you.

--Dale Carnegie

UF English Language Institute
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA
English Language Institute
PO Box 117051
315 Norman Hall
Gainesville, FL 32611-7051, USA
Phone: (352) 392-2070
Fax: (352) 392-3744
Email: StudyEnglish@eli.ufl.edu
Webpage: www.eli.ufl.edu