

# Teatime Titbits

## WALKING ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Who gives a f\*\*K about  
grammar anyway?



Tina is designed by Susann

**Tina is on the way to a walking English dictionary.  
by Dave Preston**

Thank for downloading this extract of the Walking English Dictionary 1. The goal of the Walking English Dictionary (WED) series is to boost your passive and active vocabulary to make your understanding easier and your spoken language richer.

As you can see this chapter is all about the topic of work in the broadest sense. At the end I've given you an overview of the rest of the chapters and a link to buy this book.

Get the WED, get reading, get improving at work, at home or even on the move and for the price of a canteen lunch, you've got a great resource of vocabulary just waiting to be discovered, dissected & digested to create your own dictionary.

You CAN become your own Walking English Dictionary, you just have to make the first step!!

**extract** (Leseprobe), **in the broadest sense** (im weitesten Sinne), **to discover** (entdecken), **to dissect** (zerlegen), **to digest** (durchdenken), **walking dictionary** (wandelndes Wörterbuch)

## Chapter 3. WWW 2 – world of work.

The previous post 'Early bird' serves as a great lead-in to our next chapter, which dives into the Wonderful Wednesday Words of the world of work. We start with advice for interviews and finishing with leaving your job.

### Interview.

Ever had to attend an interview in English or at least in part? Unless you are one of those freaks of nature, who don't seem to get fazed by anything, you are nervous during an interview as it is and then added to that, speaking in a foreign language – nerve-wracking.

So imagine then you even have to remember not to say some words for fear of how the HR bod & whoever else might interpret them. And yet just that is the core message of an article, which I read in 'Business English, but was originally published in the British newspaper: Independent

I'll endeavour to give a brief résumé. Check out the list:

**NERVOUS:** They don't want to hire somebody who lacks confidence. Advice: 'Just fake it till you make it'.

**SALARY etc:** Not in the **EARLY** stages – raises a red flag. They want an applicant, who aligns with the company mission and values.

**WEAKNESS:** Don't voluntarily talk about weakness or mistakes, only if to show improvements.

NEED: Their needs not yours. You are looking for a long-term career NOT a job.

PERKS & BENEFITS: Don't mention you are attracted to perks – see above.

TERRIBLE, HORRIBLE: No negative language especially concerning current or previous employers/bosses. Even if invited to by interviewers, don't fall into the trap to bad-mouth anyone.

FINE: is too vague, overused and colloquial – may even be perceived as dishonest and dismissive.

SORRY: used as a filler to seem more polite. Use too much, may be perceived as too passive & indecisive.

ACTUALLY: by prefacing with 'actually' you could be seen to be saying the interviewer is wrong.

Wow – what a list. The top 6 seem plausible enough in my humble opinion but the last 3 seem somehow far-fetched and nitpicking.

When working with clients on interview training, I recommend the book 'The interview question and answer book' by James Innes and try to model their 'pitches' based on the advice & examples given.

QOTD. What's your take on the list?

<https://www.cvcentre.co.uk/james-innes-books.htm>

**freaks of nature** (Laune der Natur), **to get fazed** (beunruhigt werden), **nerve wracking** (nervenzerschütternd), **HR bod** (Typ), **to endeavour** (sich bemühen), **résumé** (Zusammenfassung), **to hire sb** (jdn einstellen), **to lack confidence** (kein Selbstvertrauen haben), **to fake sth** (hier: vortäuschen), **salary** (Gehalt), **early stage** (Anfangsphase), **to raise a red flag** (für jdn ein Alarmzeichen sein), **applicant** (Bewerber), **to align with sth** (etw zu Eigen machen), **values** (Werte(vorstellung)), **weakness** (Schwäche), **to do sth voluntarily** (Freiwillig etw tun), **need** (hier: Bedürfnisse), **perks** (Vergünstigungen), **benefits** (Extraleistungen), **to fall into the trap** (reinfliegen), **to bad-mouth sb** (über jdn herziehen), **to be overused** (überstrapaziert), **colloquial** (Umgangssprache), **to perceive sth as** (etw empfinden als), **dismissive** (abweisend, abschätzig), **filler (word)** (Füllwort), **indecisive** (unentschlossen), **to preface** (einleiten), **humble opinion** (bescheidene Meinung), **to be far-fetched** (weit hergeholt), **nitpicking** (Korinthenkackerei), **pitch** (hier: (Verkaufs)Präsentation bzw. Antworten)

## Pay slip.

I clearly remember the first time I received a German pay slip from work. Wow, numbers, lines, words and abbreviations galore. It was easy enough to find the net aka take-home pay at the bottom right but when I realised which was the gross pay and the difference between, I nearly fell off my chair. OMG, well I was single and no kids (non at least that I knew of) at that time.

Having picked myself back up, I asked my colleague to run me through all the gobbledegook. In the UK (at that time) you had income tax and the rest was all included in the National Insurance deduction and I guess the British government decided in which pot how much went to.

Not the case in German, each deduction was accounted for and you knew how much health insurance, unemployment benefit, you pay. We went down the mile long list, one by one, long-term (nursing) care insurance? What's that? Ok, I guess I may well get old and in need of care in Germany. Solidarity tax, help rebuild Eastern Germany, fair enough!! A visit to East Berlin just after the wall came down made me realise they didn't need a solidarity tax, they needed a mini miracle – looking back it happened. Amazing feat, eh!

Then we came to *pièce de résistance*, any guesses, yep the church tax, having pick myself up a second time, I blurted out “you've got to be kidding, right?” My dear colleague (who remains nameless) just matter-of-factly said “NO” closely followed by an equally blasé “but you can opt out .. but then ...” I had stopped listening after ‘opt out’, a get out of jail card! “How do I opt out?” I interjected.

It was the fact that I didn't want to ‘donate’ to the church because I had always paid into the collection box/plate in church back in England, but it was this idea that it automatically came out of my pay – come what may - that's what ruffled my feathers. Needless to say our conversation ended quite abruptly as I dashed off to the nearest Administration Office for Citizens,

QOTD. “Is there any experience you had while abroad, which really ruffled your feathers?”

**To remember sth clearly** (etw noch genau vor Augen haben), **pay slip** (Gehaltsabrechnung), **abbreviation** (Abkürzung), **galore** (in Menge), **net** (Netto), **gross (pay)** (Bruttogehalt), **gobbledegook** (Papierdeutsch), **income tax** (Einkommensteuer), **deduction** (Abzug), **be accounted for** (sich erklären lassen mit), **health insurance** (Krankenversicherung), **unemployment benefit** (Arbeitslosengeld), **long-term care insurance**, (Pflegeversicherung), **fair enough** (verständlich), **feat** (Großtat), **pièce de résistance** (Krönung), **to blurt sth out** (ausplappern), **to kid sb** (jdn auf den Arm nehmen), **matter-of-factly** (sachlich), **blasé**, (gleichgültig), **to opt out of sth** (aussteigen), **to interject** (einwerfen), **to donate** (spenden), **to ruffle sb's feather's** (jdn verärgern), **needless to say** (natürlich), **to dash off** (losdüsen) **Administration Office for Citizens** (Bürgeramt)

## Sickie.

Did you know that yesterday was the UK's National Sickie Day? According to the broadsheet newspaper the ‘Telegraph’ yesterday was the worst day in the year for absenteeism as people took/pulled a sickie, primarily because people were taking the day off to attend job interviews.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/newsttopics/howaboutthat/11383086/National-Sickie-Day-Whats-your-excuse-for-phoning-in.html>

The tabloid newspaper the 'Mirror' also covered the story but blame it on people "celebrating the end of Dry January a bit too much" and not feeling up to going into work and taking a duvet day.

<http://www.mirror.co.uk/news/uk-news/national-sickie-day-skiving-expected-5086241>

It begs the question, does Germany have a National Sickie Day? And if so when? Any ideas?

**to take/pull a sickie** (Krankfeiern), **according to** (Laut), **broadsheet newspaper** (Qualitätsblatt), **absenteeism** (Arbeitsausfall/Nichtanwesenheit), **primarily** (hauptsächlich), **to take the day off** (den Tag freinehmen), **to attend job interviews** (Vorstellungsgespräch besuchen), **tabloid newspaper** (Boulevardzeitung), **to cover the story** (hier: das Thema behandeln), **to blame sth on sth** (die Schuld an etw auf etw schieben), **Dry January** (You don't drink alcohol (in the month of January)), **to feel up to sth** (sich etw gewachsen fühlen), **to take a duvet day** (einen Tag blaumachen), **to beg the question** (die Frage aufwerfen).

## Leave.

Some may say the best thing about the job is 'leave' we take/have, but did you know how many different types of 'leave' there are?

First of all, you have 'paid' leave, which makes up your 'annual' leave and we say "you are on leave (holiday/vacation)" during this time. Secondly, there is the so-called 'leave of absence' (permission to be away from work) for a special reason e.g. funeral and the like. 'Compassionate leave' can also be granted, if someone in your family is ill or has died. Speaking of illnesses, you are said to be on 'sick leave' and the doc 'sign you off (work)' for some time. However, you don't want be "absent without leave (AWOL)" cos that'll just land you in the s\*\*t.

Naturally, there is also 'unpaid' leave, which you have to apply for to do something special - extended holiday etc. I have recently watched a very inspiring TED talk on the matter, check it out: Travel more, buy less <https://youtu.be/AICqyZEXM1I>

– great food for thought. A 'sabbatical' is also classed as a form of leave in which you have time off your normal work in order to study or travel.

Parental (maternity or paternity) leave is becoming more and more popular for men, who want to share the joy (and burden) of looking after a newly born. 'Respite' (care) could be understood as a kind of leave in the broadest sense of the word, because the carer is able to get some downtime/rest themselves.

Finally back to work, Have you ever heard of a 'Busman's holiday' or 'gardening leave'? A 'busman's holiday' is the term given to a holiday that is spent doing the same thing that you do at work and 'gardening leave' is, you guessed it have time off to tend to your garden – just kidding. This is a term I heard for the first time just recently and it is a period which somebody does not work but remains employed by a company in order to prevent them working for another company.

QOTD: Referring to the final part of the talk from 15.52, which place(s) would like to travel to?

**To get around to** (dazu kommen, etw zu tun), **'annual' leave** (Jahresurlaub), **"you are on leave"** (holiday/vacation), **'leave of absence'** (Freistellung), **permission** (Erlaubnis), **and the like** (und Ähnliches), **compassionate leave** (Urlaub aus dringenden familiären Gründen), **to grant sth** (gewähren), **speaking of sth** (wo wir gerade von etw sprechen), **to sign sb off (work)** (jdn krankschreiben), **absent without leave (AWOL)** (abwesend ohne Erlaubnis), **to apply for sth** (beantragen), **parental (maternity or paternity) leave** (Elternzeit), **burden** (Last), **respite (care)** (Erholungsurlaub), **in the broadest sense** (im weitesten Sinne), **the carer** (Pfleger(in)), **to tend to sth/sb** (sich um etw kümmern).

## Leaving.

Brendan Rogers (former manager of Liverpool FC) must have seen the writing on the wall, his team wasn't firing on all cylinders and the performances and results reflected that.

Similar to high profile CEOs, members of governments, football coaches live a precarious life, one minute riding the wave of good fortune the next a goner.

Why didn't he, like the former VW CEO not do the right thing, bow out before being thrown out? Step down or resign before being fired or as it's colloquially called 'sacked'! Then, there's the question of compensation – otherwise known as 'severance pay' – for what, messing up in the first place. Thanx a million bucks (Dollar).

We lesser mortals face being made redundant or laid off, when our TOP managers mess up or we resign, quit and jump ship before she starts sinking and we would get the chop anyway.

After a working life dodging the bullet, we finally have the right to go (more or less) on our terms with a 'golden handshake' into the land of permanent leave – retirement.

But for how much longer? I'll still probably be writing these posts at the age of 103 the way things are going. Oh, god forbid, I guess you're thinking, dear Teatime Titbiters.

**To see the writing on the wall** (die Stunde hat geschlagen), **to fire on all cylinders** (hervorragend funktionieren), **to reflect** (etw wiederspiegeln), **precarious** (unsicher), **good fortune** (Glück), **to be a goner** (weg vom Fenster sein), **to bow out** (ausscheiden), **to step down** (zurücktreten), **to resign** (kündigen), **compensation** (Entschädigung), **severance pay** (Abfindung), **to mess sth up** (etw vermässlen), **buck** (Dollar), **we lesser mortals** (Normalsterbliche), **to face sth** (etw ins Auge sehen), **to be made redundant/laid off** (betriebsbedingt kündigen), **to jump ship** (das sinkende Schiff verlassen), **to sink** (untergehen), **to get the chop** (rausfliegen), **to dodge the bullet** (gerade nochmal so davonkommen), **on our terms** (zu unseren Bedingungen), **'golden handshake'** (hohe Abfindung), **leave** (Urlaub), **retirement** (Pension), **god forbid** (Gott bewahre).

# **Contents of WED 1.**

## **Chapter 1. WWW 1 - Learning**

Titbit  
Immersion  
Lurking  
Redundant  
Hyper(poly)glot

## **Chapter 2. The language of 'thingybobs'1 – People.**

The Language of thingybob  
The language of family friends and others  
The language of parenting  
The language of love, couples & marriage  
The language of the early bird and night owl

## **Chapter 3. WWW 2 - work.**

Interview  
Pay slip  
Sickie  
Leave  
Leaving

## **Chapter 4. Language of thingybobs 2 - In the news.**

The language of headline English  
The language of negotiation  
The language of a German politics  
The language of migration  
The language of manipulation

## **Chapter 5. WWW 3 . Words**

Getting to Grips with\* 'get' 1.  
Randomsome 1  
Up your game 1  
3 in the bed  
Confusing words

## **Chapter 6. The language of 'thingybobs' 3 - mixed bag**

The language of liking and disliking  
The language of fear  
The language of betting  
The language of buying a car  
The language of motorways

## **Chapter 7. WWW 4 - business.**

Doable  
Valuable  
Negotiate  
Haggle  
Marketing

## **Chapter 8. Language of 'thingybobs' 4 - rants.**

Fancy a rant

A turncoat Royalist!

A foreigner's take on the reunification

The writing was on the wall.

How would you like your Breggit, David?

## **Chapter 9. WWW 5 – mixed bag.**

Managing meanings

Short

Out

Bother

Splendid & Co

## **Chapter 10. WWW 6 - weird (sounding) words**

Ad-lib

Pussyfoot

One-upmanship

Sugar-coat

Zythum & Zyzzyva

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