

# A DAILY DOZEN-

## A Dozen Items from the Honolulu Daily to Start off-Warm up the ESL Class

by Jason Alter

During the Fall 1974 semester at the English Language Institute, University of Hawaii (Manoa), I taught a section in the Listening Comprehension series, ELI 80. I made it a practice to select a few items from the evening daily in Honolulu, the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin*, with which to enliven the class. I confined these selections to the front page. If the item was in large print, I merely held up the newspaper; otherwise I'd write the item on the board. This particular class was high-level, but I insist that one can utilize the technique at any level. The class included students from Hong Kong, Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Taiwan, Viet Nam, the Republic of China, Korea, and Burma.

Here I list a dozen examples, along with comments on how to use them. Sometimes, there happened to be a picture as well, a ready-made visual aid. There are language-and-culture ramifications. Students react positively to language items from the real world; they learn current vocabulary and usage. Students' evaluations at the end of the semester (anonymously contributed in written form) testify to the efficacy of this technique.

1. **Senate OKs Rocky**
  - a. Note the absence of an apostrophe in "OKs."
  - b. OK backwards is K.O. (knockout)
  - c. Note the penchant in the U.S. for giving nicknames to political leaders.
  - d. Discuss various meanings of "rocky" as an adjective.
2. **Family' in Homeless Catch-22**
  - a. The meaning of Catch-22 here?
  - b. Other examples where a book title can serve as a noun like this?
  - c. Other words with "-less" suffix?
3. **Man of Characters (Picture of new Prime Minister Takeo Miki, practicing traditional calligraphy)**
  - a. Compare "Man of Character" and "Man of Characters."
  - b. How many Chinese characters do you need to know to read a newspaper?
  - c. Meaning of "He's a character"?
4. **Says It May Be Longest Recession Since 1945**
  - a. Pronunciation of "says"?
  - b. Compare "may be" and "maybe."
  - c. Make a sentence with another word ending in "-est."
  - d. Other words ending in "-ion"?
  - e. Other uses of "since"?
5. **Who's lyin' on the table? (Picture of a local lioness being operated on)**
  - a. Compare pronunciation of "lyin'" and "lion."
  - b. Homonym for "who's"?
  - c. Make sentences using both homonyms in "b."
6. **12-Month Rise Worst Since 1947**
  - a. Words that rhyme with "worst"?
  - b. Other expressions like "12-month"?
  - c. "Translate" the headline into "regular" sentence form.

**7. Sugar Workers Offered a Bonus**

- a. Other words starting with the same sound of "su-?"
- b. Who did the offering?
- c. Other words ending with "-us"?

**8. Rocky Agrees to Cut Gifts**

- a. Note the two-word verb "agrees to."
- b. Compare "agrees to" and "agrees with."
- c. Note the semantic ambiguity in "cut."
- d. Words that rhyme with "gifts"?
- e. Other words that end in "-fts"?

**9. Ariyoshi, Doi Close with Big Isle Rally**

- a. Two pronunciations of "close"?
- b. Semantic ambiguity in "Big Isle Rally"?  
(In Hawaii, "Big Isle" refers to the Island of Hawaii.)
- c. Two homonyms for "isle"?

**10. Russians Cut Short Parade**

- a. Words that rhyme with "short"?

- b. Compare the pronunciation of "short" and "sort."
- c. Note the two-word verb "cut short."
- d. Semantic ambiguity in "cut short parade"?

**11. Pan Am & TWA to split Up Routes**

- a. Rearrange the letters of "split" to form another word.
- b. Two pronunciations of "routes"?
- c. Homonyms for each of the two pronunciations of "route"?
- d. Note the two-word verb "split up."

What I'm suggesting is that we can find countless examples of living-English from the daily paper. The teacher can judiciously pick and choose those that fit the particular occasion. Once the students are familiar with the technique, the pace of the class is enhanced immeasurably. One comment leads to another, and learning takes place.