

CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter August, 2019

BABBLE-ON

The story of the Tower of Babel is a mythical account of humanity's loss of unanimity brought about by the collapse of the common language that was in use throughout the known world at that time.



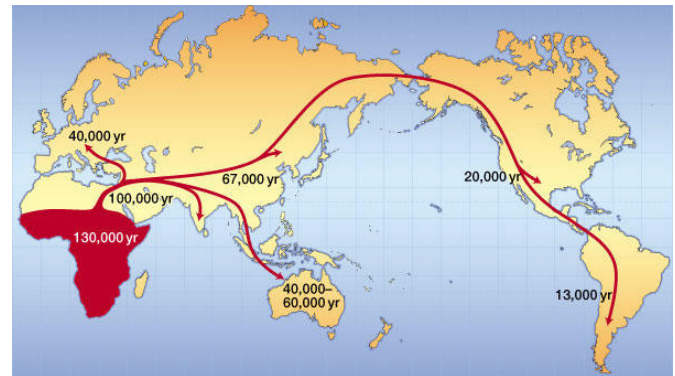
You see according to this legend, the people of Babylon were originally a united, loving and caring people, and very smart too. And, they all spoke the same language. Their king, for some reason, decided that Earth was not enough. He wanted his people to enjoy the pleasures of Heaven as well, so he commissioned a very tall tower to be built all the way up to Heaven. Their God at the time was not pleased with this idea and decided to "throw a spanner in the works." He separated the people by taking their language away from them. As a result, everyone started speaking multiple languages which, of course, sounded like a whole lot of "babel" to anyone trying to understand what was being said. This had a very confusing effect on the workers on the Tower who were now unable to understand each other. Needless to say, the Tower was never finished. Instead, the people split up into separate groups and wandered aimlessly throughout the world not being able to contact or communicate with others outside of their immediate group.

To this day, the word "babel" in English means a confusion of words or sounds, and we refer to the way babies talk, and to some adults when they are not making sense, as "babbling."

Could it be possible that there may be a kernel of truth to this legend?

Geneticists tell us that every single person on the face of the earth today can trace ancestry back to a single tribe of homo-sapiens who migrated out of Africa some 60,000 to 70,000 years ago. One can assume that these original people had some kind of common language; how else could they have cooperated and agree to make those first tentative steps away from their home-land?

Over a period of 10's of thousands of years of separation, adjustment and adaptation to different environments, one would expect people to make changes physically, socially. Each fragmented group's language would have developed differently also. Is this a pointer to some truth in the "Tower of Babel" story?



As long as the people of Babylon could communicate freely with each other, there seemed no limit to what they could achieve. Their God didn't like that prospect very much and acted in accordance with His conscience. Today there are anywhere between 4,000 and 7,000 different languages in the world. But what would happen if all 7 billion of us spoke the same language?

Net News

NET LESSONS: Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

.... Try our *lessons on the net!*

Here's the original T of B story: www.biblestudytools.com/bible-stories/the-tower-of-babel.html

Some Thoughts for the Month



Joshua Says: I read recently that humanity can help alleviate the worse effects of global warming by planting 1 trillion new trees world-wide. That's a lot of trees! Yet already in countries like India, some very large tree-planting projects have been achieved with great success. Modern architecture, notably in parts of China, is also creating buildings that are designed to incorporate space for growing trees, even multi-story constructions. So, how many plants are you growing on *your* balcony?

Junko Says: Recently I heard about a "cooling towel" from America. At first these towels were used exclusively by sportsmen but now they are used by anyone trying to cope with this hot summer weather. First you wet the towel then wring it before wearing it. It brings your body temperature down. The cooling effect is a result of the unique fabric construction of the towel. Once it is wet, the temperature goes down just by waving it. This hot summer makes me feel like trying it out.



Kevin Says: Before I arrived in Japan I did, of course, know a thing or two about it as a country. Thanks mainly to my students I have learnt a whole lot more. It's a very rich culture, yours. We are quite different in many ways, vive le difference they say (it makes life interesting!). Patience, graciousness and worldliness balanced with innocence are things to be proud of as a society and these are some of the things I associate with Japanese life. And as long as we can learn from each other, we have a chance.

Darrin Says: The 1995 Rugby World Cup was hosted by South Africa, and was the first time that all matches would be played in just a single country. It was the first time that South Africa participated in the tournament following the end of their international sports boycott due to the apartheid regime. South Africa won the tournament, defeating New Zealand 15-12 in the final. What happened after the match has become an iconic moment in the history of the sport. Nelson Mandela, wearing a Springbok rugby jersey and baseball cap, presented the Webb Ellis Cup to South African captain François Pienaar to the delight of the capacity crowd. The moment is thought by some to be one of the most famous finals of any sport. The World Cup would also be the last major event of rugby union's amateur era; two months after the tournament, the IRFB opened the sport to professionalism.



Mandcy dit: Au mois d'août, 18 000 personnes au Japon ont attrapé un coup de chaleur. En effet, c'est la canicule, il fait plus de 35 degrés et c'est difficile de faire les choses quotidiennes. Quand il fait troo chaud, les français ont l'habitude de boire une boisson avec beaucoup de glaçons (ou un grand verre de pastis) et s'asseoir sur une terrasse ombragée. Quoi de mieux ? J'attends vos propositions !!

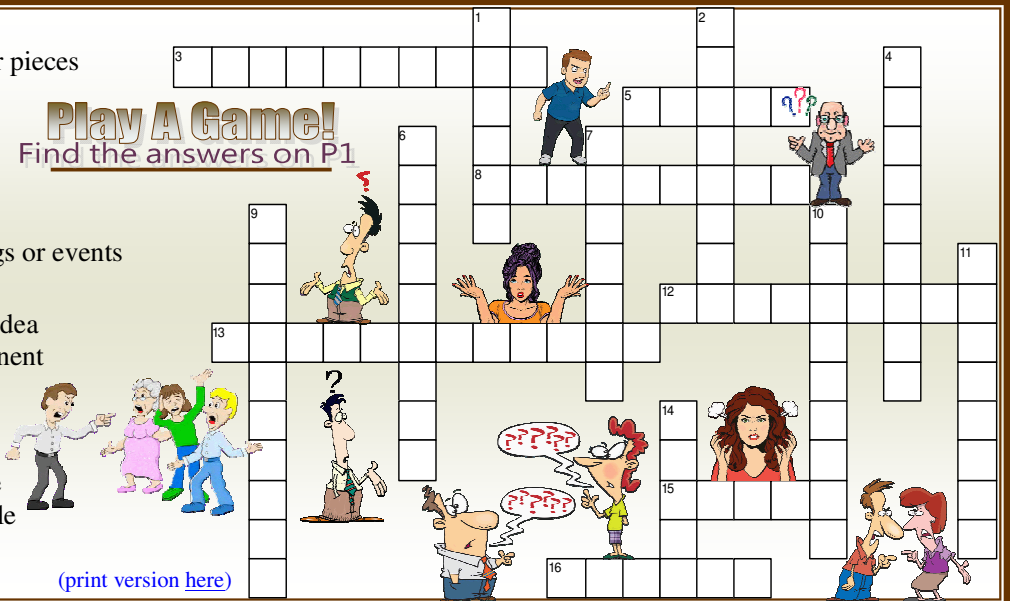
ACROSS

- 3 break up into separate units or pieces
- 5 separate into parts
- 8 as reported or stated
- 12 unsettled, unsure
- 13 given official approval to act
- 15 conform to new conditions
- 16 a story of extraordinary beings or events

DOWN

- 1 the most essential part of an idea
- 2 more than one part or component
- 4 disorder, unclear
- 6 without purpose of direction
- 7 indicator
- 9 the whole extent, everywhere
- 10 full agreement between people
- 11 unnecessary
- 14 follow a line of development

Play A Game!
Find the answers on P1



Some thoughts about the history of (some) words.

It is said that time never stands still and change is the only constant. History, everything we are, everything we do, all going through time and change. Not surprising, that includes the English language. Here are a few words that have danced the dance of change over time:



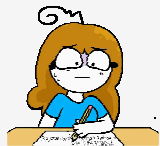
In 1200 the word **SILLY** meant 'pious'. Later, at about the end of the 13th century, it came to mean 'to have pity.' In the 1570's the meaning of 'silly' had transformed to mean 'feeble of mind, lacking reason,' more or less its meaning today



Back in the 1790's if you caught someone telling a lie you'd say they were 'fudging.' The word **FUDGE** comes from Captain Fudge a dishonest seaman of that time. A modern derivative meaning can be found in the game of marbles that kids play. To 'fudge' is to cheat. Another modern meaning is to describe a story made up spontaneously, or at the last minute, to offer a temporary solution for a particular problem. But since the 1890's and up to the present, 'fudge' most commonly refers to a very popular candy in America.



TRAGEDY comes from the Greek "tragodia" meaning the song of the male goat. Lovelorn he may have been, but the ancient Greeks thought goats were crazy and/or sad. During performances of Greek plays, the chorus' would dance around a live goat on stage and then at the end of the play, ritually sacrifice him to their gods! Certainly a tragedy for the goat!



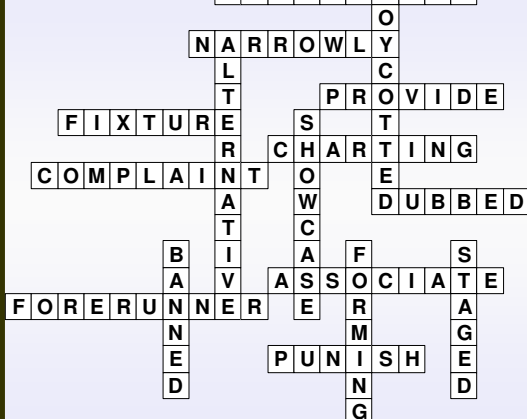
If you were left-handed in ancient Rome, you may not have been well liked. **SINISTER** is Latin for 'of the left' and because most people were right-handed, lefties were considered "bad luck" or "untrustworthy." Further on in time and the word has come to mean something akin to "evil."



And finally, **DAISY** is Old English for the 'day's eye.' It was noted that one particular flower opened its "eye" during the day and shut it at night..., so the name.



SPRING BOOKS



Last Month's puzzle Solution

ACROSS

- 1 a national rugby team
- 3 not by a wide margin
- 5 give what is needed
- 6 a sporting event on a specific date
- 8 keeping a record of something
- 9 an expression of dissatisfaction
- 10 given a nickname
- 14 make a connection with
- 15 coming before
- 16 impose a penalty

DOWN

- 2 refused to do business or to sponsor
- 4 in place of
- 7 show something to best effect
- 11 forbidden
- 12 give shape or identity to
- 13 planned, organized and carried out



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See our notice board, or ask Junko in our office, for the details.