

# CrossTalk

CROSSROADS Language Studio's Newsletter September, 2016

## Is It All Bad News?

Is 2016 the worst year in history? If you follow the news closely you could certainly be forgiven for thinking so. From the beginning of the year there has been a constant stream of bad news.

Terror attacks, Zika virus, Brexit, police shootings in the U.S, Trump, Syria, extreme weather events, and the death of pop icons David Bowie and Prince. It's been an unrelenting year that has many people proclaiming 2016 "the worst year ever."

But are things really that bad, or do we just notice the negative things more these days because we are so much more connected to what's going on in the world?

It's worth remembering that most of the news we consume (nightly TV news, the daily paper, online websites, social media) is produced by businesses interested in one thing above all – making money. These businesses have a vested interest in producing news that people feel they *need* to know about. In order to attract their audience they target their headline news at our *negativity bias* – the tendency to give far more information to negative details, and the *confirmation bias* which is our tendency to selectively look at information that confirms our pre-existing notions, which are typically negative. Next time you are watching the nightly news, take a look . . . the major headlines in the first third of the show will almost exclusively be bad news stories. These organisations understand that we, the consumer, aren't really that captivated by feel-good stories, so these are relegated to the tail end of the show.

So, back to the original question . . . is 2016 really that bad? Statistics would suggest 'no'.



In 2016 you are much less likely to be the victim of a violent crime than at almost any time in the past one hundred years. You are much less likely to be inflicted with a life threatening disease than at any other time in history, and you have more chance of recovering if you are.

For 2016 to be considered the worst year it would have to beat out some real humdingers from history. In **72,000 BCE** a super volcano erupted in Sumatra, plunging the earth into darkness, resulting in food sources dying off. The population of earth plummeted to between 3,000 and 10,000 inhabitants. In **1348** the Black Death swept across Europe killing a third of its population. In **1492** Columbus discovered the Americas. With European occupation of the continent, the combination of genocide and old world diseases wiped out 90% of the indigenous populations by the mid sixteenth century. And of course, we could not leave out The Great War between **1914** and **1918** or indeed WWII between **1939** and **1945**.

So yes, there is plenty of bad news from 2016, but is it the worst year ever? Certainly not!

*Article by Mark*

## Net News

**NET LESSONS:** Too busy to come to CROSSROADS?

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

Ten ancient disaster myths that might be real:

[www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ten-ancient-stories-and-geological-events-may-have-inspired-them-180950347/?no-ist](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/science-nature/ten-ancient-stories-and-geological-events-may-have-inspired-them-180950347/?no-ist)

# Some Thoughts for the Month



**Joshua Says:** This month we welcome a new teacher to Crossroads. Matt is from the northern part of England and has recently been teaching in China. I'm sure many of you will be curious about his home town and, indeed, his experiences in China. Please don't be shy, I'm sure Matt would be glad to tell you all about his experiences, if you ask him.

**Junko Says:** As the Japanese working environment has been changing rapidly with accelerated globalization, a new concept in education has been necessary to cope with the new world. In one estimation, 65% of children who entered elementary school in 2011 will engage in new types of work that do not exist yet. A big part of this reform is in English education. They say the goal is to gain English skills in order to learn other skills. Osaka English Village opened in 2015 and Tokyo Village will open in 2018. I hope this big wave comes to Matsuyama soon.



**Mark Says:** While it might officially already be autumn, it sure doesn't feel like it yet. I was surprised when I walked into a Lawson the other day to see oden already on sale. I love that stuff but it just doesn't feel right to be eating it when it is 33° outside. I am pleased however to see the seasonal autumn beers on sale. These go down very well on a hot & humid day.

**Matt Says:** Hi Everyone! I'm the new English teacher here at Crossroads. For the last two years I have been living in China in a city called Zhangjiagang just outside of Shanghai. This is my first time ever in Japan so I am still getting used to all the new experiences. Looking forward to meeting you all!



**Danielle dit:** Le mois de septembre est pour beaucoup d'élèves (et de professeurs) dans le monde synonyme de rentrée des classes. Il peut parfois être difficile de retourner à l'école après un long été passé tranquille, à se la couler douce. Bien sûr, cela vaut à la fois pour les écoliers et étudiants que pour les professeurs! Combien d'entre eux passeront une nuit blanche avant leur premier jour?

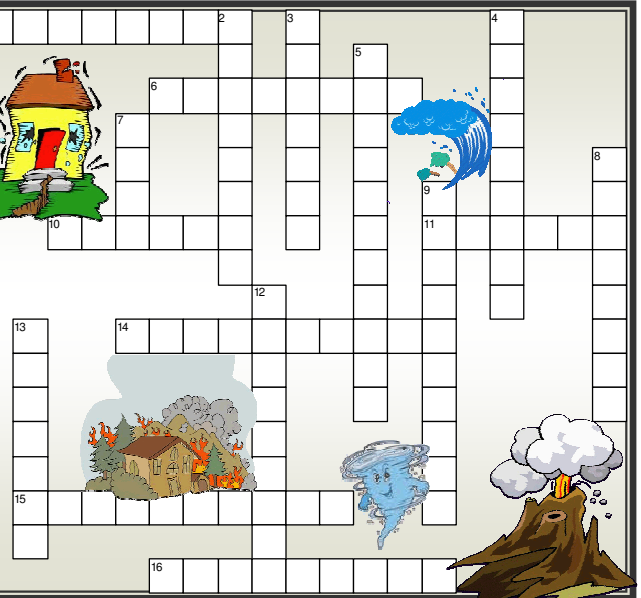
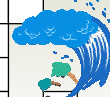
## ACROSS

- 1 dropping or falling suddenly
- 6 unchanging
- 10 fixed and absolute
- 11 vague idea
- 14 stating, announcing, declaring
- 15 strongly attracted
- 16 something remarkably outstanding

## DOWN

- 2 systematic killing of many people
- 3 far beyond normal
- 4 assigned to a lower position
- 5 never stopping or easing up
- 7 influence unfairly
- 8 a general inclination toward something
- 9 people originating in the land they inhabit
- 12 drop sharply
- 13 cause pain or damage

## Play A Game!



(print version [here](#))

## Let's Go to the Shining Island – by S(A)3's Taro

From July 23 to August 4, I visited Sri Lanka. Although it was a business trip, I enjoyed it so much. Today, I will introduce this island to you as an ideal resort. In the local language, Sinhalese, "sri" means "shine" and "lanka" is "land."

I presume most people must associate Sri Lanka with curry. In fact, you can taste various kinds of curry there. While Japanese curry includes several ingredients mixed together (meats, carrots, onions, etc), Sri Lankan curries usually have only one ingredient. They not only use chicken or fish, but also banana or jackfruit. Some guidebooks may tell you to eat curry and rice with your hand. Actually, you don't have to take that seriously because they give tourists spoons and forks at many restaurants. However if you can, "when in Sri Lanka, do as the Sri Lankans do."

If you book a hotel in Sri Lanka, you may choose one in Colombo, the biggest city. However, Colombo itself doesn't have many attractions except for shopping. Therefore, I recommend that you visit other cities, too. First of all, the most famous spot in this country is Sigiriya, at the center of this land. It is an ancient rock fortress where the king resided in the 5<sup>th</sup> century. Unfortunately, in spite of my earnest request, my boss cut it from our itinerary because we didn't have enough time to include a visit there.

When you want to relax on the beach, I'm convinced that Trincomalee will satisfy you. This city is in the northeast of Sri Lanka. There are many resort hotels for foreigners and you can enjoy swimming, fishing and boating there. The only problem there is the heavy afternoon downpours. If you take a nap by the poolside, you may be caught in a sudden storm.

Kandy, an old city, is located in the central area. This city has The Temple of the Tooth, a famous sacred Buddhist temple. On our way from Colombo to Kandy, you can drop by Pinnalawa, where there is an Elephant Orphanage. It accommodates more than 50 elephants. You can have your picture taken with them.

I believe you will find it easy and comfortable to stay in Sri Lanka because many people can understand English. Maybe it is because this country was colonized and influenced by England. Most banners and signs in the streets are written in both Sinhalese (the official language) and English. Furthermore, all of the people I met there had a good sense of hospitality. I'm sure you will be moved by their generosity and kindness.



## A Day In Mitsuhamu with Yufuko from S(b)

I went to Mitsuhamu with a comic band. The band's name is "Sugio Sugiyama and Sweet Memories." Sugio is the vocalist in the band. He has a funny face and a funny voice, and he sings famous old Japanese songs by Seiko Matsuda. There are other instrumentalists in the group; a guitarist, bass player, accordion, sax, chorus girls, a guard, attendant and me! I am an actress in the band. I pretend to be a crazy fan of Sugio who goes by the name of Mrs. Matsuhana. She (I) always follows Sugio and presents him with a bouquet of red sweetpeas. She is a strange woman! The band has musicians and actors and an actress. They play music and perform a funny show on stage. When we were there we went to Mitsui, the old town, to walk around and take pictures. It was a very funny day!



### ACROSS

- 4 bush
- 7 property, especially land
- 8 a bitter flavor (especially in wine or tea)
- 10 left in liquid to extract flavor
- 11 not fresh
- 12 mostly
- 13 a cup of tea
- 14 to destroy or make worthless
- 15 a drink made by boiling

### Last Month's puzzle Solution

#### DOWN

- 1 fruit such as lemon or orange
- 2 false or mistaken belief
- 3 a pleasant odor
- 5 combined into one
- 6 a type of flavor in some drinks
- 9 easily broken, damaged or destroyed
- 11 a small branch



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