

3 Worksheet on Visual Literacy: Signs in English in Foreign Countries

Text: Broken English (p. 49: picture), from: David Beal, *Britain in Europe*, Viewfinder Topics New Edition plus (München: Langenscheidt, 2010).

A SIGNS IN ENGLISH IN FOREIGN COUNTRIES

The English language as a lingua franca enables people to communicate with each other around the world. However, wrong grammar and/or words can cause severe misunderstandings.

The internet is full of websites which show funny signs and public notices, written by people with a poor command of English. The tasks will make use of some of them.

B SIGNS IN ENGLISH

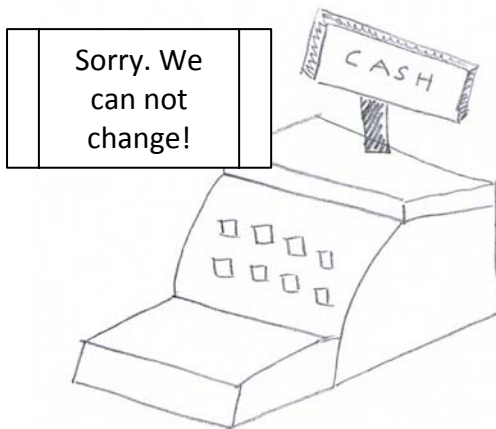
1 SIGNS IN THE STUDENTS' BOOK

1. The wooden board in Mexico (p. 49): Explain why this sign is amusing.

2. Sign in a takeaway restaurant (p. 50): Rewrite the sentence at the bottom in correct English.

2 MORE FUNNY SIGNS

1. What makes the sign funny? Rewrite it in correct English.



Source:

<http://www.innocentenglish.com/funny-english-mistakes-bloopers/other-funny-signs.html>

2. What was this Chilean trying to say in the public notice?



If you see a woman laboring, go to a hospital right away!

- ☐ If you see a pregnant woman who is about to give birth to a baby, **you** must go to a hospital at once.
- ☐ If you see a pregnant woman who is about to give birth to a baby, **she** must go to a hospital at once.
- ☐ If you see a woman working, **you** must go to a hospital at once.
- ☐ If you see a woman working, **she** must go to a hospital at once.

Source:

<http://www.innocentenglish.com/funny-english-mistakes-bloopers/other-funny-signs.html>

3. This tip for tourists in the lobby of a Moscow hotel across from a Russian Orthodox monastery is highly interesting. What does seem to say and what does it really intend to say?

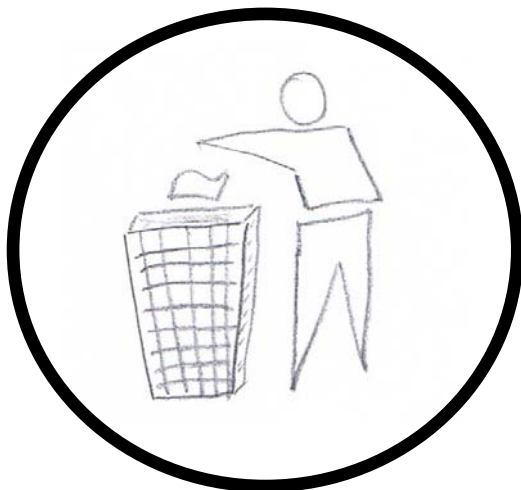


"YOU ARE WELCOME TO VISIT THE CEMETERY WHERE FAMOUS RUSSIAN AND SOVIET COMPOSERS, ARTISTS, AND WRITERS ARE BURIED DAILY EXCEPT THURSDAY."

Source:

<http://mylanguages.org/humor.php>

4. For Europeans, Japanese is really difficult to learn. And obviously some Japanese people also have problems with correct English. This sign can be found on rubbish bins in an amusement park in Osaka, Japan. Explain the sign's unintentional irony.



PLEASE WASTE!

For the photo, please copy and paste this hyperlink into your browser:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/vlumi/404883011/in/pool-36685493@N00/>

5. Explain the mistake in the Swiss wine menu and rewrite the slogan in good English.



Source:

<http://www.alphadictionary.com/fun/mistranslation.html>

(Daniela Pröls)