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DARIYA DZIUBA

NEWSLETTER #17



SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION

10/12/2010

SOME CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

You are welcome to join our "Business English Tips" group. In the group you will be able to communicate with other people who learn English. You will share your ideas about learning and also study something new. To make the participation more complete, I invite you to take part in the discussions and, of course, work on the newsletter during the two weeks you have.

Here are some tips of participation in the discussions:



Be polite



Answer the questions directly and post only relevant information



Check your post before sending it (please don't reply to the e-mails. Create a new message when answering the discussion question from your e-mail address)



Be understanding and accept other people's positions



Remember that we all study, so don't correct or laugh at any mistakes



Enjoy the opportunity you have

P.S. I will be very glad if you could tell other people about this newsletter. It's free, it's professional and it's about English. I'm sure that a lot of people will be glad to use this opportunity. To invite your friends join our newsletter, please, ask them to write to the following e-mail address: info@enrucafe.com

SPECIAL CHRISTMAS EDITION



Hello everyone,
 This is a special Christmas issue where you will find ideas on how to write business Christmas greeting letters, a Christmas story and some information about Christmas trees business. The grammar section is not very big in this newsletter, because the main idea of this holiday is to relax and stay with your family, not learn grammar and do grammar activities. So, relax and enjoy your deserved days off.
 Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Dariya Dziuba

GRAMMAR

Exercise. Sentence structure.*

This section is especially dedicated to the English sentence structure because it is one of the most difficult areas of English. Here you will have a possibility to train yourself in making sentences from the given words. As usually, you can check your answers at the end of the newsletter.

1. face/the/xmas/crush/shopping/I'd/rather/go/then/the/nightmare/online/of.

2. year/I/did/every/do/bit/of/same/my/Last/online/and/this/year/I/shopping/will/the.

3. the/Christmas/rush/Sit/and/back/put/on/with/whilst/a/the/music/cup/of/tea/is/far/more/doing/civilized.

4. shop/worried/I/in/shops/the/Internet/as/I/am/about/security/on.

5. retailers/to/security/reputable/online/Sticking/reduces/the/worries/of.

6. expect/cheaper/the/prices/much/convenient/online/I/online/is/not/as/shopping/finding/as/one/can/be/would/Although/am.

7. essential/a/full-time/job/Christmas/With/and/I/find/internet/2/young/children/shopping.

8. shop/music/online/shops/because/time/I/Christmas/especially/I/can't/stand/the/they/play/in/at.

9. I/never/buy/them/would/clothes/hassle/have/online/return/because/you/to/just/try/on/and/it/is/a/to.

10. security/with/don't/about/companies/I/reputable/worry.

The sentences were taken at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/business/4481568.stm>



BRAIN TEASERS

At job interviews and at some business schools brainteasers are quite popular now. That is why I decided to include some of them into this newsletter. From now on you are going to find two brainteasers in every newsletter. Check the answers to the teasers at the end of the newsletter.*

- 1) Three fat ladies stood under an umbrella but none of them got wet. Why didn't any of them get wet?
- 2) We live in a large tower block, 10 floors high. My 5 year old son goes to school each day using the lift from the 10th floor to the ground floor. However, when he returns in the evening, he uses the lift to get to the 5th floor and then uses the stairs for the remaining 5 floors. Why?

Source: <http://www.woodlands-junior.kent.sch.uk/fun.html>



SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS SKILLS: How to Write Business Christmas Letters & Cards *Business Holiday Cards & Letters For Everyone*

At the end of the year, it's customary for businesses to send holiday greetings or letters to clients, vendors, and other business associates. But what should you write that will sound professional and sincere without offending anyone's religious sensibilities? Here are some ideas for writing business Christmas wishes for your cards and letters.

Sample Business Christmas Letter

If you use your own company letterhead or other Christmas letter paper to send your holiday greetings, you'll need to write a short letter to express your wishes. Here is a sample business holiday letter you can customize to suit your needs.

"Dear (Customer Name),

As the holiday season approaches, we'd like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued partnership. It is business associates like you who make our jobs a pleasure and keep our company successful.

May your holiday season and the new year be filled with much joy, happiness and success. We look forward to working with you in the coming year and hope our business relationship continues for many years to come.

Happy holidays!

(Your Company Name)"



Christmas Cards Sayings

Phrases for your holiday cards

If you're sending preprinted holiday cards rather than letters, you will only need a good phrase or two for your card. But finding the right words to include in a business holiday card can be harder than creating something for your friends and family, as you probably don't know your clients and merchants as well. Here are some safe phrases you can include in cards for business colleagues without fear of offending most people. Here are some business Christmas wishes you can use.

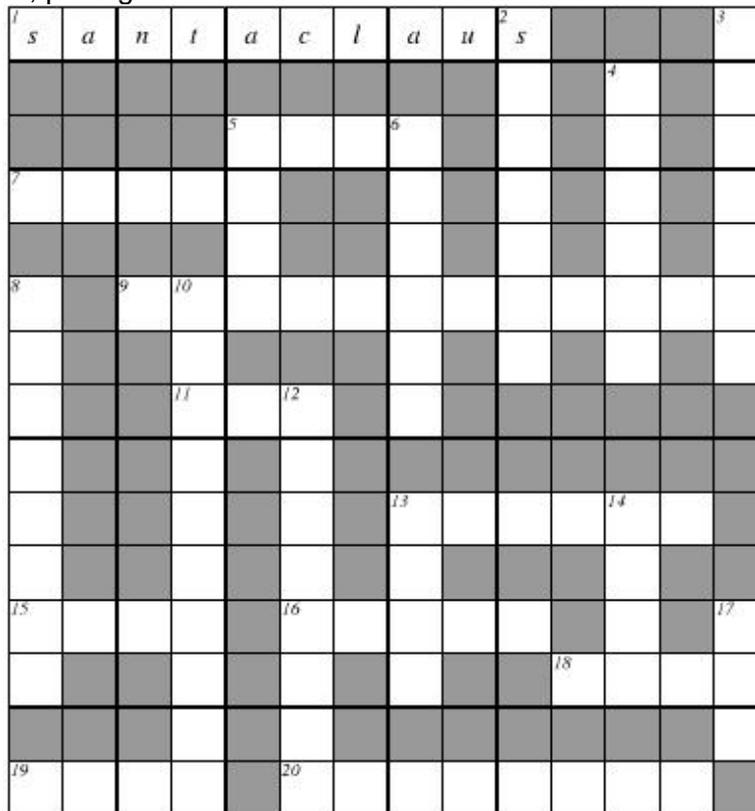
- Best wishes for a happy and prosperous New Year from (your company name)
- Best wishes for the holidays and for prosperity throughout the coming year
- Season's greetings and best wishes for the New Year
- All of us at (your company name) join in sending season's greetings with all good wishes for the new year
- In appreciation of our association during the past year, everyone at (your company name) extends our very best wishes for a wonderful holiday season
- To our customers and friends, we at (your company name) extend our best wishes for a joyous holiday season and prosperous new year
- Warmest wishes for a happy holiday season and a wonderful new year
- Wishing you a joyous holiday season and a year of happiness
- Everyone at (your company name) joins in sending season's greetings and good wishes for the new year
- All of us at (your company name) join in saying "thank you" and wishing you a happy holiday and prosperous new year
- At the close of another year, we gratefully take time to wish you a happy holiday season and prosperous new year

Source: <http://www.squidoo.com/how-to-write-business-christmas-letters>



BUSINESS CROSSWORD

This is not a business crossword; it is a Christmas crossword for you to solve. As usually, answer all the questions you have here, putting them either across or down. Good luck!



Across

1. He's old and fat. He likes to wear red clothes. He brings children their presents on Christmas Day.
5. It's cold and white.
7. This is the name of a Christmas carol. *Silent* what?
8. What is the name of the day before Christmas Day?
11. What is Santa Claus' favorite color?
13. Many people go there on Christmas Day. They go there to pray, and to sing carols.
15. It's green and brown. People put presents under it and open them on Christmas Day.
16. On Christmas Day, we say "Happy Christmas!" What's another word for Happy?
18. You can see this in a church. People ring it.
19. On January first, we say "Happy New ...!"
20. What kind of animal is Rudolph? Rudolph the red-nosed what?

Down

2. This is something you make with snow. It looks like a man.
3. How does Santa Claus enter a house? Through what?
4. Many people eat this bird on Christmas Day.
5. You can see this at night in the sky.
6. In what season is Christmas?
8. Children receive these on Christmas Day.
10. How often does Santa Claus work?
12. In what month is Christmas?
13. This is something the mailman brings at Christmas. He puts it through the letter box.
14. It's sweet. We eat it on Christmas Day.
17. Santa Claus isn't young. He's what?

Source: <http://www.docstoc.com/docs/15373632/Christmas-crossword>



BUSINESS STORIES AND TALES

The Big Wheel

In September 1960, I woke up one morning with six hungry babies and just 75 cents in my pocket. Their father was gone.

The boys ranged from three months to seven years; their sister was two. Their Dad had never been much more than a presence they feared. Whenever they heard his tires crunch on the gravel driveway they would scramble to hide under their beds. He did manage to leave \$15 a week to buy groceries.

Now that he had decided to leave, there would be no more beatings, but no food either. If there was a welfare system in effect in southern Indiana at that time, I certainly knew nothing about it.

I scrubbed the kids until they looked brand new and then put on my best homemade dress. I loaded them into the rusty old 51 Chevy and drove off to find a job.

The seven of us went to every factory, store and restaurant in our small town. No luck. The kids stayed, crammed into the car and tried to be quiet while I tried to convince whomever would listen that I was willing to learn or do anything. I had to have a job. Still no luck. The last place we went to, just a few miles out of town, was an old Root Beer Barrel drive-in that had been converted to a truck stop. It was called The Big Wheel. An old lady named Granny owned the place and she peeked out of the window from time to time at all those kids. She needed someone on the graveyard shift, 11 at night until seven in the morning. She paid 65 cents an hour and I could start that night. I raced home and called the teenager down the street that baby-sat for people. I bargained with her to come and sleep on my sofa for a dollar a night. She could arrive with her pajamas on and the kids would already be asleep. This seemed like a good arrangement to her, so we made a deal.

That night when the little ones and I knelt to say our prayers we all thanked God for finding Mommy a job.

And so I started at The Big Wheel. When I got home in the mornings I woke the baby-sitter up and sent her home with one dollar of my tip money -- fully half of what I averaged every night.

As the weeks went by, heating bills added another strain to my meager wage. The tires on the old Chevy had the consistency of penny balloons and began to leak. I had to fill them with air on the way to work and again every morning before I could go home. One bleak fall morning, I dragged myself to the car to go home and found four tires in the back seat. New tires! There was no note, no nothing, just those beautiful brand new tires. Had angels taken up residence in Indiana? I wondered. I made a deal with the owner of the local service station. In exchange for his mounting the new tires, I would clean up his office. I remember it took me a lot longer to scrub his floor than it did for him to do the tires.

I was now working six nights instead of five and it still wasn't enough. Christmas was coming and I knew there would be no money for toys for the kids. I found a can of red paint and started repairing and painting some old toys. Then I hid them in the basement so there would be something for Santa to deliver on Christmas morning. Clothes were a worry too. I was sewing patches on top of patches on the boys pants and soon they would be too far gone to repair.

On Christmas Eve the usual customers were drinking coffee in The Big Wheel. These were the truckers, Les, Frank, and Jim, and a state trooper named Joe. A few musicians were hanging around after a gig at the Legion and were dropping nickels in the pinball machine. The regulars all just sat around and talked through the wee hours of the morning and then left to get home before the sun came up.

When it was time for me to go home at seven o'clock on Christmas morning I hurried to the car. I was hoping the kids wouldn't wake up before I managed to get home and get the presents from the basement and place them under the tree. (We had cut down a small cedar tree by the side of the road down by the dump.) It was still dark and I couldn't see much, but there appeared to be some dark shadows in the car -- or was that just a trick of the night? Something certainly looked different, but it was hard to tell what. When I reached the car I peered warily into one of the side windows.

Then my jaw dropped in amazement. My old battered Chevy was filled full to the top with boxes of all shapes and sizes. I quickly opened the driver's side door, scrambled inside and knelt in the front facing the back seat. Reaching back, I pulled off the lid of the top box. Inside was a whole case of little blue jeans, sizes 2-10! I looked inside another box: It was full of shirts to go with the jeans. Then I peeked inside some of the other boxes: There were candy and nuts and bananas and bags of groceries. There was an enormous ham for baking, and canned vegetables and potatoes. There was pudding and Jell-O and cookies, pie filling and flour. There was a whole bag of laundry supplies and cleaning items. And there were five toy trucks and one beautiful little doll. As I drove back through empty streets as the sun slowly rose on the most amazing Christmas Day of my life, I was sobbing with gratitude. And I will never forget the joy on the faces of my little ones that precious morning.

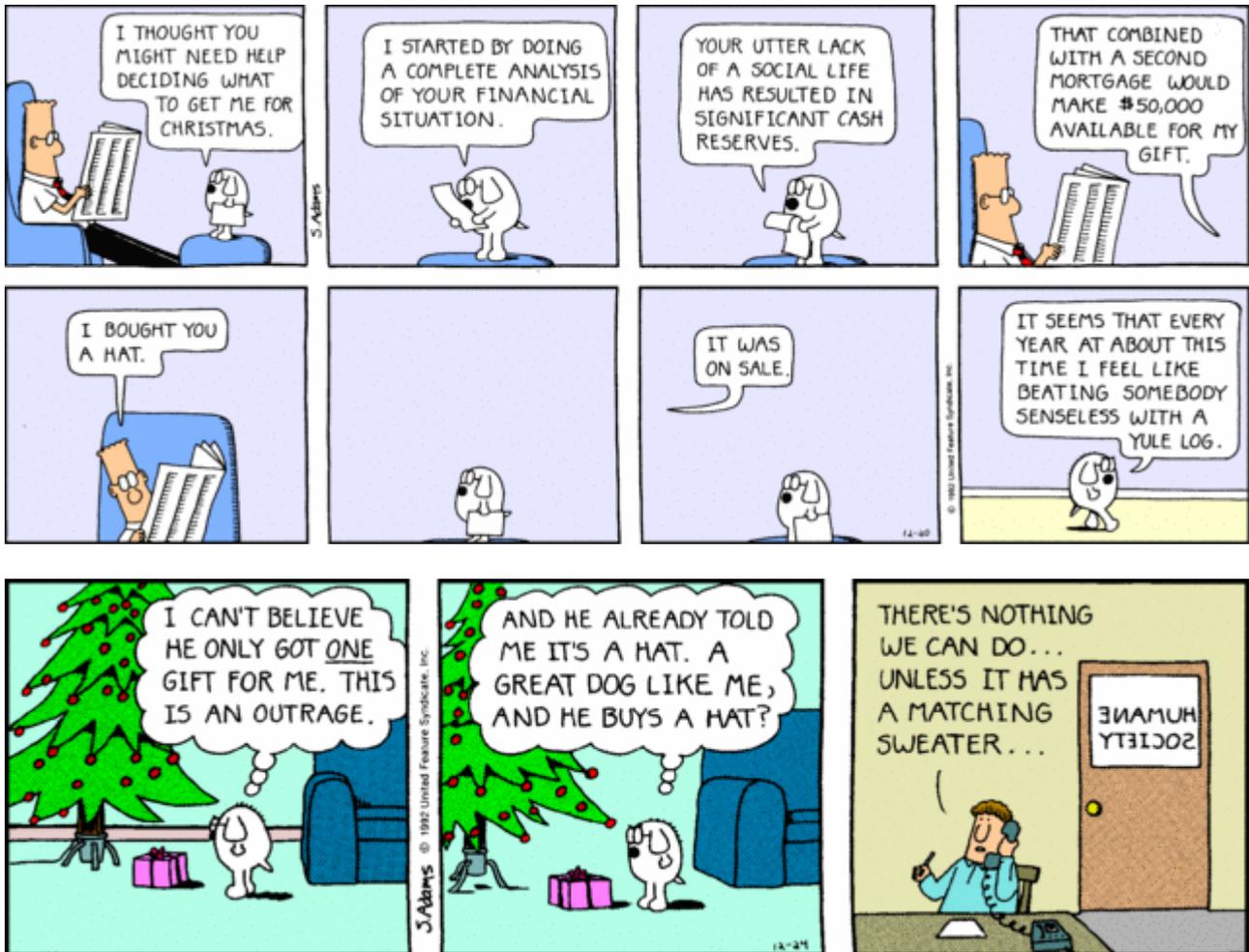
Yes, there were angels in Indiana that long-ago December. And they all hung out at The Big Wheel truck stop.

Source: <http://www.butlerwebs.com/holidays/christmas-stories.htm>



BUSINESS COMIC STRIPS: JUST FOR FUN

Scott Adams



Source: <http://dilbert.com/strips/comic/1992-12-20/>



USEFUL EXPRESSIONS: Christmas quotes and sayings

- Christmas comes but once a year.
- Christmas comes but once a year, but Hallmark makes sure it lasts three months.
- In the New Year, may your right hand always be stretched out in friendship, never in want.
- Your Merry Christmas may depend on what others do for you. But your Happy New Year depends on what you do for others.
- New Year's Resolution: To tolerate fools more gladly, provided this does not encourage them to take up more of my time. James Agate
- Many people look forward to the New Year for a new start on old habits.
- Always bear in mind that your own resolution to succeed is more important than any one thing. Abraham Lincoln
- May all your troubles last as long as your New Year's resolutions. Joey Adams
- Be always at war with your vices, at peace with your neighbors, and let each New Year find you a better man. Benjamin Franklin

Sources: <http://www.saidwhat.co.uk/listproverb/C>

<http://quotations.about.com/od/specialdays/a/newyear2.htm>

<http://www.businesspundit.com/25-new-years-quotes-to-ring-in-2010/>



TEXT TO READ AND THINK ABOUT

Inside the \$1 Billion Christmas Tree Business

A Christmas tree is synonymous with the holiday season as much as gift-giving overload; fun but mildly dysfunctional family get-togethers; and otherwise cringe-worthy but enjoyable "seasonal" music. But do you know where your tree comes from?

Should you have gotten a fancy plastic one with pre-attached lights? Are millions of real tree carcasses that end up in dumpsters January 1st really better for the environment? And who are those scruffy out-of-towners on New York City and other urban corners selling "real Canadian" firs?

We'll tell you.

First, some history

The use of evergreens as a "symbol and celebration of life during Winter Solstice celebrations" started in ancient Roman and Egyptian times. It evolved over the centuries to be incorporated into Christmas celebrations in the Germanic areas of Europe, according to the National Christmas Tree Association.

Christmas trees as we know them have been around for more than 500 years.

According to the NCTA, the first decorated Christmas tree was in Riga, Latvia in 1510. Early Christmas trees were decorated with paper, fruits, and sweets.

By 1531, the first retail Christmas tree lots are started in German cities.

In 1777, the tradition of the Christmas tree is brought to colonial America by Hessian troops fighting for Britain in the Revolution War.

Trees made their way to New York City in 1851, when Mark Carr opened a retail Christmas tree lot in the city, the first in the United States.

The first White House Christmas tree was brought in by President Franklin Pierce in 1856.

A big industry

Each year, 30 to 35 million American families get a holiday tree, according to the NCTA.

Virtually all of them — roughly 98% — come from farms. There are close to 350 million Christmas trees currently growing on tree farms in the U.S., using about 350,000 acres.

There are close to 15,000 Christmas tree farms in the U.S. and more than 100,000 people employed full or part-time in the industry.

The U.S. retail market was worth \$1.03 billion in 2008, according to the consumer tracking survey commissioned by NCTA and conducted by Harris Interactive.

Made in the USA?

Significant amounts of Christmas trees bought in the U.S. come from Canada.

According to the Canadian Christmas Tree Growers Association, the country harvests approximately 5.5 million Christmas trees annually.

In 2008, Canada exported 1.8 million trees, worth \$34.2 million, according to the Canadian Government. Of that amount, nearly \$32 million worth were exported to the U.S.

Canadian trees also go to Central and South America (especially Mexico) and the Caribbean islands.

Despite the exports, Canada also imports U.S. trees. According to the USDA Foreign Agricultural Service, Mexico is the fourth largest market for U.S. Christmas tree exports behind the Netherlands, Belgium and Canada.

Mexico recently levied a 20% tax on U.S. Christmas trees in retaliation for a NAFTA trucking spat, making traditionally more expensive Canadian furs, which remain duty-free, more attractive.

Mexico has also started to grow its own trees, according to the USDA, and hopes to rid itself of imported trees one day.

The real deal?

A sizable number forgo the traditional real tree for a fake.



Last year, all sales were down, especially for artificial trees. According to an NCTA poll, U.S. consumers purchased 28.2 million farm-grown trees (down 10%) and 11.7 million artificial trees in 2008 (down 35%).

Says the NCTA: "Many factors can influence total trees purchased, including harvest conditions, weather conditions, number of consumers traveling for the holidays and even the number of days between Thanksgiving and Christmas."

Don't be boring

Artificial trees come in many colors and shapes.

Retail sites like Treetopia.com sell pink, blue and American flag trees. Eighty percent of artificial trees worldwide are manufactured in China, according to the U.S. Commerce Department.

International companies like Polygroup employ thousands of workers at multi-million square-foot factories that pump out hundreds of different types of trees made of plastics and metals.

As a report in *Slate* noted, that includes green, gold, silver, flocked, frosted, pre-lighted, and fiber-optic. Some even "spray snow, some have real pine cones, some play music, some rotate, and some count down to New Year's and then launch into 'Auld Lang Syne.'"

Cost analysis

Every year, many decide between real and fake trees, but it's a tricky calculation.

Two industry associations try and push consumers in either direction. The NCTA, which represents the real tree farmers, emphasizes the irreplaceable aesthetics and environmental sustainability of natural firs.

On the other hand, the American *Christmas Tree Association* notes the higher costs over time and potential dangers — fire, pollen, mold — of real trees.

The ACTA says that based on a ten year analysis, the "purchase of a single pre-lit artificial Christmas tree costs 70% less than the purchase of 10 real Christmas trees over the same period. With many consumers keeping their artificial tree for 20 years or more, the savings are even greater."

The footprint

Artificial trees are, well, artificial, but are they better for the environment?

A study sponsored by the ACTA (which represents fake tree businesses) found that the carbon footprint of artificial trees was actually lower.

"Owning an artificial Christmas tree is healthier for the environment over a 10 year period than using real trees," notes the ACTA, which included "analyzing each stage of the life cycle of natural Christmas trees, from seedling through commercial farming, cultivation and harvesting, transport to retail, transport to consumer homes, and finally transport and disposal. The study also examined the manufacturing of an artificial tree including resource harvesting, raw material transport, each stage of the manufacturing process, transport to retail, transport to consumer homes, and finally transport and disposal."

The NCTA fires back on its site: "That's a very short-sighted perspective. According to research, most fake trees are only used 6 to 9 years before they're disposed. Even if you would use one for 20 years or more, it will eventually be thrown away and end up in a landfill. And unlike Real Trees, which are biodegradable and recyclable, fake trees are always a burden to the environment."

Or just cut one yourself

Enterprising tree seekers can forget the farm versus fake debate and cut their own.

U.S. national parks sell cutting permits, usually for \$10 or less.

As *NPR's Marketplace* noted recently, the program existed since the late 1940's, but the Forest Service says permit sales have increased 50 percent in the last two years. Maybe it's the recession.

Source: <http://gawker.com/5433155/inside-the-1-billion-christmas-tree-business>



VOCABULARY TO THE TEXT

- **cringe-worthy** (adjective) – causing extreme embarrassment; *Ex. They played cringe-worthy "seasonal" music.*
- **scruffy** (adjective) – untidy looking; *Ex. Her car looked very scruffy inside with oil stains all over the seats.*
- **Winter Solstice celebrations** (expression) – time when the night is longer than the day; *Ex. Romans used to celebrate Winter Solstice.*
- **Christmas tree lots** (expression) – outlets where they sell Christmas trees; *Ex. The first Christmas*

tree lots were opened in 1851 in N.Y.

- **levy** (verb) – impose; *Ex. Mexico recently levied a 20% tax on U.S. Christmas trees.*
- **retaliation** (noun) – action that a person takes against somebody who has harmed them in some way; *Ex. Do not take any retaliation against any employee if you do not want to be sued afterwards.*
- **spat** (noun) – a short argument or disagreement about something unimportant; *Ex. Because of that spat about some minor terms and conditions of our contract we had to freeze our negotiations.*
- **'Auld Lang Syne'** – a Scottish poem, written by Robert Burns and set to the tune of a traditional folk song. You can listen to that song here: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=acxnmaVTIZA>
- **fire back** (phrasal verb) – respond, react; *Ex. They fired back in New York Times in order to deny their complicity in the case.*
- **landfill** (noun) – a place where wastes and rubbish are kept; *Ex. According to the official data, fake Christmas trees usually end up in a landfill in six years.*
- **fake tree** (expression) – an artificial tree; *Ex. More and more people buy fake trees nowadays.*
- **NCTA** – National Christmas Tree Association
- **ACTA** – The American Christmas Tree Association
- **USDA** – United States Department of Agriculture
- **NAFTA** – North American Free Trade Agreement



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Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

