

Re: So it is true...

Source: <http://sci.tech-archive.net/Archive/sci.lang/2005-12/msg00311.html>

- *From:* "Peter T. Daniels" <grammatim@xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx>
 - *Date:* Sun, 04 Dec 2005 15:24:23 GMT
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Seán O'Leathlóbhair wrote:

>

> Peter T. Daniels wrote:

>> Seán O'Leathlóbhair wrote:

>>>

>>> Peter T. Daniels wrote:

>>>> Seán O'Leathlóbhair wrote:

>>>

>>>> There is now a Scottish Parliament with a moderate amount of power and

>>>> a Welsh Assembly with rather less. I would guess that even the

>>>> Scottish Parliament has rather less power than one of your States. The

>>>> Northern Ireland Assembly is currently suspended. Oddly, there is no

>>>> government at this level in England. The next level above county is

>>>> the United Kingdom. So, today at least, England probably has a weaker

>>>> claim to nationhood than the others.

>>>>

>>>> So you're adopting the American usage!

>>>>

>>>> Not really since, as I mentioned above, the word nation is mostly used

>>>> in a sporting context. I think that the official term for these

>>>> governments is: regional assemblies. This is probably to dodge the

>>>> difficult question of whether they are nations.

>>>>

>>>> In Britain, perhaps the word "nation" is mostly used in a "sporting"

>>>> context, but perhaps not elsewhere.

>>>>

>>>> To make things a bit more precise, I only meant that referring to

>>>> England, Wales etc as nations is primarily limited to sports. It is

>>>> used for further away places. At a guess, the usage here is similar to

>>>> that in the US.

>>>>

>>>>> If you are offered British citizenship then you will need to swear an

>>>>> oath of allegiance

>>>>>

>>>>> to the Monarch, right? not to the State?

>>>>>

>>>>> Why the capital S?

>>>>>

>>>>> Parallelism with Monarch.

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> So why the capital M? I would not use that either. I would regard the
> word "monarch" as the name of a job or role and no more deserving of a
> capital than doctor, teacher, garbage man etc. Despite being a
> "subject of Her Majesty", I don't support it and don't dignify it any
> more than I have to.

The Chicago Manual of Style and the New York Times style guide prescribe the capital letter when the referent is a single individual.

Dumbya is the 43rd president. The President is dumb.

>>> Yes but the monarch represents the state so it is not a significant
>>> distinction. There are often debates on how rich the queen is. A
>>> significant issue is what she owns personally and what belongs to the
>>> job. Does she own Buckingham Palace? Could she sell it? Similarly,
>>> the difference, if any, between an oath to the queen and the state is
>>> debatable. Of course some see a difference, most notably NI
>>> politicians who object to British rule.

>>

>> AIUI, the Queen has subjects while the rest of the world has citizens.

>

> Yet my British passport refers to me as a citizen.

When did the usage change? Perhaps it has to do with the demise of the Empire.

>>>>>> The sense that I meant was an area under a particular government. Here
>>>>>> is the first definition from the Cambridge Online Dictionary.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> 1 [C] a country, especially when thought of as a large group of people
>>>>>> living in one area with their own government, language, traditions,
>>>>>> etc:

>>

>>>>>> 2 [S] a large group of people of the same race who share the same
>>>>>> language, traditions and history, but who might not all live in one
>>>>>> area: the Navajo nation

>>>>>>

>>>>>> What are [C] and [S] introducing these definitions?

>>>>>>

>>>>>> (And what does Cambridge think "race" means?)

>>>>>>

>>>>>> I cannot speak for Cambridge but it is an online dictionary so you
>>>>>> could have a look yourself.

>>>>>>

>>>>>> As you should know by now, I don't click links, because when I do,
>>>>>> either it takes a very long time for the website to resolve itself and
>>>>>> then it doesn't have anything useful anyway, or else it all goes blooey
>>>>>> right away. (Publishers' websites tend to be particularly picky.)

>>>>

>>>> Well, I don't do research for others if it is very easy for them to do

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- >>> it themselves. I could copy and paste the dictionary's definition for
- >>> race but since it would be so easy for you to follow the link and see
- >>
- >> I just explained that it isn't easy.
- >
- > You are an enthusiastic user of some internet functions so your
- > reluctance to use the web is surprising. Young children find it easy.
- > Many older people don't but you are the first I have encountered that
- > is happy to use some internet functions but not the web. The converse,
- > happy to use the web only, is common.

I go to websites when needed. What I don't do is click links provided in newsgroups. (Especially if their nature is concealed by "tinyurl" or some such.)

- >> Why won't you tell me what [C] and [S] mean?
- >
- > In my first reply after that question, I just missed it. Later, when I
- > noticed it, I did not answer since I did not know the answer and did
- > not have the time to check. I have now tried and unfortunately I could
- > not, in a reasonable time, find the answer. Maybe they are hoping that
- > we will go and buy the hard copy. Nouns are usually followed by [C] or
- > [U] or both. It seems likely that they indicate countable and
- > uncountable. [S] seems rarer and I cannot guess its possible meaning.
- > Here for example, is one of the entries for race.

So you discovered I'm right about the inutility of clicking links.

- > race (PEOPLE) Show phonetics
- > noun [C or U]
- > a group, especially of people, with particular similar physical
- > characteristics, who are considered as belonging to the same type, or
- > the fact of belonging to such a group:
- > People of many different races were living side by side.
- > Discrimination on grounds of race will not be tolerated.
- > An increasing number of people in the country are of mixed race (= with
- > parents of different races).

Does it go on to explain it's a "loaded" (cf. Dwight Bolinger) word and ought to be used with great care?

- >>> it for yourself, I won't. If you don't like following links, try a
- >>> good bookshop or library, you should be able to find the real thing.
- >>
- >> Erm, no, it's not likely that any British dictionary, let alone
- >> "Learners" ones, would be available in an American bookstore _or_
- >> library; who would buy or consult them?
- >
- > Fair point on the bookshops. I have been in a few American bookshops

We don't have bookshops, we have bookstores, as I tacitly indicated in

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my reply.

> and I was disappointed by them. Once, with some time to kill in a
> small city, I decided to buy an American dictionary. I could find only
> one bookshop in the downtown area and it only had pocket dictionaries.

Would you care to identify the city and the store and the year?

Over the past two decades or so, the national chains (Borders and Barnes & Noble, and formerly Crown Books, which started it all with an aggressive TV ad campaign but never figured out that breadth of coverage is important to a bookstore) have invaded the malls and shopping strips of America, very often driving the small independents out of business. The biggest cities have them in commercial spaces in downtown buildings, but without parking. They need a huge amount of space, and the costs must be huge. They depend on volume.

> I wanted something of at least the size and seriousness of the Concise
> Oxford. Back here in the UK, a city of that size would probably have
> multiple bookshops and plenty of choice of dictionaries. I thought
> that you lived in, or at least often visited, New York, I would have
> guessed that it would have some good bookshops and that some of them
> would stock a few British dictionaries. My copy of the Oxford
> Learner's dictionary was bought in Bangkok while I lived there.

How many of the Merriam–Webster line, the American Heritage, and the Random House can you find in a bookshop? Who would buy them?

> I have never been in a US public library, would not even the better
> ones have any British dictionaries? A decent sized library here would
> probably have some American dictionaries. Also, I had expected that
> you would have access to some university libraries and that they may
> have a good selection.

The point is not whether large libraries have British dictionaries. The point is that the Cambridge and Oxford Learners' Dictionaries would not have an audience in the US.

—

Peter T. Daniels grammatim@xxxxxxx

• ***Follow-Ups:***

- ◆ ***Re: So it is true...***
 ◇ *From:* Vladimir Menkov
- ◆ ***Re: So it is true...***
 ◇ *From:* John Atkinson
- ◆ ***Re: So it is true...***
 ◇ *From:* Seán O'Leathlóbhair

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• **References:**

- ◆ **[Re: So it is true...](#)**
 ◇ *From:* Thomas Widmann
- ◆ **[Re: So it is true...](#)**
 ◇ *From:* Wiktor S.
- ◆ **[Re: So it is true...](#)**
 ◇ *From:* Seán O'Leathlóbhair
- ◆ **[Re: So it is true...](#)**
 ◇ *From:* Paul J Kriha
- ◆ **[Re: So it is true...](#)**
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