



One-Quarter English: Episode 1 Transcript

PODCAST INTRO	
Jenna	Hello, and welcome to One-Quarter English. I'm Jenna.
Mark	And I'm Mark. Thanks for tuning in. Before we kick things off, Jenna's going to give you a preview of this episode.
Jenna	That's right. Over the next quarter of an hour we'll present the latest news headlines from around the world before looking at one of the topics in depth. We'll then discuss one grammar difference between American and British English. After that, you'll find out how to pluralize nouns ending with the letter "y". You'll hear the first installment of a classic story, and then we'll wrap up the podcast with something fun. Enjoy the show!
HEADLINES	
Mark	Maridiania has been rocked by a powerful earthquake, causing widespread devastation with buildings collapsing, power lines down, and fires raging in several regions. Rescue operations are ongoing with 200 confirmed fatalities and thousands of injured.
Jenna	In other news, Gulzharstan has plunged into chaos after a military coup ousted the civilian government and suspended the constitution. Troops are flooding the streets, enforcing a nationwide curfew as protests erupt. The international community has condemned the takeover, urging for a swift restoration of democracy.
Mark	Meanwhile, the manhunt for escaped felon James Thompson ended this morning after police apprehended him from a residence in Marlowe. Thompson had eluded police for two weeks after escaping from the maximum security prison via its maze-like sewer system.
Jenna	EU regulators are intensifying their scrutiny of Silicon Valley tech giants, investigating potential anti-competitive practices and unfair market dominance. Concerns center on issues such as data privacy, consumer choice, and algorithmic influence.
Mark	Finally, scientists are raising urgent alarms as Arctic ice melt accelerates. Research shows a shocking 95 percent decrease in the oldest, thickest ice over the past three decades.
DISCUSSION	
Jenna	I'd like to discuss some of the challenges faced by polar regions if that's alright with you, Mark.
Mark	Definitely. What are your thoughts?
Jenna	It's terrifying how quickly it's happening. I mean according to recent studies, Arctic sea ice is melting at a rate of approximately 13.1% per decade, surpassing previous estimates. And the implications are far-reaching. I read a report that said if current trends continue, we could see an ice-free Arctic during the summer months within the next few decades.
Mark	That's staggering. But it's not just about the loss of ice, Jenna. The Arctic ecosystem is incredibly fragile, and this rapid change is disrupting the lives of countless species, from polar bears to Arctic seals. Some experts predict that two-thirds of the world's polar bears could be extinct by 2050.
Jenna	Yes, I've heard that statistic too. And let's not forget the crucial role the Arctic plays in regulating the Earth's climate, and its rapid warming could have cascading effects worldwide. I read a quote somewhere. I'm not sure who said it but it was definitely an environmentalist – anyway this person said, "The Arctic is a critical

	barometer of the health of our planet. What happens in the Arctic doesn't stay in the Arctic.”
Mark	Nicely put. We're already seeing the effects of Arctic warming in extreme weather events, rising sea levels, and disruptions to agriculture and fisheries.
Jenna	Absolutely. We need to heed these warnings and work together to protect the Arctic and our planet for future generations. The time to act is now.
Mark	Of course you're right, Jenna. But what can people do on an individual level?
Jenna	Well, reducing our carbon footprint is key. We can start by making small changes in our daily lives, like using energy-efficient appliances, reducing our reliance on single-use plastics, and opting for renewable energy sources whenever possible.
Mark	Definitely. And we can also support policies and initiatives aimed at combating climate change. Whether it's advocating for renewable energy investments, supporting sustainable agriculture practices, or pushing for stronger environmental regulations, our voices matter.
Jenna	Absolutely, Mark. We can also make conscious choices in our consumption habits, like reducing meat consumption even though that might be difficult for some people. Because meat does have a significant environmental footprint. Another way is to support companies that prioritize sustainability and ethical practices.
Mark	Good point. And let's not forget the power of education and awareness. We can educate ourselves and others about the importance of protecting the Arctic and the broader impacts of climate change because knowledge is a powerful tool for driving change.
Jenna	That's true. By spreading awareness and inspiring others to take action, we can amplify our impact and create a ripple effect of positive change. Every individual action counts, and together, we can make a difference.
Mark	Well said, Jenna.
AMERICAN ENGLISH VS. BRITISH ENGLISH	
Mark	Okay, I'd like to bring up a difference between American and British English that I've never quite understood. Tell me, Jenna, what are your plans for the coming weekend?
Jenna	Next weekend? I'm not sure. Wait. I think there's a film festival in town starting at the weekend. I'll probably go there.
Mark	So you're going to a film festival on the weekend, right? On the weekend?
Jenna	Oh. I know what you're getting at, Mark. But no, I'm going to a film festival at not on the weekend.
Mark	And therein lies the conundrum. Is it on or at the weekend. I mean when we teach students prepositions of time, we say that in is the least and at is the most specific. So years and months go with in, but dates and days of the week take on. Specific times like midnight or 5:45 go with at. The weekend is clearly not as specific as an exact time. The weekend is made up of Saturday and Sunday and they go with on. So why do British speakers say at when they clearly should say on the weekend.
Jenna	Yes, I know it doesn't really match with what we try to teach English learners, but it's just one of those differences that exist between British and American English. Just like British speakers who say, “I have got” and American speakers who say, “I have gotten.” Both are completely correct.
Mark	Yes, on the weekend and at the weekend are both correct, but not everyone knows that. I know someone who used to teach French Canadian civilians working for the Defence Department. They were required to have a certain level of English depending on their positions, and the practice material provided for the writing test included a gap fill question in which learners had to choose from in, on, or at the weekend. Only one was correct. And in this case Canadian English agrees with American English, so if students chose at the weekend, their answer was wrong.
Jenna	That's crazy!

Mark	I know, right? Whoever made that test had no idea that at the weekend is British English. This was twenty years ago though, so hopefully the test has been changed.
Jenna	On the weekend or at the weekend. It's your choice. Just make sure you're consistent.
GRAMMAR	
Jenna	I've marked a lot of English papers, Mark, and a lot of English learners have a hard time when it comes to pluralizing nouns that end in a "y". So the words country, or penalty, or attorney. When you say the plural, it's easy. Countries. Penalties. Attorneys. But spelling them can be tricky. When do you replace the "y" with "ies" and when do you keep the "y" and add an "s"? There of course is a rule. Do you know what it is, Mark?
Mark	I sure do, Jenna. It's actually really simple. All you need to do is look at the letter that comes before the "y". If it's a vowel like in attorney, you just add the "s" for the plural. But if the letter directly before the "y" is a consonant, like in country or penalty, you remove the "y" and add "ies."
Jenna	Is it really that simple?
Mark	Totally that simple. Say any noun that ends with a "y" and can be pluralized.
Jenna	Okay ... what about the noun ... toy.
Mark	There's an "o" before the "y" so you just add an "s". T-O-Y-S.
Jenna	Alright. What about ... autobiography?
Mark	Easy. There's an "h" before the "y", which is a consonant, so you remove the "y" and add "ies." A-U-T-O-B-I-O-G-R-A-P-H-I-E-S.
Jenna	You're right, Mark. It's really easy. And I have to add, you're an incredibly fast speller, Mark. What a minute. This rule also applies to verbs, right? Buys is spelled "ys" but amplify is spelled "ies". With verbs you also look at the letter before the "y", right?
Mark	Exactly.
Jenna	If the letter before is a vowel, you just add an "s". And if the letter before is a consonant, you remove the "y" and add "ies." Super! Thanks, Mark.
Mark	Anytime, Jenna.
SHERLOCK HOLMES	
Jenna	Is it just me, or have there been a lot of Sherlock Holmes-related movies, TV shows, books, and radio plays recently?
Mark	No, it's not just you. 2023 was a big year for Sherlock Holmes fans.
Jenna	Why?
Mark	Because every Sherlock Holmes story written by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle entered the public domain on January 1st, 2023.
Jenna	And what does public domain mean exactly?
Mark	Well, when a work is in the public domain, it means that it's available for anyone to use, reproduce, modify, and distribute without seeking permission from the original creator or paying royalties.
Jenna	And why is Sherlock Holmes in the public domain now?
Mark	In the EU, copyright protection lasts for 70 years after an author's death. But in both the US and the UK, it's 95 years after the publication of the work. And the final set of Sherlock Holmes stories were published in 1927, which means they were copyright protected until the end of 2022. And this is fantastic news for Sherlock Holmes fans.
Jenna	You seem to be pretty excited about this, Mark.
Mark	I am. And you should be too.
Jenna	I should?
Mark	Yes, you definitely should be excited, because we're going to feature some classic Sherlock Holmes stories on this podcast.

Jenna	We are?
Mark	Yes, and
Jenna	Wait a second, Mark. You're not hoping to be the voice of Sherlock Holmes, are you?
Mark	Well ... actually
Jenna	Stop right there. Let me hear your best British accent.
Mark	Okay. The evidence clearly points to the butler. It's elementary, my dear Watson.
Jenna	Hahahaha. Was that supposed to be British?
Mark	I guess I didn't get the part.
Jenna	Sorry, Mark. But we'll find a cameo for you.
Mark	Thanks, Jenna. I'd appreciate that. And without further ado, here's the first installment of The Speckled Band.
Jenna	Oh good. I like that one!
Watson	In glancing over my notes of the seventy odd cases in which I have during the last eight years studied the methods of my friend Sherlock Holmes, I find many tragic, some comic, a large number merely strange, but none commonplace for, working as he did rather for the love of his art than for the acquirement of wealth, he refused to associate himself with any investigation which did not tend towards the unusual, and even the fantastic. Of all these varied cases, however, I cannot recall any which presented more singular features than that which was associated with the well-known Surrey family of the Roylotts of Stoke Moran. The events in question occurred in the early days of my association with Holmes, when we were sharing rooms as bachelors, in Baker-street. It is possible that I might have placed them upon record before, but a promise of secrecy was made at the time, from which I have only been freed during the last month by the untimely death of the lady to whom the pledge was given. It is perhaps as well that the facts should now come to light, for I have reasons to know that there are widespread rumours as to the death of Dr. Grimesby Roylott which tend to make the matter even more terrible than the truth. It was early in April in the year '83 that I woke one morning to find Sherlock Holmes standing, fully dressed, by the side of my bed. He was a late riser as a rule, and, as the clock on the mantelpiece showed me that it was only a quarter past seven, I blinked up at him in some surprise, and perhaps just a little resentment, for I was myself regular in my habits.
Holmes	Very sorry to knock you up, Watson. But it's the common lot this morning. Mrs. Hudson has been knocked up, she retorted upon me, and I on you.
Watson	What is it, then? A fire?
Holmes	No, a client. It seems that a young lady has arrived in a considerable state of excitement, who insists upon seeing me. She is waiting now in the sitting-room. Now, when young ladies wander about the Metropolis at this hour of the morning, and knock sleepy people up out of their beds, I presume that it is something very pressing which they have to communicate. Should it prove to be an interesting case, you would, I am sure, wish to follow it from the outset. I thought at any rate that I should call you, and give you the chance.
Watson	My dear fellow, I would not miss it for anything. I had no keener pleasure than in following Holmes in his professional investigations, and in admiring the rapid deductions, as swift as intuitions, and yet always founded on a logical basis, with which he unravelled the problems which were submitted to him. I rapidly threw on my clothes, and was ready in a few minutes to accompany my friend down to the sitting-room. A lady dressed in black and heavily veiled, who had been sitting in the window, rose as we entered.
Holmes	Good morning, madam. My name is Sherlock Holmes. This is my intimate friend and associate, Dr. Watson, before whom you can speak as freely as before myself. Ha, I am glad to see that Mrs. Hudson has had the good sense to light the fire.

	Pray draw up to it, and I shall order you a cup of hot coffee, for I observe that you are shivering.
Stoner	It is not cold which makes me shiver.
Holmes	What then?
Stoner	It is fear, Mr. Holmes. It is terror.
Watson	She raised her veil as she spoke, and we could see that she was indeed in a pitiable state of agitation, her face all drawn and grey, with restless, frightened eyes, like those of some hunted animal. Her features and figure were those of a woman of thirty, but her hair was shot with premature grey, and her expression was weary and haggard. Sherlock Holmes ran her over with one of his quick, all-comprehensive glances.
Holmes	You must not fear. We shall soon set matters right. I have no doubt. You have come in by train this morning, I see.
Stoner	You know me, then?
Holmes	No, but I observe the second half of a return ticket in the palm of your left glove. You must have started early, and yet you had a good drive in a dog-cart, along heavy roads, before you reached the station.
Watson	The lady gave a violent start, and stared in bewilderment at my companion.
Holmes	There is no mystery, my dear madam. The left arm of your jacket is spattered with mud in no less than seven places. The marks are perfectly fresh. There is no vehicle save a dog-cart which throws up mud in that way, and then only when you sit on the left-hand side of the driver.
Stoner	Whatever your reasons may be, you are perfectly correct. I started from home before six, reached Leatherhead at twenty past, and came in by the first train to Waterloo. Sir, I can stand this strain no longer. I shall go mad if it continues. I have no one to turn to. None, save only one, who cares for me. And he, poor fellow, can be of little aid. I have heard of you, Mr. Holmes. I have heard of you from Mrs. Farintosh, whom you helped in the hour of her sore need. It was from her that I had your address. Oh, sir, do you not think that you could help me, too, and at least throw a little light through the dense darkness which surrounds me? At present it is out of my power to reward you for your services. But in a month or six weeks I shall be married, with the control of my own income. And then at least you shall not find me ungrateful.
Watson	Holmes turned to his desk, and unlocking it, drew out a small case-book, which he consulted.
Holmes	Farintosh. Ah, yes. I recall the case. It was concerned with an opal tiara. I think it was before your time, Watson. I can only say, madam, that I shall be happy to devote the same care to your case as I did to that of your friend. As to reward, my profession is its own reward. But you are at liberty to defray whatever expenses I may be put to, at the time which suits you best. And now I beg that you will lay before us everything that may help us in forming an opinion upon the matter.
Jenna	And that's it for this installment of the Speckled Band. Next time, we'll find out more about the dense darkness surrounding the mysterious woman asking Sherlock Holmes for help.
Mark	Wait! What about my promised cameo?
Jenna	Sorry, Mark. You'll have to wait a bit for that.
TONGUE TWISTER	
Mark	And now for something light-hearted. Are you a fan of tongue twisters, Jenna?
Jenna	Sure. I've even got a few favourites.
Mark	Okay, let me hear one.
Jenna	H mm ... okay, here's a good one. She sells seashells by the seashore. The seashells that she sells are seashells I'm sure.
Mark	Yeah, I know that one. It's a good one. She sells seashells by the seashore. The shesells – no - the seashells that she sells are seashells I'm sure.

Jenna	Nice, Mark. Now let's see how some other people do.
George	She sells seashells by the sheshore – no - seashore. The shesells. No. That's not right. The seashells that she sells are seashells I'm sure.
Sumita	She sells seashells by the seashore. The seashells that she sells are seashells I'm sure.
Baptiste	She sells seashells by the seashore. The seashells that she sells are are seashells I'm sure.
Ada	She sells seashells by the seashore. The shesells - no - seashells that she sells are shesells. No. The shesells. No. The seashells that she shells. Hahaha! I give up.
PODCAST EXTRO	
Jenna	Well, that's it for this episode. We hope you enjoyed it!
Mark	Tune in next time for more headlines, more in-depth discussions, another difference between British and American English, a grammar point explained, and more Sherlock Holmes. Plus there'll be something fun at the end. Bye for now!
Jenna	Goodbye!