

# Diary of a native speaker

Wednesday 30th August

Had my first lesson with 7b. The kids were very angry with me as I said there is no such word as 'hissel'. Their little German faces looked completely shocked and I could tell that they didn't want to believe me.

"OK," I said, "I'll give anyone who finds the word 'hissel' in the dictionary 500 euros."

I was beginning to feel unsure myself and started to panic as huge dictionaries were pulled out of bags and the kids searched like crazy. But finally I could relax! It doesn't exist. Shocked expressions were replaced by angry ones and then I heard loud whispers which sounded like: 'What did Frau Krugkopf teach us then last year?' 'Send Frau Krugkopf to the Sahara.'

It took quite a bit of time to get order in the class again. Hope no damage has been done to my relationship with the 7b kids.



Thursday 31st August

Damn! 7b are now very, very angry with me as I told them that the plural of 'man' is 'men' as in 'pen', not 'min' as in 'bin'.

"Can we get 500 euros again, Mrs Green?"

"OK," I said being dead certain this time. After a flood of dictionaries and a careful search, the kids started to make disappointed noises.

Then one brilliant kid said, "It's 'min' in women, Mrs Green!"

"OK, Steffen. If you want to be part of a woman that's your choice."

Luckily smiles and a few laughs from his neighbours stopped him from making any further comments. But I couldn't help hearing angry whispers of 'Shoot Frau Krugkopf.' 'Cut off her tongue.' 'Send her to the zoo.'

Then Alexandra said loudly, "We have to unlearn all the English we've learnt now, Mrs Green."

"Not quite," I replied. "Just a few words, right? Or do you want me to teach you a funny English?"

The kids suddenly went very quiet.

Monday 4th June

Things have been OK with the kids at school. Nobody in 7b has said 'hissel' or 'min' again, but I have heard 'childrens' and 'peoples' quite a bit. I think I'll wait a while before I deal with that in class. The bad news is that Frau Krugkopf keeps giving me horrible looks. I wonder if the kids have said something to her about 'funny English'?

## A Reading

1 Skim the text and find the answers to these questions.

- What is the teacher's mother tongue? \_\_\_\_\_
- What country is she teaching in? \_\_\_\_\_
- What words did the pupils look up in their dictionaries? \_\_\_\_\_
- When does 'men' sound like 'min'? \_\_\_\_\_
- What words are the pupils in 7b still using wrongly? \_\_\_\_\_