



# A LESSON ON ENGLISH

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## “TELL ME WHAT YOU KNOW ABOUT....”

Many conversations are exchanges of information. You ask questions, receive answers, and ask more questions.

Here's a pattern for a conversation in American English. You can fill in the blanks to create a conversation on any topic.

*Directions: imagine that you meet an American friend on Staromestske namesti during the Easter market. On the back of this page is information about Easter celebrations in Prague. You can use this information to compose your conversation.*



You: “Hello!”

Your friend: “Hello, what is going on here?”

You:

Your friend: “Who makes all these beautiful eggs?”

You:

Your friend: “What are these wooden rattle things?”

You:

Your friend: “What are those whips for?”

You:

Your friend: “Are you serious? They whip people here?”

You:

Your friend: “What do they do with the eggs?”

You:

Your friend: “And sometimes girls get a cold bath?”

You:

Your friend: “Well, okay, I have to get moving here. Great to see you! Happy Easter!”

You:





Sara Tusek near Prague

"A Lesson on English" is a series of short lessons created for people who want to become fluent in conversational English. The lessons are practical and useful for students learning English in a traditional classroom setting or on their own.

## TELL ME... FROM P. 1

### *Easter Preparations in the Czech Republic*

Children finish school on "Ugly Wednesday." The following day ("Green Thursday") boys equip themselves with wooden rattles, called "rehtacka." They then form a group and walk through their local village or town, shaking their rattles vigorously. This, as tradition dictates, scares off Judas.



This walk is repeated on "Good Friday" and then once more on "White Saturday." On Saturday, progress is slowed by the boys stopping at every house and shaking their rattles until they receive a present!

### *Easter Sunday*

The greatest traditional symbol of Easter is the egg, with its connections of spring and new life.



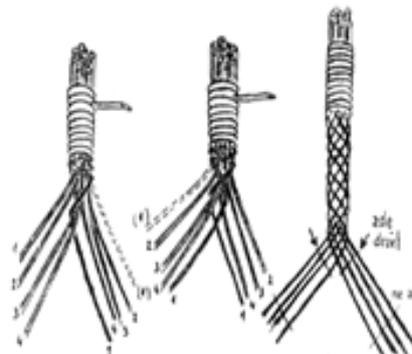
On Easter Sunday, the girls and women of the village paint eggs ("kraslice"). This is a skilled affair with many variations on the decoration, usually a mixture of watercolors, picture stickers, bee's wax, straw and/or feathers. For particularly well decorated eggs there is an Easter egg contest held annually in Prague.



As girls paint their Easter eggs, the boys prepare their Easter whips ("pomlázka"), ready for Easter Monday. This is not the kind of whip used on horses, but is made from osier twigs, braided together. This takes some skill to make and the more twigs, the more difficult it is to braid a whip.

### *Easter Monday*

On Easter Monday people get up early. The boys and men set off on a whipping trip through the village. Boys stop at people's



For older boys, the gifts of eggs and ribbons have lately given way to the man being offered a shot of alcohol. By the time they arrive home, the men can be fairly happy!



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homes and whip the legs of every girl and woman who live in the house. Small boys are required to recite an Easter carol as they go about their whipping.

As if the whipping is not enough, a popular custom is also to grab the girl and throw her in a bath of cold water, known as an "Easter dousing." The whipping and dousing is performed to chase away illness and bad spirits. She may not appreciate it at the time, but it is actually good for the girl!

Once all the whipping and dousing is over, the girl, strangely enough, rewards the boy with one of her painted eggs. She then ties a ribbon around his whip and he moves on to the next house.

As the boys progress through the village, their bags fill with eggs and the whips become more and more colorful, with many bright ribbons.

