



Waldorf English Week e.V.
www.english-week.de

June, 2024

**To the English Teachers at the
Rudolf Steiner Schools / Waldorf Schools**

We are delighted to invite you to the next



from **Sunday, November 3rd to Friday, November 8th, 2024**
in beautiful, historic **Haus Altenberg**, near Cologne.

Since its founding, the *English Week* has always seen its primary task as offering language teachers different possibilities to develop and support those personal and professional capabilities which Waldorf teaching, understood as an art, continually calls for. For those of you who are not familiar with the *English Week* here is a brief description, which can serve as a first introduction:

The concept of the English Week is based on our conviction that intensive artistic work with actors, directors, storytellers, poets and clowns, can be of immeasurable benefit for foreign language teachers. Thus, we view the daily three-hour artistic workshops as the keystone of the entire English Week. In addition, there are morning lectures based on the general conference theme and a wide variety of working groups addressing different methodological issues and questions, as well as a 'Market Place' offering an exchange of materials and ideas. We also regularly invite leading experts from outside of Waldorf education to offer new perspectives on language teaching. The evenings are full of the "Spirit of English" in the form of songs, dances and artistic presentations.

**The theme of this year's conference will be
"Reconsidering Language Teaching in the Light of Artificial Intelligence".**

It is evident that programs such as Google translator, DeepL and Chat GPT have already begun to fundamentally transform the very nature of language teaching and learning and will continue to do so. In considering the high quality and practicality of these programs, it is apparent that we now need to be able to justify and articulate the reasons why the challenging and long-term learning processes which learning a foreign language in school invariably entails are an essential part of education. A crucial question that now needs to be addressed is whether such learning processes can be supported by the possibilities of digital translations and artificial intelligence. This all means that we need to reconsider *what* we teach, *how* we teach and, most fundamentally, *why* we teach foreign languages.

This calls for new perspectives and approaches which, for example, emphasize learning processes which lead to an ongoing openness for and engagement with exactly what is unknown and "foreign" in other languages. In Waldorf education, these processes are deeply connected to the *felt and embodied experience* of another language which is also tied to those aesthetic and affective qualities which can be found in different materials we can use and the ways in which we work with them. In the course of time, such experiences in language learning can become internalized in the ways pupils see themselves and in how they learn to perceive, think about and act towards others. Such individual developments stand in stark contrast to the way artificial intelligence functions and is used. We shouldn't underestimate how fundamental this difference is and the long-term consequences it implies. **Klaus Schwab**, the founder and organizer of the yearly international economic conference in Davos and one of the most influential economists in the world has described the effects of these new technologies: "The Fourth Industrial Revolution, finally, will change not only what we do but also who we are."

The lectures and courses in the English Week in 2024 will explore different ways of fruitfully and creatively addressing these new challenges and opportunities. Parallel to this, it has always been our deep-seated conviction that it is exactly the artistic workshops, which constitute the 'heart' of each *English Week*, which offer teachers unique chances to go substantially further in developing the entire range of their entire perceptual and expressive capabilities in working in different ways with words and language, all within a highly supportive environment full of warmth, humour and trust. This is deeply personal work that truly cannot be replaced by artificial intelligence!

The entire English Week Team 2024

We are very happy that **Paul Matthews**, England's leading specialist for creative writing, and **Norman Skillen** from Ireland, one of our co-founders, will also be able to join us again. This year for the third time we will have one of England's outstanding storytellers **Martin Maudsley** with us. **Juanita Boardman** from South Africa will be joining our team again and will create an evening English Week Choir and bring a varied repertoire of songs to aid our classroom activities in her working groups. We are very glad that **Douglas Kennedy** from Stuttgart will be able to be with us this year. **Susan Wehner** from Hamburg, **Mario Radisic** from Haan-Gruiten, **Miriam Kastell-Watson** from Marburg, **Beate Langer** from Stuttgart, **Alexandra Spencer** from Berlin, and **Kavita Desai** from Freiburg and will all be giving courses. We will also have a special lecture by **Robin Schmidt** (Dornach) who will share his expertise **and deep insights into artificial intelligence**. **And naturally, Silvia Albert-Jahn (Mülheim), Christoph Jaffke (Stuttgart), Doris Schlott (Frankfurt), Peter Lutzker (Stuttgart), Robert McNeer (Ostuni, Italy), Martyn Rawson (Kiel/Hamburg), Ulrike Sievers (Hamburg), Alec Templeton (Basel), Catherine Bryden (Kirn), and Tessa Westlake (Cologne)** will all be back.

We will also offer an open '**Market Place**', designed to facilitate the exchange of teaching materials and ideas for all grade levels. This space is intended to enable teachers to directly offer and explain resource material and ideas they have developed. **Thus, please bring readers, poems, copies of reading material to exhibit and share; examples of students' work, and/or books you wish to recommend.**

We are very glad to be once again in *Haus Altenberg* (www.haus-altenberg.de). Whereas the rooms are new, having been renovated both before and *after* the 2021 flood, that beautiful old Gothic cathedral in the courtyard is still standing there and for those of you who don't know it and the immediate area, it's a wonderful place to spend an inspiring week. At the same time, **the number of available rooms** in Haus Altenberg, due to damages caused by the 2021 floods to the popular guest house 'Brauhaus' near the stream, **has become more limited than ever before**. Since we regularly have long waiting lists, we strongly suggest that you register soon. If it is possible for you, we also encourage you to book double rooms, instead of single rooms. Naturally, if the conference has to be cancelled for some reason you would be immediately informed and your deposit and/or conference fee would be fully refunded.

To register please check our website <https://www.english-week.de/>

We hope to see you in Altenberg!

Peter Lutzker • Silvia Albert-Jahn • Doris Schlott • Martyn Rawson • Christoph Jaffke • Ulrike Sievers • Mario Radisic • Kavita Desai • Alexandra Spencer