

MEDIA RELEASE

For immediate release

Speak Good English Movement (SGEM) 2004 Targets Working Adults in Service Industry

Singapore, [21 April 2004] – The Acting Minister for Manpower and Minister of State for Education, Dr Ng Eng Hen launched the Speak Good English Movement (SGEM) 2004 today and called on all Singaporeans, particularly working adults in the service industry, to speak good English.

2. Launching the Speak Good English Movement at the Arts House @ The Old Parliament, Dr Ng said that speaking good English facilitates the development of “soft skills” and gives added confidence to our workers.
3. First launched by PM Goh Chok Tong in 2000, the SGEM is into its fifth year of encouraging Singaporeans to “**Speak Well, Be Understood**”. This year’s Movement focuses on promoting the usage of good English among working adults – both white and blue-collar workers – especially those in the service industry. It also aims to encourage adults in position of influence, such as teachers and parents, to serve as positive role models for speaking good English to those around them.
4. This targeted approach is summed up in the Movement’s theme for this year – **English@Work&Play**.
5. Speaking at the launch, Dr Ng emphasised that learning good English is crucial for workers in the fast-growing service sector because their frontline jobs bring them into constant contact with Singaporeans and foreigners from all walks of life.

6. He said, "Speaking good English will help workers enhance their employability in the service sector where the need to communicate clearly in English is an asset."
7. The movement also aims to support parents, educators and childcare providers with resources they need in order to speak better English, so that they can serve as good examples for their children, students or charges.
8. Said Dr Ng, "The ability to speak well can be learned, and is not necessarily something a person has to be born with. With a bit of practice, anyone can speak good English."
9. Also speaking at the launch today was Mr David Wong, Chairman of the Speak Good English Movement. "Being able to speak English is a useful skill. It is needed in the workplace, and it is useful in everyday situations. More importantly, it is easy to speak good English. This year, we want to build on our past success, and help more Singaporeans gain confidence in their ability to speak English," said Mr Wong.
10. An extensive programme of diverse activities has been lined up to support the objectives of the Movement this year. The National Library Board, which serves as the secretariat for the Movement, will continue to hold reading and storytelling activities and talks in the various libraries islandwide. Partner organizations and key agencies will also run programmes aimed at helping Singaporeans improve their English. For example, the Ministry of Education is initiating the Training Workshop on Promoting Reading And Teaching Reading in primary schools that aims to provide teachers with the tools of storytelling and book talks to promote interest in reading in students.
11. To start the ball rolling for this year's programme, activities will be held throughout this entire weekend at the Arts House. These include storytelling sessions, an interactive drama, as well as information booths put up by various partners to answer questions on courses and self-help schemes. Librarians will be on hand to recommend books, and advise parents on how to choose books for their children.

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About the Speak Good English Movement

The SGEM was started in 2000 to promote the use of good English among Singaporeans. Speaking good English means using grammatically correct English during conversations, where rules for constructing sentences are adhered to. Accent is not an issue though the pronunciation should be accurate. More information can be found on www.goodenglish.org.sg

About National Library Board

The National Library Board (NLB) was established on 1 September 1995 with the mission to continuously expand the learning capacity of the nation. NLB oversees the management of the National Library, three regional libraries, 20 community libraries, 18 community children's libraries, as well as libraries belonging to government agencies, schools and private institutions. Its digital library, eLibraryHub, provides patrons access to information resources and services any time, anywhere. Through its innovative use of technology and its collaboration with strategic partners, the NLB ensures that library users have access to a rich array of information services and resources that are convenient, accessible and useful. The NLB is serving as the secretariat for the Speak Good English Movement for the second year running. More information on NLB can be found on www.nlb.gov.sg.

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