

You must have all heard about the recent Scottish referendum. Of course, I have to write a podcast about it; it is too important not to(1). So what was it all about? Scotland, England, and Wales have been united for over 300 years politically and economically. Some people in Scotland want total independence, and to no longer be part of that union. So they voted on it. The vote was 'close', meaning that the 'No' votes were only 10% greater than the 'Yes' votes. Now that the dust has settled(2) after the vote, the U.K government is considering making changes to its system, so each part of the union feels totally satisfied in how it is represented in parliament.

Scotland is definitely different from England. Its' terrain is more mountainous. It has hundreds of islands. It's education system is said to be(3) much better than England's. The Scots have their own history, culture, and native language. And of course, they have their own successful industries, particularly the North Sea oil. However, the tax base for the Union comes mainly from England, as there are so many people there generating the taxes. Also, the military is paid mainly by English taxes. Splitting up would not be a simple matter. I, personally, would not want the Union to divide, as I think it has worked well for so long. My father who is English actually lives in Scotland. He loves it there, and didn't expect the Scots to vote for independence. However, we all want to govern ourselves, and why not? Perhaps it would work. So far, though, there isn't enough support in Scotland for independence. I'm proud to say that the democratic process was carried out peacefully, and fairly, with both sides accepting the result. And that's how it should be: ultimately the people's decision.

1. '...;...it is too important not to.' The end of the sentence is a shortcut. Instead of writing, '...; it is too important to not write about the referendum,' I can simply put 'not to' after important. As long as the first part of the sentence is complete, and has a verb, you can use this shortcut.

a. We need to turn the air conditioner on; it is too hot not to.

b. He should apply for that job; he is too qualified not to.

c. They will travel there by plane; it's too far not to.

2. 'Now that the dust has settled/ when the dust settles' is a great phrase that points to the clarity that comes after an incident or event is over. When a bomb explodes, for a while, there is dust in the air, and you cannot see clearly. 'When the dust settles' you can see clearly, therefore you can make correct decisions or opinions.

a. When the fight is over, and the dust settles, we will see who was guilty and who was innocent.

b. The riot was caught on film. When the dust settles, we will see who caused it.

c. Now that the dust has settled after the divorce, and the anger and emotion are over, perhaps the man and woman will behave better.

3. '....is said to be' is similar to '..is known as'.

a. She is said to be stronger than any man.

b. The orangutan is said to be one of the most intelligent animals in the world.