

COMMUNICATION SKILLS IN ENGLISH

WHY ENGLISH IS SO HARD

We'll begin with a box, and the plural is boxes,
But the plural of ox becomes oxen, not oxes.
One fowl is a goose, but two are called geese,
Yet the plural of moose should never be meese.
You may find a lone mouse or a nest full of mice,
Yet the plural of house is houses, not hice.

If the plural of man is always called men,
Why shouldn't the plural of pan be called pen?
If I speak of my foot and show you my feet,
And I give you a boot, would a pair be called beet?
If one is a tooth and a whole set are teeth,
Why shouldn't the plural of booth be called beeth?
Let's face it - English is a crazy language.
There is no egg in eggplant nor ham in hamburger;
Neither apple nor pine in pineapple
If teachers taught, why didn't preachers praught?
If a vegetarian eats vegetables, what does a humanitarian eat?.

DO NOT USE 'THE' BEFORE

Names of most countries/territories: Italy, Mexico, Bolivia; however, use it before - the Netherlands, the Dominican Republic, the Philippines, the United States, the Republic of Cuba, the Kingdom of Sweden or geographical regions like the Congo, the Ukraine, etc.

Names of cities, towns, or states: Seoul, Manitoba, Miami

Names of streets: Mahatma Gandhi Road Main St.

Names of lakes and bays: Lake Titicaca, Lake Erie except with a group of lakes like the Great Lakes

Names of mountains: Mount Everest, Mount Fuji except with ranges of mountains like the Andes or the Rockies or unusual names like the Matterhorn, the Himalayas.

Names of continents (Asia, Europe)

Names of islands (Easter Island, Maui, Key West) except with island chains like the Aleutians, the Hebrides, or the Canary Islands

Names of languages and nationalities: Chinese, English, Spanish, Russian (unless you are referring to the population of the nation: "The Spanish are known for their warm hospitality.")

Names of sports: volleyball, hockey, baseball

Names of academic subjects: mathematics, biology, history, computer science

Words signifying things that cannot be counted easily. Words such as "sand, milk, fruit," and other things that are measured in quantity can be preceded by a measurement (eight cans, a gallon, a pound):

We found sand in the car.

HOMOPHONES (also called HOMONYMS)

Homophones are words that sound the same (same pronunciation) but are spelt differently and have different meanings. Test your skill with words with this homophone quiz.

- 1) Since I am interested in art, I plan to do a(course/coarse) in drawing.
- 2) My grandfather's house is (too/two) small, so he wants to(by/buy) a bigger one.
- 3) Snoopy is (quite/quiet) a naughty dog, and often (chews/choose) the furniture in my aunt's house.
- 4) I bought a new chair after seeing an (add/ad) in the newspaper.
- 5)(It's Its) (bean/been) two years since I last visited my grandmother.
- 6) I(would/wood) like to visit Paris someday.
- 7) The doctor told me that the cracks in my (heels/heals) would soon.... (heel/heal).
- 8)(Our/ hour) teacher gives us only one(hour/our) of homework every day.
- 9) The thief tried to(flea/flee) when the police spotted him.
- 10) There were no rooms available at the(in/inn)
- 11) Don't allow your temper to(flare/flair) up when you get angry.
- 12) The(main/mane) character in the movie was a villain.
- 13) During the (reign/rain) of Emperor Akbar, there was peace and prosperity.
- 14)(Would /wood) you like to buy a chair made of teak (wood/would)?
- 15) This is my favourite (pair/pare/pear) of jeans.
- 16) The (principal/principle) of the school spoke to the parents.
- 17) My uncle and aunt like to work in (they're/their/there) garden.
- 18) I.... (sent/scent/cent) a letter to my cousin in Baroda.
- 19) The dog raised his..... (paws/pause) when he begged for scraps.
- 20) The bar of chocolate cost only(four/for/fore) rupees.

HOMOGRAPHS

Homographs are words that have the same spelling, but different pronunciations and meanings. Test your skill with words with this homograph quiz.

The is blowing hard today.
I forgot to ...the clock in our house.

Pleasethe door after you enter the room.
The dog lay to the fire to keep warm.

I was not in school on Monday.
I hope I get a bicycle as a for my birthday.

As I go to school, I ... good-bye to my mother.
The fisherman's boat was upset by a huge

Sachin Tendulkar uses a special cricket

A uses its wings as radar when it flies around at night.

The ant is a insect.
Sixty seconds make one

Socrates was a.....man.
I how to use oil paints in my painting class.

The camel is called the ship of the
The dog was not willing to his master.

The bride wore a saree made of silk.
If you cross a red-light, the police will make you pay a

The student wrote with a ...pencil.
The old elephant wanted to the herd.

The cat was after she had drunk a saucer full of milk.
The student wanted to know more about the in the course of study.

COMMUNICATION IS ALL ABOUT CHOOSING THE RIGHT WORDS

To write we use words, and there are trillions of words in English to choose from! A good writer uses his or her words carefully so that they convey their meaning well, and create a picture in a reader's mind. A good writer chooses words carefully, so that his or her sentences are interesting.

The words below are common adjectives or describing words that we use often when we write stories and poems.

However, they are used so often that they have become boring. Can you think of other words that have the same meaning as each of these words? A synonym is a word or phrase that means exactly, or nearly the same as another word or phrase.

SYNONYMS

Happy – content, pleased, cheerful, glad, joyful

Sad – sorrowful, mournful, unhappy, depressed,

Evil – wicked, mean, wretched, cruel

Large – gigantic, colossal, huge, great, massive

Small – tiny, petite, teeny-weeny

Fast – quickly, speedily, rapidly

Angry – cross, furious, enraged, wrathful,

Brave – heroic, gallant, valiant

Kind – gentle, charitable, good natured, generous

Beautiful – lovely, attractive, gorgeous

Fat – Plump, stout, chubby, heavy

Thin – lean, thin, slender, slim

Instead of using very common words in your communication, try and find and use different, and expressive words that have the same meaning to make your communication creative and interesting

USE THE RIGHT EXPRESSIONS WHEN YOU COMMUNICATE

THESE EXPRESSIONS OR PHRASES ARE WIDELY USED IN INDIA, BUT ARE GRAMMATICALLY INCORRECT OR WRONG. AVOID USING THEM IN YOUR COMMUNICATION.

1) Too good - Shah Rukh Khan's latest movie was too good.

The expression 'too good', often used to describe something very superior, is incorrect.

Correct usage - Shah Rukh Khan's latest movie was really good/ very good/ superb/ excellent.

Remember that food can be too spicy or sweet, clothes can be too tight or colourful, and cars can be too fast or too noisy. But not a single thing can be described as 'too good'!

2) Discuss about – Let's meet tomorrow to discuss about giving Heena a surprise birthday party.

'Discuss' means 'talk about', so 'discuss about' becomes 'talk about about'. It is not correct to use 'about' with 'discuss'.

Correct usage - Let's meet tomorrow to discuss giving Heena a surprise birthday party

3) Pass out of - Next year, I will pass out of St. Joseph's College.

There is a military meaning to 'pass out'. In the military, pass out means 'to qualify for a military commission or complete a course of training satisfactorily.' This expression is not correct when used for other academic courses.

The phrase that should be used here is 'graduate'

Correct usage - Next year, I will graduate from St. Joseph's College.

4) Three years back - I visited Kanpur three years back.

Correct usage – I visited Kanpur three years ago.

5) What is your good name?

The question "What is your good name?" is actually a translation of the Hindi "Aap ka shubh naam kya hai?"

Correct usage – What is your name?

What is your real name? (If you are asking someone who is known by a nickname or pen name)

6) To take tension - Don't take tension because your teenagers ignore your advice.

Correct usage - Don't get tense because your teenagers ignore your advice

7) Where do you put up?

Correct usage – Where do you live/ reside?

8) I am not getting you.

Correct usage – I do not understand what you mean/ are trying to say.

9) I will get back to you today itself.

We arrived in Mumbai today only.

I've understood the problem now only.

Correct usage: I will get back to you today.

We arrived in Mumbai today

I've understood the problem now.

Don't use "itself" or "only" to emphasize Time or Place: Instead, use Intonation to provide emphasis.

10) I am having this job since four years.

I've been having this job for the last four years.

11) Don't mistake me if I ask you a personal question.

Correct usage – Do not take it amiss/do not misunderstand me if I ask you a personal question.

12) Shall we go by walk?

Correct usage – Shall we go by foot? Shall we o walking?

13) He told to me that I was late.

Told means said to, so we cannot repeat the use of to after told

Correct usage: He told me that I was late.

14) I went to the beach to do some time pass.

Correct usage: I went to the beach to while away the hours/ because I had some leisure time.

15) At the end of the 10th Std, students have to give a public exam.

Although this expression is very frequently used, it is incorrect to say a student 'gives' an exam.

Only a teacher or professor 'gives' an exam.

Correct usage: At the end of the 10th Std, students have to sit for/ appear/ write a public exam.

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