

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

## Know your English — Calling it a day and child's play

# Know Your English

**S. UPENDRAN**

DECEMBER 22, 2014 23:16 IST

UPDATED: APRIL 12, 2016 00:22 IST

“You’re back early. I didn’t expect to see you here at this time of day.”

“Our team has been working round the clock the past couple of days. My boss suggested that we call it a day at noon.”

“Call it a day? Does it mean to stop working?”

“That’s right. When someone says that he’s calling it a day, he means that he’s going to stop whatever it is that he is doing and ...”

“He’s going home. In other words, he’s done for the day?”

“Exactly! In some of our government offices, people call it a day after lunch.”

“In some cases, even before lunch! We’re all tired. Why don’t we call it a day?”

“That’s a good example. This informal expression ‘call it a day’ has other meanings as well. It can be used to mean ‘to retire’. For example, after working in the company for 40 years, the Finance Officer decided to call it a day.”

“How about this example? Tendulkar decided to call it a day in 2013.”

“Most athletes know when to call it a day. Now then, how is your project coming along?”

“I really don’t know. When I first started, I thought it would be a child’s play. I ...”

“Child’s play is ...”

“I know what child’s play means. When you say that something is a child’s play, it means that it is very easy to do.”

“Very good! That’s what ‘child’s play’ means. But we don’t say ‘a child’s play’. It’s always ‘child’s play’. For example, solving difficult math problems is child’s play for Ram.”

“Serving booming aces was child’s play for Pete Sampras.”

“He had a fantastic serve, didn’t he? So, now you find doing a project is no child’s play.”

“Yes, I’ve certainly realised that. You see, I’m working really hard. Doing all the things I’m supposed to, but ...”

“But you don't seem to be getting anywhere. You’re not ...”

“Exactly! All the hard work that I’ve put in, I have very little to show for it.”

“I know that feeling all right. It’s like you’ve been chasing your tail.”

“Chasing my tail? What are you talking about?”

“When you say you’ve been chasing your tail, you mean you’ve spent a lot of energy and time doing things, but have achieved very little.”

“You feel frustrated about the whole thing.”

“That’s right! I’ve been chasing my tail all morning trying to find a two hour time slot when the surgeon and the anaesthetist are free.”

“Organising the annual cultural event at college this year proved to be a trying experience. Most of the time, I had the feeling that I was chasing my tail. Tell me, where does the expression come from?”

“You must have seen puppies trying to catch their own tail. They go ...”

“Oh, yes! They go around in circles trying to grab their tail. Finally, they become exhausted and fall down. The poor things never manage to catch their tail!”

“That’s how I feel now. Completely exhausted.”

“Then you should call it a day.”

“I think I will. You take care.

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*“Sometimes I get the feeling the aspirin companies are sponsoring my headaches.”* – **VL Allineare**  
*upendrankye@gmail.com*

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