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It is time to strut your stuff

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What is the meaning of the expression 'strut your stuff'? (Sneha Mahajan, Chandigarh)

The word 'strut' is normally used to refer to the manner in which an individual walks. When you 'strut', you are trying to get everyone to notice you; you attempt to impress others with your confident and proud walk. The expression 'strut your stuff' is used in informal contexts to suggest how well someone is performing in public. This individual who is good at something performs brilliantly and impresses those around him or her. The aim here is to win the approval of those watching – the person is being a show-off.

Dilip and Rani were itching to strut their stuff on the dance floor.

Some of the talented people in the company got a chance to strut their stuff.

What is the meaning of 'soul brother'? (Siddharth Jain, Faridabad)

African-Americans first used the expressions 'soul brother' and 'soul sister' as a term of address. Nowadays, when a man refers to another man as being his soul brother, what he is suggesting is that the two are alike in many ways – both have similar opinions about certain things, have similar interests, and so on. They are, what people would call, a 'kindred spirit'.

If you ask me, Usha and Sarita are soul sisters.

Ganesh seems to have found a soul brother in John.

How is the word 'carnivorous' pronounced? (Ratan Prasad, Warangal)

One simple way is to reduce the word to three syllables. The first syllable can be pronounced like the word 'car', and the vowel in the second like the 'i' in 'sit', 'hit' and 'pit'. The first 'o' remains silent and the second sounds like the 'a' in 'china'. Many people pronounce this word 'car-NIV-res' with the stress on the second syllable. It is also possible to pronounce the first and second 'o' like the 'a' in 'china'; when this happens, the word is pronounced 'car-NIV-e-res'. In both cases, the stress is on the second syllable. Animals and plants that eat meat are said to be carnivorous. The word comes from the Latin 'carnivorus' meaning 'feeding on flesh'. A non-vegetarian is sometimes humorously referred to as a 'carnivore'.

Be careful! Some of the plants being grown here are carnivorous.

Nayaz didn't know that certain varieties of turtles were carnivorous.

What is the difference between 'euphoric' and 'elated'? (S.K Jayanthi, Bengaluru)

In both cases, you are very happy and excited about something that has happened or is about to happen. 'Euphoric' suggests that you are overly happy, and the contentment that you are feeling is temporary; it is going to be short-lived. The word comes from the Greek 'euphoros' meaning 'borne well, healthy'. It was first used to refer to the temporary sense of well-being that drugs and medicines induced in a patient. When you are 'elated' about something, you are extremely happy about it; you are absolutely delighted with the success or the good fortune that has come your way. It is not a case of exaggerated happiness.

Shruthi's parents were elated when she was made captain.

The players were euphoric after winning the championship.

People eat meat and think they will become as strong as an ox, forgetting that the ox eats grass. Pino Caruso

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