

**KNOW YOUR ENGLISH EDUCATION**

# Don't beat around the bush

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“What a downpour we had yesterday! The concert you were planning to attend must have been cancelled. There was no way...”

“Not a chance! Several hundred fans braved the rain to be...”

“Braved the rain? Does it mean hundreds of fans were brave enough to show up... although it was pouring?”

“You could say that. When you ‘brave something’, you face an unpleasant or a difficult situation. You deal with it courageously. You show no fear. For example, Indira braved the cold and took a dip in the freezing water.”

“How about this example? My grandmother has stopped driving. She says she can no longer brave the chaotic traffic in our city.”

“Sheba braved the wrath of her parents by choosing to major in Economics.”

“They wanted her to become a doctor, didn’t they? Understandable, I guess. Both parents are doctors.”

“So, are we going out tomorrow? Last week we’d planned to...”

“I’m not really sure. I want to, you know that. But the problem is that there...”

“When will you learn to stop beating about the bush? I need an answer right...”

“Stop beating ‘about’ the bush? I always thought it was beat ‘around’ the bush.”

“Both are correct. When you beat around/about the bush, you never get to the point. You talk about all kinds of things without really talking about the most important thing.”

“Nobody in my family beats around the bush. If they have something to say, they say it.”

“That’s not the case in my family. Many of my cousins never get to the point. They beat about the bush quite a bit – especially when they have to give you bad news.”

“Our politicians beat around the bush all the time. It’s probably because...”

“Forget about politicians. When will you let me know about...”

“By this evening, definitely. Did you enjoy yourself last evening? Did you...”

“Yes, it was quite enjoyable. They sang all my favourite songs. Unfortunately, a gaggle of students behind me made a lot of...”

### **Noisy group**

“Gaggle of students? I thought ‘gaggle’ was used to refer to a flock of geese.”

“You’re absolutely right! But in informal contexts, ‘gaggle’ can be used to refer to a group of noisy people – a very disorderly lot. The gaggle of reporters made it impossible to hear what the star was saying.”

“How about this example? I went to the park for some peace and quiet. But a gaggle of children made it impossible to relax.”

“That’s a pretty good example. The gaggle of protesters wouldn’t allow us to enter the building.”

“I wanted to tell the kids to stop shouting... but they were having so much fun. I didn’t want to feel guilty of spoiling their fun.”

“One doesn’t usually ‘feel guilty of’ something. One usually feels guilty ‘about’ something. For example, Sneha feels very guilty about not having visited her uncle when he was in hospital.”

“I didn’t help Advaith when he was in trouble. I feel very guilty about it.”

“I wish our politicians would feel guilty about taking bribes.”

“No chance of that happening!”

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*Conscience is what makes a boy tell his mother before his sister does. – Evan Esar*

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