

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Know Your English - December 07

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DECEMBER 07, 2015 19:03 IST

UPDATED: MARCH 24, 2016 14:42 IST

“Is the article you’re reading interesting? Do you...”

“It’s an article about... Tell me, how do you pronounce p..e..s..c..a..t..a..r..i..a..n?”

“There are several ways of pronouncing the word. The ‘pesc’ rhymes with the word ‘desk’, and the following ‘a’ is like the ‘a’ in ‘china’ and ‘amount’. The ‘tar’ rhymes with the words ‘share’, ‘dare’ and ‘pair’. The word is pronounced ‘pes-ke-TAY-ri-en’ with the stress on the third syllable. This is just one way of pronouncing the word.”

“I see. A pescatarian is someone who eats fish but not meat, right?”

“That’s right! I know quite a few people who are pescatarians. By the way, the word can also be spelt p..e..s..c..e..t..a..r..i..a..n.”

“I see. A pescatarian diet consists mainly of vegetables and fish. Do you...”

“That’s true. Another name for ‘pescatarian’ is ‘pescevegetarian’.

“I see. Are any of your friends pescatarian?”

“Well, I don’t know if I’d call him a friend. But Ganesh, I’m told, is a pescatarian.”

“Really? I ran into him at the supermarket this morning.”

“You did? I’m sure the motormouth had a lot to say.”

“Motormouth? Does it mean someone who talks a lot?”

“Very good. That’s exactly what it means! A motormouth is someone who speaks non-stop and rather quickly. He says things without really thinking about the consequences of what he’s saying. His mouth runs like a motor.”

“Speaking without thinking! In that case, there are several motormouths in my family.”

“What I hate most about travelling by train is that sometimes we’re forced to listen to some motormouth’s cell phone conversation. It’s loud and...”

“That can be pretty irritating. I’m always tempted to tell the motormouth to shut up.”

“Unfortunately, nobody ever does. So, what did motormouth Ganesh talk about?”

“About some movie he’d seen recently. He seemed...”

“I should have guessed. Ganesh is a filmaholic. He’s knows a lot about...”

“Filmaholic? I’ve never heard that word before. Does it mean someone who loves films?”

“That’s right. Just like ‘chocoholic’ means someone who loves chocolate, a ‘filmaholic’ is someone who loves films. Sumithran, for example, is a filmaholic.”

“I know several people who are filmaholics. Is this word listed in dictionaries?”

“No, the word doesn’t find a place in most standard dictionaries. But native speakers use it in their everyday conversation. ‘Cinephile’, however, is listed in many dictionaries.”

“Cinephile? Does it have the same meaning as filmaholic?”

“That’s right! A cinephile is a lover of the cinema. Are you a cinephile?”

“My friend Naushir is, but I’m not. And I don’t have the slightest intention to become one anytime soon. You see, I have...”

“You don’t have the slightest intention of becoming a cinephile. Usually, you don’t say, I don’t have the intention to become something.”

“I see. How about this sentence then? When the people realised that the politician had no intention of fulfilling his promise, they began throwing rotten eggs at him.”

“Sounds good. I have no intention of marrying my best friend’s sister.”

“My brother doesn’t have the slightest intention of looking for a job.”

“Good for him!”

“A mind of the calibre of mine cannot get its nutriment from cows.”

– *George Bernard Shaw*

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Printable version | Apr 22, 2018 5:23:51 AM | <http://www.thehindu.com/books/know-your-english/know-your-english-december-07/article7957721.ece>

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