

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

# Know your English — How is the word 'research' pronounced?

**S. UPENDRAN**

DECEMBER 17, 2013 00:32 IST

UPDATED: MAY 12, 2016 10:10 IST

## How is the word 'research' pronounced?

(D Gayathri, Bangalore)

The Americans and the British tend to pronounce this word very differently. The British pronounce the 'e' in the first syllable like the 'i' in 'bit' and 'sit', and the second syllable like the word 'search'. They pronounce the word with the stress on the second syllable: 'ri-SEARCH'. The Americans, on the other hand, pronounce the vowel in the first syllable like the 'ee' in 'fees', 'bees' and 'cheese'. They pronounce the word 'REE-search' with the stress on the first syllable. There was a time when the word research was considered an uncountable noun; its plural form was 'research'. Nowadays, many writers are using the word 'researches'; examples of such use are found in many standard dictionaries.

\*There is some fascinating research going on in the area of aphasia.

\*The researches carried out by our team produced unexpected results.

\*The first chapter of the book summarises his researches.

## What is the meaning and origin of 'dot the I's and cross the t's'?

(Shuka Jain, New Delhi)

When you say that someone 'dots the I's and crosses the t's', you mean that whenever the individual does something, he does a meticulous job. He pays great attention to every detail, even minor ones, and ensures there are no mistakes. Whether the job is trivial or important — washing dishes or writing an annual report — the individual takes it seriously, and does a good job of it.

\*Before handing over the proposal to the Chairman, Mohana ensured that she had dotted all the I's and crossed all the t's.

\*Please ask Rajiv to take a look at your dissertation. He'll make sure that the I's have been dotted and the t's crossed.

The 'I' and the 't' refer to two letters of the alphabet. According to one theory, the expression comes from the world of schooling; when children learn how to write, they are told time and time again by the teacher to put a dot on top of the letter 'i' and a dash across the letter 't'. If these minor details are overlooked, then the child's writing task is considered incomplete.

### **What is the difference between 'flayed' and 'criticised'?**

(Pawan Kumar, Kanpur)

The word 'flay' comes from the Old English 'flean' meaning 'to skin'. When you flay someone or something, you remove the skin off the person or thing. In the past, it was common practice for soldiers to flay a captured enemy while he was still alive. The word can also be used to mean to beat or whip someone so hard that some of the skin peels off. Nowadays, flay is being used figuratively to mean to criticise someone harshly or brutally. When you 'flay someone', you tear into the individual. You are very severe in your criticism.

\*The critics flayed the superstar's latest film.

\*The hunter flayed the bear and took the fur home.

The word 'criticism' is mostly used to show disapproval as well, but unlike 'flay', it is not necessarily harsh. Someone's criticism of your work may be 'mild', 'severe' or 'scathing'.

Kamini's mild/severe criticism of his work angered Joshi.

\*\*\*\*\*

*"Money won't buy happiness, but it'll pay the salaries of a large research staff to study the problem."* —

**Bill Vaughan**

*upendrankye@gmail.com*

Printable version | Apr 24, 2018 8:06:45 AM | <http://www.thehindu.com/books/know-your-english/know-your-english-how-is-the-word-research-pronounced/article5466941.ece>

© The Hindu