

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

# Know Your English - How is the word 'cornucopia' pronounced?

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## What is the meaning and origin of 'ride one's hobbyhorse'?

(K. Bhavani, Trichy)

Some people like to talk about cricket all the time. No matter where they are and who they are talking to, they somehow or the other bring cricket into the conversation. Once they start talking about the game, they go on and on. The term 'hobbyhorse' is used to refer to a topic/subject matter one is passionate about and is willing to talk about at length. When you say that someone is 'riding his hobbyhorse' or is 'on his hobbyhorse', you mean that the individual is talking about his favourite topic. The word can also be used to mean one's favourite hobby.

\*Don't mention 'corruption'. If you do, Arvind will get started on his hobbyhorse.

A 'hobbyhorse' was actually a toy that children played with. It was basically a long stick which had a wooden horse's head at one end.

## What is the difference between a newspaper 'correspondent' and a newspaper 'reporter'?

(Anil Kumar, Hyderabad)

A 'reporter' is 'local'; he usually works in the city where the newspaper is based or has an office. A 'correspondent', on the other hand, is based somewhere else – he could be abroad or in some other city within the country. He is called a 'correspondent' because before the era of instant communication, this individual actually 'corresponded' with the Editor – he mailed or posted his stories to the head office. Unlike a reporter, a 'correspondent' is a specialist; he deals with a particular area. It could be anything – health, finance, sports, politics, etc. Since he is dealing with an area that he is familiar with, a correspondent may at times include his own take on a matter. A 'reporter' is usually assigned stories by the Editor, and every day he might report on different things. He has no area of specialisation, and whatever story he writes, he merely presents the facts. Not everyone maintains these distinctions.

## How is the word 'cornucopia' pronounced?

(Prabhakar Rao, Hyderabad)

The first syllable sounds like the word 'corn' and the second like the word 'you'. The 'cop' is pronounced like the word 'cope'. The 'I' is like the 'I' in 'bit' and 'sit' and the final 'a' like the 'a' in 'china'. The word is pronounced 'cor-nyu-CO-pi-e' with the stress on the third syllable. It comes from the Latin 'cornu copiae' meaning 'horn of plenty'. The word is presently used in English to mean 'abundant' or a 'great supply of'.

\*The new supermarket offers a cornucopia of fresh fruit and vegetables.

According to Greek mythology, when 'Zeus', the king of gods, was a child, he was taken care of by a goat named Amalthea. One day, while he was playing with the goat, Zeus accidentally broke off one of her horns. From this horn came an unending supply of food. Traditional paintings of 'cornucopia' show a horn with lots of fruit and nuts next to it.

### **Which is correct: 'See you on Saturday' or 'See you Saturday'?**

(J. Malini, Bangalore)

There was a time, of course, when only the first sentence would have been considered acceptable. Now, both are. The second sentence without the preposition 'on' is frequently used in American English in informal contexts. In writing and in formal situations, most people would say 'See you on Saturday'.

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*"Hospitality: making your guests feel like they're at home, even if you wish they were!"* –

**Unknown**

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