

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

# Know your English - What is the meaning and origin of 'run into rough weather'?

**S. UPENDRAN**

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## What is the meaning and origin of 'run into rough weather'?

*(Sona Satheesh, Nileshtar)*

Native speakers of **English** generally say 'hit rough weather'. The idiom is mostly used to mean to run into difficulties or experience problems.

\*Nobody wants to interview the superstar anymore. The relationship between him and the media has hit rough weather.

\*We need to borrow money, I'm afraid. We have hit rough weather.

Sailors originally used this expression to refer to the weather at sea. When the sea became 'rough', it caused a lot of problems for people on boats and ships. Heavy rain accompanied by strong winds often tossed the ships around, very often sinking them.

## Which is correct? 'The book entitled/titled River of Dreams ...'?

*(Ravi Hegde, Bangalore)*

There are many people who believe that the correct word is 'titled' and not 'entitled'. Some books on English usage contend that the use of 'entitled' to refer to titles of books and articles is wrong. They argue that the word 'entitled' should be used to mean a person's rights to something. But the fact is, even native speakers of English say, 'the book entitled ...'; they tend to use 'titled' and 'entitled' interchangeably. In fact, in the past, 'entitled' was the preferred word. Geoffrey Chaucer is believed to have used 'entitled' rather than 'titled'. It was only in the mid-20th century that 'titled' became the more common of the two. The Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary defines 'entitled' as 'give something a particular title'.

\*The father read his children a story from a book entitled/titled 'The Dragon'.

\*His dissertation entitled 'Higher Education: A Waste' is likely to be published soon.

## What is the difference between 'circumlocution' and 'euphemism'?

*(Pankaj, Chandigarh)*

First, let us deal with the pronunciation of the two words. The first syllable of 'circumlocution' is pronounced like the word 'sir', and the following 'u' and 'o' sound like the 'a' in 'china'. The 'cu' in the fourth syllable sounds like the word 'cue'. The word is pronounced 'sir-kem-le-CUE-shen' with the stress on the fourth syllable. The 'eu' in 'euphemism' is pronounced like the word 'you' and the following 'ph' like the 'f' in 'fish', 'feet' and 'four'. The word is pronounced 'YOU-fe-mi-zem' with the stress on the first syllable. Both words are used to refer to the roundabout way of expressing an idea or saying something. We all use circumlocution in our speech. Sometimes, when we are speaking, we may fail to recall the exact word. In order to keep the conversation going, we resort to making use of many words, instead of one, to get our message across. For example, we might be unable to recall the word 'flash drive'; we might end up saying 'the device we use to store data'. Euphemism is also a kind of circumlocution, but in this case you resort to it because you wish to sound polite and not very blunt or crude. For example, in western culture, people consider it offensive to say that somebody is dead. Instead, they might prefer to say he has 'passed away', 'expired', 'moved on', etc. Euphemisms are used to deliberately sound polite or educated – sometimes, they are used to sound humorous.

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*"Euphemisms are unpleasant truths wearing diplomatic cologne."* – **Quentin Crisp**

*upendrankye@gmail.com*

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