

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Know your English – Meaning of 'dead tree media'

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What is the difference between 'heist' and 'robbery'?

(Sanjeev Kumar, Bhopal)

In the case of a 'robbery', there is usually violence or the threat of violence. The robber comes face to face with his victim and compels him to part with his belongings. The thing taken may be extremely valuable or it may have very little value. A robbery may be planned or it may be something that happens at the spur of the moment. A 'heist', on the other hand, is always planned; it is a well-organised attempt to steal something very valuable from a place or a person – one usually talks about a 'bank heist' and 'jewellery heist'. Stealing one hundred rupees from a person would not be considered a 'heist'. The word is considered slang, and is therefore always used in informal contexts. A heist, like a robbery, may or may not involve violence. A burglary can also be called a heist – when someone enters your home without your being aware of it and walks away with something valuable. When used as a verb, 'heist' means 'to steal'.

*The bank robbery/heist had been meticulously planned.

*The thieves heisted my neighbour's new BMW.

'Heist' is American in origin, and according to some scholars, it is a dialectal variation of 'hoist', meaning 'to lift'. The word 'heist' was first used to refer to shop lifters. The 'hei' sounds like the word 'high'; the word is pronounced 'highst'.

What is the meaning of 'to go viral'?

(Purnachander Rao, Medak)

The expression is mostly used to refer to content that is available on the Internet. It means something that spreads very quickly and becomes extremely popular among the public. People like the content – photo, video, song, etc. – so much that they forward it to their friends, who in turn share it with theirs. Like a virus, the content is passed on from person to another very quickly, and soon everyone – including the media – is talking about it. Earlier this year, Dhanush's song 'Why this kolaveri di' went viral.

*The video of the Minister slapping her aide has gone viral.

THE HINDU

(K.S. Sunderam, Bangalore)

A 'keg' – rhymes with 'peg' and 'beg' – is a wooden barrel, and the 'powder' referred to in the idiom is 'gunpowder'. It is not the gunpowder that we have along with our idlis and dosas, but the real explosive stuff. When you say that someone is 'sitting on a powder keg', you mean that he/she is in an explosive situation. The person is in extreme danger, for the keg may explode any minute. Another expression that has the same meaning is 'sitting on a volcano'.

*Don't you realise you are sitting on a powder keg? Quit before it's too late.

*We left before the storm hit. We realised we were sitting on a powder keg.

What is the meaning of 'dead tree media'?

(N. Siva Kumar, Coimbatore)

It is a relatively new term to refer to the traditional print media. Newspapers, magazines, journals, books and other things that are printed on paper are referred to as 'dead tree media'. It is the opposite of 'electronic media' and 'electronic publishing'. Paper, as we all know, is made from wood.

"If you don't read the newspaper, you are uninformed; if you do read the newspaper, you are misinformed." – **Mark Twain**

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