

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH EDUCATION

# Nonchalance is the new 'cool'

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**How is the word 'nonchalant' pronounced? (B.Devi, Kurnool)**

The first syllable is pronounced like the word 'non' and the remaining two vowels sound like the 'a' in 'China'. The 'ch' is like the 'sh' in 'ship', 'sheep' and 'shoe'. One way of pronouncing the word is 'NON-she-lent' with the stress on the first syllable. It comes from the French term 'noncholoir' meaning 'to be indifferent to someone'. The word is normally used with people. When you say that someone is nonchalant about something, what you are suggesting is that he looks relaxed and does not display any sense of anxiety or worry. He looks and acts as if he does not have a care in the world.

*The champion glided to the net and put away the volley with nonchalant ease.*

*Sandeep talked in such a nonchalant manner at the condolence meeting that it made many people extremely angry.*

**What is the difference between 'amend' and 'emend'? (V.Balakrishnan, Kochi)**

Both words have the stress on the second syllable, but unlike 'amend', 'emend' is seldom used in everyday contexts nowadays. In terms of meaning, it does not have the wide range that 'amend' does. Emend is mostly used in the context of writing; when you 'emend' a document, you edit it. You improve the quality of the text by removing the errors – spelling, grammar, punctuation, and so on, in it. When you 'amend' a document, in addition to carrying out the required language corrections, you may also bring about changes in the content. You may choose to change the organisation or include new information; it is possible to 'amend' a document that is error free. MPs and MLAs often talk about 'amending' a law. The word, unlike 'emend', can be used with people as well. It is possible for one to amend or change one's behaviour.

*This badly written dissertation needs to be emended.*

*I don't believe this is the time to amend the Constitution.*

*If Prabhu is serious about fitting in, he needs to amend his behaviour.*

**What is the meaning of 'roast' in 'celebrity roast'? (S.Prem, Chennai)**

It is an expression used mostly in American English. It is an occasion when people get together to celebrate the achievement of a well-known person. At the event, the friends of

the celebrity keep the audience entertained by narrating funny stories about him/her – not all stories are complimentary. The word 'roast' is frequently used in informal contexts as a verb to mean to speak angrily or criticise someone rather harshly.

*Prof. Ranjit is retiring next month. The students are planning to have a roast in his honour.*

*Go well prepared. If Gurveen feels you're wasting her time, she'll roast you.*

**Which is correct? The couple has/have gone...? (Sandhya Rani, Vellore)**

Both 'have' and 'has' are possible – it depends on how you view the two individuals. If you consider them to be inseparable – a single unit – then you use 'has'. The couple has decided not to have children. If, on the other, you think of them as being two separate individuals, then you use 'have'. The couple have gone their separate ways.

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*A bride at her second wedding does not wear a veil. She wants to see what she is getting. –*

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