

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Know your English – It is ‘time immemorial’ and not ‘times immemorial’

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DECEMBER 08, 2014 22:09 IST

UPDATED: DECEMBER 08, 2014 23:51 IST

“Did you read about the ancient ruins they discovered in China?”

“Yes, I read about it. Didn’t find the piece of news very interesting, though. I mean who wants to read about something that has been there from times immemorial.”

“You might not be interested in the ruins. But you may be interested to know that the expression is ‘time immemorial’ and not ‘times immemorial’. It means ...”

“I know what it means. When you say something has been around from time immemorial, it means that it has been around for a long, long time.”

“It’s so ancient that there is no record of it anywhere. Wild geese have been flying the same route since time immemorial.”

“This particular festival has been celebrated by Indians from time immemorial.”

“That’s a good example. Now then, do you ...”

“Why are we wasting our time talking about wild geese and ancient ruins? As far as I’m concerned, they can go to ...”

“Hey, what’s bugging you today? You sound really angry. Did any of your teachers give you a surprise test?”

“No, I didn’t have a test. It’s that Srinivas. I lost to him again.”

“When it comes to table tennis, I’m afraid Srinivas has your number.”

“Of course, he has my number. He calls me every evening to talk ...”

“No, that’s not what I meant. When you say you ‘have someone’s number’, you’re implying that you understand the person very well. You know what he is capable of and how he will react in a particular situation.”

“So, you are saying Srinivas understands my game and is able to predict or anticipate the shot I’m going to play.”

“That’s right! He’s at an advantage and therefore will always beat you.”

“That’s just great. Now, you’ve made me even more depressed.”

“Oh, don’t worry. I’m sure you’ll soon have Srinivas’ number. The expression can also be used to mean to discover someone’s true character or motive.”

“How about this example? People were surprised when Sangeetha admitted she had lied to her clients. But I knew she was capable of it. I had her number.”

“Raju wanted to marry Sneha for her money. What he didn’t realise was she had his number.”

“Good for her. How is your friend Chethan doing? Is he back in Delhi?”

“No, he’s still here. He’s leaving the day after. Can you suggest a good restaurant that I can take him to?”

“Why not try the new Udipi joint down the street? They say it’s good.”

“We went there yesterday. You see, Chethan is a bit of a foodie, so I need to ...”

“Foodie? Does it mean someone who loves good food?”

“That’s right. A foodie is someone who takes a great delight in food, and loves to eat different varieties of food. Sarita claims to be a foodie.”

“The foodies in my college are very unhappy with the hostel menu. They want ...”

“Another term that is sometimes used to refer to a food lover is ‘foodophile’. My uncle is such a foodophile that he begins to think about dinner as soon as he finishes lunch.”

“Chethan is a such a well-known foodie that he is welcomed with open arms in most restaurants.”

“An Englishman teaching an American about food is like the blind leading the one-eyed.” – A J Liebling

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Printable version | Apr 24, 2018 8:07:14 AM | <http://www.thehindu.com/books/know-your-english/know-your-english/article6673537.ece>

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