

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

# Know Your English: February 1

**S. Upendran**

FEBRUARY 01, 2016 12:50 IST

UPDATED: FEBRUARY 01, 2016 12:50 IST

“Have you been watching the Australian Open?”

“Of course, I have. You know me. I’m crazy about tennis.”

“Some of the commentators keep saying that a player has been ‘overcooking’ his forehand or backhand. What does ‘overcooking’ mean in the context of tennis?”

“I think what the commentator is trying to say is that the player is not keeping the ball in play. He is hitting the ball rather hard and most of the time, it’s sailing long.”

“I see. How about this example? The champion lost in straight sets because she kept overcooking her forehand.”

“It wasn’t just the forehand. She overcooked her backhand as well.”

“Tell me, what do you think of my new shoes? I got them on sale yesterday.”

“I wouldn’t have bought a pair like that. To each his own, I guess.”

“To each his own? What does it mean?”

“The expression is mostly used in informal contexts. After having said something and you add, ‘to each his own’, what you mean is that since we’re all very different, each one of us is entitled to make our own choice.”

“In other words, every person can choose what he wants to. He need not...”

“That’s right! All of us have different tastes. We should therefore be allowed to do or choose what we want to. For example, how can you spend so much of your time watching such terrible serials? To each his own, I suppose.”

“I hate pink, but my friend Devi loves it. To each his own, I suppose.”

“That’s a good example. It’s also possible to say ‘each to their own’. I would never consider buying shares in your cousin’s company. Many people have. Each to their own, I guess.”

“That’s true. By the way, my cousin is in town right now. He’s living with us.”

“You mean ‘staying’ with you, don’t you?”

“What’s the difference between ‘living’ with someone and ‘staying’ with someone?”

“When you say that you’re living with someone, it suggests that you’re going to be with them for a long time. Perhaps even on a permanent basis.”

“I see. Whereas ‘staying’ suggests that it’s temporary.”

“That’s right. While their house was getting painted, my neighbours stayed in a hotel.”

“When we go to Chennai, we usually stay at my cousin’s place. My friend has been looking for an apartment. Are there any available in this complex?”

“Plenty. The one opposite mine is available. I can tell you that it’s in good repair.”

“In good repair? Does it mean that it’s not in good condition? Do we have to spend a lot of time and money repairing it?”

“It means just the opposite. When you say that something is in good repair, what you’re suggesting is that it’s in good condition. My uncle’s car is always in good repair.”

“My uncle’s isn’t. So can I say, my uncle’s car is in bad repair?”

“Yes. When something is not in good condition, you can say it’s in bad repair. Many of the government schools in our district are in bad repair.”

\*\*\*\*

*One advantage of talking to yourself is that you know that at least somebody’s listening. –  
Franklin P Jones*

*Email: upendrankye@gmail.com*

Printable version | Apr 22, 2018 2:07:16 PM | <http://www.thehindu.com/books/know-your-english/know-your-english-february-1/article8171958.ece>

© The Hindu