

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

## Know your English — February 9, 2015

# Know Your English

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“I’m so sorry about yesterday. I couldn't come with you because my uncle's train was late by nearly five hours. I had to wait and ...”

“Don’t worry about it. You look tired. Why don't you take a load off your feet.”

“Take a load off my feet? Are you asking me to sit down?”

“Very good! When you ask someone to take a load off his feet, you are asking him to sit down or lie down. The expression is mostly used in informal contexts.”

“I see. We’ve been walking for nearly three hours. Let’s go to the park over there and take a load off our feet.”

“It’s also possible to say, ‘take the weight off your legs/feet.’ Now then, ...”

“I’m not tired, so I don’t need to take the weight off my feet. Anyway, as I was saying, I regret for not coming with you to the dealer ...”

“You don’t ‘regret for doing something’, you ‘regret doing something’. For example, I regret missing your birthday party.”

“John regretted that he hadn't worked harder when he was in college.”

“I guess that’s a regret many people have. So, what ...”

“You say that ‘regret for’ is unacceptable. So, is ‘regret to’ also unacceptable?”

“The expression ‘regret to’ is mostly used in formal contexts to mean that you are sorry about something. I regret to inform you that you haven’t been promoted.”

“We regret to inform that you have not been admitted to our PhD programme.”

“Is that the kind of response you got from all the American universities you’d applied to last year?”

“Unfortunately, yes. I regret having spent all that money on application forms. Anyway, now I have decided not to go to abroad and study.”

“You ‘go abroad’, you don’t say ‘go to abroad’. The same is true of ‘overseas’ as well. Many students in our country want to go abroad and study.”

“My friend goes overseas every six months. Let’s talk about something else. Tell me, where is it? I didn't see it outside. Did you pick ...”

“Where is what? What are you talking you about?”

“Your new car, of course! Weren’t you planning on getting a new car yesterday?”

“Yes, I was planning to buy one yesterday. In fact, I had arranged for the loan. But unfortunately, the seller decided to move the goalposts at the last minute.”

“Move the goalposts? What are you talking about?”

“When you and someone agree on something, and at the last minute you move the goalposts, what you are doing is changing the rules. You do this ...”

“You probably decide to change the rules because you want to make things difficult for the other person.”

“Exactly! By moving the goalposts, you are making it difficult for the person to achieve what he wants to. Maya had a tough time with her PhD supervisor. Every time she thought she had more or less completed her study, he moved the goalposts.”

“I’m told that some supervisors like to harass their student by moving the goalposts. How about this example? The deal fell through because the builder kept moving the goalposts. He kept increasing the price.”

“That’s life, I guess.”

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“*Speak when you are angry – and you’ll make the best speech you’ll ever regret.*” – **Laurence J. Peter**

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