

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH EDUCATION

Are you in it for the long haul?

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What is the difference between ‘intolerable’ and ‘intolerant’? (C. Aditya, Chennai)

When you say that the situation that you are in has become ‘intolerable’, what you are suggesting is that it has become unbearable; you find it extremely difficult to deal with. The word can be used with both people and things. For example, when you say that the movie was intolerably boring, what you are suggesting is that you could not sit through it. The word ‘intolerant’, on the other hand, is mostly used with people, and it is always used to show disapproval. Someone who is intolerant is very narrow minded; he is not very accepting. He is not willing to consider ideas or beliefs of others that are different from his own; he expects everyone to be like him. One is usually ‘intolerant of’ someone or something.

My grandmother is very intolerant of girls who wear jeans and t-shirt.

You’re our party leader. How can you be so intolerant of other people’s beliefs?

The constant criticism from his boss made Ravi’s life at work intolerable.

The pain from the wound was becoming intolerable.

What is the meaning of ‘be in it for the long haul’? (J Indrani, Delhi)

This is an expression that is quite frequently used in American English in informal contexts. When you say that you are going to be in something for the long haul, what you are suggesting is that you are going to be committed to it or be involved in it for a very long time. If the something is a project, then you will continue to work on it till it has been successfully completed. You realise from the beginning that it is going to take a long time to complete, and no matter what, you are not going to abandon it anytime soon.

The people of the town are very sceptical about the project. We need to convince them we’re in it for the long haul.

Jai knows that being a doctor in a small village is very difficult, but he said he’s in it for the long haul.

Can the word ‘mothball’ be used as a verb? (J Hegde, Bengaluru)

Yes, it can. When used as a noun, the word refers to the white balls that we normally put in trunks and suitcases when we wish to put our winter clothes away – we do this in order to keep the moths and other insects away. When used as a verb, the word ‘mothball’ means to ‘cancel or postpone’ work on a project. If a company mothballs one of its factories, it means that it is going to shut it down temporarily or for a very long time.

The University’s plan to start a new centre in Kochi has been mothballed.

If you ask me, all these old buildings need to be mothballed.

Is it okay to say, ‘Everyone wants to see the latest Star Wars movie, and Prithi is not an exception’? (S. Rama Devi, Anantapur)

No, it is not. The standard expression is ‘and X is no exception’, and not ‘and X is not an exception’.

All children love chocolate ice cream, and Anika is no exception.

Every Sunday I go to the beach, and last Sunday was no exception.

A smart person knows all the rules so he can break them wisely. – Lubna Azmi

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