

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Know your English – How is the word ‘myriad’ pronounced?

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How is the word ‘myriad’ pronounced?

(J Karthik, Madurai)

One simple way of pronouncing this word is to pronounce the ‘y’ and the ‘i’ like the ‘i’ in ‘sit’, ‘bit’ and ‘chit’, and the following ‘a’ like the ‘a’ in ‘china’. This rather formal word is pronounced ‘MI-ri-ed’ with the stress on the first syllable. It comes from the Greek ‘myrias’ meaning ‘ten thousand’. In **English**, the word is used both as a noun and an adjective to mean ‘countless’ or ‘a large number of’.

*Her myriad of admirers cheered Mithali as she rose to speak.

*For someone who has myriad problems, Jai looks pretty relaxed.

Is it okay to say ‘get off of the chair’?

(CV Geetha, Hyderabad)

There are many people today who squirm when they hear someone say ‘get off of the chair’! It is interesting to note, however, that in the 15th and 16th centuries, the expression ‘get off of’ was acceptable; it was considered standard. Nowadays, of course, most people are likely to say, ‘get off the chair/table’ rather than ‘get off of the table/chair’. But the use of ‘get off of’ has not completely disappeared; it continues to be used today in informal contexts in American English. Dictionaries label such use as ‘colloquial’ and ‘non-standard’. You may be able to get away with ‘get off of’ in speech, but not in formal styles of writing.

What is the difference between ‘exemplar’ and ‘example’?

(L Jayanth, Kancheepuram)

First, let us deal with the pronunciation of ‘exemplar’. The first vowel is pronounced like the ‘i’ in ‘sit’, ‘bit’ and ‘kit’, while the vowel in the second syllable sounds like the ‘e’ in ‘set’, ‘bet’ and ‘wet’. The final ‘ar’ can be pronounced like the ‘ar’ in ‘car’, ‘far’ and ‘par’. One way of pronouncing this word of Latin origin is ‘ig-ZEM-plaa’, with the stress on the second syllable. When you refer to someone as being an exemplar of courage, you are suggesting that he is a very courageous person; he is someone that others can do well to imitate. The word literally means worthy of being copied. An ‘example’, on the other hand, can be either

good or bad. It may or may not be worthy of imitation. 'Exemplar' suggests perfection; it is related to 'exemplary'.

*Rishi is an exemplar of hard work.

*That shot is a good example of the importance of footwork.

What is the meaning and origin of 'in full cry'?

(Kalamkar, Pune)

When you are in 'full cry' over someone or something, you are continuously talking about the person or thing – and that too in a loud and enthusiastic manner. The expression usually suggests that a lot of noise is involved. It can also be used to mean to criticise someone or something; you express your thoughts/feelings rather forcefully and loudly.

*The students were in full cry over the proposed hike in fees.

The expression comes from the world of hunting, and therefore the word 'cry' has nothing to do with the tears that come out of one's eyes. In this context, it refers to the loud barking sounds that a pack of dogs make when they are in hot pursuit of another animal.

"If you must hold yourself up to your children as an object lesson, hold yourself up as a warning and not as an example." – **G. B. Shaw**

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