

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

# Know your English – What is the meaning of ‘honey trap’?

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**What is the meaning of ‘honey trap’?**

(S. Raj Mohan, Hyderabad)

This is a term that was frequently used in the media when the match fixing scandal in IPL was making the headlines. ‘Honey trap’ is mostly used in British **English** to refer to the strategy of using attractive people to entrap or get information from someone. According to news reports, during IPL 6, ‘bookies’ lured cricketers using beautiful women as bait. The term ‘honey trap’ was first used in the world of espionage, and now it is frequently used in the world of journalism.

\*Our competitors may set up a honey trap to get you to spill the beans.

The expression has a positive meaning as well. It can be used to mean ‘something that is most attractive’.

\*The Taj Mahal is a honey trap for most tourists.

**What is the meaning and origin of ‘let’s talk turkey’?**

(Sneha Kurien, Secunder-abad)

The expression is mostly used in informal contexts in American English to mean ‘to speak frankly’. When you tell someone that you wish to talk turkey, you mean that you wish to get down to serious business. Your aim in having the discussion is to solve the existing problem. The original expression was ‘let’s talk cold turkey’.

\*It’s high time the government started talking turkey with Pakistan.

The problem will never be solved. The two sides refuse to talk turkey.

There are several theories about the origin of this idiom. According to one story, a white man and a Native American went hunting, and shot a few turkeys and crows. When it came to dividing the spoils, the white man apparently started separating the birds by saying, “I take the turkey, and you take the crow. You take the crow and I take the turkey.” The smart Native American stopped the hunter and said, ‘Let’s talk turkey for me’.

**How is the word ‘hubris’ pronounced?**

(KS Gayathri, Kochi)

The 'hu' rhymes with the words 'cue', 'due' and 'few', and the following 'I' sounds like the 'I' in 'bit', 'sit' and 'kit'. The word is pronounced 'HYUU-bris' with the stress on the first syllable. This rather literary word comes from the Greek 'hybris' meaning 'outrage' or 'wanton violence'. Nowadays, the word is used to refer to an individual's excessive pride and foolish self-confidence. The individual's outrageous behaviour and at times a total disregard for moral values often put people off.

\*The champion's hubris led to his ultimate downfall.

### Is it okay to say 'two wheeler' and 'three wheeler'?

(Neeraja, Madurai)

We Indians use these terms quite frequently in our everyday conversation. Though they might not occur as frequently in native varieties of English, all standard dictionaries list the terms. For native speakers of English, a 'two wheeler' is any vehicle that runs on two wheels – bicycles, scooters and motorcycles. While for Indians, a 'three wheeler' means an 'auto rickshaw', for native speakers, it is any vehicle equipped with three wheels – it could be a tricycle, a scooter or motorcycle attached to a sidecar, an all terrain motorcycle, etc.

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*"He (Geoff Boycott) fell in love with himself at a very young age, and has remained faithful ever since."* – **Dennis Lillee**

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