

## KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

## Know your English

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NOVEMBER 05, 2012 21:59 IST

UPDATED: NOVEMBER 05, 2012 21:59 IST

“Is something wrong with Sujatha? I haven’t received an SMS from her in two days.”

“You won’t receive any for a few more days. She has texter’s thumb.”

“Texter’s thumb? What’s that?”

“It’s the injury that results to the thumb due to constant texting on the cell phone. Many kids I know have texter’s thumb.”

“So Sujatha’s texter’s thumb is keeping her from contacting us.”

“She could always call if she wanted to, I guess. You are always messaging people. Have you ever had texter’s thumb?”

“No. And you?”

“I seldom text people. I prefer to call.”

“You can afford to make calls because you have a job. Tell me, your neighbour’s house has been locked for nearly a month now. Where have they gone?”

“Search me.”

“Search you? What’s the point? I probably won’t find anything.”

“That’s true, you won’t.”

“Then why should I search you?”

“When someone asks you a question, and you respond by saying ‘search me’, you are saying that you have no idea.”

“In other words, you’re saying you don’t know where your neighbours went.”

“That’s right! I’m planning on buying a new TV. Which brand do you think I should get?”

“Search me. How ...”

“That’s a good response. The expression ‘search me’ is considered slang and is therefore mostly used in informal contexts. Now tell me, what do you think I should wear to Mahidhar’s reception?”

“Mahidhar’s reception? What are you talking about?”

“Don’t you know? Mahidhar is jumping over the broomstick next month.”

“What broom? You’re not making any sense.”

“When you say that someone is jumping over the broomstick, you mean that he/she is getting married.”

“Really? Ravi’s daughter, Shwetha, will be jumping over the broomstick soon.”

“Good example. More often than not, the expression is used in informal contexts.”

“More often than not? Does the expression mean ‘very often’ or something like that?”

“Good guess! The expression ‘more often than not’ is a lengthy way of saying ‘usually’ or ‘in most cases’. Here is an example. More often than not, our company’s general body meeting starts on time.”

“More often than not, my father comes up with something funny to say.”

“That sounds like your father, all right.”

“But tell me, what does ‘jumping over the broomstick’ have anything to do with getting married?”

“I understand when slavery was a common practice in the United States, blacks were not allowed to have a religious ceremony like the whites did. If two slaves wanted to get married, they held hands and jumped over a broomstick.”

“A broomstick is something you would expect all slaves to have, I guess.”

“That’s right! I understand this way of getting married was common practice in many African tribes and among the gypsies in Europe.”

“That’s very interesting. Do people do this even today?”

“Search me!”

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*“Marriage is like a phone call in the night: first the ring, and then you wake up.”* – **Evelyn Hendrickson**

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