

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

Know your English - What is the difference between 'advert' and 'advertorial'?

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What is the difference between 'advert' and 'advertorial'?

(Ravi Kumar, Noida)

'Advert' is the abbreviated or shortened form of 'advertisement'. The word is mostly used in informal contexts in British **English**. As far as the pronunciation is concerned, the first 'a' is like the 'a' in 'cat' and 'bat', and the 'er' is like the 'ir' in 'shirt', 'bird' and 'third'. The word is pronounced 'AD-vert' with the stress on the first syllable. An 'advertorial', on the other hand, is a combination of two words: 'advertisement' and 'editorial'. Dictionaries define it as an advertisement found in the print media that is written like an editorial – the advertisement is made to look like an objective news story. Information about the product is given in an objective rather than promotional manner.

The advertorials that are aired on TV are called 'infomercials' – combination of 'information' and 'commercial'.

What is the meaning of 'discomfit'?

(B. Anirudh, Madurai)

First, let us deal with the pronunciation of the word. The 'com' in the second syllable is pronounced like the word 'come'. The word is pronounced 'dis-COME-fit' with the stress on the second syllable. When you 'discomfit' someone, you make the person rather uneasy or embarrassed. The verb can also be used to mean to ruin someone's plans. The original meaning of this French word was 'to be utterly defeated' or 'frustrated'. But because 'discomfit' sounded a lot like 'discomfort', the meaning of the word gradually changed. Nowadays, the word is mostly used to mean to 'disconcert' or 'embarrass'. The original meaning of this word is considered archaic.

*The constant telephone calls discomfited him in his attempt to finish the project.

Which is correct: iced tea or ice tea?

(C. Praveen, Kochi)

If you are a stickler for grammar rules, then it should be 'iced tea'. But when 'iced' is said quickly, the final 'd' sound is seldom heard. As a result, most people think it is 'ice tea' and not 'iced tea'. Many are surprised when they see 'iced tea' written on packages. It is interesting to note that the dessert that most of us love to eat (ice cream) was originally called 'iced cream'. Over a period of time, it became 'ice cream'. The same thing happened to 'iced water' as well. Everyone says 'ice water' nowadays.

*Would you like to have some iced/ice tea?

Is it okay to say, 'How many years have you been put up in these quarters'?

(K. Ashok, Chennai)

In India, there is a tendency to use the phrasal verb 'put up' to mean to live or stay in some place. In native varieties of English, when you inform someone that you have been put up in some place, you mean that you will be staying there for a very short period of time. The expression is mostly used to mean 'a temporary accommodation'.

One cannot be 'put up' in a hotel or an apartment for months together.

*Jayanthi asked if I could put her up for the weekend.

"In theory, there is no difference between theory and practice. But in practice, there is." – **Yogi Berra**

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