

3 Indianism

By 'Indianism' we mean all those expressions which are essentially un-English but which are generally regarded as 'correct' by the so-called Indian students of English. In most cases, they are the literal translation of some native idiom or phrase. They are, in fact, the distortions of the correct English expressions and idioms. These queer expressions have given rise to what is known as Indian English or 'Babu English'. The 'King's English' or the 'Queen's English' is considered to be absolutely flawless. It is the English language which is written and spoken impeccably by educated people in the United Kingdom.

Let us discuss a few examples of Indianism and their correct usage in our everyday life.

(1) 'Work' and not 'Works'

- We are responsible to God for our works. (Incorrect)

We are responsible to God for our deeds or work. (Correct)

- I have to attend to many works at home. (Incorrect)

I have to attend to many things at home. (Correct)

- He performed many brave works. (Incorrect)

He performed many brave deeds. (Correct)

Note that 'works' in the plural means books or a factory; as,

Works of Shakespeare, an engineering works or a brickworks

(2) 'Tell a lie' and not 'speak a lie'

- Don't speak a lie. (Incorrect)

Don't tell a lie. (Correct)

(3) 'In good health' and not 'good in health'

- He is good in health. (Incorrect)

He is in good health. (Correct)

(4) 'Ascended' and not 'ascended up'

- He ascended up the mountain. (Incorrect)

He ascended the mountain. (Correct)

(5) 'To make both ends meet' and not 'to make both his ends meet'

- He is so poor that he can't make both his ends meet. (Incorrect)

He is so poor that he can't make both ends meet. (Correct)

(6) 'Aim at' and not 'aim to'

- We aim to publish good books. (Incorrect)

We aim at publishing good books. (Correct)

(7) '5.30 train' and not '5.30 o'clock train'

- I am leaving for Agra by 5.30 o'clock train. (Incorrect)

I am leaving for Agra by 5.30 train. (Correct)

(8) 'Tony Blair, Esq.' and not 'Mr. Tony Blair, Esq.'

- Mr. Tony Blair, Esq., is our Chief Guest. (Incorrect)

Tony Blair, Esq. is our Chief Guest. (Correct)

Note well—'Esquire' or Esq. in short is a polite title written after a man's name, especially on an official letter addressed to him. If 'Esq.' is used, 'Mr.' is not used.

(9) 'Cowardly' and not 'coward man'

- He is a coward man. (Incorrect)

He is a cowardly man. (Correct)

(10) 'Yours sincerely' and not 'your sincerely' or 'your's sincerely'

- Your's or Your sincerely Mahesh Gupta (Incorrect)

Yours sincerely (Correct) Mahesh Gupta

(11) 'How do you do' and not 'quite well, thank you'

- How do you do? (Incorrect) Quite well, thank you.

- How do you do? (Correct) How do you do?

Note: The correct reply is to repeat 'How do you do' only.

12. 'The whole' and not 'whole'

- Whole town came to receive him. (Incorrect)

The whole town came to receive him. (Correct)

13. 'All these' and not 'these all'

- These all men are guilty. (Incorrect)

All these men are guilty. (Correct)

14. 'Lover of Nature' and not 'Lover of the Nature'

- William Wordsworth was a lover of the Nature. (Incorrect)

William Wordsworth was a lover of Nature. (Correct)

15. 'Mankind' and not 'the mankind'

- The mankind is thankful to the scientist who invented the television. (Incorrect)

Mankind is thankful to the scientist who invented the television. (Correct)

16. 'Man' and not 'the man'

- The man is mortal. (Incorrect)

Man is mortal. (Correct)

17. 'A noise' and not 'noise'

- Don't make noise. (Incorrect)

Don't make a noise. (Correct)

18. 'Scratch or erase' and not 'cut'

- He cut that word. (Incorrect)

He scratched or erased that word. (Correct)

19. 'Dispose of' and not 'dispose off'

- He has disposed off his old TV-set. (Incorrect)

He has disposed of his old TV-set. (Correct)

20. 'The shoulder' and not 'my shoulder'

- He caught me by my shoulder. (Incorrect)

He caught me by the shoulder. (Correct)

21. 'Take the examination' and not 'give the examination'

- I have given an MBA examination. (Incorrect)

I have taken an MBA examination. (Correct)

22. 'Avail oneself of' and not 'avail of'

- I shall certainly avail of this opportunity. (Incorrect)

I shall avail myself of this opportunity. (Correct)

23. 'Preferable to' and not 'preferable than'

- This plan is preferable than that. (Incorrect)

This plan is preferable to that. (Correct)

24. 'Scenery' and not 'sceneries'

• Kashmir is famous for its sceneries. (Incorrect)

Kashmir is famous for its scenery. (Correct)

25. 'Advice' and not 'advices'

• The teacher gave me many advices on the parting day. (Incorrect)

The teacher gave me much useful advice on the parting day. (Correct)

or

The teacher gave me many pieces of advice on the parting day. (Correct)

26. 'Felt' and not 'became'

• On hearing the verdict he became very angry. (Incorrect)

On hearing the verdict he felt very angry. (Correct)

27. 'Cry' and not 'weep'

• She was weeping because she had lost the way. (Incorrect)

She was crying because she had lost the way. (Correct)

28. 'Returned home' and not 'returned to home'

• In the evening all of us returned to home. (Incorrect)

In the evening, all of us returned home. (Correct)

29. 'On the way' and not 'in the way'

• In the way, I met an old friend. (Incorrect)

On the way, I met an old friend. (Correct)

30. 'With a view to doing' not 'with a view to do'

• With a view to do this work I went there. (Incorrect)

With a view to doing this work I went there. (Correct)

Note: 'with a view to' is always followed by a gerund, not by an infinitive.

31. 'Members of one's family' and not 'family members'

• Next day all my family members came to see me in the hostel. (Incorrect)

Next day all the members of my family came to see me in the hostel. (Correct)

32. 'Not to speak of' and not 'what to speak of'.

• What to speak of French, he does not know even English. (Incorrect)

Not to speak of (or to say nothing of) French, he does not know even English. (Correct)

33. 'Places worth seeing' and not 'worth-seeing places'

• There are many worth-seeing places in London. (Incorrect)

There are many places worth seeing in London. (Correct)

34. 'A five-rupee note' and not 'a five-rupees note'

• He borrowed a five-rupees note from me. (Incorrect)

He borrowed a five-rupee note from me. (Correct)

35. 'Do what is necessary' and not 'do the needful'

• I hope you will do the needful. (Incorrect)

I hope you will do what is necessary. (Correct)

36. 'Inferior to' and not 'inferior than'

• This ink is inferior than that. (Incorrect)

This ink is inferior to that. (Correct)

37. 'Resemble' and not 'resemble with' or 'resemble to'

• He resembles to/with his father. (Incorrect)

He resembles his father. (Correct)

38. 'Discuss' and not 'discuss about' or 'discuss on'

• We discussed about/on the widow remarriage. (Incorrect)

We discussed the widow remarriage. (Correct)

39. 'Pulling well together' and not 'pulling on well'
- Ramesh and Rajesh are pulling on well. (Incorrect)
- Ramesh and Rajesh are pulling well together. (Correct)
- Note: 'Pulling well together' means they are working in harmony; 'pulling on well' in the sense of 'getting on nicely' is not a correct expression.**
40. 'Ill' and not 'sick'
- He fell sick yesterday. (Incorrect)
- He fell ill yesterday. (Correct)
- Note: 'Sick' is used when the illness has vomiting or one of its symptoms. Thus 'he is sick' means—he is unwell and he vomits. 'Sick' is metaphysically used in the sense of tired; as, I am sick of this work.**
41. 'Yet' and not 'but'
- Though he is poor but he is honest. (Incorrect)
- Though he is poor yet he is honest. (Correct)
42. 'How to swim' and not 'swimming'
- He knows swimming. (Incorrect)
- He knows how to swim. (Correct)
43. 'Went' and not 'had been'
- I had been to Delhi last Monday. (Incorrect)
- I went to Delhi last Monday. (Correct)
44. 'Has been working' and not 'is working'
- Mahesh is working in the department for the last thirty years. (Incorrect)
- Mahesh has been working in this department for the last thirty years. (Correct)
- Note: When an action begins in the past and continues into the present, present perfect continuous tense should be used.**
45. 'Into' and not 'in'
- She jumped in the river to save the drowning child. (Incorrect)
- She jumped into the river to save the drowning child. (Correct)
46. 'Reach' and not 'reach at'
- He reached at the station in time. (Incorrect)
- He reached the station in time. (Correct)
47. 'On' and not 'from'
- The winter term begins from first October. (Incorrect)
- The winter term begins on first October. (Correct)
48. 'Marry' and not 'marry with'
- Rama married with Sita. (Incorrect)
- Rama married Sita. (Correct)
49. 'To one's address' and not 'on one's address'
- Send this parcel on my address. (Incorrect)
- Send this parcel to my address. (Correct)
50. 'Have been' and not 'am'
- I am ill since Sunday. (Incorrect)
- I have been ill since Sunday. (Correct)
51. 'Owing to' and 'due to'
- Due to bad weather he could not come. (Incorrect)

Owing to bad weather he could not come. (Correct)

52. 'Pray to' and not 'pray'

- He prays God every morning. (Incorrect)

He prays to God every morning. (Correct)

53. 'Different from' and not 'different to'

- This is different to that. (Incorrect)

This is different from that. (Correct)

54. 'Who' and not 'and who'

- He is a noble man and who can be trusted. (Incorrect)

He is a noble man who can be trusted. (Correct)

55. 'Have' and not 'have got'

- I have got a spare pencil. (Incorrect)

I have a spare pencil. (Correct)

56. 'Notebook' or 'exercise book' and not 'copy'

- Please write this letter in your copy. (Incorrect)

Please write this letter in your notebook. (Correct)

57. 'To' and not 'for'

- This milk is good for drinking. (Incorrect)

This milk is good to drink. (Correct)

58. 'Fruit' and not 'fruits'

- We bought some fruits at Shimla. (Incorrect)

We bought some fruit at Shimla. (Correct)

59. 'Vegetables' and not 'vegetable'

- He prefers vegetable to beef. (Incorrect)

He prefers vegetables to beef. (Correct)

60. Double negative with 'until'

- Until you don't work hard, you will not pass. (Incorrect)

Until you work hard, you will not pass. (Correct)

Note: In the sentence containing 'until', never use 'not' in that sentence.

61. 'Pick a quarrel' and not 'pick up a quarrel'

- He picks up a quarrel with everybody. (Incorrect)

He picks a quarrel with everybody. (Correct)

62. 'Whether' and not 'as to whether'

- I don't know as to whether he knows German. (Incorrect)

I don't know whether he knows German. (Correct)

63. 'Order' and not 'order for'

- He ordered for a drink. (Incorrect)

He ordered a drink. (Correct)

64. 'Very' and not 'too'

- I am too glad to see you. (Incorrect)

I am very glad to see you. (Correct)

65. 'Very' and not 'very much'

- I am very much sorry. (Incorrect)

I am very sorry. (Correct)

- I am very much pleased to befriend you. (Incorrect)

I am very pleased to befriend you. (Correct)

- He is very much popular. (Incorrect)

He is very popular. (Correct)

66. 'Furniture' and not 'furnitures'

• He sold all his furnitures. (Incorrect)

He sold all his furniture. (Correct)

67. 'The poor' and not 'poors'

• You should be kind to poors. (Incorrect)

You should be kind to the poor. (Correct)

Note: 'The poor' means all the poor people.

68. 'Take leave of' and not 'take leave from'.

• The headmaster took leave from his old students. (Incorrect)

The headmaster took leave of his old students. (Correct)

69. 'Part from a person' and not 'part with a person'

• When I parted with my friends, I felt sad. (Incorrect)

When I parted from my friends, I felt sad. (Correct)

70. 'Part with a thing' and not 'part from a thing'

• The miser was unwilling to part from gold. (Incorrect)

The miser was unwilling to part with gold. (Correct)

71. 'Affect' and not 'effect'

• Overwork has effected his health. (Incorrect)

Overwork has affected his health. (Correct)

Note: 'Affect' is a verb while 'effect' is a noun.

72. 'No' and not 'yes'

• Do you smoke? Yes, I don't. (Incorrect)

Do you smoke? No, I don't. (Correct)

or

Do you smoke? Yes, I do. (Correct)

Note: When the answer is in the negative, preface it with 'No'. When it is in the affirmative, preface in with 'Yes'.

73. 'Speaking terms' and not 'talking terms'

• I am not on talking terms with Harish. (Incorrect)

I am not on speaking terms with Harish. (Correct)

74. 'Women' and not 'females'

• Many females were present at the meeting. (Incorrect)

Many women were present at the meeting. (Correct)

75. 'Enjoying good health' and not 'keeping good health'.

• I hope you are keeping good health. (Incorrect)

I hope you are enjoying good health. (Correct)

or

I hope you are well. (Correct)

76. 'Enjoy himself' and not 'enjoy'

• He went to the river and enjoyed. (Incorrect)

He went to the river and enjoyed himself. (Correct)

Note: The verb 'enjoy' being a transitive verb must have an object. Thus we should say:-

We enjoyed a holiday.

He enjoyed the scene before him.

He enjoyed himself.

77. 'Fear' and not 'hope'

- I hope I will catch cold. (Incorrect)

I fear I will catch cold. (Correct)

78. 'Men in one's family' and not 'the male members of one's family'

- The male members of my family were opposed to this idea. (Incorrect)

The men in my family were opposed to this idea. (Correct)

79. 'May I have a look at this' and not 'Can I have a look at this'

- Can I have a look at this book? (Incorrect)

May I have a look at this book? (Correct)

Note: 'May' implies permission.

80. 'Good evening' and not 'good night'

- Good night! How do you do? (Incorrect)

Good evening! How do you do? (Correct)

Note: 'Good night' is a parting salutation; when two people meet for the first time in the evening, they should bid 'good evening' to each other.

81. 'Comes of' and not 'comes off'

- He comes off a noble family. (Incorrect)

He comes of a noble family. (Correct)

Note: 'Come off' means 'to take place'; as,

His marriage comes off next Monday.

82. Superfluous 'as to'

- I am undecided as to whether to accept this job or not. (Incorrect)

I am undecided whether to accept this job or not. (Correct)

83. 'What I am to do' or 'I was to do' and not 'what to do'

- I did not know what to do. (Incorrect)

I did not know what I was to do. (Correct)

84. 'Look forward to expecting' and not 'look forward to expect'

- I look forward to expect a positive reply from your side. (Incorrect)

I look forward to expecting a positive reply from your side. (Correct)

85. 'Help someone (to) cross' and not 'help someone in crossing'

- I helped the blind man in crossing the road. (Incorrect)

I helped the blind man (to) cross the road. (Correct)