

Taeuffer Dictionary

A collection of the vernacular (with definitions and derivations) of which a working knowledge is required in order to communicate efficiently with the Norman Taeuffer family.

Actin' too big fer yer britches

1. You are behaving in an overly proud manner that is supported by neither your accomplishments nor your abilities.
2. Stop boasting. Before somebody "takes you down a peg."

Back to the grind

1. To return to work or to one's normal and presumably boring routine. Related to "keep your nose to the grindstone."
2. See "back to the salt mine."

Back to the Salt Mine

1. To return to work or to one's normal and presumably routine. Particularly after a vacation.
2. See "back to the grind."

Count your blessings

1. You may think that the current situation is bad, but it could be a lot worse.
2. Stop complaining, you have it made. See "better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick."

Don't air your dirty laundry in public

1. What you are talking about is nothing to be proud of, so keep your mouth shut.
2. You should not tell other people your business.

Don't tell lies because it's too hard to keep track of what you told people

1. You are not smart enough to remember which fabrication you told to which person.
2. Related to "oh what a tangled web we weave, when first we practice to deceive," which would have been the saying if our parents had been English majors

Fools' names and fools' faces often found in public places

1. Just because somebody's name or picture is posted (in the newspaper, on a monument, etc.), it does not mean that they have actually accomplished anything of value. Example, there are hundreds of references to early Taeuffer family members at the Healdsburg Museum.
2. See "question authority."

Full of piss and vinegar

1. Spirited, feisty and mischievous.
2. Energetic, often with no purpose. As when the cat suddenly and for no apparent reason dashes around the house.

Get a wiggle on

1. You are lollygagging and will make us all late.
2. Hurry up.

Get wiggling

1. Short for "get a wiggle on."
2. We are leaving right now.

Hay is for horses, straw's cheaper

1. Sentence said to discourage youngsters from using the word "hey" in conversation.

He has bitten off more than he can chew

1. That person has gotten themselves into a situation for which they are not prepared.
2. See "in over his head."

He who pays the piper calls the tune

1. The one in charge or who has paid gets to make the decision.
2. See “rank hath its privilege.”
3. Related to “time to pay the piper.”

If you were a horse, we would have to shoot you

1. A comment made when someone is sick, often used in an ironic sense, as when the individual is suspected of malingering.

In over his head

1. How someone ends up after they have “bitten off more than they can chew.”
2. That person has gotten himself into a situation for which he is not prepared.

It adds

1. This ingredient or design element, while not required, will improve the experience. Often used to justify or explain the addition of a random choice.

It ain't fittin', it just ain't fittin'

1. This is not the way we do things. From *Gone with the Wind*. A recent addition to the lexicon provided by Judi and Jeannie.

It is better to stay silent and let people think you are ignorant than to open your mouth and remove all doubt

1. Stop talking.

It looks a little skimpy

1. Said to convey an impression that something is a bit lacking in either quantity, quality or complexity.
2. Absence of abundance.
3. The meal is not sufficiently large to feed an army.

It's a load-bearing wall

1. Response made to any and all suggestions for remodeling to a house. Used whether or not the wall in question actually is required for structural integrity. Or whether or not a wall is even involved.

It's better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick

1. You are complaining too vigorously about a minor problem.
2. Used to describe the situation when one is presented with a thing that does not quite come up to expectations, but which is better than receiving nothing.
3. See “count your blessings.”

Jerry, you're doing it wrong

1. Phrase that means “I had a specific idea of how something should be accomplished and you are accomplishing it in a different manner.” First heard when Jerry attempted to hang a picture using a finish nail rather than a two-piece type of picture hanging hardware.

Johnny come latelays

1. Term used to describe people living in Healdsburg whose family did not arrive prior to 1900.

Keep your nose to the grindstone

1. Do not deviate from your task. No lollygagging.
2. Do not be distracted. People who do this will succeed in life.

Leave well enough alone

1. Do not concern yourself with matters that do not affect you.
2. See “mind your own beeswax” and “tend to your own knitting.”

Let's not and say we did

1. What you are proposing is not a good idea and we are not going to pursue it.
2. Often used sarcastically to indicate that the suggestion made was foolish. Or stupid.

Lollygagging

1. Wasting time, particularly when there is some other specific thing that one ought to be doing.
2. Procrastinating, particularly when it inconveniences someone else.
3. What Judi was doing just before she was left behind at the gas station.

Mind your own beeswax

1. Mind your own business.
2. Stop being so nosy. See “tend to your own knitting.”

Nobody is looking at you

1. You are not the center of the universe. No one is interested in what you are doing.
2. What Marie would say to Jeannie to indicate that she (Jeannie) was acting vain or self centered.

Oh boy

1. Yikes. Originating from I Love Lucy (“whoa boy!”).

People who live in glass houses shouldn't throw stones

1. You are making negative comments about others for things that you are guilty of yourself.
2. You better watch out or pretty soon someone may be pointing out your failings.

Piaga

1. Plague
2. Pest
3. Pain in the ass

Question authority

1. Never articulated overtly, rather the message was communicated via iconic stories, as in “I have the colonel's pants, I have the colonel's pants!”
2. The proper reaction to those who are “actin' too big fer their britches.”
3. Also related to “fools' names and fools' faces...” and “take 'em down a peg.”

Quitch yer bellyachin'

1. You are complaining too vigorously about a minor inconvenience.
2. See “it's better than a poke in the eye with a sharp stick” and “count your blessings.”

Rank hath its privileges

1. People often are given rewards that they have done nothing in particular to deserve.
2. Jeannie, talking about her Frequent Flyer upgrades.

She's no spring chicken

1. That person is old and does not have time to be putting things off for later.
2. That person is behaving in a manner that is not consistent with her age.
3. Can be used for either gender.

Short rations

1. What you will be limited to for a period of time upon return from a vacation, or following a particularly large and delicious meal, or after the holidays.

Take 'em down a peg

1. What needs to be done to those who are “actin' too big fer their britches.”
2. Possibly derived from the method of scoring in the game of Cribbage.

Tend to your own knitting

1. Mind your own business.
2. Stop being so nosy.
3. See “mind your own beeswax.”

Time to pay the piper

1. You cannot expect to have a good time without any consequences. Said by Marie to Jeannie when she would wake her up early on the morning after she had been out late on a date.

Tout de suite (the “de” is silent)

1. Said to indicate that something needs to be done immediately. With no lollygagging.
2. See “get a wiggle on.”

Up in arms

1. Term used to describe someone who is agitated, often without cause.
2. Derisive term for someone who is overreacting to a situation, often a minor local political matter.

Vuz you dere, Charlie?

1. A query Norman would pose concerning someone who was pontificating on a subject about which they had no way of actually knowing anything. Especially if it was a subject that he (Norman) had personal knowledge of.

Who put a nickel in you?

1. When somebody “goes off” exuberantly...without apparent justification. See “up in arms.”
2. You are being a chatterbox.
3. What Norman would ask when Jeannie was running off at the mouth, usually with a stream of consciousness rather than a coherent story.

Wound up

1. Used to describe someone who is “up in arms.”

You don’t even look wrinkled

1. Said to Michael when first introduced and finding out he had been on a submarine underwater for 72 days. Probably related to the joke “I just flew in from Miami, and boy are my arms tired.”

Your eyes were too big for your stomach

1. You have overestimated your capability and/or capability.
2. You have ordered more food than you could possibly eat.

You need to get your room under control

1. Clean up your bedroom. No lollygagging.

You’ll get your reward in heaven

1. Don’t expect any thanks because you aren’t going to get them. Used when the person has done something admirable and actually does deserve recognition or thanks.
2. Related to “no good deed goes unpunished.”