

## Q2.15 Laconic

From the Greek *Lakōn*, the name of a region near ancient Sparta. Laconians were known for their terse speech. The most famous example is the Laconian reply to Philip of Maceon's threat "If I enter Laconia, I will raze Sparta to the ground." Their ruler simply responded, "If."

In English, **laconic** is still used to describe someone of few words. It sometimes carries a negative connotation.

**You can get far in North America with laconic grunts. "Huh," "hun," and "hi!" in their various modulations, together with "sure," "guess so," "that so?" and "nuts!" will meet almost any contingency.**

—*For Your Eyes Only* by Ian Fleming,  
Scottish writer