

Glossary of American Slang

Source: "Interesting Things for ESL Students," 1998
by Charles Kelly and Laurence Kelly.
<<http://www.manythings.org/slang/index.html>>

ace (very good). He's an **ace** reporter.

action (excitement). Where is the **action**?

airhead (stupid person). My brother is a real **airhead**.

all wet (completely wrong). Your ideas are **all wet**.

all-nighter (studying all night). I fell asleep after an **all-nighter**.

ammo (ammunition). The gun ran out of **ammo**.

antifreeze (liquor). I need some **antifreeze** on cold nights.

armpit (undesirable place). That town is the **armpit** of America.

awesome (great). What an **awesome** sunset.

bad (intense). Wow, that was really a **bad** movie.

barf (vomited). He **barfed** all over the seat of the airplane.

bashed (crushed). The board was **bashed** beyond recognition.

beat (exhausted). I'm really **beat**.

beemer (BMW car). He bought a new **beemer**.

bench (taken out of the game). He was **benched** for misconduct.

bent (angry). It's OK. Don't get so **bent**.

bent out of shape (upset). Don't get so **bent out of shape**.

big gun (powerful person). They brought the **big gun** to the meeting.

big mouth (talk too much). You have a really **big mouth**.

big stink (big issue). They made a **big stink** about nuclear power.

blade (knife). He carries a ten-inch **blade**.

blimp (very fat person). I always sit next to a **blimp** when I travel.

blow (leave). I'm going to **blow** out of here now.

blow (lost). He **blew** all his money gambling.

blow a fuse (lose your temper). Hey, **don't blow a fuse** over this.

blow one's cool (become angry). Calm down. Don't **blow** your cool.

blown away (greatly impressed). I was **blown** away by his presentation.

bomb (bad). The movie was a **bomb**.

bombed (intoxicated), The driver of that car was **bombed**.

bonkers (crazy). I think I am going **bonkers**.

boo-boo (mistake). If you make another **boo-boo**, you won't have a job.

boo-boo (minor injury, usually a scrape). I have a **boo-boo** on my big toe.

booze (alcohol). I promised to bring two bottles of **booze** to the party.

bread (money). I need some **bread** to pay for my car.

break (opportunity). A lucky **break** helped him get the job.

break it up (stop). **Break** it up, or I'll call the police.

bring-down (depressing). The news of the crash was a real **bring-down**.

buck (dollar). Do you have a **buck** I can borrow?

bummed (depressed). I was really **bummed** after I heard the news.

bummer (bad experience). My trip to New York was a **bummer**.

bust (failure). The whole idea was a **bust**.

buy it (die). If you don't slow down, you'll **buy it** in a car accident.

buy it (accept). I'm not **buying** his story for coming in so late last night.

call (prediction). The weatherman made a good **call** about that storm.

can (bathroom). Do you know where the **can** is?

catch some rays (get some sunshine). I'm going to lie on the beach and **catch some rays**.

catch some Z's (get some sleep). I need to **catch some Z's** before I go on my trip.

cheesy (cheap). That's a **cheesy**-looking outfit.

chicken (coward). Don't be a **chicken**. Stand up to him.

chintzy (cheap). He was so **chintzy** when it came time to tip the waitress.

chow down. (eat a lot). I need to find a place to **chow down**.

clip (cheat). Watch out or they will **clip** you at that bar.

clunker (old car). I can't go on a date in that **clunker**.

cold fish (dull, unresponsive). My date for the dance was a **cold fish**.

collar (arrest). I knew they would **collar** the robber sooner or later.

come up for air (take a break). He has **to come up for air** or he'll die of exhaustion.

con (deceive). Don't try to **con** me.

cool (good). This a really **cool** place to work.

cool down (calm down). Things should **cool down** in a day or two.

cop (stole). He **copped** that road sign last night.

cop (policeman). The **cop** showed me his badge.

couch potato (lazy person). I was a real **couch potato** all day Saturday.

crack open a bottle (open). Let's **crack open a bottle** of champagne for your birthday.

cram (study hard). I need more time to **cram** for the test.

cream (beat) Our team **creamed** them badly

croak (die) I feel like I'm going to **croak**.

cruise (going very fast). The skier was **cruising** down the hill.

cushy (easy). He has a real **cushy** job.

cut (dilute). Could you **cut** my whiskey with a little water?

cut out (leave). It is late, I have to **cut out**.

cut it out (a command to stop). **Cut it out!** That is so irritating.

damage (cost). Let's get our restaurant bill and see what the **damage** is.

dead (quiet). It's really been **dead** around here lately.

deck (knocked down). He was **decked** in the fight.

deep pockets (is a good source of money). Her boyfriend has **deep pockets**.

dicey (chancy). Since the weather is a little **dicey**, I won't go today.

dirty (obscene). I hear that's a **dirty** movie.

ditch (get rid of) I'll **ditch** my younger brother with my grandmother.

do a snow job on (deceive). Don't try to **do a snow job** on me.

dope (stupid person). He is such a **dope**.

dork (strange person). He is such a **dork**.

dough (money) I need some **dough** to go Christmas shopping.

down (drink quickly). Let's go to a bar and **down** a few beers.

drag (boring). Doing homework is such a **drag**.

dynamite (powerful, great). This drink is really **dynamite**.

earful (a lot of gossip). My grandmother game me an **earful** about the neighborhood.

easy mark (likely victim). You are an **easy mark** if you carry a lot of cash.

eat (bothering). The problem is really **eating** away at me.

excellent (very fine). That's **excellent**, man.

face-off (confrontation) The two dies were headed for a nasty **face-off**.

far out (great). This music is really **far out**.

fix (dose of drugs). The addict needs another **fix**.

flaky (unreliable). He is too **flaky** to do the work.

flashback (a memory) At the wedding he had a **flashback** of his old girlfriend.

flick (movie). I haven't seen a **flick** in a long time.

flip out (lost control). He **flipped out** when he heard his mother had been killed.

flip side (other side). What kind of music do you have on the **flip side** of the tape?

fox (very attractive). His older sister is a **fox**.

foxy (sexy). She's a **foxy** lady.

freebie (a free thing). The pillow was a **freebie**.

get into something (become seriously interested in). He **got into** gardening in high school.

get it (understand) I listened to the joke twice but I still don't **get it**.

get with it (hurry up). If you don't **get with it**, we will never finish this work.

gig (job). I have a **gig** on a Saturday night from 7 to 10 pm.

glitch (problem). There's **glitch** in this computer software.

glitzy (fashionable). This is a pretty **glitzy** hotel to be staying in.

go (try). Let me have a **go** at solving the problem.

go bananas (go crazy). I'm going to **go bananas** if I don't get away soon.

go down (happening). What's **going down** at your place?

goof (fool). I'm a real **goof** at times.

goofy (silly). You were acting really **goofy** last night.

gourd (head). Use your **gourd** to figure out what is happening.

grand (thousand dollars). His salary is twenty **grand**.

grass (marijuana). Some students smoke **grass** in the dormitory.

gravy (easy money). This job is pure **gravy**.

groovy (pleasant). This music is **groovy**. (Note: This expression is from the 1960's and outdated in American culture.)

gross (disgusting). Picking your nose is a **gross** habit.

gross-out (disgusting time) The party was a **gross-out**.

grub (food). Where is the best place to get some **grub** around here?

grubby (unclean and untidy). Those clothes are too **grubby** to wear to the party.

grungy (dirty). That is a **grungy** jacket.

gut (stomach). He was shot in the **gut**.

guts (courage). It takes a lot of **guts** to give the boss your true opinion.

hairy (dangerous). That was a **hairy** plane trip. I am glad the storm is over.

hammer (accelerator). Put the **hammer** to the floor or we'll be late for the wedding.

hang it up (quit). I have decided to **hang up** my teaching job.

hang loose (relax). Just **hang loose** for another few days.

hang tough (stick with). We need to **hang tough** on our decision.

hardware (weapons). The police were surprised by all the **hardware** the gang members had.

have a buzz on (slightly intoxicated). I **had a buzz on** after the third martini.

have good vibes (feel good about). I **have good vibes** about our new secretary.

have it all together (feel mentally all there). Recently I haven't **had it all together**.

heave (vomited). I **heaved** up on the floor.

high (intoxicated on drugs). The teenagers looked **high** to me.

hip-shooter (always talking without thinking). He is such a **hip-shooter**.

history (something in the past) I don't have any ideas where my old boyfriend is. He's **history**.

hit (successful). Your proposal was a **hit** with the boss.

hole up (hide) He had to **hole up** for three days to hide from the police.

head honcho (boss). The **head honcho** says that we have to hurry.

hooker (prostitute). Her clothes make her look like a **hooker**.

hot (stolen). The police stopped them because they thought the car was **hot**.

hot (sexy). That girl is **hot**.

huffy (angry). I will do it soon so please don't get **huffy**.

hungry (eager to make money). If you are not **hungry**, you won't get ahead in the business.

hustle (hurry up). If you don't **hustle**, we'll be late again.

hyped (excited). The fans were all **hyped** up for the football game.

hyper (over excited). Don't get **hyper** about what she told you. You know it isn't true.

I.D. (identification). Can you show me some **I.D.** please?

in (fashionable). The jacket you are wearing is really **in**.

in deep (involved). They are really **in deep** with each other.

in the bag. (taken care of). Everything is **in the bag**. There's nothing to worry about.

intense (stressful). This is a very **intense** situation we are discussing.

jam (trouble). I am glad you got yourself out of that **jam**.

jerk someone around (wasting my time and causing me trouble). Everyone is **jerking me around**.

jock (athlete). My roommate is a **jock** for the basketball team.

john (bathroom). The **john** really smells bad today.

joint (cheap bar). Where is the closest **joint** to here?

joint (marijuana cigarettes). He is good at rolling **joints**.

junkie (drug addict). Sam is a **junkie**.

just off the boat (naïve). He acts like he is **just off the boat**.

keep one's cool (remained calm). He **kept his cool** when his house burned down.

kegger (beer party). I hear there is a **kegger** at John's house tonight.

kick (enjoy). I get a kick out of watching him paint.

klutz (stupid and clumsy person). He is a real **klutz**.

knock (criticize). Don't **knock** it if you can't do it any better.

knocked up (pregnant). My dog gets **knocked up** once a year.

knockout (stunningly beautiful or handsome person). Who was that **knockout** I saw you with last Friday?

knuckle sandwich (punch in the mouth). Shut up or I'll give you a **knuckle sandwich**.

kook (strange person). Watch out for all the **kooks** in this neighborhood.

laid-back (calm and relaxed). You need to be more **laid-back**.

lame (inadequate). That is a **lame** excuse.

line (story). I have heard that **line** a million times.

loser (annoying and useless) John is a **loser**.

love handles (rolls of fat around the stomach). I exercise every day but can't get rid of these **love handles**.

make waves (cause trouble). Try not to **make waves** around the office.

maxed out (exhausted). I am maxed out at my work and need to rest.

mean (performs well on). He plays a **mean** violin.

mega (large). I have **mega** amounts of tomatoes in my garden this summer.

megabucks (a lot of money). He made **megabucks** when he sold his company.

mellow (calm down and relax). You need to **mellow** out and enjoy life.

meltdown (total collapse). There has been a **meltdown** in the relationship between my parents and me.

mickey mouse. (nonsense and a waste of time). The homework the teacher gave us was **mickey mouse**.

move on someone (pick up and seduce). I am going to try to **move on Sarah** next Saturday.

nark (drug police). Watch out for the **narks** in the airport.

neat (good). That was a **neat** idea that you had.

negative (bad thing). There are too many **negatives** about the company merger.

nick (arrested). The police **nicked** the shoplifter as he was leaving the store.

nip (a quick drink). I could really use a **nip** right now.

no sweat (no problem) It's **no sweat** to have the report in to you by Monday.

nuke (nuclear weapons). Does that attack plane have any **nukes**?

nuke (heat up in the microwave). I'll **nuke** our dinner in a few minutes.

nut (crazy person). I think that he is a **nut**.

nuts (crazy). You are completely **nuts** if you think I will go with you.

pad (a place to live). His apartment is a bachelor's **pad**.

pain in the neck (annoying). My wife's best friend is a **pain in the neck**.

paper-pusher (bureaucratic office worker). My office is filled with **paper-pushers**.

party animal (person who loves to go to parties). You're too old to be a **party animal**.

party-hearty (celebrate). We need to **party hearty** because we just got a raise in salary.

paws (hands). Get your **paws** off my body.

peanuts (practically no money). I am not going to work for **peanuts**.

piece of cake (easy to do). Working on a computer for me is a **piece of cake**.

pig (eats too much). He is a **pig** at parties.

pig out (eat a lot or overeat). Let's go to the restaurant and **pig out**.

pit stop (stop and go to the bathroom). Let's make a **pit stop** at the next rest area.

plastered (intoxicated). He drinks too much and is always **plastered** on the weekend.

pooped out (quit). He **pooped out** after we started to do the hard work.

pop (hit). Shut up or I'll **pop** you one.

pop for something (buy). It's my turn to **pop for something**.

pro (professional). He is really a **pro** at his work.

prod (reminder). Can you give me a gentle **prod** next week so I won't forget?

psyched up (mentally ready). The players are really **psyched up** for the game on Friday.

psycho (mentally ill). She is a **psycho**. She should be in a hospital.

puke (vomit). I feel like I am going to **puke**.

push off (leave) I am going to **push off** now.

put the moves on (seduce). Just give up trying to **put the moves on** her. She's married.

put-on (deception). It was an elaborate **put-on** which I almost believed.

quarterback (lead). Who is going to **quarterback** the meeting?

quick buck (easy money). I need to make a **quick buck**.

rack (bed). I have to hit the **rack** by ten or I'll be tired in the morning.

rack out (sleep). I am going to **rack out** for two hours.

racket (noise). There sure was a lot of **racket** outside last night.

rag (newspaper of low quality) I can't believe we still get this same old **rag**.

rap (talk about) We need to sit down and **rap** about a few things.

rathole (run-down place). When are you going to move out of this **rathole**?

raw (new). The **raw** office workers were not getting much done.

ream someone out (got angry with him). The boss really **reamed** him out for his bad report.

red hot (important). Your idea is really **red** hot.

repo (repossess). Hey, don't **repo** my car. I'll pay next week.

rinky-dink (inferior). The circus was really **rinky-dink**.

riot (funny). The comedy show was a **riot**.

road hog (someone who takes up too much of the road). That driver is a **road hog**.

rocks (with ice). Would you like your whiskey on the **rocks**?

rug (wig). Is that a **rug** on his head?

rug rat (a very young child). My sister has three **rug rats**.

sack (bed). When did you hit the **sack** last night?

scam (swindle). Don't lose all your money in some kind of **scam**.

scarf (to eat quickly). He **scarfed** down everything on his plate.

schmuck (jerk). What a stupid **schmuck**.

screw around (waste time). Don't **screw around** all day at work.

screw up (make a mistake) If you **screw up** one more time, I will fire you.

sharp (intelligent). He is very **sharp** with numbers.

shot (try). I'll give the puzzle another **shot**.

slammer (jail). The police threw him in the **slammer**.

smashed (intoxicated). Try not to get **smashed** at the party.

split (leave). It's almost time to **split**.

spuds (potatoes). Do you want rice or **spuds** for dinner?

straight (honest). I want you to give me a **straight** answer.

sucker (someone who is deceived). Don't be a **sucker**.

take a hike (leave). I am tired of all your complaining. **Take a hike**.

taken (cheated out of). He was **taken** for all his money at the casino.

taking care of business (doing what has to be done). I've **been taking care of business**.

threads (clothes). Those look like expensive **threads** he is wearing.

tool around (drive around). I don't want to **tool around** all night. It's time to go home.

totaled (completely wrecked). My car was **totaled** in the accident with the garbage truck.

up (happy and cheerful). He has been **up** ever since he met his new girlfriend.

up for grabs (available). This is a sale. Everything is **up for grabs**.

veg out (relax and do nothing). I want to **veg out** in front of the television this evening.

vibes (feelings). He really gives off good **vibes**.

wad (bundle of money). You don't want to carry a **wad** like that with you in the big city.

wheels (car). If you let me borrow your **wheels**, I'll go out and buy a pizza.

whiz (talented person). He's a **whiz** at the computer.

wired (alert). I am really **wired** after drinking five cups of coffee.

wussy (weak person). Don't be such a **wussy** all the time. Say what you are thinking.

yukky (bad). This food tastes **yukky**.

zapped (exhausted). I am too **zapped** to help you right now.

zip (nothing). He knew **zip** about running the company.