



Coffee and Conversation for ESL Listening



with Donielle and Khrystyna

Episode 15: Animal Idioms

Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations. For more information about ways to use this podcast, download notes for [students](#) or [teachers](#).

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss the following animal idioms:

<p>My dogs are barking.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • My feet hurt (usually from walking a lot) 	<p>let the cat out of the bag</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reveal a secret carelessly or by mistake
<p>in the doghouse</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describing a husband, etc. who has done something to make their partner angry 	<p>the elephant in the room</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an obvious problem or issue that no one wants to discuss 
<p>quit [something] cold turkey</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completely and abruptly stop an addictive habit 	<p>kitty corner (catty/cater corner)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • diagonally opposite someone or something
<p>have butterflies in your stomach</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • be anxious, with a nervous feeling in the stomach 	<p>Hold your horses.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • slow down; wait a moment; be patient. (use with children or someone you are very informal with)
<p>get your ducks in a row</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • organize your tasks and schedule so that you are ready for the next step 	<p>Hold on there, tiger.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tell someone in a joking (informal) way to stop before they get too excited or angry, or before they take a possibly wrong action
<p>like herding cats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • describing a difficult task of trying to organize an out of control crowd 	<p>straight from the horse's mouth</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • information obtained directly from the source
<p>empty nester</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a parent whose children have grown up and left home 	<p>seems/sounds fishy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • making you feel that someone is lying or something dishonest is happening 
<p>chicken out</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • after planning to do something, decide not to do it because you are scared. 	

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

slap happy	in a humorous mood as a result of fatigue; silly from being tired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> When she gets really tired, she gets a bit <u>slap happy</u>.
It's pouring	A common way to express that it's raining very hard
narrow [smthg] down	Reduce a large list of options to a smaller, more manageable one. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was a very large list of idioms, so we had to <u>narrow it down</u> to a specific theme.
take turns [doing something]	do something one after another in regular succession in order to share the responsibility or opportunity of doing it <ul style="list-style-type: none"> We're going to <u>take turns</u> sharing our idioms.
as opposed to	used as a way to show contrast between two things <u>As opposed to</u> "it's raining cats and dogs" which we know is not possible, "my dogs are barking" sounds like it could be a real situation.
bring [smthg] up	start to talk about a particular subject <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I wanted to <u>bring</u> [this idiom] <u>up</u> because we've talked about it before.
goosebumps	small raised bumps on the skin caused by cold, fear, excitement, etc.
have withdrawals	describes the physical and mental symptoms that a person has when they suddenly stop using an addictive substance
flutter	move with quick, light movements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I felt <u>fluttering</u> in my stomach
ducklings	baby ducks
herd	to gather and move (usually animals) to a specific place
get/go off script	to add something (in a performance, speech, etc.) that was not planned or prepared
have something hanging over your head	Idiom: be constantly worried, anxious, or stressed about something, such as an upcoming obligation or event <ul style="list-style-type: none"> It was difficult to really enjoy my vacation because I <u>had</u> the upcoming exams <u>hanging over my head</u>.
chicken (N, Adj.)	informal: be afraid to do something / someone who is afraid <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I'm too <u>chicken</u> to go parasailing. Don't be a <u>chicken</u>.
parasailing	activity of gliding through the air with a parachute while being pulled by a motorboat

Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

spill the beans	idiom: see “let the cat out of the bag” for same meaning
dang it	informal: expression of displeasure (clean alternative for “damn it”)
[someone] is due	This word is usually used to talk about a deadline (e.g. the rent is due today.) But when we say a <i>person</i> is due, it’s often used to state when a pregnant woman is expecting to give birth When <u>is</u> your sister <u>due</u> ? <u>She is due</u> next month.
kitty vs. kitten	the word for a baby cat is <u>kitten</u> ; the word <u>kitty</u> is used as an informal and affectional way of referring to any cat – kitten or adult
term of endearment	a word or phrase used to address or describe a person or animal for which the speaker feels love or affection
be/get riled up	angry because of something someone has done or said • Don’t let the social media comments <u>get</u> you all <u>riled up</u> .
be up to something	to be doing something bad, sneaky, etc. but you just don’t know what it is. • The kids are acting suspiciously; they must <u>be up to something</u> .
telephone game	a game in which a message is passed on, in a whisper, by each of a number of people, so that the final version of the message is often drastically changed from the original
count on [someone or something]	have trust or confidence in something • When you hear something straight from the horse’s mouth, you can <u>count on</u> it to be true.

Grammar Focus: Be Supposed to

We often use supposed to when we talk about things we are obligated or expected to do.

- I don't understand what I'm supposed to do for this assignment.
- You're not supposed to use any outside resources.

It can also be used to express the idea that the expected outcome may not happen (or there is doubt whether it will happen).

- The new season of the TV series is supposed to be good. (*I heard that it was, but it may not be*)
- I'm supposed to meet up with my friend next week for lunch. (*It's planned, but it may not happen*)
- The cable company is supposed to be here between 9:00 and 11:00. (*I don't have a lot of confidence they will be here at the time they say*).

When we use supposed to in the past, it means that the expected action or situation did not happen.

- I was supposed to finish writing my essay last night. (*But I did not actually finish it*)
 - You weren't supposed to tell anyone about the party. (*But you let the cat out of the bag*)
 - I was supposed to meet my friend for lunch yesterday. (*But something happened and we canceled*)
- A common mistake is to say, "I should finish my essay last night." However, should can only be used for present or future situations, not past. If it was an obligation in the past, use supposed to **OR** to add the feeling of regret or criticism for doing (or not doing) something in the past, you can use should(n't) have.
- I should have finished writing my essay last night. (*I've made it harder for myself now; I wish I had done it last night.*)
 - You shouldn't have told anyone about the party. (*criticism; implies a negative consequence*)

Join the Conversation

- Have you ever planned to do something, but then chickened out? Is there some activity that you would like to try, but you think you would chicken out if you had the opportunity?
- Where do you think the idiom the elephant in the room comes from? In other words, how does the image of this expression add to the meaning?
- Have you ever received an email that seemed fishy? What are some suspicious signs that make you think it's not real or truthful?
- What are some situations that cause people to have butterflies in their stomach?
- What do you think life is like for empty nesters? What are some positive and negative points?
- What is the weather supposed to be like tomorrow where you live? What movies or TV shows are supposed to be good? (you haven't seen yet, but you heard they are good). What qualities are judges supposed to have? (They are supposed to be ____). Talk about something you were supposed to do within the last week (but didn't do).

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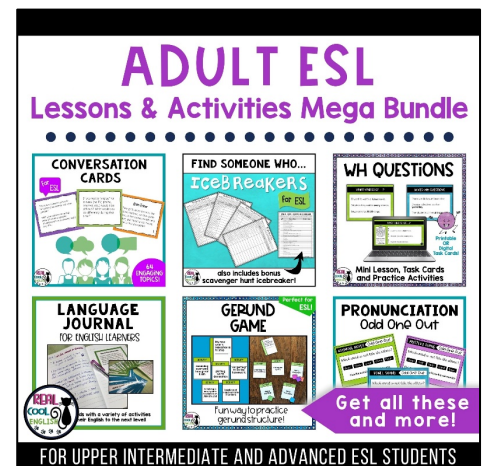
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