



Episode 4: April Fools' Day, Pranks, and Practical Jokes

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 pranks and practical jokes and talk a little about the history of April Fools' Day.

Here are a few words and phrases about the topic that you may find useful:

prank/practical joke	These two words are synonyms; not really any difference in meaning. Used to describe a trick or mildly mischievous act that is directed to a person (the "mark") or a group of people (such as family, classmates, etc.) It is done for fun or entertainment and is generally good-natured and harmless. e.g. putting someone's stapler in a bowl of gelatin or stretching plastic wrap across a door frame.
prankster (someone who does a prank)	
hoax	an attempt to trick people into believing or accepting as genuine something false and often ridiculous. While it may seem similar to a prank, the difference is that a hoax is done on a much larger scale, and is generally not good-natured and often causes harm. e.g. political propaganda or fake warnings about a computer virus.
fool (v.)	to deceive someone in a way that makes them appear <i>foolish</i> (adj.) (without good judgment) The person who has been deceived is a <i>fool</i> (n.). In many contexts, it could be a strong and negative statement. However, in the context of pranks/practical jokes, it's a lighthearted way to talk about the prank being successful. (Ex. We <u>fooled</u> him.)
gullible	easily fooled or cheated; quick to believe something that is not true • Ex: She's very <u>gullible</u> ; she won't suspect it's a prank.
to fall for [something]	be deceived by something, especially a lie. • The email that's going around about winning a vacation is obviously a scam; only a <u>gullible</u> person would <u>fall for</u> it.
to get [someone]	to successfully prank someone or make them believe a false story that is the basis of the prank. Ex. I <u>got</u> you! (You <u>fell for</u> my prank.)
April Fools!	something you shout to reveal the April Fools' day joke.

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



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

come up with [something]	This very common and useful phrasal verb means to produce something, especially in dealing with a problem or challenge. (often ideas, reasons, etc.) • I'm trying to <u>come up with</u> a good prank to pull on my sister.
top of the line	of the best quality or among the most expensive of its kind available • The company takes great pride in providing <u>top of the line</u> products.
cutting edge	the newest and most advanced area of activity in an art, science, etc. • This home security company uses <u>cutting edge</u> surveillance technology.
have a tendency [to do something]	inclination toward a particular characteristic or type of behavior • I <u>have a tendency</u> to eat sweets when I'm stressed.
go the extra mile	do more than someone is required to do • My teacher <u>goes the extra mile</u> to help students be the best they can be.
to have a "thing" about [something]	have very strong feelings about something. It could be positive or negative, depending on context. Ex. She has <u>a thing about</u> Nicholas Cage. (In this case, it seems that the person really dislikes him, based on the context.)
to go all out	To put forth the utmost amount of energy, effort, enthusiasm, and/or resources toward some task or action • When I throw a party, I have a tendency <u>to go all out</u> .
execute (v.) execution (n.)	carry out or put into effect (a plan, order, or course of action) • I had a great plan for a prank, but I wasn't able to <u>execute</u> it.
every so often	common synonym for occasionally. Other common synonyms: once in a while, from time to time, now and then • <u>Every so often</u> , I find a piece of bubble wrap clipped to my office door.
a bummer	informal and casual: a situation that is unpleasant or disappointing • I never got the chance to play the prank, so that's <u>a bummer</u> .
honk	make a short, loud noise with a horn, typically from a car • We put a sign on the back of his car that read, " <u>Honk</u> and wave."
freaked out	informal and casual: in a heightened emotional state, such as fear, anger, or excitement. (Context usually makes it clear which emotion is referenced) • I want a prank to put a smile on my face; I don't want to be <u>freaked out</u> .
grossed out	informal and casual: with strong feelings of disgust or repulsion • I'm <u>grossed out</u> by the idea of mayo in a doughnut. (It grosses me out.)
something's off	Something is not quite right, but it's difficult to say exactly what is wrong. • The seat isn't moved so much that it's obvious, but just enough to feel that <u>something's off</u> .
squished	informal and casual: in a space that is too tight or very crowded • The seat was pulled too close, so he felt <u>squished</u> in the car.
watch out	be careful; be alert for some danger ahead • He may pull a prank on you one of these days, so <u>watch out</u> .

Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

milestone	<p>an event marking a significant change or stage in development</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She was celebrating a <u>milestone</u> birthday (e.g. 30, 40, 50, etc.)
elaborate (adj.)	<p>made or done with great care or with much detail</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We pulled off an <u>elaborate</u> prank.
keep a straight face	<p>manage to show no emotion; stop yourself from smiling or laughing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I could barely <u>keep a straight face</u> during the prank.
crop	<p>plants such as wheat and potatoes that are grown in large quantities for food.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The April Fools' hoax was about a spaghetti <u>crop</u>.
"It's a thing"	<p>something that exists</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • I didn't want to believe there actually are people who believe that chocolate milk comes from brown cows, but apparently, <u>it's a thing</u>.
one-hit wonder	<p>a singer/group that was popular for a very brief period of time, usually having only one hit song.</p>
disoriented	<p>feeling lost and/or confused.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The little boy woke up from a nap and was <u>disoriented</u>.
heartthrob	<p>A male celebrity who is attractive and appealing, especially to teen girls</p>
get along [with] [someone]	<p>have a friendly relationship with someone</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • She doesn't <u>get along with</u> her colleague.
booby trap	<p>A hidden trap for an unsuspecting person to get caught in</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can set up a <u>booby trap</u> on the door to drop confetti when opened.
take it up a notch	<p>notch: a slightly higher or lower level in a series of levels. If you take it up a notch, you increase the intensity. (Conversely, if something or someone is too intense, we might say that they should "take it <i>down</i> a notch.")</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Or instead of confetti, it could be a bucket of water, to <u>take it up a notch</u>.
swap out	<p>replace one thing with another</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • You can <u>swap out</u> the person's family photos with pictures of a celebrity.

Expressions with "Pull"

There are several expressions related to pranks or deceiving people that contain the word pull:

pull a prank [on someone]	To carry out a trick, deception, or practical joke (also: play a prank) <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>We <u>pulled a prank</u> on our teacher.</i>
pull off [something] Ph. Verb (separable)	To successfully carry out a difficult or elaborate plan, such as a prank. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>We <u>pulled off</u> the perfect prank!</i>• <i>I didn't think she could organize such a big party so quickly, but somehow she <u>pulled it off</u>.</i>
pull [someone's] leg	deceive someone in a playful way as a joke. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Come on, you don't know Beyonce – stop <u>pulling my leg</u>!</i>
pull the wool over [someone's] eyes	try to deceive someone, often to take advantage of them <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Teenagers often <u>pull the wool over their parents' eyes</u>, so don't just automatically believe everything they tell you.</i>
pull a fast one [on someone]	deceive, trick, or cheat someone by lying <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>I don't believe what he wrote in his resume. I think he's trying to <u>pull a fast one</u>.</i>• <i>I shouldn't have sold my car for such a low price. I think that guy <u>pulled a fast one</u> on me.</i>

Join the Conversation

- Do you like pranks and practical jokes? What kinds of pranks do kids pull in school? Have you ever pulled a prank on someone? Did anyone ever pull a good prank on you?
- Watch a TV show or YouTube video with some pranks and practical jokes. Describe one or two that you liked. Were there any that you did not think were funny? Why?
- What examples of practical joke ideas did you hear in the conversation? Which ones did you think were the funniest?
- Have you ever been "Rick Rolled"? What would be some funny ways to Rick Roll someone? (Read [HERE](#) for more information about Rick Rolling.)
- Have you or someone you know ever fallen for a scam? What are some scams that you have heard of that you think only a very gullible person could possibly believe?
- What are some ways that teenagers try to pull the wool over their parents' eyes?
- Do a Google search for "famous hoaxes" and find an interesting one to discuss.

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

We are enjoying these discussions, and we hope that you are finding them helpful!



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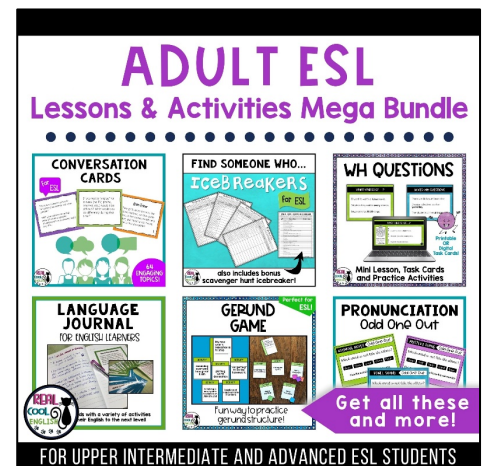

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