

A List of American Slang Words with Examples

Being aware of the slang words and phrases is crucial when learning the English language. Here's a rundown of some of the most common expressions you might frequently hear among native English speakers. And to help you better understand what they mean and how they're used in context, we've included examples for each phrase:

Bae

Bae literally stands for "before anyone else". It's used to refer to a special someone, usually a romantic partner.

Example:

"Hey, do you want to come over later?"
"I can't. I have plans, it's my bae's birthday."

Bomb

When defined literally, a *bomb* is a type of explosive. But when used as slang, *bomb* is often used to refer to someone or something that is really good or awesome.

Example:

"Where do you want to eat lunch?"
"There's a fast-food place around the corner. Their burger is the bomb!"

Bummer

Feeling disappointed? The word *bummer* has you covered to express exactly how you feel. Basically, it's like "I'm disappointed" in an informal manner.

Example:

"Have you watched the movie that came out just recently?"
"Yeah, I ended up just wasting my time. That movie was a bummer."

Chill Out / Chilling Out

Defined literally, chill refers to cold temperature. But when used as slang, *chill out* and *chilling out* may sound the same, but it is used in different ways. When someone tells you to *chill out*, it means that you're getting unnecessarily stressed about something and you need to calm down. Chilling out, on the other hand, means that you're at ease and simply relaxing.

Example:

"Kelly is always late! If she's not here by the next hour, we'll be leaving without her."
"Hey, dude, chill out. I'm sure she'll be here soon."

"Hey, what are you guys doing?"
"Nothing, just chilling out. Do you want to come over?"

Dunno

Dunno is a shortened version of “*I don’t know.*” It’s basically a quicker and lazier way of saying it and it’s most commonly used by younger people.

Example:

“Where’s Andrea? She’s supposed to be here by now.”

“Dunno, I haven’t seen her. She’s always late anyway.”

Epic

Literally, *epic* refers to a long poem. However, when used as slang, it has an entirely different meaning. The word *epic* is used to describe a person, an object, or an event that is grand or awesome. So the next time you find something amazing, say *epic*.

Example:

“How was the house party you went to last night?”

“You should’ve come. You missed an epic party!”

Ex

If you hear an American mention the word *ex*, it means they are referring to a past boyfriend, girlfriend, husband, or wife that they are no longer dating. Typically, you may hear it in a more specific manner like “*ex-boyfriend*”, “*ex-girlfriend*”, “*ex-husband*”, or “*ex-wife*”.

However, if you hear it with another noun such as “*boss*” or “*colleague*”, its meaning changes entirely. For instance, the word “*ex-boss*” refers to someone who you’ve previously worked under, while an “*ex-colleague*” refers to someone you’ve previously worked with.

Keep in mind that if you hear someone use the word *ex* as a stand-alone, they’re usually referring to a person they were once romantically involved with.

Examples:

“Have you heard from Adam recently?”

“No, there’s no point communicating with an ex.”

“Why did you quit your job?”

“I don’t get along with my boss—well, ex-boss now.”

Flake

The literal definition of *flake* refers to a small piece of something, usually of food. But when used as a slang, *flake* refers to someone who generally makes plans or agrees to do something with you but never follows through.

Example:

“I thought Jenny is going with you to the prom?”

“I’m not surprised. She always makes plans with me, but never shows up. She’s such a flake.”

For Real

This is most commonly used to imply that you're speaking honestly and truthfully. The closest phrase that is quite similar to this is *"to be honest,"* which is usually used in the beginning of a sentence.

Example:

"How are you doing?"

"For real, though, I'm feeling a bit under the weather."

Have a Blast!

The literal definition of blast is explosion. But when used as slang, its meaning is on the positive side. Saying *"Have a blast!"* is like saying *"Have a good time!"*

Example:

"We'll be driving to the beach to go swimming. Do you want to come with us?"

"I'm a bit busy. Anyway, have a blast!"

I Feel You

While this may not make any sense when taken literally, saying *"I feel you"* simply means *"I understand and empathize with you."* This phrase is often used sympathetically, especially when someone is going through a hard time and you want to let them know that you understand how they feel.

Example:

"I can't believe my boyfriend left me for that woman."

"I feel you, girl. My ex-boyfriend cheated on me, too."

Laid Back

Laid back is a slang word used to refer to a person or a situation that is very relaxed or calm. For instance, you're at a beach and the surroundings are peaceful, you can describe the circumstance as *laid back*. When describing a person, you can use *laid back* as a way to define someone who's gentle and at ease.

Example:

"Have you ever been to the park around the corner?"

"Yeah, I like it there. The place is very laid back."

"Have you met Jeffrey's cousin?"

"Yeah, I like him. He's very laid back."

My Bad

When you've made a mistake, you can say *"my bad"* instead of the formal apologies. It's like owning up to your mistake.

Example:

"You didn't invite me to your birthday party."

"My bad! I simply forgot, I meant no offense."

No biggie

No biggie is originally derived from the phrase “*no big deal*.” There are also other similar terms such as “*no problem*” and “*no sweat*”. There are a lot of variations, but all of them mean the same thing: It’s not a problem. These are the terms that you can use as a way to say “*you’re welcome*” casually.

Example:

“Hey, thanks for driving me to school.”

“No biggie, John.”

Ripped

The literal meaning of *ripped* is badly torn. When used as a slang, however, it refers to someone who is extremely physically fit. If a person is *ripped*, it means that they have a great body and good muscles—probably due to working out or being athletic.

Example:

“Have you seen George recently? He’s so ripped!”

“What?! No way! He used to be so overweight.”

Shady

Literally, *shady* means to be situated in or full of shade. The slang word *shady*, on the other hand, is used to refer to a person or an object that seems questionable or suspicious.

Example:

“How’s your sister?”

“I don’t know, she’s being shady. I think she’s pregnant.”

Tea

When defined literally, *tea* is an aromatic beverage. But when used as a slang, *tea* refers to gossip or hearsay.

Example:

“I’ve been hearing rumors about Sally. What is it really about?”

“She cheated on her husband with her cousin. That’s the tea!”

Trashed

The slang term *trashed* has two distinctive definitions. The first one refers to a person—when someone is *trashed*, it means that they are extremely drunk. Its second meaning means to completely destroy someone’s property.

Example:

“What happened yesterday? I was drunk, I can barely remember anything.”

“Man, you were trashed! We were almost hit by a truck when you were driving.”

“I heard your landlord kicked you out of your apartment.”

“Yeah, and I trashed the whole place before I left.”

What's Up?

As you have probably already figured out, American slang words are not to be taken literally. When someone asks you, "What's up?" It doesn't have anything to do with what's above, but rather how you're doing. So the next time someone asks you the question, don't look upwards. Instead, tell them how you're doing.

Example:

"What's up?"

"Good. I've been pretty busy with work lately."

Zonked

Feeling worn out? Perhaps exhausted? The slang word that best describes how you feel is *zonked*. So the next time you're feeling extremely weary, say you're *zonked* instead.

Example:

"Hey, we're going on a road trip. Do you want to come with us?"

"I can't, I'm sorry. I'm totally zonked, I can't even get up."

These are just some of the most common slang words and phrases, but there's a lot more, perhaps even more than you thought. Luckily for you, there are useful materials available online to help you add some slang words and phrases into your English vocabulary.