

STREET TALK-1

HOW TO SPEAK & UNDERSTAND AMERICAN SLANG



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CASSETTE OFFER
DETAILS INSIDE



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preface

Recently, I went to the movies with a French friend of mine named Pascale, who had been studying English for ten years. While we were waiting in line, Pascale's co-worker, Steve, approached him and said,

"Hey, Pascale! What's up?"

To me, this was a completely normal question and I was waiting to hear how he was going to reply. Instead, he looked confused, paused a moment, then cautiously stepped back and looked up. Amused, I rephrased the question for him to make things a little clearer. But Steve didn't stop there and kept right on firing away unmercifully,

"I couldn't get over how what's-'er-face got all bent outta shape yesterday and read me the riot act jus' 'cause I showed up a few minutes late ta work. Man, gimme a break! Betcha never saw anyone get so ticked off 'n freak out like that b'fore, huh?"

Pascale was obviously stunned and didn't know whether to answer "yes," "no," or to give Steve the correct time. After all his years of English study, there were two things he had never learned: *how* we speak—colloquialisms; and *what* we speak—slang.

Colloquialisms cover the extensive array of contractions, pronunciations, and common usage characteristic of all native speakers of American-English. For example, any student of English would undoubtedly understand the following phrase:

"I am going to get upset if he does not quit what he is doing and stop bothering me!"

However, it is more likely to be pronounced like this:

I'm gonna ged upsed if 'e duz'n quit what 'e's doin' 'n stop botherin' me!

Slang encompasses "secret" words and idioms that are consistently used in books, magazines, television, movies, songs, American homes, etc. and generally are reserved only for native speakers. The example above demonstrates how this phrase would be spoken by a native; but a native speaker would most likely use slang words in place of the conventional words:

*I am going to **freak out** if he does not **knock it off** and stop **bugging** me!"*

And now, after adding the colloquial contractions, here is our final result:

*I'm gonna **freak oud** if 'e duz'n **knock id off** 'n stop **buggin'** me!*

For the non-native speaker, learning the information in **STREET TALK -1** will equal years of living in America and eliminate the usual time it takes to absorb the intricacies of slang and colloquialisms.

For the American, you're in for a treat as we explore the evolution and variations of some of the most common hilarious expressions and slang terms handed down to us through the years.

STREET TALK -1 is a self-teaching guide divided into five parts:

- **DIALOGUE**

Twenty to thirty new American expressions and terms (indicated in boldface) are presented as they may be heard in an actual conversation. A translation of the dialogue in standard English is always given on the opposite page followed by an important phonetic version of the dialogue as it would actually be spoken by an American. This page will prove vital to any non-native since, as previously demonstrated, Americans tend to rely heavily on contractions and shortcuts in pronunciation.

- **VOCABULARY**

This section spotlights all of the slang words and expressions that were used in the dialogue and offers more examples of usage, synonyms, antonyms, and special notes.

- **PRACTICE THE VOCABULARY**

These word games include all of the new terms and idioms previously learned and will help you to test yourself on your comprehension. (The pages providing the answers to all the drills are indicated at the beginning of this section.)

- **A CLOSER LOOK**

This section offers the reader a unique look at common words used in slang expressions pertaining to a specific category such as *Body Parts, Proper Names, Numbers, Colors, etc.* A short drill is then presented in preparation for the final section.

- **JUST FOR FUN**

Here, the reader is offered an entertaining monologue containing many of the words from the same category as previously introduced. This section will surely prove to be hilarious for any native-speaker since it demonstrates the unlimited creativity of our own language.

If you have always prided yourself on being fluent in English, you will undoubtedly be surprised and amused to encounter a whole new world of phrases usually hidden away in the American-English language and usually reserved only for the native speaker...*until now!*

David Burke

Author

NOTE

Slang falls into two very separate categories: suitable and proper as well as obscene and vulgar. In order to be truly fluent in any language, these two groups *must* be learned. **STREET TALK -1** focuses primarily on slang which is very acceptable and commonly used by everyone, and will only explore vulgarisms as far as translating some popular euphemisms created from vulgar expressions.

For a close look at the extremely popular yet forbidden language of obscenities and vulgarisms, refer to: **BLEEP! - A Guide to Popular American Obscenities** by David Burke. (See the coupon on the back page for details.)

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At School



LESSON ONE

Dialogue In Slang

At School...

Anne joins Peggy, who seems totally out of it.

Anne: You seem really **ticked off**. What's up?

Peggy: Just **get out of my face**, would you?!

Anne: **Chill out!** What's eating you, anyway?

Peggy: Sorry. It's just that I think I **blew the final** and now my parents are going to get all **bent out of shape**. I like totally **drew a blank** on everything!

Anne: Well, now you're really going to **freak out** when I tell you who **aced it... what's-her-face...** the one who always **kisses up** to the teacher.

Peggy: Jennifer Davies? **Give me a break!** I can't **stand** her. She's such a **dweeb!** How could she possibly **ace** it when she keeps **cutting** class all the time?

Anne: She's the **teacher's pet**, that's why. Besides, he's so **laid back** he lets her **get away with it**. She just really **rubs me the wrong way**. And you know what? I think she's got the **hots** for him, too.

Peggy: **Get out of here!**

Anne: I'm **dead serious**. Yesterday, before class starts, she walks up to Mr. Edward's desk and **goes**, 'Good morning, Jim.'

Peggy: Oh, **gag me!** She's totally **gross!**

LESSON ONE

Translation of dialogue in standard English

At School...

Anne joins Peggy, who seems to be in a daze.

Anne: You seem really **angry**. What's the matter?

Peggy: Just leave me alone, alright?!

Anne: **Relax!** What's the matter with you, anyway?

Peggy: Sorry. It's just that I think I **failed** the **final examination** and now my parents are going to get all **upset**. I, uh, **couldn't think of any of the answers!**

Anne: Well, now you're really going to be **mad** when I tell you who got **100% on** it... I **forgot her name**... the one who always **flatters** the teacher.

Peggy: Jennifer Davies? **You're kidding!** I don't **like** her! She's such a **moron!** How could she possibly get **100% on** it when she's **absent from** class all the time?

Anne: She's the **teacher's favorite student**, that's why. Besides, he's so **casual** he **permits her to do it**. There's just **something about her I don't like**. And you know what? I think she **really likes** him, too.

Peggy: **You've got to be joking!**

Anne: I'm **very serious**. Yesterday, before class starts, she walks up to Mr. Edward's desk and **says**, 'Good morning, Jim.'

Peggy: Oh, **that makes me sick!** She's totally **disgusting!**

LESSON ONE

Dialogue in slang as it would be heard

At School...

Anne joins Peggy, who seems totally out of it.

Anne: You seem really **tict off**. What's up?

Peggy: Jus' **ged oudda my face**, would ja?!

Anne: **Chill out!** What's **eatin' you**, anyway?

Peggy: Sorry. It's jus' thad I think I **blew the final'n** now my parents'r gonna ged all **ben' oudda shape**. I like totally **drew a blank** on ev'rything!

Anne: Well, now yer really gonna **freak out** when I tell ya who **aced** it... **what's-'er face**... the one who always **kisses up** ta the teacher.

Peggy: Jennifer Davies? **Gimme a break!** I can't **stand 'er**. She's such a **dweeb!** How could she possibly ace it when she keeps **cudding** class all the time?

Anne: She's the **teacher's pet**, that's why. Besides, he's so **laid back** 'e lets 'er **ged away with it**. She jus' really **rubs me the wrong way**. And ya know what? I think she's got the **hots** fer 'im, too.

Peggy: **Ged oudda here!**

Anne: I'm **dead serious**. Yesterday, before class starts, she walks up ta Mr. Edwards desk'n **goes**, 'Good morning, Jim.'

Peggy: Oh, **gag me!** She's totally **gross!**

At the Mall



The New Car



strip down (to) *exp.* to undress • *She stripped down to nothing!; She undressed until she was wearing nothing!*

♦ ALSO (1): **to strip** *v.* • *When I got my physical examination, the doctor made me strip; When I got my physical examination, the doctor made me undress.*

♦ ALSO (2): **stripper** *n.* man or woman who performs in a nightclub while undressing and dancing • *She's a stripper?!; She's a performer who undresses in a nightclub?*

♦ ALSO (3): **striptease** *n.* sexually provocative performance of one or more people who undress while dancing • *She does striptease at night; She does sexually provocative performances of undressing and dancing at night.*

♦ ALSO (4): **strip joint** *n.* night club that features striptease acts.

sweat like a pig (to) *exp.* to perspire profusely • *I sweat like a pig when I work out; • I perspire profusely when I work out.*

"What's with you?" *exp.* (very popular) "What's bothering you?"

♦ SYNONYM: **"What's eating you?"** *exp.*

"When hell freezes over" *exp.* "Absolutely never" • *"When do you suppose he'll graduate from college?" "When hell freezes over"; "When do you suppose he'll graduate from college?" "Absolutely never!"*

wiped out *exp.* exhausted • *I need to rest. I'm wiped out; I need to rest. I'm exhausted.*

♦ VARIATION: **wiped** *adj.* • *I'm going to bed. I'm wiped; I'm going to bed. I'm exhausted.*

♦ SYNONYM: **to be pooped** *exp.* • *I'm pooped!; I'm exhausted.*

→ NOTE: Occasionally, you may hear the outdated expression *"to be too pooped to pop"* used *only* in jest.

♦ NOTE: **to wipe out** *v.* (surfer slang) to fall off one's surfboard.

"Wow!" *exclam.* exclamation denoting surprise or disbelief • *Wow! That's a beautiful car!*

♦ SYNONYM: **"Geez! (or "Jeez!")** *exclam.* • *Geez! What an idiot!*

→ NOTE: *"Geez!"* is a euphemism for *"Jesus Christ!"*

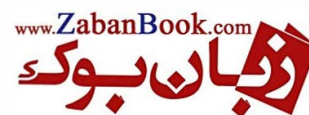
wuss *n.* weakling • *Don't be such a wuss. Just ask him for a raise!; Don't be such a coward. Just ask him for a raise!*

♦ ALSO: **wussy** *adj.* cowardly, spineless • *I've never seen anyone so wussy before; I've never seen anyone so spineless before.*

thanks *exp.* a very common abbreviation of *"thank you."*

♦ NOTE: This abbreviation should only be used in an informal setting since it implies familiarity and comfort between the speakers.

Practice The Vocabulary



[Answers to Lesson 6, p. 232]

A. Complete the sentences by choosing the appropriate word(s) from the list below. Make all necessary changes.

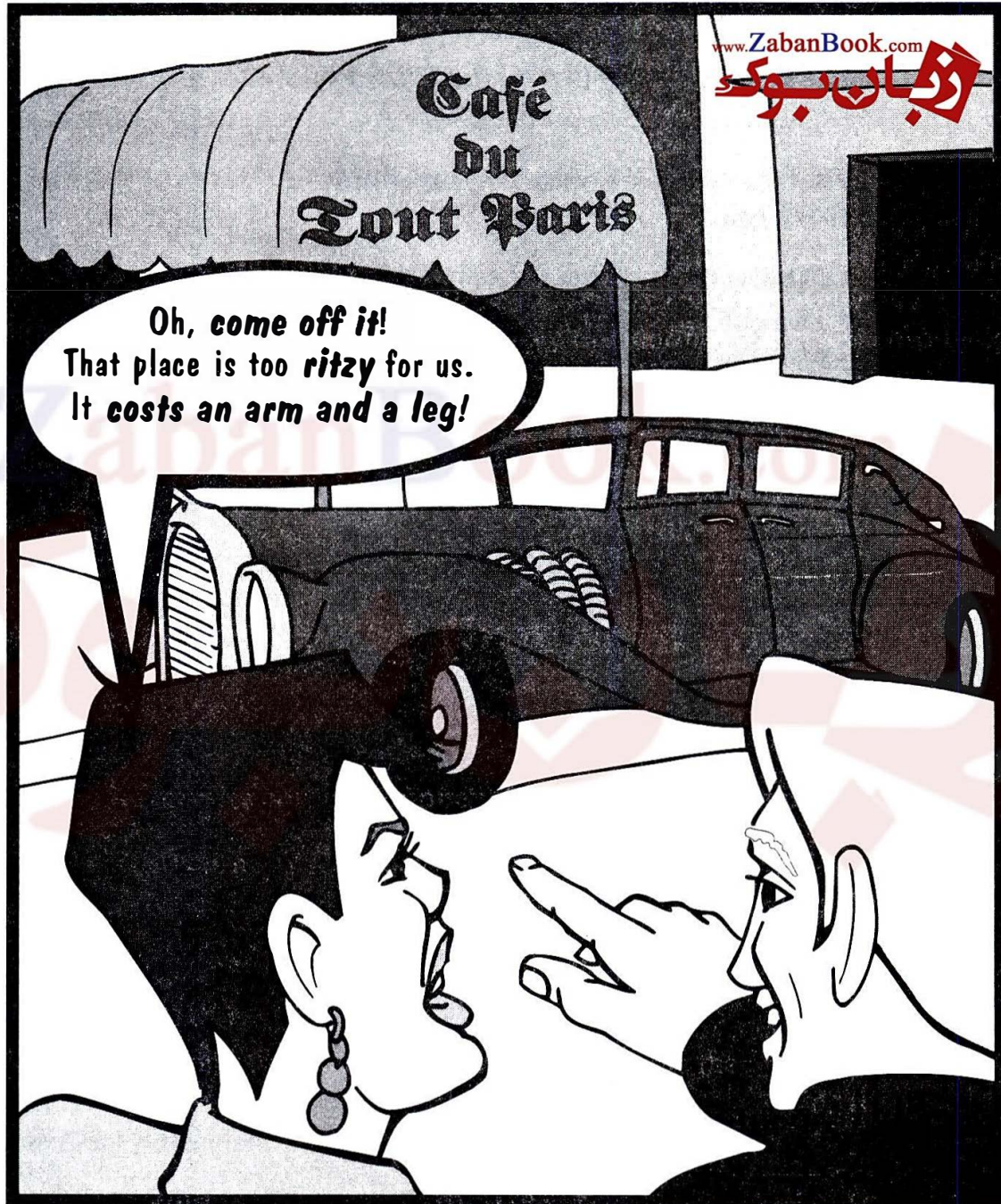
comfy
get off it
raw
high heaven

revved
hit
flipped
get

wow
strip down
cut
hot

1. In a nudist colony, the first thing you do is to _____ .
2. Oh, _____ ! All you do is complain.
3. Even if it takes the rest of my life, I'm going to _____ you for this!
4. It reeks to _____ in this gym!
5. We're leaving on vacation in just a few minutes. I'm so _____ !
6. He's so sexy. That's what I call one _____ guy.
7. _____ ! Did you see that? It was fantastic!
8. Ah, this chair is so _____ .
9. I'm exhausted after a day with these children. I'm just not _____ out to be a teacher.
10. You yelled at your new boss? Have you _____ ?
11. After that workout, I can't wait to _____ the showers.
12. At the nude beach, I bet I saw a thousand people in the _____ .

At the Restaurant



ANSWERS TO LESSONS 1-10

LESSON ONE - At School

Practice the Vocabulary

- A. 1. up
2. gross
3. face
4. Chill
5. cutting
6. blew
7. face
8. off
9. back
10. rubs
11. dead
12. hots
- B. 1. pissed off
2. eating
3. gross
4. pet
5. up
6. ached
7. kissing up to
8. went
9. gag me
10. stand
- C. 1. E
2. B
3. G
4. J
5. I
6. D
7. F
8. H
9. A
10. C

A CLOSER LOOK (1):**Practice Commonly Used Contractions**

I *just* **jus'** heard that Nancy *and* **'n** Dominic *are* **'r** going to **gonna** have a baby! *Is that* **Izat** great or **'r** what?! Nancy said that Dominic was calm about it. How *can he* **c'n 'e** be so relaxed?! He *has* **'as** a lot of **a** control, that's *for* **fer** sure **sher** ! What **Whad** if she gives birth to **ta** twins? I *don't know* **dunno** what they'd do! They'd *probably* **prob'ly** move out of **outta** that house. Maybe they'll *let me* **lem'me** help *them* **'em** find something in my neighborhood.

A CLOSER LOOK (2):**Practice Using Commonly Used Initials**

- | | |
|------------|-----------|
| A. 1. O.T. | 7. B.O. |
| 2. V.P. | 8. T.A. |
| 3. I.D. | 9. L.A. |
| 4. M.C. | 10. P.J.s |
| 5. U.F.O. | 11. D.J. |
| 6. T.P. | 12. CD |

LESSON TWO - At the Party**Practice the Vocabulary**

- | | |
|---------|-------|
| A. 1. b | 6. b |
| 2. a | 7. a |
| 3. b | 8. b |
| 4. b | 9. a |
| 5. a | 10. b |

really bad.

♦ **SYNONYM:** **turkey** *n.* • *That show was a real turkey; That show was really bad.*

♦ **ANTONYM:** SEE - **smash**.

♦ **ALSO:** **to bomb** *v.* to fail • *The movie really bombed; The movie really failed • I really bombed on my test; I really failed my test.*

booze *n.* alcohol • *His breath always smells of booze; His breath always smells of alcohol.*

bottomless pit *exp.* a person with an insatiable appetite • *I can't believe how much you can eat. You really are a bottomless pit!; I can't believe how much you can eat. You really have an insatiable appetite!*

♦ **SYNONYM:** **to have a hollow leg** *exp.*

⇒ **NOTE:** This expression conjures up an image of someone's food going right past the stomach and into a hollow leg. • *She eats so much she must have a hollow leg.*

broke *exp.* destitute • *I can't afford that. I'm broke; I can't afford that. I'm destitute.*

♦ **ALSO (1):** **stone/flat broke** *exp.* completely destitute • *I'm stone/flat broke; I'm completely destitute.*

♦ **ALSO (2):** **busted** *adj.* (variation of "broke") destitute.

♦ **SYNONYM:** **down and out** *exp.* • *The poor man is really down and out; The poor man is really destitute.*

"Brother!" *exclam.* (said in contempt) • *Oh, brother! How could she wear that?; I can't believe it! How could she wear that?*

♦ **NOTE:** Used as an exclamation, "brother" can certainly be used among women.

♦ **SYNONYM:** **"Come on!"** *exclam.* • *Come on! How could she wear that?; I can't believe it! How could she wear that?*

buck *n.* dollar • *Can you lend me five bucks?; Can you lend me five dollars?*

buffed *adj.* muscular and brawny • *You're really getting buffed!; You're really getting muscular!*

♦ **SYNONYM:** **hunky** *adj.* • *He's hunky; He's muscular.*

⇒ **ALSO:** **hunk** *n.* muscular and sexy man • *What a hunk!; What a muscular and sexy man!*

bug (to) *v.* to annoy • *That really bugs me!; That really annoys me!*

♦ **SYNONYM:** **to burn one up** *exp.* • *He really burns me up!; He really makes me mad!*

bummed *adj.* disappointed, depressed • *I couldn't go with my friends to the movies because I got sick. I'm bummed; I couldn't go with my friends to the movies because I got sick. I'm disappointed.*

♦ **NOTE:** This is a contraction of "bummed out" which is equally popular.

♦ **SYNONYM:** **down in the dumps** *exp.* *What's wrong? You look down in the dumps; What's wrong? You look depressed.*

bunch (a) *n.* a lot • *She has a bunch of kids; She has a lot of children • Thanks a bunch!; Thanks a lot!*

♦ **ALSO:** **a whole bunch** *exp.* a large amount • *She has a whole bunch of kids; She really has many children • I drank a whole bunch of coffee last night; I really drank a lot of coffee last night.*

♦ **SYNONYM:** **pile** *n.* • *She has a pile of children; She has many children.*

burger joint *exp.* restaurant that specializes in hamburgers • *That's the best burger joint in town; That's the best restaurant for hamburgers in town.*

white lie *exp.* harmless untruth used to avoid confrontation • *I didn't feel like going into work today, so I told the boss I was sick. It was just a little white lie; I didn't feel like going into work today so I told the boss I was sick. It was just a little harmless untruth.*

"Whoa!" *exclam.* exclamation of surprise and amazement • *You passed the test? Whoa!*

wimp *n.* weakling • *He'll never take control. He's such a wimp; He'll never take control. He's such a weakling.*

window-shop (to) *exp.* to look in store windows without making any purchases • *Since I don't have any money, I can only window-shop; Since I don't have any money, I can only look in the store windows without making any purchases.*

wiped out *exp.* exhausted • *I need to rest. I'm wiped out; I need to rest. I'm exhausted.*

♦ VARIATION: **wiped** *adj.* • *I'm going to bed. I'm wiped; I'm going to bed. I'm exhausted.*

♦ SYNONYM: **to be pooped** *exp.* • *I'm pooped!; I'm exhausted.*

⇒ NOTE: Occasionally, you may hear the outdated expression "*to be too pooped to pop*" used only in jest.

♦ NOTE: **to wipe out** *v.* (surfer slang) to fall off one's surfboard.

"Wow!" *exclam.* exclamation denoting surprise or disbelief • *Wow! That's a beautiful car!*

♦ SYNONYM: **"Geez! (or "Jeez!")** *exclam.* • *Geez! What an idiot!*

⇒ NOTE: "Geez!" is a euphemism for "Jesus Christ!"

wuss *n.* weakling • *Don't be such a wuss. Just ask him for a raise!; Don't be such a coward. Just ask him for a raise!*

♦ ALSO: **wussy** *adj.* cowardly, spineless • *I've never seen anyone so wussy before; I've never seen anyone so spineless before.*

-Y-

yeah *adv.* (informal and extremely popular) yes • *Yeah, I know her; Yes, I know her.*

♦ SYNONYMS: **yep/yup/uh,huh** *adv.* (informal) • *"Are you coming right back?" "Yep/Yup/Uh,huh"; "Are you coming right back?" "Yes."*

"You can say that again!" *exclam.* "That's very true!"

♦ NOTE: In this expression, it is important to stress the word "*that*."

♦ SYNONYM: **"I'll say!"** *exp.*

⇒ NOTE: In this expression, it is important to stress the contraction "*I'll*."

"You said it!" *exclam.* "I agree!"

♦ SYNONYM: **"You got it!"** *exclam.*

"Yuck!" *exclam.* used to signify great displeasure.

♦ SYNONYM: **Ew!** *exclam.* • *Ew! What is this stuff?*

♦ NOTE: **Pew!** *exclam.* used to signify displeasure upon smelling a foul odor.

-Z-

zoned *adj.* dazed and senseless, oblivious • *I'm zoned today because I only got two hours of sleep last night; I'm oblivious today because I only got two hours of sleep last night.*

♦ SYNONYM: **out of it** *exp.* • *I feel out of it today; I feel oblivious today.*

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STREET TALK-1, the first self-teaching guide on American slang, is designed to teach you quickly how to speak and understand the "inside" language that is used constantly in movies, books, magazines, in every day conversation, and usually reserved only for Americans... *until now!*

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