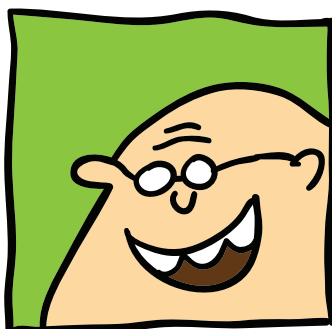
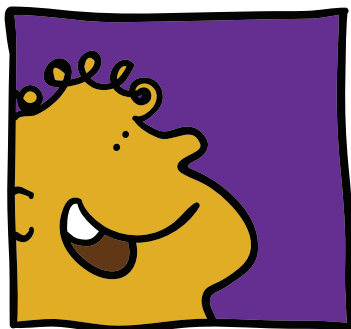
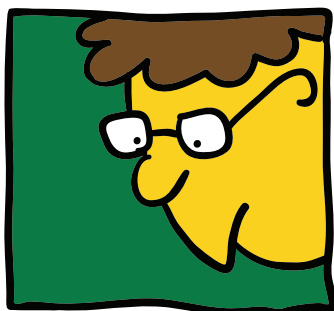




ENGLISH THE AMERICAN WAY:

A FUN ESL GUIDE TO LANGUAGE AND CULTURE IN THE U.S.



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- Sample dialogues show everyday American English in context
- Idioms, slang, useful phrases, and tons of vocabulary
- Cool tips, quizzes, and hands-on activities make learning fun!
- **Plus** audio to improve listening & speaking skills



Audio available
on CD + Mp3

New Friends

Get Started

Hi There!



New country? New friends! *But how do you meet them?*

Making new friends is an exciting part of moving to a new place, but sometimes it's hard to know just how formal to be with new people. Americans are usually very **casual**. They're also very friendly. This is a good thing, but it can be **tricky**. Everyone knows that good old basic English phrase, "Hello. It's nice to meet you." Oh, yeah, we bet you were ready for that. Well, you may be ready, but then you may be surprised to learn that you won't hear that phrase very often. "Hello. It's

nice to meet you" is okay for first-time introductions, but when friends meet socially, the conversation will probably sound more like this:

DIALOGUE 1: TRACK 2

ALAN: Hey, Lia! It's good to see you.

LIA: You, too. I haven't seen you in a few days. How are you?
How's it going?

ALAN: Not bad. I'm so busy with the classes I'm taking. How about you?

LIA: I'm okay. I know you're busy with classes. My job's really **hectic** this time of year, too. What's new with you?

ALAN: Nothing much. I'm on my way to the **mall**. I need some **time off**! Do you remember Lana? She's there. Ha! She's always at the mall! I think a lot of our friends plan to just **hang out** at the mall tonight.

LIA: Who? Oh yeah. I remember Lana. She's the one with the scary-looking dog. I don't want to hang out with that dog!

ALAN: Ha! You aren't afraid of that little tiny dog, are you? Well, I'm sure Rover isn't at the mall.

LIA: Actually, I'm **headed** to the mall later, anyway. There's a **huge sale** going on. I think they're open extra late.

ALAN: Great! Maybe I'll see you there.

LIA: Sounds good. We're both good shoppers! If I get there before you leave, maybe I'll see you. After all, we aren't leaving until we see all the sales. And I'm not leaving until I have some cute new shoes!

TIP 1



When people ask, "How are you?" they are really just saying, "Hi." This is *not* a good time to talk about your health!

TIP 2



The mall isn't just for shopping. Many young people go to the mall to **hang around** with friends. In a city, however, the place to be might be *downtown*.

VOCABULARY

- **casual:** simple, not formal
- ① **hang out** (also hang around): just spend time with friends, with no special activity
- ① **headed:** going
- **hectic:** very busy

- ① **hey:** hi; also a word to get someone's attention
- **huge:** very, very, very big
 - **mall:** a large shopping center with stores and restaurants
 - **sale:** a short time of lower prices in a store
 - **time off:** relaxation time for yourself, away from your work
- ① **tricky:** seems simple, but is a little complicated



PRONUNCIATION POINTER

- In spoken English, we often drop the *-ing* ending of words. This means that *how's it going* will sound like **how's it goin'**. *Nothing* sounds like **nothin'**.
- Another very common spoken difference is the word *you*, which is usually unstressed and sounds like **yuh**. *How are you doing* will sound like **How yuh doin'**.

GRAMMAR REMINDER 1: Verb *to be* Affirmative Statements and Contractions

Of course, our first grammar reminder just *has* to be about the verb *to be*. It may be a little tricky, but it also may be the most important verb in English.

Most speakers use contractions (the short forms) rather than full forms of the verb in affirmative statements. To really sound like a native speaker, practice, practice, practice using contractions! Notice the contractions of the verb *to be* in the dialogue:

- **I'm** on my way. (I am)
- **You're** busy. (You are)
- **It's** good to see you. (It is)
- **She's** there. (She is)
- **There's** a huge sale. (There is)
- **We're** both good shoppers. (We are)
- **They're** open extra late. (They are)

GRAMMAR REMINDER 2: Verb *to be* Questions and Negatives

For questions using the verb *to be*, put the question word first, then the verb *to be* in its correct form, and then the subject.

Correct Examples:

How are you?

What's new with you?

Not:

How you are?

What with you is new?

To make a negative, just add *n't* (or *not*) to the form of *to be*. **Isn't** that easy?

Examples:

You **aren't** afraid of that little dog.

Rover **isn't** there.

We **aren't** leaving.

Meet the Neighbors



Although Americans are very friendly, they are also rather private. You may be surprised to know that very often people don't even know their neighbors. In a big city, it's very possible that people living in the same apartment building won't know the people **next door**. In the **suburbs**, it's not unusual for neighbors to wave from their cars or to say "Hi" across their **yards**, but not to know their neighbors' names. Have you noticed how many houses have fences around them? It may seem strange, but it's really just an example of how much Americans **value** a sense of privacy, especially at home.

Friendly, but private—now that's tricky! Of course, some neighbors just like to party all the time. Hoo, boy! That can be a problem.

DIALOGUE 2: TRACK 3

LIA: Hi. I'm Lia Chen, your neighbor from around the **block**. We're having a **barbecue** Saturday, and we thought you might like to come. **Lots of** the neighbors will be there. Jae and Ramon are coming, too. They're your neighbors across the street.

ALAN: It's nice to meet you, Lia. I'd like to come, but I'll be working all weekend on a big project for my job.

LIA: Well, if you **change your mind**, come on over. You're welcome to come, and I think it will be fun for you to meet all the neighbors.

ALAN: Thanks. By the way, I've been **meaning to** talk to you. I hope my dog's **barking** doesn't bother you.

LIA: Actually, I wanted to talk to you about that. When you're gone during the day, the dog barks all the time. It's **driving me nuts**.

ALAN: I'm really sorry! I'll keep the dog in the house when I'm gone.

LIA: Thanks so much. I hope you'll come over for some **burgers and dogs** on Saturday. And **drop by** our house to visit anytime!

TIP 3



When people are trying to be friendly, they may ask you to “drop by anytime.” Don't believe it! This is a way of being friendly, but most people don't like unexpected visitors to drop by. It's always a good idea to call first and ask if the person is busy.

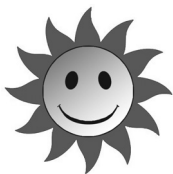
TIP 4



If you are invited to a party or barbecue, it's polite to bring something. Before you go you can ask, “What can I bring?” Even if the **host** says, “Nothing,” you should bring something. It can be a special food treat from your culture or some flowers. Other kinds of gifts are *not* usually given.

VOCABULARY

- **barbecue** (also called a cookout): an outside party where food is cooked on a grill
- **barking**: dog talk!
- **block**: in a neighborhood, the area from street to street
- ① **burgers and dogs**: hamburgers and hot dogs
- **change your mind**: make a different decision from your first one
- ① **driving someone nuts** (or **going crazy**): doing something very annoying (or being annoyed)
- ① **drop by**: go to someone's house without an invitation
- **host**: person who invites others to a party
- ① **lots of**: many
- **meaning to do something**: intending or planning to do something
- **next door**: the apartment or house right next to yours
- **suburbs**: neighborhoods just outside the city
- **value**: think something is very important
- **yards**: small gardens around houses



Fun Fact!

Many neighborhoods have a “block party” during the summer. All the neighbors bring some food and drinks to share, and everyone has a great time.

Those Crazy Kids! | (Just for fun)



It’s probably the same in the country you come from, but teenagers here sometimes sound like they speak a different language. Everyone uses some slang, sometimes, but it seems that **teenagers** use their own slang *all* the time! You may not expect to have a conversation like the next one, but you’ll probably hear one, and it’s fun to know what these **crazy** kids are talking about.

DIALOGUE 3: TRACK 4

LIA: Say! Wassup?

JAE: Nothing much. What are you **up to**?

LIA: Nothing really. We’re just **chillin’**.

JAE: Hey, you’re really **rocking** those cool jeans! You’re really **stylin’**.

LIA: Thanks **a bunch**. They’re from the mall. There’s a huge sale at that cool store we really like. But, hey, I can’t talk now. I **gotta run**.

JAE: Later, **dude**.

LIA: Catch you later.

TIP 5



It’s fun to know what kids are talking about, but people who aren’t teenagers sound funny using this slang. No **kidding**, dude.

TIP 6



Exclamations are fun! They don’t really have a special meaning, but they add excitement to what you’re saying. Here are some examples of common American exclamations: Hey! Wow! Yikes! Hoo, boy! Man! Oh, brother! Oh, boy!

VOCABULARY

- ① **a bunch**: a lot, many
- ① **chillin'**: just relaxing
- ① **crazy**: this can mean insane, but it's often used to mean funny or silly
- ① **dude**: guy (man); girls use this to refer to each other, too
- ① **gotta run**: I don't have time to talk right now; I have to go
- ① **kidding**: joking
- ① **later/catch you later**: I'll see you later
- ① **rocking**: wearing something well
- ① **say!:** a greeting, like *hey!*
- ① **stylin'**: looking very fashionable
- ① **teenagers**: people from thirteen to nineteen years old
- ① **wassup, what're you up to**: What's up? What are you doing?
What's going on? What's new? What's happening? These expressions are all ways of saying *Hi, how are you?*

Did You Spot It?



Did you notice the contractions of the plural forms for the verb *to be*?

- **We're** just chillin'. (We are)
- **You're** really stylin'. (You are)
- **They're** from the mall. (They are)

MORE FUN WITH IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS: Greetings

- **How's tricks?:** How are things?
*I haven't seen you in a while. **How's tricks?***
- **Where have you been hiding?:** Where have you been?
*Wow, Susan, I haven't seen you in two months? **Where have you been hiding?***
- **welcome with open arms:** be very happy to see someone.
*When his sister came home from college, his parents **welcomed her with open arms.***
- **tied up:** busy
*Hey, Sara, I'm glad you called! I'd love to join you for coffee, but I'm **tied up** until lunchtime.*
- **What's happening?:** What's new?
*It's good to see you, Marcus. **What's happening?***