

Catch Word #198 – Dating slang

Episode description

Andrew and Jeremy teach you some funny and modern slang expressions about online dating.

Fun fact

According to the Pew Research Center, only 5% of Americans who are married or in a committed relationship say that they met their partner online. This means the majority of couples in the United States met the old-fashioned way, offline.

Expressions included in the study guide

- To gear up to [do something]
- To hit the slopes
- The dating pool
- To slide into the DMs
- A pic
- To ghost
- To dodge a bullet
- To make it Facebook official



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hello everybody. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And I'm Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Hey Jeremy, how are you?

Jeremy: I'm doing really well today, how about you?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty good. You know, Jeremy, **I'm gearing up to go snowboarding** this weekend.

Jeremy: Wow. That's gonna be fun.

Andrew: I haven't been snowboarding for 5, 6, 7 years, I can't even remember the last time I went snowboarding. So I'm a little bit nervous, actually, to tell you the truth.

Jeremy: I hear that people fall a lot when they go snowboarding. Is that true?

Andrew: Yeah, I fall a lot, yeah.

Jeremy: You have to fall to learn, right? I guess.

Andrew: That's true, it's all part of the process, but I think it will be fun and so I'm excited to get back on the hill, **to hit the slopes**.

Jeremy: **Hit the slopes**.



- Andrew: Speaking of sliding, Jeremy, the word slide appears in one of the expressions that we will teach everyone today in this Catch Word episode. And if you don't know, Catch Word is the series where we take a close look at some interesting English vocabulary, could be an idiom, could be slang, could be a phrasal verb, just an interesting expression, and we teach it to you. We dissect it, give you some examples, tell you how to use it. And today I think we have a fun episode. We're gonna look at some fresh, hot, and current dating slang.
- Jeremy: Oh man, for some people this will be very useful, I think.
- Andrew: Yeah. Jeremy and I were just chatting before we started recording. We're talking about how we're not really in **the dating pool**, so maybe we're not experts about the most current dating slang but we will try our best.
- Jeremy: Maybe we are getting old.
- Andrew: Definitely I'm getting old. OK, so, right before we get started here, everyone, I wanna let you know there is a study guide for this episode and you can download it on our website, Culips.com. Using the study guide is a great way to practice your English with us. You'll get the transcript for this episode along with detailed vocabulary explanations and definitions of some of the useful vocabulary that you'll hear Jeremy and I use during this episode. You'll also get a comprehension quiz and there'll be examples, lots of good stuff included in the study guide. So head on over to Culips.com to download that and follow along.
- All right Jeremy, what is the first expression for today?
- Jeremy: The first expression is **to slide into the DMs**.
- Andrew: Yeah, **to slide into the DMs. To slide into the DMs**. What is DM?
- Jeremy: I have a feeling this one comes from Twitter, I think, because before this I can't imagine why anyone would need to say direct message. But on Twitter, they have a function called direct message. So it's a private message, basically.
- Andrew: Right, one user to another user. A direct message.
- Jeremy: Sort of like an email, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, like a short email essentially, yeah.
- Jeremy: Or a text message, I guess. Since it's through social media, like Twitter or Facebook, they say direct message to indicate that it's not public, that other people can't see it.

- Andrew: Exactly. It's user to user. It's not like a comment, right? It's not public for everybody to view, it's just a private message. A direct message is a private message.
- Jeremy: So why would someone want to use a direct message to talk to someone they're interested in?
- Andrew: Well, I think you just mentioned the key point, it's because you're interested in that person, right? Maybe you want to proposition them or ask them on a date or something like this.
- Jeremy: Or send them a picture of your lunch or something like that. Look what I ate today.
- Andrew: Exactly. So, when you **slide into the DMs**, this means to send someone a direct message through social media. You know, I actually hear this expression more than I say it. I think I've only said it once or twice as a joke. But I think this is a really good expression to know to be able to understand so when you're reading social media or listening to podcasts or watching TV, you can understand what it means if somebody **slides into the DMs**. It means that they are messaging somebody through social media with the purpose of asking them on a date or propositioning them, something like this.
- Jeremy: Maybe just getting closer to them, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, trying to start a relationship. You're showing interest.
- Jeremy: One thing to mention here to make clear, I think, is DM standing for direct message is plural in this phrase. So we say into the DMs. In case you didn't hear that.
- Andrew: Yeah, that is a good point, **to slide into the DMs**. And if you asked me why we say that, I don't know, to be honest with you. I don't know why we pluralize it. It's just a fixed expression that has DMs pluralized.
- Jeremy: Yeah. So slide into, to me, slide into sounds like something that's sort of natural maybe, or accidental, right? If you slide down the slopes on your snowboard, it's not really by your effort, right? It's sort of natural gravity, you just go.
- Andrew: Yeah that's a great point, because this expression has a nuance to it, right? You're trying to sort of sneak in, trying to almost trick the person into liking you, right? You're trying to be very causal, very sneaky if you **slide into the DMs**.



- Jeremy: I guess, like, if there was a pretty girl sitting on a bench at a park and you sit on the other end of the bench, far away from her but you want to get closer to her, you can slide across the bench to get closer to her, right?
- Andrew: Right, exactly.
- Jeremy: Maybe that's it.
- Andrew: You know, I've heard this expression used a lot of times, actually, by women who are complaining about guys sending them messages through Instagram, for example. They'll say something like all these guys trying **to slide into my DMs**, trying to, you know, ask me on dates, they're so annoying. So maybe this is a lesson to everybody that this is not a great way to meet somebody. But I'm not an expert, I don't know.
- Jeremy: Who knows, maybe it's worked for some people.
- Andrew: Possibly, possibly. Anyway, Jeremy, I think we're ready to listen to an example using this expression, **to slide into the DMs**.
- Jeremy: All right. Let's do it.

- Friend 1: Did you see the new **pic** Sandra uploaded to Instagram today?
- Friend 2: Yeah, oh my god. She's such a babe.
- Friend 1: That's what I'm saying.
- Friend 2: You gonna try **to slide into the DMs**?
- Friend 1: Yeah, I'm writing her a message right now.

- Andrew: In this example, a guy tries **to slide into the DMs** of a woman, Sandra, that he follows on Instagram. So remember when you **slide into the DMs**, you send someone a direct message over social media with the hope that you'll be able to get a date or the phone number of the person you're messaging. So this guy hopes that, by sending Sandra a message, he'll be able to get a date with her. Best of luck to you, sir.
- Jeremy: Good luck, sir. It's not me!
- Andrew: Yes. OK, good. Well, Jeremy, let's move on to our second dating slang expression today. And this is another fun one. It is **to ghost**.
- Jeremy: **To ghost**. So in English we do this a lot, we take a noun and make it a verb. It's very common, right?



- Andrew: Very, very common. One of my favourite things about English is how naturally we can do this.
- Jeremy: I just Facebooked you yesterday.
- Andrew: Exactly. We can take almost any noun and switch it into a verb. It makes for some very fun conversations, sometimes.
- Jeremy: Yeah, yeah.
- Andrew: And this is an example of that. So, we took the noun ghost, we transformed it into a verb so that it is **to ghost**. **To ghost** and so if you **ghost**, or if you **ghost** on someone—I wonder if people can guess what this means?
- Jeremy: Well, if you and I were in the same room, but I was a ghost, I could watch what you were doing. But you couldn't see me.
- Andrew: That's right, a ghost is invisible, right? You can't see ghosts, so I think this is the hint to deciphering, to understanding this expression, because if you **ghost** on someone, you suddenly disappear. Poof. So it means you leave without giving any notice, without giving any warning, without telling anybody. You just disappear.
- Jeremy: Like a ghost.
- Andrew: Like a ghost, yeah, poof, you disappear. OK, so when would you **ghost**? When do people **ghost**?
- Jeremy: I guess when the relationship gets awkward for some reason, like maybe breaking up with the person. So if you break up with someone, but you don't want to see them on social media and see their posts, then you can block them and, from their perspective, you have just disappeared. You're not uploading any pictures anymore or status updates or whatever people update these days.
- Andrew: Exactly and, actually, I can think of three situations that we use this verb **to ghost** in. And I think, Jeremy, like you just said, with social media, right? You can **ghost** on social media. You can block people from seeing your activity online, this is **ghosting**. You can also **ghost** when you wanna break up with somebody but you don't wanna face the awkwardness of a breakup, right? Actually, this is a pretty immature way to break up with somebody.
- Jeremy: That's what I was gonna say. That's terrible.



Andrew: It's terrible, but people do it and so if all of a sudden you know, you don't want to continue the relationship with the person you are seeing, you can **ghost** them. And that means just no show, no contact, no anything anymore. You just cut off all communication, this is **ghosting**.

And the third context I can think of is perhaps you're on a date with someone, and especially a first date, you know, or even a blind date and it's not going very well. You can **ghost** by, you know, maybe excusing yourself to go to the washroom and then you just take off, you leave.

Jeremy: It's terrible.

Andrew: It's also terrible.

Jeremy: Like a ghost, I guess, it's pretty terrible.

Andrew: Just like a ghost, you're gone. And I really think that this expression became popular at the same time that internet dating apps became popular, like Tinder, for example, because, you know, you're meeting people that you've just talked to online so perhaps, you know, you meet up for coffee or something and then you're, like, oh my gosh, this person is crazy, I gotta get out of here. You can **ghost** them, right? You just take off and leave.

Jeremy: No social repercussions because you don't already know them. You have no mutual friends. Still terrible.

Andrew: I think this might be a more common activity with younger generations, right? Like high school students or university students, maybe they're the ones **ghosting**, but.

Jeremy: Not us old guys.

Andrew: That's right. Thankfully I've never been **ghosted**, but it could be a painful experience to suddenly be left wondering what's happening.

Jeremy: I hope you never get **ghosted**, my friend.

Andrew: Thank you very much. Me as well. All right, Jeremy, I think we've explained this one enough, so let's listen to an example using the expression **to ghost**.



Friend 1: How'd your date with Jessica go the other night?

Friend 2: I thought it went well, but I've sent her a couple texts and haven't heard anything back, so I don't know.

Friend 1: Oh my god, maybe you're getting **ghosted**.

Friend 2: Do you think so? I hope not, I really liked her.

Jeremy: In this example, a guy gets **ghosted** by a woman he went on a date with, Jessica. When you get **ghosted**, someone cuts off all contact with you. They don't reply to any messages and they block you on social media. So when Jessica **ghosted** the guy, she cut off all contact with him and is ignoring him. Poor guy.

Andrew: Poor guy.

Jeremy: Or maybe not. Maybe he's not a good guy, maybe Jessica's doing the right thing.

Andrew: Yeah, or maybe Jessica's a terrible person and he **dodged a bullet**. There's so many possibilities.

Jeremy: So many possibilities with made-up situations.

Andrew: That's right. OK, so, we have one more expression to teach everyone today and, again, it's another fun one that relates to modern dating culture and social media. It is **to make it Facebook official**.

Jeremy: FBO.

Andrew: FBO, **to make it Facebook official**. **To make it Facebook official**. Now, I have to ask you, Jeremy, have you seen it shortened to FBO before?

Jeremy: I mean, I use this, I'm married now so I don't do this dating thing, I'm not in the dating game, but I did use this when I was dating. So I think FBO, yeah, I do think we did say FBO sometimes. To be secretive about it, like if we're in a public place and our other friends are sitting near by, I don't want them to know that I'm dating this person, that's funny because if I **made it Facebook official** they would know, of course.

Andrew: Right.

Jeremy: But, still, I think sometimes we would say FBO.

Andrew: Very cool. So, yeah, the expression is **to make it Facebook official** or FBO, Facebook official.



- Jeremy: So what is it, in this situation?
- Andrew: Good question. It is a relationship, right? So when you **make your relationship or a relationship Facebook official**, it means that you change your online Facebook profile status to in a relationship. And when you do this, all of your network, all of your friends, and I guess anybody who looks at your profile—
- Jeremy: Your grandparents.
- Andrew: Your grandparents, your family members, they can see, oh you are in a relationship now. You're dating somebody, it's Facebook official. And I guess the underlying message to this expression is that when you **make a relationship Facebook official**, it's kind of serious now, right? It's not, you're not just casually dating somebody, you're, like, oh, I'm in a relationship, I'm committed. I'm in a serious relationship, it's Facebook official.
- Jeremy: I think we probably use to say before Facebook, we probably used to say make it official. We made it official yesterday, I asked her to be my girlfriend. That kinda thing.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Jeremy: Right? But this is a next level.
- Andrew: Right, this is a modern, updated version of that.
- Jeremy: Yeah, but it's a big deal, all your friends see it, right? The next day everyone at school or everyone at your office or ... Will see you, oh my god, you have a girlfriend? Wow! Everyone knows, all of a sudden.
- Andrew: All of the sudden, your status has changed. You are officially in a relationship, I guess.
- Jeremy: Big deal.
- Andrew: Cool, Jeremy, well, I think we can get to an example now. So let's take a listen to one.

- Friend 1: So Mitch and Jenny are a thing.
- Friend 2: Yeah, I saw that they **made things Facebook official**.
- Friend 1: I'm so happy for them.
- Friend 2: Yeah, they're great together.

- Andrew: OK, in this example, Mitch and Jenny make their relationship official by announcing it on Facebook. When you announce a relationship to all of your friends and family on Facebook, you **make your relationship Facebook official**.
- Jeremy: Before that, it's not really official, is it?
- Andrew: No, you have no relationship until you update your Facebook status.
- Jeremy: And then the next level up would be getting married, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, exactly. Jeremy, I think that about brings us to the end of today's episode. I wanna thank everybody for listening. And if you have any questions or comments or suggestions for future episodes, drop us a line. You can send us a message via our Facebook profile, and the address is Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast or, if you prefer, you can **slide into our DMs** by emailing us at contact@culips.com.
- Jeremy: So are you and Culips Facebook official?
- Andrew: I should update my status. I should **make it Facebook official**. Married to Culips.
- Jeremy: You can find more episodes of the show at Culips.com or wherever you get your podcasts.
- Andrew: That's right, and we will be back soon with another episode. And we'll talk to you then. Bye.
- Jeremy: Bye.
- Announcer: Do you like listening to Culips? If so, please show your support by leaving Culips a 5-star rating and a review on iTunes or Stitcher. This helps new listeners find the show. So don't delay, rate and review today.

Detailed Explanations

To gear up to [do something]

Phrasal verb

In this episode, Andrew mentions that he is **gearing up to go snowboarding**. This means that he is preparing to go snowboarding.

To **gear up to [do something]** means to get ready to do an activity, especially one that requires equipment, like snowboarding.

The word gear is another word for equipment. So **to gear up** means to prepare your equipment so that you can do an activity.

Here are a couple examples with **to gear up to [do something]**:

Chris:	Got any plans for this weekend?
Mary:	Yeah, actually, I'm gearing up to go camping with my boyfriend. We'll leave right after work on Friday evening and come back Sunday afternoon. What about you?
Chris:	That sounds awesome! I've got nothing special planned. I wish I could go camping.
Mary:	You'll have to join us next time.

Jarrold:	The new school semester starts next week.
Faith:	Yeah, are you all geared up to start studying?
Jarrold:	Not at all. I can't believe summer vacation is almost over.
Faith:	Well, time flies when you're having fun!



To hit the slopes

Idiom

To hit the slopes means to go skiing or snowboarding. In this expression, slopes mean ski hills, and the verb to hit is a very casual way to say to visit or to go. For example, to hit the beach means to go to the beach. Similarly, to hit the park means to go to the park.

At the start of this episode, Andrew tells Jeremy about his plans to **hit the slopes** and go snowboarding.

Here's an example with **to hit the slopes**:

Nancy:	Why are you walking with a limp? Are you OK?
Chase:	Not really. I hit the slopes yesterday and had a pretty bad crash.
Nancy:	Ouch. Did you see a doctor?
Chase:	No, I'll be all right. I just bruised my butt pretty badly, that's all!

The dating pool

Noun

In this episode, Andrew and Jeremy mention that they're not in **the dating pool**. A pool is a group of people or things. For example, you may have heard the word carpool before. A carpool is a group of coworkers who drive to work together in the same car.

Similarly, **the dating pool** is the group of single people in society that are actively dating or looking to date.

Another related expression is the gene pool. This refers to all of the group of available genes within an animal or plant species. Don't worry too much about this expression; it's a high-level scientific word and isn't used very much in everyday conversation.

Here's an example with **the dating pool**:

Lee: Valentine's Day is coming up soon!

Rebecca: Don't remind me.

Lee: Why, don't you have a date?

Rebecca: Nope, still single.

Lee: There's got to be someone in **the dating pool** who will date you.

Rebecca: I sure hope so! I've been single for almost 5 years now.

Lee: Don't worry, Mr. Right will come along before you know it.

To slide into the DMs

Slang

To slide into the DMs means to send someone a message through social media in order to try to date or start a relationship with that person.

As Andrew and Jeremy mention, when you **slide into the DMs**, you casually and sneakily message someone. Even though the person you message might be a stranger, you pretend you are already close.

This is a very casual, slang expression and shouldn't be used in formal situations.

Here's one more example with **to slide into the DMs**:

Rob:	You know that barista who works at the coffee shop across from my apartment?
Soo Bin:	The one you have a major crush on?
Rob:	Yeah, her. Alex.
Soo Bin:	Did you finally ask her on a date?
Rob:	No, not yet, but I did start following her on Instagram, and she followed me back, too!
Soo Bin:	Don't tell me you're going to try to slide into her DMs .
Rob:	I'm thinking about it! Why, is that a bad call?
Soo Bin:	All I can say is that every time someone's tried to slide into my DMs , it hasn't ended well.

Pic

Shortened word

In this episode, there is an example in which two friends talk about **a pic** that Sandra uploaded to Instagram.

The word **pic** is the short, slang form of the word picture.

Pic started out as an internet-only word, but now it is used commonly in everyday conversation, too. It would be completely natural to say to your friend, “Hey, show me the **pics** you took yesterday at the party.”

Of course, because **pic** sounds very casual, you shouldn’t use it in professional or serious situations.

Here’s an example with **pic**:

Harris:	What are you doing?
Anne:	Just organizing all the pics on my phone.
Harris:	That must be hard work. You take so many pictures!
Anne:	Yeah, it’s crazy. I’ve got about 15,000 pictures to sort through.
Harris:	Well, good luck!



To ghost Slang

To ghost means to disappear without any warning. In a dating context, this can mean a couple of things, depending on the situation:

1. Escaping from a bad a date without telling your date you're leaving
2. Breaking up with someone by deleting them from your social media and cutting off all contact with that person

Here's another example with **to ghost**:

Jamie:	You'll never believe what happened to me last night.
Sally:	What?
Jamie:	I went on a blind date.
Sally:	Wow! How was it?
Jamie:	So, so bad. The guy was such a creep.
Sally:	So what did you do?
Jamie:	Well, I feel slightly ashamed about this, but I ghosted him.
Sally:	Really?
Jamie:	Yeah, I just couldn't stand to be around him for a moment longer. When he got up to go to the washroom, I paid for my drink and left.

To dodge a bullet

Idiom

When you **dodge a bullet**, you barely avoid a potentially dangerous or disastrous situation.

This idiom is easy to visualize. Imagine a bullet being shot out of a gun and rushing towards someone at full speed. If that target gets out of the path of the bullet, then they have **dodged the bullet** and have managed to just barely escape this extremely dangerous situation. Of course, we don't limit the use of this expression to just being shot. We can use it with any situation that has the potential to be dangerous, uncomfortable, or disastrous.

So when you have a close call but in the end manage to escape a dangerous or unwanted situation, you've **dodged a bullet**.

Here's an example with **to dodge a bullet**:

Glen:	Wow. I can't believe I forgot to pay for parking and I didn't even get a ticket.
Will:	That's lucky.
Glen:	Look over there! Isn't that the parking inspector coming down the street?
Will:	Yeah, it is! Wow, you really dodged a bullet . If we had returned to the car 10 minutes later, you would have gotten a ticket!
Glen:	Yeah, no doubt. We made it back just in time!

To make it Facebook official Slang

To make it Facebook official means to announce a new relationship on Facebook so that all your friends, family, and acquaintances can see.

As Jeremey mentions in this episode, this expression is a modernization of **to make it official**, which means to announce a new relationship to your social circle.

Sometimes this expression is shortened to **to make it FBO**.

If a relationship is Facebook official, then you can assume that it is a serious relationship and not a casual romance.

Here's one more example with **to make it Facebook official**:

Gloria:	We've been dating for how long now? About 6 months, right?
Trevor:	That sounds about right.
Gloria:	I'm going to change my Facebook status to in a relationship.
Trevor:	You want to make this thing Facebook official , hey?
Gloria:	Yeah! My grandma will be so happy!



Quiz

1. What does to gear up to [do something] mean?

- a) to repair a machine
- b) to prepare to do an activity
- c) to set your watch
- d) to clear your schedule

2. What is a pic?

- a) Pikachu
- b) pickle
- c) picture
- d) picnic

3. What activity do you do when you hit the slopes?

- a) ski or snowboard
- b) motorcycle
- c) rollerblade
- d) swim

4. Fill in the blank.

Jim: I was absent last class because I was sick. What did I miss?

Robby: Absolutely nothing. The lecture was super boring and the professor just babbled on for over an hour and a half. I could barely stay awake.

Jim: Sounds like I _____!

- a) avoided the shark
- b) outran an arrow
- c) evaded the law
- d) dodged a bullet



5. If you quickly and secretly run away from a date, you _____ them.

- a) ghost
- b) goblin
- c) gremlin
- d) ghoul

Prompts for writing or discussion

1. Have you ever ghosted someone?
2. Explain why you agree or disagree with the following statement: A relationship is only real after the couple makes it Facebook official.
3. Do you like to hit the slopes in the winter? What kind of winter activities do you enjoy?
4. Can you think of a time you dodged a bullet? Describe it.
5. How would you feel if someone tried to slide into your DMs?

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.c 3.a 4.d 5.a

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