

Catch Word #151 – Go call your folks

*The words and expressions that appear in **bold blue** text throughout this document are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanation section that follows the transcript.*

Transcript

Andrew: Hey everyone. I'm Andrew.

Maura: And it's Maura.

Andrew: And we are back with another Culips English episode.

Maura: That's right and don't forget to go to our website Culips.com, that is C-U-L-I-P-S.com because that is the only place where you can become a member. Right?

Andrew: That's exactly right. And when you become a member, it's great because you can access the transcripts, you get detailed explanations of some of the key expressions we talk about, and you also get a specially prepared quiz.

Maura: That's right. So go check that out and if you're online, you can also talk to us on Facebook and Twitter, which I hopefully am slowly **getting the hang of**.

Andrew: I think we've been tweeting more often.

Maura: Yeah. I think so. Well if you're on Twitter, tweet at us and then maybe we'll learn how to use it even more.

Andrew: Yeah. We'll tweet back at you.

Maura: There you go. That's the **lingo** I was looking for.

Andrew: Right. Hey, so thanks for those cupcakes that you brought earlier.

Maura: No problem. I can't take all the credit though because I didn't actually make them. My sister who's visiting, and she made them for me.

Andrew: Wow. Well, hey, say thanks to your sister. They were delicious.

Maura: Yes. Thanks Kara. They were very good.

Andrew: And where was your sister visiting from?

Maura: She was visiting from our hometown, which is Kitchener, Ontario. Not too far, but it's far enough away that I don't get to see my family too often.

Andrew: Yeah. And how long was she here for?

- Maura: Yeah. Just a few days. Just enough time to make some cupcakes.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Maura: Yeah. They were really good. She made a special peanut butter icing, which I think gave it a really special taste. I'm sure to people listening out there, that some of them are really grossed out because if you don't like peanut butter, the sound of peanut butter must be pretty yucky.
- Andrew: I don't know. I love peanut butter. I think anything with peanut butter is a good combination for me.
- Maura: Well, you know, I was a bit sceptical about peanut butter icing on cupcakes, but I agree it's pretty good.
- Andrew: Yeah, totally.
- Maura: OK. Now before we get completely **sidetracked**, and do an episode just about cupcakes. So let's get to today's episode, which is a Catchword episode and that is where we look at different slang or expressions and of course we explain them and give you examples of how you can use them.
- Andrew: That's right. And today's theme is slang expressions for parents. So these are slang terms that you could use to call your parents.
- Maura: Right. And before we get into all of that, I think it's a good idea if we first review the common standard terms that you can use to talk about your parents. So for example, you talk about your parents by calling them mother and father, **mom** and **dad**, those kind of words that most people already know and hear often.
- Andrew: Yeah. Exactly. So I call my parents just **mom** and **dad**.
- Maura: Yeah. That is the usual most common way that you hear people talking about their parents or talking to their parents. You just say, **mom** or **dad**.
- Andrew: Yup. Straightforward, but there are some other people who use different terms to address their parents. Some other popular ones are mother and father.
- Maura: Right. They're not quite as common as **mom** and **dad**. When I think about someone using mother and father to talk to their parents, I think that the family must be very rich or very formal. Actually, I think about how I see it used in movies, and often you might hear a kid call their mother or father, "Yes mother I need to get something to eat," and it's kind of a formal or rich kind of family.

- Andrew: Yeah. I kinda think it has, it's sort of snobby, it's kinda upper class. When a child calls their parent, mother or father, especially like how you said, "Yes mother, yes father," it sounds almost like they're a brat.
- Maura: Yeah. It also sounds cold, it doesn't sound like the kid has a really close relationship with their mother and father, like maybe they were sent away to boarding school or something like that.
- Andrew: Exactly. The relationship seems formal, it doesn't sound like a **tight**, loving family.
- Maura: Yeah. I agree. Another time when you might hear mother and father being used is when someone is talking about their parents, and it's usually not kids but adults talking about their mother or father, they might say, "Oh my mother is coming to visit." It's something that people tend to do when they get a little bit older. They would still call their **mom**, "**mom**" to their face, but when they're talking about her to other people, they might use "mother" instead.
- Andrew: And in this context it seems more appropriate. It doesn't seem snobby or distant. It still seems loving, but it's just I guess when you're aging you just use mother and father in that way to talk about them when they're not around.
- Maura: You know, speaking about aging, there's also another common way to talk about your parents or talk to your parents and that is to say **mummy** and **daddy**. And that is something that only small children really use.
- Andrew: Yeah. **Mummy and daddy**, or I think if you're in the USA you would say **mommy**, is that true?
- Maura: Maybe there is a slight difference with the accent. Yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah. British people and Canadians tend to say **mummy**, that's what I would say **mummy**.
- Maura: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: If you're from America, you would say **mommy**.
- Maura: Umm hmm. Interesting. It's also interesting because in Canada we spell it **M-O-M-M-Y**, which is like the US, but in the UK they don't spell it like that, they spell it with the U, **M-U-M-M-Y**.

- Andrew: There is a little bit of variation but essentially they're the same thing, and this is when a little child, maybe up until five or six years old would address their parents as **mommy** or **daddy**.
- Maura: Yeah. It's hard to say what age a child might stop saying **mommy** and **daddy** but I guess whenever they don't wanna seem like a little kid anymore, they wanna seem cool, they stop using **mommy** and **daddy**.
- Andrew: Yup. And then you just change **mom** and **dad**.
- Maura: That's right. OK now that we've reviewed the common standard ways to talk about or talk to your parents, we're gonna get into the slang for parents.
- Andrew: Yup. And these slang words are usually used when you're talking about your parents, not when you're talking to your parents. These are expressions that we use to refer to our parents, but not something that we would use to address our parents.
- Maura: Yup. That's a very important distinction. For sure. OK. Let's get to the first slang term for parents.
- Andrew: Sure. It is **folks**, or **my folks**.
- Maura: Right. So the word is **folks**, but like you say Andrew, it's really important to use a kind of possessive pronoun here, to say **my folks**, your folks, or his folks, because without it you might you think of the other meaning for folks.
- Andrew: That's right. And **folks** just means people, but since we're not talking about people in general, we're talking about our parents like you said, we need to use the possessive pronoun to sort of indicate that we have ownership over these, they are ours, they're our parents, they are mine.
- Maura: That's right. So do you wanna give an example with **folks** now?
- Andrew: Yeah. Let's do it.

- Andrew: Hey. Are you busy this weekend? I'm going skiing, if you'd like to come along.
- Maura: Oh, I'd love to but **my folks** are coming, so I'm gonna be busy entertaining them all weekend.
- Andrew: That's great! Your parents **are in town, your folks**, but you don't seem too happy about that.

Maura:	No. I mean, I am, but it's just that it's the winter, and they don't like to go outside that much, so I'm just trying to think of things we can do. You know?
Andrew:	Yeah, yeah. I understand. That's all right. We'll go skiing another time.
Maura:	Yeah, yeah. For sure. Have fun on the slopes .
Andrew:	Thanks.

Maura: So in this example we heard from someone whose parents were coming to visit her, and instead of saying "my parents are coming," she says, "**my folks** are coming." And in this case **my folks** just directly means my parents. It's just a more casual, familiar way to talk about them.

Andrew: That's right. And while we're talking about **folks** maybe we should we talk about the word itself. So folks is spelled **F-O-L-K-S**. And if you notice when you hear the word **folks**, you don't hear an L sound, even though there is an L in the spelling. So when you're reading this word, don't say **folks**, it sounds strange, just say **folks**. Pretend the L is not there.

Maura: Right. That's good advice. You know there are so many of these words in English too that just have a strange spelling.

Andrew: Absolutely.

Maura: OK. Now let's move on to the next slang term that we have for parents.

Andrew: Yeah. The next term is '**rents**'.

Maura: That's right. It is '**rents**'.

Andrew: And you may notice that it's spelled very familiar, because it is a shortened version of *parents*.

Maura: That's right. It is just the second part of parents. You just cut off the syllable to make it shorter.

Andrew: Yeah, it's shorter and maybe a little bit hipper or something. I'm not sure but yeah, you take away the par and you're left with '**rents**'. And that's what the expression is.

Maura: Yeah. And when it's written, it's often written with a little apostrophe at the beginning because it's missing that part of the word.

- Andrew: Yeah. It's an abbreviation, so you just put the apostrophe there to show that it's the shortened form of parents.
- Maura: And actually **come to think of it**, I see this word written more than I hear it spoken.
- Andrew: Yeah. That's true. I would use this term when I'm writing a text message, but I don't know if I would say it in everyday conversation very often.
- Maura: You know, the very first place that I remember seeing this slang term was in a teen magazine when I was younger.
- Andrew: Really?
- Maura: Yeah, and at that time it was I feel maybe it was a new slang.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's definitely a newer word and I don't think it's been around too long, but that seems like an appropriate place. It seems the type of word that teenagers use more often than adults.
- Maura: Yup. That's right. OK. Shall we do an example with '**rents**'?
- Andrew: Yup. Let's go for it.

- Maura: So yeah, I saw Melanie the other day, because I had to go back to her place to return some stuff...
- Andrew: Umm I'm sorry to interrupt, but I just got a text message from my sister, and she said, my '**rents**' are on the way over right now. So they're on their way over like right now. And as you can see, the apartment's a mess. I really need to do the dishes and clean up a bit before they get here. Is it all right if I **get to it**?
- Maura: Yeah. Sure, I mean, **do you want a hand**?
- Andrew: Yeah. I mean if you're willing to help me that would be awesome.
- Maura: Yeah. Sure. Hand me a broom.
- Andrew: Thanks.

- Andrew: So in this example, a guy got a text message from his sister and the text message said that his '**rents**' or his parents were on the way over to his house for a surprise visit. And since his apartment was a little bit messy, a little bit dirty, he had to clean up really quickly before his parents arrived.

- Maura: You know, I can't help wondering Andrew, is this based on any truth in your life. Do you often have to clean up before your parents come over?
- Andrew: Well, it's not necessarily to do with me, but this situation happened this last weekend. My mom texted me to say that she was going to be visiting my sister, so then I texted my sister and said, look out the parents are on their way over to your place, like get prepared.
- Maura: That's very nice of you to alert your sister.
- Andrew: Yeah. And I'm sure that my sister's apartment was immaculate, and clean, but you just never know.
- Maura: I know that I definitely take the time to clean my place a little bit more than I normally would when I know my mom is coming to visit.
- Andrew: Yeah. Absolutely. You want to show your best.
- Maura: That's right. OK now we have a couple more slang terms for you, but this time we're just talking about **dad**.
- Andrew: Yeah, totally **dad** now, we're getting rid of **mom** now. So there's actually no more slang expressions for **mom**, I find this interesting. We just have the one word, **mom**.
- Maura: Yeah. That's true. Sometimes there are shortened versions or longer ones, like *ma*, or *mamma*, that some people might use but they're not very common and they sound just like **mom**.
- Andrew: Yeah. I'm actually curious, listeners, in your languages do you have other slang expressions for **mom**? Is this just an English thing or is this all languages? I don't know. But if you have a slang expression for **mom** in your language, you should let us know. I'm curious.
- Maura: Yeah, me too.
- Andrew: But let's get back to **dad**. There's two more terms we're gonna look at for **dad**, and the first one is **pop** or **pops**.
- Maura: That's right. Instead of saying **dad**, you can say pop, or pops and this you can use to talk about your **dad**, and some people might even use it to talk to their **dad**.
- Andrew: Yeah. I can see myself calling my **dad pops** perhaps, maybe not always but in some circumstances yeah.

Maura: Right. Probably not always but once in a while. Maybe you're trying **to butter him up**, get him to do something for you, so you call him **pops** for fun.

Andrew: Yeah. Or you're joking around, just having fun, something like that, you can use pops.

Maura: And I think **pops** or **pop** comes from papa, which is not used in English to talk about dad, but it's used in other languages. And papa in English might be used for grandfather, so there's some connection happening there, but somehow, it's changed so that we now can use **pop** or **pops** to talk about **dad**.

Andrew: Yup. That's right.

Maura: OK. Do you wanna give an example with **pops**?

Andrew: Yeah. Let's do it.

Maura: Do you want me to pick up some frozen pizza on my way to your place?

Andrew: You know what? Actually my oven is broken at the moment, so if we're gonna have pizza, we better call the delivery guy.

Maura: Oh. What are you gonna do? It kind of sucks not having an oven.

Andrew: Well, I was thinking of talking it to the shop, but that's a big hassle, and my **pop** is good at fixing things. So I'm just gonna have him come over and take a look at it. I'm sure he'll get it up and running in no time.

Maura: Oh, that's sweet. You can just call your **dad**, and he comes over and helps you out.

Andrew: Yeah. Absolutely, it's great.

Maura: So in that example, we heard from someone whose oven was broken, and he wasn't going to call a repairman, he was going to call his **pops**. He was going to call his **dad**, who was going to help him fix the oven.

Andrew: Yup. So in this example we just used the word **pops** to talk about **dad**.

Maura: And before we end this episode, we wanna talk about one more slang term for **dad**, which is **old man**, and you would usually say my **old man** or **your old man**.

- Andrew: Yup. Old man. It's another expression for **dad**. And whenever I hear someone say old man, it reminds me of the song by a really famous Canadian singer whose name is Neil Young, and he has a really big hit song called "Old Man."
- Maura: Yeah. I know that song and if you listen to the lyrics, it's like he's talking to his **dad** reflecting on his life and his **dad's** life.
- Andrew: Yup and he's just saying I've become like my **dad**, which is something every guy fears a little bit, but then it happens anyway.
- Maura: Yeah. It's interesting too because the name of the song is just "Old Man", but normally when we're talking about our **dad**, we would say **my old man**, and we would use that possessive pronoun, We wouldn't just say an **old man** or the **old man**, we would say **my old man, your old man**.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's just like the first expression **folks**, if we just say **folks**, if we just say **old man**, then we are just talking about people in general, but when we use my, your, his, hers, then we know it's something that belongs to that person.
- Maura: And most of the time, this expression, **my old man**, is used when you're talking about your **dad**, not to your **dad**, it seems a bit harsh to tell your **dad** that he's old.
- Andrew: Yeah. Yeah. Absolutely, I wouldn't call my **dad** on the phone and say, "Hey **old man**, how you doing?" That would be really mean I think.
- Maura: Some people do though. I once had a friend who did, but I think he was always just kidding around, trying to bug his **dad** a little bit.
- Andrew: Yeah. For joking around perhaps but in a serious conversation, no way.
- Maura: That's right. We went over actually a ton of expressions, didn't we?
- Andrew: Yeah. So many.
- Maura: OK, let's start from the beginning and repeat all the slang or terms that we talked about.
- Andrew: Sure. So the first one was **folks** or **my folks**.
- Maura: Right. And then we talked about '**rents**, which is short for parents.
- Andrew: Right. And then we talked about **dads** and there's two terms, **pops or pop** and **old man, my old man**.

- Maura: Right. And back in the beginning of the episode, we also talked about all the standard terms for parents like mother, father, **mom**, **dad**, and **mommy** and **daddy**.
- Andrew: Yeah, that about wraps up pretty much all of the expressions we can use to talk to your parents or talk about your parents.
- Maura: And you know, after this episode, I feel like I wanna go call **my folks**.
- Andrew: You can call **your folks**, yeah, I wanna call **my pops**, see how he's doing.
- Maura: All right. So don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com because that is where you can become a member, which gives you access to a ton of Learning Materials for this episode and all our past episodes. It also supports us here at Culips.
- Andrew: That's right and check us out on Facebook, Twitter and we're on iTunes and Stitcher as well, we're all over the place.
- Maura: That's right. So we will talk to you again soon.
- Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanation

Informal Contractions in this Episode

Informal contractions are unofficial short forms of other words, and they're usually only used in casual conversation. For example, when a native English speaker talks casually, they might say *gonna* instead of *going to*, or *whaddya* instead of *what do you*. Even though informal contractions are usually only used in spoken English, we include them in the Culips written transcripts to help you get used to how they're used and what they sound like.

These are the informal contractions used in today's episode, along with their meanings:

- **kinda**: kind of
- **gonna**: going to
- **wanna**: want to

To get the hang of something

When **you get the hang of something**, you learn how to do or use something. In this episode, Maura mentions that she is **getting the hang of** how to use Twitter. This means that she is learning and understanding how to use Twitter correctly.

So, if you **get the hang of something**, you learn how to do or use something. We use this often when we describe learning how to do or use something that is not easy right away. If doing or using something has an initial learning curve, then it takes some time **to get the hang of it**.

Here are some examples that use **to get the hang of something**:

Robert: Hey I heard you are taking guitar lessons. How are they coming along?

Jean: So far so good. It took me a little while to **get the hang of** how to position my hand on the guitar, but I feel comfortable now. I'm even able to play some simple songs!

Robert: That's awesome. You'll have to give a little concert sometime!

Beth: Can you help with my math homework tomorrow afternoon? I just can't **get the hang of** algebra.

Tina: Sure, no problem. It's not too hard, you'll pick it up after a bit of practice.

Lingo

We use the expression **lingo** to casually talk about either a foreign language or technical terminology (also called jargon). In this episode, Maura uses the **lingo** of Twitter when she talks about the popular social media service. The technical vocabulary that people need to know when they talk about Twitter (to tweet, to tweet at somebody, etc.) are examples of **lingo**.

So, whenever someone talks about **lingo** they are discussing a foreign language or technical jargon. Here are some examples of how **lingo** can be used. The first example uses **lingo** to mean foreign language and the second, jargon.

Johnny: Did you hear I'm moving to Germany next month?

Claire: Won't it be hard to live over there? You don't even know the **lingo**.

Johnny: True, it'll be a big adjustment. I plan to start taking German classes as soon as I get settled.

Satomi: My **mom** is really bad at using the Internet. Reading emails is super hard for her because she doesn't know any Internet **lingo**. The other day she even asked me what LOL means.

Sean: That makes sense though, Internet **lingo** is generational. Older people might not know that LOL stands for laugh out loud.

To get sidetracked

When people **get sidetracked**, they become distracted and start doing something that they are not supposed to be doing. In this episode, Maura tells Andrew that they should stop talking about cupcakes before they **get sidetracked** and spend the whole episode talking about cupcakes instead of sharing cool expressions with their loyal Culips listeners.

So, whenever someone is doing something important but then gets distracted and starts doing something less important instead, they **have gotten sidetracked**.

Usage note: the expression **to get sidetracked** is almost always used in the passive voice. To see how this works, check out the examples below:

Terry: Sorry I'm late, I **got sidetracked** this morning on my way to work.

Ralph: Really, what happened?

Terry: I noticed a new coffee shop opened up so I stopped in to check it out. They were giving away free coffee so I grabbed you a cup.

Ralph: Oh that's great, thanks!

Jane: I'm going to fail tomorrow's test for sure. I was supposed to spend all last week studying, but I **got sidetracked** by a new videogame and barely studied at all.

Vicky: That's pretty irresponsible. You better cram tonight!

A tight family

When we use the adjective **tight** to describe a family, we mean that the family has a very close relationship. In a family that's tight, all of the family members get along with each other and love each other. **Tight** is the shortened form of **tight-knit**.

This expression brings to mind an image of a well-constructed sweater or scarf. We can imagine that just as all the stitches of the sweater are tightly knit, the members of a **tight-knit** family form a strong bond and stand beside each other.

A related expression is *to be closely knit*. It means the same thing as **to be tightly knit**. Both expressions can be used to describe family, friendship, and community.

Here are some examples using this expression:

Brain: I can't wait for my family reunion in August. It will be great to see everyone again.

Mary: I'm sure you miss being away from your family all the time. You're such a **tight-knit** group.

Zach: Last year I spent some time living in a small village in Scotland.

Ruby: How was that?

Zach: It was amazing. The people were very welcoming and it felt awesome to be accepted into their **tight knit** community.

Ruby: That's so great!

Mum or Mom

Like most languages, English has many different dialects. The shortened form of the word *mother* can be pronounced a few different ways depending on where the speaker is from. Here is a short list of how English speaking countries pronounce this word:

Canada: Most people say **mom** (pronounced /mɑm/) but some older Canadians, especially those who emigrated from the UK, say **mum** (pronounced /mʌm/).

USA: Most people say **mom** (pronounced /mɑm/).

England: Most people say **mum** (pronounced /mʌm/).

Ireland and Wales: Most people say **mam** (pronounced /mæm/).

Australia and New Zealand: Most people say **mum** (pronounced /mʌm/).

Outside of North America, you are more likely to hear an adult call their mother *mummy* (UK, Australia, New Zealand) or *mammy* (Ireland). In the USA and Canada, only children call their mother *mommy*.

Folks

The word **folks** can be used in different ways to mean different things. As we mentioned in this episode, **folks** can mean parents. Often a personal pronoun (my, your, his, etc.) precedes **folks** when we use it to refer to parents.

We can also use **folk** or **folks** to refer to a group of people. Some common expressions include: old folk (senior citizens), ordinary folk or regular folk (regular people), and country folk (people who live in the country).

Folks is also used often as casual and friendly way to address more than one person. It's common to hear the expressions *listen up, folks!* Said by a person who is trying to get the attention of a large group.

Here are three examples that use **folks**. Each example contains a different usage situation.

Suzy: How are your **folks** doing these days?

Ryan: Really great, they just got back from a vacation in Hawaii.

Suzy: Good for them! I'm happy to hear they're doing well!

Cindy: I had to wait forever at the bank today just to cash a cheque.

Juan: Yeah the folks that work there really need to improve their customer service skills.

(Said to a group of people at a dinner party)

Host: Ok **folks**, dinner is ready! Come on into the dining room and sit down!

To be in town

When someone who lives in a different part of the world comes to visit, we can say that person **is in town**. In this episode, we heard a dialogue example where one of the character's parents **were in town**. This means that the parents live in a different city and had to travel to where their daughter lives to visit her.

Usage note: although this expression includes the word **town** it doesn't mean that the visitor needs to go to a town. In fact, when we say that **someone is in town** we really just mean that they are in the same place as we are. This could be anywhere from a big city to a small village.

So, when a visitor from a different place comes to where you live, we can say that person **is in town**. Here are a few examples:

Rhonda: Did you Beyoncé is going to **be in town** next week playing a concert?

Jason: No way! Did you buy concert tickets? We have to go see her!

Rhonda: Yes, I have two tickets. Do you wanna come with me?

Jason: Yes!

Declan: Next time **you're in town** can you make sure to give me a call? I'd really like to get together.

Lisa: Sure, I'll make sure to squeeze in a visit.

The slopes

A **slope** is a part of a mountain or a hill where the land is higher at the top and lower at the bottom. So, whenever we talk about **the slopes** we are talking about a mountain where someone can go skiing/snowboarding.

In this episode, we heard the expression *have fun on **the slopes***. This is just another way to say *have fun skiing/snowboarding*.

A really common expression that means *to go skiing/snowboarding* is **to hit the slopes**.

Here are some examples that use this expression:

Randy: What are you going to do this weekend?

Mel: Jay and I have a little trip planned. We're going to fly to Colorado to **hit the slopes**.

Randy: Have fun!

Petra: Yesterday when we were up at **the slopes** it was so cold that I thought I was going to freeze to death!

Stevie: Yes, yesterday was so cold!

'Rents

A slang expression for parents is **'rents**. Just like we mentioned in this episode, **'rents** is a shortened form of the word parents. This expression is mainly used when writing text messages or chatting on the Internet, but sometimes people use it when talking too. Make sure to include the apostrophe mark at the start **'rents** to indicate that it is the shortened form of parents.

Here are two examples that use **'rents**:

Wendy: My **'rents** came over for breakfast this morning. It was really nice to see them!

Dave: That's so weird. I had breakfast with my parents yesterday.

Wendy: I love spending time with my parents.

Dave: Me too!

Lindy: What did you get up to during your trip back home?

Gina: I went skiing, visited my brother and the **'rents**, saw a movie, and just relaxed. It was a nice little getaway.

Lindy: Sounds great!

Come to think of it

We can use the expression **come to think of it** whenever someone suddenly realizes or remembers something. In this episode, Maura says **come to think of it** when she realizes that **'rents** is used more frequently in text messages and on the Internet than it is in real life speaking situations.

So, whenever you find yourself in a situation where you suddenly realize or remember something important, you can say **come to think of it** to express this feeling. Here are a couple of examples that demonstrate how this expression can be used:

Diya: Do you remember where I put my keys? I can't seem to find them.

Yan: Did you check in your purse?

Diya: Yup. Not there.

Yan: Oh **come to think of it** I remember that you wore your spring jacket last night when we went for a walk because it was so warm out. Maybe you left the keys in the pocket?

Diya: Oh yeah! I totally forgot. They must be in there!

Lauren: Remember back in high school when we almost got expelled for trying to cheat on a math quiz?

Peter: Wow **come to think of it** I do remember that. We did some pretty dumb stuff back in the day.

Lauren: Yup, we sure did.

To get to it

When you **get to it** you focus your attention on a specific task and then start doing that task. This expression is used often when talking about doing work or chores. In this episode, we hear a dialogue example where the male character's apartment needs cleaning and he has to **get to it** before his parents visit. So, in this example, **get to it** means start.

Sometimes people insert the word *down* into this expression, which makes it **to get down to it**. It means the same thing, to focus and start doing a task. However, the word *down* strengthens the expression and emphasizes the difficulty of the task that needs to be done. We are more likely to use **to get down to it** when the task requires a lot of physical labour or activity to complete.

So, whenever someone **gets to it**, they seriously commit to starting and working on a task. Here are a couple examples to show how **to get to it** works:

Cody: Do you have some time next week to help me fix my computer? I think it has a virus or something.

Andrea: I'm free right now, why don't you let me take a look.

Cody: That would be great.

Andrea: Sure, just type in your password and I'll **get to it** right away.

William: Wow it's raining really hard outside. We better take the clothes off the laundry line immediately before they get drenched!

Tina: Yeah let's **get to it**!

A hand

A very common expression that means *help* is **hand**. When you think about it, this expression makes a lot of sense. When we help people, we usually do so by using our hands in one way or another. If you help someone move a box, then you use your hands to lift the box. If you help someone clean their room, then you use your hands to sweep up with the broom.

There are a lot of expressions that use **hand**. Here is a short list of some of the ones that are most commonly used:

To give someone a hand -- to help someone

To need a hand - to need help

Do you want a hand? -- a way to ask for help

I could use a hand - to need help

Here are some examples that use **a hand**:

Jerome: Can I help you cook dinner?

Rina: No, I think I have it under control. But if you want you could **give me a hand** by setting the table.

Jerome: Sure, no problem.

Frieda: Wow, remodelling a house is a lot of work. I'm super tired from painting all day.

Tony: If you **need a hand**, just let me know. I'm happy to help.

Frieda: I could definitely use your help next week. I'll give you a call this weekend to confirm the details.

Tony: Sounds good!

Mama and ma

The word **mama** is often the first word babies use to refer to their mothers. As kids grow up, they usually call their mother **mom** or **mum**. If you want more information about these terms, check out the explanation on page 12.

In certain areas of the English speaking world, **mama** and its shortened version **ma**, are used by people of all ages to mean **mother**. Even adults in the USA, especially in the southern states, use these terms of endearment. It is also common to hear **mama** and **ma** in the Caribbean.

Mama and **ma** are less common in the UK, Canada and Australia. If used, these terms are likely to be said by kids.

Here is one example that uses **mama** and one that uses **ma**:

Freddie: I like that shirt. Where did you get it?

Thomas: My **ma** bought it for me for Christmas.

Christina: I hope my **mama** feels better soon. She's had the flu all week.

Trent: Oh no! Is there anything I can bring her?

Christina: No, I think she just needs to rest for a while.

Pops and Old Man

Sometimes people call their father **pops** or **old man**. These are very informal ways to refer to a father and are most commonly used in North American English.

As we mentioned in this episode, **pop** or **pops** is a cute and playful name to call a father. It originates from the word *papa*. You can use **pops** to talk about your **dad** and it is even possible to call your **dad pops**.

Old man on the other hand is an expression that is usually only used when talking about your **dad**. It would be weird to call your **dad old man** when talking to him. As we mention in this episode, **old man** is frequently accompanied by a possessive pronoun (my, your, her, etc.).

Check out these examples that use **pops** and **old man**:

Eugene: Are you going to make it out to the party on Saturday night?
Sally: Yup and I'm planning to bring my **pops** along as well. Is that ok?
Eugene: Sure, see you Saturday.

Penelope: It's **dad's** birthday next week. What should we get him?
Wes: How about we take our **old man** out for brunch?
Penelope: That sounds nice; I think he'll like that.

To butter someone up

When you **butter someone up** you try to make that person happy so he/she will do something for you. We recorded a Catch Word episode that featured the expression **to butter someone up** in 2010. You can find that episode by following this link:

<http://esl.culips.com/2010/09/would-you-ever-butter-someone-up/>

So whenever you say something nice to someone or treat him or her special so that can in return he/she will do something that you want, you have **battered that person up**. In this episode, we learn that calling you **dad pops** might be a good way to **butter him up**.

Here are two examples that use **to butter someone up**:

Jen: Wow you look really great today. I love your sweater!
Ian: You usually don't complement me. Are you being genuine or are you just trying to **butter me up**? What do you want?
Jen: I actually am really broke. Do you think I could borrow \$20?

Luke: I really want to go away on a camping trip this weekend but I don't think my boss will give me any time off work.
Russ: Why don't you try **to butter him up** before you ask him for time off?
Luke: That's actually a good idea. I'll be nice to him and hopefully in return, he'll be nice to me.

Quiz

1. What is the shortened form of *mother* that is popular in Ireland and Wales?

- a) Mem
- b) Mum
- c) Mom
- d) Mam

2. If you give someone a hand, what are you giving him or her?

- a) trouble
- b) help
- c) a handshake
- d) a punch

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

- a) snowshoe
- b) roller skate
- c) ski/snowboard
- d) bike

4. Which expression means to become distracted?

- a) to be sidetracked
- b) to be side tricked
- c) to be sideswiped
- d) to be sided

5. I'd love to see you but I have an _____ visitor staying at my place and so I don't have any free time.

Fill in the blank.

- a) out of town
- b) from of town
- c) new from town
- d) visitor of town

6. Which expression is mostly used when texting or chatting online?

- a) pops
- b) old man
- c) mama
- d) 'rents

7. Which expression means to learn how to do something?

- a) to hang something
- b) to get the hang of something
- c) to grab the fringe of something
- d) to hold something

8. What can you call a family that gets along well?

- a) restricted
- b) tense
- c) tight
- d) fit

9. What is lingo?

- a) a father
- b) a new dieting fad
- c) a genre of music
- d) jargon or a foreign language

Answers:

1.d 2.b 3.c 4.a 5.a 6.d 7.b 8.c 9.d