

Catch Word #98 – Mooch

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone! This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura!

Harp: And we're here at Culips English learning podcast.

Maura: And this is the podcast that always gives you fun, interesting episodes about different slang and expressions.

Harp: And we always feature natural English that you'll hear on the streets in Canada and in North America.

Maura: Go to our website, Culips.com, which is C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and there you can find a ton more information. You can also learn how to become a member. And if you're a Culips member, then you'll have access to the transcript for this episode and our past episodes, as well as more detailed explanations of the vocabulary we talk about and even a quiz to test yourself.

Harp: Yes, and you can also like us on Facebook or rate us on iTunes.

Maura: Today's episode is a Catch Word episode, and this is where we look at different expressions and slang terms that are related to each other, we give you lots of explanation and examples of how to use them.

Harp: And today we're going to look at expressions related to when someone borrows something and has no intention of **paying it back**.

Maura: That doesn't sound very nice.

Harp: It's not very nice.

Maura: Yeah. So, we're gonna look at expressions that mean a person borrows something from another person and isn't planning to **pay them back** for it. Now, the first expression is **to mooch**.

Harp: **To mooch.**

Maura: I find this is a fun word to say. **Mooch.**

Harp: **Mooch.**

- Maura: So, **to mooch** is to borrow something from someone and just take it, just take it and use it, and you're not gonna offer them money for it. You're not gonna **pay them back** at a later date. You're not gonna give the thing you borrowed back to them. You're just gonna take it.
- Harp: Yeah. So you can **mooch** all kinds of different stuff. You can **mooch** a meal.
- Maura: Yup, you could **mooch** money.
- Harp: **Mooch** a ride.
- Maura: Yup. Anything that you can take from someone, you can **mooch** from them, really. And yeah, like we said, it's not a good thing. When someone **mooches**, they directly ask the person for something, like money or food or a ride, or whatever. Now, let's give an example with the verb **to mooch**.
- Harp: OK.

- Harp: I am so annoyed.
- Maura: Oh, what's up?
- Harp: Dan just **mooched** \$5 off me, again.
- Maura: Oh, that's so annoying. He's always asking you for money, isn't he?
- Harp: He's such a **mooch**, he never **pays me back**.
- Maura: Well, maybe you just gotta start **turning him down**.
- Harp: I know. I just feel so bad. He gives me those puppy-dog eyes. Then I feel like I have to give him the money. He's such a **mooch**.

- Maura: So, in that example, we talked about Dan, who **mooched** money.
- Harp: Yes. So in this example, Dan is a **mooch**. And a **mooch** is someone who borrows often, with no intention of **paying it back**.
- Maura: Right. So, we can use **mooch** like a verb, like *he mooches*. But when someone **mooches** a lot, then they can be called a **mooch**. So in that example, because Dan **mooched** \$5 off of you, on more than one occasion, we also called him a **mooch**.
- Harp: Yes. Let's give one more example.

- Maura: Oh, I'm so hungry.
- Harp: Your **stomach's making so much noise!**

Maura:	I know. Well, in the cafeteria at lunch, Shelly was really hungry and she didn't bring anything, so she mooched off of me, and I gave her part of my sandwich.
Harp:	Oh no, maybe go buy a snack now.
Maura:	Yeah, I guess so, because my stomach's grumbling too much. I won't be able to make it.
Harp:	Yeah, you sound hungry.

Maura: So, in that example, Shelly **mooched** some food. We didn't call her a **mooch**, because it was a one-time thing, but she did **mooch**, because she took something and she doesn't have any intention of **paying me back**.

Harp: Yeah. So if Shelly did it every single day or a couple times a week, then we could call her a **mooch**, but since it was a one-time thing, we wouldn't say that about her.

Maura: It's funny though, because some people really do **mooch** a lot.

Harp: I know, and it's really bad. I feel it's just not polite.

Maura: Yeah, it isn't. It's not a polite thing to do. If you borrow from someone, then you should offer to **pay them back** or offer them money or say, "Yeah, I'll **get you back** another time."

Harp: And actually mean and do it next time.

Maura: Yeah, because that's a good point, some people who **mooch** say they're going to **pay you back** but then they never do.

Harp: That's the worst. OK, so let's move on to the second expression.

Maura: So, the next expression that means a person borrows something and doesn't **pay it back** is **to sponge** or **to sponge off of a person**.

Harp: Yes, so **to sponge** or **to sponge off of a person**.

Maura: I like this expression, because if you imagine a sponge, what does it do? It just absorbs the water, it takes, takes, takes, takes, takes, just like someone who **sponges**.

Harp: That's a good point.

Maura: Yeah, so **to sponge** is to borrow something, to take it and not intend to give it back.

Harp: Yes, so it's the same as **to mooch**.

Maura: Right. So let's give an example with **to sponge off of someone**.

Maura: Oh man, Matthew's **in town** again and he's staying at my place.

Harp: **Big surprise.**

Maura: The guy just won't stop **sponging off of me**.

Harp: Yeah, that's what? Five weekends in a row?

Maura: I know but I just feel bad. I wanna help the guy out.

Harp: I know. But hopefully he stops soon.

Maura: He stays at my place, he eats my food. I mean, I just can't get rid of the guy.

Harp: And he hasn't offered to pay at all?

Maura: No.

Harp: That's not nice.

Maura: Well, hopefully he'll be out in the next couple days.

Harp: I hope so, for you.

Maura: There's another example of someone who is **sponging off another person**.

Harp: Yeah, so he's staying the night often, without offering to pay or bringing food.

Maura: Yeah, it's just not polite. At the very least, you should also be really, really appreciative too, and sometimes people who **sponge** or **mooch** aren't very appreciative, either. They don't really say thank you very much, they just kind of think that they deserve to take from people.

Harp: Yeah, it's a rude thing to do, so often it comes with other rude behaviour, like not saying thank you or please.

Maura: Yeah, you're right. So we looked at **mooch**, we looked at **sponge**, and now we're gonna look at?

Harp: **Bum.**

Maura: Yeah. So, another way that you can use this expression as a verb is **to bum**, which is funny and feels funny to say, but **to bum something off of someone** means that you take it without the intention of **paying it back**.

Harp: Yes, **to bum something off someone** means that you borrow it without intending to **pay them back**.

Maura: So, this expression, **to bum**, is a little bit different than the first two, because you could use this verb, **to bum**, to talk about yourself. Like for example, if I thought I had really bad breath and I knew, Harp, that you had some gum, I might say, "Could I **bum** a piece of gum off of you?" And it's really just a piece of gum, so you might not expect that I **pay you back**, but maybe another time, I offer you gum or if I'm really sweet, I buy you a pack of gum.

Harp: Yeah. So, you can use it to talk about yourself, "Oh, can I **bum** \$5 off you?" Or, "Do you mind if I **bum** a sandwich?" If you have an extra one.

Maura: And in that case, because you've asked and you've used the verb **to bum** about yourself, you might be more inclined to **pay that person back**, but it depends on the situation, like we said. If it's a bigger thing, like money, you'll **pay them back**, but if it's something smaller like a piece of gum, you might not.

Harp: Yes, exactly.

Maura: OK, so let's do some examples with **to bum**. We'll do two. The first one we'll do, maybe the person's going **to pay back**, maybe not. And then we'll do another example where the person is going to **pay their friend back** after they **bum** something from them.

Harp: OK. Let's start with the first example.

Maura: Hey Jen?

Harp: Yeah?

Maura: Can I **bum** a ride with you tomorrow?

Harp: Yeah, sure, no problem.

Maura: OK, thanks. What time are you leaving?

Harp: 7:00.

Maura: OK, no problem.

Maura: So, in that example, we're not really sure if the person's going to get **paid back** or not.

Harp: Yeah. Maybe tomorrow the second person will say, "Oh, I can give you a ride the next day." We don't know. Or maybe she'll offer money but we don't know.

Maura: Or maybe the person's not going to offer any money. We don't know. Now, let's do an example where the person is going **to pay back**.

Harp: OK.

Maura: Hey Jen?

Harp: Yeah?

Maura: Could I **bum** a ride with you tomorrow?

Harp: Yeah, sure, no problem.

Maura: Thanks a lot. I'll totally **chip in** for gas money.

Harp: Oh, don't worry about it. It's not a big deal.

Maura: No, no, I insist. I really appreciate the ride.

Harp: OK, thanks.

Maura: So, in that example, the person also used **bum** but they did offer money, so in that case, they weren't using something and not **paying it back**.

Harp: Yes. OK, so today we looked at expressions related to borrowing with no real intention of **paying back**.

Maura: Mmhmm, which isn't good.

Harp: And not very polite.

Maura: The first expression that we looked at was **to mooch** or if someone does this often you can call them a **mooch**.

Harp: Yes, and the next expression was **to sponge** or **to sponge off of someone**.

Maura: And then the last one was **to bum**.

Harp: And remember you can always go to the website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com, for more information and to become a member, because then you have access to the learning materials, again, with the complete transcript, more explanation, and even a quiz.

Maura: Right. So remember to check out our website, and check out all we have to offer there. That's about it for today. Wouldn't you say?

Harp: I would say.

Maura: So, we will talk to you soon. Bye for now!

Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

To mooch/A mooch

As we hear in this episode, the expression **to mooch** or **to mooch off of someone** means to take or borrow something from someone with no intention of paying them back. It is impolite **to mooch**.

Here's an example using the expression **to mooch off of someone**:

Karla: I know that whenever I see Heather, she's going to try **to mooch something off of me**. Today was no exception.

Steph: What was it this time?

Karla: She ate half my lunch!

If someone **mooches** a lot, we can call them a **mooch**. Some people also call this kind of person a **moocher**.

Here's an example using the expression **a mooch**:

Kathy: Jon is such a **mooch**! He's borrowed half the books on my shelf, and then I've never seen them again.

Jeff: You have to stop letting him borrow things.

As we say in this episode about *to bum*, people might also use **to mooch** jokingly to talk about themselves. This is a way to show that they know the person is doing them a favour, and that they're acknowledging that they're asking for something without being able to offer anything in return at that time, although they may pay the person back in the future.

To pay back

When you **pay someone back**, it means that you've borrowed money (or something else) from them and you're giving them the same amount of money back. People usually borrow money from people they are close to, but one might also borrow money from colleagues or acquaintances. You would usually only ask someone to lend you a small amount of money casually. A small amount of money in Canada would be under \$10.

Here's an example using the expression **to pay back**:

Kurt: I have to remember to **pay Kristen back** the next time I see her. It was really nice of her to lend me that \$20.

Lauren: She's always doing nice stuff like that. So make sure you don't forget!

We can also use the expression **to pay someone back** to mean to get revenge on someone for something wrong that they have done.

Here's an example using **to pay someone back** meaning to get revenge on someone:

Joseph: I can't believe that guy cheated off my paper during the exam. I'll **pay him back** by telling the teacher what he did.

Brian: Make sure you do. Show him what he did was wrong.

We also use the expression *payback time* to talk about the time when someone will pay someone else back for something unpleasant that was done.

Here's an example using *payback time*:

Jordan: Do you remember when we played that football game against the Tigers and they won by 25 points?

Jon: Of course! How could I forget?

Jordan: Well, now it's *payback time*. Let's beat them!

To turn someone down

The expression **to turn someone down** means to reject a request that someone makes. If they ask you for something, you might say no to them directly or **turn them down** in a less direct way.

Here's an example using **to turn someone down**:

Erin: I went to the bank to see if I could get a loan, but they **turned me down**.

Carey: Aw, that's too bad.

Puppy-dog eyes

When dogs want something, especially some of the food that you're eating, they look at you with big, sad eyes. When people want something, sometimes we imitate the way that dogs look at us and make a sad face, and we call this look **puppy-dog eyes**. **Puppy-dog eyes** are hard to say no to!

In this episode, Harp says that when a friend gives her **puppy-dog eyes**, it works and this is why she gives him money.

People talk about **puppy-dog eyes** by saying that someone uses them to get what they want.

Here's another example with **puppy-dog eyes**:

Son: Could I please have another cookie? Please?

Father: Don't use those **puppy-dog eyes** on me. That won't work! Cookies will spoil your appetite for dinner.

Stomach noises, grumbling, growling

When we're hungry, we can say that our stomach is **growling** or **grumbling**, or that our **stomach is making noises**. Sometimes stomachs actually do make strange noises, like **grumbling**, when we're hungry, and sometimes we just use this as an expression, even though no sound can really be heard. In an example dialogue in this episode, Harp says that Maura sounds hungry because she can hear her stomach **growling**.

A **grumble** is low sound that is unclear. Thunder might also be described as **grumbling** or **rumbling**, or a person might **grumble** if they are not happy. A **growl** is a lot like a **grumble**. We can also say that an animal, like a dog, **growls** when it is angry.

To get someone back

If someone does something nice for us, it's always good to do something nice for them in return. In this case, we say that we'll **get someone back**.

Here's an example using the expression **to get someone back**:

Rachel: Do you mind lending me \$5? I left my wallet at home.

Dana: Sure, no problem.

Rachel: Thanks so much. I'll **get you back** tomorrow.

This expression can also be used in the same way that we use the expression *to pay someone back*, when we're talking about revenge. If you **get someone back**, it can mean that you are getting revenge against them for something they did to you.

Here's an example using the expression **to get someone back** to talk about revenge:

Nathan: I can't believe he went on a date with the girl I like! He doesn't even like her!

Nick: You have **to get him back**. Do the same thing to him the next time he likes someone.

To sponge

As we hear in this episode, the expression **to sponge off of someone** means that someone takes something and doesn't give it back. A sponge absorbs water, and continues absorbing it without giving anything back. It just goes into the sponge.

Here's an example using **to sponge off of someone**:

Jamie: Chris has been at my house every single day this week. He eats my food, he uses my computer, and then he sleeps on my couch!

Sam: You can't let him **sponge off of you** like that. Tell him to go home.

To be in town

When we use the expression **to be in town**, we don't necessarily have to be literally in a town. We could also be talking about a big city or a small village or suburb. If you have a friend **in town**, it just means that a friend is visiting the city (or town, or village) where you live. You could live in New York City, and if a friend is visiting, you have a friend **in town**.

We don't just use this expression when we talk about friends visiting, we can also use it to simply refer to the city where we live.

Here's an example using the expression **to be in town**:

Rachel: Is there an H&M store **in town**?

Lisa: Yeah, I think there's one on St. Catherine Street.

We can also say that something is **out of town**, which means the opposite:

Ross: I have to go **out of town** this weekend, so I'm going to get my car checked before I leave.

Scott: Good idea. You don't want your car to break down on the highway!

Big surprise

We use this expression sarcastically. We don't really mean that something is a **big surprise**; we mean the opposite, that we expected it to happen and it's not actually a surprise at all. In the example in this episode, Maura expected her friend Matthew to stay at her place because he's done the same thing five weekends in a row.

The full sentence is really **that's a big surprise**. But when we speak, we often cut off the beginning of a sentence if it begins with *that is* or *it is*.

Here's another example with **big surprise** used sarcastically:

Toula: I failed my driving test!

Mother: **Big surprise**. You didn't practice or study at all.

To bum

As we hear in this episode, **to bum** means to borrow something without the intention of giving it back. We usually use this expression to talk about smaller things, like a piece of gum or a ride to school.

Here's an example using the expression **to bum**:

Adam: I didn't get any fries with my burger. Do you mind if I **bum** some of yours?

Mark: Go ahead. I'm not going to finish them anyways.

Obviously, Adam is not going to pay Mark back for the fries that he took. Mark expects him to just take the fries. If Adam is really nice, he might offer to buy Mark lunch next time, but he doesn't really need to, since a few french fries are a very small thing.

To chip in

The expression **to chip in** means to give some money to someone who is buying something. For example, if you're staying at someone's house, you might offer **to chip in** for groceries, which means to give them some money for groceries.

Here's another example using **to chip in**:

Greg: We're ordering pizza for dinner. What kind would you like?

Chris: I'd like pepperoni and mushroom. I'll **chip in** \$10.

Greg: Okay, thanks.

Quiz

1. Andrea mooched \$5 off of Brent. Jen could have given Andrea the money too, but Andrea asked Brent first. Who is the mooch in this situation?

- a) Andrea
- b) Brent
- c) Jen
- d) No one

2. Which of the following is a negative example of payback?

- a) giving your friend \$10 after they lent you \$10
- b) giving your friend \$5
- c) beating your friend in a game after they previously won
- d) beating another team that you have never played against before

3. Jim asked Kelly on a date. She said that she couldn't go because she was already dating someone.

What did Kelly do to Jim?

- a) She turned him around.
- b) She turned him in.
- c) She turned him up.
- d) She turned him down.

4. Which of the following is NOT an expression that we can use to talk about a hungry stomach?

- a) making noises
- b) grumbling
- c) growling
- d) singing

5. Which of the following statements is NOT an expression that means to take from someone without the intention of paying them back?

- a) to mooch
- b) to sponge
- c) to smooch
- d) to bum

6. Which of the following is true about the expression *to be in town*?
- a) You must be in a town to use this expression.
 - b) You can only use this expression for people.
 - c) You can only use this expression for things.
 - d) You can also use this expression in a city.
7. What kind of humour (which is popular in English culture) is it when people use the expression *big surprise*?
- a) absurdity
 - b) puns
 - c) sarcasm
 - d) slapstick
8. Which of the following expressions means that someone contributes money to a situation?
- a) to chip in
 - b) to catch up
 - c) to chime in
 - d) to calm down

Answers

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