

Catch Word #30 – When Pigs Fly

Transcript

Jessie: Hi everybody, and welcome to the Culips podcast. I'm Jessie ...

Harp: And I'm Harp. So today we're going to do a **Catch Word** podcast which is where we take a close look at one word or an expression.

Jessie: Right, we talk about how it's used in everyday conversation; we talk about some synonyms and some similar expressions.

Harp: Exactly! And, as usual, if you'd like to learn more about today's episode, or if you want to listen to other episodes, you can visit our website at Culips.com.

Jessie: That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: Yeah and when you're at the website you can sign up to be a member where you can have access to the Lipservice, so you can see the transcripts, the Detailed Explanations, and even quizzes.

Jessie: Right! So Harp, what is today's Catch Word?

Harp: Today's Catch Word is "**When pigs fly.**"

Jessie: "**When pigs fly.**" I didn't know that pigs could fly!

Harp: Exactly! So that's why it's funny because it will never happen – pigs can't fly.

Jessie: So Harp, what does the expression "**When pigs fly**" mean?

Harp: It means "never."

Jessie: OK.

Harp: It's better to explain it with an example, I think.

Jessie: OK.

Harp: So would you ever shave your head?

Jessie: I would never shave my head.

- Harp: Or you could say I would shave my head **when pigs fly**.
- Jessie: Oh, I see! Because pigs could never fly and I would never shave my head, so I could say I will shave my head **when pigs fly**.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Jessie: So that means “never.”
- Harp: Exactly. OK, so should we give some more examples?
- Jessie: Sure!
- Harp: My boyfriend is very adventurous and he always wants me to do things like **bungee jumping**, but I say to him I would **bungee jump when pigs fly**.
- Jessie: OK, so you would never **bungee jump**.
- Harp: Never. What about you? What are some things that you will never do?
- Jessie: Well, I’ll probably never go to the Olympics.
- Harp: You would go to the Olympics **when pigs fly**. A funny example that I’ve heard before is this girl who was asked to go on a date by a boy and she really didn’t like him so she said to him, I will go out with you **when pigs fly**.
- Jessie: Oh that’s **kinda** mean.
- Harp: Really mean.
- Jessie: So at first maybe he thought, great she said she would go out with me, and then she added **when pigs fly**.
- Harp: Exactly. So it was mean.
- Jessie: Harp, was that you?
- Harp: No. I think it was just a story, I don’t think it was real.
- Jessie: I think you’re nicer than that. I think Harp would only be mean **when pigs fly**.
- Harp: I hope so.
- Jessie: Are there any other funny expressions like “**When pigs fly**”?

Harp: Yeah this one use **with caution**, some people might be insulted by this expression.

Jessie: OK.

Harp: It's "**when hell freezes over.**"

Jessie: **When hell freezes over.**

Harp: **When hell freezes over.**

Jessie: Right, some people might not like the word "**hell.**"

Harp: Exactly, but this expression means the exact same thing.

Jessie: Right, because **hell** is supposed to be a really hot place.

Harp: Exactly!

Jessie: So the traditional idea of **hell** is a really hot place where there is fire, and everything is burning.

Harp: Exactly. So when we say "**when hell freezes over,**" that means that **hell** would be really cold and there would be ice, which isn't the traditional idea of **hell**.

Jessie: Right, so that would never happen.

Harp: Exactly. So Jessie, let's give an example of "**when hell freezes over.**"

Jessie: OK, let's do a dialogue.

Hey Harp, I have some plans for this weekend and I was wondering if you wanted to come with me.

Harp: Oh, really? What are you doing?

Jessie: I'm going **skydiving!**

Harp: I'll go **skydiving when hell freezes over.**

Jessie: Why?

Harp: I'm so **afraid of heights.**

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Jessie: All right.

OK, so today we talked about two very interesting expressions, “**When pigs fly**” and “**When hell freezes over.**”

Harp: Exactly. And they both mean “never,” you’ll do something never.

Jessie: Right. Because pigs will never fly and hell will never freeze over. If you say you will do something **when pigs fly** or **when hell freezes over**, you will never do it.

Harp: Exactly. Like I will never be in the Olympics for swimming.

Jessie: Right. Or, you’ll be in the Olympics for swimming **when pigs fly**.

Harp: Exactly. So I think that’s good for today. Make sure you check out the website, Culips.com, and you can find out all the Detailed Explanations, and the transcript for this episode, and all our episodes.

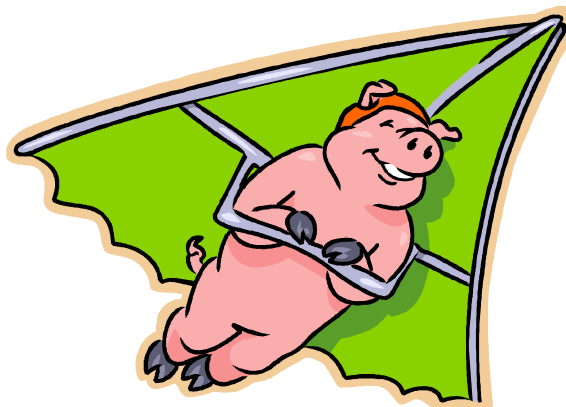
Jessie: And we will see you next time.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Detailed Explanation

When pigs fly

Simply put, the expression, “**When pigs fly**” means “never.” It means “never” because pigs cannot fly (they do not even have wings!) and they will never be able to. If someone says they will do something **when pigs fly**, it means they will never do it.



If Sally says she will apologize **when pigs fly**, it is the same as saying she will never apologize.

Sometimes people simply say “**When pigs fly**” in response to something. This still means “never.”

Don: Will you go out with Jen?

Jamie: **When pigs fly.**

Bungee jumping

Harp is right, **bungee jumping** is very adventurous. Have you heard of **bungee jumping**?

A “**bungee**” is actually a special kind of elastic rope. In this case, the very large and strong elastic **bungee** cord is attached to a person and then this person **jumps** from a very tall structure (often a bridge), but could also be a tall building. This is done for the thrill and excitement of falling and rebounding or bouncing.

The first modern bungee jump happened in 1979, and the first commercial jump was in 1986, so it is a very new thing!

“**Bungee**” can also be spelled “**bungy**.”

Kinda

Jessie says “That’s **kinda** mean.” “**Kinda**” or “sorta” comes from “kind of” and “sort of.” “Kind of” means “a little bit.” Saying “**kinda**” just makes the sentence less strong and less direct, but really does not change the meaning of the sentence very much.

“He is **kinda** funny” is like saying “He is a little bit funny.”

“It was good ... sorta” is like saying, “It was OK.” (OK is “a little bit” good.)

“They were **kinda** angry” is like saying, “They were a little bit angry.”

With caution

Harp gives some important advice about the next expression. She says that you should use it **with caution**. This means that you should be careful when using it. You should make sure that you are using it in an acceptable situation.



You should use the next expression “**When hell freezes over**” **with caution** because some people find the word “**hell**” offensive and rude. You should not use “**hell**” in a professional or formal situation.

“**Caution**” is used to warn or advise, as Harp did. “**Caution**” means alertness in a situation that could be dangerous. So to do something “**with caution**” means that you are being careful in a situation because there could be some kind of danger.

A popular place to see the word “**caution**” used is near a construction site. There are often signs that say “**caution**” or “enter with **caution**” because a construction site is a dangerous place.

Here are a couple more common examples with “**with caution**”:

Proceed **with caution**.

Exercise **with caution**.

Approach (something) **with caution**.

Hell

“**Hell**” is never a good word. “**Hell**” is the direct opposite of heaven or paradise. “**Hell**” is the place where some people believe bad people go when they die. It is associated with evil and misery and torment. When we think of **hell**, we also think of red and fire.

That all sounds so serious! Many people use this expression naturally and it is not so serious. In fact, in the past “**hell**” was a very bad word to use, but now it is not generally seen as a bad word.



As we mentioned above, you should use the next expression and any expression with the word “**hell**” in it **with caution**, because the word “**hell**” can still be offensive to some people.

When hell freezes over...

This expression means the same thing and is used in the exact same way as “**When pigs fly**.” “**When hell freezes over**” also means “never.”

Just like it is impossible for pigs to fly, it is also impossible for hell to freeze over, because hell is made of fire.

As the meanings are the same for the two expressions here, we can use the same examples.

Don: Will you go out with Jen?
Jamie: **When hell freezes over.**

Because of the “**hell**” in “**when hell freezes over**,” this expression is considered stronger.

Skydiving

This is another extreme activity, like **bungee jumping**. **Skydiving** also involves jumping, but this time it is out of a plane.

“**To dive**” is to jump, head-first, usually into water. But in **skydiving**, you are diving in the sky. This is done with a parachute, which is the device that people use to float down to the ground safely. Sometimes **skydiving** is also called “parachuting.”

The first known skydive was from a hot air balloon in 1797. It is still quite popular to this day!

Afraid of heights

Someone who is **afraid of heights** will probably not go **bungee jumping** or **skydiving** anytime soon. If you are **afraid of heights** this means that you are afraid of being up high, in tall buildings or airplanes, and you do not feel safe in such places.

We can also say someone has a fear of heights. A more serious fear of heights is called “acrophobia.” There are many phobias or fears. Here is a short list of some common ones.

Agoraphobia – fear of public spaces

Arachnophobia – fear of spiders

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(This was also the name of a film about spiders made in 1990.)

Claustrophobia – fear of confined spaces, like elevators or closets

Homophobia – fear of homosexuals or of becoming homosexual

Necrophobia – fear of dead things

Quiz (see the answers at the end of this Lipservice)**1. Can pigs fly?**

- a) no
- b) yes
- c) maybe

2. Which word has the same meaning as “when pigs fly”?

- a) ever
- b) never
- c) not
- d) every

3. Which activity does Harp say she will never do?

- a) bungee cords
- b) bun jumping
- c) jumping
- d) bungee jumping

4. We should use “hell” with caution. Why is “hell” considered a bad word by some people?

- a) because “hell” is an old word
- b) because “hell” is associated with evil and fire
- c) because “hell” is a new word
- d) because “hell” is associated with cold

5. Walter: Would you ever apologize to Cindy?
Pamela: I will apologize when hell _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) gets warm
 - b) freezes
 - c) becomes cold
 - d) freezes over
6. What does it mean when someone is afraid of heights?
- a) they are afraid of pigs
 - b) they are afraid of horses
 - c) they are afraid of high places
 - d) they are afraid of jumping
7. What is a phobia?
- a) a love of something
 - b) a fear of something
 - c) an ability
 - d) a strength

Answers: 1.a 2.b 3.d 4.b 5.d 6.c 7. b