

250 SLANG EXPRESSIONS

MEANINGS, EXAMPLES, ORIGINS

FREE PREVIEW

LEARZING

A

AC/DC

Meaning: Bisexual.

Example 1: I wish I was AC/DC, then I would have more people to date.

Example 2:

- Dude, are you sure that girl you hooked up with is AC/DC?
- Yes! I just saw her kissing some chick at the bar.

Origin: Humorous reference to electrical apparatus that is adaptable for alternating current and direct current. Since 1960–65 for this use.

ADAM'S ALE

Meaning: Water.

Example 1: We have no beer or wine, but I can offer you some Adam's ale.

Example 2: Cold beer is great on a hot summer's day, but if you are truly thirsty, nothing will do but Adam's ale.

Origin: First recorded in 1635–45, from the name of the first man to appear in the Old Testament.

(AN) AFRO

Meaning: A bushy, rounded hairstyle worn predominantly by African Americans.

Example 1: This rain is going to ruin my afro!

Example 2: Don't tease your father - everybody had an afro back in the 70s.

AFTERS

Meaning: Dessert.

Example 1: We're having a really nice cake for afters tonight.

Example 2: What's for afters, mom?

AFTY

Meaning: Afternoon.

Example 1: I have an appointment with my dentist this afty.

Example 2: What are you doing this afty?

Origin: Diminutive with -y (aft- + -y). 1960s; chiefly in "this afty".

AGGRO

Meaning 1: Aggressive, violent.

Example 1: People in a British pub who've had a few too many drinks can get very aggro.

Meaning 2: Annoyed, irritated.

Example 2: Stay away from the boss today, he seems pretty aggro.

Origin: British slang. 1965–70; construed as a shortening of either aggravation or aggression (or aggressive).

(AN) AIRHEAD

Meaning: A stupid person.

Example 1: I wouldn't ask Susan for the answer - she's an airhead.

Example 2: I have to spend all day talking to Laura at the office. She's such an airhead! All she wants to talk about is doing her nails.

Origin: This term implies the person's head contains nothing but air. [Probably earlier than 1975–80]

(AN) ALKIE (ALLY, ALCHY)

Meaning: An alcoholic.

Example 1: Poor old Bob turned into an alkie after his business failed.

Example 2: That alky drank the whole bottle of vodka by himself!

Origin: 1840–50; respelling of alc(ohol) + -ie (-y)

(AN) ANKLE-BITER

Meaning: A small child.

Example 1: Diana loves kids. She's always happy if there are lots of ankle-biters around.

Example 2: And how are you, John? And how's Molly, and all the little ankle-biters?

Origin: First recorded in the mid-19th century. Harper's Magazine, September 1850, has: "And how are you, John? And how's Molly, and all the little ankle-biters?"

ANTS Y

Meaning: Nervous, worried, restless.

Example 1: Many students were getting antsy as the exams got nearer.

Example 2: Carrie is so antsy waiting for the doctor to call with her test results.

Example 3: It was a long drive and the children started to get antsy.

Origin: American English, from plural of ants + -y; probably reflecting the same image as the idiomatic expression "have ants in (one's) pants", "be restless and fidgety". The term antsy was first noted as a rural Southern USA figure of speech in the early 20th century.

(AN) AVERAGE JOE

Meaning: An average, ordinary man.

Example 1: Frank is an average Joe - he likes football, hates opera, and watches TV on weekends.

Example 2: I like to think I'm a bit more intelligent than an average Joe.

Origin: An average Joe is a symbolization of an average American person (generally male). The term was used mainly in the late 90s - early 2000s, when the majority of America's population consisted of middle class citizens. Usually falls under the following traits: considered not to be dumb nor smart, follows any kind of sports (and also drinks heavily when their favorite team is not doing well), works five or six days a week (usually as a white collar worker), and comes home every night to sit on their sofas and watch TV.

B

(A) BAD EGG

Meaning: Someone who behaves in a bad or dishonest way.

Example 1: I'm not surprised at all that he lied. I always knew he was a bad egg.

Example 2: I'm telling you, Robert is just a bad egg. I wouldn't trust him if I were you.

Origin: The allusion is clearly to the disappointment felt when cracking or shelling an egg, only to find that it is bad. That's most likely where the figurative phrase came from, and it may have started as British public school slang. Other experts have found the earliest mentions of bad egg in American newspapers in the mid-1800's.

BAD-MOUTH

Meaning: To say bad things about someone or something.

Example 1: They often bad-mouth their boss when he's not around.

Example 2: Why are you always bad-mouthing Sandra? You don't even know her that well!

Example 3: John bad-mouths his car constantly because it is too small for him.

Origin: 1935–40; originally a curse, spell (the sense recorded in Gullah, a creole language spoken by the Gullah people an African-American population).

(A) BASKET CASE

Meaning: A person who is not able to think or act normally, due to stress or anxiety.

Example 1: After his wife left him, Paul was a real basket case.

Example 2: Sarah was so nervous on her first day of high school that she burst into tears after walking into the wrong classroom. Her classmates looked at her like she was a complete basket case.

Origin: Originating in World War I for a soldier who had lost all four limbs in combat and consequently had to be carried in a litter ("basket"), this term was then transferred to an emotionally or mentally unstable person and later to anything that failed to function. [Second half of 1900s]

BEEFY

Meaning: Big and muscular.

Example 1: Nick has been working out in the gym for years. That's why he's so beefy.

Example 2: Who's that beefy young man? He looks like a bodybuilder.

Origin: 1743, from beef (n.) in colloquial extended sense "human muscle" + -y.

(A) BELT

Meaning: An alcoholic drink.

Example 1: My boss is acting so strangely. I think he may have taken a couple of belts during lunch.

Example 2: Jack had a belt or two at the bar in town.

Origin: In the mid-1800s, "belt" as a shortened form of "belt the bottle," meaning "to drink liquor heavily". This verb sense of "belt" meaning "to drink" then led, by the 1920s, to the use of "belt" as a noun meaning "a drink of liquor," especially a quick, possibly furtive drink.

(THE) BIG APPLE

Meaning: New York City.

Example 1: I like walking on the streets of the Big Apple, especially in the autumn.

Example 2: I'm so excited for our trip to the Big Apple because we're going to a Broadway show!

Origin: The researchers concluded that, most likely, the term is associated with horse racing. Horses love apples and races in New York, according to the jockeys, are "big apple" because of the money to be won. The popularity of this term since the 1970s is due in part to a promotional campaign by the New York tourist authorities.

(THE) BIG HOUSE

Meaning: Prison.

Example 1: After he got caught robbing a bank, Ted was sent to the big house for 20 years.

Example 2: You're going to end up in the big house if you don't get out of that gang soon.

Origin: The term "big house" with reference to prisons has been around since the early-20th century. It possibly descends from big house as applied to the workhouses of 19th-century London, in which the unemployed and destitute would receive food and lodging in exchange for work. Because of the work programs in place in some North American prisons, workhouse is still used today to refer to some prisons.

(A) BIMBO

Meaning: An attractive but stupid young woman.

Example 1: Linda asked me how to turn on her tablet. What a bimbo!

Example 2: Maggie says most of the women who marry professional golfers or footballers look like bimbos whose main interest in life is shopping.

Origin: 1915–20, Americanism; Italian "bimbo" meaning "baby."