

Slang

WORKSHEET A

Exercise 1

The sentences below contain examples of American, Australian, or British slang. Can you figure out the slang words that match the definitions in the boxes?

1. "I know **zilch** about computers. I've never used one before." (American)
2. "He's **loaded**. That's why he can eat in expensive restaurants most nights."
(American)
3. "It's good **tucker** there, especially the fish. And quite cheap, too." (Australian)
4. "She's got a great job. Fifty **grand** a year and fifteen days' paid vacation." (American)
5. "You know what happened to Steve? He left his coat on a chair with his wallet in the pocket, and someone **nicked** it." (British)
6. "She's ... unusual. Not a bad person, just kind of **kooky**." (American)
7. "I **flunked** my driving test, so I'm going to have to take it again." (American)
8. "Their kitchen is so **manky**. I don't think they've cleaned it for about a month."
(British)
9. "I had four hours' sleep last night and only about five the night before. I'm **zonked**."
(American)
10. "We're having a **barbie** on Sunday if the weather's good. Why don't you come round?" (Australian)
11. "Do I know Mike? Of course I do! We've been **buddies** for years!" (American)
12. "The stores are open **24/7** so you can buy stuff whenever you want." (American)

A	dirty	G	very tired
B	nothing, zero	H	very rich
C	steal	I	strange, crazy
D	food	J	all the time
E	fail (an exam or a course)	K	one thousand dollars
F	friend	L	barbecue

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WORKSHEET B

A conversation in Los Angeles between Mark, an American, and Karolina, from the Czech Republic:

Mark:	How's the job going?
Karolina:	At the restaurant?
Mark:	Yeah.
Karolina:	It's OK. The staff comes from lots of different countries and I'm the only Czech – so I have to speak English all the time, which is very good practice for me. The money's OK, but the hours are long. I'm zonked.
Mark:	Ha! Where did you learn that?
Karolina:	What?
Mark:	“Zonked”?
Karolina:	One of the waitresses says it all the time. Is it wrong?
Mark:	No, but it's slang. It's funny – I wouldn't expect to hear a foreigner use a word like that.
Karolina:	So, to say “zonk out” is also slang?
Mark:	Yeah. But they're words lots of people use, when they're not in formal situations, so it's good to know them. Hey, how much other slang do you know?
Karolina:	Um ...
Mark:	I'll test you. What does “cool” mean?
Karolina:	Oh, that's too easy. “Cool” means very good.
Mark:	OK, something harder ... What does it mean if someone is “loaded”?
Karolina:	Loaded ... Ah yes – I think it means they are very rich.
Mark:	Right again. How about “sketchy”?
Karolina:	Uh ...
Mark:	It's the same as “shady.”
Karolina:	Oh, yes ... um, “sketchy” is not good. You can say someone you can't trust is sketchy.
Mark:	You're good! What about “zilch”?
Karolina:	Huh?
Mark:	Zilch. Like if someone asks you what you're up to later, and you say “zilch.”
Karolina:	No idea.
Mark:	It means “nothing.”
Karolina:	Oh, OK. You know, there's an Australian chef at work, and he was teaching me some Australian slang. So maybe I can test you?
Mark:	I'm sure I've heard it before. Let me guess. Barbie? Tucker?
Karolina:	Yes. And “chook.”
Mark:	And what?
Karolina:	Chook. What's a chook?
Mark:	I don't know.
Karolina:	A chicken. You see, I've taught you a word in your own language!

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WORKSHEET C

Exercise 2

Decide whether the following statements are true (T) or false (F), or if the text doesn't say (D).

1. Karolina works in a restaurant.
2. Karolina has been in Los Angeles for about one year.
3. All the people Karolina works with are American.
4. Karolina sometimes finds her job tiring.
5. Mark doesn't think he knows any Australian slang.
6. Karolina didn't know that "zonked" is slang.
7. Karolina knew what "loaded" means.
8. Two of the people Karolina works with are also from the Czech Republic.
9. Karolina is a waitress in the restaurant.
10. In the United States, people would use the slang word "cool" to describe something they don't like.

Exercise 3

Answer the questions about the text on Worksheet B.

1. Why does Karolina think it is good that she has to speak English all the time at work?
2. Who taught Karolina the word "chook"?
3. Who taught Karoline the word "zonked"?
4. When does Mark say people wouldn't use slang words?
5. Mark says two American slang words that have similar meanings: what are they?
6. What does "zilch" mean?
7. Why did Mark find it funny when he heard Karolina say "zonked"?
8. Make a list of all the slang words that appear in the conversation, where they are from, and what they mean.

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WORKSHEET D

Exercise 4

Using the slang from Worksheets A and B, can you fill in the blanks?

1. "I don't know if you should believe what he says. He's a pretty _____ character." (American)
2. "Of course I'm angry! She says she's my friend, and then what does she do for me when I need help? _____!" (American)
3. "I went to the fair with my best _____, John." (American)
4. "It's raining, so maybe we should have the _____ tomorrow." (Australian)
5. "I cycle to work and back every day – 12 miles in total. When I get home, I just _____ in front of the TV." (American)
6. "I did OK in history and English, but I _____ math." (American)
7. "We always wonder what _____ thing she's going to do next – last week she was wearing a plastic bag on her head." (American)
8. "No wonder he's tired all the time – he works _____, you know." (American)
9. "Helen's boss always _____ her best ideas and pretends he thought of them himself." (British)
10. "Of course I can't afford it. Where am I going to get two _____ from? You buy it – you're the one who's _____." (American)