

Meet the Parents

(Comedy) (2000)

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Major Characters

- Greg (Gaylord) Focker.....Ben Stiller
A very sweet male nurse who lives in Chicago, and who wants to marry Pam, or at least did want to until he met her parents.
- Pam Byrnes.....Tei Polo
Greg's charming and pretty girlfriend, who is a school teacher.
- Jack Byrnes.....Robert DeNiro
Pam's father, a conservative and controlling man who tells people he was a seller of rare flowers, but who in fact was an agent for the CIA (The Central Intelligence Agency, which spies for the US government).
- Dina Byrnes.....Blythe Danner
Pam's very nice mother, who likes Greg more than her husband does.
- Kevin Rawley.....Owen Wilson
Pam's former boyfriend and fiancée, who's now a wealthy stock trader.
- Debbie Byrnes.....Nicole DeHuff
Pam's younger sister, who is planning to soon get married.
- Dr. Bob Banks.....Thomas McCarthy
Debbie's husband-to-be, who is a young doctor.
- Larry Banks.....James Rebhorn
Bob's father, who is also a doctor.
- Linda Banks.....Phyllis George
Bob's mother.
- Denny Byrnes.....Jon Abrahams
Pam's typical teenage brother.

Plot Summary

Greg is a good person, a male nurse, and madly in love with Pam. One day, the two of them travel from their home in Chicago to stay at her parents house in Long Island, New York, in order to attend the wedding of Pam's sister, Debbie. Greg had been going out with Pam for less than a year, and was

planning to ask Pam to marry him, but before he can do so, he meets her parents at their home. Unfortunately, Pam's dad Jack is a very conservative, suspicious and protective father, and he doesn't seem to like Greg. For poor Greg, it will be a very painful visit.

After arriving at Pam's house, Greg does everything he can to get Jack to like him, but it seems that the world is against him. The airlines lose Greg's luggage, Greg almost loses Jack's much loved cat, and soon everyone in Pam's family is convinced that Greg is a loser who does not deserve to be with her. Fortunately for Greg, Pam still loves him, and thus it is Jack who will have to learn to accept that....

Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

Greg tries to ask Pam to marry him, but the time just isn't right....

I got one question for you; Can you deal with that?!

“To deal with” something is to be able to accept or handle it.

Do you think that sounds good? :: I think that kind of sums up...

“To sum up” a situation is to clearly explain or summarize it.

Sometimes these catheters can pinch a little bit.

A “catheter” is a small or narrow tube that is inserted into the body for some medical purpose. “To pinch” something is to hold it tightly, often between a thumb and a finger.

I want you to pick out your problem; A problem that's been bothering you all week.

“To pick” out something is to choose or select it.

I want you to scare your problems away. I want you to say “Boo!”

A word that is used to scare people. Popular among young kids.

I got off work a little early, thought maybe you wanted to get a bite to eat.

“To get off work” is to leave the workplace. In this case, a “bite” is a little food that is usually casual and quickly served.

Oh, shoot, I forgot to change my shoes.

A gentle word to express frustration or anger.

I got sneakers in my backpack.

“Sneakers” are a cheap type of sport or running shoe.

Come on, sweetie. I got a half hour before I have to go back.

The most versatile phrasal verb in the English language, meaning everything from “hurry up” (as here), to “be serious” or “stop it!”

These last 10 months have been the happiest in my life. ∴ Yeah, they’ve been amazing.

A powerful adjective meaning incredible, exceptional or perhaps fantastic.

Are you OK; You’re acting so weird.

A great little adjective meaning very strange or bizarre.

I’m fine; I just got a crick in my neck. I was doing CPR on a 300 pound crack addict this morning.

A “crick” is a painful muscle ache. “CPR” is “cardiopulmonary resuscitation,” which is the act of trying to force air into a person’s mouth after they have stopped breathing. A “crack addict” is a person who is addicted to crack cocaine, which is a very dangerous drug.

You’re engaged?!

If a person is “engaged,” they have officially announced to others that they are going to get married.

Yeah, I overheard that. So, what, he, like, had to ask his permission?

“To overhear” a conversation is to hear it without having intentionally tried to hear it. Note the use of the filler word “like,” which adds nothing of meaning, but is very common.

Anyway, Deb said that dad’s crazy about him.

To be “crazy about somebody” is to like them very much.

Bob bought him the perfect gift that just won him over.

In this case, “to win a person over” is to get them to like you after they did not at first.

It’s OK to X-ray this. It’s not going to mutate or anything.

“To X-ray” something is to photograph it with a camera that sees inside (human bodies and luggage can both be X-rayed). If a living thing “mutates,” it is biologically and fundamentally changed, such as when frogs develop three eyes because of poison in a river.

Sir, that’s not going to fit. ∴ Hang on a second.

If one thing doesn’t “fit” inside another one, it is too big or not the right size. “Hang on a second” is a way of telling a person to be patient.

The bag is too big. You gotta check it.

Note that in rapid speech, “have got to” ----> “gotta.” “To check” a piece of luggage on a plane is to register it so that it can be transported under the plane.

Hey pal, if it ain't fitting through the frame, you ain't carrying it on the plane.

“Pal” is a slang word for friend, but as here, it is often used as a way of addressing anybody. “Ain't” is a very slangy and incorrect way of saying “isn't” or another conjugation of ‘to be.’ It's best to avoid it.

531. New York. La Guardia.

The name of a major airport that serves New York City.

You lost my bag, and there's a two-carat diamond ring inside it.

A “carat” is a word that expresses the amount of gold in a ring, or weight of a diamond or other type of jewelry.

Fill out this form, and we'll ship it when it surfaces.

“To fill out” a form is to write information in the blank spaces.

Here, “to ship” something is to deliver it, and “to surface” is to appear or be found.

I think your dad's gonna be really psyched about this gift.

Note that “going to” ----> “gonna” in rapid speech. If a person is “psyched” about something, they are very happy about it. Slangy and common.

Take it easy on the sarcasm; Humor is entirely wasted on my parents.

In this case, “take it easy on” something is to use little of it. “Sarcasm” is a type of humor in which you say the opposite of what you really mean (“It was a good idea to put the cat in the room with the dogs”).

What, are they Amish?

The Amish are a group of very religious people who do not use electricity or other modern conveniences. There are many in the state of Pennsylvania.

Greg meets Pam's parents, and soon learns Jack is a pretty mysterious guy who really loves his cat.

Oh, gosh.

A gentle way of expressing frustration or surprise.

Sweet pea! Pamcake. Flap jack.

The names of foods, and ridiculous nicknames that Pam and her father call each other (Actually, there are pancakes, but not “pamcakes”).

Short stack, short stack, coming up.

A “short stack” of pancakes is two, as opposed to three or more.

Another silly nickname. If something is “coming up” in a restaurant, it is about to be served.

We were going to get a midsize, but I figure, hey, we pull down decent bucks.

Might as well go all out and pop for the full-size.

A “midsize” is a medium sized car, whereas a “full-size” is big car. “To pull down decent bucks” is a very slangy way of saying to make a lot of money (bucks are dollars). In this context, “to go all out and pop for something” is a colloquial way of saying to spend a lot of money for it.

Oh, yuck, what smells of old sour milk?

“Yuck” is a great word to express disgust when something smells, looks or tastes horrible.

It will turn up, I’m sure.

If something that is missing “turns up,” it is found.

“Mi casa es su casa.” :: Oh, thanks Jack, you too.

This is a Spanish language expression which means “My house is your house.” Rarely used in English, except by those who like Spanish.

Greg, you have a very unique last name.

Note that “unique,” which means the only one of its type, should not have “very” before it. Still, even educated speakers make this mistake.

We were curious; How do you pronounce it?

Note that “curious” means odd or strange when describing how a person looks to others, and eager to learn or know about others, when describing a person’s state of mind.

F-o-c-k-e-r. Fucker.

Note the spelling of Greg’s name could be pronounced “Fawker” (like soccer), but whenever people are upset at him, they end up saying “fucker.” This is a clever and running joke throughout the film.

That a boy!

A common thing to say to animals or boys if they accomplish something difficult (Note it is generally pronounced “attaboy”).

Even taught him to use the potty.
A child's word for toilet.

What's so weird about it? Now we don't have to smell kitty litter all the time.
A type of sand that cats who live indoors use to shit in.

Every chance he gets he tries to dig, squat and bury.
"To squat" is to sit low on the ground with one's legs under the body (Cats squat when they go to the bathroom).

He lacks the strength and the opposable thumbs.
"To lack" something is to not have it. "Opposable thumbs" is a biological term, referring to the fact that only humans have thumbs that move so freely, allowing them to grab and carry more things than other animals.

Jinx is strictly a house cat. You can't let him outside because he also lacks outside survival skills.
A "house cat" is one that usually stays inside.

Hey, why don't we let the kids freshen up.
To "freshen up" is to clean oneself and perhaps relax.

I'm sorry. It just kind of slipped out.
In this case, if words "slip out" of a person's mouth, they are not the words that the person had really wanted or intended to say.

Actually, the real gift is what's planted in the soil.
Another word for ground or dirt.

The bulb of a Jerusalem tulip.
The bulb is the root of a plant or flower, and a tulip is a type of flower.

Right, from the Jerusales tulepisi genus.
"Genus" is a biological word referring to a division or family of plant or animal ('Jerusales tulepisi' are perhaps Latin words).

With regular watering, it should bloom in about six months.
If a plant "blooms," it grows and flowers outward.

I recently got transferred to triage.
The part of a hospital where emergency patients are kept alive while waiting to be seen by a doctor.

No, mom, triage is a unit of the ER.
An abbreviation for the emergency room of a hospital.

It's where all the top nurses work.

"Top" is a widely used adjective referring to the best of a group.

So what is it? :: What's the new venture?

A "business venture" is a risky but often exciting course of action designed to create a growing and successful business.

Let's say...you want to get out of the house and spend a night on the town.

A common expression which refers to the act of passing the night relaxing or having fun, often at a restaurant, nightclub or play.

References, work experiences---it all checks out fine.

In this context, "references" are the names of people that a person looking for a new job will give to a potential employer. If something "checks out," it is verified that what had been claimed is in fact true.

How can you know for certain that your loved ones are safe with this stranger?

One way of referring to family members, such as your spouse or kids.

This looks like a teddy bear. :: Smile, you're on "nanny camera."

A "teddy bear" is a stuffed toy bear for children. A "nanny" is a young woman or teenage girl who takes care of kids and cleans the house, usually of wealthy families.

Where's the other camera? Right here in this decorative artifact.

An "artifact" is any object made by man, especially something useful.

We hide them in mirrors, lamps, televisions, you name it.

Another way of saying "anything" after you've just named a list of specific things.

Couldn't this be construed as illegal, you know, invasion of privacy?

If something is "construed" in a certain way, it is seen or viewed that way. "Invasion of privacy" is a legal term that refers to the viewing or observing of things that people have a right to expect will not be viewed by others.

Trust me, when you start to have little Fockers running around, you'll start to understand the need for this level of protection.

This is Jack's way of telling Greg that if he had kids, he would also want one of Jack's secret cameras.

Hey, I'll get it.

Note the only correct verb tense when planning an immediate response to a phone call or knock at the door (so stop saying "I will get it").

Any problem with the documents?

Any piece of paper with information or evidence on it.

If anybody else answers, just use a Southern accent and ask for the vegetarian special.

The way a restaurant would refer to one its best meatless meals.

I'm going to make a run to the store.

A slangy way of saying to take a short trip.

I'll be back in a jif.

To do something "in a jif" is to do it very quickly.

You'll need something in case your suitcase doesn't show up.

A common colloquial phrasal verb meaning to appear or arrive.

OK, let's head out.

A colloquial way of saying to leave.

I don't not like cats. I just prefer dogs.

Note the use of the double negative, though in this construction, where the "not" is placed before the verb, it is grammatically correct!

Wagging their little tails..... :: You need that assurance, do you? You prefer an emotionally shallow animal?

When a dog "wags" its tail, it moves it back and forth. "Assurance" is a strong promise or statement of support. If a person (or animal) is "emotionally shallow," they are superficial or simple.

You see, Greg, when you yell at a dog, his tail will go between his legs and cover his genitals....his ears will go down.

"Genitals" are the sexual organs.

A dog is very easy to break. But cat's make you work for their affection. They don't sell out the ways dogs do.

In this case, "to break" a dog is to make them cry, beg or surrender. If a person "sells out," they agree to do something they don't want to, in order to get something they do want (such as money, approval or sex). This is Jack's silly way of explaining why cats are better than dogs.

Who would have thought it wasn't really about a dragon, huh?

A "dragon" is an imaginary fire-breathing animal in kid's stories.

"To puff the magic dragon" is, uh, really to smoke a marijuana cigarette.

"To puff the magic dragon" is a well known folk song from the 1960s ("To puff" is to blow out smoke from one's mouth). "Marijuana" is a popular illegal drug that is smoked.

Are you a pothead, Focker?

A "pothead" is a slang term for a person who smokes a lot of marijuana, which is also commonly called pot.

No, I pass on grass all the time.

"To pass on" something is to decide to not to use it.

"Grass" is another slang word for marijuana.

Oyster Bay Drugstore and Sundries.

"Sundries" is an interesting word that means various small items.

Do you have any of the nicotine patches? ; No, we have the gum.

A type of patch or sticky cloth that is worn on the skin to help people quit smoking (Nicotine is a drug found in cigarettes).

I was just reading up about....pumps. Breast pumps.

Devices that let women get breast milk from their own breasts so that they can feed their babies.

Greg's dinner with the family becomes the first disaster of his visit.

Get your hot buns, hot patoosies.

A "bun" is a small bread roll. A "patoosie" is a type of roll, but this is never used.

Everything looks fabulous. It's such a treat for me to have a home-cooked meal like this.

"Fabulous" means great or wonderful. In this case, a "treat" is a special occasion or an unexpected pleasure.

Dinner at my house usually consisted of everybody in the kitchen fighting over containers of Chinese food.

"To consist of" means to be made up of, or include.

"Containers" are anything that hold physical objects, in this case small boxes or cartons for Chinese food.

Greg, would you like to say grace?

The act of giving thanks to God before a meal.

Pam, come on, it's not like I'm a rabbi or something.

A "rabbi" is a Jewish religious leader, like a priest for Catholics.

I said grace at many a dinner table.

A poetic or stylistic alternative to "many dinner tables."

A kind and gentle and...accommodating God.

If a person is "accommodating," they're helpful and hospitable, or perhaps accepting of new conditions.

We thank you...for the smorgasbord...you have so aptly lain at our table this day.

A "smorgasbord" is a great feast with lots of wonderful food.

"Aptly" is appropriately or suitably, and "lain" is the past participle of "to lay," but this is a ridiculous way for Greg to say grace.

Oh, Dear Lord, three things we pray, to love thee more dearly, to see thee more clearly, to follow thee more nearly.

"Lord" is another word for God. "Thee" is old (Shakespearian) English for "you." More nonsensical words from Greg.

Amen. :: Oh Greg, that was lovely.

"Amen" is the word that is used to end most prayers.

"Lovely" is a British word for pretty, beautiful or nice.

That's an urn that holds the remains of Jack's mother.

An "urn" is a container for the ashes of a human body after it has been burned. The "remains" of a body is another word for those ashes.

That's our gran gran. We like to think of her as watching over us as we eat.

This is Pam's totally ridiculous way of referring to her grandmother.

When Jack had to retire for health reasons... ::

Oh honey, that's a bunch of malarkey. I'm fine!

An interesting word for nonsense, or more colloquially, bullshit.

The doctor thought it would be therapeutic if he expressed his emotions in an artistic way.

If something is "therapeutic," it is considered helpful in the treating or curing of either a physical or mental health problem or disease.

Alright, it's a work in progress.

A "work in progress" usually refers to a project that is not yet finished.

As soon as it's ready, I'm going to glaze it on a plate, and put it next to the urn.
 "To glaze" words on a plate is to put them on the surface of the plate with a shiny or glass-like finish.

Selfishly, I tried to keep you here while the cancer ate away your organs...like an unstoppable rebel force.
 A "rebel force" is usually a group of people who are trying to overthrow a government. This is Jack's very bad poetry.

I shall see your face nevermore...until we meet in heaven.
 A poetic way of saying not any more.

I didn't actually grow up in a farm, per se.
 A set expression generally meaning actually, in fact, or in reality.

The house we grew up in was originally erected in the early Dutch farm colonial style.
 "To erect" a building is to build it, or place it upright. "Dutch farm colonial style" was a type of house that was popular in the American colonies in the 1700s.

Honey, he said he pumped milk. :: What have you ever milked?
 "To pump" a liquid is to remove it, usually with some kind of machine and tube. "To milk" an animal is to remove milk from it by holding or squeezing its nipples.

The cat birthed a litter of kittens, there must have been 30 of them, and there was this one little runt, who couldn't really get access to the teat.
 "To birth" is a rare way of saying to give birth. A "litter" of kittens is a small group of them that have just been born. The "runt" of the litter is the smallest one, and a "teat" is a funny word for a nipple ("Tits" is a somewhat vulgar slang word for female breasts).

Teat? :: What have you.
 A way of saying "whatever," which can be used when you are not sure of the accuracy or truth of what you have just said.

I...then took the saucer and fed it to the cappetto.
 A "saucer" is a small plate (Capetto is the name of Greg's kitten).

Oh yeah, you can milk anything with nipples.
 The end of a breast, from which babies can get milk.

I thought maybe we could celebrate with a little bubbly.
 A slang word for champagne, named for the bubbles within it.

This is so sweet of you. Isn't that a nice gesture?

A useful word for any small action that is done to show one's feeling or appreciation, such as buying a bottle of wine as a thank you gift.

When I gave Bob the OK to propose to Deb, I put him in touch with my diamond guy, and he picked out the exact same design that Kevin gave you.

"To propose" to a person is to ask them to get married.

Kevin was Pam's fiancée.

The word for a person who you're engaged to marry in the near future.

How you doing? :: Just fine, considering I desecrated your grandma's remains, found out you were engaged and had your father ask me to milk him.

"To desecrate" something that is holy or sacred is to treat it with disrespect or shame. This is a clever response to Pam's question.

You never told me about your cat-milking days in Motown.

"Motown" is a nickname for Detroit, Michigan. It got this name because it is where the motorcar (or automobile) industry began.

Physical? Like what? You worked out together?

"To work out" is a common phrasal verb meaning to exercise seriously, in order to stay in good shape or lose weight.

I'm going to throw up now.

The most common alternative to vomit (to throw up food when sick).

I moved to Chicago, I met and fell in love with you, so can we please drop this?

"To drop" a topic of conversation is to stop talking about it.

Mr. Winky is still on Chicago time, and there is only one way to make Mr. Winky go away.

"Mr. Winky" is Greg's ridiculous way of referring to his penis.

"Chicago time" is the actual time in Chicago, as opposed to New York, which is an hour earlier (there are three time zones in the U.S.).

What's with the robe? :: My pajamas are in the suitcase with everything else.

"What's with..." is a common and colloquial way of asking a question about something that is unexpected, or seems strange or out of place.

You'll have the pullout in the den

In this case, a "pullout" is a bed that one pulls out from inside a folded couch.

Just try not to flush the toilet. It's always a little quirky.

"To flush" a toilet is to clean it out with a sudden flow of water.
If something is "quirky," it acts a little odd or strange.

You've probably had premarital relations with my daughter, but under my roof, it's my way or the Long Island Expressway.

"Premarital relations" is a ridiculously old-fashioned way of referring to sex before marriage. The Long Island Expressway is a well known highway, and thus this is Jack's way of telling Greg he can't have sex with Pam as long as they are staying in his house.

Keep your snake in its cage for 72 hours.

Jack's completely stupid way of telling Greg to keep his penis in his underwear.

We're experiencing heavy call volume...

The words a taped message will say when it's difficult to talk to a real person because they are so many people calling at the same time.

There's just something about him that's a little off.

If a person is a little "off," there is something about them that is strange, but it is not clear what it is.

We've been through this with every boyfriend Pam has had since middle school.

In this case, to "go through" something is to experience it, or discuss it over and over. Middle school is grades 6-8, before high school.

What kind of family doesn't have time to sit down for dinner? :: Fugitives.

"Fugitives" are people who are being chased by the police because they have broken the law.

Pamela Martha Focker.

This would be Pam's full name if she married Greg, which is funny since it could sound like "motherfucker," which is one of the dirtiest words in English.

Operation Ko-Samuai.

The name of what looks like a secret project that Jack is working on.

Greg learns the truth about Jack's life at the CIA, enters the "circle of trust," and meets the rest of Pam's family

Jesus, Jack, you scared me.

A common way of expressing emotion such as fear, anger or surprise.

I saw a light on in here and I kind of stumbled in.

“To stumble” is to trip or perhaps walk without control.

This is great. It’s a cozy little nook.

“Cozy” means small and comfortable, like a warm room when it’s raining outside. A “nook” is a small private place.

It’s an antique polygraphic machine.

A “polygraph” is a machine that tries to tell whether or not a person is lying.

Let’s give it a whirl.

A way of saying “let’s try it” (A “whirl” is the act of spinning around).

No peeking.

“To peek” is to try and secretly look at something that others do not want you to see.

Did we eat pot roast for dinner tonight?

A traditional type of beef, usually served with potatoes.

I’m just kidding.

“To kid” around is to be joking, or not serious.

Have you ever watched pornographic videos?

Adult movies that are filled with graphic sex.

What did you tell him? :: Nothing, I yanked the little things off before I had to answer.

“To yank off” something is a phrasal verb which means to forcefully or quickly pull it off from something else.

Is this how you would react if I told you he shoved bamboo shoots up my fingernails....or does he hook up all your boyfriends to his machine?

“To shove” something is to forcefully push it. “Bamboo shoots” are hard plant roots that are found in Asia. “To hook up” a person to a machine is to connect them to it.

He was never in the rare flower business. That was just his cover.

In this case, a “cover” is a fake story that is designed to fool people so they won’t know the truth about a situation.

How come you didn't tell me? :: It was strictly on a need to know basis.

“How come” is a common way of asking why. “Strictly” means completely or exactly. If something is on a “need to know basis,” only those people who truly need to know are ever told about it.

He was like a psychological profiler. They used him to interrogate suspected double agents in the company.

A “psychological profiler” is a person who analyses the personal psychology and behavior of people in order to see what kind of people they really are. “To interrogate” a person is to question them very seriously, often over several hours or more. A “double agent” is a spy for one country who is actually spying for another.

I was scared of your dad when I thought he was a florist. It's wonderful to know that I've actually got a CIA spy hunter on my ass.

A “florist” is a person who sells flowers. If a person is “on your ass,” they are trying to capture or perhaps hurt you. Slangy, but useful (The CIA is the Central Intelligence Agency, a US spying organization).

This is a lot to take in, honey. I'm sorry.

In this case, “to take in” a lot means to learn a lot that is quite overwhelming or dramatic (Here, that Jack worked for the CIA).

Pam told me that she let you in on a little secret of mine.

“To let a person in on” a secret is to tell them it.

You are now on the inside of what I like to call “the Byrnes' family circle of trust.”

This is Jack's way of referring to those people who are close enough to the family that they can be trusted not to tell all of their secrets.

Somebody had a little visit from the hair fairy.

A “fairly” is a tiny magical figure that is shaped like a human that appears in children's stories. This is a totally ridiculous way of saying that Greg's hair does not look very good.

I'll do the intros, Greg.

A slangy way of saying to introduce people to each other.

The bride-to-be, and her fiancée, Dr. Bob.

The “bride-to-be” is a woman who will soon get married.

You can call me Bob, M.D.

The initials for a doctor (Medical Doctor).

And the world-famous plastic surgeon, Dr. Larry. :: **Cut that out!**

A “plastic surgeon” is a surgeon who performs operations that improve people’s physical appearance.

“Cut that out” is a great colloquial expression meaning “stop it!”

What field?

In this case, a “field” is a specialization, such as skin, in medicine.

Just as well; Boards are killers. :: Actually, Greg aced his MCATs.

The “Boards” are the Board Exams or MCATs, which stands for the Medical College Admissions Tests, which all students must take to get into Medical School. “To ace” an exam is to get an A on it, or at least do very well on it (MCATs are graded with numbers, not letters).

I wanted to keep my options open, but in the end, nursing was just a better fit for me.

An “option” is a choice or alternative possibility. If one profession is a “better fit” for you than another, then it probably is more appropriate for your personality or life situation.

I can focus 100% on patient care as opposed to being a doctor, where you have to deal with the bureaucracy.

“To focus” on something is to concentrate on it, or to think of nothing but that. A “bureaucracy” is a negative word for a system of people in a large organization who are inefficient and often get little done. In this case, this is probably a reference to hospital and insurance company bureaucracies, on which doctors pass much of their time.

Now I have to reconfigure the whole procession.

“To reconfigure” a plan is to reorganize it so that it will work smoothly. A “procession” is a group of people moving slowly in a ceremonial way (A wedding procession is led by the bride and groom).

Why doesn’t Greg stand in for Andy, to be the usher?

“To stand in for” a person at a ceremony is to take their place.

An “usher” is a person who helps people to their seats at a wedding, play or other public event.

We have a pre-activity briefing in 32 minutes.

A “briefing” is an official word for a short meeting to go over plans or the details of a situation.

Tell that to Dr. Taquimata, in there with the grand inquisition.

A reference to grand inquisitions in history (especially Spain), where people were questioned and even tortured for long periods of time in order to get them to reveal information or admit to a crime.

What the hell are you doing here?

Added to Wh questions to show emotion such as surprise or anger.
Colloquial and common.

Were you just sniffing my boxers, dude?

“To sniff” is to smell (like a dog). “Boxers” are a type of underwear for men. “Dude” is an overused word for guy, that many young males use to address each other.

Dad keeps you under a pretty close watch.

Dennis’ way of saying that Jack watches everything that Greg does.

You need some clothes...glad to hook you up.

“To hook up” a person is to connect them, in this case with clothes.

Like what you did with the crib.

A small bed for babies that has a railing around it so they can’t get out.
(Note the use of elliptical sentences, where the pronoun ‘I’ is dropped).

She’s phat.

A new teenage slang word meaning excellent, or more colloquially, cool (It is pronounced like fat).

Alright, here you go, chief.

“Here you go” are the words to use when you are physically giving a person something. A “chief” is the leader of an Indian tribe, though it is also used, as here, as a slangy form of address.

Don’t worry about the covert op.

Short for “covert operation,” which is a term that describes secret missions performed by spy agencies, such as rescuing a kidnap victim.

I’ll keep it on the low down. Down low.

Greg’s attempt to sound young and cool and express the idea that he won’t tell Dennis’ secret, but in fact these words don’t mean anything.

People, come get your revised itineraries.

If a schedule is “revised,” it is changed or modified because of a new situation. An “itinerary” is the planned schedule for an event such as a wedding.

I’m going to activate the alarm. It will go off in T minus 16 seconds.

“To activate” an alarm is to set it so that it will ring. “T minus” is a military expression which says how much time until something happens.

Dennis, I'm lending Greg your jacket. :: Whatever.

An overused word, that basically means "whatever you say is OK."

This isn't a sculpture. It's a device for smoking marijuana.

A "device" is an object, tool or machine.

I like the top hat. It complements you.

A "top hat" is a type of fancy hat that is very tall. If a piece of clothing "compliments" you, it makes you look good.

If I find that you are trying to corrupt my first-born child,

I will bring you down baby. I'll bring you down to Chinatown!

In this case, "to corrupt" a person is to introduce them to things such as illegal drugs, or perhaps sex out of marriage. "To bring a person down" is a slangy way of saying to defeat or possibly destroy them.

Greg meets Pam's ex-fiancée Kevin, and then seriously injures Debbie before her upcoming wedding.

This is Kevin's new house. :: Wow!

A common way of expressing emotion such as excitement or amazement.

Maybe he uses marijuana for medicinal purposes.

Another word for medical. Some doctors prescribe marijuana as a medicine for certain conditions or diseases.

Get in some quality time with the boys?

"Quality time" is a fashionable expression which refers to the passing of enjoyable time with a friend or relative that you don't often see.

Why would a barbecue at the best man's be weird?

"The best man" in a wedding is the person chosen by the husband-to-be to make the official speech in honor of the new couple. "Weird" is an excellent adjective meaning strange or bizarre.

I was able to salvage this wood from an old seaman's chapel in Nantucket.

"To salvage" something is to save it for use before it is destroyed. A "chapel" is a small church (Nantucket is a town in Massachusetts).

The sun is out, the grill is hot and the pool is luke.

The grill refers to the barbecue grill for cooking meats. "Luke" is short for luke warm, which is a bit cooler than warm, but it is never used!

It's not a big deal. If I can handle a weekend without sex and cigarettes, I can handle an afternoon with your ex-fiancée.

If something is “not a big deal,” it's not important. In this case, “to handle” a situation is to be able to accept it or survive with it.

For the floor, I chose this Bolivian worm wood.

Apparently, a type of expensive wood from the country of Bolivia.

I have the Viking range and the twin sub-Zs.

A “range” is an oven, and “sub-Zs” are an expensive type of refrigerator.

Yeah, they kind of blend in.

If something “blends in” with the rest of the room, they are not easily noticeable, perhaps because they look like other things in the room.

I got in early on some wireless IPOs and the stuff just skyrocketed from there.

“To get in early on” a stock is to buy it before the price goes up.

“Wireless” refers to those technologies such as cell phones that do not need to be plugged into a wall. An “IPO” is an Initial Public Offering, which is when the stock of a company is offered for sale for the first time, and “to skyrocket” is to go up very quickly and very high.

There is a lot.....to be made with biotech stuff.

“Biotech” is short for biotechnology, such as modern drugs.

Note the general use of “stuff,” that in this case refers to the products that biotechnology companies make.

How's your portfolio?

Short for “investment portfolio,” which refers to the stocks, real estate and other investments where people put their money. Generally speaking, only rich people refer to their investments as portfolios.

You gotta strike while the iron is hot.

Note that “have got to”-----> “gotta” in rapid speech. This is a way of saying that with investments, a person must take action when there is still opportunity if they want to make a lot of money.

That's great to give something back like that.

I'd like to find some time to do some volunteer work.

“To give something back to the community” refers to the general idea that people that make a lot of money should contribute to the world around them since the world has given them so much.

I saw this golden retriever and he had like a gimp...it made me feel terrible.

A “golden retriever” is a type of pretty dog that always smiles.

A “gimp” is way of walking that is lame or very fragile. Rarely used.

You’re a Wall Street trader. :: I’m willing to be painted with that brush. Yes, that’s my day job.

A “Wall Street trader” buys and sell stocks. If a person is “painted with a certain brush,” they are portrayed or represented like that (in this case as a trader). A person’s “day job” is what they do for a living, though anyone who uses that term for themselves is probably saying they do more important things for themselves outside of that real job.

It looks like somebody got an ‘A’ in woodshop.

“Woodshop” is a class in middle school where people learn to work with wood (There is also metal, auto and other types of shop classes).

I whittled that out of beach wood.

“To whittle” a piece of wood is to reduce it in size with a knife by cutting off thin slices.

What got you into carpentering? :: Carpentry?

“Carpentry” is the making of wooden objects such as beds or tables (And ‘carpentering’ is not a real word).

If you’re gonna follow in someone’s footsteps, who better than Christ?

“To follow in a person’s footsteps” is to lead the type of life that they do, or to at least do something similar to what they do.

Greg’s Jewish. :: Wow, so was J.C. You’re in good company.

“J.C.” is a totally ridiculous way of referring to Jesus. If you are “in good company,” you are part of a group with notable people, or have done something that other people have also done.

I just put a fresh coat of lacquer on this...so bear with me with the fumes.

A “fresh coat of” paint is a new round or application of the paint.

“Lacquer” is a stain that is applied to wood. “To bear with” a person is to be patient with them, and “fumes” are strong chemical smells.

It’s an altar. Oh, you might call it a “ho-pa.”

An “altar” is a raised piece of furniture that is used for religious events.

“Hoopa” is a Hebrew word for an alter that is used at Jewish weddings.

When they purchase a home, maybe it will grace their garden. Well, that’s my sappy, romantic idea.

“To purchase” is to buy. If a flower “graces” a garden, it brings beauty to it. “Sappy” is an interesting word meaning too sentimental or sweet.

I carved it all by hand from one piece of wood.

“To carve” wood is to shape it with a knife.

You guys grab your suits and I’ll meet you down at the pool.

“To grab” something is to quickly take it.

In this case, “suits” is short for swim suit.

Boy, she is a tomcat. Whoa.

A “tomcat” is a fast and wild cat. “Whoa” expresses general emotion such as surprise or amazement.

I think they call that the munchies.

A good colloquial expression for the strong desire to eat snack food such as potato chips or brownies.

Nice shot! Sweet setup, iceman.

“Nice shot” are the words to use in many sports when a person hits a ball. A “setup” in sports is the creation of a situation where a team can easily score. “Iceman” is a nickname, taken from the movie Top Gun.

You gotta rush the ball on defense.

“To rush” a ball is to run toward it as quickly as possible.

Huddle up.

“To huddle” is to get together in a small group, in the shape of a circle.

We’re getting creamed. :: Well, if Florence

Nightingale would play a little defense.

If one team is getting “creamed,” they are losing very badly (Florence Nightingale is a well known name from literature).

Greg, nobody is expecting much out of you, so if I set you the ball, do you think you can jump up and spike it?

In volleyball and water polo, to “set” a ball is to hit it gently in the air, and to “spike” the ball is to hit it strongly to the other side of the net.

Alright, everybody look sharp.

If you tell a person to “look sharp,” you’re telling them to look good and competent.

Go over the song selection with Bob.

To “go over” something is to review it or discuss it.

What are you two doing in there? :: I'd say rounding second base.
 In baseball, to "round second base" is to run past the second base toward the third base, though in colloquial English among teenagers, it can refer to various sexual acts (A "home run" is sexual intercourse).

Greg sets the house on fire and loses Jinxy the cat, and soon all of Pam's family is convinced that he's not the one for Pam.

Greg will stay in Debbie's room and she'll bunk up with you tonight.
 "To bunk up" with a person is to sleep in the same room with them (A bunk-bed is a piece of furniture with one bed built on top of another).

I have nothing but the best intentions with Pam.
 A nice way of saying an honest desire to help somebody, or in this case, perhaps to marry and stay with them forever.

There's something in the suitcase that I'm planning on giving her that I think symbolizes my level of commitment to her.
 "To symbolize" something is to represent it (A ring can symbolize the love between two people). "Commitment" is another word for loyalty or dedication, and is an important word in romantic relationships.

I saw Jinxy come in last night and he took a little squat and relieved himself.
 A "squat" is the act of kneeling low on the ground. If a person needs to "relieve themselves," they need to go to the toilet.

What's the matter? :: The matter, Greg, R.N.,
 is that when this toilet is flushed, it runs.
 An "R.N." is a registered nurse (Greg's profession).
 If a toilet is running, the water in it continues to flow.

When you have a septic tank that's nearly full and a toilet that's been running all night, then you could have a hell of a problem.
 A "septic tank" is a large hole in the ground for storing human shit!
 "A hell of" is added to show emphasis (This is a BIG problem...).

Nice stench. You're really on a roll there, bud. :: Bite me, Dennis.
 "Stench" is a disgusting smell. A person who is "on a roll" has had many successes happen in a short period of time (though here Dennis is joking around). "Bud" is short for buddy, or friend. "Bite me" is a silly way of saying "fuck you" in response to a person's criticism.

I need my cesspool pumped now.
 A "cesspool" is another word for septic tank.

Jinx cannot flush the toilet. He's a cat, for Christ's sake.

A common colloquial way of expressing emotion such as anger or frustration.

What the heck?!

A gentler form of "What the hell?," in this case used to express great surprise. "Heck" is old-fashioned, but used by those who don't want to use dirtier words.

Do you think maybe it's possible that the Samsonite people, in some crazy scheme to actually turn a profit, made more than one?

"Samsonite" is the name of a large luggage company. A "scheme" is a plan, but one that is often seen as dishonest. "To turn a profit" is to make money.

I am going to need your baggage claim number again.

The number put on a piece of luggage to keep track of it on a plane.

Can I talk to your supervisor? :: My supervisor is on a break.

A "supervisor" is a person who watches over an office, factory or other workers, and is responsible for making sure things run well. If a person is "on a break," they are resting or perhaps eating for a few minutes.

Greg didn't ace his Ed school boards. He never even took the goddamn MCATs. :: That's what you had your sources check out?

"Goddamn" is a filler word used to express anger or frustration. In this case, "sources" are people who give unknown or secret information. "To check out" something is to investigate it.

A lot of hospital workers are just pill poppers looking for easy access to ludes.

A "pill popper" is a person who takes a lot of pills, either legal or illegal. "Ludes" is short for Quaaludes, a dangerous illegal drug in the form of a pill that makes a person feel drunk.

Somebody call 911 right away!

The number you should immediately telephone if you have an emergency (they connect people to ambulances and the police).

You tried to milk him, didn't you, you sick son of a bitch!

"Son of a bitch" is a common insult for a mean or abusive person.

We're 15 minutes away from the wedding rehearsal and the ring bearer is missing.

A "rehearsal" is a practice session for a play, or a ceremony such as a wedding.

Now we have to postpone the rehearsal.

“To postpone” something is to plan to do it later than planned.

We’re gonna canvas the neighborhood.

“To canvas” a neighborhood is to look everywhere for something, often by knocking on the doors of all the area houses.

Stupid cat?!...We’re supposed to let him wander the streets without food, water or toilet?!

“To wander” is to travel or move aimlessly, without a real destination.

They brought in a Himalayan a little while ago.

A type of cat, named after the Himalayan mountains in Nepal.

Holy shit, that’s Jinx!

A crude but fun way to express emotion such as surprise or amazement.

You gotta picture him without that stupid Santa cap.

The tiny red head covering that Santa Claus wears while travelling around the world with his reindeer.

Dearly beloved, we are gathered here on this beautiful day....

A religious way to start a marriage ceremony (“Dear friends...”)

...to join Dr. Robert Banks and Debbie Byrnes in holy matrimony.

Religious words that refer to a sacred or God-blessed marriage.

Hooray!

A silly word used to express excited approval.

Where’s Greg? ; He’s in the restroom.

Along with bathroom, the most common way to refer to a public toilet.

Sorry folks, had to pay a little visit to the urinal fairy.

“Folks” is a common way of saying people. “Urinal” is generally a public toilet for men (To urinate is to piss).

I’m just glad I could help out. You know, we never did finish that little convo back in the den.

If a person is “glad,” they’re happy about something. A “convocation” is a meeting of church officials, but Greg’s word “convo” is never used.

You have my word.

One way of saying “I promise.”

I saw some beach wood outside. :: He's very handy.

A person who is "handy" is able to do lots of practical things with their hands, such as fix car engines or build book shelves.

He's an extremely handy and crafty craftsman.

A person who is "crafty" is smart or clever, but in a dishonest way.
A "craftsman" is a person who builds things with their own hands, such as furniture.

It would never have worked out.

If a relationship doesn't "work out," it ends badly.

It's brown with a little bit of black trim.

"Trim" refers to a narrow band or strip, usually near the edge of an object.

Please enter your four digit code.

A "digit" is a number, and a "code" is a secret group of numbers or letters that allow a person to access information.

Thought you might be worried, so just give me a jingle when you guys get home, and I'll bring the little rascal over.

A "jingle" is the ringing of a bell, or in this case, a phone call.
A "rascal" is usually a young child who misbehaves or is dishonest.

I guess sometimes these things sort of come together in their own kooky sort of way.

"Kooky" is an interesting adjective meaning strange or odd.

You haven't seen any of his latest tricks, have you?

A "trick" is an act of special skill done to entertain, such as when a cat learns to follow exact human instructions.

Whoa, Nellie!

An odd and very old way to express disapproval or surprise.

Just trying to make good time.

"To make good time" is to do something quickly or efficiently.

It's not the autobahn! Come on, Greg!

The German highway system, known for cars that drive very fast.

What a fun ride!

A key word that refers to the act of being driven in a car.

You're a lunatic!

A fun word for a crazy person.

You spray painted his tail to make him look like Jinxy, didn't you, Focker?

"To spray paint" something is paint it with a can of paint, which is sprayed the way water can be sprayed from a hose.

He tried to beat us back here so he could get rid of the evidence.

"To get rid" of something is to throw it away or destroy it.

"Evidence" is a legal word that refers to any object which helps to prove something, such as who committed a crime.

He put so much goddamn lacquer on that thing! It was an accident waiting to happen!

"Lacquer" is a coating for fine wood. "An accident waiting to happen" describes any situation or object that is very dangerous.

Can't you see what's happening here?!

Your dad has totally turned you against me!

"To turn one person against another" is to convince the first person to no longer trust or approve of the second one.

I'm a very accepting person.

A person who is usually willing to accept the decisions of others.

What's the matter? Cat got your tongue?

An interesting colloquial expression that describes a situation when a person is unable to talk, usually because they don't know what to say.

Daddy's planning a little covert operation in Thailand for the day after the wedding.

A secret mission or plan.

I'm sure everyone would like to know about your little rendezvous in the parking lot of the Oyster Bay Drug and Sundry.

A widely used French word for a meeting or get-together.

Jack talk Thai very well.

A funny line, but you should always say *speaks very well*.

My cover is blown.

"My secret has been exposed."

A surprise honeymoon for Deb and Bob.

The trip that newly married couples take right after they get married.

You stupid son of a bitch. You just **blew** it!

“To blow” something is a colloquial way of saying to do it very badly, or in this case, to completely destroy it (Here, the secret honeymoon).

He is my travel agent; He was giving me their visas.

Official government documents that allow a person to travel between various countries.

If this nursing thing doesn't work out, I'd say you definitely have a career in espionage.

“Espionage” is the profession of spying, usually for a government.

Gaylord? :: It's my legal name. Nobody has called me it since I was in third grade.

Note that many people have legal names that they never use.

Greg decides to escape form Pam's family, but Jack has a change of heart.

And without a Saturday stay-over, that fare difference would be \$1, 371.11.

“Saturday stay-over” refers to the fact that many airlines require you to spend Saturday night at the city you traveled to, or they charge you much more for the round-trip ticket. A “fare” is the ticket price.

Would you want me to book you the seat?

“To book” a seat is to pay for it, or possibly reserve it.

I called Gaylord, A.K.A., Greg's parent's, in Detroit.

A useful abbreviation meaning “Also Known as...”

They saved his S-A-T scores, too, in case you're interested.

The SAT is the “Scholastic Aptitude Test,” taken by most students in high school if they are planning to go to college.

I love you, dad, but you can be a real jerk sometimes.

A good insult word for a stupid or abusive person (idiot, asshole, etc).

Do you realize that you never even warmed up to Kevin until she broke up with him?

“To warm up” to a person is to start to like them. If a couple break up, they separate or stop seeing each other.

I acted like a complete idiot and I hope you can forgive me.

An important word to describe a stupid person or fool.

I can't believe you actually spray-painted a cat. That's actually pretty **gross**.
A much-loved adjective among young people that means disgusting.

I need a commercial flight **I.D. scan** from New York LaGuardia to Chicago.
A list of people's identifications (in this case, of those people taking a flight from LaGuardia airport in New York to Chicago).

2:35? **Affirmative**.
A common word in the military that means yes, or perhaps "I agree."

Sorry, we're only **boarding** rows nine and above.
"To board" a plane is allow people to get on.

We'll call your row **momentarily**. **Step aside**.
"Momentarily" means in just a few minutes. "Step aside" is a very direct way of telling a person to step back or to the side.

By the way, your airline---You **suck** at checking bags!
If somebody "sucks" at doing something, they are very bad at it. This is a crude but common slang verb.

I already did that once and you lost it, and then I had everything **screwed up** very badly.
"To screw up" something is to do it very poorly.
A common and useful phrasal verb.

I can **assure** you that your bags will be placed directly **below deck** with the other luggage.
"To assure" a person is to promise them. "Below deck" on a plane is in the big storage area beneath the seats.

Are you going outside with the guys and the **earmuffs** and put it in there?
"Earmuffs" are covers that you put on your ears to keep out noise.

Shut your **pie-hole** and listen to me when I say I am finished with the checking-of-the-bag conversation.
"Pie-hole" is a ridiculous and never used way to refer to a mouth.
Note that "checking-of-the-bag" functions as an adjective!

Sir, we have a **policy** on this airline....
A "policy" is a set of rules or guidelines that a business follows.

Get your **grubby** little **paws** off my bag, OK?
"Grubby" is dirty or soiled, and paws are the hands of animals like bears.

It's not like I have a bomb in here and I want to **blow up** the plane.

"To blow up" something is to explode or destroy it.

I just want to stow my bag according to your safety regulations.

"To stow" a bag is to store or hold it, and a "regulation" is a rule or law.

The only way I would ever let go of my bag would be if you come over here and tried to pry it from my dead lifeless fingers.

"To pry" something away from something else is to forcefully remove it, often by using a metal bar or other kind of tool.

If you could get it from my kung-fu grip, you could come and have it. Otherwise, step-off, bitch.

"King-fu" is a form of self-defense, like karate. "Step-off" is a way of telling a person to get out of the way (or to step down the steps of a car), and "bitch" is a very vulgar word for a mean or abusive woman.

You can't leave your vehicle unattended! :: Tow it!

A "vehicle" is a car or truck, and if it is "unattended," there is nobody inside it. "To tow" a car is to pull it away with a truck, which is done if it is parked illegally.

You were acting like a maniac and you threatened her with a bomb!

A "maniac" is a crazy person. "To threaten" a person is to scare them by implying that you might hurt them.

You assaulted an airline employee.

"To assault" a person is to physically attack them.

What if I was a bombardier?

An airforce pilot that flies a plane which drops bombs.

I got enough to put you away for a few years.

This is a way of telling Greg that he has done so many illegal things that he could face many years in prison.

Norm, take five. I got a specialist here.

A slangy way of telling a person to rest or take a few minute break.

Did you spray paint the tail of a cat to pass him off as Mr. Jinx.

"To pass off" one person as another is to pretend that the first person is the other, often in order to do something wrong or illegal.

Frankly, Sir, I'm a little terrified of being your son-in-law.

A way of saying that you are going to be completely honest.

I think you've got some serious issues.

Greg's way of telling Jack he has got serious psychological problems.

If I lighten up, would you consider marrying my daughter?

"To lighten up" is to not take life so seriously.

Would you let me and Pam sleep in the same room?

:: Don't push it, Foucker, you're in a real mess.

"Don't push it" is a way of telling a person to not ask for too much. To be "in a real mess" is to have serious problems.

Will you be honest and faithful to her?

A person who is "faithful" to another is always committed to be with that person, or perhaps committed to not sleep with others.

Your dad caught up with me at the airport.

"To catch up" with a person is to meet them after chasing them.

You and my dad worked out a lot of your issues?

"To work out" the issues between two people is to solve them, or at least to learn how to deal with them.

I had this whole elaborate plan, and somewhere between giving your sister a black eye and setting the house on fire, it kind of went off track.

If a plan is "elaborate," it is filled with little details, but well thought out before. If a plan goes "off track," it fails or doesn't work because things do not happen as they were supposed to.

If we can get through what we got through in this last 48 hours, we can get through anything.

In this case, "to get through" something is to survive it.

Not too quick on the uptake, huh, Jack?

To be "quick on the uptake" is to be smart and understand what is being said or explained. A slangy and interesting expression.

Check my pulse on this question, Jack!

A person's "pulse" is the beating of blood that can be felt at the wrist.

Do I think you're a psycho?! Yes.

An excellent slang word for crazy or psychologically dangerous.

Oh, you don't know shit about flowers?

"To not know shit" about something is a crude way saying to not know anything about it.

Meet the Parents

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. What was your favorite scene in this movie?
2. Are guys who are gentle and kind really losers with women?
3. Do you agree that dogs are more “emotionally shallow” than cats?
4. What’s so funny about Kevin?
5. Are you married? If so, how bad or awkward was it when you met your in-laws?

