

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

(Drama) (1975)

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Major Characters

- Randle Patrick McMurphy ('Mac')**.....**Jack Nicholson**
A rebellious prisoner who is sent to a mental hospital in order to be “evaluated for mental illness.”
- Nurse Mildred Ratched**.....**Louise Fletcher**
A cold and strict nurse who is responsible for the patients at the hospital.
- Dr. John Spivey**.....**Dean R. Brooks**
The head of the hospital, who tries to find out if McMurphy is truly sick, at least by the standards of modern psychology.
- Chief**.....**Will Sampson**
An American Indian patient who everyone thinks is deaf and dumb.
- Billy Bibbit**.....**Brad Dourif**
A young, gentle patient who has a bad stuttering problem (“To stutter” is to speak with an uncontrolled repeating of sounds).
- Harding**.....**William Redfield**
A highly educated patient who is terribly depressed about the relationship he has with his wife.
- Martini**.....**Danny Devito**
A patient who is apparently mentally retarded, but kind and gentle.
- Charlie Cheswick**.....**Sydney Lassick**
A patient who often acts like a young child.
- Washington**.....**Nathan George**
A worker at the hospital who is responsible for security.
- Candy**.....**Marya Small**
A girlfriend of McMurphy's who lives near the hospital.
- Rose**.....**Louisa Mortiz**
A friend of Candy.

Turkle.....Scatman Crothers

A night time worker at the hospital who is supposed to make sure that no one gets into trouble when the rest of the staff is away.

Plot Summary

This film is the story of Randle Patrick McMurphy, a man who has been sentenced to prison for having sex with a 15 year old girl. McMurphy is a rebellious but almost comical person, who, in the summer of 1963, at the age of 38, ends up in an Oregon state mental hospital because he refuses to work while in prison. It is not clear if McMurphy intentionally tried to convince prison officials that he is crazy, but regardless, he soon finds himself in a place filled with men who most of society would consider insane or mentally ill. Even more challenging for McMurphy is the fact that the hospital is run by Nurse Ratched, who is determined to maintain absolute control over the hospital and its patients.

Soon after his arrival, an increasingly tense battle grows between them. McMurphy is determined to challenge the daily routine of these men's generally sad and boring lives, but Nurse Ratched is equally determined to keep the institution as peaceful and predictable as it had been before. Yet over the course of several months, McMurphy begins to win over the hearts of the various patients, and in their bitter struggle over such things as the right to watch baseball on TV, it soon becomes clear that the hospital and its emotionally repressive ways might be as insane as McMurphy, or any of his supposedly crazy friends.

A Background Note: "One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest" is based on Ken Kesey's critically acclaimed 1962 novel of the same name. The movie is considered by some critics to be one of the greatest films ever made, and in fact, it was only the second film in history to win all five of the most important Academy Awards---Best Movie, Best Director, Best Actor (Nicholson), Best Actress (Fletcher), and Best Screenplay.

Words and Expressions that You man not Know

***Jack McMurphy arrives at the hospital,
to change the lives of everyone there...***

[Cuckoo].

A "cuckoo" is a type of bird, but it is also a colloquial word for a foolish or crazy person.

Medication time.

“Medication” is a more official word for medicine, and thus this is the time each day when the patients are supposed to take their pills.

The Jack of Clubs.

When discussing card games such as “Blackjack” (also called “21”), you need to know that the four suits of cards are called clubs, spades, hearts and diamonds. After the numbers 1-10, the various levels are jacks, queens, kings and aces.

What’s the bid?

A “bid” is a gambling word for the amount one wants to bet.

Come on, Martini!

Here, meaning hurry up, but probably the most semantically versatile phrasal verb in English, meaning different things in different contexts.

Get a grip on yourself!

An interesting way to say calm down, or “stop being so emotional.”

That’s a hell of a fish.

A common expression added before nouns to show extra emotion or emphasis.

Isn’t that a dandy?

“Dandy” is an old-fashioned slang word for something good or fun.

It took every damn bit of strength I had.

A slightly crude but common adjective which is used to add emotion or intensity.

You didn’t weigh the chain?

“To weigh” is to measure the weight of an object.

That was the first Chinooker I ever caught.

A type of large fish found in Washington and Oregon.

It says you’ve been belligerent, talked when unauthorized, and been resentful in attitude toward work.

“Belligerent” is an educated word for aggressive or hostile. If someone is “resentful,” they are angry or bitter about something.

They wanted you to be evaluated to determine if you’re mentally ill.

“To evaluate” something (or someone) is to study it in order to make an educated analysis. If someone is “mentally ill,” they could be emotionally disturbed, and perhaps more colloquially, crazy.

As near as I can **figure it out**, I fight and fuck too much.

“To figure out” something is to understand it, usually after seriously thinking about it.

In the **penitentiary**?

An official word for prison.

You’ve had at least five arrests for **assault**.

A legal word: “To assault” someone is to physically attack them.

Rocky Marciano.

A famous boxer from who fought in the 50s and 60s.

You went in for **statutory rape**?

A legal term that usually applies to situations where men have sex with girls who are under 18. Actual force or violence is not implied.

She was 15 going on 35.

A grammatically common way to describe a person who appears to be much older than they really are.

I practically had to sew my pants shut.

McMurphy’s way of explaining that he actually resisted the girl’s sexual advances.

That little red **beaver**.

This is a very crude and silly way to refer to female sexual organs.

Now they say I’m crazy because I don’t sit there like a goddamn **vegetable**.

Note that a “vegetable” can refer to those people who are so mentally damaged that they pass their time staring aimlessly into space, doing nothing all day long.

If that’s crazy, then I’m senseless, **out of it**, gone down the road **wacko!**

If someone is “out of it,” they are not mentally alert. “Wacko” is a great little slang word that means completely crazy, insane or strange.

They think you’ve been **faking** it to get out of **work detail**.

“To fake it” is to pretend that something is what it is not. “Work detail” refers to the manual labor, such as doing the laundry, that prisoners or others are required to do during the day.

I’m a goddamn **marvel** of modern science.

A “marvel” is an interesting word that refers to anything that causes amazement, fascination or wonder.

I'm going to cooperate with you 100%, because we ought to get to the bottom of R.P. McMurphy.

"To get to the bottom of" something (or in this case, someone) is to study it completely so that it can be completely understood.

Mac gets to know his new and crazy roommates.

You'll wear yourself out!

This is a useful alternative to "exhaust yourself."

His wife made him uneasy because she drew stares from others on the street. If someone is "uneasy," they are probably nervous or emotionally uncomfortable. If someone "draws stares," this means that other people are looking at them, perhaps because they are so pretty.

Mr. Harding has been heard to say to his wife "You've betrayed me."
"To betray" someone is a powerful verb which means to turn against or harm them, often after they have shown great trust or loyalty.

Does anybody care to touch on this further?

"To touch on" something is to briefly make comments about it.

Yes, I suspect her, but I can only speculate as to the reasons why.

"To suspect" someone is to believe that they have done something wrong, without knowing for sure. "To speculate" is to guess.

She doesn't meet your mental requirements.

A way of saying "She isn't smart enough to keep you interested in her."

The juxtaposition of one person to another.

An educated word that means the act of comparison, usually when two things or people are placed side by side.

Harding, why don't you knock off the bullshit and **get to the point**.

When someone tells you to "knock off the bullshit," they are often telling you to stop saying nonsense or lies. "Get to the point" is an excellent way of telling someone to tell you only the most important or critical thing that they have to say to you.

I can't seem to get that through to you.

"To get through" to someone is to make them understand.

I'm talking about interrelationships!

An educated word for the relationships between two or more people.

You're so **fucking dumb** I can't believe it.

"Fucking" is noted here for its use as an adverb (Yes, an adverb!), to show intensity of emotion. "Dumb" is a great alternative to stupid.

It makes me feel very **peculiar** when you **throw in** something like that.

"Peculiar" is an interesting word that means odd or strange. Note that people often "throw in" unexpected comments during a conversation.

Are you trying to say that I'm **queer**. Is that it?

"Queer" used to be a very pejorative (negative) word to describe homosexuals, but it is now often used by gays to describe themselves.

Mr. Harding, they're all crowding in on you, **ganging up** on you.

"To gang up" on someone is to have several people begin to physically or orally attack a person, who is often weak or vulnerable.

Take it easy and **stay off of my side**.

If someone is "on your side" during an argument, this means that they are supporting you.

The other day you made such **allusions**, not **illusions**.

An "allusion" is an indirect or subtle comment about something. An "illusion" is a belief about something that is untrue or mistaken.

If you're trying to tell me something, **you got another thing coming**.

A slangy way of telling someone they are badly mistaken about an idea.

I think you're some kind of **morbid** asshole or something.

"Morbid" is a powerful adjective that refers to an obsession with disease or death. This sentence is obviously a strong insult.

She's on your mind and **blah blah blah**.

This is a great colloquial way to finish a sentence when you do not feel like continuing to name all the details of the topic you're talking about.

We're talking about my wife. **When are you going to get that through your fucking head?!**

A crude and interesting way of asking "When are you going to understand this?"

It's a lot of **baloney** and I'm tired.

"Baloney" is a type of sandwich meat, and, as here, a way of saying "nonsense."

Recreation time.

A general word that refers to sports, games and other fun activities.

All non-restricted patients please report to the bus.

Someone who is “restricted” is not allowed to do certain things, such as in this case, to leave the hospital to go into town on the bus.

Mac decides to bring sports into the lives of the group.

Chief, that's your spot.

A “spot” is both a physical marking, and as here, a particular physical space.

You'll crush the air out of it.

“To crush the air out of a ball” is to squeeze it so hard that all the air escapes and it becomes flat.

See, it don't hurt him.

Note that many people use ‘don't’ when 3rd person ‘doesn't’ is correct.

Jump up and dunk it in. Stuff that son of a bitch in there.

“To dunk” is to shoot a basketball through a basketball hoop. “To stuff” the ball, in this case, means the same thing. “Son of a bitch” is a crude insult that is usually used for people, and not as here, a basketball!

Hit me Chief, I got the moves.

In a basketball context, “hit me” means “throw me the ball.” If someone has “the moves,” they know how to score in the game.

Where the fuck are you throwing it at?!

Note that in this case, “fuck” functions as a noun preceded by a definitive article! A crude but common way to show emotional emphasis, or perhaps anger or frustration.

Fast break! Hit me, Chief! Put it in the basket!

A common term in basketball where one team tries to get to the other side of the basketball court as fast as possible.

It's a dime, Martini. ∴ I bet a nickel.

A reminder: The major US coins are penny, nickel, dime, and quarter.

Ten to Billy to match his wang and the dealer gets a three.

A “wang” is a silly slang term for penis. The “dealer” is the person who distributes the cards during a card game.

What do you do? Hit or sit?

In a card game context, “to hit” is to take a card, and “to sit” is to decline to take any more cards.

Ok, you're busted.

If a person is busted at blackjack (21), they have gone over the limit and lost the game.

I can't hit you, Jesus Christ!

A curious expression of anger, frustration and other emotion.

You got 20 showing!!

In blackjack, the cards "showing" are those that all players can see.

Who is pitching the opener?

In baseball, the "pitcher" is the person who throws the ball to the batter. "The opener" refers to the first game of a particular series of games.

Jesus Christ almighty!

An exaggerated and old fashioned variation of "Jesus Christ."

"Almighty" literally means powerful, though it's almost never used.

Do you nuts want to play cards or do you want to jack off?

"Nuts" is a colloquial noun and adjective that refers to people who are considered crazy. "To jack off" is a common way of saying masturbate.

Do you think we might ease it down so we wouldn't have to shout?

"To ease down" the volume is to turn the sound a little lower.

We have a lot of old men on this ward.

A "ward" is a section or division of a hospital.

Your hand is staining my window.

"To stain" something is to make it dirty or spot it, and is often used when discussing clothes.

What's in the horse pill?

A funny expression for a pill that is so big that it's hard to swallow.

I don't want anyone to try and slip me a saltpeter.

If someone tries to "slip you" something in your food, they are trying to secretly place it in the food so that you will eat it without noticing.

"Saltpeter" is a type of drug that's given to kill a person's sexual desire.

You'd like that, wouldn't you hard-on?

Jack refers to Mr. Harding as "hard-on," which is a common slang term for a hard (or erect) penis.

Tell me lover boy, why didn't you tell her to go fuck herself?

Note that you can tell someone "fuck you" directly, or you can tell a third person to deliver the message for you! Either way, it's very crude!

God almighty, she's got you guys coming and going.

Slangy way to say "You guys are so scared you'll do anything she says."

I thought you were the **champ**.

A short version of "champion," referring to boxers and other athletes.

I bet in one week that I can put a bug so far up her ass that she won't know weather to shit or wind her wrist watch.

This is McMurphy's way of saying that he will soon drive Nurse Ratched crazy. Crude and ridiculous.

Note "to wind" is the verb used when you set a watch.

Bet a **buck**!

The most common way to refer to a dollar.

Mac and Nurse Ratched have their first of many battles.

There's a couple things that I'd like to get off my chest.

"To get something off your chest" is to talk about something that has been bothering you, but that you have been hesitant to discuss.

Today is the opening of the World Series.

This is the championship series of games between the two best baseball teams in the United States, which is played every October.

If you change the schedule now, they may find it very **disturbing**.

"Disturbing" is a powerful word that means troubling, or unsettling.

Fuck the schedule! They can go back to the schedule after the World Series!

Note that you can use "fuck" as an imperative verb, followed by a noun, to mean that the noun in question is actually not important.

This is no way to proceed about this.

"To proceed" is an educated verb meaning to go ahead, advance, or move forward.

Let the majority rule!

A fundamental rule of democracy!

What is this crap?

A crude but excellent word meaning lies or nonsense.
A noble cousin of the great word “bullshit.”

Even when I was in the cooler, they’d have it there.

A slang term for prison.

OK, hot dice!

The six sided cubes with one to six dots, used in gambling games.

Mediterranean Avenue. Boardwalk.

Places that are found in the famous board game “Monopoly.”

Play the game and knock off the bullshit.

Again, a crude but excellent way to say “Stop the nonsense.”

What the fuck are you picking on me for?

“To pick on” someone is to treat them
badly, or even to threaten to hurt them.

I can be pushed just so far.

“There are limits to what I will accept before I fight back.”

Damn lunatic.

An interesting word for a crazy person.

Anybody want to bet, chicken shits!?

A “chicken shit” is a crude term for a coward, or
one who is always scared in dangerous situations.

Maybe I’ll just use your thick skull and knock a hole in the wall.

A person’s “skull” is the hard surface of the top of their head.
“To knock a hole” in a wall is to use a hard object to make a hole.

My head would squash like an eggplant.

“To squash” is to crush or flatten. An eggplant is a purplish vegetable.

Me and my buddy Cheswick are going to go downtown,
sit down in a bar, wet our whistles and watch the ball game.

“Buddy” is another word for friend. “To wet one’s whistle”
is to drink a beer or other type of liquor.

Get out of my way. You’re using my oxygen.

The main chemical substance found in air.

Give up? :: No, just warming up.

“To give up” is to surrender, or decide to no longer try.

“To warm up” is to be just getting started in a long effort.

And on the mound, the left hander, Al Downing.

This refers to the “pitching mound” in baseball stadiums, where pitchers stand when they are throwing the ball during a game.

Wasn't that the first time you tried to commit suicide?

Note that “commit” is the only verb that goes with “suicide.”

Why are you pressing him? Why can't we go on to some new business.

“To press” somebody is to insist that they do something.

The business of this meeting, Mr. Chadwick, is therapy.

A critical word in modern psychology which refers to the process of helping people with their problems by having them discuss their lives.

Yes, it will satisfy me.

“To satisfy” someone is to please them, or perhaps make them happy.

Which one of you nuts has got any guts?

“Guts” are literally stomach intestines, and colloquially, courage.

Only nine votes? It's a landslide!

A key political word that describes an election that is won by a large number of votes.

You have to have a majority to change ward policy.

In this case, “policy” refers to the ways of doing daily activities.

Come on in, pal, this could be a big moment.

“Pal” is another word for friend.

“Oh say, can you see, by the dawn's early light?”

These are the first words of “The Star Spangled Banner,” which is the American National Anthem, which is sung at every baseball game.

Gentleman, the meeting is adjourned.

“To adjourn” a meeting is to officially end or close it.

Isn't there one of you fucking maniacs who know what I'm talking about?

A “maniac” is a common and useful word for a person who is crazy, or perhaps obsessed with one specific subject.

You can bring up the subject again tomorrow.

“To bring up” something in a conversation is to discuss it.

There's got to be one guy here who is not a total fucking nut!
A funny line, and McMurphy's way of saying there must be
at least one normal or sane person in the hospital ward.

You're going to pull that henhouse shit now?
Note that in this context, to "pull" something means to do something
that is considered unfair or wrong. Although never used in this way,
a "henhouse" is the place where hens (farm birds) live.

Koufax is in big fucking trouble!
A reference to the great baseball pitcher Sandy Koufax.

Curve ball. It's a long fly ball to deep left center.
These are baseball terms. A curve ball is a pitch that is thrown in such a
way that it curves. Left center is a part of the playing field for the game.

Somebody give me a fucking wiener before I die!!
This is a funny colloquial word for a hot dog, which is
a very popular food at all American baseball games.

Mantle swings; It's a fucking home run!!
A reference to the great baseball player Mickey Mantle. A "home run"
is made when a ball is hit so hard it lands past the fence in the field.

Nurse Ratchet is one of the finest nurses we got in this institution.
Another way to say one of the best.

I don't want to break up the meeting, but
she's something of a cunt, aien't she doc?
"Cunt," is considered by many to be the most vulgar word in the
English language. A truly crude noun for female sexual organs, and
for a mean or unpleasant woman. "Doc" is a slang word for doctor.

She likes a rigged game.
If a game is "rigged," it has been fixed so that there will be a certain
outcome, most likely so that people can gamble on the game and be
sure to win.

I don't see evidence of mental illness.
A medical or clinical term for people who are considered crazy.

I think you've been trying to put us on, all this time.
"To put on" someone is to try and fool them, or possibly tease them.

“A rolling stone gathers no moss.”

An old and famous expression, meaning it’s hard to grow on something that is always moving. “Moss” is a type of green algae.

“Don’t wash your dirty underwear in public.”

Another famous expression, this time meaning people should keep their personal problems to themselves.

Where do you suppose she lives?

“To suppose” is a slightly dated verb meaning to think or believe.

Mac decides to take the boys out for a little fun and relaxation.

All right, grab the fence.

“To grab” is to seize or hold on to.

Come on you guys, get the lead out!

This is a very slangy way to say “hurry up!”

Hey, what the hell is going on here?!

Added to Wh questions in order to show emotion or emphasis.

You all crazies?

Here, “crazy” is used as a plural noun, but this is almost never done.

What the heck is going on here?

“What the heck” is a more polite version of “what the hell, ” but in fact it sounds a bit too conservative, and therefore dated.

We chartered this boat, we are going to go fishing, and that’s all there is to it.

“To charter” something is to rent it for a set period of time. “That’s all there is to it” is one way of saying “there is nothing more to discuss.”

You better quit this or they’ll throw you in the can again.

In this context, “the can” refers to prison.

They’ll just take us back to the feeb farm!

This is slang that I’ve only heard McMurphy use. Someone who is “feeble minded” might be retarded or mentally ill, and thus the “feeb farm” is McMurphy’s way of referring to the mental hospital.

Aye, aye, Sir. I mean, yes, Mac.

This is a way to say “yes” when serving in the military.

Have you ever driven one of these things?

Hold it steady and go straight as an arrow.

Note that the past participle of “to drive” is driven. If you “hold something steady,” that means it doesn’t shake or move.

This is the bait. Little fishes.

“Bait” is anything that is used to attract and trap another fish or animal.

Despite the dialog here, the plural of fish is fish, not fishes!

You’re not a goddamn loony now. You’re a fisherman.

A loony is a yet another slang word for a crazy person.

Take the bottom hook and push it through his eyes. Good eye work!

A hook is small curved metal device used to catch or hold something.

That little devil isn’t even going to feel the sting.

This is McMurphy’s way of affectionately referring to the fish.

The son-of-a-gun is going to bite you.

A more polite but dated way of saying son-of-a-bitch.

Billy, fishing don’t grab you?

If something doesn’t “grab you,” this probably means you don’t like it.

I’m going to give each and every one of you a rod.

A pole or stick, and in this case, a rod used for fishing.

“I’m Popeye the Sailor Man.”

Popeye is a famous cartoon character who is a sailor.

Get the fuck back up there!

A grammatically intense way to simply say “go back.”

Hey Harlin, I’m the skipper on this boat!

A “skipper” is the leader of a boat, but as a rank, it is below captain.

Home safe and sound!

What one might say after returning safely from a dangerous trip.

They’re going to be trolling this place for six months looking for bodies.

“To troll” is to search underwater by using tools such as fishing rods.

I don’t think he’s overly psychotic.

“Overly” is an adverb which means “too.” A person who is “psychotic” is considered very mentally disturbed.

I'd like to send him back to the work farm.

A colloquial term for the prison where McMurphy had been staying.

Anybody on your staff that can relate to him?

"To relate to" someone is to understand them at an emotional level.

This is a widely used and useful colloquial expression.

If we send him to Pendleton or to disturbed, it's one more way of passing our problem to somebody else.

"Pendleton" is the name of a prison, and here, "disturbed" refers to the part of the prison system that deals with emotionally disturbed people.

Mac soon discovers the high price of fun.

Hey Mac, time! Time!

In a sports context, "Time out" is a way of asking to stop the game clock. Sometimes, as here, this is shortened to just "time!"

Mac, I'm open!

In a sports context, to be "open" means to be free from defenders, so that another player should consider throwing the ball to that person.

Stop dribbling the goddamn ball!

"To dribble" is to bounce a basketball while moving up the court.

You were covered! :: I wasn't covered.

If a player is "covered," this means that they are being closely guarded by the other team. The opposite of "open."

The ball is in play!

One way of saying the game is continuing, and that the game clock has started once again.

Oh fuck that shit!

A very crude and classic way of saying "that's ridiculous."

By the time you get out of here, you'll be too old to get it up.

If a man can't "get it up" he can't get a (sexual) erection.

You're with us sucker, and you'll stay with us.

"Sucker" is a somewhat dated way to refer to any person that could be seen as a fool or loser in any given situation.

You can keep me here until you're good and ready to let me loose.

"To let loose" someone is to release them, or let them go where they want.

You let me go on hassling Nurse Ratchet, knowing how much I had to lose!

"To hassle" is a critical verb meaning to aggressively bother or annoy.

I'm voluntary here. I'm not committed.

In this context, "voluntary" patients are at the hospital because they want to be, while "committed" patients are forced to stay there.

He's bullshitting me, right?

"To bullshit" someone is a classic and crude colloquial verb, meaning to lie or distort.

Few are committed. Some of the chronics, and you.

A "chronic" patient (or medical condition) lasts indefinitely.

You ought to be in a convertible, bird dogging chicks and banging beaver.

A "convertible" is a car that does not have a roof (in order to let the sun in). The last part of the sentence is McMurphy's way of saying to have sex, but outside "chicks" for girls, these words are rarely used.

Those are very challenging observations, you made Randall.

This is Nurse Ratchet's way of saying McMurphy's comments are probably not liked or appreciated.

I want to know why the dorm is locked during the day and on weekends.

A "dorm" is a building (or part of a building) where people sleep.

Time spent in the company of others is therapeutic, but time spent brooding alone only increases feelings of separation.

If something is "therapeutic," it is either emotionally or physically helpful to a person. "To brood" is an excellent verb meaning to sit around in a bad or angry mood.

Look, I'm not running a charity ward.

A place to help people who cannot help themselves, often supported by voluntary donations of money and time.

I lost my head. I'm sorry.

If a person "loses their head," this often means that for just a few moments, they became too emotional or irrational.

You lost a tidy sum of money to Mr. McMurphy.

One way of saying "a relatively large amount."

That's why your cigarettes have been rationed.

"To ration" something is to let only a small amount be bought at any given time. Governments ration many things when there is a war.

Piss on your fucking rules, Miss Ratchett!

A very crude and insulting way to express anger about something!

Mac learns the truth about the deaf and dumb Indian.

Would you keep an eye on these two?

"To keep an eye" on something is to watch over or guard it.

Juicy Fruit.

A famous brand of chewing gum.

You sly son-of-a-bitch, Chief!

A great adjective meaning clever or smart, in a secretive sort of way.

Can you hear me? Yeah, you bet.

An interesting way to say "of course."

You fooled them all!

"To fool" a person is to trick them into believing something which isn't true.

Canada? We'll be there before the sons-of-a-bitches know what hit them.

In this context, if something "hits you," it means you suddenly realize.

Just a little leak.

The escape of water or other liquid.

A light shine, and send the specimen to nurse Ratched.

A "shine" is short for shoe shine, or the polishing of shoes.

A "specimen" is a small sample, often of blood or urine.

A little dab will do you.

An old fashioned way of saying "all one needs is just a little bit."

How about it?! You creeps, lunatics, mental defectives!

A "creep" is a good word for an unpleasant person. A "lunatic" is crazy and a "mental defective" is probably mentally retarded or stupid.

The feeb's brigade, you ding-a-lings!

A "brigade" is a group of people, in this case feeble minded people.
 "Ding-a-ling" is an old fashioned word for a silly or stupid person.

They were giving me 10,000 watts a day and I'm hot to trot!

"Watts" is a unit of electricity. If someone is "hot to trot," they are energetic and ready to do whatever needs to be done.

The next woman who takes me on is going to light up like a pinball machine and pay off in silver dollars.

This is McMurphy's way of saying that he has so much energy that he will be able to sexually satisfy any woman. "To take on" someone is to engage or challenge them.

Please proceed.

"Please continue."

A church bombing in Alabama killed three Negro children.

Note that in 1963, people used the word "Negro" instead of black.

They're being held on a misdemeanor charge.

A "misdemeanor" is a legal term for a crime, but it is not as serious a crime as a "felony."

Mac arranges a party for the boys.

It's on tonight. Get a car.

In this context, if something is "on," that means it's going to happen.

I don't give a shit. Steal one if you have to!

A classic, common and crude way of saying "I don't care."

Don't forget to bring some booze.

"Booze" is a slang word for liquor.

I can't take it no more.

Note the double negatives, which you should avoid.

You're about as big as a goddamn tree trunk.

The base of a tree, which supports the branches.

Every time he put the bottle to his mouth, he didn't suck out of it, it sucked out of him...

This is the Chief's way of describing the damage of alcoholism.

...until he was so wrinkled and yellow that even the dogs didn't know him.
 "Wrinkles" are the lines that grow on peoples faces as they grow older.

They just worked on him, the way they're working on you.
 In this context, "to work on" somebody is to slowly drive them crazy.

McMurphy, stop all this holly roller shit and get your ass back in bed!
 Note the use of "shit" as a noun, here to mean unacceptable behavior.
 ("Holly roller" is dated and never used).

No, it don't send me.
 "To send" someone used to mean to attract them, but this is very dated.

Keep it down!
 "Keep quiet!"

Take a load of these tubs!
 "Take a load" is no longer used. But if you say "Get a load" of something, this is an excellent colloquial expression in which you tell someone to look at something that is interesting or amazing.

Rose was married to a maniac once up in Beaverton.
 A "maniac" is a crazy person. "Beaverton" is a city in Oregon.

I'm going to take Candy for a stroll.
 A nice little word for a walk.

The night time spirits are here to get you high.
 "To get high" is the goal of people who take drugs such as marijuana.

That's right, Mr. Martini, there is an Easter bunny.
 A fictional rabbit associated with Easter, much loved by children.

Join Mr. McMurphy around the side in the executive lounge.
 A relaxation room for the top executives of a company.

Aien't this a bitch! You're trying to get my ass really fired?!
 The first sentence is a very colloquial way of saying "This is horrible!"
 "To get someone's ass fired" is a very slangy way of saying to get someone in so much trouble that they lose their job.

Oh shit, the supervisor!
 A "supervisor" is a person in charge of an office or building.

Why didn't he answer? :: He's jerking off!

"To jerk off" is a classic colloquial expression meaning to masturbate.

A man gets awfully lonesome at night.

Noted here for the use of the adverb "awfully," meaning "very."

Get your behind out of here and go back to bed! Move it!

"Behind" is one more way to say ass, rear end, butt, derriere, etc...

Get out of here, you slim motherfucker!

A truly colorful insult! "Motherfucker" is, of course, extremely vulgar, yet "slim" is simply a nice little word that means thin.

Good night! Don't let the cooties bite!

"Cooties" is a word that children use to describe lice (bugs), germs, etc...

Settle down, Charley.

This is a useful way to tell someone to calm down, or to stop being so emotional.

Don't "nothing" me.

Noted as an odd grammatical construction. One way of saying "Don't tell me that there is nothing wrong," but other words can be used, if they had been said previously in the conversation.

Do you want a date with her?

A "date" is usually a social event out at the movies or a restaurant, but McMurphy uses it here to simply mean sex.

God, I must be crazy to be in a loony bin like this.

A "loony bin" is a funny little slang expression referring to a home for crazy people, which is often called an insane asylum.

The kid's cute, isn't he?

A critical adjective meaning attractive or charming, or perhaps sweet.

I got \$25 that says you are going to burn this woman down.

McMurphy's way of saying that he would bet \$25 that Billy will sexually satisfy Candy.

Back off. I'll show you some card tricks.

This refers to magic tricks or illusions that are done with playing cards.

Deck of cards.

All 52 cards together are called "a deck."

Out of sight, man!

This is a dated and 1960s way of saying great, or colloquially, “cool.”

Show this woman the way out of the hospital.

Note that to “show” someone the way out (or perhaps to show them the door) can be a gentle way of telling them to leave.

Get your ass over here and bring Dracula with you.

“Dracula” is a famous fictional character who is known for sucking people’s blood.

***Nurse Ratched returns to restore order,
and the battle with Mac soon leads to tragedy for all.***

Did Billy leave the grounds of the hospital?

In this case, “the grounds” refer to the hospital building, as well as the various yards and outdoor play areas that surround it.

My cap.

A small head covering, often used to show rank or profession.

What worries me is how your mother is going to take this.

If you ask “How is your mom taking this?,” you are usually asking how she is emotionally dealing with news that is very bad or stressful.

Don’t you think you should have thought of that before you took that woman in that room?

Noted here primarily to show a good use of the past conditional tense.

She dragged you in there by force?

“To drag” something is to pull it, often by using a lot of physical energy.

Let me through!

One way of saying “Let me get past,” when people are blocking the way.

The best thing we can do is go on with our daily routine.

A person’s “daily routine” refers to the usual things they do every day, such as waking and taking a shower, going to work, eating lunch, etc...

And the bets are placed.

In card games like blackjack, note that you “place a bet” for each round.

He sticks with a four.

If you “stick” with the cards you have, you refuse to take any more.

That's a queen. I think you're busted.

Here, "busted" means the player has gone over 21, and loses the hand.

Deuce to the dealer.

A "deuce" is another word for a "2" card.

McMurphy beat up two of the attendants and he escaped.

"To beat up" someone is a widely used phrasal verb which means to physically attack and hurt them.

He's upstairs and he's as meek as a lamb.

"Meek" is an interesting adjective meaning shy, submissive or gentle.

Jack Dumphy is full of shit.

This is crude, but a very common and useful expression. If someone is "full of shit," they're usually telling lies, distortions or other nonsense.

I wouldn't leave you here this way. You're coming with me.

In this context, these words are a very "spiritual" thing for Chief to say.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. Was McMurphy really mentally ill?
2. Was he admirable? Dangerous? Both?
3. What are the goals of a mental hospital?
4. Was Nurse Ratched's version of "therapy" helping the group before Mac arrived?
5. How would you have reacted to Mac if you had been a voluntary patient at the hospital when he showed up?
6. Was the hospital's solution to the "McMurphy problem" justified? Would that happen today? In your country?
7. In the Ken Kesey novel, the story is not told from the point of view of Mac, but from another one of the characters; Can you guess which one?

