

Talk a Lot

Getting a Job

20 Common English Slang Words and Phrases

1. to use your loaf	(rhym.) to use your head [loaf of bread]; to act wisely	2. keep your chin up!	(phr.) stay positive!
3. a charm offensive	(n.) when you emphasise your strengths	4. to be strapped for cash	(v.) to be without money temporarily
5. a begging letter	(n.) a letter asking for financial help / work, etc.	6. to get grilled about sth	(v.) to be asked a lot of difficult questions
7. to come a cropper	(v.) to suffer misfortune	8. to have a shot at sth	(v.) to try to do sth, esp. an unfamiliar activity
9. to earn a packet	(v.) to earn a big salary	10. to be right up your street	(v.) to be very suitable for you
11. to gen up on sth	(phr. v.) to prepare for sth via reading and research	12. "Job's a good'un!"	(phr.) "I have completed this task well."
13. to faff around	(phr. v.) to waste time; to be indecisive	14. to get nowhere fast	(v.) to make no progress
15. to brush up well	(phr. v.) to look good when smartly dressed	16. on the off-chance	(phr.) even though the probability is not very high
17. "Get a life!"	(phr.) "Stop dreaming and be more realistic!"	18. to hang out	(phr. v.) to spend time somewhere, esp. with friends
19. to jazz sth up	(phr. v.) to embellish sth	20. to big yourself up	(phr. v.) to make yourself look impressive

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English Slang Words and Phrases – Matching Game

Match each sentence below with one of the slang words and phrases from this unit.
Change forms where necessary:



So, that's five applications all completed and ready to send off. _____!
"This job looks _____." "What? Oh, yeah. I could do that, no problem."
You shouldn't ____ your CV with fancy fonts and graphics. Boring will be fine.
I'm so sorry you didn't get the job, love! _____ and don't give up!
What my parents don't realise is that _____ at the mall <i>is</i> a full-time job!
I _____ about my last few jobs and why I wanted to work there. It was tough.
I wrote to them asking for work experience _____, but I doubt I'll hear back.
To be successful at a job interview you need to _____ and imagine how the interviewers see you – how you're coming across.
I spent a couple of hours _____ on the company on the 'net. To try and look good.
"Have you seen this _____ we got last week?" "Yes. Her qualifications and experience are good – but we don't have any openings right now."
If Glen got the job he could _____! Look at that salary!
"How are you getting on with that covering letter?" "I'm _____, I'm afraid."
When I get in front of that interview panel, I'm going to unleash _____! Then they'll see that I'm the right person for the job!
You're wasting your life away with your get-rich-quick schemes! _____!
I was doing OK, but I _____ when they asked me about my medical history.
"Right. I'm off to the interview. What do you think?" "Wow! You _____, don't you?"
Could you lend me a fiver until Friday? I'm a bit _____ at the moment.
The Key Skills part of a CV is a good chance to _____ – to sell yourself.
I must get a job, because I can't stand _____ at home all day!
"Should I apply for this one?" "Why not? You might as well _____ at it."

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Getting a Job – English Slang Words and Phrases Activities

Meaning and Context

1. Check for new vocabulary. Are there any words/phrases that you know already? Explain each meaning and give an example sentence or situation in which you could use it. Find the meaning of the rest by using a dictionary, then match the definition cards with the slang cards.
2. Who would you be speaking to when you used these words and phrases? Are there any words or phrases that you wouldn't use with certain people? If yes, why not?
3. Do any of the slang words and phrases exist in your first language? Translate them.
4. Divide the slang into four categories: **Looking for a Job**, **Applying for a Job**, **Job Interviews**, and **Motivation**.
5. Take some cards. Describe the slang word or phrase on a card without saying it.
6. How many slang words/phrases can you remember when they are all turned over?

Practice Activities

Choose a random slang word or phrase (or one that particularly interests you) and...

1. think of a time or situation in your life when you... a) could have used this slang (past), and b) might use this slang (future).
2. say the name of a person you know who would be... a) the *most likely* to say this, and b) the *least likely* to say it. In what kind of situation?
3. others guess while you act it out without speaking, although you can make sounds!
4. others guess while you draw a picture to represent both forms – slang and dictionary (literal).
5. analyse the word(s). Is it at all possible to guess the meaning from the words – or completely impossible? Research the origin and background of this slang word or phrase.
6. replace the slang word or phrase in a sentence with the literal (boring) meaning. Compare the two sentences. Which sounds better? Why?
7. think of another slang word or phrase that has the same or a similar meaning.
8. tell a story or devise a dialogue/role play by linking one slang word/phrase to the next.

Topic Questions

1. Choose the correct slang word or phrase. 2. Make a sentence about... a) yourself, b) a friend.

1. If I got one of these, I would probably chuck it in the bin – especially if I had no vacancies.
2. I've found a job for you, which I think you would be able to do – and really enjoy.
3. I'm sending in my CV and asking for work, even though nothing has been advertised.
4. You could say this to a friend who you believe to be a dreamer and lacking in real purpose.
5. If I didn't have any money until my next pay cheque, I could describe myself in this way.
6. This phrase means to make yourself look better in somebody else's opinion.
7. Having trouble finding a job? This is the kind of thing you might hear from a sympathetic friend.
8. You do this when you earn a lot of money from your work.
9. You're shocked to see a mate who is usually scruffy looking well-dressed before an interview.
10. This is what you do when you spend a lot of your leisure time at a particular place.
11. At a job interview you can expect to be asked many questions, including some tricky ones.