Talk a Lot
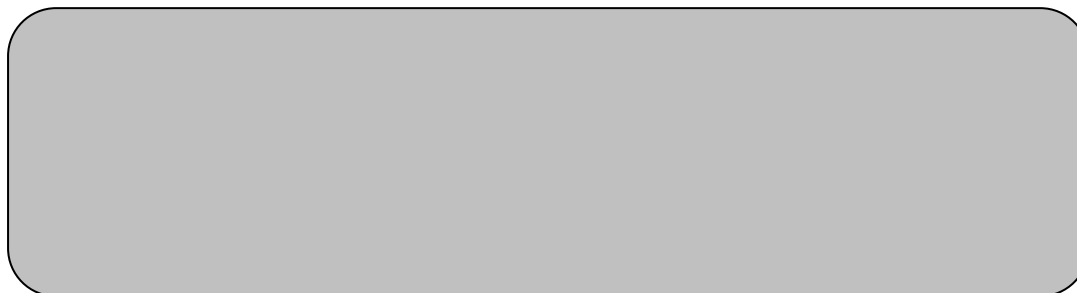
Media

Role Play with Non-Literal English

*1. Practise the role play with a partner. Find and underline **nine** examples of non-literal English* and match each one to a category below:*

* For more information about each category, please see pp.36-38.

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Matt and Clare are journalists writing for the technology section of a national newspaper. They are also good friends. Matt was born in Derbyshire. Matt enters the office:

Matt:	Eyup, miduck!
Clare:	Hi, Matt.
Matt:	What've you got there?
Clare:	It's the prototype from Panasonic for their latest TV projector. I'm going to review it.
Matt:	Open the box and let's play with it. *[Impatiently, as she struggles with the packaging]* Hey! Get a move on!
Clare:	OK. I've done it. Look, it says on the packaging, "…the whole world in your pocket!"
Matt:	Let me see that. *[Reading:]* "…boasts picture quality like nothing else on earth." Hmm. *[Reading:]* "…this pocket device includes a 3.3 inch WVGA AMOLED display for ease of use…" The design is amazing. Let's see whether it works. Where's the thingummybob?
Clare:	What?
Matt:	The on button. Ah, here it is. *[He switches it on. A weak image is projected onto the wall]* Oh, but that's absolutely pathetic. Is that the best it can do?
Clare:	You know, I thought it was going to be fantastic. It won a major prize at the electronics fair.
Matt:	Oh yes, I can see how fantastic it is! *[He waves the gadget in her face]*
Clare:	Hey pack it in!
Matt:	Make me! *[He starts to follow her around the desk]* Can I help you review any more gadgets today, Miss Eliot?
Clare:	I hate you, Matthew Peterson!

[He chases her out, but she thrashes him with the empty box. Both laugh]

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2. Replace each example of non-literal English with one of the literal words or phrases below. Practise the role play using only literal English, then using non-literal English. What differences do you notice? Which version sounds more natural? Why? Which do you prefer?

a) I like you. You make me laugh	b) an up-to-date kind of screen	c) hi
d) it isn't very good	e) hurry	f) something that I can't remember the name of now
g) "…it's useful and convenient."	h) stop	i) "…it projects the image very well."

Talk a Lot Intermediate Book 1

Talk a **Lot**

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Answers:

Feature of Non-Literal English:	Example in this Text:	Literal Translation:
1. play-fighting	I hate you, Matthew Peterson!	a) I like you. You make me laugh
2. idioms	Get a move on!	e) hurry
3. jargon	a 3.3 inch WVGA AMOLED display	b) an up-to-date kind of screen
4. phrasal verbs	pack it in!	h) stop
5. irony	Oh yes, I can see how fantastic it is!	d) it isn't very good
6. slang	thingummybob	f) something that I can't remember the name of now
7. cliché*	"…the whole world in your pocket!"	g) "…it's useful and convenient."
8. hyperbole	"…boasts picture quality like nothing else on earth."	i) "…it projects the image very well."
9. colloquialisms	Eyup, miduck!	c) hi

* Cliché and hyperbole are closely related in that clichés are often used to make hyperbolic sentences, for example: "My new camera is <u>simply the best</u>, because the picture quality is <u>out of this world</u>!" The underlined phrases are clichés, while the entire sentence is an example of hyperbole – saying that something is much better than it really is.

Note: in general, using non-literal English will help students' spoken English to sound more natural, because native speakers of English often favour non-literal forms – such as idioms, phrasal verbs, and slang – over the more literal, "dictionary definition" words and phrases that they replace.