

# Slang & Informal English

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## Slang for Food, Drink, & Drugs

Some slang words for food in general are **grub** and **chow**. These are usually used in the informal phrase: “Let’s get some **grub/chow**” when you want to get food together with your friends.

The word **nosh** means snack-type food, not a complete meal. It can also be used as a verb: “She’s **noshing on** potato chips.” If you **have the munchies** (have light hunger, desire for snack food) you can nosh on cookies, nuts, etc.

The word **brunch** is a combination of *breakfast + lunch*: it is a mid-morning meal (eaten around 10:30) that takes the place of breakfast and lunch. Some churches and social groups like to organize brunches on weekends.

When you don’t eat all your food at a restaurant, and you want to take the leftovers home, you take them home in a **doggy bag**. You can put the leftovers in the refrigerator and then **nuke** them (heat them up in the microwave) when you want to eat them later.

When we’re *extremely* hungry, we often exaggerate and say “**I’m starving!**” – and after you’ve eaten too much, you can say “**I’m stuffed!**” The regular expression is “I’m full,” but “stuffed” means you’ve eaten too much and no more food will fit into your stomach.

Someone who really likes sweet and sugary foods like candy, cookies, ice cream, etc. **has a sweet tooth**; and someone who has a more healthy diet will eat more **veggies** (short for “vegetables.”)

Now let’s look at drinks. Most of the slang for drinking revolves around alcohol, but there is one informal word for a cup of coffee: **cup o’joe** (sometimes spelled **cuppa joe**): “I can’t concentrate in the morning until I’ve had a nice, strong **cuppa joe**.”

Imagine it’s a really hot summer day, and you **take a swig of** (take a big drink of) an ice-cold lemonade – you could say “**Ahhh, that hits the spot!**” The expression “that hits the spot” means “that was satisfying; that was exactly what I wanted.” It can be used about any type of drink that you really wanted.

The word **booze** is slang for alcohol. On some party invitations, there’s the abbreviation BYOB, which means “bring your own booze” – the guests will need to bring alcohol to the party. Some people like to **pregame** – drink at home or at someone’s house before going to the main party/event of the night.

If you prefer to go out, you can **bar hop** – go from bar to bar, spending only a short time at each. Sometimes a popular local bar is called a **watering hole**, because it attracts people like a pool of water attracts thirsty animals. At the bar, someone should check your **ID** (identification) at the door to be sure you are old enough to drink.

- “Murphy’s is the only **watering hole** in town that has decent beer.”
- “Can I see some **ID**, please?”
- “The teenagers tried to get into the bar using fake **IDs**.”

There are dozens of slang words that mean someone is drunk. If you are **buzzed** or **have a buzz**, it means you are only a little bit drunk. Describing someone as a **lightweight** means they get drunk easily; it only takes a little bit of alcohol to affect them.

- “He finds it much easier to talk to pretty girls when he’s **buzzed**.”
- “She’s such a **lightweight** that she can’t have more than one glass of wine.”

Someone who is *completely* drunk is **hammered, sloshed, plastered**, or **wasted**. One funny way to describe someone who is drunk is to say they are **three sheets to the wind** – this refers to a sailboat with nobody controlling its sails (“sheets”).

- “Rick is **plastered**, he shouldn’t drive home. Let’s call a taxi for him.”
- “Ashley always makes hilarious comments when she’s **three sheets to the wind**.”

One slang word for someone who is an alcoholic, or who drinks too much, is a **lush**:

- “My ex-husband was such a **lush** that he’d even bring a water bottle full of vodka to work, so he could drink secretly during the day.”

The word “wasted” can also be used for someone who is completely under the influence of drugs. Speaking of drugs, we have:

- **coke** – cocaine
- **crack** – a more pure form of cocaine
- **pot / weed / grass / herb** – marijuana
- **a joint** – a marijuana cigarette
- **acid** – LSD (a psychedelic drug that causes hallucinations)
- **E / X** – ecstasy (a drug that causes euphoria, often used in dance parties)
- **speed / meth** – methamphetamine (a drug that causes increased energy)

The period of intense feelings caused by the drug is called a **high**, and this word can also be used to describe a person currently under the influence of drugs: “He’s **high**.”

When a drug causes hallucinations and crazy psychological experiences, that is a **trip** and the person is “**tripping**.” Of course, after the high/trip, the drug user experiences a **crash**: a sudden drop in energy and mood.

One slang word for people who are addicted to drugs is a **junkie**, although there are also some more specific words like **pothead / stoner** (someone who smokes a lot of marijuana) and **cokehead** (someone addicted to cocaine).

- “There are a few **junkies** living under the highway bridge.”
- “My college roommate was a **stoner**; I was always nervous that I’d get in trouble, too, if he was caught with weed in our room.”

Some drug users try to quit **cold turkey** – that means stopping suddenly, resolving never to use the drug again. You can also quit smoking cold turkey; this expression can be used for any addictive habit where you stop instantly (instead of gradually decreasing).

## Slang for Problems & Mistakes

A few informal nouns for a mistake are a **blooper, boo-boo**, and **blunder**. We also have **hiccup**, which means a minor problem/mistake that was corrected and didn’t affect the final result/outcome.

- “The soccer team’s defensive **blunder** resulted in their opponents scoring the winning goal.”
- “Aside from a few **hiccups** in communication among the team members, the whole event went off without a hitch.” (*without a hitch = perfectly*)

For the act of making mistakes, we have phrasal verbs like **slip up, screw up, foul up**, and **fuck up**, and funny-sounding verbs like **flub** and **bungle**.

- “My girlfriend got so mad when I **slipped up** and called her by my ex’s name!”
- “He has low self-confidence because he feels like he’s always **screwing up**.”
- “I totally **flubbed** my introduction to the presentation – I said everything in the wrong order.”

When something fails, we can say it was **a flop** or **a dud**, or say that it **bombed** or it **tanked**. These expressions are usually used for sudden, obvious failures. When something progressively gets worse over time, it is **going down the drain/tubes** or **going to the dogs/going to pot**.

- “We tried to start a club, but it was **a flop**. We were hoping for at least fifteen people, but only two signed up.”
- “A lot of people lost their jobs when the economy **tanked**.”
- “Some of my friends say this country is **going to the dogs**, but I disagree – I think things are slowly but surely getting better.”

You might make a **last-ditch effort** (a desperate, final effort) to fix the problem; your last option is called the **last resort**. But if it doesn't work, then you're really **in a jam** (in a difficult situation).

- “After spilling coffee all over my computer, I made a **last-ditch effort** to recover the data: I took it to a repair shop to see if they could at least salvage the hard drive.”
- “That medication has a bunch of serious side effects; doctors only prescribe it as a **last resort**.”
- “I know I can always count on my brother's help whenever I'm **in a jam**.”

You'll have to tell your supervisors... trying to cover up the mistake is a **sure-fire** (definite) way to have bigger problems later on. If your boss finds out, you'll be **busted** (caught doing/having done something wrong, and consequently in trouble).

- “Getting more sleep is a **sure-fire** way to increase your energy and productivity during the day.”
- “At the airport, I saw a guy get **busted** trying to enter the country with a fake passport.”

Hopefully when you tell your supervisors about the mistake, they will **let it slide** (not punish you for your mistake). However, if they think you **can't hack it** (can't handle the responsibility effectively) or if your work is **not up to par / not up to snuff** (does not meet the minimum standards), then you might lose your job!

- “You're half an hour late. I'll **let it slide** this time, but don't make a habit of it.”
- “Sarah worked as a journalist for a month, but she **couldn't hack it** – she wasn't able to finish her stories on time for the strict deadlines.”

- “The service at that restaurant is just **not up to par**. I won’t be eating there again.”

Let’s talk about success. If something **works like magic / works like a charm**, it works perfectly and effectively.

- “This new detergent **works like magic** for getting stains out of white clothing.”

When you have a lot of successes in a row, or a lot of positive momentum in your action, you are **on a roll**.

- “I’ve gotten the highest grade in the class on the past three tests. I’m really on a roll this semester!”

If you’re on a roll, just keep up the good work and **you’ve got it made** (success for you is certain).

- “If you study an area like computer science, where there’s always a huge number of high-paying jobs, **you’ve got it made**.”

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