

Confusing Slang Terms for ESL Students

- “*All right*” – Something is under control, ‘*It’s all right; it was a false alarm.*’ Also can be used to respond ‘yes’ to someone.
- “*Blog*” – An online website forum, used to display the host’s freethinking ideas, on any number of topics.
- “*Break up*” – A verb used to describe a couple that stops dating. “*Jenny and I broke up last night*”
- “*Bite me*” – An insulting retort if someone says something bad about you. Usually said with emphasis.
- “*Bubbler*” – A Wisconsin term, other parts of America call this a ‘*drinking fountain*’ or a ‘*water fountain*’
- “*Bugs me*” – Something is bothersome, ‘*That noise my car started making bugs me.*’
- “*Cheap*” – Can refer to something being low priced, ‘*6 cents for Ramen Noodles is cheap,*’ Can also be an insult, ‘*I’ve only had these cheap shoes for a week, and they’re already worn out.*’
- “*Chill out.*” – A phrase meaning calm down or stop worrying. ‘*Chill out man.*’ ‘*Chill*’ by itself can also mean ‘*wait here,*’ as in ‘*We’ll chill until he gets back.*’
- “*Cool*” – Can be used in many situations. “*That’s cool.*”—that’s good or great. “*Cool.*”—agreement with something that was said. “*It was cool.*”—given situation was enjoyable. “*It is cool out.*”—the weather is chilly.
- “*Close call*” – Something unpleasant, possibly even dangerous, was narrowly avoided. ‘*That was a close call; that car almost hit me!*’
- “*Crazy*” – Often used to describe someone who’s acting in a foolish or unusual manner, ‘*He was acting crazy at the party.*’ In addition ‘*That’s crazy.*’ which might describe some weird or strange course of action.
- “*Duh*” – A retort meaning what was just said was terribly obvious and unnecessary. ‘*Well, duh!*’
- “*Ditched*” – To be left behind, usually on purpose, ‘*My friends ditched me at the mall.*’
- “*Drained*” – Used to replace the word tired, for instance, “*I didn’t get any sleep last night, I’m really drained.*”
- “*Drinking*” – Similar to ‘*to have a drink,*’ when used alone often refers to an alcoholic beverage. Context clues are required to be certain of meaning.
- “*Freaky*” – Something is unusual or weird. ‘*That guy was freaky.*’

- “*Frick*” – A somewhat non-offensive expletive used in an unpleasant situation. ‘*Oh, Frick!*’
- “*Get over*” – To recover from an ended relationship. “*He got over her.*” Also, to forget insult. “*He got over the embarrassment.*”
- “*Hang Out*” –To get together with your friends. “*I was hanging out with my friends Friday night.*”
- “*Hey*” – Can be a greeting, like ‘*hi,*’ or an exclamation like ‘*Hey! Get back here.*’
- “*How’s it going?*” – Another common hallway greeting, also typically answered with something similar to ‘*good,*’ ‘*ok,*’ ‘*bad.*’
- “*Iffy*” – Something or someone is unreliable or uncertain. ‘*That bridge looks iffy to me. We should find another way around.*’
- “*Later*” – Short for “See you later,” a farewell. Also ‘*C’ya*’ or “*C’ya later.*’
- “*Long shot*” – Little chance of something being successful, possibly also a desperate, final attempt at something, ‘*Winning the lottery is always a long shot.*’
- “*Loser*” – Derogatory term for someone ‘*He is a loser. He’s going no where in life.*’
- “*Messed up*” – Either a situation or a person is unusual, ‘*This is messed up.*’ Also if a person is hurt or possibly under the influence of illegal substances. ‘*He was messed up.*’
- “*Messing with you*” – Fooling around, joking, being sarcastic, ‘*I wasn’t serious; I was messing with you.*’
- “*Morning*” – Short for good morning, sometimes also ‘*g’ morning*’.
- “*My Bad*” – A saying used in conversations to relay responsibility for an incident or accident to one’s self.
- “*Night*” – Short for good night, sometimes also ‘*g’night*’
- “*No way*” – An emphatic no, ‘*There’s no way I’m going parachuting.*’
- “*O.C.*” – An abbreviation spoken to replace the term “Out of Control”
- “*O.K.*” – An abbreviation to replace okay, which when used in a conversation, displays agreement with one another.
- “*Out of it*” – Not aware of surroundings, not feeling well and therefore not able to pay attention. ‘*I was out of it today in class because I felt sick.*’
- “*Peace*” – A phrase originating in the 60’s, it has a very similar meaning to ‘*Cool*’, is also a stereotyped catchphrase of the Hippie movement. ‘*Peace out, man.*’

- “*Rocks*” – Used to describe an enjoyable situation or occurrence. ‘*This rocks! I got an A.*’
- “*Shut up*” – A minor offensive term used to cut off another persons conversation. Usually conveys disagreement or disbelief with the person to whom you speak it, but can also be used between friends jokingly.
- “*Sick*” – Said as an adjective, it can describe something that was exciting, “Snowboarding is Sick.” It can also apply to somewhat who is insane, demented, or mentally instable.
- “*Soda*” – A regionalism for carbonated beverages, is also ‘*Pop*’ or ‘*Coke*’ in other areas of America.
- “*Space out*” – Not pay attention to your surroundings, also “*stare off into space*”, as in “*The class was very boring, and I started to space out while the teacher was talking.*”
- “*Spiced up*” –Used in reference to making something more interesting, “Since he showed up things really spiced up” Geared up or fired up can be used in roughly the same manner.
- “*Sup?*” – Short for ‘*what’s up?*,’ a greeting, means ‘How’s life?’, can be answered with either a returned ‘*sup*’ or possibly ‘*not much*,’ is often very slurred and can be difficult to understand. A response is not always necessary.
- “*Sucks*” – As in ‘*that sucks*,’ means this situation is negative or unpleasant.
- “*Take it Easy*” – Normally used to calm down an excited person, or as a departing phrase to replace goodbye.
- “*Tight*” – A substitute for cool, normally used to describe someone’s actions, “*Casey that shot was tight*”
- “*Uptight*” – Describes a person who is overly sensitive about a subject or easily annoyed. ‘*She was very uptight about her car.*”
- “*Wicked*” – Refers to something exciting, for instance, “That movie was wicked awesome”
- “*Word*” – A one-word affirmation, used to support or agree with something that has just been said.
- “*Y’all*” – A southern regionalism, short for ‘*you all*’ or, more grammatically correct, ‘*all of you*’
- “*Yo*” – Can be a greeting similar to ‘*hi*’, is also sometimes used to mean ‘*yes*’, but only in casual situations.

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Revised – David Rindt, 2004