

# 101 English Words You'll Never Learn in School



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# INTRODUCTION

One of the problems with school is that they teach you language as if you were learning so that you could write a textbook. They don't recognize that most language is spoken much different than the "proper" way it's written.

Even the spelling of certain words like "going to" and "want to" are often spelt phonetically (gonna and wanna) in informal dialogs like SMS, email, and Facebook.

The most important part of learning a language is to be able to communicate with your fellow human beings. Here we have compiled 101 words and sayings that will help you communicate, understand, and express yourself as if you were a native speaker.

The English language is a beautiful, expressive language that uses many idioms and phrases. While this can make the language beautiful for native speakers, it can very difficult for non-natives to be able to understand.

The Western world emphasizes individuality which tends to bring into existence different slang ways to say the same thing, although they usually have slightly different contexts.

Slang is some of the most interesting parts of learning a new language as it gives color, vibrance, and creativity.

Slang is also some of the most useful words to know and understand if you want to master the language.

Included in this ebook are 101 of the most common words and expressions that you will never learn in school.

We have focused on the phrases and words that are used the most in everyday life, and are therefore in your best interest to know.

Master these words and phrases and you will be on the fast track to being confused with a native speaker.

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Each phrase is divided into different sections to help you understand it more deeply.

The different sections are:

**When to use it**—To help you understand the appropriate context for the word or phrase.

**Variations**—Different but similar ways to say the same expression.

**Add-ons**—Other words that are often added before or after the phrase.

**Usage notes**—Information about the phrase, how formal or informal the phrase is, and other uses of the expression.

**Pronunciation tips**—Help with pronouncing the word like a native. If learning the English language is important to you, it's very important to hear a native help you will the correct pronunciation. You can only learn so much about how to speak from text.

**Examples**—Giving you real world examples where the phrase or word is used. The best way to get an idea of how these phrases are used is to see how natives speakers use them in real world, everyday conversations. It doesn't matter if you have a flawless accent if you say the wrong wrong phrase at the wrong time.



# SEVEN DIFFERENT WAYS TO SAY "FRIEND"



These ways to say friend can also be used if you forget someone's name. You will probably use the following A LOT (which is why they're put first), so it's important to know when to use them and the differences between them.

Most of these words are only used by guys and for guys. Sometimes girls will say these words, but it's not as common.

## 1. DUDE

**When to use it:** Can be used with males you know and even those you don't know.

**Usage Notes:** Depending on the tone and context, it can also be used to express sadness.

**Pronunciation Tips:** When used to express sadness, it is drawn out like, “duuuude.”

### Examples:

- “Yo *dude*, long time no see.”
- “I can't go to the Real Life English event because I don't live in Brazil...”  
“*Duuuude*, that sucks...”

## 2. BRO

**When to use it:** Usually used when talking to your brother or someone you feel really close to. But lately it's commonly used when talking to any other male.

**Variations:** Brotha' (short for brother) usually has a stronger context to being a real brother than "bro." In other words, you would not greet someone you just met as "brotha'," but you could greet them as "bro."

**Usage Notes:** Short for brother. Originally, bro was used when someone is close enough to you that they feel like a brother, but lately bro has also been used to refer to any male. A common phrase for someone who wants to get into a fight is to say to the other person, "Come at me bro," with their hands raised in the air. Obviously in this case, bro is just another way of getting the attention of another male.



### Examples:

- "What's up, *my brotha'*?? Long time no see."
- Someone you've never met before says: "Hey *bro*, you dropped your wallet."

## 3. HOMIE

**When to use it:** When referring to a really good friend, usually in a greeting.

**Variations:** Homes, homeslice

**Usage Notes:** Can also be used to talk about how good a friend is.

### Examples:

- "What's up *homes*?"
- "Josh cooked lunch for me, he's such a *homie*."
- "Yo *homeslice*, what's crackin'?" (see page 12)

#### 4. MAN

**When to use it:** Is commonly used in place of someone's name.

**Usage Notes:** Can also be used to express dismay, based on context and tone of voice.

**Pronunciation Tips:** When used to express sadness, it is drawn out to "maaan," (similar to dude).

**Examples:**

- "Hey *man*, what's up?"
- "Maaan... I can't find my keys..."

#### 5. MATE

**When to use it:** Used to refer to a good friend.

**Usage Notes:** Is often used by people from the U.K. and Australia.

**Example:**

- (On the phone), "Hey, I'm just at the bar with my *mates*."

#### 6. BUDDY

**When to use it:** Buddy is a playful way to call someone friend. Most often used when first greeting someone or in a playful tone.

**Variations:** Bud.

**Usage Notes:** A common nickname to call a dog to the dog.

**Examples:**

- "Hey, what's up *buddy*?"
- "Hey did you know I can dunk?" (a basketball)  
"Yeah, whatever you say *buddy*..."
- To a dog, "Come here *buddy*!"



## 7. DAWG

**When to use it:** In place of a good friend's name.

**Usage Notes:** Dawg has a gangster background, but is common with mainstream society.



**Pronunciation Tips:** Is usually said with a ebonic accent and/or when people are pretending to be gangster (usually in a playful way). It's sometimes pronounced as if it were spelt "daowg."

**Examples:**

- "What up *daowg*??"
- "Yo *dawg*, you gotta come to this party! It's off the hook (see page 33)!"

# ELEVEN GREETINGS

Out of all the English you'll learn, greetings are one of the most important. After all, how many people are you going to communicate with without greeting them first?

When becoming more fluent, it's important to know the various different greetings that English speakers use and to be able to respond to them correctly. For example, "I'm fine," can work with some expressions but not others.

Learn to leave a good first impression with someone by greeting them like a native would.



## 1. WHAT'S UP?

**When to use it:** Greeting friends, peers.

**Variations:** What up? Sup? What are you up to?

**Add-ons:** What's up dude/man/bro/dawg/etc.

**Usage notes:** "What's up?" is an informal greeting. The shortened version "Sup?" is very informal.

The most common way to respond to this greeting is to say "Not much. If you want, you can add what it is that you're doing. For example, your friend says to you, "Hey what's up, man?" And you respond, "not much, just doing my English homework."

**COMMON MISTAKE:** When responding to this greeting, you DO NOT SAY "I'm good," or "I'm fine." When someone uses this greeting they aren't asking you how you feel, they're asking you what's going on in your life.

**Pronunciation Tips:** It is said as one word: whatsup. The "t" sound in whatup is pronounced as if it were a "d," "whaddup?"

**Examples:**

- You meet up with your best friend and say, “*Sup bro?*”  
He responds with, “*What up dawg?*”
- You're introduced to a friend of a friend and you say to him, “*What's up, man?*”  
He responds, “Not much, *what's up with you?*”

## 2. How's it GOING?

**When to use it:** When greeting someone.

**Add-ons:** How's it going bro/dude/man/dawg/mate

**Usage Notes:** A little informal. A response is not always expected.

**Pronunciation tips:** “How's it” is pronounced as if it were one word, “howzit.” The g in going is never pronounced.

**Examples:**

- You are walking through the city and you see someone you know.  
“Hey, *how's it goin'?*”  
“It's goin' good, how about you?”
- You're hiking on a trail and you pass someone you've never met and say: “Hey.”  
They respond: “*How's it goin'?*” and the conversation ends there.

## 3. HOW'RE YOU DOING?

**When to use it:** After saying hello.

**Variations:** Informal: how you doin'?; how ya doin'?”

**Add-ons:** How ya doin' man/bro/dude/mate?

**Pronunciation Tips:** With the shortened versions, ‘how’ and ‘you’ should be pronounced as one word. Howya doin'? Howyou doin'?

**Usage Notes:** “How're you doing?” (only) can be used in formal situations. Don't say “How ya doin'?” in formal situations.

**Example:**

- “Mr. Chang, this is Mr. Smith, the head of our international sales department.”  
“Hi, *how are you doing?*”  
“*I'm doing good*, how are you?”

- You're introduced to a friend of a friend and greet him with:  
“Hey, *how ya doin'?*”

## 4. WHAT'S GOING ON?

**When to use it:** When saying hi to a friend or group of friends.

**Add-ons:** What's going on man/dude/bro/guys?

**Pronunciation Tips:** ‘Going’ is pronounced without the g at the end, like go-in.

**Usage Notes:** The most common way to respond to this question is to say, “Not much.” You can follow that up by saying what it is that you're doing.

**Example:**

- You arrive at your friend's house and see four people sitting on the couch and say:  
“*What's goin' on, guys?*”  
“Not much just watching TV, what's goin' on with you?”  
“I just got back from a job interview.”

## 5. WHAT'S HAPPENING?

**When to use it:** When greeting a friend or group of friends.

**Add-ons:** What's happening yo/dude/guys?

**Pronunciation Tips:** “Happening” is often pronounced without the “g,” as if it were spelt, “happenin'.”

**Usage Notes:** A common greeting that can be used in many situations. Just like with “what's goin' on?” or “what's up?” the most common response to this question is, “Not much.”

**Example:**

- You see your friends sitting down and say, “Yo, *what's happenin',* guys?”  
“Not much, just about to eat.”

## 6. WHAT'S NEW?

**When to use it:** When greeting someone you haven't seen in a while.



**Add-ons:** What's new with you?

**Usage Notes:** This can be used in formal situations as well as informal situations. This is also used as a follow up question after using other greetings.

**Example:**

- You come across an old coworker you haven't seen in weeks and say, "Hey Joe, *what's new?*"

## 7. HOW HAVE YOU BEEN?

**When to use it:** When greeting someone you haven't seen in a while.

**Variations:** How've you been? How you been?

**Add-ons:** How you been bro/man/dude?

**Usage Notes:** How have you been can be used formally. How you been is more informal.

**Pronunciation:** "How have you" is commonly pronounced as one word "How'veyou"

**Example:**

- You see an old friend from high school and say, "Hey, long time no see! *How've you* been man?"  
"I've been good... [blah blah blah]"

## 8. HOWDY

**When to use it:** Can be used in passing. Can be used in the place of "hello."

**Add-ons:** Howdy partner.

**Usage Notes:** This is a common greeting in the South of the United States.



**Example:**

- You pass someone on the street and say, “*Howdy.*”  
They respond back, “*Howdy partner.*”

## 9. WHAT'S GOOD?

**When to use it:** When greeting a friend.

**Add-ons:** What's good in the hood? What's good with...

**Usage Notes:** This can be a more informal way of saying “What's up?” But unlike what's up, when you ask, “What's good?” you're looking for good news.

**Examples:**

- You give your friend a hug and say,  
“*What's good, man?*”  
“Not much, *what's good with you?*”
- “Hey, *what's good* with my laptop, have you fixed it yet?”

## 10. WHAT'S CRACKIN'?

**When to use it:** When you are greeting someone you often see.

**Add-ons:** What's crackin' yo?

**Usage Notes:** Respond the same ways as if he or she said, “What's up?”

**Example:**

- You meet up with a friend that you see every week and say “*What's crackin' yo?*”

## 11. YO

**When to use it:** To call someone's attention or to say hi.

**Add-ons:** Yo yo. Yo what up?

**Pronunciation Tips:** Draw out the ‘o’ sound.



**Usage Notes:** Can be used the same way you would say “hi.” Is commonly added before most of the greetings here. However, you would never say, “Yo, howdy.”

**Example:**

- You're at a party and a friend shows up. You say to him, “Yo, whats up?”  
He responds, “Yo yo, how ya doin'?”