

Talk Turkey on Thanksgiving:

An English Lesson eBook



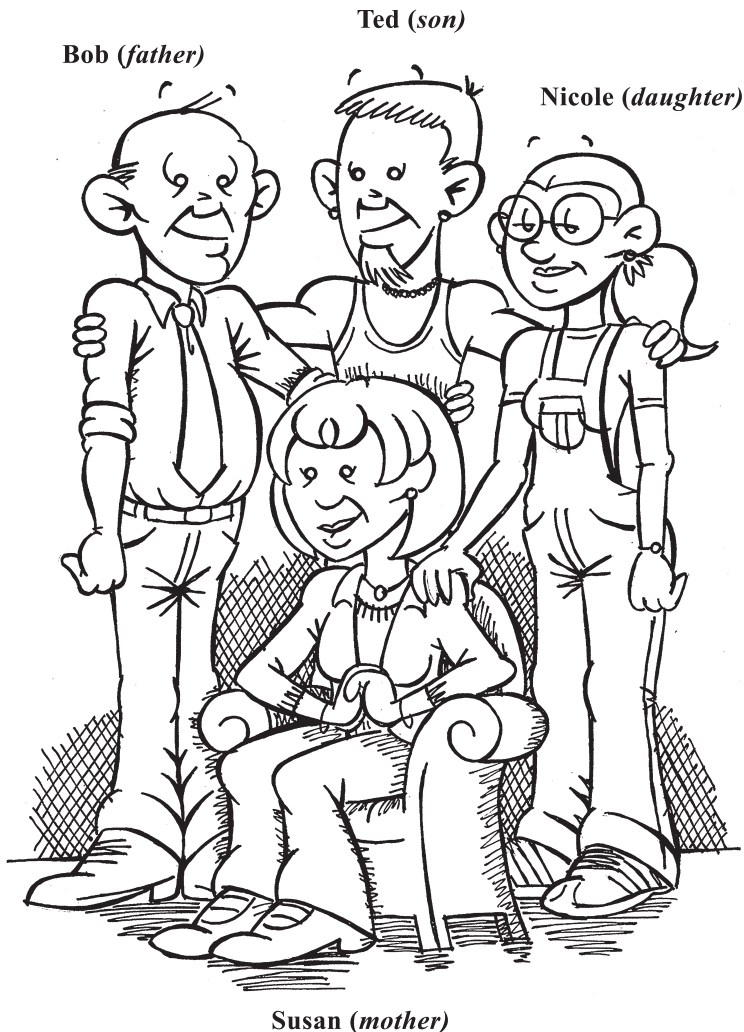
BY AMY GILLET



MAIN CHARACTERS

The author would like to thank the Johnson family for graciously agreeing to appear in this lesson. If you like this lesson, please check out the book *Speak English Like an American*, also featuring the Johnson family.

The Johnson Family



A THANKSGIVING DAY FEAST

The Johnson family is celebrating Thanksgiving with a traditional Thanksgiving day feast. As usual, Ted and his sister Nicole are having trouble getting along. Fortunately, Ted's girlfriend Amber is with the family and helps break up the tension.

Amber:  She's got a carving knife. She knows how to use it! 

Susan: Amber, what a pretty song!

Amber: I'm **killing two birds with one stone**. I'm coming up with new songs while helping you get Thanksgiving dinner ready.

(ten minutes later)

Susan: Everything's on the table. We're ready to eat.

Bob: Before we **dig in**, I think we should **count our blessings**.

Susan: I agree! We have so much to be grateful for. **For starters**, we have our whole family together with us today.

Bob: I'm grateful to the National Cookie Company for buying Susan's Scrumptious Cookies. That helped us buy our new house.

Ted: I'm grateful to Amber. With her beautiful singing voice, she helped us **land a recording contract** with Big Deal Records.

Susan: Yes, Amber is certainly **blessed with** a lovely voice.

Amber: I'm grateful that Ted was able to quit smoking this year, **cold turkey!**

Susan: What? Ted smoked?

Amber: Oh, not that much.

Nicole: Not much at all. Only about a pack a day!

Ted: It's a **mixed blessing** being here today. On the one hand, I get to see Mom and Dad. On the other hand, I have to put up with my sister!

(everyone is eating)

Susan: Amber, you're **eating like a bird**. Everything okay?

Amber: I **stuffed myself** on turkey while I was carving it in the kitchen.

Nicole: I thought I noticed a leg missing. I thought it walked away by itself!

Ted: Everything was delicious. I'm **stuffed!**

Susan: I hope you **saved room for dessert**. We have pecan pie and pumpkin cookies for dessert.

Nicole: Pumpkin cookies?

Susan: Yes. Now's a good time to **break the news**. The National Cookie Company* has hired me as a recipe consultant. I'm having all of you test out my new recipe tonight.

Amber: **Talk about killing two birds with one stone!**

* In the book *Speak English Like an American*, Susan and Bob sell their cookie business to the National Cookie Company for a "small fortune."

IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

blessed with – lucky to have a special quality or character

- Nicole finds her chemistry and physics classes very easy. She's **blessed with** a scientific mind.

(to) break the news – to make something known

- Ted said, “Now’s a good time to **break the news**: Amber and I are getting married!”

cold turkey – immediately, not gradually (when you quit a habit cold turkey, you stop doing it immediately instead of gradually stopping it)

- I drink five cups of coffee a day. If I quit **cold turkey**, I’m sure I’d start getting headaches.

(to) count one’s blessings – to think about the good things in one’s life; to express gratitude for all that one has (and not focus on what one does not have)

- We should **count our blessings**. Many houses in town were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, but ours was hardly touched.

(to) dig in – to start eating

- **Dig in!** Everything will get cold if you don’t start eating.

(to) eat like a bird – to not eat much; to have a small appetite

- That’s all your having? A turkey wing and a small blob of mashed potatoes? You **eat like a bird!**

for starters – as a first step; to begin with

- We need to clean the house before our company comes. **For starters**, let’s vacuum downstairs.

(to) kill two birds with one stone – to get two things done at the same time; to solve two problems with one action

- Susan **killed two birds with one stone** by listening to the new Stephen King novel on CD while cooking Thanksgiving dinner.

NOTE: This expression can be traced back 2,000 years. The Roman poet Ovid used a similar expression in his works.

(to) land a contract – to get a contract; to finalize a contract

- The National Cookie Company **landed a contract** to distribute its cookies in the largest supermarket chain in California.

NOTE: "land" in this context means to gain or secure; you can also land a deal or a job.

mixed blessing – something with both good and bad aspects

- Having house guests over Thanksgiving is a **mixed blessing**. On the one hand, we need to prepare rooms for them. On the other hand, we have people to help us eat all the leftover turkey!

(to) put up with – to endure without complaint

- Michelle’s husband always complains about her cooking. I don’t know how she **puts up with** him.

(to) save room for dessert – to not eat too much so that one can still eat dessert

- “May I have seconds?” — “Sure, but be sure to **save room for dessert**. We’ve got pumpkin pie.”

(to) stuff oneself / to be stuffed – to overeat / to feel very full

- The dinner was so delicious, I **stuffed myself**. Unfortunately, I don’t think I’ll be able to eat dessert.
- “There’s a turkey leg left. Would you like it?” — “No, I’m **stuffed**.”

Talk about ... – That’s an example of; we were talking before about ... (often used when a topic has recently mentioned and another example has come up, or to add emphasis to a point you are making)

- **Talk about** overeating. Ted just ate two turkey legs, a big pile of stuffing, and half a green bean casserole!

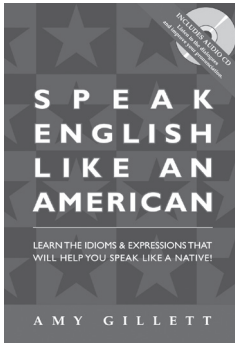
Practice the Expressions

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) What happened to your appetite? You're eating like a ____.
a) chicken b) turkey c) bird
- 2) I baked chocolate chip cookies, so save ____ for dessert.
a) room b) space c) place
- 3) Bob can barely turn on the oven, but fortunately his wife Susan is blessed ____ with great cooking skills.
a) from b) by c) with
- 4) Ted was able to quit smoking ____ turkey.
a) smoked b) hot c) cold
- 5) The pies are all on the table. Please dig ____!
a) on b) up c) in
- 6) This year, we're staying home for Thanksgiving. It's a ____ blessing. On the one hand, we don't get caught up in holiday traffic. On the other hand, we miss seeing our family.
a) mixed b) combined c) total
- 7) Our Thanksgiving dinner guests bought a \$2 bottle of wine from Trader Joe's. Talk ____ cheap!
a) of b) about c) on
- 8) While the turkey rests, we can kill two birds with one ____: we'll let the turkey cool down, while working up our appetites for dinner.
a) arrow b) rock c) stone

ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. A; 3. C; 4. C; 5. C; 6. A; 7. B; 8. C

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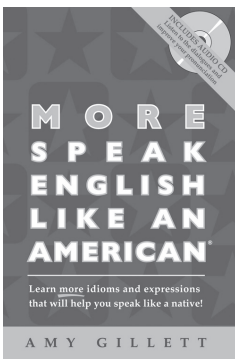
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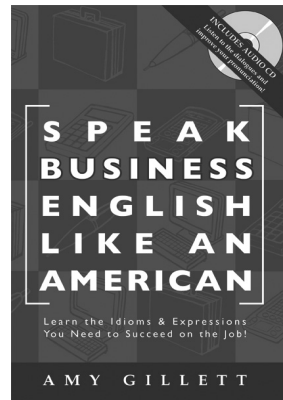
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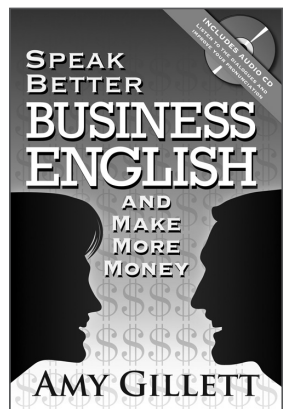
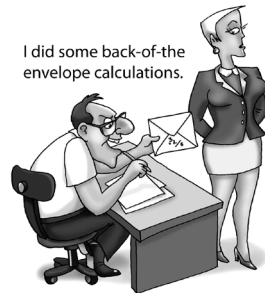
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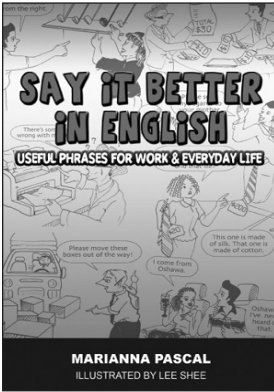


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