

# Speak English on Christmas Day

An English Lesson eBook



BY AMY GILLET



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## 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



## CHRISTMAS MORNING WITH THE JOHNSONS

*The Johnson family is celebrating Christmas. The kids, Ted and Nicole, are home from college for the holidays. Ted's girlfriend Amber is also with them. Now it's time to gather around the tree and open the presents. (Target idioms and expressions are highlighted in bold and defined on the next pages).*

*Susan:* Merry Christmas, everyone!

*Bob:* It's wonderful to have the family here for the holiday. Now that Mom and I are **empty nesters**, the house is usually so quiet.

*Nicole:* I'm sure you miss Ted's loud rock music at 2 a.m.!

*Susan:* Who would like to **start out the day with** one of my fresh-baked gingerbread cookies?

*Nicole:* Mom, it's 10 o'clock in the morning. Who eats cookies so early?

*Ted:* **Get in the holiday spirit!** I'll take a cookie, Mom.

*Amber:* Mind if I take one too?

*Susan:* **Be my guest.**

*Bob:* Let's get started with the presents.

*(everyone sits by the Christmas tree)*

*Bob:* Here's one for Amber from Ted.

*Amber:* *(opens box)* A beautiful silver nose ring! Just what I wanted.  
**How did you know?**

*Ted:* You **dropped a few hints!**

*Bob:* This big box is for Mom from Ted.

*(Susan unwraps present and takes out a sweater)*

*Nicole:* Oh, it's an **ugly Christmas sweater!**

*Bob:* Nicole, **it's the thought that counts.** Besides, that sweater is quite a **conversation piece.**

*Susan:* Thanks, Ted. I love it. Look at all the smiling snowmen on the sweater. Looking at their happy faces would help anyone **beat the holiday blues!**

*Bob:* And this present is for Ted from Nicole.

*Ted:* *(unwraps present)* It's a book. *Chemistry for Dummies.* Just what I wanted. Did you save the receipt?\*

*Nicole:* **Don't look a gift horse in the mouth!**

*Bob:* And here's a present for Ted from Mom and me.

*Ted:* *(unwraps present)* A new iPad. Great! Thanks a lot.

*Nicole:* Now Ted can spend even more time playing video games.

*Ted:* **Mind your own business!**

*Susan:* That's enough, guys. I hope you two won't be **at each other's throats** for the entire holiday.

*Bob:* Right. Don't forget what Bing Crosby\* said: "Christmas has a way of **bringing out the best in** everyone."

*Ted:* Bing Crosby never met Nicole!

\* Ted is asking for the sales receipt so he can return the book.

\* Bing Crosby was an American singer and actor (1903-1977). His most popular song was his 1941 recording of "White Christmas," written by Irving Berlin.

## IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

**at each other's throats** – arguing with each other; fighting

- Gina and Jim are always **at each other's throats**. I can't believe they're still married!

**be my guest** – help yourself; go ahead and do something

- "Do you mind if I slice the apple pie?" — "**Be my guest.**"

**(to) beat the holiday blues** – to do something so that one does not feel stressed and depressed during the holidays

- Susan always says that helping others is a great way to **beat the holiday blues**.

**(to) bring out the best in someone** – to cause someone to behave in the best way; to bring out their best qualities

- With her great sense of humor and positive attitude, Amber always **brings out the best in** people.

**conversation piece** – something unusual that attracts attention or makes people talk

- My boss gave me a sparkling angel pin for Christmas. It's a real **conversation piece!**

**Don't look a gift horse in the mouth** – don't be ungrateful when you receive a gift

- "These earrings Jane gave me are so ugly!" — "**Don't look a gift horse in the mouth.**"

**(to) drop a hint** – to give a small hint or clue about something

- I don't know what you want for Christmas. I wish you'd **drop some hints!**

**empty nester** – a parent whose child has grown up and left the house

- Now that Tina and Carl are **empty nesters**, they're planning to travel around the world.

**(to) get in the holiday spirit** – to start having good feelings about the holidays

- Anna put on a Bing Crosby Christmas CD to try to **get in the holiday spirit**.

**How did you know?** – asked when someone gives you just the gift that you wanted

- Great, a new Hermès tie! **How did you know?**

**it's the thought that counts** – it doesn't matter what the gift is, at least the giver was kind enough to give *something*

- "Look at these bunny rabbit slippers my friend gave me. They're ridiculous!" — "**It's the thought that counts.**"

**mind your own business** – don't interfere in matters that you are not a part of

- "Nicole, who was that guy you were talking to on the phone?" — "**Mind your own business, Ted.**"

**(to) start out the day with** – to begin the day with

- Nicole always **starts out the day with** a jog around the block.

**ugly Christmas sweater** – a tacky sweater with holiday themes like Christmas trees, reindeer, or snowmen and bold colors

- Mike always wears his **ugly Christmas sweater** to his office holiday party.

NOTE: Ugly Christmas sweaters became a trend about 10 years ago. They are often worn with irony (the wearer knows they look a little silly, but they enjoy it). There are even ugly Christmas sweater parties.

## Practice the Expressions

Fill in the blank with the missing word:

1) Nicole has been a little depressed. How can we help her get in the holiday \_\_\_\_\_?

- a) feel                      b) sense                      c) spirit

2) I like to start \_\_\_\_\_ the day with a big cup of coffee.

- a) out                      b) up                      c) on

3) The scarf my boss gave me is hideous, but I guess it's the \_\_\_\_\_ that counts.

- a) idea                      b) feeling                      c) thought

4) With both of their kids away at college, Bob and Susan are now \_\_\_\_\_ nesters.

- a) happy                      b) full                      c) empty

5) "Dan gave me a bathrobe for Christmas. I already have a million bathrobes!" — "Don't look a gift \_\_\_\_\_ in the mouth."

- a) pony                      b) horse                      c) donkey

6) That light-up singing Santa in your den is a conversation \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) piece                      b) item                      c) thing

7) Nicole always find that getting plenty of exercise helps her \_\_\_\_\_ the holiday blues.

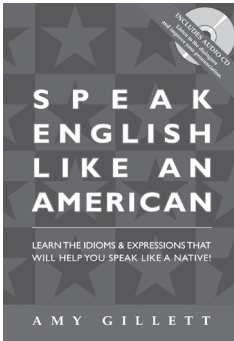
- a) win                      b) beat                      c) get

8) Lucas wants a new Kindle for Christmas, so he dropped plenty of \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) clues                      b) suggestions                      c) hints

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

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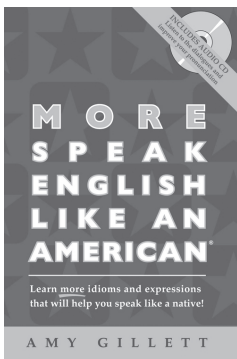
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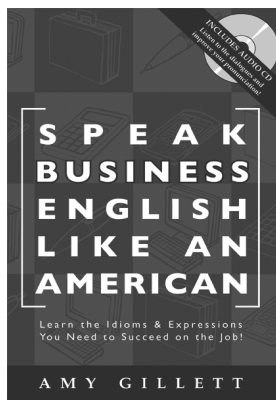
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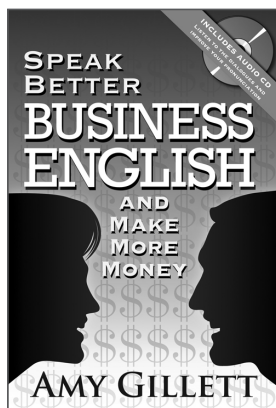
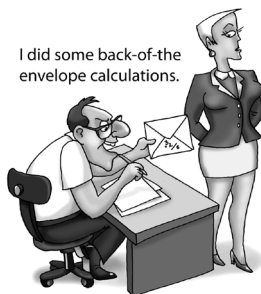
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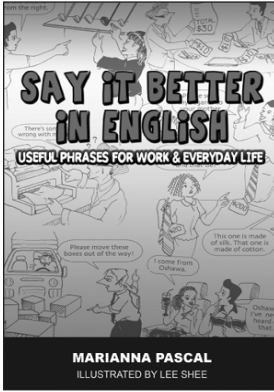


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