



Colloquial English / Level 2

Unit 17 - Professions and Kinds of People



About this eBook

This eBook goes together with the audio that you can download from Zappenglish.com. If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, please visit our website – we always value your opinion. Good luck! Katie, Tom & Mark



Introduction

In this unit you're going to learn colloquial words and expressions to describe different kinds of people. Remember, you need to be careful with colloquial expressions because not all of them are polite. If you're not sure – check! OK let's start!

Colloquial Expressions Task 1

KATIE: Hello Tom.

TOM: Hello Katie.

KATIE: How are you?

TOM: Very happy today.

KATIE: Good. We're in the park, it's sunny.

TOM: Yeah that's all I need. (laughter)

KATIE: Well I hope you'll be happy...er, after you try and guess, the phrases that I've got for you.

TOM: OK, well don't make them too difficult.

KATIE: So I'll describe some colloquial expressions...Tom will guess them. And...erm...they're all... colloquial...expressions for a...a kind of person. How somebody is.

TOM: Yeah.

KATIE: OK. So, the first one, is about money.

TOM: OK.

KATIE: What do you call...we have two words for this, that I'm looking for...what do you call somebody who's very mean with their money? They don't like to spend their money and they don't buy expensive things.

TOM: Er, I think the most common colloquial one...colloquial expression is *tight*. Someone's tight.

KATIE: OK, yes, I didn't have that one, but it's a very good one. To be tight, yes.

TOM: Erm, or *mean*. Or but that's not colloquial.

KATIE: Yes, I'm looking for...I'm looking for a noun. A...

TOM: A *miser*? No a...



KATIE: No...A penny...

TOM: A **penny pincher**.

KATIE: Yeah.

TOM: Ah-ha.

KATIE: So, if you're a **penny pincher** do you spend a lot of money?

TOM: If I'm a penny pincher do I spend a lot of money? Erm...no. Not at all, I save every penny, I save everything I have, I'm very careful.

KATIE: Yeah. So you are the kind of person who will...look at everything in the supermarket and check the prices...if you are...

TOM: Buy the cheapest of everything...

KATIE: Yeah.

TOM: And, yeah...

KATIE: If you're a...

TOM: I don't spend money on other people.

KATIE: Mmm hmm. OK and there's another noun I'm looking for. A cheap...

TOM: **Cheapskate**.

KATIE: Yes.

TOM: A **cheapskate**. (laughter)

KATIE: Would you want to go for a drink with a **cheapskate**?

TOM: No because you will have to pay.

KATIE: Yes. (laughter)

TOM: Always.

KATIE: OK. So the first one was a...

TOM: A **penny pincher**.

KATIE: Yeah. And a...

TOM: **Cheapskate**.



KATIE: Yes. Alright. Different words now. Not about money. What do you call somebody who's always...erm...interested in other people's lives? And they're always asking questions about what other people are doing, and...they want to...get information about, business that's...nothing to do with them. It's about somebody else.

TOM: Is this two words?

KATIE: Yes.

TOM: Is it **nosy parker**?

KATIE: Yes.

TOM: **Nosy parker.**

KATIE: Yeah. And we can also just say, very nosy, can't we?

TOM: Yeah. Somebody's very **nosy**, yeah they're just interested in everyone else's business, they're curious, they're a gossip.

KATIE: Yes. So, if you have a **nosy parker** living in your street...when you arrive home in your car, you might see them looking out of their window.

TOM: Yeah. *Who's that? Who's that?*

KATIE: *What are they doing? Where have they been?*

TOM: *What are they carrying in their hand?*

KATIE: Yeah. So a **nosy parker**.

TOM: **Nosy parker.**

KATIE: We've got two more.

TOM: OK.

KATIE: Er, next one. Are you...like you're mother or father? Are you similar to either of them?

TOM: Personality...wise or ap...appearance?

KATIE: Erm both.

TOM: Actually yeah I think I'm more like my mother...

KATIE: OK.

TOM: ...than my father.



KATIE: Mmm. I think you're very similar to your mother actually. And if we think someone is very similar to, one of their parents...we can call them a...chip...

TOM: A chip off the old block.

KATIE: Yes.

TOM: A chip off the old block. Yeah it's like somebody chopped me off my mother...

KATIE: Yeah.

TOM: ...and then, I'm the same as her.

KATIE: Exactly. So they cut a piece of your mother, and it grew into you.

TOM: Yeah. **Chip off the old block.**

KATIE: Yeah. OK so erm...very often when a child...does the same thing, you know, maybe goes into the same job and has the same interests...you might say, *Oh yeah, she's a real chip off the old block.*

TOM: Yeah.

KATIE: Yes. I think you are **a chip off the old block.** (laughter) Although I don't think your mother would want me to call her an old block.

TOM: No...(laughter) A chip off the young block.

KATIE: Yeah. OK. And the last one.

TOM: OK.

KATIE: Erm...if I want to do something and, I'm not allowed. I can't. And I...(crying noise) Or, I fall over and I hurt myself and I...(crying noise) *I've hurt my leg...*(crying noise)... what am I?

TOM: A whinger? Um...

KATIE: Yes. What's...what's this action? (crying noise)

TOM: Cry baby?

KATIE: Yeah.

TOM: Cry baby.

KATIE: Cry baby. So we often say it to children. Don't we?

TOM: Well...children say it to other children quite a lot...

KATIE: Yes.



TOM: ...when they cry actually. When they're...yeah when I was young at school and if you're five or six or seven years old, you'll hear, *She's a **cry baby*** and *He's a **cry baby***.

KATIE: And then...you *could* say it to an adult...if they're, behaving a bit like a child. *Oh don't be such a **cry baby***.

TOM: But it is quite rude isn't it?

KATIE: Yes it is. Yes.

TOM: To say to somebody your age.

KATIE: Yeah. So be careful with that one. But a **cry baby** is somebody who...cries or gets upset...too easily.

TOM: Cries all the time.

KATIE: Yeah...you big **cry baby**.

Meaning and Pronunciation Task 1

So now let's check the meaning of those phrases and see what you can remember. Answer the questions and repeat after the beep.

What do you call somebody who's mean with money? They hate spending it.

a penny pincher

a penny pincher He never spends money, he's a real **penny pincher**.

Another word that means the same thing is a cheap...

a cheapskate

a cheapskate It's your turn to buy the drinks **cheapskate**!

What's the name for a person who's always asking questions about other people's lives and getting involved in things that are not their business?

a nosy parker



a nosy parker She's watching us again. What a **nosy parker**!

The next noun is a person who is just the same as one of their parents. If you're very similar to your mother or father, you're a...

a chip off the old block

a chip off the old block He's a **chip off the old block**.

Someone who cries very easily and often, in the same way as a child is called a...

a cry baby

a cry baby Don't be such a **cry baby**.

Colloquial Expressions Task 2

KATIE: Hello Clare.

CLARE: Hi Katie.

KATIE: We are sitting in your kitchen.

CLARE: We are.

KATIE: We've moved from the roof because the planes were making too much of a noise.

CLARE: I know. How rude.

KATIE: OK. And er...again...erm...in our little colloquial listening, section, I'm going to describe some informal words.

CLARE: Great.

KATIE: What are you going to do?

CLARE: I'm going to guess what they are.

KATIE: Yes. (laughter) Or try. We'll see.

CLARE: No try...no no no. I'm going to guess.



KATIE: OK well, these are all erm...expressions we can use...to describe a kind of person, so the...they're nouns. Alright. Can you think of...an expression...for somebody who...whatever you do, or whatever you say, they go, *Oh yes yes, I know that. Yes yes. And...I know it...so I am a...know...*

CLARE: Ah I am **a know all**.

KATIE: Yes *a know all* or **a know-it-all**.

CLARE: Yes. (laughter)

KATIE: So...

CLARE: Ah yeah...

KATIE: Somebody who...always thinks they know more than everybody else.

CLARE: Yeah a really annoying person, generally.

KATIE: Yes...

CLARE: Who it doesn't matter what you say, they...they know more about the subject, or more about the...the whatever you're explaining than you do. A very annoying person.

KATIE: Yes, **a know-it-all**.

CLARE: **A know-it-all**.

KATIE: *Oh she's such a know-it-all. He's such a know-it-all. Whatever you say, they always know more.*

CLARE: It's very frustrating.

KATIE: Yeah annoying. So if we call someone **a know-it-all**, then we probably think they're a bit annoying.

CLARE: Yes. Of course.

KATIE: OK. And, the next one is a little bit similar, but it's not so negative. Sometimes it's a funny one. And, again we use it to describe somebody who...who knows a lot. So what's a word for intelligent?

CLARE: Smart.

KATIE: Yes smart or...

CLARE: Clever.

KATIE: Yes. So can you think of an expression with clever? A clever...



CLARE: Dick.

KATIE: Yes, there are two.

CLARE: Ah...(laughter) OK.

KATIE: OK. Er...and they're both...both mean the same thing, so *a clever dick*, or **a clever clogs**.

CLARE: Ah a **clever clogs** yes.

KATIE: Yes. Erm...I think, clever Dick is nearer to **know-it-all**. Er, so maybe a little bit more negative. *Oh God. Alright clever Dick.*

CLARE: Yeah.

KATIE: ...*you know everything*

CLARE: Yeah.

KATIE: And **a clever clogs**...is maybe a bit funnier, a bit sort of, erm...just a way to say that somebody's clever.

CLARE: Yeah...

KATIE: Smart.

CLARE: ...s...someone's very intelligent, that they know a lot of things...

KATIE: Yeah.

CLARE: ...but maybe they're not...quite so annoying.

KATIE: Yeah so...

CLARE: Ah yeah, I agree.

KATIE: Erm, *I've got a friend who's a oh she's a real **clever clogs**. She's a scientist.*

CLARE: Yeah. Exactly. It's not...it's not as negative as perhaps the other two.

KATIE: Yeah. So we've had a **know-it-all** and **a clever clogs**, or a clever Dick, you can also say, yes. (laughter) Alright, let's go on, now then. What do you call a person who...whatever you say...you...you have an idea, for example I say, *Oh why don't we go to the beach?* And this person will go, *Oh well we could but we'll get sand in...in our shoes and it might rain. Or...*

CLARE: So a very negative person.

KATIE: Yes.

CLARE: Erm...



KATIE: ...a wet...

CLARE: Ah a **wet weekend**.

KATIE: A wet weekend we can use and that describes like erm...a miserable person.

CLARE: Yeah...

KATIE: There's a similar one, a **wet blanket**.

CLARE: Ah OK OK Yeah. Yeah.

KATIE: That's sort of...what...whenever there's a good idea, or a good suggestion...they come up with, they think of a reason, that's negative about it.

CLARE: Yeah why it won't work. Or why it's a bad idea.

KATIE: Yeah. So...

CLARE: A **wet blanket**.

KATIE: ...a **wet blanket**. Er...you know, you say, *Do you want to go out tonight?* A **wet blanket** would say, *Oh I don't know, I can't think of anywhere good to go...*

CLARE: *Ah...it might rain, oh...*

KATIE: Yeah.

CLARE: Yeah.

KATIE: A **wet blanket**.

CLARE: A **wet blanket**.

KATIE: So somebody who always thinks of someth...some reason why an idea, is not good.

CLARE: Yep.

KATIE: A **wet blanket**. OK. Now a very similar one, but this means somebody is just generally an unhappy person. A...

CLARE: ...**misery guts**. (laughter)

KATIE: That's the one.

CLARE: Yeah!

KATIE: Exactly. A **misery guts**.

CLARE: Yeah somebody that's just always...unhappy. Or and...and yeah, just generally in life, is unhappy.



KATIE: Yeah.

CLARE: Whatever the situation...it doesn't matter who he's with, or she, of course. (laughter) Yeah, just generally unhappy.

KATIE: **A misery guts**. I mean we can be, **a misery guts** temporarily. So I could say, *Oh, you know...*

CLARE: Ah yeah it's true.

KATIE: *...what's wrong with you, you're being a right misery guts, you're usually very happy, what's happened?*

CLARE: Ah yeah, it's true we do use it like that, yeah.

KATIE: But, so...misery...horrible, sad, awful, so **a misery guts**.

CLARE: Hmm.

KATIE: We're not **misery guts**.

CLARE: No of course not! It's not a nice thing to be called.

KATIE: No. Now before we talked about **a know-it-all** and you said *Oh a-know-it-all*, yes a very annoying person. What's another word for an annoying person? This one is not the polite version. A pain...

CLARE: **A pain in the arse**.

KATIE: Yes.

CLARE: I like this. (laughter)

KATIE: Do you use this one a lot?

CLARE: I use this a lot. *Oh...he is a...or she...* I always say he like women are so perfect. Erm...this person is a...is **a pain in the arse**. Erm...yeah somebody that's just very difficult...that's very erm...

KATIE: Annoying.

CLARE: Yeah annoying. That...that does a lot of things that you don't like or...gets in the way, when you're trying to do something...

KATIE: Yeah.

CLARE: Oh you're **a pain in the arse**. Yeah.

KATIE: Yeah.

CLARE: I...I use this a lot.



KATIE: (laughter)

Meaning and Pronunciation Task 2

How many of the second group of expressions can you remember? Answer the questions and repeat after the beeps.

A person who always has the answers and always thinks they're right, and always thinks they know what's best for people is called a...

a know-it-all

We don't usually like **know-it-alls**, it's not a positive description.

a know-it-all He's a real **know-it-all**.

There was another expression that's similar to a **know-it-all**, but is a little bit less negative.

a clever clogs

a clever clogs Do you know the answer **clever clogs**?

There's a name for people who never get excited about things, and always think that everything is a bad idea.

a wet blanket

a wet blanket Don't be such a **wet blanket**, it's a great idea.

And what about a person who's always unhappy and often complains?

a misery guts

a misery guts Don't be a **misery guts**. It's a lovely day.

What's the name for a person who's very annoying? This one is very colloquial.



a pain in the arse

a pain in the arse He's **a pain in the arse**.

Remember that one's not polite. Be careful not to use it unless you know someone very well and the situation is very informal.

Summary

You should now know more colloquial expressions that describe types of people. Well done!



Extra Materials

Glossary

1 = Informal but could be used in speech with most people and in most situations.

2 = Informal and would be best used in very informal situations with people you know well.

3 = Be very careful! Very informal and may upset or offend some people. Don't use this with your mother-in-law!!!

a **penny pincher** (2) – someone who doesn't like spending money, is a bit mean.

a **cheapskate** (2) – someone who doesn't like spending money, is a bit mean.

a **nosy parker** (2) – someone who is too interested in other people's lives.

a **chip off the old block** (1) – very similar to one of your parents.

a **cry** baby (2) – someone who cries easily and too much, especially a child.

a **know-it-all** (2) – someone who thinks they know more than everybody else.

a **clever clogs** (2) – someone who is always right, or who knows a lot about something.

a **wet** blanket (2) – someone who always complains and sees the negative things about an idea; they often stop other people having fun.

a **misery guts** (2) – a person who is always unhappy and complaining.

a **pain** in the **arse** (3) – someone who is very annoying; not polite!



Practice Exercise 1

How quickly can you add the vowels to make a word from this unit?

1. m _ s _ ry g _ ts
2. p _ _ n _ n th _ _ rs _
3. p _ nny p _ nch _ r
4. ch _ p _ ff th _ _ ld bl _ ck
5. n _ sy p _ rk _ r
6. kn _ w - _ t - _ ll
7. cry b _ by
8. ch _ _ psk _ t _
9. w _ t bl _ nk _ t
10. cl _ v _ r cl _ gs

Practice Exercise 2

Write the name of the person each sentence is about.

1. He's watching us from his window again – what a _____
2. She's exactly like her mum. A real _____
3. He's crying again. What a _____
4. She always buys the cheapest things. She's a bit of a _____
5. He never wants to do anything nice. He's a real _____
6. Ask her, she'll know the answer. She's a _____



Extra Materials - Answers

Practice Exercise 1

How quickly can you add the vowels to make a word from this unit?

1. misery guts
2. pain in the arse
3. penny pincher
4. chip off the old block
5. nosy parker
6. know-it-all
7. cry baby
8. cheapskate
9. wet blanket
10. clever clogs

Practice Exercise 2

1. He's watching us from his window again – what a ***nosy parker***.
2. She's exactly like her mum. A real ***chip off the old block***.
3. He's crying again. What a ***cry baby***.
4. She always buys the cheapest things. She's a bit of a ***penny pincher***.
5. He never wants to do anything nice. He's a real ***wet blanket / misery guts***.
6. Ask her, she'll know the answer. She's a ***clever clogs***.

