

Here's to a New Semester

Student 1: Hi, how was your summer? What classes are you taking this semester?

Student 2: It was great! I am taking ESL 103: Pronunciation and ESL 104: College Reading. What about you two?

Student 3: I have those classes, too!

Student 1: Me, too!

Student 3: Which class do you think will be the hardest?

Student 2: I really hate to read, so I am not looking forward to College Reading.

Student 1: Oh, really? I love to read. I hear we get to read two really great novels.

Student 3: I don't mind reading, but I have heard that the pronunciation class is really fun. We just do a lot of talking and interacting with other people.

Student 1: I HATE talking in front of people!

Student 2: Oh, it's not so bad. I am sure you will be great!

Student 3: What are you most nervous about this semester?

Student 2: I am not great with using the computer, so I am worried about having to use Canvas so much.

Student 3: Yeah, that is a concern of mine too.

Student 1: I am great at using the computer. I can help you anytime. Also, you can go to the help desk in the library. They are a huge help. Have you been there before?

Student 3: Is it in the back of the library?

Student 1: Yes, right past the circulation desk.

Student 2: I think that's where I had to go when I borrowed my laptop.

Student 3: Are you guys planning to join any clubs or groups this semester?

Student 2: Yes, I was in Global Student Network. It was so much fun!

Student 3: What does that group do?

Student 1: Oh, you don't know? We have lots of fun outings such as going to see plays and getting pizza. It's a great way to meet other international students and practice English.

Student 3: I will definitely check it out.

Student 2: Our first meeting is next Thursday at 2 p.m. You can come with me.

Student 3: Okay, sounds good.

Student 1: I have to get to work. It was great to see you all. Here's to a great semester!

Student 2: Bye!

Student 3: See you around!

Weird American Expressions

Student 1: Ugh! I am so confused!

Student 2: What are you confused about?

Student 1: Everything! The English language is so hard to understand!

Student 2: I get it. It was hard for me too when I first moved here. What are you confused about? Maybe I can help.

Student 1: Well, I just don't understand so many expressions. My mom's friend is a nurse, and she said she's so tired of being "in the trenches." I don't get it. Trenches are ditches. She's not digging ditches all day!

Student 2: Yeah, that is confusing. In the trenches means she is doing difficult work. Her work is important, but it's not always easy. She feels like she is weighed down and "in the trenches."

Student 1: Oh, okay. That makes sense. But that expression doesn't mean what I thought it meant.

Student 2: "In the trenches" is an example of an idiom. They are common phrases that don't always mean what you think they do.

Student 1: Good to know. Can you give me another example of an idiom?

Student 2: Sure. Have you ever heard of "woke up on the other side of the bed?"

Student 1: Yes! And I don't get that one either. Why does it matter what side of the bed you wake up on? Sometimes, I wake up on my left side; sometimes, it is my right. That's not important to me.

Student 2: Ha. You are right; it doesn't matter. But that's not what the phrase means. It means to be grumpy or grouchy when you wake up.

Student 1: Wow, that is so helpful! What about the phrase, "beat around the bush?" Let me guess—another idiom!

Student 2: You are right. It means that someone doesn't want to be direct; they avoid saying something that might make them uncomfortable.

Student 1: This has been really helpful. Thanks for explaining all of this to me. I don't think I will be as confused when talking to native English speakers now.

Student 2: No problem. I am happy to help!

Talking to Teachers

Student 1: Gosh, I have had such a bad day!

Student 2: Why? What happened?

Student 1: Well, I just checked my grade in my reading class, and I didn't like what I saw.

Student 3: I had a bad day like that earlier this semester. I wasn't happy with my grades either.

Student 1: Well, what did you do?

Student 3: I made an appointment to talk with my instructor.

Student 2: Yes, if you don't understand something or are struggling in a class, it is important to talk to your teacher.

Student 1: Well, I am kind of embarrassed because I don't really understand how to submit my work in Canvas.

Student 2: Well, we can help you with that! If you don't know how to do something, you have to ask for help from your teachers or classmates.

Student 3: Or you can also go to the ACE tutoring center. The tutors are very kind and helpful. And they have experience working with non-native speakers.

Student 1: I know, I know. I am just so busy with work and my other activities....

Student 2: Now you are just making excuses!

Student 1: Hey, that's not very nice!

Student 3: Well, it sounds like it is true. Do you want to improve your grade?

Student 1: Of course I do.

Student 2: Then you have to DO something about it!

Student 1: Okay, what should I do first?

Student 3: Bring your computer tomorrow, and we can help you use Canvas. That's the first step.

Student 2: You should also make an appointment with your teacher. You can ask about submitting missed work and ask for extra credit.

Student 1: I didn't think about extra credit. How do I make an appointment with my teacher?

Student 2: Email her.

Student 1: What if she is mad at me for not submitting my work or not understanding?

Student 3: She won't be mad at you for not understanding. She will be happy you are asking for help.

Student 1: Okay, that's what I will do.....maybe later this week.

Student 2: Don't put it off! You need to ask for help before you get further behind.

Student 1: Okay, okay, I will email her tonight.

Student 3: Excellent, and don't forget your computer in the morning.

Student 2: See you guys tomorrow!

Student 1: Thanks for all the help!

Student 3: No problem!