

Jul 31 2020~ **Understanding American Slang, #13** (Lesson 139c)

American Slang:

Remember: **sth = something; **sb** = somebody.

1. tag along = go somewhere with sb even though they didn't originally plan for you to come (to try to get into a group, because your Mom said to take your little sister, because you are bored, etc)
I'm going to IFM's special dinner tonight. Do you wanna tag along? "wanna" is oral English for "want to"
2. take a load off = take a break from working or studying; relax ***Before your flight takes off, sit down, and take a load off (your feet) for a while.*** (Note: "take off" can mean to depart by plane, leave work, etc)
3. can't take a joke = is easily offended by a humorous comment directed towards him ***Americans tend to believe that internationals can't take a joke, when they really don't understand what is intended as kidding.*** (When you look offended, sb might say...) ***"I was only kidding. Can't you take a joke?"***
4. is thick-skinned = isn't easily offended; is the opposite of "touchy" ***He's thick-skinned, so he can take criticism.***
is thin-skinned = is easily offended ***Be careful around Joe; he's thin-skinned and can't take a joke.***
5. That does it! = This is said when sb cannot continue to bear sth/sb. ***That does it! I've had it! I'm leaving!***
I've had it (with) = (similar to "That does it!") ***I've had it with all these political ads; let's watch a film!***
6. That hit the spot! = That (food/drink) was great! That's exactly what I needed/wanted! ***That steak hit the spot!*** (...or if a friend is massaging your back) ***Try a little lower...AH! That hit the spot!***
7. is tripping on sth = is high on sth (usually drugs); acting crazy ***Billy was tripping on cocaine when he overdosed.*** (or) ***You trippin', man! You can't be safe from Covid if you go to parties every night!***
8. That's a no-brainer = a decision so easy that you don't need to use your brain ***I was accepted at two universities; one gave a full scholarship and I couldn't afford the other, so it was a no-brainer.***
9. trash (v) a place = destroy or tear up a place ***Protestors started peacefully, but then trashed City Hall.***
10. you are turned off by sth/sb = sth/sb makes you lose interest
you are turned off when sth happens or when sb does sth = sth/sb makes you lose interest
sth/sb is a turn-off = sth/sb that makes you lose your interest ***I was turned off by her smoking. I was turned off when she started smoking a cigarette. It was a real turn-off when she lit the cigarette.***

Note: Using slang is an advanced language skill. Non-native speakers have trouble because a figurative meaning, stress on a certain word, or even the look on your face is often needed to be understood. However, you should study slang so that you can *understand* what the people around you are saying. Try using these expressions with friends, and ask them to let you know if you are using them correctly.

Read this paragraph, and ask questions about anything you don't understand.

Jenny had a rough day at work. Her colleague's son tagged along during a Zoom meeting, and kept interrupting. When Jenny finally got to take off, she wanted to take a load off and turned on the TV. But she was quickly turned off by all the discouraging news; she yelled: "That does it!" and clicked it off. Then she called a friend to ask if there was a party to attend. Mary said: "Are you trippin', girl? With COVID-19 cases exploding? Just stay home! That's a no-brainer." So, Jenny got some ice cream and a favorite book. That really hit the spot!

Questions: (Use the underlined phrase when you answer a question, to make sure you can use it correctly.)

1. In your culture, how comfortable is it for another person to tag along when you and your friend made plans to do something fun together? Explain. What would you say to discourage sb from tagging along?
2. Describe a situation in which you might say (or at least might **want** to say) That does it! or I've had it!
3. Share about a recent time when something you ate or did hit the spot. Why did it hit the spot?
4. Has anyone ever said "Can't you take a joke?" or accused you of being thin-skinned? Was it true that you are easily offended, or was there a misunderstanding? To what extent do you understand American humor? Explain.
5. Rate the following between "1" if it is a "turn off" and "10" if you are *extremely interested*. (a) learning about slang, (b) astronomy/Neowise Comet, (c) conversations about faith/God, (d) watching a movie in English. Pick one and explain why.

6. Choose another slang expression from today's lesson, and tell us how/when you might use it.

If you still have time:

7. Describe a kind of situation or person that might turn you off. Also, why is that situation/person a turn-off for you?

8. When you are at a party or other social activity, do you ever take off early, or do you usually stay until the end? Why?

9. Among you and your close friends, which of you can take a joke the best? Why? What are some possible reasons it's hard for some people to take a joke? When is it good to be thick-skinned (or thin-skinned)?

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For lower level students: leave out the "note" and the middle paragraph, and omit some of the slang expressions; change the discussion questions accordingly.