Reading + Vocabulary + Speaking

How Not to Get Along

EXPRESSIONS • MEANINGS • EXAMPLES

Better English Bigger Conversations

Vocabulary

Drive away	To make someone leave or go away.	His rude behavior **drove** his friends away.
Tag along	To go somewhere with someone, often when you weren't invited.	Can I **tag along** with you to the cinema?
Get someone off your back	To make someone stop criticizing, annoying, or pressuring you.	I finished my homework **to get** my teacher **off my back.**
Around to	To finally do something you have been delaying.	I finally **got around to** cleaning my room.
Short of	Not having enough of something.	We're **short of** time, so let's hurry.
On	Depending on the context, it can mean relying on someone or being a burden. In "be hard on someone", it means treating them harshly.	Don't be too **hard on** yourself.
Let down	To disappoint someone.	I promised to help her, and I don't want to **let her down.**
Telemarketer	Someone who calls people to sell products or services.	A telemarketer called me during dinner.
Intention	Something you plan or mean to do.	I had no **intention** of hurting your feelings.

Speaking – B2

Discuss the questions below. Use the vocabulary and expressions in your answers.

1. Who do you find it difficult to get along with, and why?
2. Have you ever let a friend down unintentionally?
3. How do you react when someone keeps getting on your back?
4. Do you usually let your friends tag along with you?
5. What do you do when telemarketers call you?
6. Have you ever had good intentions but accidentally upset someone?

Useful expressions

- **Get along with someone** – to have a good relationship with someone.
- **Not get along** – to have problems or disagreements with someone.
- **Let someone down** – to disappoint someone.
- **Get around to doing something** – to finally do something you planned to do.

Good communication helps people get along.



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Speaking Strategy

I have to say...

USEFUL PHRASES TO EXPRESS YOUR OPINION

Be clear
Be confident
Be yourself

I have to say

A common way to introduce your opinion or comment.

Example:
"I have to say, I really like the new design."

Honesty

The quality of being truthful and sincere.

Example:
"I value honesty in a friendship."

Quite frankly

Used to be direct and honest, often in a serious or open way.

Example:
"Quite frankly, I don't think that's the right decision."

To be honest

A casual way to say you are being truthful.

Example:
"To be honest, I'm not really interested in that."

On other words

Used to rephrase or explain something in a different way.

Example:
"On other words, what you're saying is that you need more time."

I mean

Used to clarify what you are trying to say.

Example:
"I mean, it's not that I don't like it, I just think it could be better."

What I mean is

Used to give a clearer explanation of your point.

Example:
"What I mean is, I'm not against the idea, I just have some concerns."

What I'm saying is

Used to emphasize or restate your point.

Example:
"What I'm saying is, we need to find a better solution."

I'm not saying

Used to soften your opinion or avoid sounding too harsh.

Example:
"I'm not saying it's a bad idea, but I think we should consider the risks."

Speaking Practice

Use the phrases above to talk about the topics. Try to be natural and confident. You can change the words and make your own sentences.

Use the phrases naturally, not just in a list!

1. What do you think about online learning? (Use at least 2 phrases.)
2. Do you agree that social media is good for young people? (Use at least 2 phrases.)
3. What's your opinion about working from home? (Use at least 2 phrases.)
4. Would you like to live in a big city or a small town? Why? (Use at least 2 phrases.)
5. What's one thing you want to change about your life? (Use at least 2 phrases.)



Extra Practice – Role Play

Work with a partner. Choose a situation and have a short conversation. Try to use at least 3–4 of the phrases from the list.

Some ideas:

- A friend gave you advice, but you have a different opinion.
- Your teacher asks for your opinion about a class.
- A friend wants to go somewhere, but you're not sure.
- You need to say something honestly, but you don't want to upset anyone.
- You're explaining your point in a group discussion.

Your voice matters!

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Saying "Blood is thicker than water"

Meaning

This saying means that family ties are stronger and more important than other relationships, even close friends or romantic partners.

In other words...

- Family always comes first.
- You should support your family, even when it's difficult.
- Family bonds are stronger than other kinds of connections.

Examples

- *"Even though I have great friends, I know blood is thicker than water, and I'll always be there for my family."*
- *"After all the disagreements, we are still family – blood is thicker than water."*



Clause in Writing

A clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb (and can't stand alone as a full sentence).

Types of Clauses

1. **Independent Clause**
   Makes sense on its own.
   Example: *I stayed at home.*
2. **Dependent Clause**
   Doesn't make sense on its own; it needs an independent clause.
   Example: *because it was raining.*
3. **Relative Clause**
   Gives extra information about a noun.
   Example: *The girl who won the prize is my friend.*

Common Subordinating Conjunctions

because	when	if
although	while	since
before	after	because of
as	until	even though

Examples

- I stayed at home because it was raining. (dependent)
- When I was tired, I went to bed. (dependent)
- The movie, which was really good, ended late. (relative)

Remember!

- ✓ A clause has a subject + a verb.
- ✓ An independent clause can stand alone.
- ✓ A dependent clause cannot stand alone.

Clauses help you connect ideas and make your writing clearer and more interesting!

Thesis Statement

A thesis statement is a clear and focused sentence that presents the main idea of your essay or paragraph.

Key Features

- ✓ States your position or main idea.
- ✓ Is specific, not too general.
- ✓ Appears in the introduction (usually).
- ✓ Guides the rest of your writing.

Examples

General
"Technology is important." ✗

Thesis statement
"While technology brings many benefits, its impact on mental health, especially among teenagers, can be harmful." ✓

More examples

- "Social media has more negative effects than positive ones, especially on young people's self-esteem."
- "Although online learning offers flexibility, it cannot fully replace face-to-face education."
- "Family support plays a crucial role in overcoming mental health challenges."

Think Write Express

Better writing → Clearer ideas → Stronger communication

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