

"As an A to Z, it's the bee's knees"

C. Rown



Crown Relocation's Survival Guide
to British Slang

CROWN 
RELOCATIONS

The way the British speak can seem incomprehensible at times.

They call fries “chips” (except when they call them fries). They call cookies “biscuits”.

And they have so many words for the bathroom: toilet, loo, WC, little girl's/boy's room, and so on. It's no surprise that some people moving to the UK can find it daunting.

Well, at Crown Relocations, we don't just move your possessions. We get you set up and ready for your new chapter in the UK.

So, with that in mind, we asked our British colleagues to put together a list of the most important British words you'll need to survive amongst a people who call the sidewalk a “pavement”.

[Welcome to your British Lingo Survival Guide.](#)

"Alright?"



Definiton

A greeting. Similar to hello. Entirely rhetorical. Acceptable responses include “Not bad, you?” or “Yeah, you?” (regardless of how you’re feeling: it’s the British way), or “Alright?” in return.*

* Actually answering the question by telling the other person how you actually feel is considered bad form.

Context

“ Alright, Gary? ”

“ Well, my knee’s a bit stiff this morning and it took me hours to find the car keys. ”

“ Blimey, Gary, I didn’t ask for your life story. ”

"Bob's your uncle"



Definiton

Done, voilà, easy as that. Quite who Bob is and why he needs to be related to one of your parents is a mystery that has perplexed non-Brits for decades.

Context

" All we need to do is read this British Lingo Survival Guide and, Bob's your uncle, we'll fit right in! "

"Chuffed"



Definiton

Proud, pleased with oneself, made up.

Context

" I was gagging for a coffee this morning but I left me wallet at me gaff. Then I found a tenner in my pocket. Well chuffed, mate. "

Translation

" I was rather keen on a coffee this morning but sadly left my wallet at home. Then I found a £10 note in my pocket. I am most pleased. "

"Dodgy"



Definiton

Not legitimate, dishonest, low-quality. You wouldn't trust a dodgy individual with your house keys, nor would you get into a car that struck you as dodgy.

Context

"Steer clear of that one, mate, he's well dodgy. Not as dodgy as the blenders he's trying to flog, mind you!"

Translation

"Avoid that fellow, for he is untrustworthy. He is also trying to sell some blenders of questionable quality."

"Earful"



Definiton

A telling off, a scolding, a good talking to.
Nothing is poured into the ear other than words.

Context

" Blimey, Dave, you know that dodgy bloke flogging blenders? I bought one and the missus near lost a finger. Got a right earful, didn't I? "

Translation

" Gosh, David, do you recall that suspicious gentleman selling blenders? I purchased one and my good lady almost lost a finger. She was rather upset with me. "

"Faff"



Definiton

Too much effort, particularly unnecessarily intricate.
Not to be confused with “faffing about”,
which means messing around

Context

“ All you need to do is copy the spreadsheet, input the new order numbers, replace column D with this formula, and rejig the layout to take into account the new results. ”

“ Sounds like a lot of faff. Can't we just scribble it on a Post-It and go to the pub? ”

"Gutted"



Definiton

Sad, disappointed, devastated. Nothing to do with gutting fish or other animals, although someone who feels gutted might have empathy with such a creature.

Context

" I was hankering after a cheeky Nando's so me and the girls tromped over but it was flipping closed! We was well gutted! "

Translation

" I rather liked the idea of a meal at Nando's, so my friends and I travelled there only to discover the restaurant was not open. We were rather disappointed. "

(sling your...)

"Hook"



Definiton

Go away, leave, get lost. There are no hooks involved, as slinging one could lead to significant injury and delay your departure while you wait for the paramedics.

Context

"Love a duck, Pat, I've had enough of your theories about your mum pinching your dosh. Sling your hook already!"

Translation

"Good gracious, Patrick, I am tired of your theories that your mother is stealing your money. Go away."

"Innit"



Definiton

Short for “isn’t it”, as opposed to a sudden instruction to get inside of something. “Innit” is more rhetorical in nature, and rarely needs a response. Alternatives include “you get me” and regional varieties such as “ent et?”

Context

“Blimey, this A-Z is a right eye-opener, innit?”

Translation

“I am startled that this guide is so informative.”

(In a...)

"Jiffy"



Definiton

Quickly, promptly, without delay. Not to be confused with a jiffy bag, which is an envelope lined with bubble wrap.

Context

*" Moving somewhere new?
Don't worry, we'll have your prized
possessions wrapped up and
shipped over there in a jiffy. "*

"Knackered"



Definiton

Tired, beat, exhausted. You may also hear people claim to be “cream crackered”; this is a way of saying “knackered” using Cockney rhyming slang, a traditional art form of finding phrases that rhyme for what you want to say rather than just saying it.

Context

“I’m right knackered, mate, been lugging Sandra’s boxes up the stairs all day! Wish she’d used a relocation specialist.”

"Lurgy"



Definiton

Undefined illness, which the British can use for anything ranging from a minor cold to the bubonic plague. As such, keep someone who claims to have the lurgy at a healthy distance. Just in case.

Context

"Shouldn't you be at work right now, Ezekiel?"

"Nah, mate, I got the lurgy."

"I see. Wish you'd said something before I let you taste my pint. No, no, you finish it off."

"Muggin' me off"



Definiton

Make someone look foolish. A mug is a fool (he's a right mug), but is also slang for the face (look at his dopey mug).

Context

"Jamie, this korma will never get cooked, you ain't turned the oven on!"

"Oi, Gordon, why are you muggin' me off in front of my pals?"

(Cheeky...)

"Nandos"



Definiton

A trip to the popular chicken-based restaurant.
There is nothing inherently cheeky about
a trip to Nando's.

Context

*"Cor, this loping around
town has got me right
Hank Marvin, let's have
a cheeky Nando's."*

Translation

*"I say, our travels around this
neighbourhood has left me
somewhat hungry, shall we
partake of a meal at Nando's?"*

"Old chestnut"



Definiton

A story, joke, excuse, that has been used too many times. This is peculiar to the chestnut. This phrase doesn't work with other nut substitutes.

Context

" I can't help you pack up your things for your move, Tracey, my fingers get a bit stiff ever since I sprained them in that yo-yo tournament. "

" Crikey, Albert, not that old chestnut again. "

"Piece of cake"



Definiton

Easy, straightforward, a cinch. There are, sadly, no baked goods on offer for making something a piece of cake.

Context

"Hi Crown Relocations, I need to move to the UK for work. Can you help me find a place to live, pack up my things, ship them over to the UK, and help me figure out what on Earth "muggin' me off" means? "

"No problem, Andrea, that's a piece of cake. "

"Quid"



Definiton

£1, one pound of UK sterling. Can be used as a singular or a plural, like sheep but with less wool.

Context

"Leo, can you bung us a quid, mate? I forgot me wallet."

"That old chestnut?"

Translation

"Leonard, could you lend me some money? I appear to have left my wallet behind."

"A likely story."

"Rank"



Definiton

Unpleasant, gross, disgusting.

Not a request to place the disgusting object on any kind of scoring system or sliding scale.

Context

" I say, Archibald, this pigeon appears to have redistributed its breakfast upon my feet. "

" Mate, that is well rank! "

"Skive"



Definiton

To avoid or ditch an obligation,
usually related to work or school.

Context

*" Thought you had work today, Reg, what are
you doing here in the pub?" "*

*" Nah, couldn't deal with the faff so I'm skiving off.
I'll get the beers in. "*

"Tart up"



Definiton

To make something look nice. Often used to refer to dressing smartly. There are no tarts involved, nor any other delicious pastries, and bringing some yourself would be peculiar.

Context

"Sheila's leaving do, we're going out-out."

Get tarted up or you'll look a right plonker."

Translation

"Sheila is finishing her employment, so we're going to go to a variety of pubs, clubs and bars to celebrate. Dress smartly or you will look daft."

"Umpteen"



Definiton

A phrase to use when you've done something countless times. Umpteen isn't a special number, but we like to think it comes somewhere after fourteen. Doing anything fourteen times is a lot.

Context

"For the umpteenth time, Henry, there's nothing cheeky about this trip to Nando's. It's just chicken, you mug."

(Lynn)

"Vera"



Definiton

Cockney Rhyming slang for gin. Vera Lynn was an English singer who was very popular during the Second World War. She was perhaps partial to a gin, but who isn't?

Context

"Your round, Johnny.

Don't get me any of that Vera, can't abide the stuff."

Translation

"Jonathan, it's your turn to get drinks for everyone. Please do not purchase any gin on my behalf as I find it rather unpleasant."

"Wind up"



Definiton

To tease, taunt, bait someone. A "wind-up" is a situation that has been engineered to wind someone up. There is no need to insert any cranks or handles into an individual in order to wind them up.

Context

" There's no better way of winding up Eric than suggesting we have a "cheeky" Nando's. "

"Bee's knees*"



Definiton

Brilliant, amazing, wonderful. No beekeeping involved, nor indeed any other insects. Brought to you by the same Victorians who also said "the cat's pyjamas", "the gnat's elbow" and "the elephant's adenoids"

Context

"Cheeky or not, Eric, this Nando's really is the bee's knees!"

* Well you find a word that starts with X that isn't X-ray or Xylophone!

"Yak"



Definiton

Incessant talking. Often seen in threes ("yak yak yak"). Someone who won't stop with the yak yak yak is "yakking on a bit". Absolutely zero relation to the long-haired cattle typical of the Indian subcontinent.

Context

"I came here for an explanation as to what the Brits meant when they said I was winding them up, not to hear you yakking on about cattle."

"Zonked"



Definiton

Tired to the point of exhaustion.
A step beyond knackered.

Context

"He's zonked out on the sofa, been tromping about the shops all day."

Translation

"He has fallen into an exhausted sleep on the sofa after spending significant time walking around various retail outlets."

Let's put your new British lingo to the test. See if you can make sense of this.

“ Alright? Trying to organise a move to the UK? Knackerin, innit? Every company will yak on about how great they are, but how do you tell the good ones from the dodgy? You'd be gutted if you got mugged off.

Talk to our team at Crown Relocations. We've helped our customers relocate umpteen times, so we can take the faff out of it all for you. 'That old chestnut,' you're thinking. But it's not a wind-up. Skive off with a nice Vera Lynn while we get it all sorted for you in a jiffy, and Bob's your uncle. Trust us, you'll be well chuffed. ”

Of course, learning the lingo is just one of many things you'll need to do to prepare for a relocation to the UK. Why not let us help? Get in touch with our team and we'll help you get everything arranged for your big move. Piece of cake.

Call us now on 0204 579 2017 or visit
www.CrownRelo.com

