



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 70

TOPICS

Current Movies: Stomp the Yard and Dreamgirls, vibe, sick vs. ill. vs. cold, to hold someone's hand vs. to hold onto someone

GLOSSARY

to stomp – to dance with heavy and noisy steps; to walk with loud, noisy steps

* When the music started playing, the dancers stomped across the stage one at a time.

to clap – to hit the palms (inside) of your hands together to make a noise

* The musicians came back on stage to perform another piece when the audience didn't stop clapping and cheering.

dance steps – the movements with one's feet that are part of a dance

* Trying to teach me dance steps is like trying to teach an elephant to dance!

cohesion – being a united group; members of a group being very friendly and close together, making a strong group

* There is too much cohesion in some high school groups. Students feel a lot of pressure to do the same things that everyone else does to be part of the group.

pride – feeling good and satisfied about one's achievements

* The speaker at the college graduation told the students that they should feel pride in their accomplishments.

to open – to premiere; to have the first performance of a movie or show

* When will the movie about Dr. Jeff McQuillan's life as a singer and dancer open at this theater?

Motown – short for Motor Town, a nickname the city of Detroit, Michigan; a type of music popular in the 1960s

* Some of the most memorable and well-known music came out of Motown.

vibe – a general emotional feeling that is difficult to define; the atmosphere of a place, such as a restaurant or a nightclub; one's general feeling about a person

* I don't know why but that I just don't like that guy. He gives me a bad vibe.



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sick – having a physical (in the body) or mental (in the mind) illness; (a little less formal and polite than “ill”)

* Call his parents to let them know that Dana is sick and needs to be picked up from school and taken home to rest.

ill – having a physical (in the body) or mental (in the mind) sickness; (a little more formal and polite than “sick”)

* The doctor asked him, “How long have you been feeling ill?”

cold – being sick because of an infection by a virus (germ) and causes one to have a running nose and a sore throat, to sneeze, and other symptoms

* I’ve been trying to get over this cold for weeks, but I’m still coughing and I can’t sleep at night.

to hold (someone’s) hand – to put your hand into someone else’s hand

* Do you think Becky will let me hold her hand during the concert?

to hold onto (someone) – to use your hands and arms to attach yourself firmly and tightly to someone else’s body

* If you’re going to ride on the back of my motorcycle, make sure you hold onto me as tightly as you can so you don’t fall off.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

The Motown Sound

The Motown Sound is a “style” (type) of popular music that is associated with the city of Detroit, Michigan, in the 1960s. It is called the Motown Sound because many of the songs with this style came from “Motown Record Corporation” located in Detroit, and the songs were written by this company’s “in-house” (within the company) songwriters and “producers,” or the people who supervise the making of music recordings. One of the most well known is the “founder” (person who started the company), Berry Gordy, whose name is “synonymous” (closely associated) with the Motown Sound.

What is the Motown Sound? It is a style of “soul” music that is a mixture of rhythm and blues (called R&B – pronounced “R and B”) and “gospel” music, a type of religious music found in some churches, most often attended by African Americans. The “recording artists” (people who play and sing recorded music) who first made the Motown Sound popular were African American.

Motown Records had an in-house band called “The Funk Brothers” and it had a lot of influence on the Motown Sound. The Funk Brothers played the instruments on the background “tracks” (recorded music) on most of the Motown “hits” (successful popular music) from 1959 to 1972.

The most well known Motown group was “The Supremes,” an “all-female” (all women) group with three members. The Supremes was the most successful musical group in the 1960s. They had 12 number one hits between 1964 and 1969. Their hits include “Stop! In the Name of Love,” and “You Can’t Hurry Love.” Today, most Americans will know at least the “tune” (music) of many of their hits, if not the “lyrics” (words). The Motown Sound still influences popular music today.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café, number 70.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café, episode 70. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in the beautiful City of Los Angeles, in the State of California.

Check out our new website at eslpod.com, where you will find the Learning Guide for this episode as well as some new premium courses that you can download. I remind you, almost every episode, to visit our website and to email us. If you don't want me to remind you to email all the time, email me at eslpod@eslpod.com.

In today's Café, we're going to be talking about some popular movies in the United States, two movies in particular. One is called "Dream Girls," and the other one is called "Stomp the Yard," two very interesting movies which we'll talk about, and both of these movies are very much about American culture, or one part of American culture. As usual, we'll answer some of your questions as well. Let's get started!

Every couple of months or so, I like to talk about some of the popular movies and books in the United States. Today we're going to talk about movies, and two movies in particular, both of which are among the most popular movies currently showing in the United States, and both of them are related to African-American or black American culture in some way.

The first movie is called "Stomp the Yard," stomp, "stomp," the yard, "yard." The verb to stomp means to put your feet down on the ground very quickly and loudly. If you are trying to take a soda can and crush it so that it's flat, you would take your foot and you would stomp on it. That's the normal use of this verb, to stomp.

A yard, "yard," has a couple of meanings. A yard is usually a part of a school where kids can play, we would call that a schoolyard. You can also have a yard in the back or front of your house - a place where there's grass and trees. A schoolyard, however, often does not have grass and trees, at least in some of our bigger cities.



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Now, the movie, “Stomp the yard,” is a movie about a type of dancing that was created by African-Americans. It was started by African American college students, who were members of fraternities and sororities.

These are like clubs or organizations that men and women in college - going to the university - can join. Most people are not members of these groups, but they're considered social groups and usually they have a name that uses some of the Greek letters like kappa, delta, chi, epsilon, and so forth - the Greek alphabet - and for that reason they are often called the Greek system. And, they are organizations that are often very popular with some college students, and they are, or at least have the reputation for being something of a party organization - that they like to have lots of parties. In fact, one of the more famous movies back in the 1970s - back when I was in high school - was called “Animal House,” and that was about a fraternity at a college.

The stomping dance movement was begun by black college students, and it involves, you can imagine, stomping your feet - putting your feet down very loudly, making noise - as well as clapping. To clap, “clap,” is to do this (sound of hands clapping). Thank you; thank you very much. That is part of the dance routine or the dance steps. We talk about the dance steps, “steps,” we mean the things that you do during the dance.

As I said, this stomping, which is sometimes called step dancing, was popular in these Greek college organizations - the Greek system - of fraternities and sororities, and is still very popular now. It is also something you can find students doing in high schools and in junior high schools where there are a lot of African-American students.

These stomp dance groups are, of course, an opportunity for the students have a good time; there are also contests or competitions in this type of dance. One person described stomping as a way of these groups to improve their cohesion and their pride. Cohesion, “cohesion,” is being together - being very close to the people around you. So, if someone says, “We have a very cohesive (that's the adjective) group,” that means that we're very close - we know each other very well - we think in the same manner.

Another thing that the stomping group does is help students with their own sense of pride, “pride,” and pride can be a good thing; it can also be a bad thing. Here, it's meant as a good description of people feeling happy and satisfied with their own achievements - what they have been able to do.



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There have been other movies made that include stomping as a type of dance. Spike Lee, one of the great filmmakers in the United States, made a movie almost 20 years ago called “School Daze” where you can also see this kind of dance used and performed by the characters.

Our second movie, also one about African-American culture in the United States, is called “Dream Girls,” “Dream Girls,” (all one word). To dream is to imagine, either while you are sleeping or when you are supposed to be working, about some other life - some other reality.

The movie, “Dream Girls,” it is about the dreams of a group of young African-American girls who are part of a singing group. “Dream Girls” was originally a Broadway musical. It was a play with lots of singing and dancing that was very popular in New York City, what we call Broadway, which is the street in New York where many of the famous theaters are. It’s actually quite an old Broadway musical. It opened, or it began, in 1981, which is when I was just out of high school.

Now, it’s been made into a movie, and the movie is about a group of three girls who are from Chicago and they call themselves the Dreams, and they want to be famous. And it talks about the story of these three girls, and how they try to become successful in the music industry.

The music that they sing is related to Motown music. Motown, “Motown,” is a style or type of music that was popular in the United States in the 1950s and 60s. It is very much related to other African-American or black American music forms. “Dream Girls” is about three girls trying to become successful singing that kind of music.

The girls, in this movie, enter a talent contest, and they go to the most famous African American music theater in the United States, the Apollo Theater, “Apollo.” This is a famous theater located in New York City where many African-American singers got their start - they began their singing career, or their singing life, at the Apollo Theater.

The story of “Dream Girls” is based on something of a true story of one of the more famous Motown singing groups in the 1960s called the Supremes. The famous singer from that group was called Diana Ross. The group changed its name later to Diana Ross and the Supremes. So, if you’re interested in the 1960s’ music - African-American inspired music - this is a good film for you to see.



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One interesting thing about this movie is that the star, or one of the stars of the movie, is a woman who, in real life, was on a talent show on national television a few years ago. The name of the show - the talent show, where people come and sing and it's like a contest - is called "American Idol." I talked about "American Idol" back on English Café number 31. Well, Jennifer Hudson was one of the contestants - one of the people who was trying to win the "American Idol" contest. She lost, but she got this movie part and now is considered one of the stars of the movie.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Mahmoud, "Mahmoud," in Iran. The question has to do with the meaning of the word vibe, "vibe," such as in the sentence, "Don't you get the same vibe from her." Vibe is a general feeling - an emotional feeling - that you can't exactly say where it comes from, but it's your impression of a person or a place. It can be the atmosphere of a place such as a restaurant or a nightclub. It can also be a plural: vibes. It originally comes from the word vibration, "vibration," which means to shake something - to move something back and forth. For example, if there's an earthquake, there's a vibration in the earth - you can feel the ground moving. We get earthquakes every year or so here in Southern California that you can feel.

In the 1960s, the term became a slang expression to mean a person's emotional state or the feeling that you got from a place or a person. For example, if you meet your sister's new boyfriend and immediately - right away - you don't like him, you may say, "I don't know why, but I just get a bad vibe from him." Notice we use the expression from a person. Getting a bad vibe from a person means that you have a bad impression of them - something about them or what they did makes you uncomfortable.

You can also have a good vibe from someone, and that's possible as well. For example, you go to a new restaurant, your friend might say to you, "What do you think of the vibe in this place" - do you get a good vibe from this place.

Our next question comes from "Eiji," Eiji from Japan. The question has to do with the difference among the words sick, "sick," cold, "cold," and ill, "ill."

These words can sometimes mean the same thing, especially sick and ill. Sick and ill means to have some sort of illness, either physical or, in my case, mental. To be sick is often used as a verb such as, "I'm going to be sick," to mean to



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vomit - when you have food that comes up from your stomach and out of your mouth.

A cold is usually an infection that you get from a virus, where you have a runny nose, a sore throat - your throat hurts, you sneeze. These can all be symptoms or signs that you have a cold. So, if you have a cold, you are sick - you are ill.

Sick and ill are usually used with almost any type of illness. Sick is probably a little more informal than ill; the doctor would probably use the word ill. Cold is a specific kind of illness - it's a type of illness. So, if you wake up and you're not feeling well, you may call your boss and say that you're sick. You could say, "I'm staying home sick today." Notice that you wouldn't say, "I'm staying home ill." Sometimes for reasons that aren't necessarily logical, we have certain expressions, and so the expression to stay home sick is used, but you would not say to stay home ill.

If you run into a friend whose wife has been sick, you might say, "I've heard that your wife has been ill. I hope she's feeling better now." Ill sounds a little more formal - a little more polite, perhaps.

Our final question comes from Chinatsu, "Chinatsu," in Osaka, Japan. Chinatsu wants to know about some expressions that were heard in songs. One of them is "hold your hand," another one was "hold onto me" - what is the difference between these expressions?

Hold your hand, which may have come from the Beatles' song, "I Want to Hold Your Hand" - yes, I will now sing!

I want to hold your hand,
I want to hold your hand.

I'm thinking of starting a music group called the Dream Boys!

Getting back to Chinatsu's question, to hold someone's hand means to take their hand and put it in your hand. We often use this expression when we are talking about two lovers - a boy and a girl in love - and they hold hands, or she holds his hand. They put their hands together as they walk down the street, for example.

To hold onto someone - "onto," is onto - to hold onto someone means to use your hands and grab someone tightly or firmly so that they can't leave, or perhaps they won't fall down. For example, if you are in a subway or a train and you are



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standing, you may say to your son or daughter, who's a young child, you may say, "Hold onto me," meaning grab me so that you don't fall.

Finally, there's an expression that just says, "hold on" when you want someone to wait. "Hold on, I'll be with you in five minutes," that means wait here, I will come back or I will be with you at a later time. We also use that verb, to hold, when you're on the telephone, and someone says, "Please hold," that means please wait and then they'll come back two hours later and talk to you!

Well, we won't come back two hours later to talk to you! We'll be back next week on the English Café. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on the English Café.

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