

## Slang and colloquial language

Colloquial language is the language we use on the street, with our friends and in informal situations. Some people think that this language is only useful in spoken contexts. However, even in written contexts (especially blogs or informal emails) this language is very common. The following are examples of colloquial language taken from the blog we read at the start of this lesson. Match them to their 'standard' equivalent:

### Exercise 1

1. hit the hay	a. I got up very early
2. pretty much straight away	b. After breakfast I walked down to Ginza
3. my jetlag was getting the better of me	c. almost immediately
4. but now I'm raring to go	d. my jetlag was asserting itself
5. I got up ridiculously early	e. to begin with, I must try <i>unagi don</i> before I return home
6. After breakfast I trundled down to Ginza	f. but now I'm eager to begin
7. all the swankiest Japanese go there to buy the trendiest clothes and gadgets	g. and I must look round Akihabara
8. but it was sure worth a look	h. but it was definitely worth investigation
9. for starters I can't go home until I've tried <i>unagi don</i>	i. the most stylish Japanese go there to buy the most fashionable clothes and gadgets
10. and I've just got to take a look round Akihabara	j. go to sleep

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_
10. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 2

The reason these are “colloquialisms” is because we would never use them in formal English, spoken or written.

Try to match the colloquial expression on the left with the standard one on the right.

COLLOQUIAL EXPRESSION	STANDARD ENGLISH
1. give me a ring / bell	a. I'm exhausted
2. I can't be bothered	b. children
3. I'm shattered	c. I'm seriously thinking about leaving
4. I was desperate for a brew	d. phone me
5. kids	e. fashionable
6. I've got a good mind to go home	f. I've been dating Laura for two weeks
7. I don't want to be a wet blanket	g. I really needed a tea / coffee
8. trendy	h. I don't want to be stop you having fun
9. I've been seeing Laura for two weeks	i. I don't have the energy or inclination

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_
7. \_\_\_\_\_
8. \_\_\_\_\_
9. \_\_\_\_\_

## Exercise 3

1. eat like a horse	a. to approve of something
2. flabbergasted	b. to consume food excessively
3. to give something the thumbs up	c. to be deceiving someone, usually in a gentle or teasing manner
4. to be having someone on	d. to be extremely busy
5. to be up to one's eye balls in something	e. extremely surprised
6. to be run off one's feet	f. to have large amounts of something (usually work or debt)

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_
6. \_\_\_\_\_

## **Exercise 4**

Using one of the expressions we have learnt above to complete the following sentences.

1. I was absolutely \_\_\_\_\_ when I came home last night – I had to wake up at 4am and I didn't leave the office until 8pm. I just fell down and went straight to sleep.
2. This morning I had to get up \_\_\_\_\_ early as I had to do my homework before school. I just want to go back to bed.
3. I was absolutely \_\_\_\_\_ when I saw a giraffe walking down Johnston Road.
4. When my friend told me she was getting married, I thought she was \_\_\_\_\_ me on, but it turned out she'd met a guy online and they were desperately in love. The wedding's in June!
5. I can't be \_\_\_\_\_ to do my homework tonight – I've had enough of studying for one day!
6. I'm up to my \_\_\_\_\_ in work – I've got three essays, a maths problem and three art projects to finish before this weekend.
7. Jane is nice but she's a bit of a \_\_\_\_\_ – when everyone else was dancing, she just sat there with a frown on her face.
8. When I worked as a waiter, I was always \_\_\_\_\_ off my feet – I had to keep dashing in and out of the kitchen and I never had time to rest.

*NOTE: Some slang and colloquial expressions can be extremely rude or offensive. It is important not to use these expressions. If you are not sure about how offensive a word might be, it is better to use the standard English form. Certainly, your blog should not contain swear words or words that would offend some readers. A good dictionary will tell you whether a word is likely to offend someone or not.*