

# Talk Turkey on Thanksgiving:

**An English Lesson eBook**



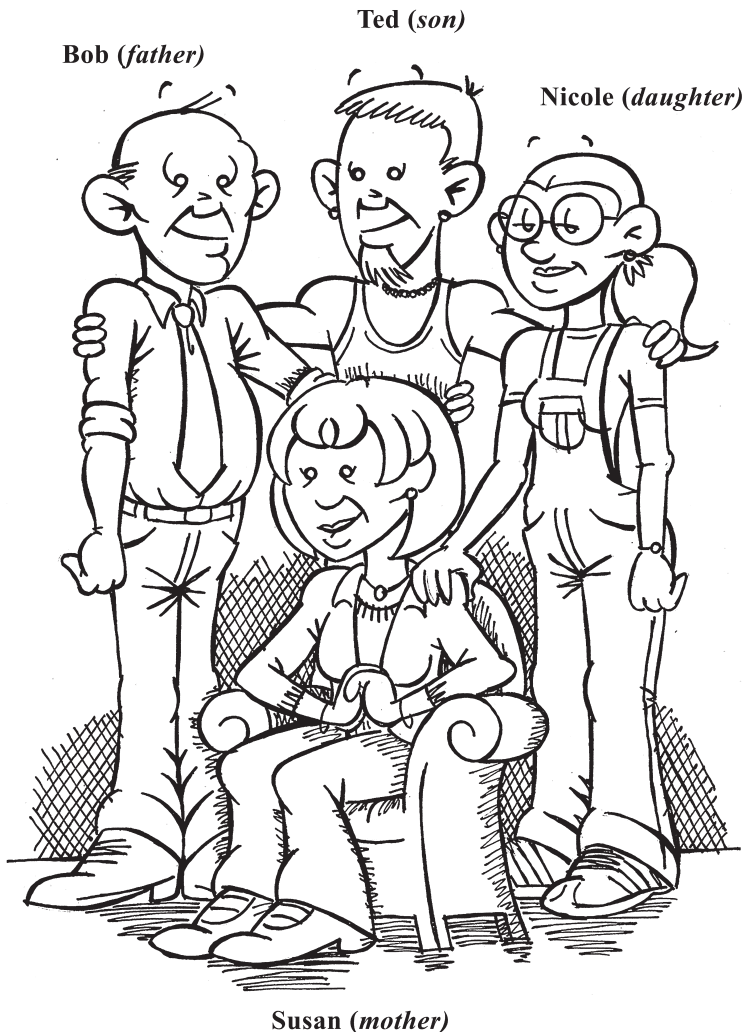
BY AMY GILLET



## MAIN CHARACTERS

The author would like to thank the Johnson family for graciously agreeing to appear in this lesson. If you like this lesson, please check out the book *Speak English Like an American*, also featuring the Johnson family.

### The Johnson Family



## A THANKSGIVING DAY FEAST

*The Johnson family is celebrating Thanksgiving with a traditional Thanksgiving day feast. As usual, Ted and his sister Nicole are having trouble getting along. Fortunately, Ted's girlfriend Amber is with the family and helps break up the tension.*

Amber:  She's got a carving knife. She knows how to use it! 

Susan: Amber, what a pretty song!

Amber: I'm **killing two birds with one stone**. I'm coming up with new songs while helping you get Thanksgiving dinner ready.

*(ten minutes later)*

Susan: Everything's on the table. We're ready to eat.

Bob: Before we **dig in**, I think we should **count our blessings**.

Susan: I agree! We have so much to be grateful for. **For starters**, we have our whole family together with us today.

Bob: I'm grateful to the National Cookie Company for buying Susan's Scrumptious Cookies. That helped us buy our new house.

Ted: I'm grateful to Amber. With her beautiful singing voice, she helped us **land a recording contract** with Big Deal Records.

Susan: Yes, Amber is certainly **blessed with** a lovely voice.

Amber: I'm grateful that Ted was able to quit smoking this year, **cold turkey!**

Susan: What? Ted smoked?

*Amber:* Oh, not that much.

*Nicole:* Not much at all. Only about a pack a day!

*Ted:* It's a **mixed blessing** being here today. On the one hand, I get to see Mom and Dad. On the other hand, I have to put up with my sister!

*(everyone is eating)*

*Susan:* Amber, you're **eating like a bird**. Everything okay?

*Amber:* I **stuffed myself** on turkey while I was carving it in the kitchen.

*Nicole:* I thought I noticed a leg missing. I thought it walked away by itself!

*Ted:* Everything was delicious. I'm **stuffed!**

*Susan:* I hope you **saved room for dessert**. We have pecan pie and pumpkin cookies for dessert.

*Nicole:* Pumpkin cookies?

*Susan:* Yes. Now's a good time to **break the news**. The National Cookie Company\* has hired me as a recipe consultant. I'm having all of you test out my new recipe tonight.

*Amber:* **Talk about killing two birds with one stone!**

\* In the book *Speak English Like an American*, Susan and Bob sell their cookie business to the National Cookie Company for a "small fortune."

## IDIOMS & EXPRESSIONS

**blessed with** – lucky to have a special quality or character

- Nicole finds her chemistry and physics classes very easy. She's **blessed with** a scientific mind.

**(to) break the news** – to make something known

- Ted said, “Now’s a good time to **break the news**: Amber and I are getting married!”

**cold turkey** – immediately, not gradually (when you quit a habit cold turkey, you stop doing it immediately instead of gradually stopping it)

- I drink five cups of coffee a day. If I quit **cold turkey**, I’m sure I’d start getting headaches.

**(to) count one’s blessings** – to think about the good things in one’s life; to express gratitude for all that one has (and not focus on what one does not have)

- We should **count our blessings**. Many houses in town were destroyed by Hurricane Sandy, but ours was hardly touched.

**(to) dig in** – to start eating

- **Dig in!** Everything will get cold if you don’t start eating.

**(to) eat like a bird** – to not eat much; to have a small appetite

- That’s all your having? A turkey wing and a small blob of mashed potatoes? You **eat like a bird!**

**for starters** – as a first step; to begin with

- We need to clean the house before our company comes. **For starters**, let’s vacuum downstairs.

**(to) kill two birds with one stone** – to get two things done at the same time; to solve two problems with one action

- Susan **killed two birds with one stone** by listening to the new Stephen King novel on CD while cooking Thanksgiving dinner.

NOTE: This expression can be traced back 2,000 years. The Roman poet Ovid used a similar expression in his works.

**(to) land a contract** – to get a contract; to finalize a contract

- The National Cookie Company **landed a contract** to distribute its cookies in the largest supermarket chain in California.

NOTE: "land" in this context means to gain or secure; you can also land a deal or a job.

**mixed blessing** – something with both good and bad aspects

- Having house guests over Thanksgiving is a **mixed blessing**. On the one hand, we need to prepare rooms for them. On the other hand, we have people to help us eat all the leftover turkey!

**(to) put up with** – to endure without complaint

- Michelle’s husband always complains about her cooking. I don’t know how she **puts up with** him.

**(to) save room for dessert** – to not eat too much so that one can still eat dessert

- “May I have seconds?” — “Sure, but be sure to **save room for dessert**. We’ve got pumpkin pie.”

**(to) stuff oneself / to be stuffed** – to overeat / to feel very full

- The dinner was so delicious, I **stuffed myself**. Unfortunately, I don’t think I’ll be able to eat dessert.
- “There’s a turkey leg left. Would you like it?” — “No, I’m **stuffed**.”

**Talk about ...** – That’s an example of; we were talking before about ... (often used when a topic has recently mentioned and another example has come up, or to add emphasis to a point you are making)

- **Talk about** overeating. Ted just ate two turkey legs, a big pile of stuffing, and half a green bean casserole!

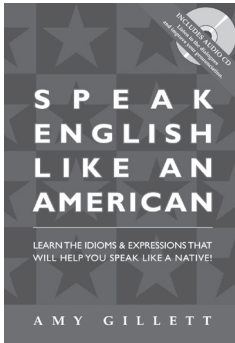
## Practice the Expressions

### Fill in the blank with the missing word:

- 1) What happened to your appetite? You're eating like a \_\_\_\_.  
a) chicken                      b) turkey                      c) bird
- 2) I baked chocolate chip cookies, so save \_\_\_\_ for dessert.  
a) room                      b) space                      c) place
- 3) Bob can barely turn on the oven, but fortunately his wife Susan is blessed \_\_\_\_ with great cooking skills.  
a) from                      b) by                      c) with
- 4) Ted was able to quit smoking \_\_\_\_ turkey.  
a) smoked                      b) hot                      c) cold
- 5) The pies are all on the table. Please dig \_\_\_\_!  
a) on                      b) up                      c) in
- 6) This year, we're staying home for Thanksgiving. It's a \_\_\_\_ blessing. On the one hand, we don't get caught up in holiday traffic. On the other hand, we miss seeing our family.  
a) mixed                      b) combined                      c) total
- 7) Our Thanksgiving dinner guests bought a \$2 bottle of wine from Trader Joe's. Talk \_\_\_\_ cheap!  
a) of                      b) about                      c) on
- 8) While the turkey rests, we can kill two birds with one \_\_\_\_: we'll let the turkey cool down, while working up our appetites for dinner.  
a) arrow                      b) rock                      c) stone

*ANSWERS: 1. C; 2. A; 3. C; 4. C; 5. C; 6. A; 7. B; 8. C*

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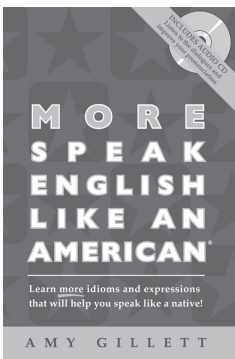
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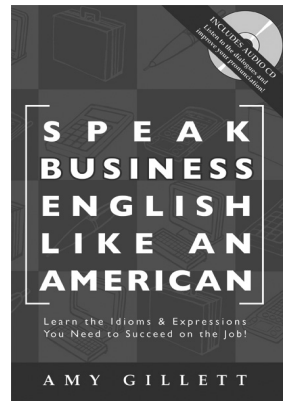
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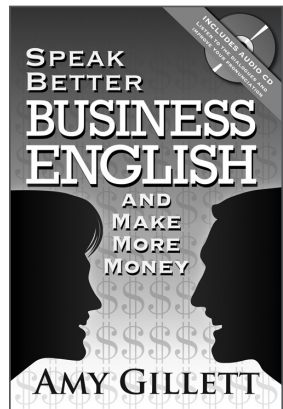
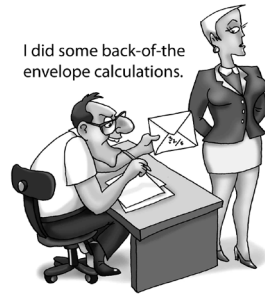
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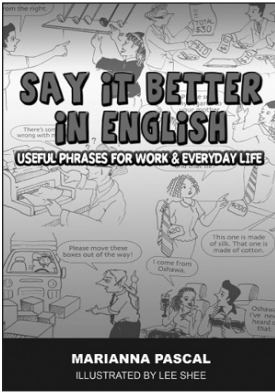


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