

FUMC ESL 3-28-2011 What is the hang up?

- You can *hang up* the telephone.
- The computer can *hang up* when you are downloading something.
- You can have a *hang up* about something. Something that bothers you is a hang up. It might be something about your appearance or personality. It could also be something that other people do that bothers you. EX: She has a hang up about her height. She thinks she is too tall. He has a hang up about people that throw trash on the ground. He yells at them to pick up their trash.
- If someone says, “What’s the *hang up*?” they mean what is the problem. Why is this problem not fixed? What is preventing the completion of the project?

### **What’s the hang up?**

The headline for the article in the paper said, “What’s the hang-up?”. The question was addressed to Rick Barnes who is the coach of the University of Texas men’s basketball team. In the article, the reporter asked why the men’s basketball team was never able to win the national championship. Year after year, they played well enough to be invited to the tournament. But they never seemed to be able to play well enough to win it. The reporter wanted to know what the problem was in winning the national championship. What was the hang up? What was the snag that kept them out of the finals? Is the coach teaching good skills? Are the players not talented? What is the answer?

### **Discussion:**

- 1.Do your newspapers at home have a whole section devoted to sports?
- 2.What are the most important sports in your country?
- 3.Do people argue about how good the coach is in the newspaper?
- 4.Is it OK to criticize the players and coaches of the national teams?
- 5.What sports do you enjoy watching?
- 6.Did you play sports when you were young? Which ones?
- 7.Are children required to play sports in school? Do you think that’s a good idea?
- 8.Some children begin training very hard for sports at a very young age. How do you feel about that?
- 9.Is it OK to send children away from their families so that they can be coached by a professional in some other city?
- 10.Have you ever hung up on someone who called you?
- 11.I have a hang up about people that text while they drive. Do you have any hang ups about people?
- 12.Sometimes people can get hung up on something. For example, my husband was hung up on installing a new water filter. He couldn’t get it to fit. Then he realized he was trying to put it in backwards. Give an example of a time when you got hung up trying to figure something out.

To encourage someone, you might say “*hang in there*”. This means keep trying. When you keep trying, you persevere. For example, you might say: “I know things are tough right now, Jo, but hang in there. Things will get better.”

Sometimes people say they are *hanging tough* meaning they are persevering. But if you *hang loose* that means you are relaxing. Sometimes we perform better at sports if we hang loose. That is we relax and don’t try so hard. Have you ever tried so hard at something that you actually did worse?

One time I was playing in a tennis tournament. I didn’t expect to win, so I was just playing for fun. But I started to win games. In fact, I got ahead four games to one. When I saw that I might win, I started trying much harder. I concentrated very hard on my serve and every stroke. As a result, I lost the next five games in a row. Once I was behind four games to five, I relaxed and played much better. Tell about a similar experience you have had.

If you *hang back*, you stay behind others. You don’t keep up with everyone. Sometimes people *hang back* because they are not confident. They are unsure. Or you might hang back from fear. For example: The girls in the freedom march hung back fearful that there might be violence.

Are you the kind of person who likes to lead the march, follow the crowd or hang back?

If someone tells you to *hang on*, they are saying wait just a minute. Perhaps they are working on something when you come in and they don't want to stop until they finish that thought or idea. For example: *Hang on* just a minute. I need to write down this message before I forget it. Another meaning for *hang on* is to listen with complete attention. For example: She is so much in love with him. She hangs on every word he speaks. And of course when you grasp something tightly, you *hang on* to it.

**Choose the correct idiom for each sentence.**

- 1.If you'll \_\_\_\_\_ until I finish this phone call, I'll be able to show you the empty apartment.
- 2.Weekends are important. They give me time to \_\_\_\_\_ and recharge.
- 3.Here comes a big wind. \_\_\_\_\_ to your hat.
- 4.When we entered the ballroom, Katy \_\_\_\_\_, unsure whether she wanted to dance.
- 5.Jim has been through a lot, but he is \_\_\_\_\_. He is a very strong guy.
- 6.I \_\_\_\_\_ on that obnoxious salesman who keeps calling me.
- 7.We can never get Cindy to eat anything. She has a real \_\_\_\_\_ about her weight.
- 8.I thought you would have this project finished by now. What's the \_\_\_\_\_?
- 9.\_\_\_\_\_ a minute, will you?
- 10.He wasn't in the first crowd of people that went through. He must have \_\_\_\_\_ when we opened the gate.
- 11.\_\_\_\_\_, Tom. Things will get easier as you get used to being on your own.

**TOEFL Vocabulary**

1. ancient: very old, often related to past centuries

In ancient times, people suffered from many diseases that we now have cures for.

*Give an example of how life was different in ancient times.*

2. celebrated: well-known, famous

He's a celebrated mathematician. Everyone in his field knows and respects him.

*Give an example of a celebrated author.*

3. common-place: very normal, everyday thing

In America, the use of idioms is common-place.

*Give an example of something that is common-place in your country.*

4. delicate: sensitive, fragile, easy to break

The president is involved in delicate negotiations with Syria.

The old China was so delicate that it cracked when I set it on the table.

*Give an example of something in your home that is delicate.*