

## FUMC ESL 10-6-2011 Advanced Lesson

### Dog Talk: Most Dogs in the U.S. Seem to Have an Easy Life

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Most dogs in the United States seem to have an easy life. They sleep a lot and get fed often. People take their dogs for a walk two times a day and also let them play outside. Dogs get medical care when they are sick or injured. What a great life! Right? Well, we say people with a similar, carefree existence enjoy a “**dog’s life**.” They have no troubles or responsibilities. They can come and go as they please, sleep all day, and never have to work.

But not everyone has it so easy. In fact, some people say we live in a “**dog-eat-dog world**.” That means many people are competing for the same things, like good jobs. They say that to be successful, a person has to “**work like a dog**.” This means they have to work very, very hard. Such hard work can make people “**dog-tired**.” And, the situation would be even worse if they became “**sick as a dog**.”

Still, people say “**every dog has its day**.” This means that every person enjoys a successful period during his or her life. To be successful, people often have to learn new skills. Yet, some people say that “**you can never teach an old dog new tricks**.” They believe that older people do not like to learn new things and will not change the way they do things.

Some people are compared to dogs in bad ways. People who are unkind or uncaring can be described as “**meaner than a junkyard dog**.” Junkyard dogs live in places where people throw away things they do not want. Mean dogs are often used to guard this property. They bark or attack people who try to enter the property. However, sometimes a person appears to be mean and threatening but is really not so bad. We say “**his bark is worse than his bite**.”

A junkyard is not a fun place for a dog. Many dogs in the United States sleep in safe little houses near their owners’ home. These doghouses provide shelter. Yet they can be cold and lonely in the winter.

Husbands and wives use this “**doghouse**” term when they are angry at each other. For example, a woman might get angry at her husband for coming home late or forgetting their wedding anniversary. She might tell him that he is “**in the doghouse**.” She may not treat him nicely until he apologizes. However, the husband may decide that it is best to leave things alone and not create more problems. He might decide “**to let sleeping dogs lie**.”

Dog expressions also are used to describe the weather. “**The dog days of summer**” are the hottest days of the year. A rainstorm may cool the weather. But we do not want it to rain too hard. We do not want it “**to rain cats and dogs**.”

### Discussion:

1-Talk about pets in your country.

- a. What animals do people keep as pets?
- b. Do you think pets are more pampered in the U.S. than in other countries?
- c. Would you ever keep a pet?
- d. What type of animal would make the best pet?
- e. What is the difference between having a dog or a cat as a pet?
- f. What things can dogs do that cats can’t and vice versa?

2-Talk about pressure to compete.

- a. Do you feel pressure to compete in this dog eat dog world?
- b. Is it important to you to go to the best schools and get the best jobs?
- c. Or do you prefer a more laid back lifestyle?
- d. Are you a go-getter or a slacker?

3-How do you feel about people who don't work hard?

- a. Someone who appears to be busy, but doesn't really do anything is a **gold bricker**. Have you ever worked with someone like this?
- b. Do you have a problem with people at your company who don't work hard?

4-Your car **idles** when you are stopped at a light. The engine is running but not going forward. The same analogy applies to people. A person who is doing nothing is an **idler**. Almost everyone is an idler sometimes. I'm an idler on Sunday mornings. I like to read the paper and have a cup of tea.

- a. When are you an idler?

5-If something is **going to the dogs**, it is getting worse. Many people have the feeling our country is going to the dogs. We feel it isn't as strong and as ethical as it used to be.

- a. Do people in your country feel like the country is going to the dogs? Do older people feel this way more often than younger people?
- b. Do you feel like your life is going to the dogs or **looking up**?

## TOEFL

1. What prompted this conversation?

- a- Bill got hungry.
- b- John noticed the time.
- c- John had an exam.
- d- John decided to go home.

2. Why is John studying?

- a- He has a test that night.
- b- He plans to go home for the weekend.
- c- He has not studied during the semester.
- d- He is helping his friend.

3. When will the cafeteria close?

- a- at six o'clock
- b- at six-thirty
- c- over the weekend
- d- on Monday

4. What does Bill want John to do?

- a- Bill wants John to study with him in the dormitory.
- b- Bill wants John to go home with him for the weekend.
- c- Bill wants John to let him know if he orders a pizza.
- d- Bill wants John to find out what is being served in the cafeteria.

5. What will Bill most probably do now?

- a- continue studying
- b- go to the cafeteria
- c- cook dinner at home
- d- eat pizza.

