

FUMC ESL 8-9-2012 ADVANCED LESSON

I. There is a saying, "One man's trash is another man's treasure". What do you think this means?

Have you ever found something you really liked in someone's trash?

Have you ever been to a garage sale or a yard sale and found something really special?

Has anyone ever wanted something of yours that you were happy to part with?

II. I always thought garbage and trash are the same, but I have recently discovered they are not. Read the article below and discuss any vocabulary or idioms you don't know.

The Difference Between Garbage And Trash

Did you know there was a difference between trash and garbage? I'm nearly 40 years old, and I didn't know that. I always figured trash and garbage were the same thing, a bunch of stuff you wanted to throw away. You live and learn.

The other morning, I walked outside my house and I noticed the can in which I dump my refuse (a highbrow word for a bunch of stuff you want to throw away), was still full from the previous day. There was a little note stuck to the can. It said, in essence, that my refuse hadn't been picked up because - and I quote - "trash and garbage had been mixed." What's the difference?

I called Georgia Waste Systems, where I have my trash/garbage account, to apologize. They were very nice and said a lot of people make the same mistake I did and they were not planning a lawsuit. As long as I had somebody on the phone who could explain, I asked, "What is the difference between trash and garbage?"

"Garbage," said a spokesperson, "are things that come from the bathroom or kitchen."

"You mean like bread you leave out for a couple of months and green things start growing on it?" I asked.

"Precisely," she said.

"Trash," she continued, "is basically anything else. We do not pick up leaves, for instance, or old furniture, or boxes of materials that were collected when somebody cleaned out their attic."

The lady said it was up to the individual garbage collectors to decide if there is, in fact, trash and garbage mixed on their appointed rounds. Somehow, I can't visualize two guys on a garbage truck really spending that much time trying to figure out which is which.

"What is it you have there, Leonard? Is it trash or garbage?" one guy says to the other.

"I can't be absolutely certain, Elvin, but it has green things growing on it." Isn't life complex enough?

I will, of course, comply with the waste company's dictum against mixing my trash and my garbage, but don't we have enough complexities in our lives as it is? Don't we have to deal with international terrorism and the women's movement? Don't we have to battle traffic, computer involvement in our lives, and airplanes that never take off on time? Isn't it enough of a burden that we have to decide what to do about Central America, which long-distance telephone company we want to serve us and which cereal has the most fiber?

Oh, for a simpler time, when the good guys always won, a girl could still cook and still would, and trash and garbage were the same, both delicacies as far as a goat was concerned. It is a

wonder that more of us don't tie a Glad Bag around our heads and tell modern living to go stick its head in the nearest dumpster.

III. Discuss these words which are similar to garbage.

debris-the remains of something that has been destroyed or broken up EX: Debris from the landslide lay on the highway.

dregs-sediment EX: I had hoped for a cup of coffee, but nothing was left in the pot but the dregs.

filth- dirt or pollution (also can be used for pornography) EX: The filth in the streets included old newspapers, remains of uneaten fast food meals and dog feces. EX: (pornography) There is so much filth on TV these days, I don't even let my young kids watch it.

scrap-small something that is leftover EX: There were scraps of paper all over the floor.

waste-an unwanted or unusable object EX: The family's waste all went into the landfill.

IV. Trash, garbage, waste is becoming a huge problem in our modern world. Americans generate 4.6 pounds of trash daily, more than any other nation. Most of that trash ends up in landfills.

How does your country dispose of trash?

Do you have trash pick up at the curb?

How many days a week is trash picked up?

Is your country active in recycling waste?

Is there a separate pick up for recycling?

What do you do personally to cut down on waste?

Who takes out the trash at your house?

V. Many athletes "talk trash" before a big game. What does that mean?

Poor, uneducated white people are sometimes referred to as "white trash". Of course, that is a demeaning and offensive term. Do you have any idioms or sayings in your country about trash?