

Elf

(Comedy/Children's Fantasy) (2003)
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Major Characters

- Buddy.....Will Ferrell
A loveable tall, sweet human being who has been raised as an elf by the elves of the North Pole, who decides to travel to New York City after he discovers he is a human whose real father lives there.
- Walter.....James Caan
Buddy's biological father, who is an executive with a New York publisher that specializes in children's books.
- Emily.....Mary Steenburgen
Walter's wife, who is happy to have Buddy in their house.
- Papa Elf.....Bob Newhart
The kind elf that agreed to raise Buddy as his own son, and the narrator of this movie.
- Santa Claus.....Edward Asner
The world-famous bearded fat man from the North Pole who brings toys to the children of the world every Christmas.
- Jovie.....Zooey Deschanel
A sweet worker at a New York department store who Buddy likes.
- Michael.....Daniel Tay
Walter and Emily's son, who grows to like and respect Buddy.
- Miles Finch.....Peter Dinklage
A successful children's book writer who is a dwarf (just over four feet tall).

Plot Summary

This film is the story of Buddy, a human being who was raised as an elf by the wonderful and loving elves of the North Pole (Elves are tiny mythical characters that are about half the size of humans, wear tight-fitting green clothes, and spend most of their time eating candy and building toys for Santa Claus to give away to the world's children every Christmas Eve). One day Buddy finds out that he is not actually an elf but a human being, and thus he decides to travel to New York City to meet his biological father.

Buddy's human dad, Walter, is a very stressed out businessman who runs a small publishing company that specializes in children's books. Naturally, when Buddy arrives at Walter's office, dressed in his elf's clothing, Walter becomes

ever more stressed out, especially when Buddy keeps on insisting that he is the biological son that he never knew he had. At first, Walter refuses to take Buddy seriously, but after a (DNA) blood test proves that Buddy is indeed his first biological son, Walter agrees to take Buddy home with him.

Buddy drives Walter crazy, but Emily and Michael soon learn to appreciate Buddy's kind heart and innocence, and he soon learns to get along in New York City, even finding a job at a local department store. Unfortunately, Buddy continues to accidentally cause Walter one problem after another, but he also brings happiness to a lot of people, including his first real girlfriend, Jovie. Eventually, Buddy is able to teach his entire family, even including Walter, the true meaning of Christmas spirit....

Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

Buddy the elf discovers his human roots....

Another interesting elfism.

Note that "ism" at the end of a word means a word that was invented by the people who come at the beginning of the word (In this case, a word invented by the elves!).

The first is making shoes at night while the old cobbler sleeps.

A "cobbler" is a person who makes and fixes shoes and other types of clothing. This is a somewhat dated word, and here it refers to Santa Claus.

As you can imagine, it's dangerous having an oven in the tree during the dry season.

A good little expression which means "it's probably obvious that..."

It's the profession that every elf aspires to, and that is to build toys in Santa's workshop.

"To aspire to" to accomplish something is to work at reaching that goal because you want it very much. "Santa's workshop" is the little work area where all of Santa's elves make toys for the world's children.

Our nimble fingers, natural cheer and active minds are perfect for toy building.

If you are "nimble," you can move quickly and with great ease. "Cheer" is an interesting noun meaning happiness or contentment. If you have an "active mind," you are always thinking of new and interesting things.

They tried using gnomes and trolls, but the gnomes drank too much and the trolls weren't toilet trained.

"Gnomes" and "trolls" are small mythical creatures, more like little monsters than elves. Note that in the right context, to "drink too much" means to drink too much alcohol or liquor. If an animal is not "toilet trained," it will piss or pooh on the floor, or other places it shouldn't!

What in the name of Sam Hill is that?!

This is a somewhat dated way of adding emotion, the way “What *the hell* is that?” is used today (Sam Hill was a famous businessman in the 1800s).

His name is Buddy; He must have snuck in your sack at the orphanage.

“To sneak in” to a room is to enter it secretly (note the irregular past tense). A “sack” is a bag, and an “orphanage” is a home where children who don’t have any parents are raised.

When it comes to babies, Santa is a push-over.

If a person is a “push-over” for babies, they’re easily made happy by them.

Buddy stayed with an older elf who always wanted a child but had been so committed to toy building he had forgotten to **settle down**.

In this context, “to settle down” means to get married, move into a house and have kids. More generally, it means to calm down.

Yes, I raised Buddy. I was his adopted father.

“To raise” a child is to take care of them, just like parents normally do. An “adopted father” is a dad who raises a child like their own, even though they are not biologically related.

Before we learn the latest in how to build extreme graphic chip set processors, let’s recite the code of the elves, shall we?

“Extreme graphic chip set processors” are complicated words for computer chips that allow your computer to play movies. “To recite” words is to say them out loud, and a “code” is a set of official rules.

There’s room for everyone on the nice list.

A list that Santa Claus keeps of all the people who are nice.

The best way to spend Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.

A common way of referring to the spirit of Christmas, which is supposed to include kindness to others and a general sense of peace and happiness.

I made him my own personal **apprentice**.

An “apprentice” is an excellent word for an assistant who helps one person in exchange for getting to learn that person’s profession or skills.

Santa’s sleigh! You’re going to help me make it fly.

A “sleigh” is a cart for carrying people who want to slide or travel on the snow, but Santa’s sleigh (pronounced ‘slay’) is special because it can fly.

I thought the magical reindeer fly.

If a person or animal is “magical,” they have wonderful powers (such as the ability to fly), or more generally, great charm. A “reindeer” is a type of deer that lives in cold and snowy climates.

There's a **rumor** flying around that the parents do it.
An excellent word for a piece of news that quickly travels from person to person, but it is not clear if the news is actually true.

We have a real energy crisis on our hands; See how low the Clauseameter is?
If you have a problem "on your hands," it is something that you need to deal with or try to take care of. In this film, the "Clauseameter" shows the energy that Santa's sleigh has, which comes from people's belief in Santa.

That's shocking! :: That's why I came up with this little beauty.
"To come up" with an idea is to invent or create it. Here, "this little beauty" refers to a clever or useful invention..

It's a Crinkle 3,000. 8,500 reindeer power, jet-turbine engine.
This is Papa Elf's way of referring to Santa's sleigh, which has lots of modern equipment, including a jet engine.

It looks like we got a short on the theorem copper.
A "short" is a cut off electricity running through wire (The 'theorem copper' is just more nonsense words referring to modern machinery).

You want to give me a hand with that?
"To give a person a hand" is to help them.

There were a few **drawbacks** to being a human in an elf's world.
A "drawback" is a good way of saying a disadvantage.

I'm going to be a little bit short on today's quota.
In this context, a "quota" is the amount of work that a person is expected to do each day.

Just tell me the Etch'n'sketch didn't get finished.
A well-known children's toy that allows kids to make drawings on a screen that can be easily erased or eliminated before drawing a new one.

That puts you 915 off the pace.
If a person is "off the pace," they are going slower than they want to go ("Pace" is another word for speed over a period of time).

I'm a cotton-headed nin-mogens.
Buddy's silly nonsense words for an idiot, dope, jerk, moron, etc....

We all just have different **talents**, that's all.
An important word for skills.

You changed batteries in the smoke detector. :: You sure did; Triple As!
A type of small battery (labeled AAA) that is common in small devices like radios and smoke detectors.

You're the only baritone in the elf choir! You bring us down a whole octave!
 A "baritone" is a singer with a low sound or voice, and a "choir" is a group of people who sing together. An "octave" is a range of notes or tones in music.

Think you can help me pick up the slack on those Etch'n'sketches?
 "To pick up the slack" for a person is to work even harder since they are not doing as much work as hoped for ("Slack" is literally extra rope or string that makes it loose and not stiff).

I just hope he doesn't get wise. :: If he hasn't figured out he's a human being by now, I don't think he ever will.
 "Wise" is a good word for smart or perhaps well-informed. In this context, "to figure out" something is to discover the truth about it.

I then proceeded to tell Buddy how his father had fallen in love when he was young to a very beautiful girl named Sara Wells, and how Buddy was born...
 "To proceed" to do something is to start or continue to do it after having paused or taken a break.

.... and put up for adoption by his mother, and how she had passed away.
 If a child is "put up for adoption," the biological parents agree to have other people raise their kids as if they were the parents. "To pass away" is a gentle way of saying to die.

His father had never even known that Buddy was born and most importantly, I told him where his father was, in a magical land called New York City.
 If a place is "magical," it is filled with wonderful things or has a feeling of great wonder, enchantment or charm.

My dad works where? :: The Empire State building.
 One of the most famous office buildings in New York City.

Why the long face, Buddy?
 A person with a "long face" looks sad or upset.

The thing is, I've never even left the North Pole.
 A colloquial way of saying "You should know that..."

It's a wonderful place filled with wondrous features, except dogs. Oh, by the way, don't eat the yellow snow.
 "Wondrous" is a nice little adjective meaning magical or beautiful.

This might be the golden opportunity to find out who you really are.
 A "golden opportunity" is an unexpected but excellent chance to do something that you couldn't do before.

I hear you're going on a little journey to the big city.
Another word for vacation or adventure.

First off, if you see gum in the street, leave it there. It's not free candy.
"First off" is a common way to start a sentence when you want to say a lot of different things. "Gum" is the sweet candy people chew on.

There are like 30 Ray's Pizzas. They all claim to be the original, but the real one is on 11th.
"To claim" something is to state or declare it as true. Here, "11th" refers to 11th Avenue (Ray's Pizza is famous in New York).

And if you see a sign that says peep show, that doesn't mean they're letting you look at presents before Christmas.
A "peep show" is a place where men can look at naked women on stage ("To peep" at something is to take a quick or secret look).

We're gonna go ice skating and eat sugarplums.
Note that "going to" ---> "gonna" is rapid speech. "Ice skating" is the act of sliding on ice with special shoes or boots that have metal blades under them. "Sugarplums" are a small and sweet candy in the shape of a ball.

Your father; He's on the naughty list.
If a child has been "naughty," they have misbehaved or done something that is considered wrong, illegal or unacceptable.

You're trying to make me feel bad, when in actuality, you're the one who missed the payments. :: But the children love the books!
"In actuality," is one way of saying in reality or in fact. A "payment" is a set amount of money that is due every week or month.

Listen, some people just lose sight of what's important in life. That doesn't mean they can't find their way again.
In this context, "to find your way" is to rediscover or learn what is truly important and best for your life.

Maybe all they need is just a little old Christmas spirit.
An important expression in this film that refers to the spirit or desire for peace, kindness and generosity during the holiday season.

I'll always be here for you.
"You can always count on me to help you."

Buddy leaves the North Pole and arrives in New York, where he soon meets his dad and gets a job at Gimbals.

Does someone need a hug?
A "hug" is the act of holding a person close to you with your arms.

I don't know, Connie. I've never declawed kittens before.

"To declaw" a cat is to remove the claws or sharp nails that often scratch people.

I'm Buddy the elf. :: You look **hilarious!**

An excellent word for extremely funny.

We should ship them? :: No, I think we should take a \$30,000 bath so some kid can understand what happened to a puppy and a friggin pigeon.

"To ship" a book is to send them out to be sold. "To take a bath" on a business mistake is to lose money. "Friggin" is a very gentle way of showing emotion or saying "fucking," without being so crude. A "pigeon" is an annoying type of bird.

All right, let's get it over with. ::

I walked all day and night to find you.

"To get something over with" is to finish it as soon as possible.

You look like you came from the North Pole.

The top of the world, where you can find lots of snow, ice and perhaps elves.

Sure, he just got off the cell phone with me.

Small wireless phones that can be carried around.

That was **weird**. Usually guys just put my name into jingle bells or something.

"Weird" is an excellent adjective meaning very strange or bizarre. "Jingle bells" is a well-known Christmas song.

Who sent this Christmas gram?

A message of love or friendship that is sent by one person to another, often through a human messenger who is paid to sing or dance as part of the message.

I think we should call security. :: I like to whisper, too.

A general word for the people who guard or protect a building.

Yeah, why don't you go back to Gimbals?

A well-known department store in New York.

Passion fruit spray? :: Sure.

"Passion fruit" is a sweet tropical fruit, and a "spray" is tiny droplets of liquid that are shot out of a bottle.

Have you seen these toilets? They're ginormous!

This is not actually a word, but it is Buddy's way of combining the words gigantic and enormous (both of which mean very big).

You shop on your break? Come downstairs.

At work, a “break” is a period of a few minutes to eat or relax.

It’s time for the announcement.

An official notice to the public, usually spoken out loud.

You’re very good at decorating that tree.

“To decorate” a Christmas tree is to put all kinds of candy, ribbons and small toys on it.

Why are you messing with me? Did Krapa put you up to this?

“To mess with” a person is to treat them in such a way that they feel uncomfortable or even emotionally abused, perhaps by threatening to harm them. “To put a person up to” something is to challenge them or convince them to do it, even though they probably think it’s not a good idea to do so.

It’s just nice to meet another human who shares my affinity for elf culture.

To have an “affinity for” something is to like it or enjoy it very much.

I’m just trying to get through the holidays.

In this context, “to get through” the holidays is trying to survive them without too much trouble or too many problems.

Sounds like someone needs to sing a Christmas carol.

A type of Christmas song that small groups of people sing together.

The best thing to spread Christmas cheer is singing loud for all to hear.

“To spread” happiness is to cause it to move all over, from one person to the next.

Attention all Gimbals shoppers; Please make your final purchases.

A “purchase” is the act of buying something.

I got a bunch of stuff to go over.

A “bunch” of things is a lot, and “stuff” is a common way of referring to things in general. “To go over” things is to study or look into them.

I wish I knew how to break the spell.

In this context, a “spell” is a period of bad luck, that is caused by a witch or some other evil person or being with magical powers.

Hey you, come here.

In the right tone of voice, this is a way of showing warmth or affection.

How come you were in the woman’s locker room this morning.

“How come” is a way of saying ‘why?’ and a “locker room” is a room with locked containers for storing clothes and other personal things.

You built this? They're kind of **pissed about** this.

To be "pissed about" something is to be angry about it.
This is a bit crude, but very useful and common.

It's a little too good. Corporate must have sent in a professional.

In this case, "corporate" refers to the executives in the corporate offices who run the company.

I don't know why somebody is gunning for my job, but let's remain a team.

"To gun for" a person's job is to try and get it, perhaps because the person who has it now will be fired.

If I go, we all go. If you get wind of anything, call me on my radio.

"To get wind" of some important news is to hear about it, perhaps directly from another person.

Channel 3—Code word is "Santa's got a brand new bag."

A "code word" is a word that means something else than its literal meaning, that is used as a secret message between two or more people so others won't understand (The code words above are a famous song).

Six inch ribbons, girl...six inches.

An "inch" is a unit of measurement, about the length of half a finger.
A "ribbon" is a small piece of fabric that is used for tying or decorating.

Who the heck are you?

A gentle version of "the hell," it is added to Wh questions to express emotion such as frustration or anger.

You **disgust** me! How can you live with yourself?!

"To disgust" a person is to outrage, revolt or make them sick.

Just **cool it**, Zippy! :: You live on a throne of lies!

"Cool it" is a common way of saying "stop it!" A "throne" is the seat of power for a king or other powerful official.

Look, I'm not kidding here! :: You're a **fake**!

To speak in a "kidding" manner is to be speaking in a light hearted or silly way, and not seriously. If a person is a "fake," they are not really who they say or claim they are.

He's an imposter! He's a fake! He's not Santa!

An "imposter" is a person who pretends to be a particular person in order to fool others into thinking they are that person.

He bailed me out; They give you one phone call.

"To bail" a person out of jail is to pay some money to the local court so that they can be released while waiting for their trial.

Sure enough, you **showed up!**

“To show up” at a particular place is to arrive.

I thought maybe we could make gingerbread houses and cookie dough and go ice skating and maybe even hold hands.

“Gingerbread houses” are pieces of sweet bread shaped like houses that are popular around Christmas. Cookie “dough” is the sweet, frozen batter that is baked in an oven to make cookies.

Why am I sitting on paper? :: Because it’s sanitary for the other patients.

If something is “sanitary,” it is clean and won’t spread germs to others.

Sit still so I can do the fingerprint.

A “fingerprint” is a way of identifying a person through the lines on their fingers.

Can I listen to your necklace?

A “necklace” is a piece of jewelry worn around a person’s neck, and it is not a *stethoscope*, which is a device through which doctor’s listen to a person’s heart.

The sooner you sit still, the sooner we can get this mess over with.

In this case, a “mess” a large and complicated problem.

I’ll put in a word with the big man.

“To put in a word” with a person is to try and get them to do a favor for somebody else. In this case, “the big man” is Santa.

Oh, it’s not a costume. I’m an elf.

A “costume” is a set of clothes designed to help you look like a famous person or come from a different time or place in history.

Technically, I’m a human, but I was raised by elves.

One way of saying “in fact,” or perhaps “strictly speaking, it’s true that...”

I’m a human raised by elves. :: **Cool**.

A still widely used word for good, excellent, etc...

He’s your son. :: Impossible; You saw that guy—He’s certifiably insane.

If something can be “certified,” it is officially declared or accepted, often by an expert or government agency. “Insane” is a good word for crazy.

He’s probably just reverting to a state of child-like dependency.

“To revert” to an emotional state or condition is to return back to it.

A “state of child-like dependency” is an expression from psychology describing a person who is dependent on another for getting by in life, just like a child is dependent on their parents.

What he needs is to be nurtured.

If a person is “nurtured,” they are taken care of with lots of love and emotional support.

Once he comes to terms with reality, he should drop the whole elf thing and move on with his life.

“To come to terms” with a situation is to learn to emotionally accept it as true, even if it is painful.

Gosh, I never really thought of it like that.

An innocent and gentle word that is used to express surprise and other types of emotion.

Buddy moves in with his new family, and while Walter goes crazy, Emily and Michael are soon happy he’s there.

It’s a little complicated, but it’s nothing we can’t handle.

“To handle” a problem is to take care of it.

Oh, come on, I’m sure he doesn’t actually think he’s an elf.

The most common and versatile phrasal verb in all of English, here meaning “be serious” or “stop joking around.”

And then I traveled to the seven levels of the candy-cane forest, past the sea of swirly-twirly gum-drops, and then I walked through the Lincoln tunnel.

The first two places are where elves can find lots of candy (Candy canes and gum drops are types of Christmas candy). The “Lincoln Tunnel” is a real tunnel that goes from New Jersey into the island of Manhattan.

Can you pass the maple syrup?

Sweet and delicious syrup (a type of sugary sauce) that is made from maple trees and often served on pancakes.

We elves try to stick to the four main food groups—candy, candy canes, candy corns and syrup.

In reality, the “four food groups” usually refers to foods such as fruits and vegetables, breads, meats and dairy products (milk and cheese).

He has some serious issues; We can’t just throw him out in the snow.

A common colloquial way of gently referring to big psychological or emotional problems.

Did you hear that? :: You’re so weird.

An excellent word meaning strange or bizarre.

I can’t go to sleep, unless I get tucked in.

“To tuck in” a person in bed is to gently put the edge of the blankets underneath the mattress so they will feel warm and safe.

I had a full 40 minutes, and I had time to build that rocking horse.

A wooden toy horse for children that gently rocks back and forth.

Oh my gosh, you actually made that.

A gentle way saying 'my God' in order to express emotion.

Dad, how many scoops? :: I'll stick with the coffee now.

A "scoop" is a spoonful or similar amount of food such as sugar.

First, we'll make snow angels for two hours, and then we'll go ice skating, and then we'll eat a whole roll of Toll-House cookie dough as fast as we can...

A well known type of frozen cookie batter which is placed in an oven in order to make warm cookies.

...and then to finish, we'll snuggle.

A sweet little verb that means to hold another person or animal close to you, usually while you're lying down.

If you're staying here, you should think about getting rid of the costume.

"To get rid" of something is to throw it away or eliminate it

You want to make me happy? :: Then lose the tights, as soon as possible!

In this case, "to lose" something means to throw it away. "Tights" are very tight-fitting pants or fabric that cover a person's legs.

It's not evil, Buddy. It's the radiator, and the heat makes noise when it comes on.

If something is "evil," it is horribly bad or immoral. A "radiator" is a type of heater.

I haven't seen you since the retreat. You're looking good.

A "retreat" is place where people come to relax or perhaps study with others, over a period of a few peaceful days.

What do I owe the pleasure?

One way of greeting a person you were not expecting to see.

She wants to know how a certain puppy and a certain pigeon escaped the clutches of a certain evil witch.

"To escape the clutches of" a person is to literally get away from their arms as they try to hold on to you ("To clutch" something is to tightly hold on to it). An "evil witch" is a mean and ugly old woman who often flies around on a broom stick and makes life miserable for everyone.

We're already looking for new printers.

This one has obviously gotten a little sloppy.

A "printer" is a person that actually prints books on paper (The *publisher* organizes the book before sending it to the printer). In this case, "sloppy" means careless or not careful (It can also mean messy).

You know we can sit here and point fingers all day, right?

“To point fingers” is a colloquial way of saying to blame a person for something bad that has happened (“To point” is to literally raise one’s finger as a way of showing or signaling something).

Even if those two pages were in there, the book still would’ve **sucked**.

To say something “sucks” is a crude but very common way of saying that something is bad, horrible, of poor quality, etc.

Did you see the numbers for this quarter?

In this context, a way of referring to the net profit or loss that a company has for a three month business quarter.

That frigging puppy and pigeon are tanking our quarter.

“Frigging” is a gentle way of expressing emotion such as anger (It is not vulgar or crude like *fucking*). If something “tanks,” it starts to go down suddenly or dramatically.

We’ll bounce back. :: No, we’re going to ship a new book, first quarter.

If a company “bounces back” after losing money, it recovers and starts to make money.

That’s Christmas eve. Uh, no problem, it will be great to have you in the loop.

“Christmas eve” is the night of December 24th, just before Christmas Day. If a person is “in the loop,” they are being kept informed on what is happening in a particular situation, in this case related to business.

I’m glad I caught up to you.

“To catch up to” a person is to run after or get close to them after being far behind, usually so you can talk to them.

Son-of-a-nutcracker!

Note the usual word to express anger is the cruder *son-of-a-bitch* (A “nutcracker” is a device for cracking open nuts and shells, while a “bitch” is a crude word for a mean or abusive woman).

These guys are bad news; We’ve got to get out of here.

If a person is “bad news,” they are likely trying to cause trouble.

We can take them; Just start making as many snow balls as you can.

Here, “to take” a person is to successfully fight back against them.

Wow, where did you say you’re from?

An excellent way of expressing surprise, excitement or similar emotion.

The girl you’re staring at.

“To stare at” a person is to continue to look at them over many seconds or longer, without turning away.

Why don't you ask her out on...you know, on a **date**, to eat food.

A "date" is the most common way of referring to an evening that a boy and girl will spend together, often at a movie or restaurant, with the possibility that the two will become romantically interested in each other.

If she says yes, you're in. It's like a secret code girls have.

In this case, "you're in" means you will succeed at being liked or accepted.

A "secret code" is a group of words, numbers or symbols that only certain people can understand, so that secret messages can be passed without others understanding them.

No, but things worked out pretty good—They gave me a restraining order.

If a situation "works out," it ends in a good way. A "restraining order" is a legal document signed by a judge which orders a person to stay physically away from a person or place.

I think you should get out of here. :: But I think you're beautiful and I feel really warm when I'm around you.

This is Buddy's cute way of saying happy (to be near her).

My tongue swells up.

If a tongue or other body part "swells up," it becomes abnormally big or enlarged, often because it has been injured or infected.

I just had my lunch break...but I'm free on Thursday.

In this case, to be "free" is to be available.

And after that, the ornaments. :: What the hell is that?

"Ornaments" are little decorations that are put on a Christmas tree, such as ribbons and pieces of candy. Note that "the hell" is added to Wh questions to express emotion such as anger or frustration.

I don't know why you're making such a big deal. They're just having a little fun.

"To make a big deal" out of something is to act as if it's very serious or important, when in fact it may not be at all.

Oh, felonies are fun now. I thought felonies were felonious. :: You really haven't been there for him.

A "felony" is a crime that can be punished by time in prison (The adjective is felonious, but this rare). "To be there for" a person is to do what is necessary to help or protect them.

Why don't we just pull him out of school and let the **deranged** elf-man raise him? Then they can have lots of fun committing felonies.

If a person is "deranged," they are crazy or deeply disturbed emotionally. Note that in English, a person "commits" a crime, which is to do it.

He's going to **destroy** the place.

"To destroy" something is to completely ruin it or put it out of existence.

Why don't you take off tomorrow? :: I have a budget meeting tomorrow.

"To take off" a day at work is to not go to work on that day. A "budget meeting" is a business meeting in which people sit around and discuss how much money they have to spend.

I can't take off. I'm one bad pitch away from being fired.

In this context, a "pitch" is an attempt to sell something to somebody.

That's a nice purple dress. Very purpley.

Not a real adjective, but the type of word a child or elf would love!

You should be on a Christmas card. :: You just made my day.

To "make a person's day" is to say or do something that makes them feel very good, perhaps for the rest of the day.

We don't do that kind of work here, pal.

A slang word for friend, but depending on the tone of voice, the word itself can be friendly or hostile.

Buddy goes to work for Walter.... and almost destroys his career.

They sort it out there and you can touch it all!

"To sort out" mail is to organize it in such a way, often by address, that it is easy to distribute.

And they put it in shiny bins.

If a surface is "shiny," it is bright and reflects light. A "bin" is a container.

Put it in a canister and shove it up the tube.

A "canister" is a small circular container. "To shove" something into a container is to push it in with force. A "tube" is a circular passage way.

You got that? :: I think so; This place reminds me of Santa's workshop, except it smells like mushrooms and everyone looks like they want to hurt me.

Remember that in the right context, "to get" a statement is to understand it.

Morris and I have been **brainstorming** and we've come up with what I think is a truly great idea.

"To brainstorm" is to try and think of new ideas or solutions, often with another person over a period of hours. "To come up with" an idea is to think of it or create it.

Picture this; We bring in Miles Finch.

One way of saying "imagine this."

The Miles Finch? :: We bring him in; He's written more classics than Dr. Seuss.
 Note that when "the" is pronounced 'thee,' it's a way of emphasizing this particular well-known individual (as opposed to other lesser known people with the same name). A "classic" is a book or other work of art that has become super famous and is likely to remain popular for many generations. Dr. Seuss was a very famous children's book writer.

It ain't gonna be easy, but I think it's worth a shot.
 "Ain't" is very poor grammar; Here, you should say 'isn't' instead!
 If a plan is "worth a shot," it's worth trying even though there is a risk it will not work out well.

My two top writers, my crack team, my fun squad—You came in here pitching me the idea of hiring another writer?
 A company's "crack team" is their very best people (in this case, their best writers), and a "squad" is a group of people brought together for a particular purpose. "To pitch" an idea is to try and sell it or convince somebody how good it is.

That is marvelous. Ouuh, it's very sucky.
 "Marvelous" is another word for wonderful. "Sucky" is never used (as opposed to saying something bad *sucks*), but for Buddy, it makes sense to use this word if you have to suck hard on a straw to get the liquid.

Can I try some? :: Be my guest.
 A common way of inviting a person to try something, such as some food.

Very generous of you—I love syrup.
 If a person is "generous," they are liberal in giving, or happy to share their money, time and other things with other people.

I know I sound like a broken record, but we are buddies.
 "To sound like a broken record" is to say the same thing, over and over again. A "buddy" is another word for friend or pal.

I just try to go with the flow, you know.
 "To go with the flow" is to try and do what everyone else wants or expects, so as not to cause trouble or bring attention to oneself (The 'flow' of a river is its natural direction of movement).

I got to get out of the flow. I'm 26 years old and I have nothing to show for it.
 This is the mailroom worker's way of saying he has to make a serious change in his life or he will never accomplish anything important.

My papa didn't make master tinker and he's 490.
 "Papa" is another word for dad, and a "master tinker" is a toy maker or inventor in Santa's workshop, though more generally, a "tinker" is an unskilled worker who tries to fix things.

Tickle fight!

“To tickle” a person is to try and make them laugh by touching them in sensitive body parts, and thus a “tickle fight” is when two people try to get each other to laugh in this way.

My favorite pickle of yours has got to be Gus’ pickle; It’s existential, yet it’s so successful.

“Existential” refers to the philosophical belief that humans are without direction or purpose, in a universe that they did not create and have no control over.

It’s a thrill just to be talking to you on a speaker phone.

A “thrill” is an emotional feeling of great excitement. A “speaker phone” allows several people in a room to hear at the same time what a person on the phone is saying.

I’d like a black S-50 to receive me at the airport.

An S-50 is a model of expensive Mercedes-Benz car. Note that “to receive” is almost never used as it is here.

I do not hold, do not put me on hold!!

This is to make a person on the phone wait while you do something else, such as talk to other people calling in on that same phone line.

What can be going on down there that’s so important you have to interrupt me?

“To interrupt” a person is to stop them from talking so that you can say or announce something.

Take a sip.

An important word for just a small swallow or amount of a liquid.

We open on a young tomato; He’s had some tough times down at the farm with a rabbit.

In this case, “to open” a book or play is to begin it. In this context, “tough” means hard or difficult.

No tomatoes. They’re too vulnerable.

A good adjective that means easily hurt or injured or taken advantage of.

Everybody is pushing small town rural.

The farm belt would be just white noise.

Here, “to push” means to try and promote or encourage as a story for books. “Rural” refers to the countryside (as opposed to *urban*, which refers to the city). The “farm belt” is that part of the country where there are lots of farms (especially in the Midwestern states like Kansas and Iowa). “White noise” is background noise that is not noticed because of other types of noise that are louder.

A tribe of asparagus children, but they're self-conscious the way their pee smells.

A "tribe" is a group of related people who live together or near each other (the word is often associated with Native American Indians). "Asparagus" is a type of green vegetable, and if children are "self-conscious," they are insecure or always worrying about how others will think of them. "Pee" is a very common slang term for piss or urine.

I got an idea that I'm especially psyched out of my mind about.

"To be psyched out of your mind" about an idea is a very slangy way of saying to be very excited about it.

I didn't know you had elves working here. :: You're **hilarious** my friend.

A good word meaning extremely funny.

I get more action in a week than you get your entire life.

In the right context, "action" is a way of referring to general excitement, or more specifically, sex.

I got homes in LA, Paris and Veil.

A small town in Colorado that is popular with rich people who ski.

Each one of them with a 70 inch plasma screen, so I suggest you wipe that stupid smile off your face before I come over and smack it off.

A "plasma screen" is flat TV that has become popular in the last few years. "To wipe the smile off your face" is to stop smiling, especially after being told to do so. "To smack" something is to hit it with great force.

He must be a South Pole elf.

Remember, elves live on the *North* Pole, on top of the world.

You get the hell out of here.

"The hell" is added to express emotion such as anger. Note that this entire sentence simply means "leave!"

I don't care that you're **nuts**!

A good colloquial word for crazy or insane.

Walter, breakthrough! We found this in the conference room.

A "breakthrough" is a useful word for a major advance or discovery that will dramatically help things move forward.

It's Miles Finch's notebook. It's chock-full of genius ideas.

If something is "choke-full," it is completely filled.

His best idea is about a peach that lives on a farm; What's more **vulnerable** than a peach!?

A good word for easily hurt, injured or taken advantage of.

Go and get a story board ready.

A large board or sheet on which the outlines of a story can be written so that many people can see it all at once.

I'm sorry I ruined your lives and crammed 11 cookies into the VCR.

"To ruin" something is to destroy it. "To cram" cookies into a container is to stuff them with great force, even if they are too big to really fit. A "VCR" is a video-cassette recorder for recording and watching movies on TV (DVD players, which play digital video discs, have replaced most VCRs).

I don't belong here.

"People don't like me here."

As you know, we need a big launch fast to get the company back on track, so I think I speak for my fellow board members when I say "This better be good."

"To launch" a book or other business project is to get it started and out to the public or customers. If a project is "back on track," it is now moving forward again after being delayed. In this context, "board members" are people who are part of the board of directors of a company, who help guide the general direction the company is going in.

I'm scared. Buddy ran away.

If a child "runs away" from home, they leave without telling their parents where they are going, often with the intent of trying to live on their own.

Let me finish this meeting, and then we'll figure it out, OK?

"To figure out" a problem is to find a solution to it.

We don't have time to reschedule. I want to hear the dam thing now.

"To reschedule" a meeting is to move it to a different time. "Dam" is a crude filler word that is used to express anger and similar emotions.

I flew in to just to hear this pitch, and I intend to.

"To intend" to do something is to plan or count on doing it.

Yeah, up yours!

A very crude insult, but not quite as vulgar as 'fuck you!'

You're finished at Greenway. You walk out of here and you're fired!

If a person is "fired," they're told they can no longer work at their job.

Back off, slick.

If you tell a person to "back off," you are aggressively telling them to stand further back, or more generally, to stop bothering or harassing you. "Slick" is an insulting slang word for a person who is always trying to fool people by pretending they are nice and honest when in fact they are crafty and manipulative.

Buddy charms Jovie one last time, and with Santa's help, brings Christmas good cheer to all of New York.

Boy, am I **glad** to see you! The clauseameter suddenly dropped down to zero.
 "Glad" is good word for happy or satisfied. In this film, the "clauseameter" is the device on Santa's sleigh which shows how much Christmas spirit there is, which in turn helps power the sleigh as it flies.

The strain was too much. The engine broke free over Vermont.
 "Strain" is physical or emotional pressure. If a part "breaks free," it comes detached from the rest of the machine. Vermont is a small state North of New York.

Authorities have closed the park and are in the process of clearing it.
 A general word for the police and perhaps other government officials that participate in law enforcement.

I got an eyewitness with me who claims to have seen the whole thing first hand.
 An "eyewitness" to a crime is a person who sees it actually take place, and if you see something "first hand," you see it directly.

Sweetheart, can you tell me what you saw falling out of the sky.
 A word of affection when addressing children or girlfriends.

New York One has just received some exclusive amateur news footage that you just might want to follow up on.
 "New York One" is the name of a TV station. "Exclusive amateur news footage" is film of a news event shot by a non-professional person that is made available to just one news organization. "To follow up on" a news story is to continue to research or follow it.

You may be a little chemically unbalanced, but you've been right about a lot of things.
 If a person is "chemically unbalanced," they most likely have problems with the chemicals or hormones in their brain.

Only the Central Park Rangers remain in the park; These forces are highly trained but rarely seen in action.
 A police force that uses horses to get around, that watches over Central Park. This is a beautiful park in the middle of Manhattan Island.

Don't accuse them of being too gung ho when called into duty.
 "To accuse" a person of a crime is to claim that they did it. If a person is "gung ho" about doing something, they are very excited or enthusiastic about doing it. If the police are "called into duty," they are told that they have to work.

Their controversial crowd control tactics at the Simon and Garfunkel concert in '85 are still under investigation.

If something is "controversial," it is the subject of heated arguments and debate. "Crowd control tactics" are methods or policies designed to keep a large crowd peaceful. Simon and Garfunkel are famous singers.

Would you mind taking this to your first born?

One way of referring to the oldest child in a family.

You never can tell, kid.

A way of saying that you never know what's going to happen.

Look here, how do you like them apples?!

A fun way of asking a person what they think after they've just been told some very surprising or amazing news.

Before the turbine days, this baby used to run solely on Christmas spirit.

A "turbine" is a type of powerful jet engine. Here, "baby" refers to Santa's sleigh (It can be used for almost any type of machine).

The paparazzi have been trying to nail me for years.

The "paparazzi" are the aggressive photographers who specialize in taking pictures of famous movie stars. In this context, "to nail" a person is to catch them or simply take a photo of them (It means to literally hammer a nail into a piece of wood or other material).

Ok, further confirmation that there has been a Santa sighting tonight.

"Confirmation" is evidence from a different source that what was claimed by others is in fact true. A "sighting" of a missing person is the act of one person seeing them with their own eyes.

Dirk Williams wants a day of pampering at the Williams spa.

"To pamper" a person is to treat them like a king, giving them massages, great food and drink, etc. A "spa" is a place of relaxation which usually has massages, pools, warm baths and other things to be pampered with.

Charlette Denim wants a Tiffany engagement ring and for her boyfriend to stop dragging his feet and commit already!

Tiffany's is an expensive jewelry store. An "engagement ring" is a ring that is given to woman after her future husband formally asks her to marry him. If a person "drags their feet" about something, they are trying to delay or postpone it. "To commit" to a person is to agree to marry them or at least spend the rest of your life with them (This has become a much discussed verb since many believe that certain men have a fear of *commitment*).

I can't wait. On Dashel, on Dancer!...

The name of Santa's reindeers (Here, 'on' is used to mean go, but this is not really used this way anywhere else).

Stop messing around! Get in!...

Another way of saying to fool around, or to act in a way that isn't serious.

Why are they chasing us? :: I put them on the naughty list and they never forgave me.

"To chase" a person is to run after them, in hopes of catching them.

If a child is "naughty" they have been misbehaving or acting in a very bad or rude manner.

He knows if you've been bad or good, so be good for goodness sake! [song]

An old-fashioned way of expressing disappointment, or in this case, a way of saying "obviously, don't be stupid!"

Well, still no sign of Santa, but some spontaneous Christmas cheer has broken out right here in Central Park.

If behavior is "spontaneous," it is done without previous planning, but instead often suddenly, naturally and unpredictably. If something "breaks out," it quickly spreads to lots of people.

Michael, what's the big deal?

A way of asking "why is this so important?"

His first book was written by a brand new critically acclaimed children's author.

If an author is "critically acclaimed," they are much liked and appreciated by the professional book critics who review books in the media.

Elf

Some Potential Questions for ESL Class Discussion

1. Was this movie made more for children or adults?
2. Is Buddy more of a human or an elf? Have you ever felt like you were also an outsider in all the cultures that you supposedly belong to?
3. Does your culture have a Santa Claus or equivalent?
4. What is Christmas spirit? Does it have anything to do with religion?
5. What are the best parts of “elf culture”?
6. What do you like and not like about this movie?

