

# Stand by Me

(Drama) (1986)

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## Major Characters

- Gordie Lachance.....Wil Wheaton  
A smart and sensitive 12 year old boy who lives in a small Oregon town in 1959, who spends most of his time with his best friends at the time—Chris, Teddy and Vern.
- Gordie Lachance (as an adult writer/narrator).....Richard Dreyfuss  
The film is told from the point of view of Gordie about 27 years after the events described, when he is a successful writer and father.
- Chris Chambers.....River Phoenix  
Gordie's very best friend and the leader of their little gang, who has a bad reputation and struggles with school, but who also has a good heart.
- Teddy Duchamp.....Corey Feldman  
The craziest friend of the four, who loves to take stupid risks (like standing and screaming on train tracks as speeding trains approach), who has a violent and abusive father.
- Vern Tessio.....Jerry O'Connell  
The fourth and youngest member of Gordie's group, who is sincere, kind hearted and overweight.
- "Eyeball Chambers".....Bradley Gregg  
Chris' older brother, who is a bit of a bully and the leader of a local teenage gang that is violent, unpleasant and always getting into trouble.
- Ace Merrill.....Kiefer Sutherland  
One of eyeball's best friend, and the most aggressive of the older boys.

## Plot Summary

This film is the story of four close friends, all around 12 years old, who live in the small fictional town of Castle Rock, Oregon, in 1959. It is told from the point of view of Gordie Lachance, who narrates the story by looking back from 1986, 27 years after the events described, by which time he had become a successful writer and the father of a 12 year old himself. Gordie is looking back fondly at the adventures he had with his friends all those years earlier, because he has just read that his very best friend in that group had been killed trying to break up a

horrible fight in a local bar, a couple days earlier. For Gordie, his adventures in 1959 were already an escape from death and sadness, since his older brother had been killed in an auto accident just a few months earlier.

The film follows Gordie, Chris, Vern, and Teddy as they decide to leave their small town in order to find the body of another kid their age, who they learned had been killed after being hit by a train. Vern had overheard two older teens talking about the kid's body, which they had seen by a river near a railroad track, a few hours outside of town. Thus, Gordie and his friends tell their parents they are going camping, and head off on a long weekend journey to recover the corpse of Raymond Brower, whose disappearance had become the biggest news in Castle Rock. For the four boys, they first see their trip as a chance to become local heroes (for having found a missing boy's body), but over the hours, their thoughts turn mainly to the body itself, for it comes to represent the mysteries of life, fate and sudden, unexpected death.

A Brief note on the language used in this film: A lot of the colloquial language is fairly dated, since the story takes place in 1959. When of interest, it is explained, but the most unimportant dated expressions are generally ignored. Also be aware that there is a lot that isn't necessarily old-fashioned, but typical of the crude way in which 12 year old boys (still) like to speak today. In general, those expressions are explained, since if you find yourself around those kind of kids, you should be able to understand what they're saying, no matter how ridiculous.

### Some Words and Expressions that You May not Know

*Gordie looks back to all those years ago, when  
the gang first heard about Ray Brower's body.*

Attorney Fatally Stabbed in Restaurant [Headline]

If a person is "fatally stabbed," they have been killed by a knife that has been pushed into their body. A horrible way to die!

1959. It's a long time ago, but only if you measure in terms of years.

A stylish way of saying "by."

It's 90 KLAM degrees and getting hotter.

Radio stations are identified by the use of four call letters (They all start with 'K' in the Western US and with 'W' in the Eastern part of the country).

How do you know a French man has been in your backyard?

:: Your garbage cans are empty and your dog's pregnant.

A stupid (and crude) joke about Frenchmen, only put here because it's shows the kind of stupid and crude humor that kids like.

Gordie's out! Old Gordie just bit the bag and stepped out the door.

If a person is "out" after a hand of cards, they have lost and can't continue in the game. The second sentence is a ridiculous and no longer used way of saying a person has lost at a game.

Come on, man, deal!

"Come on" is the most used and versatile phrasal verb in all of English, used here as a way to show impatience or frustration. "Man" is a common filler word that is still way too often used by young people. "To deal" a deck of cards is to pass them out to the players at a game.

Teddy Duchamp was the craziest guy we hung around with.

"To hang around" with a person is to pass time with them.

His dad was given to fits of rage.

If a person is "given to" a type of behavior, they act that way a lot. "Fits of rage" are sudden incidents or outbursts of horrible anger or violence.

You four-eyed piece of shit.

"Four-eyed" is still a (stupid) insult term to refer to people who wear glasses. If you call somebody a "piece of shit," you are needless to say, not being polite!

You're down to your ride, pal!

In this context, if a card player is "down to their ride," they only have enough money left for the bus ride. "Pal" is a widely used word for a friend, but it's often used colloquially, and in a somewhat negative way, to address just about any other male.

Chris Chambers was the leader of our gang and my best friend.

A "gang" refers to a group of people who work together or hang out together, but be aware that it often refers specifically to a group of young people who are violent and cause problems.

Everyone just knew he'd turn out bad.

If a person "turns out" bad, they end up or finish by being bad (In this case, bad means a kid who is always getting into trouble).

You're not gonna believe this; This is so boss!

Note that "going to"----> "gonna" in rapid speech. "Boss" is a dated word for good or excellent. Today, the equivalent word of choice is *cool*.

Let me catch my breath.

If you "catch your breath," you stop doing anything physically tiring so you can start breathing normally again.

Screw you guys!

A much more gentle version of "fuck you."

Can you guys come out tonight if you tell your folks you're going to tent out in my field?

"Folks" is a common word for parents (and more generally, people).

A "tent" is the nylon or fabric shelter that is used for sleeping outdoors, though today, you would say "*camp out*."

My dad's on a mean streak. He's been drinking a lot lately.

If a person is "on a mean streak," they have been behaving violently or abusively for several hours, days or longer.

So what are you pissing and moaning about?

An interesting colloquial expression which means to complain or gripe ("To piss" means to urinate or go to the bathroom, and to "moan" means to make a continual sound of pain, or perhaps, sexual pleasure).

You didn't deal yourself no pat hand!

"Pat" as an adjective means made or created exactly for a specific function or occasion, and in cards, a "hand" is a round of play, with cards distributed to all players.

Make your draw, shit heap.

"To draw" in cards is to choose a card. A "shit heap" is a crude but no longer used insult term (A heap is another word for pile).

I was under the porch, digging.

A "porch" is an outdoor but covered area next to a building.

He drew a treasure map so he could find them again.

"Treasure" is a good word for anything of great value that is found in nature, such as gold or diamonds.

A week later, his mom cleared out his room and threw away the map.

"To clear out" a room is to remove all the junk or debris from it.

Jesus Christ, Billy, we gotta do something.

"Jesus Christ" is a common way of expressing emotion such as anger or frustration. Note that "have got to" -----> "gotta" in rapid speech.

Who gives a shit if they ever find him?

To not "give a shit" is a very common and colloquial way of saying to not care. Note here it is used in a question, so this is one (vulgar) way of saying "Who cares if...?"

Brock, Browsers or Flowers. Whatever his name is.

A useful word that is widely used when a speaker can't remember the exact word or name they are looking for.

The train must have hit him. Big fucking deal.

This is a crude way of referring to something that is very important (Though here it is used sarcastically to mean the opposite, or more specifically, that what they are talking about is not important).

We all followed the Ray Brower story very closely because he was a kid our age.

“To follow” a story is to pay close attention to it as it evolves.

You don’t go squawking to the cops after you boosted a car, you idiot.

“To squawk” is to scream out loud like a bird, or in this case, to inform.

A “cop” is very common slang word for a policeman. “To boost” a car is to steal it, but even though it’s common in this film, it is no longer used.

An “idiot” is an excellent word for a stupid person, jerk, moron, etc.

We could make an anonymous call. :: They trace those calls, stupid.

If a phone call to the police is made “anonymously,” it is made in such a way that the caller does not identify themselves. “To trace” a phone call is to use electronic devices to try and find out from what phone it was made.

I seen it on Highway Patrol and Dragnet.

These are two 1950s TV police shows (The “Highway Patrol” are police who spend most of their time on interstate highways, and a “dragnet” is a trap or plan to catch criminals). Note that Vern should say he “I *saw*...”

I just wish we never boosted the god damn Dodge.

“God damn” is a vulgar filler term, often used to express anger. A “Dodge” is a well known brand of car.

Were not going to tell nobody. You dig me?

“To dig” is used here as a very slangy way of saying to understand, but it is no longer ever used this way (It can, however, still mean to like or enjoy, if in the right context).

The Back Harlow road comes to a dead end by the Royal River.

A “dead end” is the end of a road in which there is no exit.

After dark, a train must have come along and ‘El smacko.’

“To smack” a person is to hit them with great force. Here, Gordie is making a “Spanish version” of the word, but this is not real English.

They’ll probably pin a medal on you, Vern.

“To pin” something on a person is to attach it to their cloths, and a “medal” is a small or decorative metal object that is given to a person to honor them for something they have done.

Then we say we’re going out to the drag races the next day.

A popular form of auto racing.

We're rock solid until tomorrow night.

"Rock solid" is a way of saying strong or in excellent shape.

We'll get hided!

"To hide" is a dated transitive verb meaning to whip, flog or beat (Note that a belt is made of leather hide, and it can be used to whip a person).

Everybody will be so jazzed about what we found.

To be "jazzed" about something is to be excited or happy about it.

Too cool! :: I wanted to share my friends enthusiasm, but I couldn't.

"Cool" is still the most common colloquial word for good or excellent.

"Enthusiasm" is an important word for excitement or positive feeling.

I had become the invisible boy.

If a person is "invisible," they cannot be seen.

Do you know where my canteen is?

A small container for storing drinks, and for keeping them cold (or hot).

In April, my older brother Dennis had been killed in a jeep accident.

A well known type of boxy car that is used by the US army.

Four months had passed, but my parents had still not been able to put the pieces back together.

This is Gordie's way of saying his parents had still not emotionally recovered from the death of their oldest son.

This is your good luck cap.

As an adjective, "good luck" is used to refer to any object that is believed will bring you good fortune or at least protect you.

A "cap" is a small head covering with an extension in the front, but no brim, like most hats.

A bazillion fish.

A kid's word for a very large number.

Don't start with me, porcupine.

"Don't start with me" is a way of telling a person to not even begin talking about, or complaining about, something they don't want to hear. A

"porcupine" is the strange looking animal with the sharp needles that covers its body (and in this case, a nickname).

A thief and two feebs.

A "thief" is a person who steals things from others. "Feeble" means weak or fragile, so this is Gordie's dad's way of referring to weak people, but this is no longer used.

He stole that milk money at school. He's a thief in my book.  
A still used way of saying "in my opinion."

*The boys head out from Castle Rock, wandering  
into places they probably shouldn't be.*

It was almost noon when we set out to  
find the body of Raymond Brower.

"To set out to" do something is to start to do it  
(or more specifically, to start a long trip or journey).

Come on, man, what is it?

A common way of asking "What's the matter?"

You want to be The Lone Ranger or The Cisco Kid.

Two well known cowboys of the American West.

Hawked it from my old man's bureau. It's a 45.

In this case "to hawk" is to steal, but it is no longer used this  
way (It does still mean to sell). A '45' is a type of a well known  
type of gun or pistol.

You got shells for it?

Another word for bullets when discussing guns.

Is it loaded? :: Hell no, what do you think I am?

If a gun is "loaded," it has bullets in it and will fire if shot.  
"Hell no" is a slangy and very forceful way of saying no.

You should have seen your face! That was really fine!

In this case, "fine" is used to mean good, fun or more colloquially, cool.

That Tupper babe saw me. :: Shit, she thought it was firecrackers.

A "babe" is a silly but still used slang term for a good looking girl.  
A "firecracker" is a small explosive that is set off to make a lot of noise.

That was a mean trick.

In this case, a procedure designed to fool, defraud or deceive a person.  
It can also refer to the accomplishment of anything that most would have  
thought was impossible to do.

I didn't know it was loaded, honest. :: You swear?

In this context, "to swear" is to promise that you are telling the truth  
(Of course, in different contexts, it can also mean to use vulgar words).

On your mother's name. :: Pinky swear.

"To swear on your mother's name" is a never used way of saying to absolutely promise to be telling the truth. "Pinky swear" is also not used, but it is still true that the smallest finger on the outside of your hand is your pinky.

You're a real asshole, you know that.

A very crude and not so uncommon insult word.

Your brother's not very polite.

A good word for cordial, respectful or refined in social behavior.

I know he didn't mean to insult me, which is why I'm going to give him the opportunity of taking it back.

"To take back" what you just said is to say you did not mean it, or perhaps to apologize for having said it. Still used among kids.

Cut it out!! :: Take it back, man!

An excellent colloquial expression which simply means "Stop it!"

What do we need a pistol for, anyway?

Another word for a gun or revolver.

It's spooky sleeping out at night in the woods.

A great word for scary or creepy, perhaps because there is the presence of ghosts or other strange dangers.

Two for flinching.

"To flinch" is to tense your muscles in anticipation of pain. A verb worth knowing, but not as common as suggested by this movie.

Maybe we should just hitchhike. :: No way, that sucks.

"To hitchhike" is to try and get a ride in a passing car by sticking your thumb out in a way to signal you'd like such a ride. If something "sucks," it is considered very bad. This is a crude but very common slang word.

We'll be there by sundown. That's pussy.

Today, "pussy" is a vulgar slang word for a coward (and it's never used as an adjective), though in this film, it has a general meaning of bad.

Have gun, will travel. Knight without Armor in a Savage Land [Song]

A "knight" is a man in the Middle Ages, often on horse back, who served a rich landowner. "Armor" is the metal outfit that knights wore to protect themselves. If an animal is "savage," it is violent or untamed.

A solider of fortune is the man called Maladon.

A mercenary, or a solider who fights in a private army for money.

We have to fill up at the junkyard. My dad said it's a safe well.

In this case, "to fill up" is to buy necessities for a trip, such as food and water. A "junkyard" is a large area where all kinds of used auto parts, thrown away machines and other junk is stored and sold. A "well" is a long narrow hole in the ground where drinking water is stored.

Quidilicious is at the end of that little road by the junkyard. I think we can get some stuff there.

"Stuff" is a widely used word for things in general (Quidilicious is the name of the general store in the movie).

Train dodge! Dig it!

A "train dodge" is the act of trying to stay on train tracks as long as possible before jumping off the tracks as the train approaches (A no longer used term, hopefully because kids no longer dodge trains for fun!).

"To dig" something is a very slangy way of saying to like it.

Get the hell off the tracks! You want to get yourself killed!

Note that "the hell" is a filler term added to express emotion such as anger, or in this case, fear.

Son-of-a-bitch.

A common and vulgar insult word, and a widely used way of expressing anger, even though it is not directed at anybody.

Is that what you want, goddamn it!

A crude and common filler for expressing anger.

Tell me something I don't know, asshole.

This is sometimes said in a sarcastic or ironic manner when a person tells you something that they should realize you already know.

We only played three innings. That will be a non-official game.

An "inning" is a division of play in baseball (Baseball is divided into nine innings while football and basketball are divided into four quarters).

What's up with you homos? You've been acting psycho all day.

"What's up with...?" is a way of asking why somebody is acting strangely or differently than normal. A "homo" is a crude insult word for a gay person (The word *homosexual* is still used in formal or clinical contexts). If a person is "psycho," they are crazy. A common and fun slang word.

I'd like to finish this game before I start collecting my god damn social security.

The monthly check that old or retired people are promised from the government for having paid into the system during their working lives.

No Trespassing. Keep out. [Sign]

"To trespass" on to property is to enter it without permission.

Paratroopers over the side. Chopper is the most feared and least seen dog in Castle Rock.

A “paratrooper” is a type of soldier.

Legend has it that Milo trained Chopper, not just to sic, but to sic specific parts of the human anatomy.

“Legend has it” is a way of saying that “it is generally believed that...”

If a person orders a dog to “sic,” they’re telling them to chase, bite or attack. “Anatomy” is a medical way of referring to the body.

Thus, a kid who illegally scaled the junkyard fence might hear the dread cry, “Chopper, sic balls.”

“Thus” is another way of saying therefore. “To scale” a fence is climb up it. If something is “dreaded,” it is much feared. A boy’s or man’s “balls” are his testicles (common slang, and it would hurt a lot if a dog bit them!).

Except the dread Chopper was nowhere in sight.

If a person is “nowhere in sight,” they can’t be found.

It’s weird. Yeah, weird.

An excellent word meaning strange or bizarre.

He never misses, does he? :: Not even when the ladies keep the seat down.

A little interchange about the fact that males always leave the toilet seat up while females obviously prefer it down (though Gordie can still piss and not hit the toilet, even if the seat is down!).

He’s got Chambers beat.

“To have a person beat” is to be doing so well against them in a game that it’s obvious you will beat them when it’s over.

Chambers is making his move. Chambers at the tape!

In sports, “to make a move” is to act dramatically in order to score or beat the opponent. In a race, “the tape” refers to the tape that is stretched across the finish line.

The crowd goes wild!

If a crowd “goes wild” at a sporting event, they start to yell and scream in waves of great joy and emotion.

You been watching the Mickey Mouse Club lately? I think Annette’s tits are getting bigger.

The “Mickey Mouse Club” was a famous TV show.

“Tits” are a crude slang terms for female breasts.

This is really a good time. :: A blast.

“If a person is having “a blast,” they are having a great time and very much enjoying themselves (A blast is literally an explosion).

Vern didn't just mean being off limits inside the junkyard or fudging on our folks.

To be in a place that is considered "off limits," you are not allowed or supposed to be there. "To fudge on" a person is to lie to them, but this is no longer used.

*The boys stop for food and soon meet Chopper the killer dog.*

We knew exactly where we were going. It was grand.

A rare but fun adjective that means wonderful or great.

Girls, girls, cool it! We'll flip for it.

"Cool it" means stop it. "To flip for" something means to flip a coin in order to decide who wins a contest or decision (Coins are called either heads or tails as they're being flipped in the air).

Odd man goes. :: That's you, Gordie. Odd as a cod.

If four people flip a coin and three coins land on one side (heads) and one lands on the other (tails), the person who flips the coin that lands on tails is considered the odd man. Also note that "odd" means strange, but the expression 'odd as a cod' is not used (A cod is a type of fish).

Four tails! Oh Jesus, that's a goocher.

The two sides of a coin are either heads or tails. A "goocher" is Vern's word for a dangerous coincidence, such as four coins that are flipped and land on the same side, but this is never used.

Do you remember when Clint Blancher and those guys got wiped out on a weed hill in Durham?

In the context of cars, to be "wiped out" is to be seriously hurt or even killed, most likely because of a car crash. A "weed" is a type of unwanted plant that often kills wanted plants.

And bang, they all got totaled!

"Bang" is the word used to describe the sound of a loud crash.

If a car is "totaled" in a car crash, it is completely destroyed.

I don't like this, sincerely.

Vern says this a lot, though it is no longer used this way. However, you could say *honestly* if you want to show sincerity or emphasis.

Nobody believes that crap about moons and goochers. It's baby stuff.

"Crap" is a crude but excellent alternative to bullshit. Both are slang words for nonsense, lies, etc. In this case, "baby stuff" refers to silly stories that no adult would take seriously.

Gordie just screwed the pooch.

You should know that “to screw” is a common slang verb meaning to have sex, and a “pooch” is a colloquial word for a dog, but this expression is, thankfully, never used.

Does the word ‘retarded’ mean anything to you?

A word that means very stupid or slow in intellectual development. Some people today prefer to avoid it and say *mentally challenged* instead.

Gordie, go get the provisions, you morphadite.

“Provisions” are the basic foods and equipment that is needed to survive, such as bread, water and batteries on a camping trip. A “morphadite” is an interesting word for a person who is born part male and part female, but this word is known by few people (Today, *intergender* is more common, but even that is rare!)

Don’t call me any of your million pet names. :: What a wet end you are.

A “pet name” is a nickname that a person uses for a close friend or relative. A “wet end” is a person who seems to want to stop people from having a good time, but this is no longer used.

I grow up, and when I look at you, I throw up.

“To throw up” is to vomit, or more colloquially, to barf.

Finding new and preferably **disgusting** ways to degrade a friend’s mother was always held in high regard.

“Disgusting” is an excellent adjective to describe anything that is gross, repulsive or makes you sick. “To degrade” a person is to humiliate, disparage or treat them with little or no respect. If something is “held in high regard,” it is much respected or appreciated.

I remember the year he was all conference. Quarterback.

In college sports, if an athlete is “all conference,” they are considered one of the best players, who is good enough to compete anywhere in the conference or league. A “quarterback” is the leader of an (American) football team.

Boy, could he throw.

“Boy” is occasionally used as a filler word to express emotion such as surprise. Also note a pronoun and modal verb can be inverted for stylistic effect (“He could really throw!”)

Could be some scouts at the game tomorrow. :: I don’t know, pop.

In sports, a “scout” is a person paid by a team to find the best players available at the high school or college level, so they can later play for that team at the college or professional level. “Pop” is another word for dad.

I think she's a lovely girl.

A popular British word for pretty or attractive.

Football takes concentration. You starting in on the girls, and his mind's all over the place.

"Concentration" is the act of focusing on a single subject or thing.

"To start in on" a subject is to begin to talk about it a lot, or with great emotion. If a person's mind is "all over the place," they are not able to focus or concentrate.

There you go kid, buck and half of hamburger.

A "buck" is still the most common way to refer to a dollar.

Come back here, god dam it! I'll sic my dog on ya!

"To sic a dog on" somebody is to have the dog chase and bite them. Note that "you ----> 'ya' in rapid speech.

Chopper was my first lesson in the vast difference between myth and reality.

"Vast" means extremely big or huge, and a "myth" is a widely believed fact that is in fact not true. This is Gordie's way of saying that Chopper had a very scary reputation, but he was in fact no so dangerous after all.

Kiss my ass, choppy!

An interesting and still widely used way of insulting a person.

Stop teasing my dog!

"To tease" a person (or dog) is to make fun of them or taunt them in a way that makes them feel humiliated or frustrated.

I'm gonna beat your ass.

Note that "going to" ----> "gonna" in rapid speech. "To beat a person's ass" is to physically hurt them or beat them up.

Don't you call me that, you little tin weasel!

"Tin" is a type of cheap metal, and a "weasel" is a funny little animal like a big rat or other type of rodent.

A loony up at the nuthouse. He took your ear and put it to a stove and burnt it off!

If a person is "loony," they are crazy or insane (It can be either a noun or adjective). A "nuthouse" is a place where crazy people live (If a person is *nuts*, they're crazy or insane).

My father stormed the beach at Normandy!

If an army "storms" a beach, they invade it or seize it with great speed and force. This is a reference to the Allied invasion of German-occupied France in 1944, during World War Two.

He's crazier than a shit house rat! No wonder you're the way you are.  
A rarely used but interesting image!

I'm gonna rip your head off and shit down your neck!  
"To rip off" something is to tear it off, often with great force.

You try it, you little slimy bastard!  
"Slimy" is an unpleasant adjective which means greasy or covered with a sticky or greasy substance. It can also mean repulsive. A "bastard" is a strong insult word for a mean or abusive person.

He wants you to go over there so he can beat you up and take you to the cops.  
"To beat up" a person is to physically attack and hurt them.  
A "cop" is a common colloquial word for a policeman.

You only outweigh him by 500 pounds, fat ass!  
"To outweigh" a person is to weigh more than they do.

You little foul mouthed whore master!  
If a person is "foul mouthed," they use a lot of curse words. A "whore" is a crude word for a prostitute, and a "master" is a person who controls the life of another, such as a slave owner.

Nobody ranks out my old man!  
"To rank out" a person is to speak disrespectfully of them, but this is no longer used. A person's "old man" is their father. Dated, but still used.

He stormed the beach at Normandy, you faggot!  
An awful slur word for a gay man.

We showed him. Thought we were a bunch of pussies.  
Note that in this context, "to show" a person is to do something that shows they were wrong or mistaken. A "pussy" is a crude word for a coward (and in other contexts, female sex organs).

I couldn't give a shit about my own dad, who hadn't laid a hand on me since I was three, and that was for eating bleach under the sink.  
If you "don't give a shit" about someone, you don't care about them. Crude, but very common. If a person "doesn't lay a hand on" you, they don't even touch you, even though they may appear dangerous or threatening. "Bleach" is a type of detergent that's used to wash clothes.

Whatever is between you and your old man, he can't change that.  
In this context, if something is "between" two people, it usually refers to the emotional pain or difficulties that they are having in their relationship.

I'm sorry if I'm spoiling everybody's good time.  
"To spoil" a person's evening is to ruin it or make it turn out badly.

You know, like all guts and eyeballs, already to jump and grab you.  
 “Guts” are the intestines inside a person’s stomach. “To grab” something is to quickly and forcefully take or seize it.

Shut up, goddamn it. :: I **can’t help it**.  
 If you “can’t help” doing something, you can’t prevent yourself from doing it.

We were going to have to get moving if we were going to make some real miles before dark.  
 “To get moving” is to start moving faster or more efficiently.  
 A “mile” is a unit of measurement that equals about 1,600 meters.

*Vern nearly dies on the railroad tracks ,  
 and Gordie tells the story of fat kid's revenge.*

So what’s up with you and this Connie Palermo chick?  
 “What’s up with...?” is a slangy way of asking what’s new. A “chick” is a teen girl or young woman. A bit silly and dated, but still used.

I’ve been seeing her for over a month now and all she’ll let me do is feel her tits.  
 A crude term for female breasts. *Boobs* is a safer word.

If you want to get laid, you got to get yourself a Protestant.  
 “To get laid” is a crude but very common way of saying to have sex.  
 “Protestants” are followers of one of the two largest branches of the Christian religion (Followers of the other biggest branch are *Catholics*).

A KLAM newsbreak: We interrupt to bring you an update on the search for the missing 12 year old boy, Ray Brower.  
 A “newsbreak” is the reporting of important news that has just been received by a radio or TV station. An “update” is the latest news available.

The police have expanded their efforts to include Mutton, Durham and the outlying areas.  
 “To expand” is to increase or grow bigger. The “outlying areas” of a major city are the parts that are considered still part of the general area but furthest away from the city center.

When are they gonna **give up**?  
 “To give up” is to surrender (perhaps to the police, after having committed a crime and gotten tired of running or hiding).

Will you hold still? You’re making me fuck up the same part.  
 To “fuck up” something is a very crude but common way of saying to do it poorly, or unsuccessfully.

Ten years from now, some hunter is gonna go out in the woods, take a leak, and wind up pissing on his bones.

“The woods” is another way of referring to a forest, or at least an area with lots of trees. “To take a leak” is an excellent colloquial expression which means to urinate or go to the bathroom. “To wind up” doing something is to finish by doing it, or to do it after having considered something else. “To piss” is to urinate (Piss is urine).

**What’s the big deal? Who cares?**

Both of these questions are common and colloquial ways of saying it’s not important.

Will you two shut the fuck up?

A crude and common filler to express anger and similar emotions.

One a piece after supper.

“One a piece” is a way of saying one piece to each person.

“Supper” is a somewhat dated but still used word for dinner.

Seriously, am I weird? :: Yeah, but so what?

“Weird” is an excellent word meaning strange or bizarre. “So what?” is a slangy way of saying something is not important. Common and useful.

It won’t be like grammar school. You’ll be taking your college courses, and me, Teddy and Vern will all be in the shop courses...

“Grammar school” is another word for elementary school, which is for kids up to about age 11. “College courses” in a high school are academic classes that prepare kids for college, such as Economics and History, while “shop courses” are practical classes that teach kids a trade or job, such as wood shop and electric shop.

...with the rest of the retards making ashtrays and birdhouses.

“Retard” is a crude but still used slang word for a retarded or very stupid person.

It’s asshole if your friends drag you down.

Here, Chris uses “asshole” as an adjective to mean bad or shitty, but this is never really done. If your friends “drag you down,” they pull you down to their lower level.

If you hang with us, you’ll just be another wise guy with shit for brains.

“To hang with” a person is a slangy way of saying to pass time with them.

“Hang out” is more common. “Wise” means smart, but a “wise guy” is a set expression for a person who is always insulting people and causing problems. To say a person has “shit for brains” is obviously insulting!

Do you think Mighty Mouse can beat up Superman? :: What are you—cracked?

Another alternative slang word for crazy, insane, nuts, loony, etc.

You could be a real writer, Gordie. :: Fuck writing! It's a stupid waste of time!  
 Note the use of "fuck" as a (very crude) way of expressing disgust or anger at whoever (or whatever) the direct object is (i.e...."I hate writing").

That's your dad talking! :: **Bullshit!**  
 One of the greatest cuss words in English, generally meaning lies, half-truths or other kinds of nonsense.

Kids lose everything unless there's somebody there to look out for them, and if your parents are too fucked up to do it, then maybe I should.  
 "To look out for" a person is to make sure they are doing ok and not being hurt or hurting themselves. If a person is "fucked up," they have serious emotional or other types of problems.

I'm crossing here, and why you guys are dragging your asses half way across the state and back, I'll be waiting on the other side, relaxing with my thoughts.  
 A slangy way of saying to move very slowly.

Do you use your left hand or right hand for that?  
 This is one of Gordie's most clever lines. He's implying that when Chris is "relaxing with his thoughts," what he is really doing is masturbating.

Man, that was the all time train dodge! Too cool!  
 "To dodge" something is to avoid it, often by stopping or turning at the last possible moment. Thus for this film, a "train dodge" is the game of staying on train tracks as a train approaches, until the last possible second, before jumping off.

Ok then, you won't mind if we check your jockeys for Hershey squirts, will ya?  
 A "jockey" is loose fitting men's underwear. "Hershey" is a famous brand of chocolate and a "squirt" is a small amount of something, and thus this is a totally ridiculous and disgusting way to refer to feces or shit.

Why don't you cook your dick? It would be a small meal.  
 A common slang word for a penis.

Screw you guys! I got it.  
 A more gentle version of "fuck you guys."

Nothing like a smoke after a meal. :: Yeah, I cherish these moments.  
 "A smoke" is a slangy way of referring to a cigarette. "To cherish" something is an interesting verb meaning to have great affection for it.

Come on, Gordie. But not one of your horror stories, ok? I'm not up for that.  
 A "horror story" is a story designed to scare or terrify the reader. To be "up for" something is to be emotionally ready or prepared for it.

He weighs close to 180, but it's not his fault. It's his glands.

A medical word for the various organs in the body responsible for the production of hormones and other key functions.

I don't know about any hyboid gland, but what a blimp!. :: No shit, she looks like a Thanksgiving Turkey.

A "blimp" is the gas powered airship that look like a giant oval balloon.

"No shit" is a slangy way of saying that which was just said was obvious and didn't need to be stated (A hyboid gland doesn't exist).

Go on, Gordie. It's a swell story.

An adjective that means excellent, or more colloquially, cool.

All the kids...they call him Lard Ass.

A cruel insult for a fat person ("Lard" is a type of animal fat).

At school, they put this sticker on his back that says "wide load," and they rank him out and beat him up whenever they get a chance.

"Wide load" is the sign that is put on the back of a truck that is carrying something that is considered too wide or big for the streets the truck is driving on. "To beat up" a person is to physically attack and hurt them.

The greatest revenge idea a kid ever had.

"Revenge" is the act of hurting somebody who had hurt you earlier.

Principal John Wiggins...and our celebrity contestant from KLAM Portland!

A "contestant" is a person who takes part in a contest (In this case to see who can eat the most pie). Note that the radio stations are identified by four letters, starting with Ks in the Western US and W in the eastern US.

Don't pay attention to those fools, Lard Ass.

An important word for a person without good judgement who is easily tricked, or more generally, a silly, stupid or foolish person.

I got 10 riding on you myself, Billy Boy.

If you have ten dollars "riding on" a person, you have bet 10 dollars that they will win in the game or contest they're participating in.

Drum roll!

The sound a drummer makes when trying to build excitement.

Hey Lard Ass, chow down! Wide load!

"To chow down" is to eat quickly and often with enthusiasm.

You better pace yourself, if you want to hold out, boy!

"To pace oneself" in a contest is to use as much energy as needed, but not so much that you run out of energy later in the contest. In this case, "to hold out" is to survive after a long and difficult experience.

Castor oil. [written]

The oil of a large plant that is used mainly to get people to throw up or vomit, in order to eliminate harmful things in their stomach.

Diving into his 5<sup>th</sup> pie, Lard Ass began to imagine he wasn't eating pies.

"To dive into" a meal is to eat with great hunger ("To dive" is literally to jump hands and head first into a body of water).

He pretended he was eating corn flakes and rat guts in blueberry sauce.

"Guts" are the intestines of your stomach.

A strange and scary sound, like a log truck coming at you at 100 miles an hour.

"Logs" are large tree trunks that are used for building houses (A log truck is always very big in order to be able to carry the logs).

Bossman took one look at Bill Travis and barfed on Principal Wiggins.

A very unpleasant slang word which means to throw up or vomit.

The Women's Auxiliary barfed all over the Benevolent Order of Antelope.

Two funny-sounding names for typical social clubs ("Auxiliary" means a group or person who supports another. "Benevolent" means kind-hearted, an "order" is a club and "Antelope" are beautiful animals that are similar to deer).

A complete and total barfarama.

A fun word that doesn't exist: A place where everyone is throwing up.

Maybe he went home and celebrated with a couple cheeseburgers. :: Jesus, that ending sucks.

If something "sucks," it is extremely bad. Crude, but very common.

*The boys courageously face a series of dangers,  
from ghosts in the woods to leeches in the water.*

Cherry flavored pez. No question about it.

"Pez" is a type of popular candy. "No question about it" is one way of saying "I am absolutely certain."

I knew the \$64,000 question was fixed.

The "64,000 Question" was a very famous game show in the 1950s in which contestants tried to show who had the most knowledge. If a game is "fixed," people who work at the game have cheated in such a way to make sure the person they want to win does win.

They just keep wagon-training.

A "wagon-train" is a long line of horses pulling covered carriages.

What the hell is Goofy?

“The hell” is added to Wh questions to express surprise, frustration and other emotion. Goofy was a famous cartoon animal, but it was not clear what kind of animal Goofy was supposed to be.

I promise I won't hawk no more dirty books.

A way of referring to a book with lots of naked girls or sexual activity.

I promise I'll eat all my lima beans. :: Two for flinching.

“Lima beans” are a type of healthy food that almost all kids hate.

“To flinch” is to tense your muscles in anticipation of pain

It's not coyotes. It's his ghost.

A beautiful animal that looks like a wild dog or wolf that makes a famous howling sound at night (“Waouuuuuu....”)

2300 hours. Corporeal Teddy Duchamp stands guard.

“2300 hours” is a way of saying 11:00PM in the military. A “corporeal” is a low level rank in the army. “To stand guard” is to stay alert and watch for signs of danger (often while others get to sleep).

No sign of the enemy. The fort is secure. ::

Shut up Teddy, and keep your eyes peeled.

A “fort” is usually a place that is walled off from the outside that is designed to house soldiers. If a fort is “secure,” it is well protected. If a person is “keeping their eyes peeled,” they are staying wide awake and alert in order to see possible dangers.

Teddy, cut it out! I'm trying to sleep!

An excellent colloquial expression which means “Stop it!”

The dog faces rested easy in the knowledge that Corporeal Teddy Duchamp was protecting all that was dear to them.

“Dog face” is Teddy's silly way of referring to low level soldiers.

If something is “dear to” you, you cherish it or value it highly.

Maybe you can go into the college courses with me. :: That will be the day.

A useful expression which basically means “that is very unlikely.”

I'm just one of those low-life Chambers kids.

An insulting adjective to refer to anyone who is considered part of the lowest level of society.

Nobody ever asked me if I took the milk money that time. I just got a three day vacation.

This is Chris' way of saying he was kicked out of school for three days because it was assumed he stole some of the school's money.

Maybe I took that money to old lady Simons...but I still got a three day vacation because that money never showed up.

“To show up” normally means to arrive, though in this context it means to be found.

Yeah, it was brown and had dots on it.

A “dot” is a small spot, mark or point.

Just suppose I told the story—Me, Chris Chambers, kid brother to Eyeball Chambers.

A “kid brother” is a younger brother.

And do you think that bitch would have dared to do something like that if it had been one of those douche bags that had taken the money? :: Hell no! No way!

A “bitch” is a very vulgar word for a mean or abusive female. “To dare” to do something is decide to do it even though it is very dangerous or difficult. A “douche bag” is a strong insult for a disgusting person (A douche is a shower, or perhaps a device for feminine hygiene). “Hell no” and “No way” are common alternatives to “Absolutely not!”

I’m sure she had her eye on that skirt for a long time.

“To have an eye” on something is to be looking at, or in this case, to be considering buying it. A “skirt” is a type of dress.

Who gives a fuck, anyway?

A more vulgar alternative to “Who gives a shit?”, which is a way saying that nobody cares or it’s not important.

The freight woke up the other guys and it was on the tip of my tongue to tell them about the deer, but I didn’t.

A “freight train” is a train that carries goods, such as food and furniture, instead of people. If something is on the “tip of your tongue,” you have trouble remembering what it is you want to say (though here it used a bit differently). A “deer” is a beautiful animal.

Gee, Gordie, why didn’t you get some breakfast stuff like twinkies, pez and root beer?

“Gee” is a gentle filler word to express surprise or other emotion.

“Twinkies” are little yellow cakes, “pez” is a type of candy and “root beer” is a soft drink like coke. They’re all yummy!

I guess a more experienced shopper could have gotten more for your seven cents.

One of Gordie’s funnier lines (Even in 1959, seven cents wasn’t much!).

With our stomach rumbling, we pressed on toward the Royal River.

If a stomach “rumbles,” it makes the low growling sound that suggests you are hungry. “To press on” toward a place is to continue to move forward even if it is difficult.

The idea of seeing that kid's dead body was starting to become an **obsession**.  
An important word for an idea or object that one thinks about constantly, or to the point that it is no longer healthy.

I think we should stick to the tracks.  
"To stick to" something is to stay close by it.  
"Railroad tracks" are the steel that trains ride on.

Take no prisoners!  
An expression used by soldiers who are determined to kill all their enemies.

Billy and Charlie had managed to keep their enormous secret for about 36 hours.  
If a person "has managed to" do something, they are able to do it, despite the difficulty of doing so. "Enormous" means extremely big or huge.

I guess for those guys, protecting their mother's good name wasn't a top priority.  
If something is "a top priority," it is considered very important (A priority is literally a level or rank).

You guys are acting like my grandmother having a conniption fit.  
A "conniption fit" is a sudden outburst of anger or rage.

We go up with a whole bunch of fishing gear, and if a cop asks what we're doing, we're just here to take a couple of steel head out of the river.  
"Gear" refers to machines, tools or devices to make things easier.  
A "steel head" is a type of trout or fish that is common in Oregon.

You stated your position clearly and now I'm gonna state mine. Get in the fucking car, now.  
"To state a position" is to express an opinion. With crude people, "fucking" is a much loved adjective, adverb, gerund, etc.

I hate this **short cut**.  
A "short cut" is a way to get from point A to B that is shorter, though perhaps more difficult, than the more traditional way.

We use your body as a raft.  
A "raft" is a flat collection of logs or wood that floats on water, that can be used to transport things.

I'm in the prime of my youth, and I'll only be young once.  
To be in "the prime of your youth" is to be at perhaps your strongest and healthiest age, when you are still young.

You just signed your own death warrant.  
A legal document ordering the death or execution of a person.

Pile on!

If people “pile on” each other, they form a large pile or heap, by lying down on each other, one on top of another. For some strange reason, kids love to do this.

I’m not **falling for** that one!

In this context, to “fall for” something is to believe it, even if there is a good reason to think it’s not true. Colloquial, fun and common.

Leeches! Oh my god! Jesus Christ!

“Leeches” are disgusting worm-like animals that stick to your skin and suck blood. The last two sentences are a common expression of great emotion, said by all, whether religious or not.

Sorry, lay off of me.

An interesting way of telling someone to stop teasing, harassing or bothering them.

He’s still breathing, you **idiot**.

An excellent word for a stupid person, moron, jerk, fool, etc.

Cool it, you guys. He just fainted.

If you tell a person to “cool it,” you’re telling them to stop whatever it is they’re doing. If a person “faints,” they loses consciousness (and thus, they usually fall to the ground).

He had leeches hanging from his balls!

A very common word for a man’s testicles. This is truly a horrible image!

What are you, his mother? Eat shit!

A crude and stupid but still used way to insult a person.

You four-eyed psycho!

“Four-eyed” is a dated insult expression for a person who wears glasses. A “psycho” is a crazy person. Common, colloquial and fun to say.

You are history, guy, history!

If you tell a person they *are* “history,” you’re telling them they are in big trouble or that they may even face great harm or death in the near future.

*The long journey ends with a final struggle  
for the body of Raymond Brower.*

Come on, Ace, don’t fuck around.

In this case, “to fuck around” is to do things that will cause trouble.

The train had knocked Ray Brower out of his keds  
just like it had knocked the life out of his body.  
A brand of casual shoe that is still popular today.

Let's look for some long branches; We'll build him a stretcher.  
"Branches" are the offshoots or stems  
of a tree that grow out from the main trunk.

You might even write about us guys  
if you ever get hard up for material.  
If a writer is "hard up for material," they are having  
a difficult time finding things to write about.

What the fuck do you know about this?  
A crude filler term that is added to Wh  
questions to show anger or other emotion.

We found him! We got dibs!  
If you "got dibs" on something, you are  
the first to claim that it belongs to you.

You were under the porch!  
An area outside a main building this is usually covered.

I ought to beat the living shit out of you!  
"To beat the living shit out of" a person is to attack them with  
great violence, perhaps causing serious and permanent harm.

"Oh Billy, I think I just turned my Fruit  
of the loom into a fudge factory."  
"Fruit of the loom" is a famous brand of underwear, and in this case,  
"fudge" is not a chocolate sweet, but rather a ridiculous slang word for  
shit or feces. 12 year old humor at its worst!

That's it! You're ass is grass.  
One way of threatening to beat up  
or severely harm or injure a person.

OK, Chambers, you little faggot!  
A horrible slur against homosexuals.

Why don't you go home and fuck your mother some more.  
"To fuck" is the crudest verb for having sex in the English language, and  
the one that is most loved by 12 year old boys talking among themselves.

Come on, Chris. Let's split.  
A still common way of saying "Let's go."

You ain't got the sack to shoot a woodchuck!

A "sack" is a small bag, or in this case, Ace's way of referring to testicles, or balls (and thus Gordie's lack of courage). A "woodchuck" is a small animal that lives in the water and loves to eat wood.

Suck my fat one, you cheap dime store hood!

"Suck my fat one" is a crude insult based on images of oral sex, and once again, typical of 12 year old boys. A "dime store" used to be a store where cheap goods were sold (often for as low as a dime, or 10 cents), but they no longer exist. A "hood" is another word for a gangster or thug.

This is big time, baby!

A slangy way of saying this is very important.

Biggest one in four counties.

A "county" is a administrative area that's bigger than a city. There are often a dozen or more counties in a state.

Neither our gang nor their gang got the credit.

To "get the credit" for having some dome something is to be acknowledged or accepted as the person who did it.

In the end, we decided an anonymous phone call was the best thing to do.

If a phone call is "anonymous," it is made by an unknown person who does not identify themselves.

We headed home, and although many thoughts raced through our minds, we barely spoke.

A good word that means hardly at all.

I better get back before my mom puts me on the most-wanted list.

A list of wanted criminals with their photographs on them, that are posted at various public buildings, such as post offices.

Chris, no hard feelings, OK? :: No way, man.

"No hard feelings" is a way of saying there is no anger or bitterness between two people.

As time went on, we saw less and less of Teddy and Vern, until eventually they became just two more faces in the halls.

This is Gordie's way of saying that Teddy and Vern were just two of countless students that Chris and him saw at school.

Friends come in and out of your life like bus boys in a restaurant.

A "bus boy" is the assistant to the waiter who sets the table and takes dirty dishes back to the restaurant kitchen.

I heard that Vern got married out of high school, had four kids, and is now the fork lift operator at the Arsegaut lumber yard.

A “forklift” is a large machine with super long arms that is used for transporting large or heavy objects from one place to another at a construction site. A “lumber yard” is a place where lots of types of wood for building construction is sold.

Last I heard, he spent some time in jail and was now doing odd jobs around Castle Rock.

“Odd jobs” are usually low paid temporary jobs, such as working on a construction site for a couple weeks or delivering papers or washing dishes at a restaurant.

He enrolled in the college courses with me, and although it was hard, he gutted it out like he always did.

“To gut it out” is to continue working hard until you succeed at what you want. This is rarely used, but to “stick it out” is common.

One of them pulled a knife.

In this case, “to pull” a knife is to suddenly take it out from where it was hidden and show it in a threatening manner.

Chris, who had always made the best peace, had tried to break it up. He was stabbed in the throat.

“To break up” a fight is to stop the two people who are fighting each other. To be “stabbed” is to be attacked with a knife, which enters into the body.

## Stand by me

### Possible Topics for ESL Class Discussion

1. Do you think it's true that the best friends you'll ever have in life are the best friends you had when you were a kid?
2. What's so fascinating about a dead body?
3. If you are a male, which of the four boys do you think you were most like when you were their age?
4. Do you like to go camping? Why or why not?
5. Are kids from your culture often divided into those who are considered smart and will go on to be lawyers and other professionals (like Gordie), and those who are considered less smart and will be expected to do manual labor (like Vern)?
6. Were kids more innocent back in the 1950s than they are now?
7. What did you like and not like about this movie?

