

Spin The Wheel.

Now that the Christmas vacation is coming up, we will probably play some board(1) games in the evenings. We have so many of them! There is a big collection of them, stuffed(2) into a closet in the lounge. Monopoly, Axis and Allies, and Scrabble are three of the more well known ones. My favorite is probably Monopoly; I love games that lead you along a path to a destination, with question cards, and unexpected(3) opportunities or problems along the way. I was actually playing a similar game this morning on the computer, except it wasn't(4) about buying streets or buildings. It was an information game created by a company that deals with retirement. I'm not close to retiring, in fact, I'm probably still about twenty years away from it(5). But the reason I was playing the game, was to try a win the 1st place prize of \$50,000. I probably don't stand a chance of(6) winning, but you know, the game turned out to be very interesting. You had to spin a wheel, walk up to 5 steps along the path, and then answer questions, or read and watch informational video clips. The whole point is to get educated about retirement, health, finances, and volunteering. It was an interesting, casual(7) way to learn a lot about retiring. What I realized is that I don't know very much about retiring. One of the aims of this organization is to get retired people involved in the community, to keep them socially healthy. The game, with its spinner and pathway, is a great teaching tool for any subject.

1. A 'board game' is a game played on a board (ha! ha!). And by a 'board' I mean either a piece of strong cardboard with a picture on it which can be square or rectangular, or it can be wooden. The board serves as a table on which the other pieces are put. A board can also be a useful table-like structure, like an ironing board or a bread board. The word sounds exactly like 'bored' which has different meanings. It can mean that you are not entertained at all, or that you have drilled a hole. Let's look at some examples:

- a. Where is the game board for Monopoly? I have the pieces and the houses but not the board.
- b. I need to buy a new ironing board, because mine is broken.
- c. I'm so bored; I don't know what to do.
- d. The insects bored holes in the wooden door, so it had to be replaced.

2. 'To stuff' is a verb that I've covered before in a previous podcast, but it is very common, especially in England. It basically means to fill until very full. It can be used figuratively, and is also a noun. It also can be used in an insult, or a way of dismissing something.

- a. He built the chair, and then stuffed the seat cushion so it was very soft and comfortable.
- b. We ate too much and felt completely stuffed.
- c. My attic is full of stuff!
- d. I was so angry that I told him to get stuffed!
- e. We can't go into work because the office is flooded. Stuff it! (forget it!)

3. 'Unexpected opportunities' is quite a mouthful; however, it's a great phrase, and will impress people if you use it correctly, so let's practice the pronunciation.

Un-ex-pected opp-or-tun-ities un-ex-pected opp-or-tun-ities un-ex-pected opp-or-tun-ities

4. The use of 'except' is a tool that is similar to saying 'similar but different'. A sentence is written or said, but then 'except' is put in half way, and then a contradiction is added.

- a. I bought a coat just like yours, except it was red.
- b. We also went to Mexico for a vacation, except we went in the winter not in the summer.

- c. They'll come to visit again, except next time, they'll stay longer.
5. To be 'away from' in time means that you are not yet ready for something chronologically or in some other way.
- a. He's a few years away from retiring, but he's thinking about it.
 - b. They are dating, but she is a long way away from getting married (marriage).
 - c. He's just started High School, so he's four years away from graduating.
6. 'To stand a chance' means to have a chance; both are interchangeable.
- a. They stand a good chance of winning the race. They have a good chance of winning the race.
 - b. That boxer doesn't stand a chance of winning. That boxer doesn't have a chance of winning.
7. 'Casual' is relaxed, comfortable, and not formal.
- a. It's just a casual dinner party, nothing formal.
 - b. When we go for walks we wear just casual clothes.