Your English Toolbox

VOCABULARY · EPISODE 252

What Does That Even Mean? I’ll Give You a Ring

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

8 learning entries

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

1

give someone a ring

DEF

to telephone someone

to make a phone call to someone, especially in informal British English

Informal and mainly British. The 'ring' is the sound a phone makes, not an object. It is a friendly, relaxed way to say you will call, so it is less suitable for formal emails or serious situations.

I'll give you a ring when the train arrives.

Give me a ring if you need a lift tonight.

2

give someone a call

DEF

to telephone someone

to contact someone by phone

Very common in both British and American English, and natural in almost any informal situation. It is the safest choice when you are not sure whether 'ring' fits.

Give me a call when you get home.

I'll give the dentist a call this morning.

3

call someone back

DEF

to telephone someone who called you earlier

to telephone someone again after a short time

Back links the new call to an earlier call or conversation. 'I'll call you back' often follows a missed call or a call that was interrupted. The object can come in the middle: 'call him back'.

Sorry, I'm in a meeting. Can I call you back in an hour?

She called me back as soon as she saw my message.

4

ring

DEF

(noun) a circle of metal worn on a finger as jewellery
(noun) the sound a bell or telephone makes
(noun, British informal) a phone call: give someone a ring
One word, three common meanings, so context decides. In 'I'll give you a ring' the meaning is phone call. As a verb, ring means to telephone in British English (rang, rung) and to make a bell sound.

She wears a gold ring on her left hand.

We heard the ring of the doorbell and went to open the door.

5

miss a call

DEF

to fail to answer a phone call when it arrives
to not hear or see a call because you are busy or away
You miss a call when you are not there to answer. Often followed by call someone back. The noun is a missed call, which appears on the phone screen.

I'm sorry, I missed your call because my phone was in my bag.

She had three missed calls from her sister.

6

register

DEF

the level of formality of language, such as formal, neutral or informal
the style of speaking or writing used in a particular situation
Choosing the right register means matching your words to the situation: a job interview, a text to a friend, or a formal email each need a different one.

Her register changed from formal to friendly as the meeting went on.

Use a more formal register in your cover letter.

7

informal

DEF

relaxed and friendly, not following strict rules of style or behaviour
used in everyday conversation rather than in serious or official situations
Informal language is natural with friends and family but may sound too casual at work or in formal writing. Opposite: formal. The adverb is informally. Dictionaries often mark such words 'informal'.

It was an informal chat, not a real interview.

'Give me a ring' is an informal way to ask someone to call.

8

contact

DEF

(verb) to communicate with someone, for example by phone, email or message
(noun) communication with someone

Contact is neutral and formal, which makes it useful in emails, interviews and customer service. 'I will contact you' sounds more formal than 'I'll give you a call'. As a noun: stay in contact, get in contact.

Please contact us if you have any questions.

We stayed in contact after she moved abroad.