

How Do You Like Them Apples | Good Will Hunting

Vocabulary Breakdown

Hollywood English Club

Will Hunting is a janitor who solves graduate-level maths problems on a blackboard. In this scene, two young men try to impress a girl in a bar — and one of them has read every book in Harvard library. The language is sharp, real, and full of authentic American English.

1. "Is That Your Thing?"

■ "Is that your thing?" means is that what you are interested in or known for?

✓ A casual, friendly way to ask about someone's passion, hobby, or area of expertise.

▶ *"Is art your thing? You seem to know a lot about this exhibition."*

2. "Obscure"

■ Obscure means not well known — existing outside of mainstream awareness.

✓ Can be used to show off (I only listen to obscure music) or to genuinely describe something few people know about.

▶ *"He loved recommending obscure films that most people had never heard of."*

3. "Pawn It Off as Your Own"

■ To pawn something off as your own means to present someone else's work or idea as if it were originally yours.

✓ Implies deception and plagiarism. Will accuses Clark of regurgitating other people's ideas without true understanding.

▶ *"He pasted the article into his essay and tried to pawn it off as his own thinking."*

4. "Certainties in Life"

■ "The only certainties in life are death and taxes" — a famous saying meaning these two things are unavoidable for everyone.

✓ Often attributed to Benjamin Franklin. Will uses it to expose Clark's borrowed wisdom.

▶ *"As my grandfather used to say: the only certainties in life are death and taxes."*

5. "Dropped \$150k on an Education"

■ To drop money on something means to spend a large amount of money on it.

✓ "Dropped" is informal American English for spent. Will mocks Clark for paying a fortune for education he could get free at a library.

▶ *"She dropped a lot of money on that course but says it was worth every cent."*

6. "Drive-Thru"

■ A drive-thru is a service where customers stay in their car to be served — common at fast food restaurants and banks.

✓ Will's famous line suggests the real-world outcome of an expensive education will be no better than a minimum-wage job.

▶ *"They grabbed burgers at the drive-thru without even getting out of the car."*

7. "Unoriginal"

■ Unoriginal means lacking new ideas — copying or repeating what others have said or done.

✓ A serious intellectual insult. Will is saying Clark cannot think for himself.

▶ *"The review called the film derivative and unoriginal — a pale copy of better work."*

8. "We Could Step Outside"

■ "We could step outside" is a veiled invitation to fight — taking a confrontation away from public view.

✓ Said when someone is angry but trying to remain calm in a public setting. The threat is implied, not stated.

▶ *"He leaned across the table and said quietly: we could step outside if you want to continue this."*

9. "It's Cool"

■ "It's cool" means it's fine, no problem, or I am not upset.

✓ Will uses it to de-escalate the tension. Casual American English for everything is okay between us.

▶ *"Don't worry about being late — it's cool, we haven't ordered yet."*

10. "Wicked Smart"

■ "Wicked smart" is a Boston expression meaning extremely intelligent.

✓ "Wicked" is used as an intensifier in Boston slang — equivalent to very or incredibly.

▶ *"His little sister is wicked smart — she finished high school two years early."*

11. "Caramels"

- Caramels are soft, chewy sweets made from sugar, butter, and cream.
 - ✓ Will's caramel moment is a quiet act of kindness — buying sweets for his friend without making it a big deal.
 - ▶ *"She unwrapped a caramel and passed the rest of the bag down the row."*
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12. "Arbitrary"

- Arbitrary means based on random choice rather than reason, logic, or fairness.
 - ✓ Will uses it to dismantle Clark's arrogance — suggesting his intelligence and privilege are accidents of birth, not earned.
 - ▶ *"The selection process seemed completely arbitrary — nobody could explain how the shortlist was made."*
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13. "Embarrass"

- To embarrass someone means to make them feel awkward, ashamed, or self-conscious in front of others.
 - ✓ Notice the spelling — one r, two s's. A very common word that English learners sometimes misspell.
 - ▶ *"She did not mean to embarrass him, but pointing out his mistake in front of everyone made his face go red."*
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14. "Impression"

- To make an impression means to leave a strong, memorable effect on someone — usually when meeting for the first time.
 - ✓ Can be good or bad. "You made quite an impression" is context-dependent.
 - ▶ *"He rehearsed his answers a hundred times because he wanted to make the right impression."*
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15. "Michael Bolton Clone"

- Michael Bolton is an American singer known for his emotional power ballads and long flowing hair. A clone is an exact copy.
 - ✓ Will uses it as a quick, deflating insult — reducing Clark to a forgettable type rather than an individual.
 - ▶ *"The new guy looked like a Michael Bolton clone from 1993 — all hair and no substance."*
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16. Idiom Spotlight: "How Do You Like Them Apples?"

■ "How do you like them apples?" means what do you think of that? — usually said after an unexpected victory or reversal.

✓ An American idiom expressing triumphant satisfaction. Will uses it after getting Skylar's number right in front of Clark.

▶ *"He passed the exam on his first try after everyone said he would fail. How do you like them apples?"*

Good Will Hunting: How Do You Like Them Apples?

Student Worksheet

Part 1: Vocabulary Match

Match each word or phrase with its correct definition. Write the letter on the line.

WORDS / PHRASES	DEFINITIONS
_____ 1. how do you like them apples?	a) Random; not based on logic or a clear reason
_____ 2. turn the tables	b) To take someone else's idea and present it as your own
_____ 3. pawn it off as your own	c) Not creative; copying the style or ideas of others
_____ 4. arbitrary	d) A playful boast after proving someone wrong
_____ 5. unoriginal	e) To work out a problem or find an answer by thinking
_____ 6. figure it out	f) To reverse a situation and gain the advantage
_____ 7. obscure	g) Rare, not well-known, or difficult to understand

Part 2: Fill in the Blanks

Complete each sentence with a word or phrase from the word bank.

WORD BANK

turned the tables • wicked smart • dropped • arbitrary • pawn it off • obscure • step outside

1. She _____ \$300 on a dress she's only worn once.
2. The rules felt completely _____. Nobody could explain why they existed.
3. Down 3-0, the team somehow _____ and won the match.
4. Don't try to _____ his research as your own — everyone knows you copied it.
5. That poet is so _____. I'd never heard of him before this class.
6. "You want to _____? Fine. Let's go."

7. Her little brother is _____ — he taught himself to code at age nine.

Part 3: Word Roots — Press, Impress, Impression, Embarrass

The words **impress**, **impression**, and **embarrass** all share the Latin root **premere**, meaning "to press."

Use the correct word from the box to complete each sentence.

WORD BOX

impress • impression • embarrassed • impressive • embarrassing

8. He tripped on stage in front of 500 people. It was so _____!
9. She worked hard to _____ her new boss in the first week.
10. My first _____ of the city was that it was very noisy and exciting.
11. The athlete's performance was _____. Nobody had ever run that fast.
12. I felt _____ when I called the teacher 'Mum' by accident.

Part 4: Multiple Choice

Circle the correct answer.

13. What does "How do you like them apples?" mean?
 - a) How do you enjoy eating apples?
 - b) A playful boast after proving someone wrong or achieving something unexpected.
 - c) An expression of surprise at bad news.
 - d) A polite way to start a conversation.

14. Where does "How do you like them apples?" originally come from?
 - e) It was invented for Good Will Hunting.
 - f) It comes from a 19th century apple-growing tradition.
 - g) It originated with WWI soldiers taunting enemies after firing artillery shells.
 - h) It comes from a John Wayne interview.

15. Will says someone "dropped \$150,000 on an education." What does "dropped" mean here?
 - i) Dropped out of.
 - j) Lost accidentally.
 - k) Spent.
 - l) Borrowed.

16. "Wicked smart" is an example of what?
- m) British slang.
 - n) Boston slang, where 'wicked' means 'very.'
 - o) Sarcasm — it means the opposite.
 - p) A formal compliment.
17. Will jokes that drinking coffee is "arbitrary." What is he saying?
- q) Coffee tastes terrible.
 - r) Coffee is a carefully chosen symbol of sophistication.
 - s) Asking someone for coffee is no more logical or meaningful than eating caramels together.
 - t) He prefers tea to coffee.

Part 5: True or False?

Write T (True) or F (False). If the statement is false, correct it on the line below.

18. "Wicked smart" is a compliment used in Boston to mean "very intelligent."
Answer: _____
Correction (if false): _____
19. Will went to Harvard University on a full scholarship.
Answer: _____
Correction (if false): _____
20. "Step outside" is a polite invitation to get some fresh air.
Answer: _____
Correction (if false): _____
21. The phrase "How do you like them apples?" appeared in films before Good Will Hunting.
Answer: _____
Correction (if false): _____
22. "Turn the tables" means to give up and admit defeat.
Answer: _____
Correction (if false): _____
23. Will believes that knowledge comes from curiosity and effort, not just formal education.
Answer: _____
Correction (if false): _____

Part 6: Sarcasm or Sincere?

This scene uses sarcasm and wit heavily. Read each sentence. Write S (Sarcastic) or G (Genuine) and explain how you can tell.

24. "Oh great, another Monday."
S or G? _____
How can you tell? _____
25. "Oh wow, you spent \$150,000 and I learned the same thing at the library for \$1.50. Impressive!"
S or G? _____
How can you tell? _____
26. "She did an impressive job on that presentation — the board loved it."
S or G? _____
How can you tell? _____
27. "We could step outside if you have a problem with that."
S or G? _____
How can you tell? _____
28. "It's cool. No worries at all."
S or G? _____
How can you tell? _____
29. "Want to get together and eat a bunch of caramels? You know, because that's not arbitrary at all."
S or G? _____
How can you tell? _____

Part 7: Scene Analysis

Answer in complete sentences.

30. Will says the Harvard student "dropped \$150,000 on an education he could have got for \$1.50 in late fees at the library." What does this tell us about Will's attitude towards formal education?

31. "Turn the tables" is a key idiom in this scene. At what exact moment does Will turn the tables, and why is it so satisfying for the audience?

- Will is described as a genius who works as a janitor. What does this say about how society values intelligence vs social class? Is it the same in your country?

Great work! Keep learning English with film and TV! ☐