

Lesson 01: Double Trouble

Mary and Jacob are a married couple with two children who are rather mischievous!

Listen to their conversation and try to answer the comprehension questions:

Listening Comprehension

- 1. How old are Mary & Jacob's kids?**
 - a. two years old
 - b. four years old
 - c. six years old
- 2. Yesterday they made a mess in the...**
 - a. bedroom
 - b. kitchen
 - c. living room
- 3. What did they flush down the toilet?**
 - a. some fishing hooks
 - b. a toy
 - c. a turtle
- 4. The mess in the living room was caused by...**
 - a. dirt
 - b. food
 - c. paint
- 5. Who was also a troublemaker as a child?**
 - a. Jacob
 - b. Mary
 - c. the kids' uncle
- 6. What are the kids doing while this conversation is taking place?**
 - a. at school
 - b. playing outside
 - c. sleeping

Conversation Text

Mary: I'm completely **wiped out** from chasing the kids around all day. Let me tell you, **honey**, back when we talked about having kids, I didn't know it was going to be so exhausting!

Jacob: I just **can't get over** how much damage a pair of four-year-old **twins** can do to one house.

Mary: Yesterday they had a **chocolate pudding** fight in the kitchen. It took me over three hours to clean pudding off the kitchen walls.

Jacob: If you think that's bad, you ought to see what they did to my new **tackle box**. They took out all of my new **hooks** and filled the box with mud. When I asked them why, they told me they wanted mud for a mud pie the next time we went fishing.

Mary: **I can top that.** Last week I found Alex and Matthew in the upstairs bathroom looking into the toilet. I knew they had done something.

Jacob: Oh no, they didn't? Please tell me... they didn't.

Mary: They **flushed** the baby turtle we got them down the toilet. They told me they wanted to see how long the baby turtle could hold its breath.

Vocabulary

wiped out =
extremely tired; no
more energy

honey = an
affectionate
nickname

can't get over =
can't comprehend,
can't accept

twins = two
brothers/sisters born
together

chocolate pudding =
a type of dessert

tackle box = a box
that holds fishing
equipment

hooks = curved
pieces of metal

I can top that = I
have a better story
than that one

flushed = made the
water go down the
toilet

Jacob: I was wondering where that turtle **wandered off** to. I should have known better than to have bought them a pet... when I saw it missing... well, **I just couldn't bring myself to** ask what happened to it.

Mary: It was hard enough taking care of two babies... but when they were infants, at least they **stayed put**. I think it's even harder now that they're running around and **wreaking havoc**.

Jacob: Just wait until they hit the teenage years.

Mary: Let's not even think about that right now. Will you just look at this living room? It's going to take us **a decade** just to clean up in here. **How in the world** did Alex and Matthew get into the watercolor paints? I thought you hid them?

Jacob: I did... I promise, I hid the paints where Alex and Matthew would never find them.

Mary: They were in your sock drawer, **weren't they?**

Jacob: I... yeah, they were. I guess no place is safe. Speaking of which... how did they get the cookies down from the top of the refrigerator?

Mary: Alex helps Matthew climb up onto the kitchen counter and then Matthew grabs the cookies... at least they're learning **teamwork**.

Vocabulary

wandered off =
went without
direction

**I couldn't bring
myself to** = I
couldn't manage to

stay put = stay in
one place

wreaking havoc =
causing trouble /
destruction

decade = ten years

How in the world...?
= adding "in the
world" expresses
surprise

...weren't they? =
the use of a
"question tag"
makes a statement
into a question to
which the answer is
expected to be "yes"

teamwork = the
ability to cooperate
and work together

siblings = brothers
and sisters

Jacob: Haha, true. I have to confess, my **siblings** and I caused **a ton of** trouble when we were kids. I guess they're **taking after** their dad.

Mary: And you were still a bit of a **rebel** when I met you...

Jacob: I **cleaned up my act** before we got married, though.

Mary: Well, let's hope the boys **follow in your footsteps** and turn into responsible adults... someday!

Jacob: Come on, we might as well start cleaning the paint off the walls while the little guys are taking their **nap**.

Mary: And when they wake up, I'm going to put them to work right alongside us – at least that way they can't get into any more **mischief**.

Vocabulary

a ton of = a LOT of

taking after = acting similar to an older family member

a rebel = in this context, someone who likes to break rules and challenge authority

I cleaned up my act = I started behaving responsibly; stopped doing bad things

follow in your footsteps = do the same actions / take the same life path

nap = short period of sleep in the middle of the day

mischief = behavior that causes annoyance or trouble

Vocabulary Quiz

can top that
couldn't bring myself
get over

in the world
mischief
rebel

takes after
ton
wander
wiped out

1. A _____ of fans were waiting for the pop star outside her hotel.
2. After two hours of intense football practice, everyone on the team was _____.
3. I can't _____ how talented your sister is. She could be a professional artist!
4. My daughter's a social butterfly like me, but my son _____ his dad; he's more reserved.
5. My older brother's always been a _____ - whatever my parents tell him to do, he does the opposite.
6. So your wallet was stolen in Buenos Aires, huh? I _____ - when I was traveling in Peru, an armed gang took over the bus and robbed everyone on board.
7. The police officer let the boys off the hook, but he warned them to stay out of _____.
8. They climbed the mountain without any safety equipment?! What _____ were they thinking?
9. We don't care for guided tours; we prefer to _____ around the city and discover things ourselves.
10. When I saw how upset he was already, I _____ to give him yet another piece of bad news.

Speaking Task

Talk about a bit of mischief you got into when you were a child. Were you punished, or did you get away with it?

Record your story at www.speakpipe.com/espressoenglish - or you can e-mail me your MP3 at homework@espressoenglish.net for feedback on your spoken English.

Answers

Comprehension Questions

1. b
2. b
3. c
4. c
5. a
6. c

Vocabulary Quiz

1. ton
2. wiped out
3. get over
4. takes after
5. rebel
6. can top that
7. mischief
8. in the world
9. wander
10. couldn't bring myself