

Grammar Lesson

CATCH AND THROW

The words **catch** and **throw** each have more than one meaning and they are used in lots of English expressions and idioms too. For example, Khalid said "I didn't quite catch that" which means he didn't hear what Alice said.

Here are some of the meanings of these two words, as well as some common expressions which use catch or throw.

Meanings of catch

take hold of something, especially something that is moving through the air
Throw me the ball and I'll catch it.

get an illness / become ill, especially one caused by bacteria or a virus
She caught a cold last week and has been off work for the last three days.

begin to burn

Just a few minutes after the fire started in the kitchen, the rest of the house caught fire.

Expressions with catch

catch someone's eye

get someone's attention, especially by looking at them
Can you try to catch the waiter's eye so we can get the bill.

a catch 22 (situation)

an impossible situation where you are prevented from doing one thing until you have done another thing

It's a catch-22. They won't give me the job because they say I don't have any experience but how can I get experience if they won't give me a job!

catch someone red-handed

find someone while they are in the act of doing something wrong or bad
They caught him red-handed trying to steal food in the supermarket.

catch your breath

begin to breathe correctly again after running, exercising or being out of breath
Give me a minute to catch my breath. I've only just come in.

catch a few rays / some rays

stay outside in the sun for a short period of time
I'm going out to the garden for lunch.
Want to come out and catch a few rays?

Meanings of throw

- send something through the air with force, using your arms

Throw me the ball and I'll catch it.

- have a party

They decided to throw a party for their 10th anniversary.

- confuse or shock someone or cause difficulty for them

She was really thrown when we turned up to visit her. I don't think she was expecting us.

Expressions with throw

throw your hat in the ring

announce your intention of entering a competition or election

As soon as the boss said she was retiring, John was the first one to throw his hat in the ring. He's clearly a very ambitious young man.

people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones

you shouldn't criticise other people for bad qualities in their character that you have yourself or for things that they do that you do too

You can't complain when the other people in the office are late. You're late almost every day! You know what they say, people in glass houses shouldn't throw stones.

throw your toys out (of) the pram

complain very loudly against a relatively minor problem and behave in a childish, spoilt or rude way

She lost the match and didn't even congratulate the other player. She just stormed off the court. She's not going to get very far in tennis if she's going to keep throwing her toys out the pram every time she loses.

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