

Learn English With Photos 5 – Shop Names Transcript

Hello and welcome to episode five of Learn English With Photos. My name is Jeffrey Hill and I'm going to be using some photos I've taken to help you improve your English vocabulary and practise your speaking skills. In this lesson, I'll show you some photos of typical High Street shops and try to explain the plays on words and references which are used in their names. We'll also look at some of the vocabulary for different shops and the things they sell. And in the final part of the lesson, you'll have the opportunity to answer some questions about shops and shopping.

Let's start with the good old traditional British fish and chip shop. This one is called **Codfathers**. The name is meant to make you think of the film *The Godfather*, but the 'g' has been replaced by a 'c' because cod is a type of fish often sold in fish and chip shops.

Cutabove is a 'unisex hair salon', in other words a hairdresser's for men and women. If someone or something is described as a cut above the rest, they are better in some way. So you could say, for example, "Spain were a cut above the other teams in the tournament". And, course, a cut is what the hairdresser gives you above—or on your head!

Here's a rusty old haircutter's sign which also plays on the word 'cut'. If someone or something gives you a cutting edge, they give you an advantage over your competitors. And if you are at the cutting edge of a particular field, you are involved in its most important or exciting developments—though judging from the state of the sign, this is not likely to be the case here. Note that there's a punctuation error: 'Mens' should have an apostrophe before the 's'.

The name of this sandwich bar features a homophone. Homophones are words with different meanings which are pronounced in the same way but are spelled differently. Here the homophones are 'thyme' (t-h-y-m-e), which is a type of herb used in cooking, and 'time' (t-i-m-e), which is the spelling you would normally expect in the expression 'break time'.

Fleurtations is a florist's or flower shop. Here the usual spelling of the word 'flirtation', which begins with f-l-i-r, has been changed to f-l-e-u-r because 'fleur' is the French word for flower. This technique of changing the spelling of a company name or a product to make it more memorable is often used in marketing. Car servicing company Kwik-Fit, spelt k-w-i-k, is a good example.

Soletrader (one word) is a shoe shop. A sole trader (two words) is a person who owns their own business and does not have a partner or any shareholders. Here there's a play on the word sole, which is the bottom of a shoe or foot. By the way, sole is a homograph, a word that has the same spelling as another one but differs in meaning.

Ironed Out is a dry cleaning and ironing service. You iron your clothes to remove the creases and make them look nice. And to do that you use an iron, an electrical device with a flat metal base. However, if you iron out problems or difficulties, you resolve them and bring them to an end, so the shop name plays on this metaphorical meaning.

Screw It is a hardware store, which sells tools and equipment for the home and garden. Now, to screw is a verb meaning to fix something somewhere using a screw and a screwdriver. However, 'screw it' is a not-very-polite expression of abandon, used to show that you are annoyed or frustrated. For example, "Screw it! I'm not waiting any longer."

Hairdressers seem to be the most creative lot when it comes to finding names. Or perhaps it's just because there are a lot of hair salons. Anyway, this one's called **Scissor Sister**, an obvious reference to the American pop group Scissor Sisters. Scissors are what the hairdresser uses to cut your hair. I wonder what the old couple are looking at.

Bo'Vine is a Glasgow restaurant specializing in meats and wines. Bovine without the apostrophe is an adjective which means 'relating to cattle', so that's the meat reference. And a vine is a plant which produces grapes, which are used to make wine. Clever name, don't you think?

Blooming Lovely is another florist's. The name plays on the word blooming. When a plant or tree blooms it produces flowers. And blooming is an informal intensifier which is used for emphasis or to express annoyance. For example, "I can't see a blooming thing through all this rain!"

Headcase is yet another hair salon. A headcase is a person who has mental or emotional problems, in other words a crazy person. For example, "Her brother's a real head case!" And, of course, the head is where your hair is (well, most of it, anyway). In any case, it doesn't seem a very appropriate name for a business, even if it's a hairdresser's.

Priceless is a discount shoe shop. The adjective priceless has two different meanings. One is to emphasize that something is worth a very large amount of money. For example, "That Picasso is priceless." But it can also be used to mean 'extremely useful': "Your advice has been priceless". So there are those ideas going on, and then there's the fact that the 'less' in the logo is written in a different colour from 'price', which suggests that the price is less (than in other shops).

Soft Options is a shop which sells haberdashery (that's articles for sewing such as buttons, zips, and thread) and soft furnishings such as curtains, blinds, bedding and cushions. The name plays on the word 'soft', which can also mean easy. A soft option is an easy choice, usually involving less work: "You can always rely on him to choose the soft option"

Creature Comforts is a pet shop in Honiton, Devon. Creature is another word for animal, so the name works on that basic level, but the expression 'creature comforts' is also used to refer to the things that you need to feel comfortable in a place, such as good food, and modern equipment. 'Creature Comforts' was also used as the title of a short animated film way back in 1989, so the name is not particularly original.

ArtyFacts is an interior decoration shop in Bodmin, Cornwall. An artifact is a man-made ornament, tool, or other object that has some historical or cultural interest: "The British Museum has an interesting collection of Stone Age artifacts". And people often use the word 'arty' to describe someone who is interested in art. In case you were wondering, the letters 'Est' which you often see on front of shops are an abbreviation for 'Established', which means the same as 'founded'.

The name of this hair salon is a play on March Hare (spelt h-a-r-e), a character most famous for appearing in the tea party scene in Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*. A hare is an animal like a

rabbit but larger and with long ears, long legs and a small tail. "Mad as a March hare" is a common British English phrase, both now and in Carroll's time.

The sign on this fudge shop in Wadebridge, North Cornwall, doesn't feature any plays on words but does contain some useful vocabulary and there's an interesting story behind it. But first I should explain that fudge is a soft, brown sweet that is made from butter, cream and sugar. My mouth is already beginning to water! Anyway, **Granny Wobbly's Fudge Pantry** opened in November 2007 and is run by Tim and Sally Flower. Granny Wobbly was Sally's granny, or grandmother. When she was a child her granny used to live up an uneven road and all the cars used to bump up and down to her house with all the children in the back seat. So they gave her the nickname granny 'Wobbly'! (something that is wobbly moves unsteadily from side to side, like a wobbly chair or table).

And a pantry is a small room or large cupboard in a house, usually near the kitchen, where food is kept. You often find the word pantry in the names of food shops or cafés. Oh, and by the way, the fudge was delicious!

Right that's enough shop names, let's move on to the next part of the lesson where you get to do some speaking. I'm going to ask you a series of questions relating to shops and shopping. I suggest you pause the video to give yourself time to answer. And don't just reply with 'yes' or 'no'—try to make your answers as detailed as possible. OK, let's begin.

Questions

1. How many different words for shops do you know in English besides those mentioned in the video? Take a piece of paper and make a list.
2. Why do you think shops use plays on words, or puns, in their names?
3. How often do you go to the hairdresser's? When did you last go? What did you have done?
4. What's your opinion of discount shops?
5. In the video, we hear about fish and chips. What other typical British foods can you think of?
6. Have you ever worked in a shop? If not, would you like to?
7. What qualities and skills do you need to run a small shop?
8. What did you find most interesting about this lesson?

Vocabulary

- ❑ **artifact** — ornament, tool, or other object that is historically or culturally interesting
- ❑ **arty** — interested in drama, film, music, poetry, or painting
- ❑ **bloom** — to produce flowers
- ❑ **bovine** — relating to cattle
- ❑ **cod** — type of large, edible fish often cooked in batter by fish and chip shops
- ❑ **creature comforts** — the things that you need to feel comfortable in a place, such as good food, and modern equipment
- ❑ **cutting edge (1)** — if someone or something gives you a cutting edge, they give you an advantage over your competitors.
- ❑ **cutting edge (2)** — if you are at the cutting edge of a particular field, you are involved in its most important or exciting developments
- ❑ **dry-clean** — clean clothes, bedding, etc. with a liquid chemical rather than with water
- ❑ **fish and chip shop** — shop which sells hot food such as fish and chips, sausages, and meat pies
- ❑ **florist's** — shop which sells flowers and plants
- ❑ **fudge** — a soft, brown sweet that is made from butter, cream and sugar
- ❑ **granny** — informal word for 'grandmother'
- ❑ **haberdashery** — small articles for sewing such as buttons, needles and thread
- ❑ **hairdresser's** or **hair salon** — shop where people go to have their hair cut, washed, and styled
- ❑ **hardware store** — shop where articles for the house and garden such as tools and pans are sold
- ❑ **hare** — rabbit-like animal with long ears and legs
- ❑ **headcase** — a crazy person
- ❑ **high street** — the main street in a town where most of the shops are to be found
- ❑ **homograph** — a word that has the same spelling as another one but differs in meaning
- ❑ **homophone** — homophones are words which are pronounced in the same way but are spelled differently and have different meanings
- ❑ **iron (v)** — you iron your clothes to remove the creases and make them look nice
- ❑ **iron (n)** — electrical device with flat metal base used to iron clothes
- ❑ **iron out** — to resolve or bring to an end (difficulties, problems, etc.)
- ❑ **pantry** — small room or large cupboard in a house, usually near the kitchen, where food is kept
- ❑ **pet shop** — a shop where pet animals, pet food, pet supplies, etc. can be bought
- ❑ **priceless (1)** — worth a very large amount of money; **(2)** — extremely useful
- ❑ **screw (v)** — to fix something somewhere using a screw and a screwdriver
- ❑ **shop (v)** — go to the shops and buy things
- ❑ **sign** — piece of wood, metal, or plastic with words or pictures on it
- ❑ **soft furnishings** — curtains, blinds, bedding and cushions, etc.
- ❑ **sole** — the bottom part of a foot or shoe
- ❑ **sole trader** — person who owns their own business and does not have a partner or shareholders
- ❑ **thyme** — type of herb used in cooking
- ❑ **unisex** — designed for use by both men and women
- ❑ **vine** — a plant which produces grapes,
- ❑ **wobbly** — something that wobbly moves unsteadily from side to side, like a wobbly chair