

# DESTINATION AMERICA: TABOOS & THE MOST DANGEROUS WORD IN AMERICA...

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TRAVEL CONVERSATION

SEMESTER 3, LESSON 023



# TABLE TOPIC

Choose and discuss one of these interesting table topic questions in order to get warmed up for the lesson!

## Table Topic:

Do you know of any taboo topics or words in American culture? What are they?

## Hypothetical Table Topic:

Imagine there were no more taboos. Do you think that would be a positive or negative change?



# MOST DANGEROUS WORD

Read up on this info for today's topic!

**the n-word** - In the English language, the word "nigger" is an ethnic insult, usually directed at black people. The word originated as a neutral term referring to people with black skin, as a variation of the Spanish and Portuguese noun negro. Using the word 'nigger' is considered extremely offensive, as well as having strong racist and political connotations



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# USEFUL WORDS

Read and practice the vocabulary below.

**taboo** - an action or word that is avoided for religious or social reasons

**euphemism** - a word or phrase used to avoid saying an unpleasant or offensive word

The following words are **taboo** in varying levels depending on where you are in the U.S. and what kind of setting you are in. You can often safely replace taboo terminology with a **euphemism** (euphemisms may still be considered rude, but usually to a lesser degree).

- 1) **toilet** - instead say **bathroom** or **restroom**
- 2) **atheist**-instead say **non-religious**
- 3) **mentally retarded** - instead say **touched**
- 4) **stripper** -instead say **exotic dancer**
- 5) **sex** -instead say **do/doing it**



# GUIDED CONVERSATION

Use these questions as a guide for conversation. Splitting into small groups for conversation is advisable. The teacher will inquire to see what the students have learned post-conversation.

What are some **taboo** words in your country? Do you know of the corresponding **euphemisms**? What are they?

Do you feel more or less comfortable talking about **taboo** subjects in English?

Are there any topics you think shouldn't be **taboo** or that are becoming less **taboo**?

When you were a child were there some things that were much more **taboo**? How so?

What's a more **taboo** topic in your country, religion or politics? Why do you think that is so?



# ACTIVITY

Use this activity to practice the vocabulary and idioms you have learned so far!

## Taboo

The teacher will create a stack of notecards with a topic on each of the notecards and split the class into teams.

Each notecard will have 4 words. The initial word will be the secret word that will need to be guessed. The following 3 words will be the most obvious and relevant related words which the students might say in getting their teammate to guess the initial word - they may not say these words when describing the secret word to their partner. These words will be 'taboo'.



# HOMework

**Homework! Daily practice is essential  
for language learning.**

**1 MINUTE PRESENTATION/SPEECH**

Talk about a **euphemism** native to your language. Give a 1-minute speech presenting it (After the student is through, the teacher will quiz the other students about the speech so as to test their listening comprehension).



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