EPISODE 333

Funny Collective Nouns

Full transcript · mini-story · vocabulary review

Hi! I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode. I'm here to help you speak English more easily and with confidence.

Great! Let's start!

We humans love shortcuts! It's much faster to say a flock of birds than "a lot of birds flying together."

There's another **collective noun** that's similar: band. A band can be a **group** of musicians, fighters, or even thieves!

So if someone says, "I saw a band in the park," do they mean musicians... or maybe a gang of thieves?

Some **collective nouns** sound very poetic.

Did you know a **group** of stars in the sky is called a **constellation**?

And a **group** of islands is called an **archipelago**.

Pretty cool, right?

But not all **collective nouns** sound nice and friendly.

For example:

If someone says, "There's a pack nearby," you'd better be careful!

A pack can mean wolves, dogs, or coyotes that are ready to hunt.

A general group of animals is called a **herd**.

And a big group of people acting wild or aggressive? That's a horde.

Another example:

A group of ships is called a **fleet**.

It can also mean a group of trucks from the same company.

Some collective nouns are especially beautiful:

A group of trees? A forest.

A field of grapevines? A vineyard. (We get grapes from these!)

Let's talk about bees!

A group of bees is a **swarm**.

Sounds nice... until they sting you.

Wasps and hornets? That's a **hornet's nest**.

Fun fact:

If someone says, "That meeting turned into a hornet's nest," it means things got tense or dramatic!

A group of horses is usually a herd. But if the horses are organized for riding by soldiers—like in old movies—they are called a cavalry.

Now let's look at a few fun and unusual examples:

– A group of fish is called a school—just like the place where you learn!

– A group of lions is called a pride. Sounds powerful, doesn't it?

– And this one is always a favorite: a group of crows is called a murder! Don't worry—it doesn't mean anything scary. It's just an old word people used for crows.

Of course, we humans have collective nouns too:

A big group of people? A crowd.

In a company? A team.

In school? The student body.

At church? A congregation.

And the most important one… your family!

Because in the end, what makes a group special isn't just the name—it's the connection they share.

Now, let's practice.

Mini-Story

Speaking Practice

Answer the questions aloud with short and quick responses. Repeat the Mini-Story several times to improve your speaking and listening.

Tristan started his first day working at the zoo. He was confident—maybe too confident!

Was it Tristan's first day at the zoo?
Yes, it was his first day. It was Tristan's first day at the zoo.

Was Tristan confident?
Yes, he was confident. In fact, he was too confident. He was overconfident.

Where did Tristan start his first day?
At the zoo. Tristan started his first day at the zoo.

How did Tristan feel—confident or insecure?
Confident. Tristan didn't feel insecure. He felt confident.

Without looking at his notes, Tristan wrote very strange names on the signs.

Did Tristan look at his notes before writing the strange names?
No, he didn't look at them. Tristan didn't check his notes before writing the names.

Did he write normal names?
No, he didn't write normal names. Tristan wrote very strange names.

Where did Tristan write the names? On the signs?
Yes, he wrote them on the signs.

Did he write the names on the signs or on the walls?
On the signs. He put very strange names on the signs.

For example, he wrote "swarm of horses" and "pack of penguins."

What word did he use for the horses?
"Swarm." Tristan used the word "swarm" for the horses.

Did he use “pack” for the elephants?
No, he used “pack” for the penguins. Not for the elephants.

Which animals did he call a “pack”?
The penguins. The penguins received the name “pack.”

The director almost fainted when he saw the signs and took Tristan to his office.

Who saw the signs? The animals?
No, no. The director. The director saw Tristan’s signs.

Did the director faint?
No, he didn’t faint—but almost!

What did the director do when he saw the signs?
He took Tristan to his office.

Did the director fix the signs or take Tristan to his office?
He took him to his office. The director was probably very disappointed with the signs—they had mistakes.

The next day, there were more people at the zoo than ever before. They came to see the signs!

Were there more or fewer people at the zoo?
More people. There were more people than ever before.

Was the zoo empty?
No, it was full. The zoo was not empty.

Why did people come to the zoo? To see the director?
No, no. To see the signs. People came to see the funny signs.

Was it a success or a disaster for the zoo?
It was a success. Tristan’s mistakes made the zoo popular!

The mistakes on the signs made Tristan famous—without meaning to!

Did Tristan want to be famous?
No, it was unintentional. Tristan didn’t want to be famous.

What made Tristan famous?
The mistakes on the signs. Those mistakes made him famous.

Who became famous? The penguins: Peter and George?
No, no. Not Peter and George. Tristan. The signs made him famous, not Peter and George.

Thanks for listening, and I’ll see you in the next episode.

Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the most useful words and expressions before listening again.

01 **collective noun** a word used for a group of people, animals, or things.	05 **swarm** a large moving group of insects, especially bees.
02 **constellation** a recognized group of stars.	06 **fleet** a group of ships or vehicles operating together.
03 **archipelago** a group or chain of islands.	07 **congregation** a group of people gathered for religious worship.
04 **herd** a group of animals such as cattle or elephants.	08 **hornet’s nest** a difficult situation likely to cause anger or conflict.

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