Popular American Slang Words and Phrases

Ace – to succeed or do well
Blow or Bomb – to fail or to be unsuccessful
Blue or Have the Blues – to feel depressed or sad
Buck – one dollar
By the skin of your teeth – just barely
Cool – agreeable; okay
Cop – a police officer
Couch Potato – a lazy person, one who sits on and watches TV
Cram – to study feverishly before an exam
Crash – to go to sleep; or to show up without invitation
Down to earth – practical; simple
Drive up the wall – to irritate; “He is driving me up the wall.”
Dutch or go Dutch – each person pays for his/her own meal
Get under one’s skin – bother
Give the cold shoulder – ignore
Give a ring – to telephone
Hang out – to gather in a casual; and social manner
Hang-over – the physical effects of heavy drinking (headache)

Hit the books – study
Hit the road – to leave
Hold your horses – be calm!
Jock – an athlete
The Late Mr. Smith – a term used when the person is dead
Lemon – a bad buy or purchase
Once in a blue moon – infrequent
Oops! – said after a small mistake
Pass the buck – transfer responsibility to someone else
Piece of cake – easy or effortless
Pig out – to overeat
Pop quiz – an exam that is not announced
Rip-off – overcharge or steal
R.S.V.P. – the formal reply to an invitation, by phone or mail
Shoot the breeze – talk
Spill the beans – reveal a secret
Take a rain-check – do at another time
Take for granted – to assume
What’s up – How are you?