

VOCABULARY

Learn some useful gangster words and expressions.



Beef – a complaint or disagreement. "He's got a beef with us."

Boss – the head of the family. He decides who is killed. Also known as the "Don".

Capo – the second level of gangster bosses (below the Boss/Don).

Captain – the third level of gangster bosses (below the capo).

Come heavy – to be carrying a loaded gun. "Did you come heavy?"

Connected – if you are "connected", you are a member of a crime family.

Consigliere – a counsellor in a crime family (such as Tom in *The Godfather*). The consigliere advises the Boss.

Crew – the group of gangsters under the capo's command.

Earnar – someone who makes a lot of money for the family. "He's a big earner."

Feds – the FBI. "He's working with the Feds."

Front – a legitimate business (such as a shop or restaurant)

that is used to hide the illegal activities of a crime family. "This shop is just a front for their prostitution racket."

Goomah – a mistress; someone who a gangster is having an affair with.

Grand – a thousand dollars. Also known as "g's". "He owes us 20 g's."

Guests of the state – prisoners. "He's a guest of the state."

H – heroin. "He got done for dealing with H."

Lam – to go into hiding because of a recent crime. "He had to go on the lam."

Made guy – someone who is an official member of a crime family.

Madonn' – a typical Italian expression of surprise that gangsters often use. "Madonn' – she's beautiful."

The Mob – either referring to a single organised crime family, or to all the organised crime families together. "He's in the mob, isn't he?"

Mobster – someone who is in the mob.

Murder rap – a sentence for committing murder. "He did 8 years for a murder rap."

Offer – gangsters are very good at making offers, especially when accompanied by a gun to the head. "They made him an offer he couldn't refuse."

Organised crime – a word used to refer to the Mafia.

Piece – a gun. "You got a piece on you?"

Pinch – to arrest. "They pinched him for dealing with H."

Points – the percentage charged for a loan. "I'm gonna charge you two points per week."

Protection money – money you pay to a crime family as a form of insurance.

Racket – an illegal activity to make money. "It was a money laundering racket."

Rat – someone who informs the police about a crime committed by the Mafia. "He's a dirty rat."

RICO – an abbreviation of "Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act". This law, passed in 1970, is designed to make it easier to sentence members of crime families.

Shake someone down – to try to get money from someone by threatening them or demanding protection money. "Are you trying to shake me down?"

A sit-down – a meeting to resolve a dispute.

Soldier – the lowest-ranking gangster.

Stand-up guy – someone who refuses to cooperate with the FBI. "He's a real stand-up guy."

Waste management business – often used as a euphemism for organised crime. For many years, organised crime families controlled the waste management business in New York and other big cities.

Whack – to murder. Also, to clip, pop, or burn. "He got whacked last year."

Witness protection program – a programme designed by the government to give a new identity and home to anyone who cooperates with the government and testifies against members of an organised crime family. ☺

