ENGLISH LESSON · FRIENDS S01E01 · INTERMEDIATE

Friends S01E01 — The Runaway Bride Arrives

Clip: 7:43 · 10 words · 7 idioms & phrasal verbs · 2026-07-08

Watch again online



Friends — a scene from today's lesson

1 Before You Watch

The story

This is the first episode of Friends. The group is sitting in Central Perk, a coffee shop in New York. Ross is upset because his wife has just moved out. Then Rachel suddenly arrives in a wedding dress after running away from her wedding.

Why is it funny?

The comedy comes from fast reactions and dry sarcasm. Chandler often answers serious moments with a sharp joke. Rachel uses a strange metaphor about being a shoe, a purse or a hat to explain that she wants to choose her own life. The joke is that her father takes it too literally.

Key words — know these before you watch:

runaway bride · move out · wedding · metaphor · independence · cancel

Warm-up: Which phrase means 'slowly become less close'?

- **A.** move out
- **B.** hit on
- **C.** drift apart

> **Background reading (1 minute)**
>
> Friends is a sitcom about six young adults in New York. Sitcom language is fast, casual and full of short reactions. In this clip, two people have major life changes: Ross is separating from Carol, and Rachel is choosing independence for the first time.

2 Watch 1 — with subtitles

First watch — subtitles ON. Catch the main idea: What change is Rachel trying to make?

- **A.** Choose her own life instead of following others' plans
- **B.** Repair her relationship with Barry
- **C.** Move away from Monica

Watch 2 — subtitles ON again. Detail questions (after transcript / vocab on class day):

1. How do 'was looking' and 'realized' work together?

- **A.** Two completed events
- **B.** Background action followed by a key event
- **C.** A future plan and a promise

2. What does 'drifted apart' imply?

- **A.** They had one loud argument
- **B.** They moved to nearby rooms
- **C.** They slowly became less close

3. What does the shoe metaphor express?

- **A.** A desire to define her own identity
- **B.** A wish to go shopping
- **C.** A plan to change clothes

3 Transcript — notice the highlighted words

yellow = vocabulary to learn · blue = idioms & phrasal verbs

0:47 'There's nothing to tell.'

0:48 It's just some guy I work with.

0:50 Come on, you're going out with the guy.

0:52 There's gotta be something wrong with him.

0:55 So does he have hump? A hump and a hairpiece?

1:00 Wait, does he eat chalk?

1:02 Just 'cause I don't want her to go through what I went through with Carl.

1:06 Okay, everybody relax. This is not even a date.

1:08 It's just two people going out to dinner and not having sex.

1:12 Sounds like a date to me.

1:16 Alright so, I'm back in high school.

1:17 I'm standing in the middle of the cafeteria and I realize I'm totally naked.

1:23 - Oh, we all had that dream. - Oh, yeah.

1:24 And I look down and I realize there is a phone...there.

1:32 - Instead of-- - That's right!

1:34 Never had that one.

1:35 All of a sudden, the phone starts to ring.

1:40 And it turns out it's my mother.

1:43 Which is very, very weird because...she never calls me.

1:53 Hi.

1:56 This guy says, "Hello," I want to kill myself.

1:59 You okay, sweetie?

2:00 I just feel like someone reached down my throat grabbed my small intestine, pulled it out of my mouth and tied it around my neck.

2:07 Cookie?

2:11 Carol moved her stuff out today.

2:13 - Let me get you some coffee. - Thanks.

2:18 Oh, ugh.

2:20 Uh-oh, no. No, don't. Stop cleansing my aura.

2:25 Don't. Just leave my aura alone, okay?

2:28 I'll be fine, alright? Really, everyone I hope she'll be very happy.

2:32 - No, you don't - No, I don't.

2:33 To hell with her, she left me!

2:36 And you never knew she was a lesbian.

2:43 No, okay?

2:44 Why does everyone keep fixating on that?

2:49 She didn't know, how should I know?

2:54 Sometimes, I wish I was a lesbian.

2:58 Did I say that out loud?

3:02 Alright, Ross, look, you're feeling a lot of pain right now.

3:06 You're angry. You're hurting.

3:09 Can I tell you what the answer is?

3:11 Strip joints!

3:15 Come on, you're single. Have some hormones..

3:17 But I don't want to be single, okay?

3:19 I just, I just, I just want to be married again.

3:27 And I just won a million dollars.

3:31 Rachel?

3:32 Oh, God, Monica, hi. Thank god.

3:35 I just went to your building and you weren't there.

3:37 And then this guy with a big hammer said you might be here and you are. You are.

3:41 Can I get you some coffee?

3:43 Decaf.

3:45 Okay, everybody this is Rachel, another Lincoln High survivor.

3:49 This-this is everybody.

3:50 This is Chandler, and Phoebe and Joey.

3:53 And you remember my brother, Ross?

3:55 - Sure! Hi. - Hey.

4:06 So you want to tell us now, or are we waiting for four wet bridesmaids?

4:12 Oh, God! Well..

4:14 ...it started about a half-hour before the wedding.

4:17 I was in this room where we were keeping all the presents And I was looking at this gravy boat.

4:21 This really gorgeous Limoges gravy boat.

4:25 When all of sudden.. Sweet N' Low?

4:27 I realized I realized I was more turned on by this gravy boat than by Barry.

4:33 And then I got really freaked out.

4:35 And that's when it hit me how much Barry looks Mr. Potato Head.

4:39 You know, I mean, I always knew he looked familiar, but..

4:45 Anyway, I just had to get out of there and I started wondering "Why am I doing this?"

4:50 and "Who am I doing this for?"

4:53 So, anyway, I just didn't know where to go and I know that you and I have kind of drifted apart but you're the only person I knew who lived here in the city.

5:00 Who wasn't invited to the wedding.

5:02 Oh, I was kind of hoping that wouldn't be an issue.

5:19 I'm, uh, guessing he bought her the big pipe organ And she's really not happy about it.

5:26 Daddy, I just...I can't marry him.

5:29 I'm sorry, I just don't love him.

5:34 Well, it matters to me.

5:39 'Ooh, she should not be wearing those pants.'

5:43 I say, push her down the stairs.

5:47 Push her down the stairs.

5:52 Come on, Daddy, listen to me.

5:54 It's like all my life, everyone's always told me "You're a shoe!

5:59 'You're a shoe! You're a shoe! You're a shoe!'"

6:01 And then today, I just stopped and said What if I don't wanna be a shoe?

6:05 What if I want to be a, a purse?

6:07 You know, or-or-or a hat?

6:11 No, I don't want you to buy me a hat.

6:13 I'm saying that I am a ha-- It's a metaphor, Daddy!

6:18 You can see where he'd have trouble.

6:23 Look, Daddy, it's my life.

6:26 Well, maybe I'll just stay here with Monica.

6:32 Well, I guess we've established she's staying here with Monica.

6:36 Well, maybe that's my decision.

6:39 Well, maybe I don't need your money.

6:42 Wait! Wait! I said maybe!

6:51	- Okay, just breathe. That's it. - Okay.
6:53	Just try to think of nice, calm things.
7:09	I'm all better now.
7:13	I helped.
7:16	Okay, look, this is probably for the best, you know?
7:18	Independence. Taking control of your life.
7:21	And hey, you need anything, you can always come to Joey.
7:26	Me and Chandler live across the hall.
7:28	And he's away a lot.
7:31	Joey, stop hitting on her! It's her wedding day.
7:34	What? Like there's a rule or something?
7:38	Please don't do that again. It's a horrible sound.
7:42	Ah, it's, it's Paul.
7:44	- Let him in. - Who's Paul?
7:46	- Paul, the wine guy, Paul? - Maybe.
7:49	Wait a minute, your "not a real date," tonight is with Paul, the wine guy?
7:52	- He finally asked you out? - Yes!
7:54	Oh, this is a "Dear Diary" moment.
7:58	Rach, wait I-I can cancel.
7:59	Please, no, go. I'll be fine.
8:01	I-Ross, are you okay?
8:03	Do you want me to stay?
8:06	- That would be good. - Really?
8:09	No! Go on, it's Paul the wine guy.
8:16	Hi, come in.
8:17	Paul, this is...everybody.
8:21	Everybody, this is Paul.
8:22	Paul the wine guy.
8:24	I'm sorry, I didn't catch your name. Paul, was it?
8:28	Sit down, two seconds.

4 Vocabulary — 10 words worth remembering

Word	Pronunciation	Meaning & use	In the clip

intestine	/ɪn'testɪn/	a long tube inside your body that helps digest food	*I just feel like someone reached down my throat, grabbed my small intestine...*
aura	/'ɔːrə/	a feeling or energy that seems to surround a person	*Stop cleansing my aura.*
bridesmaid	/'braɪdzmeɪd/	a woman who helps the bride at a wedding	*Are we waiting for four wet bridesmaids?*
gorgeous	/'gɔːrdʒəs/	very beautiful or attractive **Use:** gorgeous dress / view / person · strong, informal praise	*This really gorgeous Limoges gravy boat.*
familiar	/fə'mɪliər/	easy to recognize because you have seen it before	*I always knew he looked familiar.*
issue	/'ɪʃuː/	a problem or topic people are worried about **Use:** raise / discuss / deal with an issue	*I was kind of hoping that wouldn't be an issue.*
metaphor	/'metəfɔːr/	a way of describing something by comparing it to something else **Use:** a metaphor for something · figurative, not literal	*It's a metaphor, Daddy!*
establish	/ɪ'stæblɪʃ/	to make something clear or certain **Use:** establish a fact / identity / relationship · fairly formal	*I guess we've established she's staying here with Monica.*
independence	/ˌɪndɪ'pendəns/	the ability to live or decide without depending on others **Use:** gain independence · independent (adjective)	*Independence. Taking control of your life.*
cancel	/'kænsl/	to decide that something planned will not happen	*Rach, wait, I can cancel.*

5 Idioms & Phrasal Verbs

Phrase	Type	Meaning	In the clip
go through	phrasal v.	to experience something difficult	*I don't want her to go through what I went through with Carl.*
move out	phrasal v.	to leave the place where you live	*Carol moved her stuff out today.*
fixate on	phrasal v.	to keep thinking or talking about one thing too much	*Why does everyone keep fixating on that?*
freak out	phrasal v.		*And then I got really freaked out.*

		to become very scared, shocked or upset	
drift apart	phrasal v.	to slowly become less close to someone	*You and I have kind of drifted apart.*
hit on	phrasal v.	to show romantic or sexual interest in someone	*Joey, stop hitting on her!*
for the best	idiom	better in the end, even if it feels bad now	*This is probably for the best.*

6 Grammar Spotlight

Past continuous for storytelling: was/were + verb-ing

Use the past continuous to set the scene in a story. It tells us what was happening around a key moment. The key moment often uses the past simple.

Form: was/were + verb-ing (background) + past simple (main event)

• *I was looking at this gravy boat. (This sets the scene before Rachel's big realization.)*

• *I realized I was more turned on by this gravy boat than by Barry. (realized = the key moment)*

• *I was kind of supposed to be headed for Aruba on my honeymoon. (A planned situation that changed.)*

Compare:

• I was looking at the gravy boat. ↔ I realized I did not love Barry. (Ongoing scene first; completed turning point second.)

Watch out: Use was looking, not was look; use past simple for the completed event.

Learn more: English Grammar in Use — Past continuous and past simple

7 Practice — circle / match / fill in; answers on the last page

Vocabulary in context

1. Which sentence uses 'metaphor' precisely?

- **A.** The shoe is a metaphor because it is expensive
- **B.** The shoe is a metaphor for a life chosen by others
- **C.** The shoe is a metaphor on the table

2. Rachel wants to become financially _____.

(independence · independently · independent)

Phrases in use

3. Which situation shows two friends drifting apart?

- **A.** They share an apartment
- **B.** They slowly stop calling each other
- **C.** They meet every weekend

4. Match each phrase with its meaning:

Phrase		Meaning (mixed order)
1. go through	→ ____	a. focus on one thing too much
2. fixate on	→ ____	b. show romantic interest
3. freak out	→ ____	c. experience something difficult
4. hit on	→ ____	d. become suddenly upset

Grammar in use

5. Choose the best storytelling sequence.

- **A.** I looked at the boat when I was realizing
- **B.** I was looking at the boat when I realized the truth
- **C.** I was look at the boat and realize

6. Which past continuous form is correct?

- **A.** We were keeping the presents
- **B.** We were keep the presents
- **C.** We did keeping the presents

7. Why use 'was looking' before 'realized'?

- **A.** To report a regular habit
- **B.** To describe a future arrangement
- **C.** To show an ongoing background before a completed event

Listening detail

8. Which exact sequence do you hear?

- **A.** I was looking ... I realized
- **B.** I looked ... I was realizing
- **C.** I had looked ... I realize

Meaning and tone

9. What does Rachel reject through the shoe metaphor?

- **A.** A honeymoon in Aruba
- **B.** Living in the city
- **C.** An identity chosen for her by other people

8 Final listen — NO subtitles — prove what you remember

Subtitles are OFF. Listen for today's language, not plot trivia.

Catch the line

- ☐ was looking at this gravy boat
- ☐ I realized
- ☐ You and I have kind of drifted apart.
- ☐ It's a metaphor, Daddy!
- ☐ Taking control of your life.

What did they say?

1. Which background form do you hear?

- **A.** we kept
- **B.** we were keeping
- **C.** we are keeping

2. Which phrase completes the thought?

- **A.** drift apart
- **B.** have drifted apart
- **C.** were drifting away apart

Put the lines in order

____ It's a metaphor, Daddy!

____ I was looking at this gravy boat.

____ I realized I was more turned on by this gravy boat than by Barry.

Answer Key — check yourself after finishing

Before You Watch: C · **Gist:** A · **Detail:** 1-B, 2-C, 3-A

Vocabulary in context: 1-B · 2-independent

Phrases in use: 3-B · 4: 1→c, 2→a, 3→d, 4→b

Grammar in use: 5-B · 6-A · 7-C

Listening detail: 8-A

Meaning and tone: 9-C

Final — said what: 1-B · 2-B

Final — order: 1 → 2 → 0

1: A metaphor represents another idea rather than describing it literally.

2: After become, use the adjective independent.

3: Drift apart describes a gradual loss of closeness.

5: Past continuous sets the scene; past simple marks the turning point.

6: Past continuous uses was/were plus the -ing form.

7: The longer background action frames the sudden realization.

8: Listen for was looking followed by the past-simple realized.

9: She wants to decide who she is instead of accepting a fixed role.