



WORDS AND THEIR STORIES

You 'Hit the Jackpot!'

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And now *Words and Their Stories* from VOA Learning English.

On this program we explore words and expressions in the English language. And today we talk about being lucky or having a great success -- or both!

There are times in our lives when everything seems to go our way. We win big. In other words, we hit the jackpot.

In a very **literal** way, to hit the jackpot means to win a lot of money. A jackpot is the most valuable prize in a game of chance. A lottery is one such game of chance. People buy tickets, but only a few tickets are chosen by chance to win prizes.

Some states in the U.S. hold a weekly lottery. The jackpot increases until someone wins it. Some lottery jackpots can get as big as many millions of dollars!

Once I heard about a man who really did “hit the jackpot.” He usually did not play the lottery or **gamble** with his money. But one day, he decided to buy a lottery ticket. And guess what? He won millions of dollars! He really **struck it rich**. We can also say he **made a killing!**

However, hitting the jackpot does not always deal with money. It can also mean to have a great success, usually involving some luck. For example, if you get a great job simply by being in the right place at the right time, you can say you have hit the jackpot.

I know a woman who started dating a very good-looking man. He was also very nice and smart. Then she found out that he was also really rich. She likes to say she really hit the jackpot when she met him.

There are some other expressions that have a similar meaning. If you “hit it big” or “hit the big time,” you have hit the jackpot.

I feel like I hit the jackpot with my job. The work is interesting, my co-workers are nice, and I get to hear from our readers and listeners from around the world. Jackpot!

And if you are looking for one place to learn English, you have also hit the jackpot with VOA Learning English!

And that’s all the time we have for this *Words and Their Stories*. Until next time ... I’m Anna Matteo.

Anna Matteo wrote this for VOA Learning English.

Words in This Story

literal – *adj.* following the ordinary or usual meaning of the words

gamble – *v.* to play a game in which something (as money) can be won or lost

to make a killing – *phrase* have a great financial success
