

NY Chat: What are people talking about

Vocabulary

cautiously optimistic: (adjective) hopeful for something good in the future, but still

- The weather looks good this weekend, so I'm cautiously optimistic about the picnic.

unpredictable: (adjective) impossible to guess the outcome

- The weather in April is unpredictable. It could be warm and sunny or it could snow.

hibernation: 1. (biology) when animals sleep in the winter, 2. when people are lazy in the winter

- Bears enter hibernation in the winter.
- I spend the winter in hibernation. I just eat and watch Netflix.

villain: (noun) a bad person, often used when talking about fiction

- Darth Vader is one of the most famous movie villains.

arrogant: (adjective) a rude person who thinks they are better than everyone else

- Most football fans think that Tom Brady was an arrogant player. He expected to win every game.

single elimination: (noun) a type of tournament where you leave if you lose one game, the champion must win all the games

- The NFL uses a single-elimination game for the championship while the MLB uses a series of 7 games.

seed: (noun) a team's position in a tournament

- Gonzaga was a number 3 seed this year.

put them up by: (idiom) a goal that places the team into the lead

- A three-pointer put them up by 1 point.
- The touchdown put them up by 7 points.

Cinderella story: (idiom) when a low-ranked team wins several games against higher-ranked teams

- Florida Atlantic University is this year's Cinderella story. They are a 9 seed team that is only one win away from the final. No one expected them to make it so far

Sweet 16: (noun) the name of the third round of March Madness, when there are only 16 teams left

- Alabama made it to the Sweet 16 but then lost.

To shine: (idiom)

Spectacle: (noun)

- The Super Bowl is the biggest American sports spectacle.
- A lot of people like to go to Times Square for New Year's Eve because of the spectacle of the fireworks.

Overload: (noun/verb) having too much of something

- Teachers shouldn't overload their students with homework.
- There are 12 hours of basketball on each of the first two days. Often there are four games at the same time. It's basketball overload.

make it to the final: to win enough to go to the last game of the championship

- Gonzaga always does well at the tournament, but they haven't made it to the final in many years.

contender: (noun) a person or team that is trying to win the championship

- The University of Connecticut is still a contender for the championship.

looking really good: (idiom) appear to play well

- Princeton looked really good in the first two games, but lost in the third round.

keeping an eye on: (idiom) to follow something, to get regular updates on something

- I'm planning to go on a bike ride this weekend so I need to keep an eye on the weather.
- People like to keep an eye on young players in the tournament because they will be the next basketball stars.

knock on wood: (idiom) a superstition that talking about a good outcome will cause bad luck, saying "knock on wood" while knocking on something made of wood will stop the bad luck

- I've never been in a traffic accident: Knock on wood!

to jinx something: to create bad luck by talking about something

- I don't want to jinx it, but it looks like it isn't going to rain.

jump on the bandwagon: (idiom) when people start supporting a team because they are successful

- No one in NYC supported the Buffalo Bills until they started winning, then everyone jumped on the bandwagon and bought t-shirts.

a real hardcore fan: a dedicated fan who supports their team when they are not successful

- I respect Jets fans since their team hasn't won the Super Bowl since 1968 and hasn't had a good season since 2010. They are some real hardcore fans.

ego: (noun) a person's understanding of themselves, a sense of personal qualities

- Elon Musk has a big ego.

a reversal of fortunes: (idiom) when someone switches from successful to unsuccessful, or vice versa

- Tom Brady won the Super Bowl in 2021 but didn't make it to the playoffs in 2022. He suffered a reversal of fortunes.

how long until ...?: How much time remains until _____ happens?

- How long until the playoffs?
- How long until your trip?

Merch: (slang) merchandise, branded goods

- Sports teams make a lot of money from merch.
- The price of merch at the stadiums is very high.

Controversial: (adj) people strongly disagree or fight about it

- Gun control is a controversial issue in America.

Iconic: (adjective) extremely well-known, something that completely represents or is associated with something

- The Beatles were an iconic rock band.
- Ben Big is an iconic building in London.

Default: (noun/adjective) the standard choice that is automatically selected

- Calibri is the default font when you open Microsoft Word.

ripping on: (idiom) insulting, rudely criticizing

- LA loves ripping on NYC because they are jealous.

poop: (noun) a nicer word for "feces"

- You are always supposed to pick up your dog's poop on the sidewalk or in the park.

hint, hint: (idiom) an indirect, and often joking, way to introduce a topic

- My birthday is coming next weekend, hint, hint.

rile me up: (verb) something makes you mad

- Reading political news always riles me up.

get rid of it: (verb) to remove something that you don't want anymore

- I got rid of some old clothes that I don't wear anymore.

empty out: (phrasal verb) to make or become empty

- Airport security emptied out my bag. It took five minutes to put everything back in again.

rezoning policy: a government rule about changing the purpose of land

- NYC changed its rezoning policy to make it easier to change commercial buildings into residential buildings.

shady: (idiom) suspicious, seems illegal or dangerous

- There are always a lot of shady people hanging around Port Authority.

miserable: (adjective) extremely unhappy or uncomfortable

- If you want to be in Times Square for the New Year's countdown, you have to wait outside for 10-12 hours. It can be miserable if it is cold and raining.

tenement buildings: (historic) a type of multi-unit apartment building, usually in bad or unsafe condition

- Many tenement buildings were built in the 1800s due to an increase in immigration to the city.

Ventilation: an opening to allow fresh air to enter

- Basements often don't have good ventilation.

Put it this way: (expression) used to show that you are telling someone your honest opinion, sometimes to show that you are trying to be polite.

- Let me put it this way, he's a nice guy, but he's always late.

knock off 50% off of: (idiom) to reduce the price by 50%

- I went to a flea market and got a great deal on a used bicycle. I convinced the seller to knock 50% off of the price!

be on the same track: to follow the same pattern

- Facebook became extremely popular but when older people joined, the younger people left. Instagram is on the same track: young people are now going to TikTok.

Masha: Hi, welcome to Learn English with Be fluent NYC. I'm Masha.

Stu: And I'm Stu!

Masha: So welcome to New York Chat. We're gonna talk about some hot topics that are happening here in the city. And our first topic is the spring! Stu, what do you think about this spring season?

Stu: I'm **cautiously optimistic** about it. Winter was so mild generally, that I don't know what that means for spring. Like last year, I felt we had a cold spring and so I'm hoping we're gonna get some nice weather and I'm really excited to get outside and start, you know, going to the park and having fun again. How about for you?

Masha: Yeah, I'm really this is one of my favorite seasons. New York just like blossoms. And well the cherry blossoms are starting to bloom and just the city kind of wakes up, the farmers markets get more varied with different food. But it's always so **unpredictable**. March is the most unpredictable month.

Stu: Right. Yeah, I feel I feel March is still basically winter, at least in the the earlier part of it. And so I'm yeah, the farmers markets are always so sad in the winter, and it's nice.

Masha: Potatoes, carrots...

Stu: Onions. And so I think it's really nice to be able to go back and start to see more people around and there's yeah, there's a lot more going on in the spring. And it's, it will be nice to come out of **hibernation** after winter.

Masha: Yes. Well, speaking of March I've been hearing a lot about March Madness. And I don't know much because I know that it's like college basketball, but I didn't go to college here in the US. I went to school in Montreal, in Canada. So for me, it's like, oh, okay, people are excited.

Stu: Oh, yeah, it's huge. I definitely think that if you don't, if you don't have a connection to a college, it definitely takes away from a lot of the enjoyment. You know that the rivalries are really important and there's, you know, there's schools that you dislike, because they often play your school and it also even there's a lot of regional pride that comes in and so for me, I went to Washington State University. We never go to the tournament, but instead I support Gonzaga, which is like 45 minutes away from my school.

Masha: I know that name:

Stu: Yeah, they're a big basketball school. And so yes, this is the time of year I become a Zags fan and then I go back to not caring after the tournament. But then also there's other teams that I always am happy to see lose like Duke you know, they're, Dukes kind of the **villain** of the basketball world. For for everybody who's not a Duke student.

Masha: Because they're good?

Stu: Yes, yeah. They're very, very good. And they also, there's a perception that they're kind of **arrogant** about it. And so there's a lot of people especially on the East Coast, who are are happy when they're out of the tournament.

Masha: So basically, it's like college basketball teams playing each other.

Stu: Yes, it's a **single elimination**.

Masha: Is it every college, sorry?

Stu: 64 start. And so one of the reasons it's so exciting is every, whole tournament is single elimination. And so, you you have to win all the games to win the championship. And that also makes it really unpredictable because

you only get one chance. So if you're having an off night, that could be the end of the tournament for you. And so it's also very close games often. There's, you know, 10 points is a big difference for college basketball. And so, one good example was we had a game where a low rate team, I think they were anything I think it were a 13 **seed** or a 12 seed, and then they beat like a four seed team in the first round. And they had a three point shot with two seconds left, and then that **put them up by** one and they won the game and it was really amazing. You get a lot of **Cinderella stories**. This year. It's Princeton. They were a 15 seed going in.

Masha: So, hold on, can I interrupt for one second?

Stu: Sure, of course.

Masha: When you say seed, what is that?

Stu: That is your position in the tournament. So based on your, your regular season record, you're given a position and so in the first round, a number one seed team will play a number 16 seed team. And so the strongest team plays the weakest team in the first round. And then after that, it is based on winning and so it's a it's not an exact prediction of who's going to win. Typically speaking, the lower numbers are ones that are are weaker teams usually. And so yes, Princeton is still in it. They made it to the **Sweet 16**

Masha: Okay, so then so I always think that like football is really popular in colleges. So is it like is the are the football? What makes the basketball games so, such like a big deal? Is it because the players go to the NBA after?

Stu: Often yeah, they do. It's very similar, I think that the players aren't getting any money to play. Of course, they're doing scholarships and all that but they, they really love the game. And then for a lot of the players, it's their final chance that they're not going to go to the NBA. They're gonna go on to something different. And so this is their big moment to share to...

Masha: **to shine**...

Stu: Yeah, to shine. Exactly. And so then other people are gonna go to the NBA, and you're gonna see them in the future. And so a lot of the big names were in the tournament like, I think most recently, I think it was just before the pandemic Zion Williamson was a big college player. So everybody was watching him in the tournament to see how well he did. And so it's so it's definitely part of it. And then it's also just a big **spectacle** that you have the first two days, there's like 12 hours of basketball for two days.

Masha: That's why it's called madness.

Stu: Yes, it's unpredictable. There's like four games at the same time. And then of course, it's, I think, maybe the number two betting opportunity too that lots of offices put money on the game. And of course, you know, sports books do, do a lot of money for this and so it adds another enjoyment to it.

Masha: And I guess when you watch it, do you get nostalgic about your college days? Is that how it is?

Stu: I think it's part of it. Yeah, that you, you want to support your college so for, for us. The WSU (Washington State University) women's team won the conference. So they went in so I was watching them win their first game and sadly they lost but, but it's, it's definitely is, It's kind of almost basketball **overload** for a couple of weeks, and then it starts to slow down a little bit. And, you know, even like right now, you know, Princeton is still in it, but it's unlikely they're gonna **make it to the final**. A 15th seed team almost never makes it. It's usually one of the favorites.

Masha: And the favorites this time are like Gonzaga? Duke?

Stu: Gonzaga definitely is. they're always a strong **contender**. Duke is already out. They lost already. I'd say a lot of people are, are expecting University of Texas to be one of the final teams.

Trying to think, also um...

Masha: Any New York team?

Stu: I think not anymore. Syracuse often makes it.

Masha. Oh, okay.

Stu: And there's also, trying to think, Alabama also University of Alabama is, is also **looking really good**. And so it's really too early to tell because you know, we're not going to know to each of the Final Four, really how it's going to go and then even then it's it's hard to predict who's going to win.

Masha: Ok, I'll get into it. I've been really **keeping an eye on** the NBA because....

Stu: See, I don't ever really get into the NBA. Yeah, so I was a Seattle fan until we lost our team...

Masha: New York Knicks, they need more fans.

Stu: So how are the Knicks doing this year?

Masha: The Knicks are doing.. I'm gonna **knock on wood**. I don't want **to jinx** anything.

Stu: Sure, of course.

Masha: Pretty good. I feel like Knicks fans are so loyal despite like anything.

Stu: I respect that that's. It's easy to like certain teams like Golden State Warriors...

Masha: Easy!

Stu: You know that's an easy team to **jump on the bandwagon**. But for Knicks, you gotta be **a real hardcore fan** to stay with the Knicks.

Masha: There is nobody as loyal as a Knicks fan. I haven't been to a Knicks game in a long time at Madison Square Garden, but I mean, just even watching on TV, it's just like the enthusiasm, you know, like, just the passion when they win. So they're number five, actually.

Stu: Wow, that's a big turnaround from the past couple of years.

Masha: Yes, they've always you know, again, I don't want to jinx it, but they're doing well. They're like a really good team. They play well together. They communicate well together. And it's not like a bunch of like, big names. You know, a lot of these teams, they just grab three or four really big players. They're all young and they just, they work so well together.

Stu: It also happens too that I think if you get some big names, there's often a lot of **egos** that come with it. And they don't necessarily play together as a team and

Masha: The other team that thinks they're a New York team will remain nameless. They're in Brooklyn. They had a lot of problems.

Stu: They were doing really good a couple of years ago, too. So it's really **a reversal of fortunes** for the two teams in this area.

Masha: Yes, yes.

Stu: And **how long until** the playoffs?

Masha: Oh, gosh, I think it's like I think now it's, they're... What do they say? They're like clenching their, their positions there.

Stu: Okay, right.

Masha: Yeah, it's like this week or next week, we're gonna find out.

Stu: So it's real close then. And that's usually when I start to get more interested in NBA once the playoffs come then it's it's a lot more fun as someone who has no one to really support anymore.

Masha: You have to in New York, and recently, I see so many more people with Knicks hats. You know..

Stu: Everybody likes a winner.

Masha: They do they do.

Rangers. I noticed that with the Rangers. I'm a hockey fan as well. And the Rangers, when the Rangers make the playoffs, they sell a lot of **merch**.

Masha: They do! And I think I think hockey and basketball are the same time.

Stu: They are yes, it is. It's usually you get the, they kind of have changed it.. depending on.. with the pandemic..things were a little bit kind of in flux, but usually it's May for the for the playoffs and finals.

Masha: I'm so excited. The last time the Knicks were like kind of this good was when I was in 7th or 8th grade.

Stu: Do you remember any of the big players at that time?

Masha: Patrick Ewing...

Stu: Oh, sure. Of course. Oh, yeah. Right. Yeah.

Masha: All the big names:

Stu: That was that was when I was really into basketball. And so I remember the Knicks having a lot more success.

Masha: They were so good. And then at McDonald's, I didn't go to McDonald's that often, but they had those cups with NBA players.

Stu: I remember that too. I used to go when I was. I guess I must have been in elementary school. I took some after school Spanish lessons. And then I would often ..my mom would stop by McDonald's on the way home and I remember getting the basketball cups.

Masha: The cups!

Stu: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, I was really into that too.

Masha: Well, speaking of New York, and I'm gonna share my screen in a second. There's there's kind of a big debate and a **controversial** debate happening about the new this new logo.

Stu: Oh yes.

Masha: Someone decided would be a good idea.

Stu: It's it is hideous.

Masha: It makes me so angry. First of all. It didn't need to be changed.

Stu: No, it's **iconic**.

Masha: It is like the font is iconic. The image is iconic.

Stu: Yeah, it is. It's everything about it. Like I think that it has a nice kind of balance with the heart in the I being on the one level. And then the font too, like the new font is nothing I mean, it's so forgettable and it doesn't stand out from anything else.

Masha: It's like someone went on Word, did Calibri whatever the font that comes up, bolded...You know what I'm talking about, right?

Stu: the **default**...

Masha: And then they put a heart just on the side and it looks like we New York City and there's just like a heart...

Stu: Right? Yeah, it's weird. I feel like somebody spent a lot of money on this.

Masha: Or they had like the intern, go on Canva and just like figure it out and put it together. It makes me so angry.

Stu: Yeah, it's it's, I really do think it's so unnecessary. And it's so unsuccessful.

Masha: But I agree. I'm sure so much more money went into this.

Stu: Oh, yeah. Somebody.. even if the person who made it didn't get paid much. The company had a lot of money from the city for this. A lot of a lot of our money you guys spent on this.

Masha: I'm not wearing a t-shirt with that. Absolutely not.

Stu: No way. No... I....

Masha: Like, and also it's not we love New York, not everybody loves New York. I always hear people like **ripping on** New York.

Stu: I can't, I can't speak for other people. And also too, New York, famously New York is an I city. This is not a we city. I want to walk really fast.

Masha: And I want to stand in the middle of the street and have my dog **poop** and pick it up right there.

Stu: Yeah, this is this seems to be just a disaster to me.

Masha: There's just so many other things that we can be focusing on. MTA, **hint, hint.**

Stu: I would, I would like to have trains running faster than every 10 minutes in the middle of the week. Yeah.

Masha: Yes. And another thing that is gonna **rile me up** but another thing is our mayor who I would say is not like my favorite Mayor so far. I feel like his main focus has been rats in New York and..

Stu: which you know, I would mind some... fewer rats.

Masha: Sure. But like they were here a long time they do their own thing they they manage the subways.

Stu: It's not.. you're not going to totally **get rid of it.** But, you know, it's not it's not the highest priority...

Masha: It's not the highest but I understand that.

Stu: Yeah, it's not, it's not it's not changing the logo, you know, like it's a real real thing.

Masha: I am so like, I'm okay with rats on the subway and stuff. You know, we see them in the city. I I got up I took I went to I think Governors Island or somewhere and I came home pretty late. And I was with Kaya, my daughter and I was like, let's just walk let's just walk by the East River. And I didn't realize how far we were from our house and we were there. It was like really dark at night and I said, Hey, let's just cross the bridge and go to the park over there. When we got to the park, man these rats were like I've never seen they were huge. They looked like little chihuahuas just running around and nobody noticed and I said oh my god this is so scary.

Stu: Yeah, that's yeah, I definitely see them like subway and on the sidewalk and stuff and when they have the garbage out, they're always in the garbage and stuff. But it's supposedly it's a much bigger issue. Yeah, and it was in the past. Yeah, I mean, I I don't think I see anymore personally, but I've heard statistically there's more than that before.

Masha: Yeah, I mean, okay, so let's tackle that boat. This this news came out a few days ago. And do bedrooms need Windows? So basically, a lot of the Midtown offices are empty, you know, and they have been even in 2018 pre pre COVID. They were starting to **empty out.** We were bought a bunch of

buildings. And so they're trying to figure out what to do with the space. And so a few days ago, Adam's was like, do bedrooms need windows?

Stu: I heard I didn't hear about this specifically. I remember when they changed the **rezoning policy** to make it easier to do this. But I feel this is this is kind of the next step on the real estate war on residents. You know that. There's so many things that are so **shady** about real estate here and, you know, renting an apartment in the city is such an unpleasant experience and you pay so much so little. That to me, this is kind of in their mind, it's the next logical step to make our life **miserable**.

Masha: Well, that means that every government officials should have an apartment with no windows, right?

Stu: Yeah, right. Exactly. Yes. Yeah, they should have to be they should have to experience the policies that they're putting into practice.

Masha: Yeah, so he's looking at he's gonna look into the laws which were made like probably in 1900 with the **tenement buildings** or where a lot of people died because there were no windows. **Ventilation....**

Stu: Yeah exactly, ventilation.. and also just like your, your mental well being.

Masha: Yeah, there are studies that show you need to have that.

Stu: **Put it this way**, I think it all comes down to price. No windows should be.. to get rid of my Windows if you **knock off 50% off of** my rent. I'll go for it.

Masha: An apartment with a bedroom with no windows. I'll pay \$500 a month.

Stu: Yeah, exactly. Yeah, that's yeah. I guess I guess it depends where it is. But But yeah, but yes, it would have to be very cheap for me to consider that because windows recession important thing you know, imagine like cooking with no windows.

Masha: But only in New York do you have to consider like..maybe I don't need a shower either maybe I could just shower at the gym like maybe that's gonna be next.

Stu: Oh, yeah, absolutely. I mean, it will. I think I think it definitely eventually it will get to the point because rent is higher than it's ever been now. Yeah, it recovered so fast at least for residential rent recovered so fast, that it's, it's coming eventually it's like, you know, it's kind of like with the airlines, you know, they keep making it worse and worse. Eventually, you're going to be sitting in the aisle, and you're going to pay the same price for it. And so, I feel that the

apartments are going to **be the same track** that we're gonna. Yeah, we're going to be in a shoe box and we're going to pay a lot of money for it.

Masha: It's unbelievable. When I went to Japan, a lot of the stores were in kind of office buildings. So I feel like they should use those office buildings for stores, like they can build vertically instead of across, you know,

Stu: Yeah, that's true. There is that I mean, I feel like this is, this is maybe not the best solution. For the housing problem here.

Masha: Yeah, I was so I was so angry when I saw that. I was like, what? So yeah, those are, are those are topics?

Stu: Yeah, I definitely think that's most of the things I've I've been talking to my friends about.

Masha: Yeah, me too. I think so too.

Well, thanks for joining our New York chat. Hopefully, there was something of interest to you and join us next time.

Don't forget to subscribe to our channel and like our video. See you soon!

Stu: Bye.

Masha: Bye.