

Chatterbox #197 – Interview with Andrew’s mom

Episode description

Are you ready to get to know Andrew and his family better? In this special Chatterbox episode, Andrew interviews his mom, Fiona. Join them as they chat about immigrating to Canada and Oakville, Ontario!

Fun fact

Oakville, located in Ontario, is only about 30 kilometres away from downtown Toronto (Canada) and 123 kilometres away from Buffalo (United States). Oakville is not only a popular tourist spot, but also the third best place to live in Canada and the fourth most romantic place to live in Canada!

Expressions included in the learning materials

- A tale
- A jack-of-all-trades
- Paraphernalia
- To long
- To flood



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name's Andrew. And you're listening to the Culips English podcast.

Welcome back to another episode of the Culips English podcast. I hope everybody out there, no matter where you're listening or what time you're listening, is doin' all right.

As for me, well, I had a pretty good day. I woke up really early, at about 6 a.m., and I worked all day. So, I'm a feeling a little bit tired. It's around 8:00 in the evening now. I plan to put the final finishing touches on this episode before calling it a night and relaxing a little bit before I go to sleep.

Guys, today we have a super special episode for you. You'll get to listen to an interview that I did with my mom, Fiona. Now you may know that I was back visiting my hometown recently, my hometown of Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada. And while I was there, I was able to do interviews with my dad, my mom, and my little sister. So, the interview with my sister has already been released and, if you haven't heard it yet, definitely check out Culips.com, our website, to download that episode and check it out. All of the interviews that I did with my family members were about the same topic, their hometowns, and I really enjoyed talking with my mom about her hometown because I learned some new things about my mom that I just didn't know before. I guess I'd never really sat down and talked one-on-one, face-to-face with my mom about her hometown. It's seems kinda weird in retrospect, but I guess that's just the way life goes.

The study guide for this episode is available for download, on our website Culips.com and, guys, we design the study guide to help you get awesome at English and speak and use English in a very natural way, just like native speakers. The study guide includes the transcript for this episode, along with detailed vocabulary descriptions, and real world usage examples, plus a comprehension quiz. Again, you can download the study guide on our website, Culips.com.

I do have to apologize for the audio quality of this episode. Since I was on the road travelling, I didn't have all my recording gear with me. And you can tell from the audio recording quality that it's not the best, but it's listenable and the interview isn't too long, so I think you can stick it out and still get something out of the interview. Nonetheless here it is, the interview with my mom, Fiona. Enjoy!



- Andrew: So, where were you born?
- Fiona: Well, I was born in a wee town called Dunoon, in Argyllshire, Scotland.
- Andrew: And when did you move to Canada?
- Fiona: I was just a baby, 9 months old.
- Andrew: Nine months old! I thought you were 3!
- Fiona: No, I was 9 months old.
- Andrew: Oh, so you don't really remember that at all?
- Fiona: I don't. I would not remember it. But, I've been back four or five times.
- Andrew: And so that would have been in the 1950s?
- Fiona: Yes.
- Andrew: And so how did you ... Did you take an airplane, or did you take the boat over to Canada?
- Fiona: No, we took a ship over to Canada. We sailed.
- Andrew: Took a ship, and I guess you don't remember that either?
- Fiona: I don't remember it, but I've heard many **tales** of it.
- Andrew: Heard many **tales** of it, OK, and where did you land? In Quebec?
- Fiona: In Montreal, Montreal.
- Andrew: Yeah, that was a pretty typical place for immigrants to come through.
- Fiona: Yes, I had one older brother, who was the first one that bound off the ship when it was ashore, and a sister that was 15 years old at the time, 16 years old at the time.
- Andrew: So, she would have remembered quite clearly.
- Fiona: She looked after us. In fact, I just inherited the menu that we had on the ship and many of the **paraphernalia** that my older sister collected from that journey.
- Andrew: From that ship, still have it? Interesting.
- Fiona: Yes.



- Andrew: Well, maybe we can take a picture of that, do you have it here?
- Fiona: I do.
- Andrew: I'll take a picture of it and put it online. All right, so, but you didn't stay in Montreal?
- Fiona: No, we came to Toronto.
- Andrew: Toronto.
- Fiona: Toronto, Ontario.
- Andrew: So, would you consider Toronto to be your hometown?
- Fiona: We only lived there for the first 8 years of my life. And the rest of my childhood and young adulthood was in Oakville, Ontario.
- Andrew: Oakville, Ontario.
- Fiona: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: So, Oakville would be your hometown?
- Fiona: I would say so.
- Andrew: And, OK, tell me about Oakville. Describe it. What type of place is Oakville?
- Fiona: Well, Oakville is a lovely town. It's more a city now, but when I was there it was a town, right on Lake Ontario. Very picturesque with, of course, lots of oak trees, hence the name Oakville.
- Andrew: It's where it got its name.
- Fiona: Mmhmm. And a very welcoming, friendly town to grow up in. I actually grew up in the countryside of Oakville, but nearly every weekend would go into the town. And it has lots of beauty there, being right on the lake, but also has some nice rivers that go through it and nice ravines.
- Andrew: So, it's on Lake Ontario?
- Fiona: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And what were the other people in Oakville like? Were they immigrants too, like your family?



- Fiona: There were a lot of, mostly at the time that I came, there was quite an influx of British people to Oakville. I think it's quite different there now. But at that time, I went to ... My first high school that I went to was right downtown. The very, the only high school that was in Oakville for decades, and then after my first year they built the first new high school so I went to that one.
- Andrew: And at that time, I mean, now it's part of the GTA, I assume, right?
- Fiona: No, it's not.
- Andrew: Oakville? No?
- Fiona: It's a separate city.
- Andrew: GTA, being the Greater Toronto Area.
- Fiona: Greater Toronto Area, well, a lot of people would live in Oakville that would work in Toronto, yes.
- Andrew: Commuter.
- Fiona: Mmhmm, the biggest industrial part of Oakville when I grew up was the Ford Company, but that isn't there now.
- Andrew: So, at that time, what was the population of Oakville?
- Fiona: When I grew up there? Thirty thousand. But now it would be much more than that. I don't know what it would be, but it would be comparable to Kelowna.
- Andrew: So, over 100,000? Probably.
- Fiona: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: OK, so what did you do for fun? In the summer? In Oakville? Small town, 30,000 people.
- Fiona: Summer fun, well.
- Andrew: Did you go camping?
- Fiona: We went camping, but we never camped in Oakville.
- Andrew: No?



- Fiona: We would usually go up to Algonquin Park or the Muskokas or some place like that. But Oakville is a great destination for other people to come for a holiday. I shouldn't say we never had, we never went camping in Oakville, 'cause sometimes we would just go for the weekend, by the forks of the Credit River and camp out. But there's lots to do in Oakville for kids. When I was young, lots of hiking and sports to be engaged in, had their own hockey team, and that was good for winter.
- Andrew: But you didn't play hockey?
- Fiona: No, but I liked to watch it, and we did have a pond in our backyard, so we did play hockey.
- Andrew: Oh, you played hockey on the pond?
- Fiona: We did.
- Andrew: Who would make the pond, freeze the pond?
- Fiona: The pond was already there.
- Andrew: It was a natural feature?
- Fiona: No, my dad had it made when he had the house excavated.
- Andrew: Oh, yeah, because these days a lot of kids won't have ponds in their backyard, but their dads make them, they just **flood** the lawn.
- Fiona: No, this was a swim in the summer pond and a skate in the winter pond.
- Andrew: And were there fish there?
- Fiona: There were.
- Andrew: Interesting.
- Fiona: Because we put them in.
- Andrew: Yeah, and your dad was a kind of **jack-of-all-trades**, wasn't he?
- Fiona: I wouldn't say that.
- Andrew: No?
- Fiona: He wasn't very ambitious that way. He liked to read too much. He had to cover all the newspapers in a day so, he didn't get at much.
- Andrew: But he seemed like he did a lot of different things.



Fiona: Oh, he did.

Andrew: You told me before that he had chinchillas.

Fiona: Oh yeah, he had an eye for genetics, so he raised some animals in his life. He liked to raise dogs when he was a boy. He knew a lot about his latest, or his last thing that he raised. Yup.

Andrew: All right, what else? What would you do? What were some of the negative things, some of the things you didn't like about Oakville?

Fiona: Hmm! I can't say there's very much that I disliked about Oakville. I loved to walk in the town and along those city streets because they had lovely old brick houses and very lush gardens. I can't ... Maybe the industry that grew up around about it rather rapidly and is what you see now when you go down the highway through Oakville, all you see is industry, but if you go south toward the lake, it's still that same pretty town. Yeah, it was a lovely place to grow up in.

Andrew: And your, the home you grew up in, did you have a big property then? If you had a pond in the backyard, must have been sizeable?

Fiona: Yeah, we lived in ...

Andrew: And you're in the country.

Fiona: Mmhmm, first when we moved to Oakville, we had a bungalow in a subdivision. But my dad owned some land that he bought when he first came to Canada, so it was 10 acres of land, and yeah, so it was a bit of grass cutting. Mmhmm.

Andrew: And did you have any crops that you raised or any animals? Did you have a big garden?

Fiona: We had let the farmer next door use part of it for crops, and we had some fruit trees and we did have a little bit of a garden. We had lots of flowers and lots of grass to cut, but we had a nice sit-down lawn mower, so it wasn't difficult.

Andrew: I imagine back in the day, before the internet, computers, you would have read a lot?

Fiona: We did.

Andrew: So did you have a nice library in town?



- Fiona: Oh yeah, Oakville had a wonderful library, compared to most places. It had a lovely one downtown, and then they built a very contemporary one. And then when we lived in the country we used to go to the bookmobile.
- Andrew: Bookmobile?
- Fiona: The bookmobile came around once a week.
- Andrew: What's that?
- Fiona: It's a big truck with, full of books, so it would stop at a certain location, and you walk over. And it was service of the public library.
- Andrew: Oh, interesting.
- Fiona: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Kind of a book delivery, would you get to request something and they bring it to you, or ...
- Fiona: They would, yup, my dad sent me with a list every time it came, and that's how I got to love some of my favourite authors, was because he had them on his list.
- Andrew: Well, we certainly don't have a bookmobile anymore.
- Fiona: No, we don't.
- Andrew: OK, so last question will be, why did you leave? And when did you leave?
- Fiona: Well, it was sad that we left, because my father was not well and he had a few heart attacks and when he did regain his health, he wasn't able to work. And he **longed** to go back to Scotland. So he went back or my mom and dad and younger brother and sister went back to Scotland. And I was just in grade 13 at the time, so I stayed with my older sister and brother. We had rented our lovely house to friends of my parents and I, after my school year, moved to Toronto.
- Andrew: And that was the end of Oakville.
- Fiona: That was the end of Oakville, except for the weekends.
- Andrew: I see.
- Fiona: Actually, I did come back and live in Oakville for a little while in that same house because the people weren't renting it anymore, and I stayed there for a while till it sold.

Andrew: I see.

Fiona: Mmhmm.

Andrew: All right, thanks for answering some questions about your hometown.

Fiona: No problem!

Andrew: All right guys, there it is, the short but sweet interview with my mother Fiona, about her hometown of Oakville, Ontario, Canada. I hope that you enjoyed listening to it as much as I enjoyed the experience of getting to talk to my mom about her hometown.

If you have any questions or comments for me or any other members of the Culips team, you can send us an email. The address is contact@culips.com. As well, we are on Facebook and Twitter, and so if you're a social media user make sure to follow us. That's it for me, I'm gonna call it night, guys. I will talk to you soon. Bye.

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Detailed Explanations

A tale

A tale means a story, account, or narrative that may or may not be true. The key difference between **a tale** and a story is that **a tale** is often used to refer to a fictitious or false story or account, or a story that is difficult to believe.

You may hear the terms **a tall tale**, which is a story that is greatly exaggerated, and **a cautionary tale**, which is a story that serves as an example of what not to do. **A well-known cautionary tale** is Peter and the Wolf. In this story, Peter repeatedly says there is a wolf when there isn't one. One day, a wolf appears. No one comes to help him because they do not believe Peter is telling the truth, since he lied in the past. So **this cautionary tale** is warning people not to lie.

A tale can also be used to refer to an account or narrative that is true. For example, in this episode, Andrew's mom, Fiona, mentions that she's heard many **tales** about immigrating to Canada on a ship. In this instance, Fiona is saying that she has heard many accounts of sailing to Canada. In other words, Fiona has heard stories of immigrating to Canada.

Be careful: although **a tale** is pronounced the same way as a tail, they have entirely different meanings. **A tale** is a story, which is sometimes hard to believe, and a tail is an appendage found on animals, like dogs and cats, that wags back and forth.

Here are a couple more examples with **a tale**:

Max:	Did you have a good time at the conference on famous Canadian stories last weekend?
Belinda:	I did! The keynote speaker was a very interesting guy. He did a good job of explaining and analyzing many famous Canadian tales .
Max:	It sounds like it was definitely worth your time to go!

Brett:	I can't believe what Milton was saying at the party on Saturday night.
Carl:	I didn't hang around him very much. What did he say?
Brett:	He told a tale about meeting an actor on his vacation, but I know for a fact that he was lying. My best friend went with him, and they didn't meet anyone famous!

A jack-of-all-trades

The term a trade means a job or a craft. If someone can do many skilled jobs, they are a **jack-of-all-trades**. In other words, a **jack-of-all-trades** means a person who can do many different things or has many different skill sets.

A **jack-of-all-trades** can be used to refer to someone who is really good at many different types of tasks or who is very versatile. For example, a handyman is a person who repairs or maintains a home. Because a lot could go wrong with a home, from a broken faucet to clogged gutters, a handyman must have many different skills. Therefore, because a handyman has many different skills and has to perform many different types of tasks, you could call a handyman a **jack-of-all-trades**.

So if someone is capable of doing multiple and varied tasks well, it would be appropriate to call them a **jack-of-all-trades**.

Here are a couple more examples with a **jack-of-all-trades**:

Matilda:	How are the renovations going at your house?
Gwyneth:	They're finally back on track. We ran into some trouble when our contractor quit.
Matilda:	I didn't know your contractor left. Who's finishing the work?
Gwyneth:	Well, my brother is kind of a jack-of-all-trades , so he stepped in until we can find another contractor.
Matilda:	You're lucky! My brother isn't handy at all. He can do taxes and that's about it!
Gwyneth:	Send him over to our house. My brother will teach him a few new skills!

Larry:	How was your vacation?
Jeff:	It was OK, I guess. My wife made me spend it installing a new bathroom in the basement.
Larry:	That sounds like a lot of work. Were you able to do it all by yourself?
Jeff:	Yeah, I'm kind of a jack-of-all-trades . I've picked up a lot of skills over the years.

Paraphernalia

The noun **paraphernalia** means a collection of belongings, articles, or objects. You can use **paraphernalia** to describe a large number of personal belongings or objects connected to a particular activity or a common theme.

The term **paraphernalia** can be used in many different contexts. For example, someone who is a fan of Star Trek may be interested in collecting Star Trek **paraphernalia**. They may have action figures of the main characters, various Star Trek books or posters, or clothing with the Star Trek emblem. These items are all considered **paraphernalia**.

In this episode, Andrew's mom discusses how her older sister collected **paraphernalia** from their journey to Canada. In other words, her older sister collected miscellaneous items all related or connected to their journey from Scotland to Canada.

So the word **paraphernalia** means a collection of things, often connected to a particular activity or theme, whether it be a movie, journey, or hobby.

Here are a couple more examples with **paraphernalia**:

Arnold:	Did you sign up for football yet?
Simon:	Yup! I still haven't checked if all my equipment from last year fits, though. I have all my paraphernalia in a storage locker. I should probably check it out and clean all my stuff soon.
Arnold:	You really should get on that before the new football season starts.
Simon:	You're right. I'll do it this weekend.

Gulliver:	I went to a comic book convention over the weekend.
Howard:	Did you buy anything interesting?
Gulliver:	There were a lot of vendors selling all kinds of comic book paraphernalia , but I didn't end up buying anything. I was a little overwhelmed with all the different items, and found it hard to choose.
Howard:	I hear you! I love all kinds of comics, but those conventions are a little too much for me. I prefer just ordering everything through our local comic book store or online.
Gulliver:	Me too!

To long

To long means to pine or to yearn for something. In other words, **to long** means to really want something and to think about wanting something, often for a long time. You can **long** for an object, person, or place. For example, if a boy **longs** to go out with a girl, he really wants and desires to go out with the girl.

In this episode, Andrew's mom talks about how her dad **longed** to move back to Scotland. That is, Fiona's dad strongly desired to return to the country of his roots. So **to long** means to feel a strong desire or craving for something or to do something.

Be careful: although they sound the same, **to long** and too long have different meanings. **To long** means to pine or to yearn for something, whereas too long means that something's length is excessive.

Here are a couple more examples with **to long**:

Carrie:	Did you hear what I said?
Kevin:	What? Sorry, I wasn't listening.
Carrie:	You never listen! I hate having to repeat myself all the time. I long for the day you start listening.
Kevin:	Well, you may have to wait 20 years before that happens!
Carrie:	Can you please just try to listen to me? It's important that I feel heard and understood. I love you, but I really need and want you to listen when I talk.
Kevin:	OK, I'll try.

Darrien:	Ugh, what a long day! I can't wait to get home, change out of my suit, and watch some TV. Only 10 more years until I can retire!
Krista:	Lucky! I still have another 15 years before I can retire! What I wouldn't give to be rich and not have to work. I long to spend my days travelling and just enjoying life, rather than working.
Darrien:	Well, if ever I win the lottery, I promise to give you some cash!
Krista:	Same!

To flood

The noun a flood means an overflow of water, especially onto to a normally dry area. If something is overrun with water or submerged under water, it's **flooded**. For example, if the sewers back up and water is all over the streets, you could say, "The streets are **flooded**."

Generally, **flooding** is unwanted and can cause damage. However, in winter, it is common practice for Canadians **to deliberately flood** their backyards to create skating rinks. In a controlled way, they pour a large quantity of water over their backyards, until there is a layer of water over the ground. Because Canada's winters are very cold, the water freezes, turning to ice, which people can skate on. So when Andrew's mom talks about **flooding** her backyard, she is talking about this meaning of **to flood**.

In casual conversation, **to flood** can also mean to have an overwhelming quantity of something, like phone calls, work, money, or toys. For example, if you have a lot of work, you could say, "I'm **flooded** with work."

So **to flood** means to be overcome with an enormous quantity of something, like water, work, or phone calls.

Here are a couple more examples with **to flood**:

Tom:	I can't believe winter is almost here. I'm going to miss the warmer weather.
Jill:	Not me! I love winter and all the different winter activities. I've already blocked off an area of my yard for a skating rink.
Tom:	Is it a lot of work to make a skating rink?
Jill:	Not really. All you have to do is lay down some long, thin wood planks for the borders, and then use the hose to flood the area within the borders. I love being able to skate in my backyard whenever I want.
Tom:	That does sound like fun!

Alan:	I can't wait for this quarter to be over and for things to quiet down at work. I'm constantly being flooded with calls from our clients.
Grant:	I hear you. It will be nice to slow down for a bit and catch our breath.
Alan:	At least all the phone calls mean we're making money!
Grant:	Money is always good!

Quiz

1. Which of the following is the best example of paraphernalia?
 - a) a group of kids
 - b) a group of soccer players
 - c) a collection of porcelain dolls
 - d) a collection of leaves

2. Clara is from Montreal, but is living in Ottawa while she goes to university. She really misses home and can't wait to move back there. In other words, Clara _____ for home.
 - a) longs
 - b) pines
 - c) yearns
 - d) all of the above

3. True or false: Cats have tales.
 - a) true
 - b) false

4. Which of the following is the best example of a jack-of-all-trades?
 - a) a mom
 - b) a mathematician
 - c) a renovation
 - d) a bathroom

5. Julie's backyard flooded during a bad storm. In other words, Julie _____.
 - a) had a skating rink in her backyard
 - b) had a lot of work to complete
 - c) had a lot of phone calls
 - d) had a lot of water in her backyard



Quiz Answers

1.c 2.d 3.b 4.a 5.d

Episode credits

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