

Chatterbox #213 – Interview with John: Part 2

Episode description

This is another special episode with a returning guest, Andrew's brother John. Andrew and John discuss the struggles of finding an apartment to rent in the increasingly expensive Kelowna area of British Columbia.

Fun fact

As of 2017, the average cost of a home in Kelowna was \$725,000, and up to \$10 million in the area of West Kelowna. The prices have been steadily increasing due to a lack of house listings compared to the number of buyers—a prime example of supply and demand.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Right in the middle of [something]
- In the thick of [something]
- Freaky
- Mobile
- In between places
- To have money to burn
- A long shot
- Party animal



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: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hey, everyone. How's it going? My name is Andrew and you are tuned in to Culips.

Today we've got a really special Chatterbox episode for you. Several weeks ago, my brother came to visit me in South Korea, where I live. And while he was here, I got the opportunity to interview him for Culips. We talked about a lot of things, but we divided the interview into two parts. We've already uploaded Part 1, where we talk about my brother John's life working on a mine site in northern Canada. And if you would like to listen to that interview, just head to our website, Culips.com, and you can take a listen.

And in Part 2 of the interview, which is today's episode I talk to him about trying to find an apartment in our hometown of Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada, because John's **right in the middle of trying to find an apartment**. So I thought this would be an awesome opportunity to talk about what the process is like from start to finish when you try to find a place to live in Canada.

We'll get to the interview in just a moment, but right before we do, I wanna take the opportunity to remind you that we have a study guide for this episode. And if you'd like to download it, all you have to do is visit our website, Culips.com. In the study guide, you get a lot of awesome things, like a transcript, vocabulary explanations so you can learn how to use all the natural slang and idioms and phrasal verbs and this type of vocabulary that you hear on Culips. There's also examples of how to use this vocabulary in a real-world context. There are prompts for discussion or for journaling, and there is also a quiz. So, the study guide is jam-packed with amazing things, and we highly recommend that you check it out. In fact, if you'd like to check out a free sample, there's some on our website for you to take a look at. So, yeah, visit Culips.com for all the info you need and to get that study guide.

All right, guys, I think I've been rambling on here long enough, let's get to the interview with my brother John. Enjoy.

Andrew: Johnny.



John: Andrew.

Andrew: Welcome back to Culips.

John: Thanks for having me again.

Andrew: I was riding the bus home from work today, John, and there was a pretty funny scene that unraveled on the bus.

John: Oh yeah? What happened?

Andrew: There was a really massive wasp that was flying around on the bus. And I don't know if you've seen how big the wasps or hornets can get in Asia, but they are crazy big, way bigger than back in Canada.

John: Wow, that's surprising.

Andrew: Yeah, they're kinda **freaky**. Even I was, like, oh my god, I wanna get off this bus with this massive wasp.

John: Right, yeah.

Andrew: But the really funny thing was seeing everybody's reaction, because nobody stood up to try and kill the bug, or get it out the window. Everybody just screamed and avoided it, so it was pandemonium.

John: Wow, scary times on the bus, eh?

Andrew: Understandably. I wouldn't wanna get stung or bit by one of these things, I'm pretty sure you'd have to go to the hospital.

John: And you'd probably be itching pretty bad, too.

Andrew: I think so.

John: As you've mentioned, that the bugs here, the bug bites are pretty bad.

Andrew: That's right, that's right.

So, John, you're visiting Korea.

John: Yes.

Andrew: And while you've been here, the whole time I noticed you've been on your tablet, searching for a new apartment back home.

- John: Yup, kind of **in between places** right now, so just putting the search out there because I'm only home for a few days, so just seeing if there's any ads out there that are available, that I want to check out while I'm home.
- Andrew: I see. **In between places**. So, **in between places**, what does this mean?
- John: Well, the last two places I lived at, I kinda had to move out, there's some circumstances that presented themselves, and I kinda had to move. So I haven't found a permanent place since. I've kinda been staying in Airbnbs and travelling around. So I'm trying to find a permanent residence again.
- Andrew: Right, so if you're **in between places**, it just means that you don't really have a home?
- John: Don't have a permanent place, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, you're kind of transient, not homeless, but ...
- John: **Mobile**.
- Andrew: **Mobile**, OK. That's a good word.
- So today, John, I wanted to talk to you about the process of finding an apartment. Actually, I haven't had to look for an apartment for a while in Canada. And with the internet these days, everything changes. Every year, it seems like there's a new website or a new service to use when you're looking for an apartment to live in. So I thought I should ask you about it, because you're **in the thick of it** right now, you're **in the middle of doing this**.
- John: In the process, yes.
- Andrew: All right, so how do you do this, then? What kind of website or what service are you using? Do you look in the newspaper?
- John: It's all online.
- Andrew: All online.
- John: It's an online process. It's that day and age, right? So it's just local classifieds in Kelowna. Google searches, Craigslist, Kijiji, all those sites.
- Andrew: OK, so Kijiji is a Canadian website for classified ads, right?
- John: That's true.

- Andrew: Classified ads are the buy and sell ads that used to be in newspapers, but now they're pretty much all online. Kijiji. And Craigslist is exactly the same thing.
- John: Exactly the same, yeah.
- Andrew: Exactly the same thing. Do you notice a difference between Kijiji and Craigslist?
- John: Not really, they operate very similar. Same structure. I would say there's probably more activity on Kijiji, 'cause Craigslist was kinda the first to market, so I think people kinda have switched over to Kijiji. So I would say that it's a little more competitive on Kijiji.
- Andrew: All right. And so you're looking to live in Kelowna, our hometown, which is a city of about 150 000-ish people, right?
- John: Yeah.
- Andrew: Medium-size Canadian city.
- John: Yup.
- Andrew: What's the housing market there like these days? Or the rental housing market? Is there a lot of places to rent, or are there many vacancies? What's it looking like?
- John: Well, it's pretty expensive, so it depends on your price range. If you've got a lot of **money to burn**, you know you could find a place. I'd say it's pretty competitive right now and not a very high vacancy rate.
- Andrew: Not a high vacancy rate, so not too many places. If you check in the morning when you wake up, how many new ads are you likely to see?
- John: Three to four.
- Andrew: Three to four? OK.
- John: And I'm also finding that lots of people's ads have expired, and then they're just recirculating them back onto the front of the home-page search.
- Andrew: OK. Yeah, I actually follow the Reddit page for Kelowna, and this is a common complaint that I see on the Reddit page, ah, Kelowna is too expensive, I can't find a place to live.
- John: Yeah.
- Andrew: And this seems to be a big problem there.

- John: It is, yeah. It's a growing concern, you know, you kinda start to think, well, maybe I should move to a different town or something like that. I'm not quite there yet, I'm thinking of it. But we'll see what happens over the next month or so. See if there's any places that come up.
- Andrew: And another compliant is that it's next to impossible to find an apartment to live in if you have a special circumstance, like maybe you have a pet, maybe you smoke, or maybe you have children.
- John: Yeah.
- Andrew: And this makes it really, really difficult to find a place.
- John: Really difficult, yeah. Nobody wants a renter who smokes or has a pet or, you know, maybe a child, there might be a little bit more room there.
- Andrew: Yeah, I don't know if you're legally allowed to say you can't live here because you have a child. You definitely can with a pet and with a smoker. I think you might find yourself with a lawsuit if you said you can't rent this place because you have a baby. But people will do it in a different way, right? Kind of, I'm sorry, we chose somebody else.
- John: You can't prove that there was, like, discrimination, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah. OK, so what about prices? Of course, you said that if you have a lot of money there's high-end units available and that just makes sense. You know, if you're rich, you can buy whatever you want. But for just an average working person, what are you looking to pay for a one-bedroom apartment, which is probably what you're searching for?
- John: One bedroom, yeah. I'm searching for—\$1000 would be the high end, the maximum I'd be willing to pay. So, there's a handful of those units, but I'm kinda keeping my eyes opening for a \$700 or \$800. Because in the past, I've been able to have those places in Kelowna, a \$700 unit, one bedroom. So I think you just gotta be patient, maybe wait it out. You know, it might be **a long shot**, but we'll see what happens.
- Andrew: Right, so if your budget is only \$700 or \$800 a month, it could be pretty difficult to find a place to live then? Sounds like you have to really wait for those units to come online and then jump on them right away.
- John: Right, yup. But then sometimes they're also, there's cheaper units 'cause they're looking for someone that maybe works out of town, like I do or that's quiet or single.
- Andrew: Right.

- John: So there's, you know, there's a few things going on there.
- Andrew: Right, so, again, it's another thing that you could be discriminated against, if your personality is really loud or maybe if you look a certain way. If you look like you're a **party animal** or a punk rocker.
- John: Right.
- Andrew: You know, this might not work in your favour, especially because Kelowna is such a town filled with elderly people and they have these ideas that if you look a certain way, you might act a certain way, which of course is ridiculous, but that's a story for a different episode. So we'll wrap up here in a second, but just quickly, let's talk about the process of renting a place. So, let's say you find an apartment you want, what's the next step?
- John: You contact the landlord.
- Andrew: Contact the landlord. And the landlord is the owner or the property manager?
- John: Yup. So you contact them, email or text or phone call. And then tell them you're interested and try set up a viewing, that's what I try to do, 'cause you just wanna see the place, right? 'Cause maybe you don't like it or something, so you don't wanna go too far in an interview process, you just wanna view the unit.
- Andrew: Right, yeah, you don't wanna waste your time or their time.
- John: Exactly.
- Andrew: And then so let's say you liked the place. And what's the next step if you're satisfied?
- John: Fill out the application, give them some references, and then it's up to the landlord. They, you know, call your references, your employer, your previous landlords, and they inquire about you and your tendencies and stuff like that. And then they phone you, say the unit's either available for you or you're declined, and then you make up your decision, paying the deposit, which is usually a half month's rent, and then sign the lease and you're on your way.
- Andrew: And the standard lease is 1 year?
- John: One year or month to month.
- Andrew: One year or month to month. Which do you prefer?

- John: Right now, I think I'd go with the 1 year, because then it locks it in for a year, you know? So you don't have to worry about the landlord changing their mind or something and then find yourself without a place. It's kinda nice to get that 1-year lease locked in.
- Andrew: You have the security.
- John: Yes.
- Andrew: OK, last question, and that is: could you give us a brief rundown of the types of units that are on the market? So I've been using the word apartment but, really, there are many different types of housing situations for renters, right? There's apartments, which is kind of the classic unit in a building with many other apartments that you think of. But in a town like Kelowna, actually, this is not super common, is it?
- John: No, it's changing. There's lots of newer apartments getting built, but what I'm looking for usually is a basement suite apartment or a partial unit of a house.
- Andrew: OK. So a basement suite apartment, which is simply a house where the owner has converted the basement into a livable space.
- John: Yes, that's correct. So it has its own kitchen and entrance and bathroom and everything.
- Andrew: What's the advantage of that? Why would you look for that over an apartment, a regular apartment?
- John: They're generally cheaper. That's probably the biggest thing, in my case.
- Andrew: Also, I guess there's parking usually, maybe access to a backyard or some green space, perhaps.
- John: Yeah, that's true.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- John: And then you're not having to go up and down elevators.
- Andrew: Right.
- John: Or if you're moving furniture, it's not as much of a hassle, taking it all the way down a hallway and then around a tight corner or something like that.
- Andrew: On the downside, it's much easier to break into.

- John: Yeah, probably. Just the front door, right, just get in through the front door. Apartments, there's a couple of doors.
- Andrew: Right, or you could be on the 25th floor of an apartment building and it's unlikely a burglar would steal all of your precious possessions from the 25th story.
- John: Yeah.
- Andrew: Going down the elevator each time.
- John: Yeah, that's true.
- Andrew: OK, so there's basement suite apartment, anything else?
- John: There's carriage houses.
- Andrew: Carriage house, OK. What's a carriage house?
- John: It's when there's a small house in the backyard of somebody's house.
- Andrew: Right.
- John: So it's just like—our sister lives in one, kind of.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- John: You know, it's just a small little unit they have in their backyard.
- Andrew: Exactly, so these are actually pretty cute, cool houses.
- John: Yeah.
- Andrew: Carriage house. Anything else?
- John: No, I'd just say.
- Andrew: Condo?
- John: Condo, that's kind of the same as an apartment.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- John: A townhouse, but those are usually larger units.
- Andrew: Yeah, more for a family.
- John: Yeah.

- Andrew: Yeah, but that's another popular rental unit is a townhouse. And that's just a house that's connected to another house, right?
- John: That's true, yeah.
- Andrew: It's not an individual, free-standing unit, it's connected to other houses.
- John: Connected, yeah.
- Andrew: Sometimes you see the word duplex, which is two units together.
- John: Fourplex.
- Andrew: Fourplex, four units together. Do they have triplex? Triplex?
- John: I think so; I think there's triplexes out there.
- Andrew: When you're looking at a classified ad online, you'll see these words, duplex, triplex, fourplex.
- John: Right, it's how they organize it.
- Andrew: Cool, John. Well, good luck with your housing search, if you get a nice place, let us know.
- John: I'll come back and do a report on, you know, how the search went.
- Andrew: That sounds good.
- John: OK.
- Andrew: Thank you.
- John: We'll see you then.
- Andrew: OK.

Well, that is it for today. Thanks again to everyone for listening and also, hey, a big thanks to my bro John, for not only coming all the way halfway across the world to visit me here in Korea, but also for agreeing to come on the podcast.

Once again, our website is Culips.com and we're also on social media, on Facebook and on Twitter and on YouTube, so hit us up there. And if you'd like to get in touch with me or any other members of the Culips team, just send us an email. Our address is contact@Culips.com, C-O-N-T-A-C-T@Culips.com. That's it for now. We'll be back soon with another Culips episode. We'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

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Detailed Explanations

Right in the middle of [something] Idiom

To be **right in the middle of [something]** means to be busy doing something. If you're in the process of completing a task, you're **in the middle of doing that task**. In this episode, Andrew tells us that John is **right in the middle of trying to find an apartment**. John is looking for an apartment right now, so he is **right in the middle of looking for an apartment**.

Here's one more example with **right in the middle of [something]**:

Mom:	Tyler, please clean the guest bathroom.
Tyler:	Right now? Mom, I'm right in the middle of watching a movie . Can I do it when it's over?
Mom:	No, the guests will be here at 7:00. You have to clean it now.
Tyler:	Aw, man. This sucks.

In the thick of [something]

Idiom

In the thick of [something] has pretty much the same meaning as right in the middle of [something]: to be very busy and preoccupied doing something. In this episode, Andrew uses both phrases to describe John's apartment search.

Here's one more example with **in the thick of [something]**:

Marianne: Honey, when will you be coming home?

David: I'm sorry. I'm gonna be home late. This project ... I'm really **in the thick of it**.

Marianne: Oh well. OK. I'll probably be asleep before you get home.

David: That's OK. I love you. See you tonight.

Freaky Adjective

Freaky means to be strange, weird, or unusual. **Freaky** can be used to describe something that scares someone or makes someone feel uncomfortable. In this episode, Andrew says the giant bees found in Asia are **freaky**—they are unusually big and people are especially scared of them.

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

Jean: Look at that dog. It has three eyes.

Vivien: Wow, that's **freaky**!

Jean: Yeah, don't get too close. It might have a disease.

Vivien: Aw. It just looks hungry to me.

Padma: Is that guy over there still staring at me?

Rachna: Yeah, he is. He looks kinda **freaky**.

Padma: He totally is **freaky**! He keeps staring at me, never smiling. He gives me such a weird vibe.

Rachna: Want me to go talk to him? I'll tell him to stay away from you.

Padma: Thanks, but it's OK. I'm sure he's harmless; he's just a bit awkward is all.

Mobile Adjective

Mobile means to be able to move or be moved freely and easily. If a person is **mobile**, he or she is not tied down to one place. Another word for a person with a **mobile** lifestyle is transient. Andrew's brother is **mobile** at the moment, because he is moving from place to place while he's looking for an apartment to rent.

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

Spencer:	My life is pretty mobile at the moment. I love it.
Al:	How do you mean?
Spencer:	I only have a few possessions, pretty minimalist. I could technically just pick up and move away at any time. It's so freeing.
Al:	That's cool and all, but I prefer a more permanent lifestyle.
Spencer:	Yeah, I hear you. To each their own.

Nick:	Hey, did you know that other countries call cellphones mobile phones?
Haru:	Makes more sense to me. Mobile means moveable, and a cellphone is literally a moveable phone.
Nick:	I guess you're right. It just sounds weird to me, though.
Haru:	Yeah, that's called cultural relativism. Your perception of a word is based on your background. You're American, so mobile phone doesn't sound natural to you.
Nick:	Well, aren't you full of interesting information?

In between places

Idiom

In between places means that one does not have a permanent place to live at the moment. In this context, in between does not mean physically in between two objects, but is more abstract: in between moving out of one place and being in search of another place to live.

This is similar to the phrase in between jobs. In between jobs means to unemployed and looking for a new job. If one were to say, "I'm in between jobs right now, so money is tight," it means that person doesn't have a job at the moment and therefore doesn't have much money.

Here are a couple more examples with **in between places**:

Scott:	Hey, man. I'm in between places right now. Can I stay at your place for a few days while I look for something?
Randal:	Sure, stay as long as you need.
Scott:	Rent prices have skyrocketed since I had my last apartment. I'm not sure what to do.
Randal:	Hopefully you'll find something. If worst comes to worst, you'll just need to find a roommate.

Ebba:	Since you're in between places right now, why don't you come live with us for a bit?
Olivia:	Really? Are you sure?
Ebba:	Yeah, I was hoping to find someone to help me watch the baby anyways as I transition back to working part-time. How does that sound?
Olivia:	That's a great idea! I love my little niece. We'll get some serious auntie-niece bonding time.

To have money to burn

Idiom

To have money to burn means to have a lot of money, so much that one can spend it freely, usually on unnecessary things. If one has **money to burn**, he can afford to overspend or go over budget when buying something. Usually if someone says you **have money to burn**, they think you are wasting your money on something ridiculously expensive or extravagant.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have money to burn**:

Tom:	It was pay day today. I've got money to burn! Let's head to the bar and put it to good use.
Jack:	Yes!
Rob:	Don't forget you owe 2 months on rent.
Jack:	Man. Way to ruin the mood.
Tom:	No, Rob's right. I should be more responsible ... Only the first round is on me, then. Let's go!
Rob:	Oh, boy. This is not gonna end well.

Kate:	Do you remember me telling you that I used to work at an ice cream shop in the summer? That was the best job ever.
Lauren:	Really? Doesn't seem special to me.
Kate:	Well, it was. The ice cream shop was in a pretty idyllic location in the mountains. Rich city folks would come there to get some fresh air and they would always come with money to burn .
Lauren:	So how much did you make?
Kate:	I could make close to \$20 an hour some days, scooping ice cream! Crazy, right? The ice cream cone would cost \$4, and these rich families would give me a \$5 tip just for giving them a nice smile.
Lauren:	Wow, maybe I should quit my job as a secretary and just work there.

A long shot Idiom

A long shot is something that is unlikely to happen or to be successful. For example, getting an A on a test is **a long shot** if you only studied an hour for it. Usually something that is **a long shot** is high risk but has the possibility for high reward.

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

Niko:	I bet that Alfonso would win the fight. Do you think he'll win?
Marty:	It's a long shot ; the other guy weighs a good 40 pounds more. If he does win, though, you'll make a killing.
Niko:	Then let's hope it's my lucky night.

Myra:	Have you seen Cindy? I can't find her anywhere and she's not answering her cell phone.
Frances:	It might be a long shot , but try looking at the library on 23rd Street. She sometimes goes there when she wants to be alone.

Party animal

Noun

A **party animal** is someone who goes crazy at parties. **Party animals** love to let loose, drink, dance, and have a great time at a party. Usually **party animals** behave wildly and loudly, making them the life of the party.

Here's one more example with **party animal**:

Jessica: Do you know Sherry?

Miranda: Of course I know Sherry! She's a **party animal**. She can drink as much as the guys and is known to dance all night long.

Jessica: Yeah, well, she's in the hospital.

Miranda: What? Why?

Jessica: She fell off a table at the frat party on Thursday night. She broke her arm.

Miranda: Ouch. I guess she won't be quite as energetic at the next party she goes to.

Quiz

1. What is another idiom with a similar meaning to in the thick of it?

- a) stuck between a rock and a hard place
- b) in the middle of it
- c) in the heat of the moment
- d) beat around the bush

2. What is an example of a long shot?

- a) winning the game after practising 3 hours a day
- b) winning a racetrack bet by choosing the most popular horse
- c) finding a lost ring in the sand at the beach
- d) becoming vice president of a company when your father is CEO

3. Which is an example of having money to burn?

- a) buying a used car when your car breaks down
- b) buying a new computer on sale
- c) buying a present for your friend's birthday
- d) buying a \$400 candle in a fancy boutique

4. What is NOT a word that means mobile?

- a) moveable
- b) transient
- c) migrant
- d) stationary

5. Which is NOT an example of a party animal?

- a) a person who makes animal noises at parties
- b) a person who loves to dance at parties
- c) a person who loves to drink at parties
- d) a person who is loud and wild at a party

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Do you live in an apartment or a house? Which one do you prefer?
2. In your town or city, is it difficult to find a place to rent? Why or why not?
3. Is housing expensive in your town or city? How so?
4. What is something that you consider freaky? Can you describe it?
5. Would you consider yourself a party animal? Why or why not?
6. Have you ever had money to burn? Did you spend it on something unnecessary or save it?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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