

Chatterbox #233 – Game shows

Episode description

Game shows can be exciting. They can be informative. But, since the invention of the television, they are most of all consistently popular. In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew and Morag talk about popular game shows in North America and who really watches them. Give it a listen!

Fun fact

In this episode, our hosts talk about Bob Barker, who used to be the host of a game show called The Price Is Right. He hosted the show for 35 years! He eventually retired at the age of 83. That's doing a good job!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To take a crack at [something]
- Dumb luck
- To spay/to neuter
- Surface
- A foil
- Outrageous



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 a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Morag: And my name is Morag.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Hey, Morag.

Morag: Hey, Andrew, how's it going?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty well, Morag. How are you?

Morag: I'm all right. Is anything new with you?

Andrew: Yeah, Morag, I wanted to talk to you quickly about coffee, because in one of our recent conversations you mentioned that you have a new coffee hobby. And I also have a new coffee hobby, and I'm curious about if you're into it or not as well. And it is making cold brew coffee. Have you ever tried doing this?

Morag: Oh my god, I love cold brew. I have been waiting for it to get a little bit warmer here in Montreal before starting on the cold brew. It's not so good at zero degrees or -10, -20, but, yeah, when it gets nice and hot, so refreshing.

Andrew: Yeah, I recently read about cold brew because I was a little bit confused about what it really is, and I read that it's much less acidic, so that it's better for your stomach. Like, it's up to 60% less acidic than regular coffee. And it's also much higher in caffeine.

Morag: Yes, it is.

- Andrew: So both of those things made me really excited to try it. So I've been enjoying cold brew coffee. And to make it, I just have to put the coffee grounds into cold water and then I put it into the fridge for 24 hours, then after 24 hours I strain all the coffee grounds out and the remaining coffee is called cold brew coffee. And I've been absolutely loving it, it's my new favourite thing.
- Morag: I think it's really delightful, and you can get a lot of interesting flavours from the coffee because it's been sitting so long. You can taste more, a lot of the time.
- Andrew: Absolutely, and I love how refreshing it is, too. So if any of our listeners out there haven't tried cold brew coffee before, I highly recommend it.
- Morag: If you want to try something a little weird with your cold brew, try mixing it with sparkling water.
- Andrew: I've always wondered what that would taste like. Is it OK?
- Morag: It's very strange. Some people love it, some people don't. When I had it, it made the coffee taste shockingly sweet, as though there were sugar.
- Andrew: Really?
- Morag: Yup. It was very strange. I would make that a next little adventure.
- Andrew: I'll try it out. I'm actually sipping on a lime-flavoured sparkling water right now, but I think I'll try regular, because coffee and lime doesn't sound like a good combination.

All right, Morag, well, let's get into our episode for today. We're going to do a Chatterbox episode and this is where we have a totally natural conversation about an interesting topic and we let all of our listeners listen in to learn about how to talk about these things in English. And today we're gonna talk about game shows. Yay, game shows.

But just before we do that, I want to remind all of our listeners that there is a study guide available for this episode that includes a transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, a quiz, and also some prompts that you can use for journaling or for speaking practice. There's lots of great stuff in the study guide, and we custom make it just for Culips listeners. So if you would like to download the study guide, just visit Culips.com for all the details about how you can do that.

Andrew: All right, Morag, let's get into it. Let's talk about game shows. And I guess the best place to start would be with a definition. I guess if I **took a crack at it**, in a nutshell I'd say it's a TV show, it's a genre of TV show, where people are playing games and competing against each other, usually for money. And a lot of times, a kind of trivia element is involved. So answering questions about, kind of, specialized knowledge or ...

Morag: **Dumb luck.**

Andrew: Yeah, **dumb luck**. There's a lot of games that are based on **dumb luck** as well. And so I thought today we could talk about some of the more popular and famous game shows, and also our favourite game shows. And maybe while we're talking about individual game shows, our listeners will get a better sense of what they actually are.

So, Morag, do you have a favourite game show? Or one that you've watched in the past or maybe even watch now?

Morag: I do have a few favourite game shows now, but they're a whole, kind of, different genre, so maybe we can touch that a little later. One thing that I remember watching all the time as a kid when I was sick was The Price Is Right.

Andrew: Yeah, The Price Is Right.

Morag: I think that might be, in my mind at least, the archetypical game show. You have **dumb luck**, you have guessing prices, you have big, shiny lights and loud sounds and ridiculousness and it's very cheesy.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. The first thing that pops into my mind, too, when I think about game shows is The Price Is Right. I think you're onto something there. Now, to briefly describe this show, it's an American show that's aired in the daytime. I think maybe around 10 or 11 in the morning.

Morag: Yup.

Andrew: So I was only able to watch it as a kid when I was sick and stayed home from school or during the summer vacation time. These are the only two times, because it wasn't on during the weekend. So you can imagine the audience, the audience that would watch the show were a lot of people who were retired, or maybe people who are unemployed or people like housewives that stayed at home and didn't have to go to work. I think this was the main target demographic of the show.

- Andrew: And it was really a show centred around money and shopping. Like, the goal of the show is to win as much money as possible and to do that you have to play these little miniature games where you compete against other players. And they're all centred around shopping, like, or money. For example, maybe they will show you a car and say, "Oh, you can win this car." And you have to guess the price of the car and whatever contestant comes closest to guessing the price of the car, they could win the car. Did I do a good job at describing it?
- Morag: I think you did, that's pretty great. That's pretty spot-on. One thing I would like to note about The Price Is Right, though, is that it seems to have been on air since 1956, no, 1956 to 1965, and then a revamped version started in 1972 and has not stopped.
- Andrew: Wow. So this show's been airing a lot longer than I've been alive, even. I think one thing that's really important to note about The Price Is Right is that it's really iconic, culturally. So almost everybody will know about the show and will know some facts about the show even if you don't watch it, right? Like, for example, the longtime host of the show, his name was Bob Barker, and he's kind of an icon in his own right. Morag, if you think of Bob Barker, is there anything that pops into your head?
- Morag: Yup. So, at the end of every episode, he would, the last thing he would say was, "Remember **to spay and neuter** your pets," just kind of out of nowhere.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Morag: It's a good message, but it's a little strange.
- Andrew: Yeah, so at the close of every episode of The Price Is Right, Bob Barker, the legendary host of the show, would remind the audience that if they were pet owners, they should **spay** or **neuter** their pets, which means to fix the pet so that it can no longer have babies. And I guess this was kind of his personal mission, was to eliminate pets ending up in shelters. So he was an animal lover.
- Morag: Which I think is actually really cool.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Morag: This show probably reached quite a large rural demographic as well, where for a long time, even currently, it's not very common **to spay and neuter** pets and you do get a lot of unwanted cats and dogs. So, I mean, go Bob Barker, that's pretty cool.

- Andrew: And the host of the show currently, because Bob Barker has passed away, is Drew Carey, I believe, who is a comedian. And in the 90s he had his own sitcom.
- Morag: Bob Barker's still alive.
- Andrew: Oh, he's still alive? Really?
- Morag: He is 95 years old, which makes sense as to why he retired, but he is alive.
- Andrew: OK. I'm sorry, Bob Barker, I understood that he had passed away, but I guess not, that's good, he's still around.
- Morag: Yeah, he's impressively old and retired in his 80s. He retired at 83. So, you know, that's still pretty darn impressive.
- Andrew: Absolutely. So, if anybody's curious, I'm sure that if you were to YouTube The Price Is Right, you'll get a lot of fun clips about what the show looks like. It's a pretty entertaining show, so I would recommend to check it out if you haven't seen it before.
- Morag: Definitely.
- Andrew: Another legendary game show host is a Canadian, Alex Trebek, the host of Jeopardy. Morag, have you ever watched Jeopardy before?
- Morag: Oh my, have I ever. I think it's pretty normal for Canadians around yours and my age to have watched Jeopardy and the Wheel of Fortune with their grandparents at some point. There were these two shows, so there's Jeopardy hosted by Alex Trebek, it's a more serious or more educational quiz show, really. It has some difficult questions, it's more of a skill-based thing, knowledge-based thing. And then before that, right before that on TV, there was always the Wheel of Fortune, which is very much more of a chance-based game. It's like playing hangman.
- Andrew: Essentially.
- Morag: But also with a giant wheel.
- Andrew: It's like a souped-up version of hangman.
- Morag: Yeah, with the giant, like, spinner wheel involved. It's for prizes and money and stuff. The two of those, I think, is a very typical thing to have your older grandparents watch every single night. So I think most kids have watched, or most adults have watched that in Canada at least a few times and will associate it with their grandparents.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. My nana, my grandma I called my nana, she always loved to watch Wheel of Fortune. She wasn't too much into Jeopardy, which is kind of funny in retrospect.

Morag: That's quite funny.

Andrew: And my parents now are really into Jeopardy. So if I go to my house, almost every night we watch Jeopardy together. So Wheel of Fortune comes on at 7:00 and then directly after it, Jeopardy starts at 7:30. And so I guess a lot of people that watch it watch it probably while they're eating dinner or right after they eat dinner.

Morag: Yup.

Andrew: These are two really popular game shows, and I have to say that I'm not really a big Wheel of Fortune fan. It's kind of a boring show for me. But I do like Jeopardy.

Morag: I'm with you on that one.

Andrew: Yeah, I prefer trivia and quiz questions, and Jeopardy, the way that the show works, is there's three contestants and they have to select from different categories. So maybe there would be a category like Geography and English Literature and Australian Politics or something like this. It's actually a game they refer to it as, what, the game of answers and questions, because the way that you answer the prompt that they give you is with a question.

So, for example, let's use a Culips example here. For example, if there was a Culips category on Jeopardy and I was the player, and I talked to Alex the game show host and I said "Alex, I would like the Culips category for \$200, please, 200 points." The question might come up and say, "This Culips host was originally from the West Coast of Canada, but now she lives in Montreal." And I'd have to say, "Who is Morag?" I'd have to answer like this, I have to answer with a question. And so it's kind of a unique way that the contestants have to respond to the questions in the show.

Morag: Yeah, it's quite interesting. And I think that if some of our listeners wanted to try watching it, it would be a bit of a challenge but would give you some really interesting vocabulary, some varied vocabulary, yeah.

- Andrew: And if you watch it enough, Jeopardy really isn't too challenging, like the trivia isn't that difficult, and a lot of the same categories come up. Like the Bible comes up all the time, opera and classical music comes up all the time, and you don't really need a huge depth of knowledge about these topics, just a **surface** understanding of them will really help you get a high score in this game. So if you're to watch it a lot, I think then eventually you could become a Jeopardy champion.
- Morag: Goals.
- Andrew: Goals, yeah. All right, so, Morag, at the start of the show, you said that you had some favourite game shows that were a little bit eclectic. Could you quickly tell us what those are? I'm really curious to know.
- Morag: Well, this is actually a pretty good segue from Jeopardy, because my favourite game shows are a type of British show that's actually a quiz show.
- Andrew: Oh, cool.
- Morag: Yeah, so I don't know if you watch or have heard of QI?
- Andrew: No, I haven't.
- Morag: OK, so QI is a show, and it's called Quite Interesting, and it is a game where they have a host and for the first many, many years that host was Stephen Fry.
- Andrew: Oh, OK.
- Morag: Who is a very well known and beloved English actor and presenter. So you have him and you have his sort of **foil** sidekick on the panel, Alan Davies, who's a British celebrity. And then you will have three other contestants, and they are almost always comedians or personalities of some kind. There's usually one semi, more normal person, and then you have essentially four comedians and they'll put up crazy facts and ask seemingly normal questions like, "How many moons are there?"
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: And the answer to that one at one point was two, and I think now it's like 30 or something. So basically they take interesting and strange history and science facts and present them. So the problem with how many moons are there is that what we define as a moon is actually much, much larger than the thing that we call a moon in our sky. So most of them are trick questions, honestly.

Andrew: So they're kind of asking these **outrageous** questions as a way to introduce a topic that they can teach you about?

Morag: That's one part of it, because you learn crazy and fascinating facts. The other part is that it is a free-for-all, completely insane on how to answer them, because you get points not for being correct, although you can get points for being correct, but you also get points for an interesting answer.

Andrew: That sounds fun.

Morag: Or funny. So it's a lot of the time people will make jokes about it and they'll get points if they make a good joke.

Andrew: And is it the host that's giving out the points?

Morag: Yes.

Andrew: Ah, I see. It sounds very entertaining.

Morag: It's all over the place. But you do learn a lot, and it's very British so it's inflected with that kind of humour.

Andrew: Right.

Morag: Also, you do have some strange accents, sometimes.

Andrew: Cool. Well, Morag, I think we'll wrap it up here, because we are running out of time. So just to recap, today we talked about game shows and some of our favourite game shows and iconic game shows, which included The Price Is Right, Wheel of Fortune, Jeopardy, and QI.

And, once again, there is a study guide for this episode available on Culips.com, and our website is also the place where you can listen to our collection of past episodes. So if you're dying to listen to more of us, please just visit Culips.com and you can do that.

As well, we are on all the of the popular social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram. If you search for the Culips English Podcast, you will be sure to find us. And if you'd like to get in touch with us, you can send us a message. We do love to hear from you, just send your email to contact@Culips.com. We'll be back soon with another new episode and we'll talk to you then. Bye.

Morag: Goodbye.

Detailed Explanations

To take a crack at [something]

Idiom

To take a crack at [something] is to try to do something. At the beginning of this episode, Andrew guesses at a definition and says, “I guess if I **took a crack at it**” before saying his answer. Similar expressions are to take a shot or to give it a try.

Here are a couple more examples with **to take a crack at [something]**:

Ethan:	Hey, John. Have you ever played this video game?
John:	What’s it called?
Ethan:	Super Mario Kart.
John:	I’ve heard of it, but I’ve never played. I’m not good at racing games.
Ethan:	You should take a crack at it —it’s so much fun. Here, I’ll show you how to play.

Tina:	Did you get a response for your application to McGill University yet?
Hunter:	I got the letter yesterday. They didn’t accept me.
Tina:	Oh, that’s too bad.
Hunter:	I didn’t think I would get accepted, but at least I took a crack at it .
Tina:	That’s a good way of thinking about it.

Dumb luck

Idiom

Dumb luck is another way of simply saying luck, but it emphasizes the idea that you did nothing to earn that luck. Think of a basketball player who takes a very difficult shot but still gets it in the basket. You can say he is lucky, but the player's years of practice also helped him with the shot. Now think of a player not looking at the ball, and it hits him on the head and goes into the basket. That's **dumb luck**! None of his skill was needed.

Here are a couple more examples with **dumb luck**:

Uriah:	I heard you lost your car keys the other day. Did you find them yet?
Jia:	I did. I'm so happy.
Uriah:	Where did you find them?
Jia:	Funny thing. I looked all over the house and couldn't find them. I was pretty angry, so I went out for a walk. And I found a squirrel in the grass smelling my keys!
Uriah:	What dumb luck ! That's great.

Phan:	Have you ever played this card game? It's called War.
Luke:	I think so. We divide the cards, and then flip them at the same time, right?
Phan:	Yeah. Wanna play?
Luke:	I don't really like that game. There's no skill involved. It's just dumb luck .
Phan:	Then you have a 50/50 chance of winning!

To spay/to neuter

Phrase

“Have your pets **spayed** or **neutered**” was what TV host Bob Barker used to say at the end of every show. **To spay** is to remove the reproductive organs of a female animal. **To neuter** is to remove the reproductive organs of any animal, although most native speakers use **to neuter** for male animals only. Another word for this is to have an animal fixed.

Here are a couple more examples with **to spay/to neuter**:

Rita:	Is this your new cat?
Heather:	Yeah. She’s lovely, isn’t she?
Rita:	I agree. Oh, what’s that scar down there?
Heather:	That scar? We had her spayed a few months ago.
Rita:	Is she OK?
Heather:	She is now.

Kurt:	Will you be coming to the party with your boys?
Mariana:	I don’t know. I’m sorry to say this, but your dog is a little too aggressive for my boys.
Kurt:	I know, I remember. But I had my dog neutered last year. Since then, he’s been very calm. I think your boys will be safe and comfortable around him.
Mariana:	Oh, that’s good. They do love dogs. OK, then, I’ll see you there.

Surface Adjective

In this episode, Andrew talks about only needing some **surface** understanding to answer certain categories of Jeopardy. That means you do not need a great amount of knowledge to answer the questions. **Surface** as an adjective means only a little or only what you can see.

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

Yannick:	Do you want to come to the pub tonight? It's trivia night!
Dean:	Oh, I'm not very good at trivia.
Yannick:	Don't worry, the questions are easy. You only need surface knowledge of general topics. And we'll be in a team.
Dean:	OK—so long as you're not depending on me!

Veronica:	Do you know anything about Travis?
Jill:	Of course. I think he's really nice.
Veronica:	I heard things about him, like how he's way too shy to even talk to for one second.
Jill:	Oh, that's just his surface personality. Once you get to know him, he's super nice. You should definitely talk to him.

A foil

Noun

When talking about the British show QI, Morag says the sidekick acts as **a foil** to the main host. **A foil** is someone who contrasts and complements someone else. Co-hosts with two different styles can be considered **foils** to one another. In movies, the villain is often called the **foil** to the hero.

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

Nick:	I can't believe you're dating Sandra.
Peter:	Why do you say that?
Nick:	Because you're so different. She's outgoing, but you're a little shy.
Peter:	I know, but we make a good team. She's my foil . That's why we're good together. You know how opposites attract, right?

Ben:	Who do you think make the best villain/superhero team in comic books?
Wendy:	Oh, Batman and the Joker, for sure!
Ben:	Really? Why do you think so?
Wendy:	The Joker is the perfect foil for Batman. He's wild, but Batman is more reserved. The Joker has no morality, but Batman is guided by his sense of right and wrong. They're a perfect team.

Outrageous Adjective

Outrageous is another way of saying something is shocking or very unusual. When Andrew talks about the **outrageous** questions on the game show QI, he means they are shocking in a funny way. However, you can also use **outrageous** in a negative way, meaning very bad.

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

Harry:	Did you see the Smiths' son?
Nana:	What about him?
Harry:	He dyed his hair blue.
Nana:	Oh, dear.
Harry:	What would you do if your daughter dyed her hair such an outrageous colour?
Nana:	We would have to go straight back to the hair salon and fix that!

Cynthia:	Are you going to invite Kyle for dinner?
Ollie:	I was thinking about it.
Cynthia:	I really hope you do. He's so funny. The things he says are so outrageous that I can't stop laughing.
Ollie:	He's definitely the life of the party when he shows up. I'll give him a call.

Quiz

- 1. To spay is a verb for female animals. Is to neuter only for male animals?**
 - a) yes
 - b) no

- 2. What does it mean when you take a crack at something?**
 - a) you broke something
 - b) you are repairing a crack in something
 - c) you are making an effort to do something
 - d) you are going to hit something

- 3. True or false? Outrageous is only negative.**
 - a) true
 - b) false

- 4. What is the name of a game show that our hosts did NOT talk about in this episode?**
 - a) The Price Is Right
 - b) IQ
 - c) Wheel of Fortune
 - d) Jeopardy

- 5. Which of the following is the best example of dumb luck?**
 - a) winning the lottery
 - b) getting a hole-in-one playing golf
 - c) dating a very attractive person
 - d) being 1 out of 10 candidates to get the job after the interview

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Which game shows are popular where you live?
2. Which game show is your favourite?
3. Have you ever tried to get on a game show? Do you know anyone who has?
4. Do you think you would do better on a trivia game show, a strategy game show, or a physical game show?
5. Have you ever been on television? What was the occasion?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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