

Chatterbox #242 – New Year extravaganza

Episode description

The end of the calendar year is often a time to reflect on the past year and look ahead to the next. So why not do that while practicing your English skills! In this episode of Chatterbox, Andrew and Jeremy will help you with just that. Join them as they chat about the highlights of their year.

Fun fact

The year 2020 will bring one of the world's greatest sporting events, the Summer Olympics, which will be held in Tokyo for the second time. Be on the lookout for the addition of 3x3 basketball, as well as the reintroduction of baseball and softball as competitive sports!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To reminisce
- To close a chapter
- A toddler
- Trying
- To come to fruition
- To hit the nail on the head



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.

Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And I'm Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Hi, everyone. Welcome back to Culips. Today we're doing a Chatterbox episode. And if you don't know what this is, it is the Culips series where we have completely natural English conversations and we let you listen in. And today I'm joined by Jeremy.

Jeremy, what's up?

Jeremy: Not much, man, we're coming up on the end of the year here. So I'm a little busy, but good.

Andrew: Right on. Yeah, it's the end of the year. And because of that, we need to do our annual Culips wrap-up episode, our New Year's extravaganza where we look back on 2019 and we **reminisce** about some of the highlights, and we also think about the future and look toward 2020 and talk about some of our goals and some of the things that we are anticipating for the new year. So that is what we're going to do here today, everyone.

But just before we get into it, I do want to let you know that there's a study guide for this episode. That includes lots of good things like a transcript, detailed vocabulary, explanations, and examples, some of the interesting or useful slang or idiomatic vocabulary that you'll hear Jeremy and I use today, and many other good things in the study guide, too. So if you want to study with that, and we recommend that you do, just visit our website, Culips.com, and you can do that.

Jeremy: You know, the end of the year is always a time when people reflect on the year past and what they did that year, how it went, and they also start thinking about the next year. So it's sort of a time of transition, **closing one chapter** and opening a new one. And one thing I think is kind of interesting is that next year is 2020. And when someone says that, 2020, what do you think when you hear that word? 2020. What is the first thing you think?

Andrew: Vision. 20/20 vision.

Jeremy: Exactly. Yeah, exactly. So 20/20 vision is what we say in English to mean perfect vision. So if you go to the eye doctor and you get glasses and you get your eyes checked out, they'll give you a number. Some people have bad vision or good vision, and perfect vision is 20/20.

Andrew: Correct.

Jeremy: So I think that next year is going to be a year of perfect vision, hopefully, for us.

Andrew: That's a nice way and an optimistic way to think about 2020. And I certainly hope it pans out that way. It is also the year of the rat, according to the Chinese zodiac calendar, I guess we would say, and I was born in 1984. So I was born in the year of the rat.

Jeremy: Oh.

Andrew: So it's kind of a full circle. And it's also the start and the end of it a decade, right? A decade is a cycle of 10 years. So this doesn't come around too often. So lots of things to look forward to here in the new year. But why don't we start, Jeremy, by looking back on 2019 and reflecting a little bit. I always like to do this. What did you think of this last year? How was it for you?

Jeremy: As a new father, every year is different with your child. So the first year was very difficult because we had a baby in the house. And this past year, we had a **toddler** in the house. So it's ... For those who have kids, they know the difference. One is something that just screams and the other one starts to talk and act like a person, right? So it's been, it's been **trying**, it's been a **trying** year. That's kind of maybe a difficult expression. But **trying** year.

Andrew: A **trying** year, that means difficult, right? **Trying** your patience, perhaps we could also say.

Jeremy: Like I was tested a lot, being tested. Yeah.

Andrew: Right.

Jeremy: So it was a very **trying** year. But I learned a lot about myself, thanks to my son. And I learned a lot about being a better person, I think, being a better father to him.

Andrew: OK.

Jeremy: Yeah. When I look back, that's the biggest thing that jumps out at me. What about you?

Andrew: My year was a year that had a lot of firsts, a lot of new starts. Because at the end of last year, I moved from Gwangju, in the southern part of South Korea, up to Seoul. So I left my old job and started a new job. So it was definitely an adjustment, meeting, you know, a new team. I'm working with a whole bunch of new people, working with new students, have a new apartment, a new neighbourhood. So a lot of firsts, and this happened at the start of the year. So it's almost been a complete year now that I've been in Seoul. Well, so, yeah, a year of adjustment, a year of change for me.

Jeremy: You also ran your first marathon this year, was another first, right?

Andrew: Yeah, yeah. I ran my first marathon this year. And astute Culips listeners or mega Culips fans may remember from this time last year when we did our New Year's extravaganza episode for 2018 that this was one of my goals for 2019, was to run my first marathon. And I did it. So that was awesome.

Jeremy: Good for you, man.

Andrew: Yeah, thank you. It felt really good to be able to cross that off of my bucket list. It was something that I had wanted to do for a while, and I did it. So that's great.

Jeremy, did you make any New Year's resolutions last year? Are you a New Year's resolution maker?

Jeremy: Not as much as some people are, I think, but I actually can't remember. It was probably something to do with my son, though. Just, yeah, being a better dad. And in the first, in the early years, having a kid, you know, you don't get very much sleep, and sometimes that affects your mental stability, your emotional stability. And so there was there was a lot of things that came up for me in 2018 that I had to deal with, personally. And in 2019, as well, there were many of those things, but I don't remember any kind of New Year's resolution in particular.

- Andrew: If I recall correctly, the other New Year's resolution that I made was to not quit studying Korean. So as many of our listeners will know, Jeremy and I, we both study Korean. That's our second language. And I didn't want to put a really specific goal on my Korean studies, because I thought I may disappoint myself. But I didn't want to quit, because that's a sure way to fail, right, is just to quit.
- Jeremy: Definitely.
- Andrew: And so I'm happy that I passed this New Year's resolution, as well. I didn't quit studying Korean this year. I'm still going. So success, success all around.
- Jeremy: Good for you, man.
- Andrew: Yeah. So looking forward to 2020, Jeremy, is there anything that you're anticipating for the next year? Are there any goals that you have for 2020?
- Jeremy: Yeah, I have some goals. Maybe a personal one and more of a lifestyle one. I'd really like to be able to spend a few months in Korea this year.
- Andrew: Yeah. You should come.
- Jeremy: Yup, I'll be hitting you up. So be looking out for that. So I'd like to be able to do that this year. And also I really want to focus on improving my Spanish and my written Korean. So I want to work on my writing and reading ability in Korean. Those are important to me. And I also want to expand my online business and stuff that I do for myself, keep expanding that, not quit. Like you said, to not quit is to expand, right, to not quit is to improve, we could say. So that's kind of what I'm looking at.
- Andrew: In a way, it seems like you're setting the bar really low when you set this goal for yourself just to not quit. But I think it's a really good goal, because perseverance and habit-making are so important. And when you can make good habits for yourself, this is when things start to really **come to fruition**. Again, I'm just going to repeat my goal from last year, again for this year, and that's just not to quit Korean. And of course, you know, you want to see improvement in all of the language skills, but I'm not going to set a specific goal for myself. I'm just gonna keep going and try to study a little bit every day.
- Jeremy: That's good. Do you have a routine? Do you do it at the same time every day or?

Andrew: Yeah, I mean, I go from studying many different types of material. Sometimes I'm really into studying with movies or drama. Sometimes I'm more into reading books and repetitive listening. And sometimes I'll get really heavy into using online tutors and speaking practice. And other times I focus more just on, you know, listening and reading. So it's all over the place. But consistency is the key, no matter what technique I'm using. I have to be doing something. I can't just take a long break, so a little bit every day.

Jeremy: I think you **hit the nail** on the head there when it comes to language learning, or especially language learning, I guess. If you just don't quit, you start doing it every day and then you form a habit. And the habit is what makes change, all changes in our life are all ... Most of us are just a collection of habits. You open the door the same way, you put your shoes on the same way, you know. Those are all habits. You eat with the same hand. You like the same kind of foods, you know. We're very habitual creatures. So I think you've got the right strategy there for guaranteed future success.

Andrew: Jeremy, I feel like you may have read this book, because I've heard you talk about this on your other podcast. The concept of ... I think it's called habit linking?

Jeremy: Habit piggybacking.

Andrew: Piggybacking. Yeah. And there's this book that I read this year called Atomic Habits. Have you read that book at all?

Jeremy: No, I've think I've seen it. I think I saw it in a bookstore. I haven't read it, no.

Andrew: Yeah, it's really interesting, about the power of habits and how habits can be compounding. So if you start forming good habits, the results can be compounding, just like interest is on a loan or something, right?

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: The results can snowball. And this is one of the strengths of habits. And maybe we could save this topic for a different episode, because I think there's a lot that we could say about this. But just to go back to this habit piggybacking or habit linking, you link one behaviour with another behaviour. So for me, this manifests in, like, every time I'm doing the dishes, I'm listening to Korean, or every time I'm sweeping my floor, I'm listening to Korean, right? So you're, like, tying these two things together, and it's been a really useful way for me to study the last year.

Jeremy: And after a few times of doing it, you don't have to think anymore. It's just automatic. You'd be, like, oh, I gotta do the dishes and you start automatically looking for your headphones, you know?

Andrew: Yup.

Jeremy: So that's great. That's what you want. But it's hard to get there. It's not easy.

Andrew: Yeah, it's not. It's not super easy. It's not also that difficult, if you are just a little bit disciplined, but you can't be lazy, right? You gotta really sort of slap yourself on the wrist if you're being lazy.

Jeremy: Yes. I call it ... For me I call it the "no matter what" mindset. You have to be in the mindset no matter what: I'll die if I don't do this, you know? You act like it's life or death. Or you think like it's life or death. And if you have that mindset, then it's a little easier. There's no choice. Right?

Andrew: Right.

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, that's a good way to phrase it. I like that. I'm trying to think if I have any other goals. In terms of running, I think I want to step it up just a little bit. So I did a marathon last year, and it was a good experience. I'm going to try and do another one, maybe one more road marathon, but I'd also like to try an ultramarathon. And for those who don't know what an ultramarathon is, that is anything over 50 kilometres, I think, is classified as an ultramarathon. There are tons of different options. There's some people who I think just have different brains than regular people, different bodies, who like to run like 250-mile marathons or something crazy like this, right? I'm not going to do this. I think I'm going to start small, maybe 50 kilometres. There's a race that I'm looking at in April. That's 50 kilometres, and I may try and do that. And if I don't do it in April, then I'll wait until the fall, maybe do it in October, something like this.

Jeremy: Well, now it's recorded on the podcast, and it's gonna be out there so you better do it.

Andrew: I think that's why I followed through and ran this marathon this year is because last year, I said I was going to do it on the podcast.

Jeremy: So there you go, accountability.

Andrew: Accountability, it works. And so I'm going to put you on the spot, Jeremy, and ask you if you have any goals for 2020? Because maybe if you say them publicly here, you'll be forced to do them.

Jeremy: OK, I have two that I'll put on the record. One is to do yoga every day, specifically to do something called a Sun Salutation or Surya Namaskāras, it's called Sun Salutation. Anyone who does yoga knows that it's like the basic thing that everyone does.

Andrew: Salutation is like a greeting, right? So I imagine this would be kind of greeting the sun in the mornings, a morning yoga routine or something?

Jeremy: Yes, that's the idea. It's probably one of the oldest sequences, and every class has some element of this Sun Salutation in there. Almost every yoga class does, so that's one, do it every day. But, like you said, you know, I don't want to set the bar super high, like 1 hour, 2 hours. I'm just going to do something every day, some sort of yoga sequence every day. Sun Salutations. And the other one is I am going to get the highest level on the TOPIK test, the Korean language ability test. I'm going to get a six this year. Six is the highest.

Andrew: Nice, I like that mindset. Not I'm going to try to: I'm going to. It's all about mindset, right?

Jeremy: I got close a couple years ago. And then I took it again last year, and I got worse than the year before because I didn't study at all. So this year, I'm going to take it more seriously. And next year when we do this, if you and I record this episode together, we'll recap and tell everyone how it goes or how it went.

Andrew: Can I ask why you want to take it? For me, there's no reason to. I understand, like, a lot of people write the IELTS test and the TOEIC test in English because they need it for getting into university or for their job or something like this. There's a lot of reasons why people do standardized tests in English. But there's no incentive for us to do it in Korean. Is it just a personal challenge? Is that why you're going to take it?

Jeremy: Why did you run a marathon?

Andrew: Personal challenge?

Jeremy: That's kind of how it feels. For me, it's a marathon of the mind. It's a very hard test.

Andrew: Yeah, it's not easy.

Jeremy: It gets progressively more and more difficult. The last questions are, you know, a full page of text on some very obscure topic I've never usually seen before. So it's very **trying**. It's a very **trying** test. And for that reason, I want to, you know, flex my Korean muscles a bit and make them stronger. And I don't know, there might be something in the future that I decided to do. And they'll say, oh, you need a TOPIK score for that. And I say, oh, I got one. So, yeah, maybe coming back to Korea and spending more time there hanging out with you and stuff.

Andrew: Good luck with the TOPIK. Let me know how it goes, because I won't be writing it.

Jeremy: Yeah.

Andrew: Oh, maybe, you never know. You never know. Never say never.

And, Jeremy, I think we'll wrap it up here. But before I do, I guess I should talk a little bit about our Culips goals for the new year. So over the course of 2019, we've worked hard to try and make the best study materials for learning English on the internet and to support you and be there right beside you on your English learning journey.

Now, if we look back at 2019, we did some awesome things here at Culips. We added three new series: Speak Easy, which focuses on pronunciation. Jeremy's own series, Jeremy's English Tips, where he teaches you how to learn English efficiently, and my series, The Culips Fluency Files, which is a special bonus for all of our paid Culips members. And we did some live streams on social media, too. And we're planning to do more of those soon, as well, so stay tuned for that. We also added Kassy to the Culips team, and we'll be meeting her often next year, too. We added a lot of awesome upgrades to our website, Culips.com, to make it a user-friendly and exciting place to study English. And, finally, this year we produced more English lessons and more episodes than we ever have in one single year. So this was truly a groundbreaking year for us here at Culips.

Thanks to all of you who have listened and studied with us in 2019, and a huge, massive thank-you to all of our paid Culips members who supported us this year. Without you, Culips wouldn't exist. So thank you, thank you, thank you. Everyone, we've got big plans for 2020. And we hope you'll be there with us as we roll out some great new content that will help you get awesome at speaking English.

We'll leave it here for now. Happy New Year, everyone, and talk to you in 2020.

Jeremy: Happy New Year, everyone. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To reminisce Verb

In this episode, Andrew and Jeremy **reminisce** about the past year. That means they are speaking together of past memories. These are also happy memories. **To reminisce** is to share their happy memories, usually by speaking, but also by writing.

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

Darren:	Don't you just love Christmas?
Jody:	It's just all right. I know you love it. Why is that?
Darren:	I don't get to see my family very much. So it's nice to get together and reminisce .
Jody:	That's right. You live far away from them. I see why you love the holidays.

Patsy:	Your old high school buddy Jimmy said he will be coming over tonight.
William:	Oh, cool.
Patsy:	Whenever he swings by, you guys end up talking for hours and hours. What do you talk about?
William:	Mostly about the good old days. He really likes to reminisce about all the good times we had in high school. We did a lot of crazy things!

To close a chapter

Idiom

In this episode, Jeremy talks about how going into a new year is like **closing a chapter**. This is a common expression to use when talking about a period of time that is ending. Think of reading a book, finishing a chapter, then closing the book. That section of the book is finished. The next time you open that book, you will open it to a new chapter.

Here are a couple more examples with **to close a chapter**:

Inez:	How has John been lately? I haven't seen him in a while.
Gerry:	He's really good, actually.
Inez:	That's nice to hear. I remember he used to have a drinking problem.
Gerry:	He's closed that chapter in his life now. That's probably why you haven't seen him out.

Caroline:	I heard you're finally moving out of that small apartment.
Scott:	That's right. I didn't like it very much.
Caroline:	How come you're moving now?
Scott:	As you might have heard, I got a great new job. So now I can afford to live in a nicer place.
Caroline:	You must be very happy.
Scott:	Of course! But I find it a little sad to be closing that chapter in my life. The apartment was terrible, but I still have fond memories from living there.

A toddler

Noun

A toddler is a child, generally between the ages of 12 to 36 months. As Jeremy mentions, his **toddler** is going through major changes, such as talking instead of merely screaming like when he was younger. The word comes from the verb to toddle, which means to walk unsteadily. The **toddler** period is usually when children begin to walk and talk.

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

Kerry:	Is that a new scar on your forehead? I don't recall ever seeing it before.
Walter:	Oh, I've had this scar ever since I was a toddler .
Kerry:	Really? That's crazy. What happened?
Walter:	When I was starting to walk, I hit my head on the corner of the kitchen table.
Kerry:	Ouch!

Pierre:	How old is your little boy now?
Ruby:	He's nearly 20 months.
Pierre:	Oh, really? My girl just turned 14 months.
Ruby:	That's great. How do you like having a toddler ?
Pierre:	It's a lot different now. She's walking and talking. It's a handful. And you?
Ruby:	Same thing. It just gets more exciting from here!

Trying Adjective

In this episode, Jeremy says that this past year was a **trying** time. That means it was difficult for him. He had to try harder than before, in his case, because he was a new father. A common verb form of this is to try one's patience, meaning to test one's ability to remain calm and not lose one's patience.

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

Kay:	I just wanted to say, I think you're a really upbeat person.
Luann:	Oh, thanks!
Kay:	Do people tell you that?
Luann:	Some people do, actually. It's nice to hear.
Kay:	Have you always been like that?
Luann:	Not really. My teenage years were a trying time for me. But once I became an adult, everything got better.

Charles:	Are you ready for the hike this weekend?
Tristan:	Kind of.
Charles:	What do you mean?
Tristan:	I'm a little worried. It was a really trying hike the last time.
Charles:	Don't worry. It's easier the second time around now that you know the course.

To come to fruition

Idiom

When a plan **comes to fruition**, it has been realized. In this episode, Andrew talks about how having good habits will make your plans **come to fruition**. This is a very positive expression about accomplishing your goals.

Here are a couple more examples with **to come to fruition**:

Roberto:	Did you just buy a new truck?
Jeff:	Yeah, but it's not mine. It's the company's.
Roberto:	Wow, you always wanted to buy a truck for the company. You finally did it!
Jeff:	Yes. It's been a long time coming. My plans are finally coming to fruition . I'm very grateful the company is doing well these days.

Willa:	Do you have any plans for next year?
Christiane:	A few, actually. I was thinking of going to Peru for an expedition. But before that, I'm going to study Spanish. These have long been goals of mine.
Willa:	That sounds great. I hope your dreams come to fruition next year.
Christiane:	Thanks! How about you?
Willa:	In fact, I have similar goals. I dream of learning German and travelling to Germany!

To hit the nail on the head

Idiom

To hit the nail on the head is to say something exactly correct. In this episode, Andrew says the most important thing for him to improve his Korean is to not take breaks from studying. Jeremy responds by saying Andrew **hit the nail on the head**. He means that Andrew perfectly describes what is important in studying. The expression comes from hammering a nail. You have to hit the nail on a precise spot, the head, to go a good job. If you don't, watch out for your fingers!

Here are a couple more examples with **to hit the nail on the head**:

Bev:	Did you hear David is going to be working on the project with us?
Quentin:	Oh, no.
Bev:	Yeah, I'm not thrilled about that either. There's something about him that I don't like, but I can't pinpoint it.
Quentin:	Me too. I think it's because when he works in a team, he becomes very bossy.
Bev:	That's it! You hit the nail on the head . He is a little too pushy when working in a group.

Harry:	Wow, Nadia, you look happy. Anything new in your life?
Nadia:	Thanks! I just changed a few minor things, and now things are much better.
Harry:	Really? What kind of changes did you make?
Nadia:	Well, I was talking with a friend and she told me I stressed out too much over small things. She was right. She really hit the nail over the head with that one. Since then, I've taken a lighter approach to my work and my relationships.

Quiz

1. When plans come to fruition, is that generally a positive or negative thing?

- a) positive
- b) negative

2. Which of the following is NOT a good example of to reminisce?

- a) talking with friends about your amazing trip to Florida
- b) talking with friends about the time you broke your arm
- c) writing to a friend about your favourite holiday memories
- d) talking with friends about the best pizza you've ever eaten

3. True or false? You can say the expression to open a new chapter.

- a) true
- b) false

4. Between Andrew and Jeremy, which of the following is NOT a goal for the upcoming year?

- a) improving their Korean
- b) running an ultramarathon
- c) moving to a new city
- d) doing yoga every morning

5. Who is NOT a toddler?

- a) Pete is 2.5 years old.
- b) Tommy is 33 months old.
- c) Mary is 4 years old.
- d) John is 12 months old.

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are some of the goals you want to achieve in the upcoming year?
2. What are some ways that you follow through and achieve your goals?
3. How high do you set the bar when making New Year's resolutions? Are you the type of person who says, "This year I will speak perfect English!" Or are you the type who says you just want to improve a little?
4. Who do you like to reminisce with?
5. Do you believe in closing chapters in life, or is it one long story?
6. What is a trying time in your life that still affects you?
7. Can you remember being a toddler?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Jeremy Brinkerhoff

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free, *Let It Go* by Scott Dugdale

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Matty Warnock

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: Jude Beck (Unsplash.com)