

## Chatterbox #243 – Coronavirus

### Episode description

The outbreak of viral diseases is something to be taken seriously. The new coronavirus affecting China, and soon after many other countries, is a cause for concern for everyone. In this Chatterbox episode, hosts Andrew and Jeremy talk about the sensitive topic of this new outbreak and how to discuss it in English.

### Interesting fact

It might not seem like much, but one of the best methods of prevention when it comes to infectious diseases is the simple act of washing your hands. Be sure to scrub up frequently throughout the day!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To prime [someone]
- To spring up
- An angle
- Out of [one's] mind
- To get worked up
- Epidemic/pandemic



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## Transcript

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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.

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**Suzanne:** Hey, everyone, it's Suzanne, and coming soon to Culips, I'll be starting a brand-new series called Suzanne's Quick Tips. In this series, I'll share some great tips and tricks that will help you become a better English speaker. I'll cover lots of different topics like pronunciation and clear speaking, my specialty, as well as presentation skills and some interview skills. Sometimes I may even share an interview with a friend. This series will be perfect for intermediate and advanced learners who want to improve their English for everyday, business, and academic situations. So keep your ears open for Suzanne's Quick Tips by the Culips English Podcast, and we'll see you very soon.

**Andrew:** Hey, everyone, my name is Andrew.

**Jeremy:** And this is Jeremy.

**Andrew:** And you're listening to Culips.

**Andrew:** Hello, everyone. Welcome back to another Chatterbox episode. Guys, if you don't know what Chatterbox is, it is the Culips series where we have completely natural English conversations and we don't really adjust our speaking too much at all. We use natural expressions and speak at a normal speaking pace and we let you listen in. And today, I'm joined by Jeremy. Jeremy, hello.

**Jeremy:** Hello there.

**Andrew:** Jeremy, we're going to talk today about the coronavirus. It's a big deal right now and people all over the world are talking about it. So, I thought we should talk about it too here on Culips because I think, you know, it's an interesting way to study English, right? To study English with a current news event that you are following a lot in your native language. So, for example, if you are in Korea or Japan, you're probably hearing about this story a lot on your local news channels in your native language. And now you can use that knowledge that you already have about the subject to study English, as well. So, I think this is a cool way to study.

**Jeremy:** I think it's very helpful to have some background knowledge about the content that you are, are listening to or reading when you're learning a second language, because you can sort of fill in the gaps. When there are things that you don't understand, you can guess what that part of the video or podcast or book means, because you have that background information.

**Andrew:** Totally. And I like to do that when I study Korean, too. I find the news pretty difficult still to understand in Korea, but what helps me first is **priming myself** with an English article about the same topic and then reading about it in Korean. I find it easier to understand after I do that.

**Jeremy:** Me too.

**Andrew:** So as I said, we're going to talk about the coronavirus today. But just before we do that, I want to let everyone know that there's a study guide available on our website for this episode. Our website is Culips.com and, if you visit the website, you can download the study guide. I think it's one of the best ways to study with Culips, and the guide is jam-packed with a lot of awesome material that will help you get the most out of this episode. So just visit Culips.com to download the study guide.

**Andrew:** So basically, Jeremy, recently, I guess maybe it was in late December or early January, a new kind of virus **sprung up** in the city of Wuhan, in China. And this virus is called a coronavirus and I think you have some information about why it's called a coronavirus.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I thought it was very strange when I first heard the name because I know, in Spanish, the word corona means crown.

**Andrew:** Right.

**Jeremy:** So, like, a crown on a king's head or something like that. So I thought maybe it was because the virus affected your head and it felt like a head cold or something like that. But I looked it up, and I guess it's called a coronavirus because the actual virus, under a microscope, looks like a crown.

**Andrew:** So, when you take this virus and you put it under a microscope, it looks like a crown, hence the name coronavirus.

**Jeremy:** And a coronavirus is a type of viruses or a family of viruses. The Wuhan coronavirus is one version of a coronavirus. So, there have been others in the past.

**Andrew:** Right. And when you catch this virus, the symptoms that you experience are very similar to a cold and flu. However, it can become more serious than that. And, well, we have hundreds of people that have passed away from this virus now, and thousands of people worldwide are infected. and the troubling thing or the thing that many people are worried about right now is this spreading even more than it has already. And it's been getting a lot of media coverage. And I think that's what we'll focus on today is not so much about the symptoms or the origins or preventing a viral outbreak like this, but it's more about what we've heard in the media, and the reactions of the people where we live, because, Jeremy, you're living in the USA in California, and I'm here in Korea much closer to China. So I thought it would be cool to compare the, the reactions that different people are having in different corners of the world.

**Jeremy:** Yes, and we are not scientists, so we can't speak very, very intellectually on this topic. So.

**Andrew:** That's another reason why we're going to take this **angle**, yeah. So, let's get into it. What's the, what's the media coverage like in California? Have you heard people on the radio or on TV talking about this story?

**Jeremy:** Well, as I have mentioned on this podcast before, I interact with a lot of Korean people here in California, so I heard about this virus from Korean people. And, specifically, my father-in-law has been really following it very closely, so he has told me a lot more detailed information about the virus and how many people are infected. But I heard that there was a, a fake news story in this area saying that there were three people who got infected at a hospital nearby, very close to my house, actually. And my father-in-law works across the street from this hospital, so he was very worried.

**Andrew:** Wow, yeah.

**Jeremy:** And then it, it came to light that this news story was fake. It was fake news. So.

**Andrew:** Fake news, oh man! That's, that's a really bad fake news story to have spreading around.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, that, that kind of thing is very dangerous to, to spread around like that.

**Andrew:** We have an expression that's used a lot when you have this kind of scary situation and that is mass hysteria.

**Jeremy:** Mass hysteria.

**Andrew:** Mass hysteria: when a lot of people panic at the same time, right? The details are unclear, but everybody kind of freaks out. We call this mass hysteria. So a fake news story like that could kind of cause mass hysteria, cause many people to panic or become really frightened at the same time.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, hysteria is the state of being very stressed and scared and kind of **out of your mind**. Crazy, almost.

**Andrew:** Right, acting irrational.

**Jeremy:** Irrational.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah.

**Jeremy:** So, what's the media coverage like over there in Korea?

**Andrew:** It's really getting a lot of coverage. It's really, really heavily covered right now. It's a top story in the news every day.

**Jeremy:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** And lots of people are talking about it. I think, as of this morning—guys, today in Korea is February the 6th, so probably by the time this episode comes out, it will be a week or two later—but, as of today, February the 6th, there are 19 confirmed cases here in Korea. And it's, it's a big deal. People are wearing masks and it's just—a lot of concern here, to be honest with you.

**Jeremy:** Are you personally very worried about it? Do you get worried about these kinds of things, normally?

**Andrew:** Normally? No. But this time is a little bit different. I don't know if it's just being so close to the virus that is causing me to be a little bit more aware than I usually am.

**Jeremy:** So normally you're not the type of person **to get worked up** about something like this?

**Andrew:** Normally, I'm not the type of person **to get worked up**, exactly, to get, you know, stressed out, but it is really close to where I live. There's been a confirmed case, right in my neighbourhood. I live, for people that are familiar with Seoul, I live near SungShin YeoDae University, SungShin Woman's University, and there was a confirmed case in this neighbourhood. And the person that caught the virus had been just going around the neighbourhood, going to the supermarket where I shop, going to the local movie theatre.

**Jeremy:** Oh my gosh!

**Andrew:** Going to the Diaso that I shop at, the kind of the dollar store in, in Korea. So, um, this has caused me to be a little bit more concerned than I usually am, because I've heard that this virus is dormant in people and that the symptoms don't show for somewhere between 4 to 10 days. Scientists are a little bit unclear about how long it takes to develop. But this means that, you know, people could be walking around thinking that they're totally fine, but really, they're carrying the virus. They're hosts for the virus. So, you know, yeah, I'm a little bit more concerned than I usually would be. And because of this, I'm wearing a mask when I leave my house. And I'm really, really being cautious to wash my hands often. I'm, I'm washing my hands like crazy and try not to touch my face. I've become conscious of how often I touch my face during the day. And it's crazy. And so I'm trying to break this habit.

**Jeremy:** Your skin looks great, so.

**Andrew:** Thank you, Jeremy. Maybe that's an unintended but welcome side effect.

**Jeremy:** Yes, we can say that, I guess. So how worried are you about **epidemics**?

**Andrew:** **Epidemics.** That's a great word that maybe we should explain. Jeremy, I know you are always interested in the roots of words. And I think it can be helpful for English learners to know about these roots, so.

**Jeremy:** Yes.

**Andrew:** This is a, a word that's of Greek origin, originally, and the root epi.

**Jeremy:** E-p-i.

**Andrew:** Yeah, e-p-i means up or upon.

**Jeremy:** I think probably the most familiar word to our listeners would be episode and it is epi-sode because each episode is about or on some topic.

**Andrew:** Right, exactly, and you'll hear me use the word episode in almost every Culips episode.

**Jeremy:** Episode.

**Andrew:** So epi means up or upon and demos means people. And probably people are familiar with the word democracy, right?

**Jeremy:** Or, or demographic, same word.

**Andrew:** Exactly. So, if you have this word, if we put the two roots together, **epidemic**, then you have a word that means a kind of spread to people, right? So, an **epidemic** is when an infectious disease spreads to many people in a very quick amount of time, in a very short amount of time.

**Jeremy:** So, there's another word that's similar. I wonder how it relates to this, because I've heard it before. The other word is **pandemic**. What is a **pandemic**?

**Andrew:** We have that same Greek root demos, which means people, and we also have the prefix pan. OK? So you have pan, which means all. So **pandemic** means all people. So a **pandemic** is when an infectious virus or disease spreads to many people in many countries across the world. And I think we could consider coronavirus a **pandemic** because it has now spread to many countries across the world, and it's spreading very rapidly to many people.

**Jeremy:** So, the difference between **epidemic** and **pandemic** is that **epidemic** spreads to many people quickly, so it has an element of speed in there, whereas **pandemic** is talking about how widely it has spread.

**Andrew:** That is exactly right. I think that's the key difference.



**Jeremy:** Like panorama. For those who know the word panorama, it's a long picture, kind of meaning a picture of everything, or all of the things that are there. So, to pan.

**Andrew:** Yeah, we also use the word pan when we're talking about music, right? You can pan an audio signal from your left speaker to your right speaker.

**Jeremy:** Oh, yeah.

**Andrew:** So, Jeremy, I talked a little bit about how I've changed some of my habits and routines temporarily while this virus is happening, so I make sure that I don't catch it. In your neck of the woods, I guess it's not as serious, so you probably haven't changed your lifestyle at all, or have you? Have you done anything different?

**Jeremy:** Not really. I think that in Korea, I know this because I lived there, it is more common that you're in an area with lots of people, sharing the same air, sharing the same space, like a subway or a bus. But here, everyone drives their own car. And if I walk on the street, I'm usually pretty far from the next person.

**Andrew:** Right.

**Jeremy:** So, I'm not too worried about it. I haven't changed much in my daily life. I don't see people wearing masks. But I did hear that we should avoid buffets, and large public places like that. So a buffet, everyone is eating the same food, breathing over the food, and things like that, but I don't know how true that is.

**Andrew:** Right.

**Jeremy:** So to answer your question, no, I haven't changed much about my daily life, but I am thinking about it. I am thinking about the, the virus.

**Andrew:** Let's hope that things calm down pretty soon and you don't have to get to the point where you're wearing a mask when you go outside, because it's quite uncomfortable. And, and to be honest with you, it's weird the kind of mental changes that happen when something like this is occurring. All of the sudden, I'm a little suspicious of the people in my neighbourhood. If I see somebody that's not wearing a mask, or if I see somebody cough, then I get worried and I move away from that person. And I also get a little bit angry, like, why aren't you wearing a mask right now? Don't you know what's happening? Or like, how can you be coughing in public like—

**Jeremy:** That's my air. Stop coughing into my air.

**Andrew:** I don't like that I'm thinking this way. But this is the kind of context that we're living in here in Korea right now, where somebody that's, you know, walking around with a cold and it's probably not related at all to the coronavirus, but it's, it's making me a little bit resentful and a little bit suspicious. And it's probably a little bit of this mass hysteria that I was talking about earlier. But it's real, I am feeling it.

**Jeremy:** So, we would like to hear if you have anything that you'd like to share. Perhaps there are some changes in your neck of the woods that have resulted from this **epidemic**, or **pandemic**, I guess we should say.

**Andrew:** I'm really interested to see what the reaction is like worldwide, because we have listeners from every corner of the world. And I have a gut feeling, Jeremy, that the farther away that we are from the epicentre of this outbreak—here we have that epi again, so epicentre is the origin or the centre of, of something like an earthquake or a viral outbreak like this. So, the epicentre is Wuhan, and I think the farther you get away from that city in China, probably the less coverage there is in the media and the less hysteria there is.

**Jeremy:** I think that would probably be true, but I think we'll have to ask our listeners to see what they have to say.

**Andrew:** So, guys, please send us an email and let us know what the situation on the ground is like where you live. Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com) and we would love to hear from you. As well, you can visit us on social media. We are everywhere on social media, on Twitter, on Facebook, on Instagram, and on YouTube. We're probably most active these days on YouTube and Instagram. So if you'd like to stay up to date with all of the news here at Culips, please follow us on social media and you can do that.

**Andrew:** I think that's it for us for now. We'll be back soon with another Culips episode and we'll talk to you then stay safe everyone and goodbye.

**Jeremy:** Bye, everyone.



## Detailed Explanations

### To prime [someone]

Phrasal verb

**To prime [someone]** is to get that person ready for something. In this episode, Andrew says he often reads a news article in English as preparation for reading an article on the same topic in Korean. In doing this, he is **priming himself**.

You can also **prime someone else**. A coach can give his team an inspirational speech before the game in order **to prime them**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to prime [someone]**:

**Herman:** Are you ready for the test at 1:00?

**Robert:** For sure. I've never felt better.

**Herman:** Yeah, you look so relaxed.

**Robert:** I am. I spent the morning **priming myself**, listening to some soothing Mozart. You should try it next time.

**Herman:** Maybe. Tell what score you get on the test first!

**Nadine:** Wow, the home team really is starting the game strong.

**Anita:** They usually do.

**Nadine:** Really? How come?

**Anita:** Their coach always give them a rousing speech in the locker room before the game. It really **primes them** up.

## To spring up

Phrasal verb

In this episode, Andrew and Jeremy talk about the new coronavirus that **sprung up** in Wuhan. **To spring up** is to suddenly come into existence, just as plants come back to life during the spring season in many countries. Another use of this verb is to say an idea just **sprang** into your head. You say this when you suddenly thought of something.

Here are a couple more examples with **to spring up**:

**Alberta:** Do you have a coffee shop called Fred's Beans in this city?

**Dustin:** I don't think so. I've never heard of it. Why?

**Alberta:** Oh, because they're everywhere in my hometown. I heard the company is looking to expand.

**Dustin:** Is it any good?

**Alberta:** Pretty good—and cheap. Trust me, soon enough there will be Fred's Beans **springing up** on every street corner in this city. You should invest!

**Shawn:** Hey, Cynthia, I really like the poster you made for our party on the weekend.

**Cynthia:** Thanks.

**Shawn:** How did you come up with that interesting design?

**Cynthia:** Actually, I fell asleep in front of the television. Then I woke up with a start, and the entire design **sprang up** in my head.

**Shawn:** Nice job. Do you remember what you were watching? I'd like some of that to rub off on me!

## An angle

Noun

In this episode, Andrew and Jeremy mention that they are not very qualified to talk about the science behind the new coronavirus. Instead, they decide to talk about the media coverage of the virus. That is their **angle**. In this sense, **an angle** is a way of approaching a subject. They're choosing the way they want to cover it. For example, if you are writing an opinion paper, you need to take a certain **angle** that represents your opinion.

Here are a couple more examples with **an angle**:

**Desiree:** I want to talk to you about the Mackenzie project. How's it going?

**Ray:** Good. We've been working on it for a week now.

**Desiree:** What **angle** did you decide to take regarding marketing?

**Ray:** We were thinking of investing in internet advertisement. That might better reach our intended public.

**June:** What are you working on these days?

**Claire:** I'm writing an opinion piece for the local newspaper on public schools versus private schools.

**June:** Oh, that's interesting. What's your **angle**?

**Claire:** I'm taking the position that funding private schools takes money away from the public school system.

**June:** You know you might get some backlash from that, right?

**Claire:** Yeah.

**June:** OK. Good luck!

## Out of [one's] mind

### Idiom

In this episode, our hosts talk about the mass hysteria that occurs when viruses spread and how people can go **out of their minds**. If you are **out of your mind**, you are not thinking rationally. You might make decisions that are different from those you would make when you are less emotional and are thinking straight.

**Out of [one's] mind** is also another way you can call someone crazy. It's usually in the form of a question, as in, "Are you **out of your mind**?" But you should be careful using this expression. Not a lot of people like being called crazy, even if it is a joke!

Here are a couple more examples with **out of [one's] mind**:

**Simon:** Did you manage to buy that new video game console for your children?

**Daisy:** No way. I went to the store, but so many people went there for the very same thing.

**Simon:** Was there a lineup outside the store?

**Daisy:** Not even. When the doors opened, everyone ran to the display and grabbed one. It was as if everyone was **out of their minds**!

**Simon:** That sounds chaotic. Did you get hurt?

**Daisy:** Luckily, no. But I did come back empty-handed.

**Tracy:** How was the party last night?

**Neal:** Don't ask.

**Tracy:** Why not?

**Neal:** I drank too much.

**Tracy:** Again?

**Neal:** Yeah. But this time I was completely **out of my mind**.

**Tracy:** I think it's time for you to take a little break from partying for a while.

## To get worked up

### Phrasal verb

**To get worked up** is to become upset or very excited about something. In this episode, Andrew says he isn't normally the type of person **to get worked up** by the spread of some virus that he has such a small chance of catching. That means it doesn't usually bother him or stress him out.

This phrasal verb can be positive or negative. You can **get worked up** before watching your favourite TV show or you can **get so worked up** about your exam the next day that you can't sleep. It is also common to include the word all, as in **to get all worked up**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get worked up**:

**Sam:** Have you spoken to Dean today?

**Eileen:** Not yet. Why do you ask?

**Sam:** He wouldn't shut up about the change in the company's vacation policy.

**Eileen:** Really? There's barely anything different.

**Sam:** He doesn't seem to think so.

**Eileen:** Oh, never mind him. He always **gets all worked up** about nothing. Just ignore him.

**Sandra:** Are you ready for your driver's test?

**Hugo:** I'm thinking of postponing it.

**Sandra:** How come? You've waited so long to write this test.

**Hugo:** I know, I know. But I **got all worked up** yesterday so that I barely got any sleep. I'm so tired right now, I'm afraid I won't be able to concentrate.

## Epidemic/pandemic

Noun

An **epidemic** is a problem that started in one place and grew out of control. A **pandemic** is when the **epidemic** spreads throughout an entire country or even the whole world. This new coronavirus was considered an **epidemic** when it started in Wuhan and was only in that region. However, once the virus spread throughout China and then to multiple other countries throughout the world, it became a **pandemic**.

Although **epidemic** and **pandemic** are usually used when talking about diseases, you can also use them informally. You can say there is a rat **epidemic** in your city or a laziness **epidemic** in your classroom.

Here are a couple more examples with **epidemic/pandemic**:

**Malcolm:** Are you worried about this Wuhan coronavirus?

**Rafael:** Not really.

**Malcolm:** Why not? It's starting to spread into other countries.

**Rafael:** I know, but there are measures put in place to try to prevent it from being a serious worldwide **pandemic**, like the influenza 100 years ago. That killed about 50 million people.

**Malcolm:** I hope you're right. It's pretty scary.

**Claire:** I'm heading to New York for the summer. Do you have any suggestions of things I should do?

**Joan:** Yeah. Don't go!

**Claire:** What? You love New York.

**Joan:** I used to. But I read recently that there's an **epidemic** of bedbugs in the city's hotels.

**Claire:** That's a bit overblown. Every city has some bedbugs, but I don't think it's any worse over there.

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## Quiz

1. Why is Andrew more concerned about this viral outbreak than previous ones?

- a) he's older now
- b) he's closer to the epicentre
- c) people don't wear masks
- d) he doesn't drive a car

2. True or false? **Epidemic** refers to an increase, often sudden, in the number of cases of a disease above what is normally expected in that population in that area.

**Pandemic** refers to an epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people.

- a) true
- b) false

3. If you are taking an angle on something, you are \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) receiving an opinion
- b) taking measurements
- c) doing math
- d) approaching it a certain way

4. True or false? Mass hysteria is a time when many people are out of their minds.

- a) true
- b) false



## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Do you find reactions to the epidemic have been overblown?
2. How has this recent outbreak affected your life?
3. What measures are people taking in your city?
4. Do you think we should start closing international borders if the problem gets out of hand?
5. How do you think the outbreak of disease affects the economy?

## Quiz Answers

1. b   2. a   3. d   4. a

### Episode credits

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