

Chatterbox #265 – Movies that have had an impact on society

Episode description

Grab your popcorn and get comfortable. Listen as Andrew and Kassy talk about a few of the movies that changed how people think and that inspired a whole generation.

In this episode, you'll hear how two native English speakers talk about the movies. Listening to conversations about everyday topics is one of the best ways to learn English. You'll improve your grammar and language skills and be entertained at the same time. How cool! This episode is perfect for intermediate level English learners who want to be fluent.

Fun fact

The average person goes to the cinema about five times a year (according to UNESCO data from 2015). And, recent statistics from Netflix show that people watch on average two hours of streaming video content – like movies – per day.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Housekeeping
- Valley girl
- Out of sight, out of mind
- To put [oneself] in [someone else's] shoes
- To be open [about something]
- To scratch the surface



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. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hello there, everyone. My name's Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Hello there, friends. Welcome back to Culips. This is Chatterbox, the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners, that features natural, unedited conversations between native speakers about compelling topics, trending current events, or even a hot issue. And today, I am joined by my co-host Kassy. Hey there, Kassy. How's it going?

Kassy: I'm doing great. And I'm excited to talk about our episode today, which is about TV shows and movies that had a big influence or impact on our society.

Andrew: Sounds good. And listeners, there's a transcript and study guide available for this episode for all Culips members. And following along with a study guide while you listen is the best way to study with this episode. And by becoming a Culips member, you'll support us and keep allowing us to make English lessons for people all over the world. There are also a bunch of other extras that you get when you become a member. It's really quite awesome. So to become a member and get the study guide, just visit Culips.com.

Kassy: And before we start the episode, we would like to give a shout-out to Eshin, who left us a five-star rating and a positive review on Apple podcasts. Eshin wrote, "This is my first podcast review. I'm from China, and I listened to your podcast whenever I drive alone or do my weekend chores. You are doing a great job. And you guys really helped me a lot. I couldn't really understand English back in 2019. But it started to make sense to me more and more while listening to your podcast. And now I can even type this message in English. I appreciate it. And I love you guys."

Andrew: That is really wonderful to hear, Eshin. We are so happy that you left us that nice comment. And we're really happy actually as well that we can help you to improve your English and by the sound of your writing, you're doing a great job. And everyone leaving a positive review and a five-star rating on Apple podcasts or wherever you listen to your podcasts helps us a ton and we'd really appreciate it if you could do that. Leaving just a short review even a couple of words only and a five-star rating really helps English learners all around the world find Culips and study with us.

OK, Kassy, I think all of the **housekeeping** is out of the way. And now we can get started with our main topic, which is movies and TV shows that have had a big impact on society. So when you suggested this topic, Kassy, you told me a story about the movie Legally Blonde. And I was hoping that we could start by getting you to tell the story to all of our listeners as well.

Kassy: Yeah, definitely. So, Legally Blonde was an iconic movie from the early 2000s. And it was about a blonde sorority girl who was all about like fashion and boys and parties. And you know, everybody kind of thought she was a ditzy airhead.

Andrew: A ditzy airhead. What does that mean, a ditzy airhead?

Kassy: An airhead is someone who is kind of dumb, like literally there's no brain between your ears, just air.

Andrew: Just air, empty space.

Kassy: Yes. And ditzy is used to describe you know, like a young, cute girl who, I don't know, twists her hair and make silly comments.

Andrew: Kind of a superficial person that doesn't really think deeply about too many things.

Kassy: Exactly. But she broke that stereotype when her college boyfriend broke up with her because he was going to Harvard Law School and said that she wasn't good enough for someone like him.

Andrew: OK, so she felt rejected by her boyfriend when he dumped her to move on to seemingly bigger and better things, like Harvard Law School.

Kassy: Yes. And he needed a girlfriend who was more serious like him. Well, she proved him wrong by not only getting into Harvard Law, but kicking butt and becoming the valedictorian of her class.

Andrew: OK, so it sounds like she likes a challenge. Like she was rejected by her boyfriend, who said you'll never amount to anything. I need to date a woman that's on my level. You're just some ditzy airhead. Maybe he didn't actually say that, but that was kind of the message she received, right? So she turned that into the motivation that she needed to get to the top of the class and graduate from Harvard Law School as a top lawyer.

Kassy: Exactly, yeah. And the reason why this movie is so influential is because it showed young girls out there that they can, you know, achieve their dreams. And they don't have to be like, serious, or wear only black or act manly. They can be both feminine and powerful, which is such a great message.

Andrew: Yeah, and one of the ways that this movie impacted society is that now, like, this movie came out 15-20 years ago, and now we are seeing the new class of lawyers who are graduating, are all crediting this movie for why they decided to become lawyers, right? There are tons of new women lawyers that have just graduated. And when interviewed and asked, why did you decide to become a lawyer, many of them point to Legally Blonde, and say it was because of this movie that I wanted to be a lawyer. So there's where we see a big impact on society.

Kassy: Yeah, it's really cool.

Andrew: Kassy, when you first saw this movie, did you ever have a thought or two about becoming a lawyer?

Kassy: I didn't. But like her, I also have blonde hair, not as blonde as hers. But I've been called, you know, a ditzy blonde before.

Andrew: OK.

Kassy: And she made me feel like yeah, I can be a little bit ditzy, but also smart and strong.

Andrew: Right. Your hair colour doesn't necessarily influence who you are as a person or your personality. It's just a hair colour.

Kassy: Yes.

Andrew: Maybe we should talk about that stereotype here, Kassy, very quickly before we move on, because it is kind of a cultural stereotype in English-speaking countries, about the dumb blonde, and maybe because you are a blonde, you could explain it to us. What is this stereotype mean? Could you break it down?

Kassy: Yeah, it's pretty simple. It's just there is a running joke that girls with long blonde hair are kind of **Valley girls**. They don't take anything seriously. They care more about makeup and clothes and boys than anything else.

Andrew: Has the dumb blonde stereotype ever affected your life? Has anybody ever underestimated you just by looking at your hair colour and thinking that maybe you're not very intelligent? When in fact, I know that you majored in physics and science in university. So you're the opposite. You're very intelligent. But has anyone ever underestimated you?

Kassy: I don't think I've had anybody underestimate me, like, at a professional level. But when I tell people that my major was physics, a lot of them, you know, their eyes get big and they go whoa, really, you? And I'm like, yes, me.

Andrew: OK, so maybe people are not consciously thinking of that stereotype. But it's maybe in there a little bit. And when they hear this about you, they think wow, OK, I wasn't expecting that. Interesting. Well, anyways, Kassy I'm glad that it hasn't really affected you too much, this stereotype. But we should keep moving on with our main topic for today, which, of course, is these monumental movies or TV shows that have affected society in some way or another. And I have a couple of fun examples here to share with everyone. And these examples are about two animal movies, maybe the most famous animal movies. Well, they're up there, top 10 for sure. So they are Bambi and Jaws. So Jaws is the Steven Spielberg movie that is about a shark attack. And Bambi is an animated movie from Disney that came out way back in the 1940s, 1942, if you can believe it. That's even older than my parents. So, it's an old movie about a family of deers, right? And the baby deer is named Bambi. And unfortunately in the movie, Bambi's mother is shot and killed by a hunter. So following the release of these two movies, two interesting trends emerged. And that was that when Bambi came out, the very next year, deer hunting dropped by 50% in the USA. I was pretty shocked to hear that fact. Do you think it's a coincidence, Kassy, or was it a direct result of the movie's release?

Kassy: You know, it's hard for me to imagine that this had such a result because Bambi was an animation, which I usually associate with children or their moms. But hunters I usually associate as like big, burly men with beards. I wouldn't consider them as being like, highly affected by a children's movie, but who knows?

Andrew: There's a big word in English. It's a long word, and it's even hard for me to pronounce sometimes. And that word is anthropomorphization. Anthropomorphization. Wow, that is a mouthful. And so this word means to attribute human qualities. That is where the anthro comes from. That root word means human, like anthropology is the study of humans. And anthropomorphization is giving some non-human thing human qualities. And that's what we see in Bambi, right? It's like, we are putting these human emotions onto deers, which don't think and feel in the same way that we do. And so maybe it was because of this that hunting dropped. I'm not sure, it could be the case. But we also have to consider that this movie was released in the middle of World War Two. So I was thinking that maybe all of those hunters just went and fought in the war. And that's why there were fewer deers killed that year. I'm not sure, but could be the case.

Kassy: I kind of lean more towards the war explanation. But you know.

Andrew: So the other example that I was talking about was Jaws. And obviously, Jaws was a bit of a scary movie. When it was first released, it spooked many people. And because of that movie, many people are afraid of sharks and shark attacks. And following its release, tourism on both coasts of the USA, so the Pacific coast and the Atlantic coast dropped by a significant amount. So people decided to visit the mountains, I guess, instead of go to the beach, after the release of Jaws, and it's thought that the reason for this drop is, in fact, Jaws.

Kassy: Yeah, there's a really famous expression, which is **out of sight, out of mind**. So we don't really think about sharks that much on a day to day basis. But you know, in that movie, that's all you think about, [Jaws theme song sound]. Like, it was such a powerful, scary movie. And even though it's a rare occurrence to get attacked by a shark, it really, you know, it was right there in front of people's minds that year, I'm sure.

Andrew: Yeah, yeah, for sure. And another way that movies and TV shows have had a huge impact on society is over the last 20 or 30 years in North America and the emergence of LGBT rights. And there were many movies and TV shows that were influential in helping, I guess, maybe Americans and Canadians that didn't directly know a homosexual person, to help humanize them and bring them into their homes. We could see gay characters on TV and realize that they're just humans like everyone. And actually, President Joe Biden had something to say about a sitcom that aired on NBC, an American TV network, from 1998 to 2006. That TV show was called Will and Grace. And that shows about two friends, one of them is straight, and one of them is gay. And Joe Biden had this to say about that show. He said, quote, unquote, "That Will and Grace probably did more to educate the American public on LGBT issues than almost anything anybody has ever done so far." And I think he's probably right about that. I actually didn't watch this TV show. But I know that it did have a big impact in the gay rights movements in North America.

Kassy: Yeah, I think Will and Grace was one of the most famous TV shows of their time. Brokeback Mountain, which showed a gay love story, was super iconic. And I think more recently, Glee. Glee was a show that was really influential in the young adult community.

Andrew: Another young adult show, and this is a Canadian show, so Canadians are always a little bit proud of this show to be honest, because there are not too many famous Canadian TV shows. We have lots of famous actors and comedians from Canada, but not too many famous TV shows. But Kassy, have you ever seen Degrassi Junior High? Or do you know about the Degrassi TV series?

Kassy: I've seen a couple. I know there are hundreds of episodes.

Andrew: There's actually two series. There's the original series that came out probably in the 80s and 90s. And then there was Degrassi: The Next Generation, which came out when I was a high school student, I suppose. So maybe in the early 2000s, but both are high school series. So they feature a cast of different high school characters. But that series really kind of deals with literally every single problem teenagers could possibly face. There are characters from all different types of backgrounds that appear in the show, all races, different languages, different family situations. There are immigrant stories. There are stories about sexuality, disabilities, bullying, divorce, everything. And I think this show was just, again, pretty helpful in sort of normalizing real human issues, and sharing different types of stories that you don't usually see on TV. And at least for people of my generation, this show was really influential, and I think really helps spread a good message in Canada. I'm not sure if it was as big in the USA, but I think it had a large impact down there as well.

Kassy: I can't agree more. Shows like Degrassi or Glee or those, you know, they introduced to kids the importance of inclusivity and you know, **putting yourself in someone else's shoes**. Of course, there's still bullying nowadays, that's never gonna go away. But I think kids are **a lot more open about things** that they were not when I was in school or when you were in school.

Andrew: Yeah, yeah, for sure. I completely agree. And Kassy, you know the rapper Drake, right?

Kassy: Of course. Yes.

Andrew: Yeah. Did you know Drake got his start in the Degrassi series?

Kassy: I did not. That is interesting.

Andrew: He plays a character named Jimmy, and he was in a wheelchair. Yeah, so you can watch some early Degrassi shows and see Drake as Jimmy in a wheelchair. Very interesting start, now that he's this like world famous mega superstar rapper.

Kassy: Yes. Hot shot.

Andrew: One of his songs actually says started at the bottom. And I guess that was Drake's bottom, the Degrassi TV series.

Kassy: Feel like he should be more, what's the word, grateful for that opportunity?

Andrew: Yeah, I think he's probably grateful for it.

Anyway, Kassy, I think that's a good place to end this episode. It was really interesting to talk with you about these monumental movies. And I'm sure that we only **scratched the surface**. There are probably numerous examples of different movies and TV shows, books and different types of media that have had a huge impact on society in different ways. So listeners, if you can think of an example of this, then we'd love for you to let us know. You could send us an email. Our address is contact@Culips.com. And if you enjoy listening to the Culips English Podcast, and if you find us helpful, or educational, or even just fun to listen to, then we would really appreciate your support. And there are many different ways that you can support us, such as signing up and becoming a Culips member on our website Culips.com. This is the best way to support us, actually. It really helps us to keep making high quality English lessons for everyone. And when you become a member, you do get full unlimited access to our study guide library, as well as awesome other bonuses, like exclusive access to our Fluency File series, and a monthly invitation to our member only live streams. But that's not the only way you can support us. You could also follow us on social media, leave a five-star rating and nice review on Apple podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts, or just by simply telling one of your friends who is studying English

to check us out. So that is it for us for now, but of course we will be back soon with another brand new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then. Take care everyone and goodbye.

Kassy: See ya.

Detailed Explanations

Housekeeping

Noun

Housekeeping means to do necessary things first before you can get to something else. It usually refers to routine tasks you complete regularly and are not the main purpose of your work. Checking your emails before starting a project or taking attendance before a meeting are good examples of **housekeeping**.

All Culips episodes start with a little bit of **housekeeping**. For example, this episode started with Andrew and Kassy thanking a listener for leaving a review.

Housekeeping is also the general maintenance of a computer's storage. When you do some **housekeeping** on a computer, you could be removing old files and documents, making a backup, or running a security check.

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

Nora: Hello everyone. Thank you all for coming to today's meeting. We're here to discuss the cafeteria issue raised by a few parents last week. So I think we can get right to this.

Vik: Wait. I have a few things I need to confirm with the staff.

Nora: Ah, of course. Vikram, come on up. Everyone, let's get through this little bit of **housekeeping** as quickly as possible. Then we will start the meeting.

Ren: Do you have an update on the latest project for me?

Lotte: Not yet.

Ren: What? Why's it taking so long?

Lotte: I'm still sorting through all my emails. I got a lot of them overnight. Once I'm done, I'll send you the project update. OK?

Ren: Alright, fine. Finish up your **housekeeping** and call when you're ready. I'll come back.

Valley girl

Noun

A **Valley girl** is a stereotype for a spoiled girl or young woman who acts a bit dumb. **Valley girls** are often worried about their appearances. They usually have name brand clothing and accessories and are often seen at the mall.

These girls are also often blonde, which is why dumb blonde is also often used to describe them. **Valley girls** have a unique way of speaking, called Valleyspeak. They say “like”, “oh my gosh/god”, “totally” and “whatever” a lot and will raise the pitch of their voice at the end of every sentence or thought.

This is a stereotype used usually for white American females from upper-middle-class families. This stereotype first appeared in the 1980s to describe girls from the San Fernando Valley in California, U.S. Many American movies from the 80s and 90s have at least one **Valley girl** character, if not several. The main character from the movie Clueless is perhaps the most iconic representation of a **Valley girl**.

Here are a couple more examples with **Valley girl**:

Kelly: I need a new outfit for the party next weekend. Want to come with me and help me find one?

Tae: Don't you already have a closet full of clothes? Don't tell me you're turning into a **Valley girl**.

Kelly: I can turn into one if that'd convince you to come with me.

Tae: It might.

Kelly: Oh my god, like, all my clothes are so last season! You, like, totally need to come to the mall with me tonight.

Tae: That was creepy. I'll go with you as long as you promise to never do that again!

Madison: Ugh! I can't believe Scott. He told me I talk like a **Valley girl**.

Kyra: What? No way! What a jerk.

Madison: I know. I totally just replied, like, whatever! I will not be picking up the next time he calls.

Out of sight, out of mind Idiom

Out of sight, out of mind means to forget about something or someone when it is no longer visible. It is easy to forget about someone if you have lost touch with them.

Out of sight, out of mind can also be said of things. For example, let's say you bought some snacks and put them away at the back of the kitchen cupboard. Because you couldn't see them there, you forget about them until finding them again a week later. They were **out of sight, out of mind**.

Infants are often affected by this idea of **out of sight, out of mind**. This is why playing a game of peek-a-boo with them is fun and easy.

Here are a couple more examples with **out of sight, out of mind**:

Min: Rowan emailed me. She said you haven't given her any details on her accommodations for when she comes next month.

Sam: Yes, I know. I haven't had a chance to look over everything.

Min: Well, why not? She needs that information.

Sam: And I'll get it to her. I have so many other things on my to-do list at the moment. For now she's **out of sight, out of mind**.

Jamie: Did you have a chance to follow-up with the manager about that overstock in the warehouse?

Basa: I'm bringing it up at our weekly meeting tomorrow.

Jamie: It's weird that he hasn't given us an answer yet.

Basa: Not really. He hasn't been to the warehouse in months, so he hasn't seen the piles of stock there. **Out of sight, out of mind**, and all that.

To put [oneself] in [someone else's] shoes Idiom

To put [oneself] in [someone else's] shoes means to imagine how you would feel or act if you were in the same situation as someone else. When you **put yourself in someone's shoes**, you're trying to understand and empathize with their perspective, opinion, or point of view.

This expression is figurative. You're not actually putting on someone's shoes, you're just imagining what you would do if you were in their situation. Doing this allows you to see a situation from a different perspective.

Here are a couple more examples with **to put [oneself] in [someone else's] shoes**:

Mark: Why were you so rude to Deborah yesterday?

Beth: You know why.

Mark: I think you're overreacting.

Beth: Overreacting? **Put yourself in my shoes** for one moment, Mark. She insulted me to my face. And she didn't even apologize! I think I have a right to be a little rude.

Mark: Well, I don't think it's worth ruining a perfectly good relationship.

Beth: I don't need people like her as friends. And that's that.

Jungho: This is your first retail sales job, isn't it?

Chaewon: Am I so bad at it that you can tell right away?

Jungho: Not bad, just inexperienced. You're going about your sales pitch all wrong.

Chaewon: What do you mean?

Jungho: Well, instead of trying to sell them on the accessories right away, you need to find out what they're looking for. **Put yourself in the customer's shoes.** Talk about the things they need and want, before you even get to the price.

Chaewon: Okay. I'll try that. Thanks!

To be open [about something]

Phrasal verb

To be open [about something] means to talk about your personal feelings and experiences. Someone who is open will share all the details and information about what they're doing and feeling. You can also say **to open up**.

In this episode, Kassy mentions that she thinks kids are a lot more **open about things** than they were when she was in school. This means, kids are more likely to tell each other and their loved ones whenever something is bothering them or whatever other issues they're facing.

Open and honest are often used as synonyms, but they aren't exactly the same. When someone is open, they are also being honest. Though someone who is honest isn't always open.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be open [about something]**:

Bell: I've been counselling this one family for weeks now, and they're all still very secretive.

Pino: Oh, man. That's tough. I had a family like that once. It took months to get them **to open up** to me.

Bell: Yikes. That's a lot of time and effort to just start working on a problem. I hope my clients will feel comfortable with me soon. I just want to help, you know?

Pino: I know. And you are helping, I'm sure of it.

Ray: I need to talk to you.

Todd: Uh oh. What's wrong?

Ray: I need to be completely **open with you about your cooking**.

Todd: OK?

Ray: It's not very good. Whenever you cook, the food is always somehow both raw and burned at the same time.

Todd: I know. I'm sorry. I'm trying my hardest.

Ray: And I appreciate that. But I'm going to do the cooking from now on.

To scratch the surface

Idiom

To scratch the surface means to deal with only a small part of a subject or problem. This might be a brief investigation that doesn't really do much to get to solve the problem, or it could be a conversation that only covers a small part of the topic. You can also say **to scrape the surface**.

In this episode, Andrew and Kassy are only able **to scratch the surface** of movies that have had a huge impact on society. This means that they aren't able to talk about all the iconic movies ever made.

Here are a couple more examples with **to scratch the surface**:

Patty: Well, the donation drive is over, finally. How did we do?

Irene: We didn't meet the target. Unfortunately, the amount we raised is hardly going **to scratch the surface** of the repairs we need to do to keep the building standing.

Patty: Damn. I guess we'll have to do another one right away.

Irene: We'll have to change our message though. I don't think this one worked very well.

Patty: OK, I'll schedule a brainstorming session for tomorrow afternoon. Are you free then?

Irene: Yeah. I'll be there.

Yusuf: Have you seen that ghost hunters documentary on Netflix?

Rod: Nope. That's all a load of baloney. There's no such thing as ghosts.

Yusuf: What? How can you say that?

Rod: You're kidding? You believe in ghosts?

Yusuf: You bet I do. Research has only **scratched the surface** of the paranormal. The ghost hunters have totally found places where ghosts are active, and I'm going to go visit them as soon as I can!

Quiz

1. What does it mean to be open about something?

- a) the door to your house is never locked
- b) you never talk about that topic
- c) you always lie
- d) you share all your thoughts and feelings on the subject

2. If you make an effort to understand another person's feelings and thoughts, you are _____.

- a) putting yourself in their clothes
- b) putting yourself in their shoes
- c) putting yourself in their house
- d) putting yourself in their shirt

3. Which of the following means to talk about only a small part of a topic?

- a) to scratch the surface
- b) to carve the surface
- c) to scratch the table
- d) to wipe the surface

4. When Sue gets to her office, she has to check in with her colleagues, organize her projects, and answer her emails before she can start working. What is she's doing?

- a) gardening
- b) laundry
- c) housekeeping
- d) woodworking

5. If something is out of sight, out of mind, that means you will _____.

- a) be blind and forgetful
- b) imagine seeing it
- c) always remember it
- d) forget about it

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are the housekeeping tasks you need to do every day at work?
2. Describe the last time something was out of sight, out of mind for you.
3. Describe a time when you put yourself in someone else's shoes to better understand them.
4. Would you describe yourself as an open person? Why or why not?
5. In this episode, Kassy and Andrew only scratched the surface of impactful movies. What is a movie you think has had the biggest impact on pop culture?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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