

## Chatterbox #271 – Meet Anna, the new Culips cohost!

### Episode description

With a heavy heart, Andrew announces that frequent cohost Jeremy is leaving the Culips team. However, it's a great time to introduce the new Culips host, Anna! She is from the United Kingdom and currently lives in Spain. Anna is a teacher and even has her own podcast. We hope you follow her new Culips journey with us!

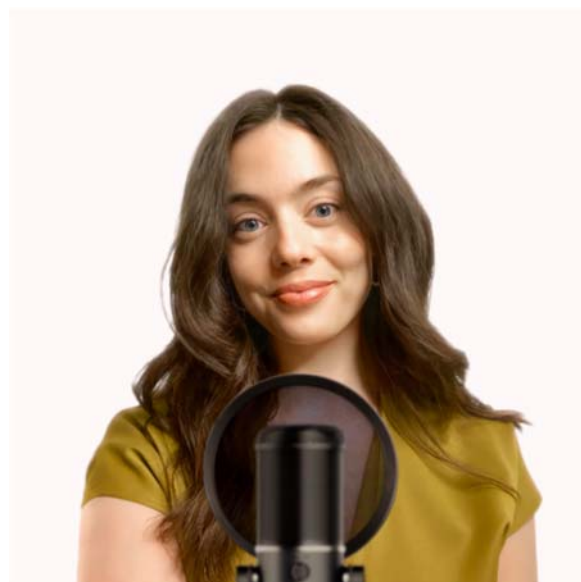
Chatterbox is a series for intermediate and advanced English learners. The conversations feature natural, unedited speech between native English speakers. Give it a listen!

### Fun fact

Although Anna mentions a few less-than-attractive aspects of her hometown, Didcot, one can always find a positive thing to mention. For example, popular English band Radiohead recorded many of their most famous songs in Didcot. That's something to be proud of!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Bittersweet
- Heavy heart
- To step back
- Residential
- Eyesore
- To stumble into [something]



---

## 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:** Hey, everyone, it's Andrew here. And you're listening to the Culips English Podcast.

Hey, friends. Welcome back to Culips. How's it going? I hope you're doing well. This is a Chatterbox episode. Now, Chatterbox is a series for intermediate and advanced English learners that features natural, unedited English conversations between native speakers.

Well, everyone, we have a **bittersweet** start to this episode. And that's because I have some good news and some bad news to share with you. What would you like to hear first, the good or the bad?

How about we start with the bad? With a **heavy heart**, I have to announce that Jeremy is going to be taking a break from cohosting with me on Culips. He's been a wonderful part of our team for several years now and we're going to miss them a ton. Jeremy has decided to focus on his family and raising his young son, and we totally support him in this. In the future, we hope Jeremy can join us again. But for now, let's all wish Jeremy good luck going forward with all of his future endeavors. And let's pass on a big thank you to him for all the great work that he has done here with us at Culips. Thank you so much, Jeremy.

So that's a bummer, everyone, I know. But I did say there was good news, didn't I? Well, let's get to it.

The good news is that I'm very happy to announce that we've added a new member to our hosting team. Her name is Anna, and she's originally from the UK, but is now living in Spain. Now, Anna's a passionate language learner and a fantastic English teacher. And she even has her own podcast dedicated to teaching business English called Anna with 2Ns. Anna's really fun, and I know you're all going to love her. Plus, she'll be a great addition to our team, since she's from the UK and is an expert about UK English and the culture of the UK.

So we're really happy to welcome Anna to the team. In this episode, you'll get to meet Anna and learn a bit more about her. And we'll get to that conversation in just a moment. But before we do, though, I want to tell you about the study guide for this episode. It's available for all Culips members on our website, [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com). Inside the guide, you'll find a full transcript, detailed descriptions and examples of the key vocabulary from this episode, a quiz, and more. We highly recommend following along with the study guide while you listen to this episode. And to become a Culips member and get the study guide, just visit [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com). And now let's get started with this episode.

Hey, Anna. Hello, welcome to Culips. How are you?

**Anna:** I'm really good. Thank you.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So, listeners, Anna is going to be our new Culips cohost. We're so excited to have her join the Culips team. And in this episode, we are going to talk with Anna to get to know a little bit about her, what she does, where she's from, all of these interesting things. And some of our very keen listeners may have already noticed, Anna, that you speak a little bit differently than I do. So maybe that's a good place to start, is with your accent and where you're from. So could you tell all of our listeners about where you're from and where you grew up?

**Anna:** Sure. Well, lovely to be here. Thank you for the lovely introduction, Andrew. Well, yes, you've made a good observation, I don't have the same accent as you. I was born in—well, I actually have an interesting story, I was born in Scotland. Most people will probably say, "But you don't have a Scottish accent." I was born in Scotland, but I grew up in England.

**Andrew:** OK, interesting.

**Anna:** Yes, I grew up in a small town, which I'm sure nobody has heard of, but I'm going to say it anyway, just to give a shout-out to my hometown. I was born in in a town called Didcot, which is in Oxfordshire, which is in the south of England. So I grew up in England and I also have lived in Liverpool as well, which is in the north of England.

**Andrew:** Home of the Beatles.

**Anna:** Home of the Beatles. And it really is an amazing, an amazing city. I really, I love that place. I lived there for actually about 7 or 8 years. So I studied there and then I decided to do the typical thing. I love the city, it was just an amazing time I spent there and I decided to live there and work there once I graduated. And then now, I actually live in Madrid, in Spain.

**Andrew:** Oh, OK. Very interesting. So, Anna, we share some things in common because my Mom is from Scotland. My Mom is Scottish.

**Anna:** Oh, really?

**Andrew:** So on my mother's side, I have some connection to that country. And I'm also living abroad, in Korea. So we share that in common, that we're both living overseas away from home. And I think that's pretty cool.

Now, I wanted **to step back** just a second to go back to your hometown. You said the name was Didcot. Is that correct, Didcot?

**Anna:** Yes.

**Andrew:** Could you tell us about this place? Is it like a small village? You're right, I've never heard about it. So I'm curious, what kind of a place is it?

**Anna:** OK, so Didcot is your typical town. It's not a village. It's a little bit bigger than a village. And Didcot is about 45 minutes from London. So if I could describe it, it's a **residential** town. It's where people live. It's a modern town, it's not an old town, there's no culture. It's not like Oxford, for example, which is our closest city. But actually a lot of people live there and then they commute into London. So we're famous for two things. Number one, the train station. And number two, there used to be, but now it's been demolished, a power station, which had a huge building and super ugly and a huge **eyesore**, but that's what we were famous for. And, actually, it has been named as one of England's crappiest towns.

**Andrew:** Really?

**Anna:** Yes. Which I think is completely unfair. Of course, I'm slightly biased. So that's a summary of the Didcot. I'm sure nobody wants to go and visit it now after listening to that. But that's some fun facts.

**Andrew:** So there's two famous places, the train station and the old power station. Why is the train station famous? Is it beautiful? Is the architecture nice or something like that?

**Anna:** No, no, absolutely not. It's been a famous railway station for many years and it has a famous rail line that connects, for example, London to Bristol. So it's a very old rail line. And a lot of people know the town only because the train from London to Bristol stops in Didcot. So it's kind of famous for being a train stop between London and other places in the west of England. So that's why it's famous. But yes, I mean, really nothing. Nothing very exciting. But I've got to make it sound, you know, at least somewhat interesting.

**Andrew:** Yeah, you gotta represent your hometown.

**Anna:** Gotta represent, exactly.

**Andrew:** Can't throw it under the bus. So it's interesting that it's only 45 minutes away from London. I imagine that you visited the city quite often then.

**Anna:** Yeah, by train, it's 45 minutes by train. And, yes, I did visit London a lot. And it was great, because you could go in at the weekend, and you could go to the theatre and you could explore the city. But surprisingly, I don't really know London very well. I've never lived there. London is really a different place. I often think of London as almost another country. And I think, I think maybe that's the thing with other big cities, they have such a different identity, such a diverse identity that perhaps it's not a reflection of everywhere in the UK. But London is a really special place, like you feel special when you go to London, like you feel like you're in the middle of this huge, global city. It's really special going there.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. And I agree with you. I think in Canada, too, my country, the difference between kind of smaller towns that are outside of the city centres and then the big cities, there's a different vibe, a different feeling, different energy. And, yeah, it almost does feel like you're in a totally different country. For sure.

**Anna:** It feels like you're in a film sometimes because you recognize some of these places that you see in movies, on TV. And you recognize all of these places, and it's just—for me, as I've never lived there, it still has that special feeling. And I really enjoy, I really enjoy going there. I can't wait to go and visit it again. Hopefully I can go this summer.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So you're, you're living in Spain, but that's not too far to go back home. Just a couple hour flights, I would imagine. So do you go back and visit the UK often?

**Anna:** I have to say, not that much. I think the last time I went back was in 2019, the Christmas of 2019. Obviously, there's been other things that have been going on. And obviously, that's meant that I haven't been able to go back as frequently. But I don't actually get that homesick, I have to say.

**Andrew:** That's good.

**Anna:** I'm not the sort of person that misses places. Does that make sense? If I'm not, if I'm not in a place, I don't miss it. So I do try and visit and, actually, now is the only time that I've really felt I really want to go back to the UK, go back to my country, see my friends, see my family, because there is something, you know, different about being in another country. And sometimes you just want to go home and just be around people that speak the same language or speak in the same way or—it's relaxing to be around people like that, so.

**Andrew:** Yeah, sure, I think everybody can identify with that feeling that it's nice to be around people who have the same kind of experiences as you, grew up in the same places, went to the same schools, etc, etc.

So, let's see, let's get to know you a little bit more, Anna, what about your hobbies? What do you like to do in your free time or for fun?

**Anna:** Well, I work a lot. I actually work 6 days a week teaching, so I have very little free time. But in the free time that I have, I love to go hiking, which I've really rediscovered in the past few years, because in Madrid, a lot of people don't know this, but Madrid is actually surrounded by mountains. And there's some beautiful trails and routes that you can do around Madrid. So I love hiking. I love reading, although I need to do it more. People always say that, but I need to do it more.

And I like to do my own things. I'm very much an introverted person, even though people don't think that. I'm a little bit of an enigma in that way. People think I'm very extroverted, but I'm actually quite an introverted person. And I like to spend time on my own. I like to explore. I like to go to museums. I'm just quite a quiet person, really. Again, I'm trying to make this sound interesting, but I have, I really, I really like hiking. I think that's probably one of my, one of my biggest hobbies that I really, really love.

**Andrew:** Hiking. Yeah, yeah, it feels awesome.

**Anna:** Yeah, being in nature.

**Andrew:** To get outside, to get into nature. Absolutely. That's great. So you mentioned you were a teacher. And since this is a podcast that is kind of an education podcast, we should talk about teaching a little bit. What do you teach?

**Anna:** So I teach English, and I teach business English, primarily to professionals and people who are working in English or need to work in English. Obviously, I'm based in Madrid. So I teach, mainly but not always, Spanish speakers. Well, I should say speakers of Castellano because Spanish is not Spanish, it's Castellano.

**Andrew:** Right.

**Anna:** So primarily speakers of Castellano into English. And I teach, as I said, professionals, people who need English for work. And I help them reach their goals and feel comfortable and confident speaking English at work, which is a really challenging task for many people, many, many people who need English for their jobs. It's a difficult topic, and I love it. I really, really enjoy teaching business English. It's my passion, teaching business English.

**Andrew:** Awesome. And you have a background in business, as well.

**Anna:** Yes. So before I was a teacher, I think this is the interesting part about me is that before I came to Spain, I wasn't a teacher. So I worked in project management. I worked in health care. I worked in an NGO. And one of my first jobs, well, my first job when I graduated university, I was working in banking.

So I've had a really, really varied career since I graduated, which I love and I think helps me to be a better teacher because I know what students need. You know, I can imagine being in those kind of work situations or work scenarios, and I feel I'm able to give them much better guidance and advice based on my previous professional experience.

So, yeah, I haven't always been a teacher. And that can be a common story for a lot of people teaching English abroad, but it seemed like a natural fit for me. I'd never, ever planned to be a teacher, never. But I joined a company and they gave me really intense training, and actually kind of just **stumbled across this profession**, which I did really well in. And I really enjoyed, which is kind of the dream, right?

**Andrew:** Yeah, **stumble into a career** and it's a good fit. Go with it. Yeah.

**Anna:** It just really fit my personality and what I wanted to do, so I would, yeah, and I've been doing that ever since I came here.

**Andrew:** Fantastic. And good news for our listeners, especially our listeners who are learning English for business reasons, because they need it for their job or for future career prospects or something like that. Anna, you have a podcast, as well, that is dedicated to teaching business English for people who want to learn it to improve their careers. So could you tell us a little bit about your podcast?

**Anna:** My podcast is called Anna with 2Ns.

**Andrew:** Anna with 2Ns.

**Anna:** Anna with 2Ns. Yes. Let me explain. So when I first arrived in Spain, there are many people called Anna. OK, Anna is a very common name in Spain, not as much in the UK, but Anna is super common in Spain. So one of the ways that I would differentiate myself with my colleagues, what I would say, oh, I'm Anna with two Ns. So it was one of the ways that I used to differentiate myself from other Annas.

**Andrew:** That's because Annas in Spain spell their name A-N-A. But your name is spelled A-N-N-A?

**Anna:** Exactly.

**Andrew:** Gotcha.

**Anna:** So, yeah, it was a way to just distinguish between different Annas, essentially. But it was catchy. And I was thinking about a name. I should mention, as well, before I did the podcast, I did radio. So I had a radio show, an English radio show. And I said, well, I'm going to call it Anna with 2Ns, because it's catchy. It's a little bit weird, which is what I wanted, I wanted a weird name so that people would be like, oh, Anna with 2Ns. So I chose that name for my radio show. And then I carried that across to my podcast.

And the podcast is really, it's 10 minutes, or just over 10 minutes, because I rarely just keep it to 10 minutes. It's, it's normally 13 or 14 minutes. And in each episode, I talk about a business English topic. So I talk about different pieces of vocabulary. I'll talk about how to use different grammar points in a business context. For example, the second conditional. I'll talk about many different things, but business English topics and mistakes that my students make, as well, and questions that my students ask me inspire me a lot for those episodes. And, yeah, I've been doing it for just over a year now. So lots of episodes in there, and I release episodes every week.



**Andrew:** Awesome. So how can our listeners find it if they want to check it out? Do you have a website? Or can they just search on Apple Podcasts for Anna with 2Ns? Or I know you have an Instagram as well, maybe you could let everybody know where to find you on the internet?

**Anna:** So you can find the podcast if you search on any of the major platforms by typing in Anna with 2Ns. I'm on Apple Podcasts, Spotify, iVoox as well, which is another platform which is quite popular in Spain. And, yes, you can find me on Instagram. I post other interesting business English tips, which you might find useful. And you can find me on Instagram at anna2nsenglish.

**Andrew:** Perfect. And when they're spelling out the podcast name, is it spelled T-W-O or is it the number 2 that they want to type in?

**Anna:** Oh, no, the number 2. Thank you. That's a good point. Yes, Anna with 2Ns, the number 2 not T-O-O. Good point. That could avoid some confusion.

**Andrew:** Yeah, just to save everybody a couple of searches trying to find it. There's too many twos in English, aren't there? There's three or four of them.

**Anna:** There's loads.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Anyway, Anna, we're so excited to have you as a member of the Culips team. Welcome again. And in the next several episodes, we're going to get to know you a little bit more by talking about what life is like in the UK, what life is like in Spain, and also about your experiences as a language teacher and language learner in a bit more detail.

**Anna:** OK, that sounds great. I'm really excited and I look forward to seeing you all in the next few episodes.

**Andrew:** Well, that wraps up the first episode with our new cohost, Anna. Isn't she great? I'm really excited for all the upcoming content that Anna and I are planning to make for all of our listeners.

Don't forget to grab the study guide for this episode on our website, Culips.com. And if you like Culips and learn a lot with us, please support us. You can do that by following us on social media, telling your friends about us, and leaving us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts.

Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com). We love hearing from you and read all of the emails we get as soon as they arrive. But sometimes it takes us a bit to respond and we do reply as soon as we can.

That's it for now. But we'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.



## Detailed Explanations

### Bittersweet Adjective

At the very beginning of this episode, Andrew says that there is good news and bad news to announce. The episode starts on a **bittersweet** note. If something is **bittersweet**, you are experiencing some sadness and some happiness at the same time. In this case, the sad news is that Jeremy is leaving the podcast. The happy news is both because Andrew wishes Jeremy well and because Andrew gets to introduce a new member to the Culips team, Anna.

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

**Mark:** Did you watch the game last night?

**Wes:** Yeah. It was pretty interesting. But I'd also say it was **bittersweet**.

**Mark:** Why do you say that?

**Wes:** On the one hand, it's great that our team won, but our captain got injured at the end of the game. That's not good in the long run.

**Kelly:** I heard your parents came to visit you.

**Dave:** Yes, they did.

**Kelly:** How was it?

**Dave:** It was a lot of fun, but also **bittersweet**.

**Kelly:** Why was it **bittersweet**?

**Dave:** Because I know I probably won't see them for another few years. I'm a little sad about that.

## Heavy heart Idiom

In speaking of Jeremy's departure from the Culips team, Andrew says that this news comes with a **heavy heart**. If you have a **heavy heart**, you have a lot of sadness within you. When we are sad, we often have this feeling of pressure in our chest, as if your heart is actually heavier.

People will often use the term **heavy heart** before they announce sad news. You would say that you're announcing some news, like a death or the firing of someone, with a **heavy heart** to show how tremendously sad you are about the situation. If it is spoken, it is usually an announcement in front of a group of people and not to a single person. However, in writing a letter or an email, you can say with a **heavy heart** to individual recipients.

Here are a couple more examples with **heavy heart**:

**Boss:** Hello, everyone. Can I have your attention a moment?

**Lyle:** OK. Hey, everyone, quiet down.

**Boss:** It's with a **heavy heart** that I announce the firing of Nathan in finance.

**Lyle:** What? How come?

**Boss:** I know he was very popular with everyone here. However, he was caught stealing money from the company, and management thought it was best to let him go. I wish it weren't the case, but it's true.

**Sam:** Hey, I just got a letter from Larry and Sheila, our old neighbours.

**Vera:** Cool. Open it up. What does it say?

**Sam:** It says, "Hello, everyone. It is with a **heavy heart** that I write to you. Sheila, my dear wife of 25 years, passed away last week."

**Vera:** Oh no!

**Sam:** That's so sad. I really liked her. We should call Larry this afternoon to see what we can do for him.

## To step back

Phrasal verb

During Anna's self-introduction, Andrew notices two major similarities between the two of them. They both have Scottish family and both live in a foreign country. However, Andrew says he wants **to step back** to the subject of her hometown. That means he wants to return to a topic they were previously discussing.

You can use **to step back** when you think you're moving along too quickly in the conversation. Perhaps you're jumping from subject to subject without speaking in depth about any one particular topic. In this case, you can say you want **to take a step back**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to step back**:

**Erica:** What's on the agenda for today's meeting?

**Luke:** I think the boss wants us to discuss either the Romeo Project or the November Project.

**Erica:** Actually, I think we should **step back** and revisit the Juliet Project. How do you feel about that?

**Luke:** OK. That sounds good. I'll tell him.

**Gary:** How was your weekend?

**Bianca:** Not bad. Let's see, what happened? I went swimming with some friends. I won the lottery. I saw a few good movies. Oh, and I started reading a new book.

**Gary:** Whoa! Can you **take a step back** one moment? Did you just say you won the lottery?

**Bianca:** Yeah, but not the jackpot. Just a few hundred thousand dollars.

**Gary:** Still, that's a lot!

## Residential Adjective

Anna describes her hometown of Didcot as a **residential** town. **Residential** means a place primarily designed for people to live. For instance, a **residential** neighbourhood will mostly have houses and apartment buildings without industrial buildings, such as factories or shops. A **residential** building is one built for people to live in, without any businesses inside.

By contrast, an industrial neighbourhood is one where most of the buildings are factories and where no one lives. You can also have a commercial neighbourhood, where most of the buildings are shops and offices.

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

**Gigi:** Do you have any more interesting business plans?

**Richard:** I do. I was thinking of converting the first storey of my house into a small coffee shop.

**Gigi:** That sounds fun. But I don't think you're allowed to do that.

**Richard:** What do you mean?

**Gigi:** We live in a **residential** area. I'm pretty sure you can't get a permit to open a business like that.

**Richard:** Seriously? I was getting excited at the idea of it.

**Howard:** In what part of the city do you live?

**Layla:** I'm from the West Island.

**Howard:** Do you like it?

**Layla:** It's OK. It's pretty quiet because it's very **residential**. But because it's so **residential**, I have to drive 10 minutes just to get to the nearest supermarket. That's annoying.

## Eyesore

Noun

Talking about her hometown, Anna says it is famous for two things. One of them is a huge and ugly power station. She calls it an **eyesore**. An **eyesore** is something ugly and unpleasant to see. It is as if looking at it hurts your eyes.

Many cities have buildings that are **eyesores**. They're usually large, out-of-date buildings that many people want to have demolished because they are unpleasant to look at.

Anything unpleasant to look at can be an **eyesore**. A neighbourhood park filled with garbage, graffiti in a public washroom, or a house that's a colour you don't like can all be considered **eyesores**.

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

**Monica:** Did you hear? They're finally tearing down that old building at the end of our street.

**Benji:** The one that's been abandoned for 10 years?

**Monica:** Yes. I'm so glad.

**Benji:** That's great. What an **eyesore**! Do you know what's going to happen to the property?

**Monica:** Apparently a developer is going to build a fancy new house.

**Benji:** That will probably raise the value of all the houses in the neighbourhood.

**Carla:** Hey, there's something different about your kitchen. What did you change?

**Gwen:** We repainted that wall dark blue. It used to be beige.

**Carla:** Oh. Why did you do that?

**Gwen:** Since the wall was beige, you could really see all the stains from years of cooking. It was becoming an **eyesore**. I'm much happier now.

## To stumble into [something]

### Idiom

When Anna talks about her career path, she says that she **stumbled into the teaching profession**. That means that she did not plan to become a teacher; she simply happened to find herself in a job that she enjoyed.

To stumble is to trip and lose your balance while walking. If you **stumbled into a river**, that means you lost your balance and fell into the river without planning on it. Similarly, Anna **stumbled into teaching** without planning on becoming a teacher.

You can also say **to stumble across [something]**. **To stumble across [something]** is to happen to find something. You can **stumble across an interesting newspaper article** or **stumble across an old friend** on the street.

Here are a couple more examples with **to stumble into [something]**:

**Dana:** Have you always wanted to be a pilot?

**Teresa:** Believe it or not, I kind of **stumbled into it**.

**Dana:** How do you **stumble into becoming a pilot**?

**Teresa:** When I moved to this city, all of my new friends were pilots. So I started getting interested in flying. The next thing you know, I enrolled in pilot school and the rest is history.

**Kate:** There's a huge sale on sneakers at the shopping mall. Do you want to check it out?

**Derrick:** Sure. How did you find out about the sale?

**Kate:** I **stumbled across a website** that advertises all the major sales in the city. Here, I'll send you a link.

**Derrick:** Sweet. Thanks.

## Quiz

### 1. What does it mean if something is bittersweet?

- a) it tastes bitter
- b) it tastes really good
- c) it's completely sad
- d) it's both happy and sad

### 2. Which of the following is the best example of an eyesore?

- a) a strange painting that you like
- b) a city park you avoid because you don't like how it looks

### 3. What is a residential neighbourhood?

- a) an area with many houses and factories
- b) an area with mostly houses
- c) an area where people don't live
- d) an area with a lot of stores

### 4. In general, is it a happy or sad feeling when you have a heavy heart?

- a) happy
- b) sad

### 5. What does it mean to stumble into [something]?

- a) you started doing something without much planning
- b) you are uncoordinated
- c) you are drunk
- d) you like swimming in rivers



---

## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are your first impressions of Anna? How excited are you to have a new host?
2. In this episode, Anna describes her hometown as a smaller town that not many people have heard of. How would you describe your hometown?
3. When was the last time you had a bittersweet moment? Describe what happened.
4. What eyesores does your neighbourhood have?
5. Tell about an unexpected situation that you stumbled into. How did you deal with it?

## Quiz Answers

1. d   2. b   3. b   4. b   5. a

### Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Anna Connelly

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free, *Step On* by Jahzzar

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Kevin Moorehouse

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Matty Warnock

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Image: Anna Connelly