

Chatterbox #272 – Life and culture in the UK

Episode description

Have you ever wondered what life is like in the UK? Turns out, it is a bit different from Canada or the US! Andrew speaks with UK native Anna to find out exactly what life was like in this English-speaking country.

Tune in for a new episode of Chatterbox, the Culips podcast series designed for intermediate and advanced English learners. Today's natural, unedited conversation between two native speakers will help improve your English listening skills while also giving you an inside look at life in another country.

Fun fact

Watch any show about or in the UK and you'll notice that the characters drink a lot of tea. This isn't just a stereotype! Since the 18th century, the UK has been one of the world's largest tea consumers, with over 100,000,000 cups enjoyed per day!

Expressions included in the study guide

- Minefield
- A [something] streak
- If I say so myself
- To pan out
- Posh
- Out of this world



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, everyone. My name is Andrew.

Anna: And my name is Anna.

Andrew: And you're listening to the Culips English Podcast.

Hey 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 or current events, or issues. And today, I'm joined by my co-host, Anna. Hey there, Anna, how's it going?

Anna: I'm great, thanks. And you?

Andrew: I'm doing very well, thank you. And we have an episode planned today, Anna, for everyone that I think our listeners will find really interesting. It's about a topic that many people have asked us to talk about, actually. And we never have, because all of the staff here at Culips, we're all from North America, from Canada or from the USA. You're our first team member from the UK. And that means we can finally talk about this topic, which is all about the UK, the culture and life in that country. So it's gonna be great, I think.

Anna: I can't wait to share some of my experiences about living in the UK and giving you a little bit more of an idea about what it's like.

Andrew: Perfect. So we'll get into that in just a moment. But before we do everyone, I want to let you know about the transcript and study guide for this episode. So guys, there's a transcript and study guide for this episode. And it's available for all Culips members on our website Culips.com. Now, following along with the study guide while you listen to us is one of the best ways to study with us. And you can do that by becoming a Culips member. And by becoming a member, you'll support us and keep allowing us to make English lessons for people all over the world. And when you become a member, there are also a bunch of other extras that you'll get. So to check out all of the details, just visit our website Culips.com.

Anna: We also wanted to give a shout-out to our listener, Seong Cheol, sorry if I pronounced that incorrectly, from the USA who left us a lovely comment and a five-star review on Apple Podcasts. So Seong Cheol wrote "Be a member. I have tried a lot of podcasts about English learning for a decade. However, the thing I have been enjoying is this one, Culips. And I finally decided to be a member last month because I want to

support this program. I hope this podcast stays with me for a long time. Each episode not only helps to study English, but also gives many thoughts about people and society. So I highly recommend you also become a member of Culips.” Well, very nice. Thank you so much, Seong Cheol. A lovely comment.

Andrew: Yes, I like that comment as well. Thank you, Seong Cheol, for the awesome review. Now everyone, if you would like to hear your name and comment mentioned at the start of an upcoming Culips episode, then you can do exactly what Seong Cheol did and leave us a positive review and five-star rating on Apple Podcasts or whatever platform you use to listen to Culips. And the reason that we ask for your support with this is it just spreads the word about Culips to other people learning English around the world. So we’d really appreciate it if you could leave us comments and review wherever you get your podcasts. And with that said, it’s finally time to talk about our topic for today. So Anna, let’s get started. The first question that I have for you, Anna, is about the name of your country. I know many people get confused. Is it the UK? Is it the United Kingdom? Is it Britain? Is it Great Britain? What should people call your country?

Anna: We have different versions and people use different names. I use the UK, the United Kingdom. I think it’s less common for people to say Great Britain. I would say that’s probably not as common as other versions. But the important thing is that we have to have the if we’re going to use UK. That’s one thing that a lot of people like to miss off but we need to say the United Kingdom. And then of course there’s the countries that make up the United Kingdom as well. We have England, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland. So there’s many different options. And actually a lot of people use the term England in general to refer to the whole of the UK, which is, is not correct. So it’s better to say the UK, which encompasses all of the countries that are included, but any of them are fine. But actually you mentioning that I realized now, we have many names that’s rather over complicated. We’re making it more difficult for everybody this way.

Andrew: So when somebody personally asks you, where are you from? How do you answer that question?

Anna: I would say I’m from the UK.

Andrew: The UK. So you don’t say I’m from England. You say I’m from the UK?

Anna: Yeah, no, I don’t say I’m from England, because in the first episode, I talked about the fact that I was born in Scotland and I grew up in England. So I have a real strong relationship, and I feel like part of my identity is Scottish. So I don’t feel English. And this is a really good point because depending on where people come from in the UK, they will give you or they might give you a different answer. For example, somebody who is in Scotland, if you ask them, where are you from, they’ll say, I’m Scottish, before saying, I’m British, or I’m from the UK. So you know, a lot of people feel very identified with their individual country within the UK. But a lot of people will also just say, I’m British, or I’m from the UK, as well. I think that’s more common for people from England. Whereas in

other countries, for example, Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, they might be more likely to say, I'm Welsh, or I'm Scottish, or I'm Northern Irish. So it's a bit of a **minefield**, actually, you could get quite a lot of different answers to that question.

Andrew: Yeah, I visited the UK for the first time two years ago. And I went and met some of my family in Scotland that I had never met before. And I got to see the homes where my grandparents grew up in. It was really cool experience. And when I was in Scotland, that's one of the things that I noticed that there was a very strong feeling of like, I'm Scottish. I'm not from the UK. There's like this kind of **independent streak** to Scottish people. So I think you're absolutely right about that.

Anna: Yeah, you know, Scottish people, Welsh people, and also English people as well, I mean, there're strong identities within the UK, which I guess is that point of it is the United Kingdom. It's made up of different places within that. It's not one huge country all together. It's made up of four different countries. So that's also an important thing to take into account when thinking about the UK. There's so much variety, so much diversity and lots of people with different ways of doing things and different identities. So it's really quite an interesting place **if I say so myself**. But it's quite an interesting place. Did you enjoy Scotland though, Andrew, is the question I would love to ask you.

Andrew: Yeah, I really enjoyed it. It was a super cool experience. You know, my family on my mother's side is Scottish. And I had never been able to visit Scotland before, although I grew up kind of being raised with Scottish traditions. So I played drums. I played snare drum in a pipe band, and my parents would take us to Highland Games as children in Canada. So it was a part of my upbringing. And I was always curious about it. And it was great to go back and visit. My mom grew up in Dunoon. So I went there. And yeah, it was really awesome.

Anna: Cool. Scotland is an amazing place. And even people from the UK don't visit Scotland enough. I know a lot of my friends who are from England, and a lot of them have never visited Scotland. It's really for me like a fantastic place and more people should visit Scotland.

Andrew: Yeah, I can't wait to go back to be honest with you. I really want to visit again. One of my hobbies is cycling. And when I was there, I saw a race. There was like a bike race happening that I watched and it made me really jealous. I was like, I got to come back with my bike and cycle through Scotland. It would be so fun. The scenery is so amazing and beautiful. I hope I can make that happen one day. By the way, where are you from in Scotland? What area?

Anna: I was born in a city called Perth, which is quite interesting because when you say to people, where were you born and you say I was born in Perth, and they say oh, Australia.

Andrew: Right.

Anna: No, sorry, not quite as exotic as Australia. It's a small city in Scotland. So you can see the look of disappointment on their faces when, when I, when I say that. But yes, I was born in a small city in Scotland which is called Perth, which is around, I don't know, an hour away from Edinburgh, it's kind of in between Edinburgh and Glasgow kind of. And that's where I was born and where my family is from. And I also have connections with Edinburgh. And I mean, really the landscape in Scotland is just as you mentioned before when you were talking about one of your dreams is to go and ride your bike there. I love hiking, as we've already talked about, and some of the hiking in Scotland is just incredible. The landscapes are so beautiful. It makes you feel like you're in Braveheart, or some kind of film and, you know, you go back centuries, and you're in this like really wild landscape. It's just really incredible, fantastic place. It always rains, you have to remember. It always rains in Scotland, even in summer. If you want sun do not go to Scotland. That's something you have to take into account. But you can appreciate its beauty with rain.

Andrew: It's very, very green, because of all the rain. That is one benefit for sure.

Anna: True. Very green, very green.

Andrew: Actually, I had a funny story when I visited the UK. I took the train from London to Edinburgh, I suppose, is where I got off the train. And I had it in my mind like this is going to be such an amazing train trip through the countryside, and I'll get to see all the scenery. It's going to be great. So I was pretty excited for the trip. But what ended up happening is that one of the earlier trains, there was some problem with it, and it was canceled. So what they did was rebook a lot of the passengers from that train into the train that I took. And it was just jam packed with people. There were people in the aisles. Everybody was crushed together. And it ended up being one of the most unpleasant train trips of my life. So, it's too bad.

Anna: The trains in the UK are terrible. And they're really expensive. And they're really bad, like they're always late. There's always problems. I'm embarrassed. I'm ashamed, I'm ashamed that you've, you had this experience. But trust me, it's not a one-off experience that. I used to commute a lot in the UK when I worked there. I used to commute between Liverpool and Warrington, which is a town in the north of the UK. And it was just a nightmare. The trains were always late and cancelled. So the trains is not something to be proud of in the UK. We have a lot of problems with our train lines.

Andrew: Yeah, I had this romantic idea in my head that it would just be so fantastic. I think I probably read too many books or watch too many movies from you know, 100 years ago when train travel was maybe.

Anna: Like the Orient Express or something like this.

Andrew: Something like this, yeah. And it just didn't **pan out** that way. But it was OK. It was still a good trip in the end. And Anna, one of the things that we talked about just a

moment ago was the diversity in the UK and how each region really has a different feeling, different culture, even different languages, right? There's different languages in every area. So I was wondering if you could maybe tell us about the diversity that you've noticed growing up in the UK?

Anna: Yeah, there's, there's so many different places and different cities and areas. From my experience, I've had experience in Scotland, of course, and in England, and in the north of England as well, which is also quite a different place. Specifically, as I mentioned, in another episode, I lived in Liverpool for a number of years. And Liverpool is just a really exciting place. The people in Liverpool have a really interesting sense of humour. They're super funny and more relaxed I would say in comparison to perhaps people in the south of England or my experiences living in the south of England. You know, they don't take themselves too seriously. In fact, they're more similar to I would say people living or coming from Spain where I am now. So there's also lots of different cities. You know, you've got Birmingham, which has a huge diverse population, lots of people from different cultures and religions, and Manchester, which is kind of like the second London which is in the north of the UK, and there's loads of industry and work there. Liverpool is great because it's a city by the sea, which I, that's one thing that's really nice about the UK, you're never far away from the sea. You're never far away from the ocean, because you know, you're always kind of within a couple of hours. So yeah, Liverpool was a city by the sea. And that was really special and I do miss that being here and in Spain now. But there's so many fantastic cities. But like I said before, I mentioned about London in the first episode that it's kind of its own city. It's got its own identity. And that's what I would be really conscious to tell people is that, you know, you can't just look at England or any place but especially the UK is one big thing where everyone is the same. Like each city has its own way of doing things. Manchester, you know, London, Liverpool, they all have like a different vibe and a different you know, Bristol is another really interesting city, which is in the, in the west of England, which is has a really vibrant music culture. It's very hipster. So there's loads of cities that I think people don't really consider, that everybody always thinks of London or maybe London and Edinburgh, maybe it's like two key points, but there's loads of other fantastic cities, Liverpool, Bristol, Brighton, which is, has a huge culture, and LGBT culture. And so there's just like, so many different cities that have really different identities. And yeah, that's what I love about the UK. There's just many different types of places and different types of people that, that, that live there.

Andrew: That's, that's awesome. Yeah, I've heard a lot of good things about Bristol from some of my friends from the UK. And unfortunately, I never got to visit it when I made my trip there a couple years back, but if I go again, I would like to check out Bristol because I love watching live music, and I heard that is a very good place to do that.

Anna: Bristol is super cool, a really nice music scene. And another place that's really close to Bristol which a lot of people go to is Bath. Well, I should say Bath because this is an interesting thing about the way people pronounce the word Bath in the UK. So people traditionally from the south of England will say Bath, and people from the north of England will say Bath. It's a difference. And now I've lived in Liverpool, I say Bath. So I used to say

Bath. And now I say Bath. It sounds quite a **posh** way to say it. But Bath is a really interesting place got loads of history, it's a Roman, they've got Roman baths there. And England's got, well the UK, it's got so much history. And one thing I always encourage people to do if they go there is go and look at the manor houses or estates. We have a beautiful place near where I live called Blenheim Palace, which is a beautiful house and gardens. So we have a lot of these really old buildings and estates that are lovely to go and visit as well.

Andrew: Now, something that you just mentioned, I think we should explain in a little more detail for our listeners, because it hasn't really come up in any Culips conversations before since we're North American English speakers. You said it sounds **posh**, and this is just a concept that we don't really have in North American English. What does it mean if you sound **posh**?

Anna: Sounding **posh** is traditionally associated with having received pronunciation in the UK. So for example, some people when they meet me because my, I have a neutral accent, I have an accent from the south of the UK, will say, "Oh Anna, you sound really **posh**. Sound really **posh**." I say, "Well, I'm not posh at all." But, so there's an association with having a certain type of accent which is received pronunciation, which is from the southeast of the UK, which is considered **posh** or some people consider it to be **posh**. But then you have other areas of the UK which have, you know, a **posh** version. So in Liverpool we call their accent a Scouse accent. And people will say, "Oh, you have a **posh** Scouse accent." So there's also within the different accents within the UK, you can have a **posh** version. I mean, I guess it would mean sounding a certain way of saying things that is associated with being **posh** or coming from a certain background. But you can't tell everything from an accent. I mean, people will say to me, "Anna, you're, you sound really **posh**." And I'm like, OK, not, not at all. And if you say to people, you say I'm from, I say I'm from Didcot. I'm from Oxford, they say, oh, Oxford, and then people have these ideas that you know, and then people would, "Did you go to Oxford University?" Well, no, not everybody that lives near Oxford went to Oxford University. And I think they kind of have this idea that you live in a kind of Harry Potter house and you know, you're very well educated. And you know, there's a lot of different things that people think about when you say where you're from.

Andrew: So then **posh**, being **posh** or speaking in a **posh** way, does it have to do with your class backgrounds? I've always understood it as being more of like, a way that people who are well-off or well-educated, they speak as a way of almost signaling that they are wealthy, that they come from a nice background, almost like a subconscious way of distinguishing themselves from common people. Is that true? Is that accurate at all?

Anna: Yes, I would say that. For example, if I speak to somebody from the UK, and they speak to me in what would be considered a **posh** way, I might think, oh, maybe they've come from a certain place or maybe they've come from a certain background, for example. So sure, I mean, you know, in the UK, we have a lot of private schools. I don't know whether maybe you as the listeners, this is something that's common in your country, but

we have a lot of private schools, which are actually called public schools, which is really confusing. But yeah.

Andrew: I learned about this recently. And it blew my mind. I never knew about this, yeah.

Anna: It's a public school, but you have to pay a lot of money. Right. OK. Go figure. So there's also this thing about private school, and oh, maybe when I was younger, I think, oh, they must go to a private school because they speak in a certain way or whatever, or they've had a specific, they've grown up in a specific way. But as I said, you can't tell anything from an accent really. I mean, people can have different accents for many different places and have different backgrounds. But yeah, I would say it's associated with you know, where you are, and in society, or maybe traditional views about that. And what is **posh**, but really, doesn't really mean anything. **Posh** can be different to different people. And yeah, some people think I'm **posh**, which I just think is hilarious, because I'm just like the complete opposite of **posh**.

Andrew: It's fascinating. It is something that we don't really have in North American English at all, but yeah, is a big part of UK English, so.

Anna: But I also think that American, because I see a lot of things on American TV and American series, and I think you all, I say you all, there's a big thing about making British people sound very **posh**. And so we all speak like this. You know, like, we're from 100 years ago.

Andrew: Right. Right.

Anna: You know, that we're all very polite and very well-spoken, which is quite funny, really.

Andrew: So Anna, why don't we switch gears a little bit here? And we mentioned earlier about how it always rains in Scotland. And this is one of the famous things about the UK that everybody knows about is that it always rains in the UK. Is that a stereotype or is that accurate?

Anna: I can't say it's not true, because then that would be a bit of a lie. But we do have some areas of the UK that have wonderful weather. For example, the south of the UK, Cornwall, is a really interesting part of the UK. Not many people know about Cornwall, but Cornwall is like the most southerly point of the UK. So Cornwall is where a lot of people go on their holidays. If they're from the UK, a lot of people go there in the summer and it has really, really nice, the best weather that you're going to get is going to be at the most southerly point. So Cornwall is quite nice. But the weird thing I think about the UK is that you can literally have every type of weather in the same day. It can be snowing in the morning, sunny, then it's going to be windy, then it's going to be rainy. So you just can't plan very well. And you know, we have a very mild climate. One thing I have noticed

though, over the last few years, maybe over like 10 years or something like that, is that our climate is like much more mild. So our summers haven't been as hot, although actually there was quite a hot summer last year in the UK, but the summers aren't as hot and the winters aren't as cold. So I feel like it's becoming more mild, but a lot of rain. Nobody from the UK can deny it. We got a lot of rain. But in London for example, London's a little microclimate as well, so London can be quite hot. And I mean I'm not saying there's never a day of sun, but for British people 20 degrees is bikini weather.

Andrew: Twenty degrees Celsius.

Anna: Twenty degrees. You look on your app, you look at the phone, you check the weather you think, ah, 20 degrees, some perfect skirt, bikini, go to the pool. I mean you know, we, 20 degrees is like a good temperature for people in the UK. We get excited about 20 degree weather.

Andrew: So as soon as the weather hits 20 degrees, do you see a lot of people out on the beach and in the park suntanning and having picnics?

Anna: Yeah, in the park suntanning, having picnics, wearing sandals, you know we really do try and make the most of every slither of sun or good weather that we get. We do try and make the most of it. And one thing that I think I love about the UK is a British summer. A good British summer where we have good weather is amazing because we have a big culture around festivals. Music festivals are really, really popular in the UK. And that's one of the things that a lot of people love to do. We have Glastonbury of course, which a lot of people know. But there's loads of other amazing festivals in the UK. So one typical thing to do in the summer is go with your friends to a music festival. It's guaranteed to rain even if it's in summer, but you know, you're hoping that you're going to get good weather and maybe some of you listeners have seen, but Glastonbury is famous for always raining, you know, just becoming a complete mud bath, but that's all part of the fun.

Andrew: I always wanted to go to Glastonbury when I was younger. But now that I'm a little bit older, I think maybe I'll just watch it on YouTube. I'm not sure if I want to visit anymore.

Anna: There's a term we have in English called glamping, which is **posh** camping. So I always think, well, I've never gone, I've never, I've never gone to Glastonbury, but I was thinking if I do, I'd like to do glamping, you know, with a caravan and a shower. And, you know, because I don't think I can do five days camping at a music festival that for me.

Andrew: It'd be tough.

Anna: I'm bit over that phase now.

Andrew: I'm with you there. Maybe one night would be possible. Five, that's a long time.

Anna: One night is a novelty, but five is too many days.

Andrew: So there's one final thing that I wanted to ask you about, Anna, and that is about some other stereotypes. So we've talked about the weather. But there are some other stereotypes about people from the UK, and about the food and cuisine from the UK as well. So maybe you could tell us about some of these stereotypes and your evaluation of them if they're accurate or inaccurate?

Anna: Well, let's start with food.

Andrew: Sure.

Anna: We have a really bad rep in the UK of having terrible food, which I think is, I think it's very unfair.

Andrew: OK.

Anna: We do have some really horrible dishes, I'm going to say, you know, fish and chips. In Scotland, it's common to have a battered Mars bar, which to everybody else sounds absolutely disgusting, but I can assure you it's actually quite nice.

Andrew: Like a deep fried Mars bar?

Anna: A deep fried Mars bar. Yeah. So we have some unusual, they're not unusual, but I wouldn't say they're very tasty, or very sophisticated dishes. But we also have really nice food. We have something called a roast dinner, which is maybe one of our, behind the English breakfast, which by the way, people don't eat English breakfast every morning in the UK. I mean, if we all ate English breakfast every morning, we would all be enormous and we'd have a huge problem with obesity in the UK.

Andrew: It's a special treat.

Anna: It's a special treat, I think in most cases. You know, we don't wake up and have sausage, ham, baked beans, eggs, every morning before we go to work.

Andrew: You'd have to take a nap after working for two hours.

Anna: Oh my god, it would be impossible. It wouldn't be, it's not practical to do that. But we have something called a roast dinner, which is really nice, which is the thing that a lot of people eat on a Sunday traditionally, but not, not always, which is meat, vegetables, potatoes, some mint sauce, which is really nice. I love roast dinner. So we have really nice like meats and vegetables. And it's very popular in the UK to, you know, eating healthy. And that's a very much a trend that's taken off in the UK over the past kind of five, 10 years. And we love to eat fresh produce. And so we have good food. And actually, interestingly, the most favourite dish in the UK is a curry. So we love different dishes from different places, India, Spanish food, French food, Italian foods. We love different foods

from other places. And there's lots of restaurants that have, you know, different takes on these things. So I think our food is not as bad as other people say it is.

Andrew: Yeah, I mean, when I visited, I ate really well. I had amazing Turkish food in London. I visited my friend there and she took me to a Turkish restaurant, and it was **out of this world**. It was really delicious. And I also thought the restaurants and like the pub scene was really, really cool too. I was amazed. You know, even on a weeknight. It wasn't even a Friday night. It was like a Wednesday night. I remember seeing everybody in the pub after the day of work had finished and everybody was just enjoying a drink and hanging out. There's people outside and it was just a really cool vibe that we don't really have here in Korea or even in my home country of Canada. So, I think it's really unique and a nice thing about your country.

Anna: I think yeah, like you said, it's bringing other different cultures and foods and bringing them here and so lots of people set up restaurants and on that one, so I think the food is good. And if you do go to the UK, you should try a scone with jam and cream, which is a typical thing that people have as a snack or with a cup of tea. So that's one thing I really encourage you all to do if you go to the UK is have a scone with jam and cream. You can thank me afterwards, because it's going to be an amazing experience for you. And you're going to, you're going to love it. If you like cakes and sweet things, they are beautiful. Lots of calories, it's a heart attack in a food, but it's really nice, but it's really nice. Now, coming back, actually, Andrew, to what you said before about some other stereotypes about British people. And we, we were chatting before in saying about how you know, stereotypes, you have to be careful because, you know, there's loads of different types of people that live in, in countries. And you know, there's people that have different ways of life. So it's not always useful to group people by things. But I think there are some useful things that I would share about British people in the way that we are and the way that we like to do things. And definitely one thing that I've noticed from living in another country is that we are quite polite. So we, we really try and be polite, because we don't like to offend people, in general. And that's something that I've noticed even more living in a different culture, because I realize how much I try not to offend people. I think we are quite polite, and we find it a little bit uncomfortable if people are polite, or sometimes if people are quite direct, or if people are maybe being more offensive. So I would say that that's a good thing to remember about British people. We don't like to offend. We don't want to offend you normally, and we feel a bit uncomfortable if people are behaving like that. It makes us feel a little bit like, oh. So I think that's a useful thing to know. We say sorry, a lot, for example. Oh, sorry. I mean, you know, you brush somebody in the street, right? And I'm so sorry. After living in Spain, people were like, "Oh, my God, Anna, just stop saying sorry." Like, I think that's something we share with the Canadian culture as well is like this thing of not wanting to offend people, being overly polite, just yeah being really conscious of other people and not wanting to come across as offensive.

Andrew: Yeah, I think this is maybe something that we've inherited, Canadians have inherited from the UK, is that we also are ridiculed by Americans. They always joke and laugh at us for saying sorry too much. And I am laughing because I have the same

experience living here in Korea is that when, especially when I first came to Korea, I would apologize all the time when getting off the bus or getting off the subway, and I just bumped somebody a little bit. And then I realized, like, nobody around me is apologizing for any of these little things. And so I stopped doing it because that was just me thinking as a Canadian, and inserting those values into a different culture that doesn't have that same value. So yeah, I think we share that in common, maybe we're overly polite. But it's a good thing, I think, not a bad thing.

Anna: I think it's a good thing. I'm thinking of a really good example, which is, like, let's say in a restaurant, you get, you order food, and you get the food and it's maybe a little bit cold, for example, it's not exactly how you wanted it. For me, it's really uncomfortable for me to say, "Excuse me, but this is this is not what I ordered. This is too cold." That for me is like really uncomfortable. So sometimes I would just prefer to eat the cold food, rather than actually complain like I should. It's my right to complain. It's not what I ordered. But it's like that type of interaction is like, oh. You know, we have this concept as well in the UK of stiff upper lip. I don't know if you've heard of that before.

Andrew: I have heard of it. But could you explain it for our listeners?

Anna: OK, so having a stiff upper lip is another thing to understand about sometimes the mentality of some British people is that we like to kind of make sure that everything's OK. It's fine, a stiff upper lip, be strong, be resilient. And this is this idea of stiff upper lip. I think it means your lips tremble, and you're nervous.

Andrew: Right. You're visibly showing other people that you're upset or emotional.

Anna: Right. So it's this idea of stiff upper lip, you know, get on with it and just keep going, and you'll be fine. And I know this from my own experience in the way that I am. Maybe rather than telling somebody if we're not doing very well, we're not happy or we're a little bit angry, we prefer to just kind of hold it in and rather than letting it out, which can be a good thing and a bad thing. But I think that's an important thing to understand about perhaps where people might be coming from. I know that's the case for me. It's like a stiff upper lip. I'm stressed, I'm tired. Maybe I'm not happy, but I'll just get on with it. I'll just do it is I think something that is useful to know about maybe a mentality of, of some British people, but not all. As I said, again, we can't paint everybody with the same brush. But this is just me speaking from my experience and the experiences I've had and the people that I've met in the UK.

Andrew: Anna, it's funny that example that you gave of not wanting to return your food, even though it's not what you ordered. Because the funny thing is, and I completely agree, I'm the same kind of personality, the same kind of culture, I would probably just eat the food rather than making a scene and returning it. But if I did work up the courage to return it, what would I do? I would apologize, I'd say, "Oh, I'm so sorry. But this isn't exactly what I ordered. If you don't mind, could you please change it?" So I would apologize first, even though I did nothing wrong. So I guess that kind of hits both of those points there.

Anna: And I think it's interesting, because in that example, when I've met people from North America, for example, the United States, I would say that probably people in that situation would be more likely to say, "Hold on a second, but this is not what I ordered." So in that example, that would be kind of the typical British American approach that I would kind of say, like, the British person will be like, "Oh, no worries, everything's fine." They come and ask you about your food, everything, okay? And you say, "Oh, lovely, thank you so much." And then, you know, maybe somebody who's from North America might say, "Oh, sorry, but this is not what I ordered. Please, can you change it?" is a very basic example. But that would be that's kind of how I see it in my head, because the people I've met from North America specifically have been more, more willing to have maybe, you know, be direct and get what they, get what they should get, you know, and that's, I think it's a good thing and a bad thing with being like, you know, too polite. I think I've had to learn and I'm learning to, you know, ask for things if I need things and if something's not right, try and fix it because it really is something here that is ingrained in my head about not wanting to offend.

Andrew: Interesting. And yeah, I think you're right about that. Although it's so hard for us to say, this is the way America is, this is the way Canada is, this is the way the UK is.

Anna: Exactly.

Andrew: But I think these generalizations are probably true for the most part.

Anna: I think they're useful. I think some generalizations are not useful. But I think those ones are useful to try and get in the head of maybe when you're interacting with someone or you're getting to know somebody who is British, or from one of the countries in the UK, you can maybe understand a little bit more about where they're coming from. Or maybe you say, why weren't you direct? Why didn't you tell me that you were upset, for example, or angry? And maybe one of the reasons is because they have this idea of stiff upper lip, you know, they don't want to show you when they're feeling a little bit vulnerable, maybe. And they prefer not to say when things are not OK, because they don't want to offend and maybe come across as being rude.

Andrew: What is the famous expression? Keep calm and carry on, is that it?

Anna: Yeah. Keep calm and carry on. Yes, yes. And we say in English, get on with it. You know, from my experience, you know, I find it difficult when people are, you know, very emotional in whatever way that is, you know, they're very happy, very sad, very angry, very loud. For me, it's like, whoa, but I think there's two things there. It's like that idea of stiff upper lip, just get on with it, keep calm and carry on. And also that I think British people are we don't express very strong emotions. I'm talking about specifically for me, I would say. That's part of the way that I've grown up, you know. We tend to have, you know, quite mild emotions. And you know, we don't tend to react really strongly one way or

another. But I think that's maybe more personal thing, I would say, rather than putting that on everybody in the UK, for example.

Andrew: Very good. Well, Anna, I think we'll leave it at here for today. That was a fascinating insight into life and the culture in the UK. And I think, you know, we could probably talk about some of these things in more detail in upcoming episodes as well, such as, like the festival culture of the UK, or the music scene, or the restaurant scene in the UK. These would all make for really interesting conversations that perhaps we could cover in upcoming Culips episodes.

Anna: Sounds great. I would love to go into those topics in a little bit more detail and tell you all about them.

Andrew: All right, listeners. That's it for this episode. Thanks for listening. We hope you learned a lot with us today. And just to remind you, our website is Culips.com. And that's the place where you can get the study guide, including the transcript and practice exercises for this episode as well. So if you want to give it a download, just visit the website.

Anna: Becoming a Culips member is a great way to support us. But it's not the only way. You can also support us by leaving us a five-star rating and a nice review on your podcast app, telling your friends about Culips and following us on social media.

Andrew: That's right and you can stay up to date with us by following us on Instagram or YouTube. Our email address is contact@Culips.com. If you'd like to send us a message, maybe ask a question, or even better, give us a suggestion for an upcoming episode topic, we'd love to hear from you. We read every message we receive and reply as soon as we can. And we'll be back soon with another brand new episode everyone. So we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Anna: See you soon.

Detailed Explanations

Minefield

Noun

When a subject or situation is a **minefield**, it's complicated and has hidden problems and dangers. This term is used when you need to be careful of what you say and do, just as if you're walking in an actual minefield. If you say or do the wrong thing, something bad might happen.

In this episode, Anna says that asking people in the UK who are not English where they're from can be a bit of a **minefield**. She means that some people are sensitive about the difference between being from the UK and being from England. So you could get quite a lot of different answers to that question.

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

Ratree: So, for the fieldtrip next week, we still need at least two parent chaperones. We'll have to send a notice home with the kids.

Evangeline: Ah, that might be a problem. I can ask again, but I think sending notices will be a **minefield**.

Ratree: Why?

Evangeline: Well, we've already sent out the notices. Parents were complaining about having to miss work and the demand on their time.

Ratree: If they want their kids to go to the science museum, we need chaperones. That's just the reality of the matter.

Marshall: The next fire we need to put out is the complaints about a lack of diversity in our administrative staff. What can we do about this?

Xuân: Ah, yes. Our lawyers have already reviewed the complaints and are crafting a plan of action. But it's taking longer than I'd like. This is a legal **minefield**.

Marshall: I need to say something to calm people down. Has Media Relations come up with a press release at least?

Xuân: Yes, here it is. It's not much but it's the best we can do right now.

A [something] streak

Phrase

A **[something] streak** describes part of someone's personality. For example, Andrew suggests there's a kind of **independent streak** to Scottish people. This means that Scottish people tend to behave in a way that expresses their independent behaviour.

One can have a **mean streak**, meaning they can be mean from time to time. **An ambitious streak** means you focus a lot on success. **A competitive streak** means someone is competitive, especially when playing games or sports.

Another variation to this phrase is **a streak of [something]**, as in **a streak of independence** or **a streak of arrogance**.

Here are a couple more examples with a **[something] streak**:

Lian:	Hey! This might be a weird question but... Do you want to go skydiving with me next month?
Michi:	I've always wanted to go skydiving! But no one I know is ever interested.
Lian:	Same here! I'm so glad to that you've got the same adventurous streak that I do.
Michi:	Adventurous? Ha! My mom would say that it's a streak of madness . Either way, I'm in!

Christine:	How did your date go? It was with that guy, right? The one you met at the bar?
Pearl:	Oh boy. Yeah. It was with him. But it did not go well.
Christine:	Oh no! What happened?
Pearl:	It turns out he's got a mean streak . He yelled at our server because she brought the menus out in the wrong language. Then he spent most of dinner talking about how he got revenge on his co-worker. The only thing his co-worker did, from what I can tell, was to ask him not to use his pens.
Christine:	Wow, he does sound pretty mean.

If I say so myself

Idiom

If I say so myself is an expression used when one is praising their own work, skill or creation. It means in my opinion in a positive way. Another variation of this expression is if I do say so myself.

People often say **if I say so myself** as a way to soften their own praise so they don't sound too boastful. In this episode, Anna calls the UK quite an interesting place and adds **if I say so myself**. Since she's from the UK, she adds the expression to not sound too arrogant, even though she does believe the UK is an interesting place.

Here are a couple more examples with **if I say so myself**:

Yeong-cheol: Welcome home! I have a surprise for you.

Roy: Oh? I love surprises.

Yeong-cheol: Come, come! I repainted the bedroom while you were gone.

Roy: That's great! We've been talking about doing that for ages. This is a really bold colour.

Yeong-cheol: I know, right? I think it looks really good, **if I do say so myself**.

Roy: It does. I can't wait to put our furniture back in.

Claudia: So, the clients want to have the meeting at the golf course. How's your golf game?

Aina: I'm a pretty good golfer, **if I say so myself**.

Claudia: Good, because these men are impressed by good golfers, for some reason. I want you on to handle this account. It's a big one, but I know you can do it.

Aina: Really? Thanks so much! I won't let you down. Finally all those hours my dad dragged me to the golf course will pay off.

To pan out

Phrasal verb

To pan out means to succeed or end in the way someone planned. If a project or piece of information **pans out**, it produces something useful or valuable. If a situation **pans out**, it turns out well.

In this episode, Andrew talks about the high expectations he had for the train between London and Edinburgh. However, he says that it did not **pan out** the way he would have liked. It turned out to be a terrible journey.

Here are a few more examples with **to pan out**:

- | | |
|--------------|--|
| Dong: | Did you hear? Marshall finalized his deal with the investors. |
| Jim: | Really? That's great news. He has been developing that business plan since forever. |
| Dong: | I know. He ran through his presentation with me the other day and it was really good. I'm not surprised the investors jumped on the opportunity. |
| Jim: | I'm really glad this has all panned out for him. |
| Dong: | Oh man, same here. He deserves it after all the work he's put in. |

- | | |
|----------------|--|
| Ashley: | Are you watching that new building show? |
| Kiki: | Where the brothers renovate one whole house in a season? Of course. |
| Ashley: | I'm really enjoying how their project is panning out . It is so exciting to watch and find out what happens next. |
| Kiki: | I know. It's also giving me loads of ideas for my future house. |

Posh Adjective

Posh means fancy, elegant, stylish, luxurious, expensive and of high quality or class. For example, a **posh** apartment is one that is furnished with expensive and high quality furniture and, most likely, found in a rich or expensive neighbourhood.

In this episode, Anna talks at length about the different ways people think of the word **posh**. It can mean refined or upper class. However, depending on your perspective, it can also mean snobbish or snooty. Anna mentions how some people might want to sound **posh** in front of others so they can sound richer or more upper class than they actually are.

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

Wakana:	I heard you met Basil yesterday?
Darcie:	Is he the guy doing all the costumes for the play?
Wakana:	Yup, that's Basil. What did you think? He's really posh , isn't he?
Darcie:	I like him and he's got good ideas, but I didn't find him any fancier or better than our last costume designer.
Wakana:	Really? Everyone I talk to thinks he's super fancy. You're the first person who doesn't.

Jesse:	It's my wedding anniversary next week, and my better half is expecting something amazing. I have no idea what to do.
Lloyd:	Oh, that's easy. Take her to a really posh restaurant. Then go for a walk on the pier under the moonlight. Girls love that kind of romantic stuff.
Jesse:	I know, but I don't think I can afford a really high class restaurant.
Lloyd:	Don't you know? Really nice restaurants aren't all expensive. Here, I'll send you a list of affordable places that feel really posh , but won't cost you a lot.
Jesse:	Sure! Send me that list and any other suggestions you have.

Out of this world

Idiom

Out of this world means extremely enjoyable, amazing or impressive. This expression emphasizes that the thing, experience or situation is extraordinary. Anything and anyone can be **out of this world**.

In this episode, Andrew mentions visiting a Turkish restaurant in London with a friend. He says the food was **out of this world**. The idiom allows him to show that the food wasn't just delicious, it really was unbelievably delicious.

Here are a couple more examples with **out of this world**:

Chantelle:	Only two more hours then I'm on vacation!
Jie:	That's so exciting! What are you doing for your vacation?
Chantelle:	We got a resort at Banff National Park, in Alberta.
Jie:	I know Banff. I went a few years ago with my family. The skiing and the mountains were just out of this world ! You're going to love it.
Chantelle:	That's exactly why we're going. I've heard such great things about the views and the ski hills. I'm so excited. I don't know how I'll be able to focus until we leave.

Edward:	Oh, what's this?
Vanessa:	These are cupcakes from a bakery close to my place. I brought them in for everyone.
Edward:	That's really nice of you, thanks! I love cupcakes. Chocolate is my favourite.
Vanessa:	Here, try this one. It's a double-chocolate creation that's totally out of this world .
Edward:	Sure. Oh, my! This is so good!

Quiz

1. Fred just found out all his plans panned out. How did his plans go?

- a) they ended poorly
- b) they ended well
- c) they are still in progress
- d) they have not yet been implemented

2. Which of the following might you say when praising yourself or your own works?

- a) if I do scream so myself
- b) if I do yell so myself
- c) if I do whisper so myself
- d) if I do say so myself

3. If someone calls something out of this world, what does that mean?

- a) it's from out of the country
- b) it's from another part of the world
- c) it's on its way into space
- d) it's amazing

4. Which of the following means a situation or topic is complicated and has hidden dangers?

- a) mineshaft
- b) miners
- c) minefield
- d) minecraft

5. What does it mean when you call someone or something posh?

- a) it's fancy
- b) it's broken
- c) it's purple
- d) it's soft

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Is there a topic you consider a minefield? What is that and why is it so complicated?
2. If you had to give describe your something streak, what would it be and why?
3. Describe a time when your plans panned out exactly how you wanted them to.
4. Who is the poshest person you know and why?
5. Describe something you've experienced lately that was out of this world.

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Anna Connelly

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Kevin Moorehouse

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Lisa Hoekstra

English editor: Matty Warnock

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Image: Darya Tryfanava via [Unsplash](https://unsplash.com)