

## Chatterbox #283 – Plogging

### Episode description

Have you heard about the newest trend that combines a daily walk or jog with picking up litter? If not, you're not alone. It's called plogging, and in this Chatterbox episode Andrew and Anna explain it, how it came to be called plogging, and why it's becoming a popular activity for many people around the world.

The Chatterbox series is designed for intermediate and advanced English learners. Podcasts and audio lessons are a great way to improve your English listening skills. Culips' Chatterbox episodes feature natural, unedited conversations between native speakers, so you can build your English vocabulary and learn about the new ways people are cleaning up their neighbourhoods.

### Fun fact

Since first appearing in Sweden in 2016, plogging has spread around the world. In 2019, it was estimated that 2 million people plogged daily in over 100 countries.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Fair play
- The [something] circuit
- Fair game
- Free box
- One man's trash is another man's treasure
- To clean up [one's] act



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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

**Anna:** And my name is Anna.

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

Hey, everyone, 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'm joined by my cohost, Anna. Anna, I have a question for you right off the start of this episode.

**Anna:** OK.

**Andrew:** The question is have you ever heard of plogging before?

**Anna:** Never. This is completely new for me, plogging is a new term. I've learned something new today.

**Andrew:** Plogging. OK, it's new to you. And it was new to me, until I read an article about it recently. And it's a new trend, and I thought it would make for a great episode here. So that's the topic for this episode, everyone, we are going to talk about plogging. And if you're like Anna and me, and you don't really know what this is, don't worry, we'll break it down and explain it to you in just a moment.

But before we do, I want to let everyone know about the transcript and study guide that is available for this episode. By signing up and becoming a Culips member, you can access it. Following along with the study guide while you listen to us is the best way to study English with Culips. And by becoming a Culips member, you'll also support us and keep allowing us to make English lessons for people all over the world. So it's really a win-win. There's also a bunch of other extras that you'll get when you become a member. So to sign up and get the study guide for this episode, just visit [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com).

**Anna:** We also wanted to give a shout-out to our listener, Sailesh1 from Japan who left us a lovely comment and a five-star review on Apple Podcasts. Sailesh1, you wrote, "I like listening to Culips podcast, sound quality is great. Topics are diverse. I enjoy listening. Thank you, guys."

**Andrew:** Awesome. Thank you, Sailesh, for that fantastic review. And, everyone, if you'd like to get a shout-out at the start of an upcoming Culips episode, then all you have to do is leave us a positive review, and a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts or whatever platform you use to listen to Culips. And we'll select one of them and give that listener a shout-out in an upcoming episode. And the reason why we ask for your support in doing this is just because it helps more English learners from around the world connect with us, find us, and improve their English with us. So, even if you leave just, you know, a short, one-word review, we'd really appreciate it.

And with that said, Anna, it's time to talk about plogging, time to talk about plogging. Anna, when you first heard this word, did any kind of image come into your head, like, did you have any guess about what it meant?

**Anna:** Yes, this is a funny thing because when I saw that word plogging, I was thinking, OK, it's either something to do with blogging, and it's a platform that I don't know about, and it's kind of a something new. But I actually didn't have any clue. I was really far off. I had absolutely no idea, but I did think it was a bit strange. I was thinking what on earth are we going to be talking about? When you said plogging, I was getting slightly worried that we'd be talking about something quite strange, but it's actually not. It's quite normal, actually.

**Andrew:** It's quite normal. So why don't we break down this word, then. The reason why it kind of sounds strange to Anna and I is because it's not really an English word. It's a loan word which we have borrowed from the Swedish language, but it sounds like it could be an English word. Like plog, there's not really a word, maybe you could say like that guy is plogging around or plogging along, like walking very slowly. Like that's what I imagined at first, almost like trotting, plogging, maybe my brain confused those two terms. I'm not sure. But originally, it's from the Swedish and it's a combination of two verbs.

So, I apologize to all our Swedish listeners here, but I'll try my best to pronounce these verbs. The first one is *plocka upp* and maybe with a Swedish accent, it has more intonation than that, but *plocka upp*, which in English means pick up, very similar, actually, to the English and the second verb is *jogga*, I imagine the pronunciation is like that *jogga*, which means to jog. So if we combine these to pick up and jog, well, then we get plogging, which means to pick up litter or pick up trash while you're jogging. So it's a kind of activity that people do while they're exercising to take care of the environment and make their community a cleaner and better place to live.

**Anna:** Yeah, and it started as an organized activity in Sweden in around 2016. But now it's actually spread to loads of other countries. So there's a really big plogging group in India, which is actually the largest community of ploggers in a single city. And so far, they've actually collected 40,000 kilograms of plastic, which I think is pretty impressive. So plogging seems to be a very effective way to collect rubbish.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it's interesting. Actually, the reason that I came across plogging is because I saw somebody from Vancouver, which is very close to my hometown in Canada, was doing some plogging over the pandemic. And he was actually getting angry, because he was posting pictures of all of the trash and rubbish that he had been collecting during his daily jogs. And he runs every day for around 20 kilometres. So he's, you know, kind of a long distance runner, and during his run, he could pick up bags and bags of trash.

Anna, could you guess what the #1 item that he picks up during his runs are these days? It's an item that's related to the time that we're all going through right now.

**Anna:** Well, with that clue, I'm gonna go for masks?

**Andrew:** Exactly. He's picking up bags and bags of masks. He actually runs around on his daily jogs with bread bags, you know, like, the plastic bags that bread comes in. And he says this is the perfect size to fill with masks, and he can fit around 100 to 150 masks in one bread bag. So, you know, he just kind of fills up his pockets with these bread bags each morning, and then jogs through his neighbourhood and picks up the masks at the same time.

And, you know, I could understand why masks are kind of becoming a problem, probably not just in Canada but all over the world, for litter and pollution. And that's because, you know, like, personally, if I'm on a walk, and I see a little piece of trash, like maybe a candy bar wrapper or something, I might pick it up. No, not every time. I'm not a perfect citizen, but I might pick it up if I was like, you know, had some free time and just wanted to make the street look better. But if I saw somebody's mask on the side of the street, I would never pick it up. Like I don't want to touch somebody's gross, dirty mask. So, I can understand why this is like a very real pollution problem that we're experiencing right now.

**Anna:** Yeah, my question would be, is he wearing gloves? Because you're not going to find me picking up anybody's used mask off the side of the street. So, I think one essential for me would have to be a nice pair of gloves and something to make sure that it's hygienic.

But I really think **fair play**. I mean, it's a good thing to do. I'm not sure if I'm going to start jogging and picking up rubbish, but I, I'm kind of like you. I mean, if I see something, I don't like to see litter. Nobody wants to see litter, but the fact of the matter is that lots of people leave it everywhere. I feel that I'm quite conscious and making sure that I always put things in the bin outside in the correct places. So, I think **fair play**, but I'm not sure if it's something that I'm going to start to do around Madrid city centre, for example. We have bin collectors, I feel like that's enough. I'm not sure if I want to start doing that, but maybe it's something in the future I might consider.

**Andrew:** Yeah, well, to get back to your point about that guy needing a good pair of gloves. He actually has, like, some really long tongs, I guess you would call them to pick up the trash. So, there is no body to used mask contact happening, which I think is very, very good for his own health and safety.

**Anna:** Yeah, that makes complete sense. I was just thinking, I was kind of stupid there because of course they have the tongs, the things that pick up the litter. I mean **fair play** because if I'm jogging, the last thing I want to do is also carry a small stake and two more bags of things as well. It's hard enough running for me. So fair enough that they're also carrying extra things as well, I haven't seen it where I live, I haven't seen this trend take off, but perhaps I'm not very plugged in to **the plogging circuit** to know about it.

**Andrew:** Yeah, where I live here in Seoul, South Korea, I haven't seen it either. Now, our long-time listeners will know that one of my hobbies is actually running. And I get outside and jog around my neighbourhood three to four times a week usually. And so I've thought that maybe plogging would be a good activity for me to do. But to be honest, the park where I jog is actually quite clean, there is a parks crew. And I see them sometimes in the morning, they're out there picking up the trash by hand. So it's not like the park is a perfect park where nobody litters, people still litter, unfortunately. But there is a crew there that picks it up and that's really good. So, I don't know that if I went plogging where I usually run that I would be very successful.

But, Anna, I'm not sure if I've told you this yet but I think our listeners will know, my wife and I adopted a dog and I go and take the dog out for a walk every morning. That is my responsibility, walking the dog in the a.m. shift. And when I walk the dog early in the morning, I go to a different park than I go when I run. And that park is actually a little dirty, there is no public garbage can. And so, I've been inspired by this plogging trend to start picking up some trash when I walk Pinky, our dog.

So I haven't started yet. I'm a little bit worried about how the neighbours will react because, you know, it might be a little strange for them to see a foreigner walking around picking up garbage and walking a little white dog early in the morning. But at the end of the day, I don't really care. I think it will make the community a better place to live, make my neighbourhood, yeah, just prettier and better than before. So I'm going to give it a try. I've been inspired by plogging.

**Anna:** And also that's an important point about dogs. Now, this is a very important point for me about keeping the neighbourhood clean. One thing that absolutely drives me crazy is when people don't pick up dog litter, and I'm sure you do, Andrew? I'm sure many people do.

**Andrew:** I do. Yes.

**Anna:** But it drives me absolutely bonkers. And this is one thing where I think this would be a good place to give people fines because it drives me crazy. It's one thing I absolutely hate, because I just think it doesn't take very much effort. I mean, I'm sure maybe there's some people that physically maybe they can't pick things up. I understand that. But that's one thing about my neighbourhood that I like, to be really nice and not have dog litter everywhere. Now I'm not sure if this guy goes around picking up dog litter as well. I'm not sure if that's part of his routine, but dog litter for me is just one of those things that in my neighbourhood drives me absolutely insane.

**Andrew:** Yeah, now, as a dog owner, it drives me extra insane because I realized how easy it is and how insignificant it is to do that. So, like, you know, your dog has to go to the washroom and after it finishes its business, picking it up takes, like, 2 seconds. It's not even a big deal at all. So, for people who don't pick up after their dog, I don't understand why that is. And, you know, I've almost been tempted, this is a little gross, but it drives me nuts to the extent where I've been tempted to pick up other people's dog waste because I just hate seeing it in the park, like, it's kind of gross and disgusting. But my wife discouraged me from doing that because she said a) it's kind of nasty, and b) like that will almost encourage people more not to pick up after themselves and after their dog if they realize that somebody else is picking it up. So, I took her words into consideration, and like I usually do, I agreed with her and I haven't done that but, yeah, I'm totally on the same page as you that not picking up after your pet is kind of disrespectful for other people.

**Anna:** So disrespectful and it's just the worst thing is if you arrive, you know, you don't want to have to look down at the pavement everywhere you're walking to make sure that you don't step in anything and then arrive at work and you've stepped in something. So that really gets on my nerves. But I think it's everyone's responsibility. If you want to live in a nice, clean neighbourhood, it's everyone's responsibility to make sure you put litter in the bin and put rubbish in the correct places.

And one thing where I live, a part of Spanish culture is leaving, when people clear out their flats, they leave things on the street and it's like **fair game**. If it's left on the street, anybody can come along and pick it up, which was something new for me. So, you know, you'll be walking down the street, and then you'll see a huge mattress, a wardrobe, five chairs, a dinner table set. So it's not necessarily litter, but it's old furniture that people don't want anymore and people come along and they collect it. So that was a bit weird for me, I thought, why are you putting your mattress in the middle of the street? I don't want to see your old mattress. But in a way, it gets recycled and somebody will take it or they will dispose of it somewhere else.

But I do think it's everyone's responsibility to make sure that you keep your neighbourhood clean and nice and then you can enjoy it more. And it feels nice when you go for a walk and, which is really important now that we're maybe not travelling as much and we're spending more time in our neighbourhoods. And it's nice to have a clean neighbourhood. And as you said, it's more respectful for everybody that's living there as well.



**Andrew:** You'd have to be pretty adventurous to pick up a mattress from the side of the road and bring it home. I don't know if I would ever find myself doing that. But I think a dining room set or some nice vintage furniture piece, maybe I would take it home. I know in Canada, some communities like where I used to live in Victoria, British Columbia, there's a real kind of freebie culture there.

And most people, when they move, they will, you know, throw out many things, right? Always happens when you move, you have so many things that you need to get rid of, but instead of just throwing them in the trash, people will put them outside in front of their house with a free sign. And often on social media, the word will spread really quickly. Like there's even communities on Instagram and Facebook that are, like, **free box** finders. So if somebody is like out for a walk, and they see a **free box**, they'll take a picture and put it online. And they'll say to the community, "Hey, guys, there's like free books here, 123 Main Street, come and get them." And people will come and just pick up the free things. So I think that's a good way to reduce the amount of trash that we create when we move.

**Anna:** Yeah, and I think it's lovely because I think there's a, there's an expression in English which is **one person's rubbish is another person's treasure**. I'm not sure if that's right?

**Andrew:** **One man's trash is another man's treasure.**

**Anna:** Yeah, I'm not sure if that's quite right, but it's got the same meaning. Like one thing you don't want anymore could be amazing for somebody else. I think it's great. I love finding things or when my friends pass me things that they don't want any more. I think it's a great way to almost recycle things or, you know, reuse things rather than just throwing them all the way, which just seems like such, such a waste. I always try and pass things on to my friends if I don't want them anymore before. And as a last resort, get rid of things in the trash. I think I'm more conscious about that now especially.

**Andrew:** Anna, I think we can wrap up this episode with a fun story about the writer David Sedaris. I'm curious, have you ever read any books by David Sedaris?

**Anna:** No, never. No.

**Andrew:** No, OK. He is an American writer and essayist. A lot of his writing is personal, it's about his own life. So it's not fiction, per se, but it's mostly about him and his very unique family. He's got a really bright, eccentric family that he comes from, and his sister, Amy Sedaris, is also a famous writer, just a really interesting family. And although he's American, David Sedaris has lived abroad in Paris and in the UK, as well. And I guess because he's a writer, he probably has more free time than other people, right? He doesn't have to go to the office from 9 to 5 every day, for example, so he's got more free time than most people. And when he was living in a place called West Sussex, do you know where that is, Anna, West Sussex?

**Anna:** Yeah, yeah. West Sussex is in the UK. It's around, more or less, near London.

**Andrew:** Near London. OK, so he was living in West Sussex. And every day he would walk around his neighbourhood picking up trash. And when I say walking around, I don't just mean like a short 20-minute walk or stroll after lunch. For example, he was walking over 60,000 steps a day, he recorded his steps with his phone. And for listeners who have ever logged their steps, everybody will know that that's crazy. That's a very long distance, because when I feel like I've had a big day of walking and I look at my phone to check my steps, it's usually, like 10,000 or 15,000. So 60,000 is crazy, that's a huge amount of walking. He would walk around and pick up trash.

And he had such an impact on his community that he actually inspired the local government to **clean up their act** and become better at trash control in the community. And they actually purchased a new trash truck, a new garbage truck and they named it after David Sedaris. They asked him what he would like the truck to be called. They were, like, we're gonna buy this truck for the community and in honour of you, David Sedaris, we will let you name the truck. And because he's kind of like a funny guy and has a very unique sense of humour, he decided to call the trash truck Pig Pen Sedaris. Pig Pen Sedaris. Of course, a pig pen is where a pig lives. And there's a big picture of a pig on the side of the truck and that is how trash is collected now in West Sussex.

**Anna:** That's crazy. And just to come back to 60,000 steps, because that is crazy. Like, I remember, as you said, measuring my steps, 10,000 steps, 15,000 steps, I think the most I've ever done is, like, 38,000 steps. And that was when I was doing a hike or something like this. So 60,000, I mean, he must have some free time because I don't know what he's doing for the rest of the day. But that's got to take a few hours. But I mean, what an achievement to try and change something just by your own actions, you've been able to change and improve something at that level. I think it's really great. He must be really pleased with that. And the council, as well, I'm sure are very happy with the work that he's done.

**Andrew:** Absolutely, and to also have like a famous figure like that in your community, making a change really can inspire other people as well. So, listeners, I'm going to post the picture of the Pig Pen Sedaris garbage truck on our Instagram, with the posting for this episode. So you can see a picture of the truck because it's pretty funny. And any listener that also would like to check out David Sedaris in more detail, I'd recommend the book *Me Talk Pretty One Day*. It's a very excellent book and a great intro into his writing. He's a genius, I have to say, I think David Sedaris is a genius, and I would recommend him to anyone. So make sure to check our Instagram so you can see that funny picture that was inspired by David Sedaris.

Well, everyone, that is going to bring us to the end of this episode. Thank you so much for listening. We hope you learned a lot with us. And, hey, Anna, maybe we even inspired some people to go plogging.



**Anna:** I hope so. That would be good. Maybe in the future for me, but let's see.

**Andrew:** We'll see. We'll see.

Now, everyone, if you want to get the study guide for this episode, including the transcript and practice exercises, then you just have to visit our website, which is [Culips.com](http://Culips.com).

**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, a nice review on your podcast app, telling your friends about Culips, and following us on social media.

**Andrew:** That's right. Stay up to date with us by checking us out on YouTube and Instagram. If you have any questions or suggestions for an upcoming Culips topic that you would like to let us know about, then please contact us. Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com). We'll be back soon with another brand-new episode, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

**Anna:** See you later.

## Detailed Explanations

### Fair play Slang

**Fair play**, as a slang term, means correct or well done. It's used to show respect for someone's actions, praise something or someone, or express approval. In this episode, Anna says **fair play** to express her approval of people picking up litter. "I really think **fair play**," she says. "It's a good thing to do ... I feel that I'm quite conscious and making sure that I always put things in the bin outside in the correct places. So, I think **fair play**, but I'm not sure if it's something that I'm going to start to do around Madrid city centre, for example."

This meaning is for the UK-based slang term. English speakers from outside the United Kingdom may not be familiar with this meaning of **fair play**. Instead, they might say something like **good on you** or **right on**. That's because **fair play** is also a noun that means an action (or play) is judged to be within the rules of a game.

Here are a couple more examples with **fair play**:

**Aysha:** I can't believe how long it's been since we last saw each other. How are you? What's new?

**Felicity:** I'm good. Really good, actually. I got a promotion at work!

**Aysha:** You did! **Fair play** to you! You totally deserve it.

**Felicity:** Thanks! Yeah, it's been a lot of hard work to get here. It's so satisfying to finally be the one in charge.

**Mohammed:** So we were about to get on the highway, right? And then I thought, there are a lot of red lights that way. So I checked the traffic app and the highway is backed up for miles! So I told my friend and he turns and we take the side roads. Got home in half the time, man.

**Su-Yeong:** **Fair play!** I wouldn't have thought to check the traffic app right before getting on the highway. That was smart.

**Mohammed:** I'm so glad I did. We'd probably still be stuck in traffic right now.

## The [something] circuit Idiom

**The [something] circuit** is a series of events, gatherings, or social functions related to a hobby or interest. This includes the community—online or in-person—of people who are interested in this particular thing. For example, **the theatre circuit** is all the plays, performances, and shows put on in a city or country. In fact, the idiom was first used in show business. The **circuit** was the series of cities, towns, or clubs that performers visited when on tour.

When you're part of a **circuit**, you know what's new with that activity, as well as all the rules or regulations. In this episode, Anna says, "I'm not very plugged in to **the plogging circuit** to know about it." She means that she's not part of the plogging community, so she doesn't know all that much about how people plog.

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

**Pranee:** I can't wait for this weekend. My friends and I are going to this fancy new bar. It's got such great reviews.

**Solomon:** Oh? Which bar?

**Pranee:** The Cube. It just opened last weekend. Apparently, it's really popular with everyone in **the cocktail circuit**.

**Solomon:** Yeah, I've heard good reviews about it. There are always lines down the street, so it must be good.

**Josh:** Oh, I forgot to tell you. I saw Stephen the other day.

**Katherine:** Stephen! How is he doing? Last time I saw him was at our graduation.

**Josh:** He says he's doing really well. He's been travelling the country competing on **the rodeo circuit**. Said he's won a few awards and is competing for the national championship this summer.

**Katherine:** Good for him! We'll have to see if we can get tickets to cheer for him when he competes.

## Fair game

Noun

**Fair game** means open and available to be attacked, hunted, or taken. When **fair game** refers to an object, it means it's available for anyone to take. For example, in this episode Andrew says people "leave things on the street and it's like **fair game** ... Anybody can come along and pick it up."

When **fair game** refers to a person or group of people, it means they're likely to be criticized, spoken about, or followed in some way. For example, celebrities are **fair game** for tabloids. Tabloid writers are allowed to criticize celebrities, and photographers will try to take their picture.

Here are a couple more examples with **fair game**:

**Hector:** Did you take the last burger?

**Shun:** Yeah. Why?

**Hector:** I was saving that for lunch tomorrow.

**Shun:** Well, dude, you know the house rules. Anything left on the counter after dinner is **fair game**.

**Hector:** I just stepped into the living room to get a dirty glass. How did you eat it so fast?

**Rina:** Ha, this comic is so funny! Look how he's drawn that politician who was on the news last night.

**Chelsea:** Ha, that's really good. Though, like, why can cartoonists draw stuff like that. Won't they get in trouble?

**Rina:** Oh, politicians are always **fair game** to cartoonists! I don't know for sure, but it's, like, their job to make fun of the people in power.

**Chelsea:** Ah, yeah, that makes sense. It's kinda like the role the jester played back when there were kings and queens everywhere.

**Rina:** Exactly. They're supposed to, like, point out the king's shortcomings, or whatever.

## Free box

Noun

A **free box** is a box or location where people can leave old or unwanted things for other people to take. It's like a donation centre, pawn shop, or garage sale, only without money or a shopkeeper involved. When someone wants to get rid of an item that is still useful, they bring it to a **free box** and leave it there. Someone else can then come by and take the item home. If no one claims the items in the **free box** after a certain amount of time, all the items go to a charity. **Free boxes** are one way that communities can reduce the amount of stuff they throw in the garbage.

**Free boxes** are popular in some Canadian and American cities. As Andrew mentions in this episode, "there's even communities on Instagram and Facebook that are, like, **free box** finders ... They'll say to the community, 'Hey, guys, there's like free books here, 123 Main Street, come and get them.'"

Here are a couple more examples with **free box**:

**Terry:** Whew! After a whole day of hard work, we've finally finished cleaning the apartment.

**Noboru:** I'm so glad that's done. The place looks great, too, which is the best part.

**Terry:** All except that pile of stuff we don't need in the corner of the living room.

**Noboru:** I was trying to forget that pile existed.

**Terry:** All of it is still in good condition, so I'll take it down to the **free box** after I've had a drink.

**Noboru:** Would you? You're the best!

**Diana:** Do you know if there are any **free boxes** around the office?

**Jackson:** I don't, sorry. Have something you need to get rid of?

**Diana:** Yeah. Hmm, OK, I'll check online. Maybe there's a list of all the **free boxes** in the city somewhere.

## One man's trash is another man's treasure

### Proverb

**One man's trash is another man's treasure** means what one person considers worthless might be valuable to someone else. This proverb dates back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century or earlier, and is used to show that people have different tastes. What one person likes, someone else might not.

There are many different versions of this saying, such as: **one man's rubbish may be another's treasure**, **one man's meat is another man's poison**, **what's one man's pleasure is another's pain**, and **one man's loss is another man's gain**.

In this episode, Andrew and Anna are discussing the free box and how people will give away the things they don't want. "I think it's lovely because ... **One person's rubbish is another person's treasure**," Anna says. "Like one thing you don't want anymore could be amazing for somebody else. I think it's great."

Here are a couple more examples with **one man's trash is another man's treasure**:

**Iona:** Why is it that every time we pass things left on the sidewalk or near garbage bins, you slow down and look at it? What are you looking for?

**Masami:** People throw out perfectly fine, usable things, in my opinion. I find those perfectly good things, take them home, and clean them up. Usually I can fix them up or use them in a project to create something new. I sell them, sometimes.

**Iona:** And people buy them?

**Masami:** Yup! As they say, **one man's trash is another man's treasure**. In this case, my treasure is the money I make selling them.

**Kyung-Sook:** Did you see the new painting Ji-U got for her living room?

**Lucas:** I did. It's hideous, so ugly.

**Kyung-Sook:** Oh. I quite liked it! Very Jackson Pollock inspired.

**Lucas:** Hmm, well, **one man's rubbish is another's treasure**.



## To clean up [one's] act

Idiom

**To clean up [one's] act** means to start behaving and acting responsibly, especially after being irresponsible. Many English speakers say this phrase when talking about someone who gave up alcohol, drugs, or other illegal activities. But **cleaning up your act** can refer to anything from giving up alcohol to changing how you dress. As long as the person is making an effort to behave better, the phrase applies.

Organizations and groups can also **clean up their acts**. Take, for example, a company that doesn't allow their employees to take bathroom breaks. This is causing employees health issues and is also morally wrong. The company then **cleans up their act** by giving their employees longer breaks.

Here are a couple more examples with **to clean up [one's] act**:

**Michi:** I read a really interesting article today. It was about that actress, I can't remember her name. She was in nearly every 90s movie, though, then just stopped acting one day.

**Leonie:** Oh! I know the one you're talking about.

**Michi:** The article said that she was, I guess, really difficult to work with back then. Making unreasonable demands of the staff and throwing temper tantrums.

**Leonie:** Yikes. I suppose that means no one wanted to work with her.

**Michi:** Exactly. But she's **cleaned up her act**, apparently. She's in a movie coming out this summer.

**Leonie:** Good for her! Let's try to go see it.

**Andre:** That's it! I'm **cleaning up my act**.

**Hideki:** Oh? What prompted this sudden decision?

**Andre:** I've been to at least one job interview per week for the last month, and none of them have offered me the job. There must be something I'm doing wrong.

**Hideki:** Maybe you just don't interview well? Not everyone does.

**Andre:** That's what I was thinking, too. I'm going to research how I can improve.

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following means people have different tastes?**

- a) one man's treasure is another man's, too
- b) one man's trash is that man's treasure
- c) one man's trash is another man's treasure
- d) one man's trash belongs in a bin

**2. Something left in a free box is fair game. What does that mean?**

- a) it's available for anyone to take for free
- b) it belongs to someone
- c) it's garbage
- d) it's been set aside by the owner to be used, for free, during the next big sports match

**3. Which of the following might you use to describe a community of people interested in board games, as well as the events they attend?**

- a) the board game carrot
- b) the board game chorus
- c) the board game circus
- d) the board game circuit

**4. If someone says that something you did is fair play, what do they mean?**

- a) you played a game
- b) you did a good job
- c) you went to a play at a fair
- d) you need to try again

**5. Which of the following means Paul has started behaving better?**

- a) Paul is clean
- b) Paul cleaned up his room
- c) Paul cleaned up his act
- d) Paul doesn't need to clean

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Do you agree with Anna when she says fair play about people who go plogging? Why or why not?
2. Are you plugged into the plogging circuit? If so, what is a tip you would give to someone new to plogging? If not, is plogging something you might be interested in trying?
3. Are there free boxes or something similar in your area? Have you ever used them? Why or why not?
4. Describe something that, to you, fits the expression one man's trash is another man's treasure.
5. Has anyone you know ever had to clean up their act? Why?

## Quiz Answers

1.c    2.a    3.d    4.b    5.c

### Episode credits

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