

Chatterbox #286 – Life hacks

Episode description

What are some of your favourite life hacks? That's the topic of discussion for this Chatterbox episode. Join Andrew and Anna as they share some of their favourite shortcuts for optimizing and organizing their lives and work.

Chatterbox is the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners. Each episode features a natural conversation between native speakers about a fascinating topic. By learning English with Chatterbox, you'll be able to build your fluency, listening skills, and vocabulary.

Fun fact

Andrew and Anna both name drop YouTube channels in this episode. Andrew watches The Bliss Bean (<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheBlissBean>) for productivity tips and Anna likes The Minimalists (<https://www.youtube.com/c/TheMinimalists>). Check out these channels if you're looking to learn some new life hacks!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To write [someone] off
- Sounds like my kind of [something]
- To be on the same page
- To knock out [something]
- A hoarder
- On hand



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.

Hello, listeners. Welcome back to Culips. This is Chatterbox, which is the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners that features natural conversations between native speakers about an interesting topic. Today, I'm joined by my cohost, Anna. Hey there, Anna, how are you?

Anna: I'm great, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: I'm doing fantastic as well, Anna, and I think we have a good episode for everyone here today. We are going to talk about life hacks.

Anna: Yes. Something I'm really obsessed with at the moment, so I'm looking forward to sharing some of my favourite ones.

Andrew: Yeah, me too. I have some life hacks that I'll share with you and the listeners, and I can't wait to find out what your life hacks are as well, Anna. Perhaps they might just change my life. I don't know, we'll find out.

But before we get to our conversation, we should let everyone know about the transcript and study guide that's available for this episode for all Culips members. And following along with the guide while you listen, everyone, is really the best way to study with this episode. And by becoming a Culips member, you'll not only support us, and keep allowing us to make English lessons for people all over the world, but you will have a tool kit that will help you to improve your English communication skills. So to become a member and to get the study guide, just visit our website, Culips.com.

Anna: We also wanted to give a shout-out to our listener Sarah from Castbox, who left us a lovely review. And you said, "Hi, I like your podcast very much. It's super useful and full of new things! The variety of topics makes it easy to learn, and you never get tired of listening. Thank you so much." Well, thank you to you, Sarah. That's a lovely review.

Andrew: Yeah, thank you so much for that review, Sarah. I agree, variety is the spice of life. And that's why we try to just come up with a bunch of different episode topics for all of our listeners so that they can stay motivated when listening to us. So, we really do appreciate that feedback.

And, listeners, if you could help us out by leaving us a positive review and a five-star rating on Apple Podcast or whatever platform you use to listen to Culips, that would really help us out and allow more English language learners from around the world connect and study with us. And even if your podcast app doesn't have a rate or review option, then you could always hit the like button or subscribe to us on that app. That would go a long way, as well.

All right, Anna, all of the business is out of the way. So I think we can get on to today's topic, and we're going to chat about life hacks. And I think probably the best place to start is by defining what a life hack is, because probably this expression is new to some of our listeners. So, could you break it down for us, Anna, what exactly is a life hack?

Anna: Life hack, I guess the first thing to say is this is an informal expression or term which has kind of appeared over the last few years. And a hack is something which makes you achieve something easier or quicker or more efficiently. So, a life hack is just something that makes your life easier, quicker, maybe it makes you more efficient, more productive, more economical. Any of those things can be considered a life hack. And, of course, life hack has many different categories. We can talk about cooking, technology, beauty, there's many different types of hacks.

Andrew: Hacks about anything that can make your life easier. Like you said, it's almost like a shortcut, right? Just a better way to do something that will result in you being more productive or more organized or something like that. It will have a good result.

Anna: At the moment, I'm obsessed. So, I'm, as I get older, I like to be very efficient and very productive. And I get, like, a lot of satisfaction out of things being very efficient. Like, I really love that. In my personal life, actually, more than in my professional life, but I just love organizing things. I love finding, for example, the perfect box to put something in. I just love it. So I've been obsessed with watching life hack videos on YouTube and learning about little tricks that other people use to make their lives a little bit more efficient.

Andrew: Most of the life hacks that you watch, then, are they about staying organized and being organized, like in your life or business? Or what kind of hacks are they, exactly?

Anna: Yeah. So, some of them are about learning ways to do things that perhaps you never knew. I'm going to give you a typical example, OK?

Andrew: Sure.

Anna: I was watching a video that said most people use bin bags incorrectly. So, most people, you take a bin bag, you open it, you put it on the bin. But, actually, this is inside out.

Andrew: Oh, really? OK.

Anna: You have to turn the bin bag inside out. You have to put it on top of the bin and then push it in. And I hadn't realized that my whole life, I was using bin bags inside out. Not really a life hack, I have to say, it doesn't really make my life much easier, much more efficient. But now I'm doing or I'm using bin bags the correct way. So, this is an example of a less useful life hack, I would say.

Andrew: It's almost like a life lesson.

Anna: A life lesson, exactly.

Andrew: I love that, though.

Anna: Yeah, I never knew it that I was using bin bags the wrong way. I was, like, I had absolutely no idea. And also, I was using tinfoil, the way that you rip tinfoil in the packets, I was also doing that wrong as well. So I learned about all these funny things as well on these videos.

But I also like learning about productivity hacks, but I think, for those types of things, it's super personal. I don't know about you, Andrew, but I find those types of things, it's really difficult to have one rule for everybody, because everybody has a very different life, different job, different ways to be productive. So how do you, what are your life hacks for being more productive? I'd love to know, I'd love to know that.

Andrew: Well, I'll get to those in just a sec. But before we move on, I just wanted to take a step back for a second because I love how you used the expression bin bag, which is so UK English. In fact, in Canada, we would say garbage bag or trash bag. So, I just thought I would point that out to our listeners, that that's a big difference between North American English and UK English, bin bag and garbage bag or trash bag.

So, I have to give a shout-out to a YouTube channel that I just randomly came across one day, actually on the Culips YouTube channel. I was doing some maintenance of the channel, uploading a video or something and I got recommended a channel and I can't remember exactly what the video was. But it must have appealed to me in some way because I clicked on it. And it was by a channel called The Bliss Bean. B-L-I-S-S B-E-A-N.

And The Bliss Bean channel is actually run by quite a youngster. I think this channel operator, this creator, is maybe a high school student or just entering into university. But her channel is amazing and it's all about staying organized. She runs her own small business and her YouTube channel is fairly successful as well. So, she's, you know, a busy person. So she has lots of advice about staying organized, running a YouTube channel, just productivity hacks in general.

So I would highly recommend her YouTube channel for anyone that wants, like, tech advice for little shortcuts or apps that you can use that will help your workflow. I don't know, I thought it was kind of funny that I was taking all this advice from such a young person, like, since she was a high school student. But I've learned so many good things from The Bliss Bean, so I can't **write her off**. I'm actually very thankful for what I've learned on her channel.

Anna: That **sounds like my kind of channel**.

Andrew: Yeah, actually. I think these days she's in Spain, Anna. I think she just moved to Spain, as far as I know. I haven't kept up to date with the channel a lot recently but, yeah, maybe you'll see her walking around on the streets of Spain. I don't know.

Anna: Oh, she can give me some coaching, my productivity coaching or something, or something like this. I think for me, in terms of productivity, none of the hacks that I use, for example, are very revolutionary. You know, they're not very techy. The one thing I would say I found a system that I really like, it's like a note-taking platform. People take notes, they have agendas, and in many different ways. In fact, I don't really use an agenda. I mean, a calendar, like a typical email calendar like most people have. And I have my schedule there, but I don't really use it though. I actually really have everything in my head. I'm very good at remembering everything. Yeah, I'm not really sure how I do that. But I never forget anything if I have, like, a specific time, or, well, I say never, I don't want to put myself to that. But I'm very good at remembering my schedule. And then I use, like, a note-taking platform to manage my week. So I always manage on a week basis.

And I try to think about what I have to do the night before. That is a huge hack, because then you wake up, you know what you've got to do, you don't waste time thinking about, "Oh, what have I got to do today?" Or you've got an idea of what you're doing for the week. And it just helps me be way more focused and not waste any of my time, or not waste as much time. Of course, everybody wastes time, it's impossible not to, really, but that I find, that and also getting up early. That is the biggest one for me, is waking up early. Get up early, get the things done in the morning, and you've won, or you've gained 2 hours. Especially for teachers like us, Andrew, I'm sure you'll, we, you know, we work a lot, so you have to make the most of, like, whatever time you have. And I find the morning is just perfect for doing work. So I like to get up early.

Andrew: Yeah, Anna, I completely agree with you. We're totally **on the same page** there. I also love waking up early in the morning, and I find, for studying or working, it's my most productive time of the day. If I can **knock out a few hours of work** in the morning before my wife and dog wake up, then I've won the day. Like you said, it's fantastic.

Former guest on Culips, Matt vs Japan, he runs his own YouTube channel about language learning, I learned a great life hack from him. I don't know if this works on Android phones or only iPhones. I happen to use an iPhone, so it works perfectly for me. But it comes down to getting to sleep early at night, which ties into your point of waking up early in the morning because if you want to wake up early in the morning to work, you have to go to bed early at night.

So what I learnt from Matt vs Japan was about setting time limits on your iPhone. So at 11 p.m. at night, all of my apps shut down. So I think there's only one or two apps that I allow to stay open. I think my phone, so if somebody calls me, but it's not just anybody. If my wife calls me or my parents call me, it will come through, but I think everybody else is blocked after 11 p.m. And maybe I have one app, I can't remember, my email or something. So, if I get an email after 11 p.m., it's OK. But every other app is closed down. Now it's not completely closed down, but it's just annoying to open it back up. Like, I get this pop-up and have to click through some other things to open it up. So, on weekdays, usually, actually, from Sunday evening until Thursday evening, everything shuts down at 11. And I find that really helps me to put my phone down and go to bed. So I'm not just wasting time in the evening.

And another life hack for iPhone users, I'll share another one that I've learned from YouTube. I don't know who taught me this one but that's where I learned it, was that if you take your iPhone, and you hit the volume up button three times, it will turn your phone screen to a black and white display. So, it will take all of your colour off of your screen and turn it to greyscale. And that is really good for when you're just, like, wasting time on Instagram and mindlessly flicking through photos, because if you take away the colour, suddenly images are not very interesting to look at. And so occasionally I'll do that. I'll just turn it on greyscale. And it gets boring. And I put my phone down and then I'll go and do something else. Hopefully the thing that I do is more productive than just wasting time on social media.

But those are my two saving-time hacks so that you can go to sleep earlier and then ultimately wake up earlier in the morning.

Anna: Yeah, I mean, you're absolutely right. You've got to go to bed early, but I had no idea about the greyscale one, that's fantastic. Well, I'm stealing that because I think these are really the most important life hacks, because you know, you can do your best during the day, you're not tired. One thing I do with my phone because I have a bad habit that I developed during the quarantine, which was looking at my phone at night. And I got into a really bad habit. And I said OK, enough. So, I put a limit, well I'm trying, I'm working on it. So, after 11:00, the plan is not to use any technology, not my laptop, not my phone, and I actually bought a little box. It's like a little black box and I put my phone inside that black box. And this is actually something I learned from a really amazing channel, which is called The Minimalists.

Andrew: OK.

Anna: There are two guys, they're super famous, they have a podcast, and they're very well known. But they talk about how to kind of live your life in a minimalist way. Trying to not be too focused on technology, trying to give yourself some time away from your phone. And one of the things they, one of the guys recommended is, like, physically putting your phone in a place, like a box or on a shelf somewhere so that it's just like a, I don't know, I think it's just mentally, it's in a different place. And that's actually worked quite well for me.

And also buying an alarm clock rather than using my phone as an alarm, so that I don't have to have my phone next to me when I'm sleeping. So I set my alarm clock so that it wakes me up. And my phone is in another place, because I think that was one of the reasons why I kept my phone with me, close to my bed is because it was my alarm. And so, it was more tempting to pick it up. So that's one thing that's working well for me.

But I mean, I have many hacks. I'm going to mention another one, actually. One of my biggest life hacks, which I've developed in the last few months is always having reserves of things. I never like to run out of, like, my favourite beauty product or mouthwash or, like, I hate that, hate running out when you're at home and you're like, ah, so I have like a beautifully organized drawer with, like, all of my reserves. So as soon as I use something, I have another one to use. I just love it. It makes me feel so happy that I have these reserve things. I don't overstock.

Andrew: OK, you're not a **hoarder**.

Anna: I'm not a **hoarder**, but I just love to have, like, an extra set of the things I like, face cream, soap, toothbrushes, like, I just love it, I get so much. That's a life hack for me because you're never, you never have a situation where you're like, oh my god, I ran out of toothpaste or, you know, and it's really, really annoying. Milk, as well, I stock milk. Because I always run out of milk and I hate it. So now I have this little, like, section in my kitchen to store milk. Yeah, it's a bit weird, but yeah.

Andrew: That's like a money-saving tip, as well. I don't do that, really. Sometimes I do, I'll buy in bulk and keep things **on hand**. But our apartment here in Seoul is pretty small. So, it's a little bit challenging to do that. But I totally know what you mean. When you run out of something, that in that moment, you usually just maybe go to a convenience store or just buy one quickly to restock it. And you end up spending more money.

And me, personally, this last week, I was too busy to go grocery shopping. And my wife was also too busy to go grocery shopping. We had a crazy week, we're super busy. And so, our house, we kind of ran out of groceries, we didn't have any food in the house. And when that happens, I really hate it because then we start making unhealthy food choices. We're, like, way more likely to go to a restaurant or just to go to the store and grab something that's pre-prepared to eat or order delivery or something like that. So we finally went grocery shopping today, we restocked. But, yeah, I think that's a great tip, just in general, is like have enough supplies **on hand** so you don't run out, because when you run out, you spend money and you make bad decisions. And it's just not good.

Anna: No, not good. I don't know why I developed that recently. It's like only in the past few months. But I just love it, especially with beauty products, because I just, I hate running out of, like, my favourite creams or anything like that. So I've got my little drawer, all organized.

And another thing that I really like to organize is my recycling, because I've also become completely crazy about recycling. So I actually measured. We have, like, a small space in the kitchen, and I measured it exactly. And I bought these, like, three boxes, which fit perfectly in this space, so that we can recycle properly. Because it used to really irritate me that we weren't recycling or, I don't know what the recycling is like in Korea, but you know, we have to separate paper and glass and plastic and it was just a bit of a mess.

And this is a bit of a life hack, because it means that we can recycle efficiently. And I just bought these little bags and they're different colours. So, it's really easy to see which, where you need to recycle. I think my flatmates thought I was a little bit crazy. But if you don't recycle properly, sometimes they check the bins and they give your flat building a fine, you know, and then everyone gets really annoyed because they're, like, who hasn't been recycling properly? So, they'll thank me later when we don't have any fines.

Andrew: Now, we have a very similar system in South Korea where we have to separate everything and organize by the kind of recycling, like glass and plastic and paper and Styrofoam, etc, etc. But we have an area outside of our building and we can just put it down there any old time. So, usually every time my wife or I leave and maybe we have, you know, a cardboard box or something to throw out, we'll just leave it down there on our way out of the building. What about you, do you have that kind of system where you live, as well? Or do you have to put it out on a specific day of the week?

Anna: Yeah, we have like a specific day and we have to do after 8:00. And it's kind of similar, but we have specific times. But I'm just really glad that now we can do it efficiently and it's very productive and it's not messy. I hate messy bins.

Andrew: So, Anna, I have one more question here for you about life hacks before we wrap this episode up. And that is, you know, these days we've name-dropped a lot of different YouTube channels and creators that talk about life hacks. And we both talked about how we've watched content on life hacks on YouTube. And it's just exploding in popularity. So my question for you is why do you think this is? Why do you think people are making so much content about life hacks on social media? And why do you think we're so hooked on learning about these hacks? Why are they so interesting to us as viewers?

Anna: I think partly because we just have less and less time. We're always trying to fit more into our schedules, do more, learn more, work more. So the time that we have really to do the day-to-day things is shrinking, I think, little by little. So I think we're always looking for, for ways to be more efficient. And I think it is just that thing, coming back to what I said, it's satisfying, things that are efficient and productive. It's, just, you get a satisfaction from it that is just, like, I don't know, I think that's why people are kind of a little bit addicted to learning different life hacks, because it just makes you feel good. Like, I feel good if I'm productive, like I'm, like, go me, like, that was good, you know? I think that maybe, maybe is why people, people like it, that sense of satisfaction and doing something well.

Andrew: I think in my case, it might be almost procrastination, ironically, because I feel like if I'm watching a life hack video or I'm learning about a new way to do something, it's kind of like I'm working. It's kind of like I'm being productive, right? So I can tell myself, like, oh, yeah, you're working, you're, like, learning this new, new way to do something more effectively. So I can kind of lie to myself. But at the same time, if I were to just do the work that I have to do, then that would ultimately probably be more productive at the end of the day. So, I don't know. Maybe in my case, I procrastinate a little bit by watching this kind of content. So I have to be careful with myself not to get too into it or too addicted, because I think, you know, these productivity hacks might ultimately end up being time-wasting hacks. And I want to avoid that, for sure.

Anna: That's an interesting point of view. I see what you mean. OK. Interesting.

Andrew: Yes, that's just me, I have a kind of addictive personality, especially when I start going down a YouTube rabbit hole. It can be dangerous, but

Anna, you shared some great hacks. Thank you for telling us all about the ones that you have incorporated into your life. And I would love to hear from our listeners, as well, to hear what they have to say. I'm sure there are some of our listeners out there who are interested in life hacks, and maybe who have some great ones to share with us. I know there are a lot of hacks about language learning and English learning, specifically, as well. So, guys, if you have any tips or hacks about productivity or staying organized or learning English more efficiently or studying better, any of those things, drop us a line and share them with us. Our email address is contact@Culips.com and we would certainly love to hear from you.

If you enjoy Culips and find us helpful for building your English language skills, then we would love it if you could support us. There are several ways that you can do that. The best way is by signing up to become a Culips member on our website, Culips.com. But that's not the only way. You can also follow us on social media, tell your friends who are learning English to check us out, and to leave us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcast, Castbox, or whichever application you use to listen to Culips.

We'll be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye everyone.

Anna: See you later.

Detailed Explanations

To write [someone] off

Phrasal verb

To write [someone] off means to ignore or not pay attention to them. In this episode, Andrew talks about watching a productivity and life hacks YouTube channel called The Bliss Bean. He says that the woman who runs the channel is quite young, but despite her age her advice is good so he can't **write her off**. In other words, her good advice should not be ignored just because she is young.

If you **write someone off**, it means that you have decided that someone is not important, useful, or worth listening to. For example, people on a busy downtown street might **write a homeless man off** and walk by him while he sits on the corner. Or a car salesperson at a luxury car dealership could **write a customer off** if that customer is wearing a plain and simple outfit. The salesperson might think the customer can't afford a luxury car just by looking at the clothes the customer is wearing.

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

Keanu: We're short one player for our soccer game on Tuesday night. Do you know anyone who could play with us?

Amy: I'd love to play with you guys!

Keanu: Have you ever played soccer before?

Amy: Sure! I played all the time in high school. I might not look like a great athlete, but don't **write me off** because of that. I'm in great shape, actually!

Keanu: OK, awesome. The game starts at 7 p.m. in Central Park.

Lisa: I was really impressed with Nick's presentation at this morning's meeting.

Matthew: Me too! To be honest, since he's so introverted I kind of **wrote him off** before. Turns out he is a great public speaker.

Lisa: Agreed. My expectations were low, but he totally impressed me. We should ask him to make another presentation at next month's meeting.

Matthew: Great idea. Let's do that!

Sounds like my kind of [something]

Phrase

In this episode, Andrew introduces Anna to The Bliss Bean YouTube channel. After learning about it, Anna says, “**Sounds like my kind of channel.**” When you say that a thing **sounds like your kind of [something]**, it means it seems like something you will like because you like things that are similar to it. So, in other words, Anna’s comment means that she thinks she will enjoy The Bliss Bean because she likes similar YouTube channels.

There are many situations in daily life when we can use this phrase. For example, if you see a TV commercial for a new restaurant that is opening and the items on the menu look delicious, you could say, “**Sounds like my kind of restaurant!**” Or If a coworker tells you about an fascinating book and you become interested in reading it, you could say, “**Sounds like my kind of book!**” Or if a friend invites you to go on a summer camping trip and you really want to go along, you could say, “Sure, **sounds like my kind of trip!**”

Here are a couple more examples with **sounds like my kind of [something]**:

Kimberly: I can’t wait for you to meet my new boyfriend. You guys will get along so well.

James: Why do you think so?

Kimberly: He loves soccer, cars, and working out, just like you do!

James: Really? That’s awesome. He **sounds like my kind of guy.**

Kimberly: Yeah, he’s great!

Jennifer: It’s my birthday on Friday and I’m having a party. I’d love for you to come.

Daniel: You know, I’m not really a party person. How about we just meet up for coffee next week instead?

Jennifer: I should clarify. It’s not going to be a big house party, just a small dinner party. I’ve only invited four people. We’ll just eat dinner, have a drink, and wrap up before 10:00.

Daniel: Well, that **sounds like my kind of party!** OK, sure. I’d love to go

To be on the same page

Idiom

In this episode, Anna talks about how she likes to wake up early so she can do some work. In response to this, Andrew says, "I completely agree with you. We're totally **on the same page** there." If two or more people **are on the same page**, it means that they agree with each other, have the same opinion, or are working together to achieve the same goal. So, in other words, when Andrew says that he and Anna **are on the same page**, he means that he agrees that the morning is a good time to do some work.

To be on the same page is commonly used in everyday conversations and is also used often in business situations. For example, if a company wants to be successful, the managers and employees need **to be on the same page**. And if the company wants to increase sales, then the sales team should **be on the same page** as their clients. Finally, at the end of a meeting, a team leader might conclude by saying, "Now that we're **all on the same page**, let's work hard to finish this project!" If the team is **on the same page** by the end of the meeting, it means that they all share the same vision and goal.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be on the same page**:

Emily: Well, that was a frustrating meeting.

Jack: Right? I think we just wasted 2 hours of our lives.

Emily: And we're having another staff meeting at the end of next week, too.

Jack: That's also going to be a huge waste of time if management, human resources, and our team aren't **on the same page**. I really hope our team leader can work with management to solve the problem as soon as possible.

Emily: Me too! I can't keep having these long meetings. I've got work to do!

Megan: Did you hear the announcement about the new music classes?

Joseph: Yeah! That's such great news for our kids.

Megan: I'm glad parents, teachers, and school administrators **are all on the same page** about how important music education is in elementary schools.

Joseph: Absolutely! My son is very excited to start learning violin and my daughter wants to try the trumpet.

To knock out [something]

Phrasal verb

While Andrew and Anna are talking about waking up early in the morning to work, Andrew says, “If I can **knock out a few hours of work** in the morning before my wife and dog wake up, then I’ve won the day.” **To knock out [something]** means to do, make, or produce something quickly and easily. In other words, Andrew says that if he can quickly and easily finish a few hours of work in the morning, then he feels like the day has been successful. When you complete a task easily and without much effort, you **knock out the task**. **To knock out [something]** is a very casual expression. It is fine to use in everyday conversations, but should be avoided in important situations or in serious writing.

The object—or the [something]—in this phrasal verb can go either before or after the preposition out. So, you can make sentences like **knock out [something]** or **knock [something] out**. Both mean the same thing.

Be careful to not confuse **knock out [something]** with the phrasal verb knock out [someone]. Although the two look and sound similar, they mean very different things. To knock out [someone] means to hit someone in the head and cause that person to lose consciousness.

Here are a couple more examples with **to knock out [something]**:

Chloe: How is your PhD dissertation coming along?

Lewis: Great! **I knocked out a whole chapter** last night.

Chole: That’s amazing! When do you think you’ll finish?

Lewis: I’m hoping for the middle of next month at the latest.

Chole: You’re almost there. Keep up the good work!

Hannah: Do you want to go for a run this afternoon?

William: I already went running today.

Hannah: Really? When?

William: I woke up early and **knocked out 10 kilometres** at around 7:00.

A hoarder

Noun

A hoarder is a person who collects and keeps a very large number of possessions. This expression is related to the verb **to hoard**, which means to collect a large amount of something because it might be useful or valuable in the future. For example, some squirrels and birds hoard seeds and nuts so that they don't run out of food during the winter.

In this episode, Anna talks about buying household supplies in advance so that she never runs out of something. She adds that she doesn't overstock. That means that she doesn't buy an excessive amount. In response to this, Andrew says, "OK, you're not **a hoarder**." In this situation, Anna is not a **hoarder** because she doesn't buy way more supplies than she needs. She just buys enough so that she doesn't run out.

On the other hand, someone who is **a hoarder** will collect and store many, many things. This behaviour is a mental health condition known as hoarding disorder. People who live with hoarding disorder often collect an excessive number of things and are unable to throw out or sell them, even if they are not valuable. Sometimes, a **hoarder's** house will become unlivable because it is completely filled and cluttered with possessions. It is estimated that between 2% and 5% of adults have a hoarding disorder.

Sometimes English speakers use this expression in a humorous way to refer to people who have a mildly dirty house or have difficulty throwing things away. In this episode, Andrew uses the word lightly when talking with Anna.

Here's one more example with **a hoarder**:

Sophie: Wow, this lamp is amazing! Where did you get it?

Myles: I bought it at a flea market last weekend.

Sophie: I love it!

Myles: Thanks! There were so many incredible things for sale at the flea market. I wanted to buy them all, but if I did, I'd be **a hoarder**. So I resisted and only bought the lamp.

Sophie: Well, you made an excellent choice. It looks great!

On hand Idiom

In this episode, Andrew says that he sometimes buys in bulk and keeps things **on hand**. If you buy something in bulk, it means that you buy a large amount of something. It is often cheaper to buy groceries and household products in bulk. For example, buying a 5-litre jug of dish soap is usually cheaper per unit than buying a small 300-millilitre bottle. And when you have something **on hand**, it means that something is available to you and easy to access. In other words, Andrew sometimes buys more than he needs in the moment and stores the extra in his house until he needs to use it.

On hand is most often used with the verbs to be, to have, and to keep.

This idiom can be used to talk about both things and people. For example, if you go on a hike, you might want to have extra snacks **on hand**, just to make sure you have some available in case you encounter a problem on the hike. Or the organizers of a soccer tournament might want to have a doctor **on hand**. If one of the soccer players gets injured while playing, then they can easily access medical treatment.

Here are a couple more examples with **on hand**:

Olivia: Paper towels are on sale right now, two packages for the price of one. We should go buy some before the sale ends.

Antonio: That's a great idea. They're always good to have **on hand**.

Olivia: I'll stop by the store after work. Do you need anything else?

Antonio: I think we're almost out of milk. Would you mind picking some up?

Olivia: No problem!

Molly: Did you get your car fixed yet?

Edward: No. It's still in the shop.

Molly: Why is it taking so long to get fixed? It's been there over a week.

Edward: The mechanic didn't have the part he needed **on hand**, so he had to order it from Germany. He said it will take at least another week before it arrives.

Quiz

1. Jeff knocked out his chores and then went and met his friends.

In the above sentence, knocked out means that Jeff did his chores:

- a) with difficulty
- b) poorly
- c) quickly
- d) strongly

2. If two people are on the same page, then they _____ with each other.

- a) agree
- b) argue
- c) play
- d) live

3. Tea bags were on sale, so I bought some extra to have _____.

- a) off hand
- b) on hand
- c) around hand
- d) with hand

4. What is a person who collects and keeps too many things called?

- a) an antiquarian
- b) a treasurer
- c) a saver
- d) a hoarder

5. When could you say, “Sounds like my kind of café”?

- a) when the café plays good music
- b) when you have visited the café before
- c) when a café you think you will enjoy is recommended to you
- d) when you hear a rumour that the café serves terrible coffee

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Has someone ever written you off? Describe the situation and what it felt like. Additionally, have you ever written someone off? Why did you do that?
2. Discuss a time when you and someone else were on the same page. What did you both agree about?
3. Do you buy in bulk and keep things on hand? If so, what? If not, why not?
4. Are there any tasks, chores, jobs, etc. that you can knock out quickly and easily?
5. Do you know anyone who is a hoarder? What is their lifestyle like?

Quiz Answers

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

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