

Chatterbox #290 – Is bread the world's favourite food?

Episode description

Bread is a staple around the world. Every culture has its own version or style, from India's naan to Brazil's pão de queijo. In today's episode, Andrew and Anna chat about bread and what makes it so delicious (and popular).

The Chatterbox series is designed for intermediate and advanced English learners. Each episode features natural, unedited conversations between native speakers, so you can build your English vocabulary while learning about interesting topics, like bread.

Fun fact

Bread was once used as an eraser. Prior to the 1770s—and the creation of today's modern erasers—people would use de-crusted, moistened, balled-up bread to erase unwanted pencil marks.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Happy to report
- On the [adjective] end/side
- Bad press
- Stumped
- Nerve racking
- Across the pond



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, everyone. Welcome back to Culips. You're listening to Chatterbox, which is the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners that features natural, unedited conversations between native speakers about interesting topics or trending current events or hot issues. Today, I'm joined by my cohost, Anna. Hey there, Anna.

Anna: Hi, Andrew. And hello, listeners. So, the topic for today's episode is bread. Yes, I think there is nothing better than bread, which is not only a delicious subject to talk about, but the one that I think nearly all of our listeners can relate to.

Andrew: I think so, Anna, because, you know, bread is really a universal food and people from all corners of the globe enjoy it. And I am certainly one of those people who enjoy it. So I'm excited to talk about this topic with you here today.

Anna: So, everyone, we'll get started in just a moment. But before we do, I want to tell you that there is a study guide and a transcript available for this episode. In the study guide, you'll find detailed vocabulary definitions and examples, a quiz, plus prompts that you can use for speaking and writing practice. And we recommend following along with the guide while you listen to the episode.

Andrew: Now to get the study guide for this episode, everyone, you just need to sign up and become a Culips member. And you can find all of the details and sign up on our website, which is Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Becoming a member helps support the work that we do here at Culips, but it also gives you access to all of the learning materials and tools that we make to help you improve your English and to get fluent faster.

Now at the start of each episode, we always love to give a shout-out to one of our listeners who has left us a review or a message. And recently we received an absolutely lovely little message and story from one of our listeners from Austria, actually, named Miriam, who left that review on Apple Podcasts. Anna, I thought this was such a cute little story and maybe you could read it for all of our listeners.

Anna: I certainly will. OK, Miriam, you said, “Until February 2021, my English skills were on a school-based level. I needed it sometimes at work, but not in my private life. This changed when I met my partner 1 year ago. He’s from Finland and went abroad for work, which brought him near to the place I live. We found each other on an online dating app. And since it was strict COVID lockdown at that time, we spent many weeks texting each other and later also video calls before we met in person. Right from the beginning, it was clear that our common language must be English, since his German skills are still on a beginner level. So, it was on me to improve my language skills, which I am doing on a daily basis ever since we met. Your podcast supported me right from the beginning and really helped me a lot to evolve my own personal language of love.” Oh, that’s wonderful. “Thank you so much for this support. I can literally say you were and still are a big part in supporting our relationship. So just keep on producing new episodes, please. 😊”

Well, don’t worry, Miriam, we will keep producing those episodes for you. And thank you so much for your support and for listening and learning English with us. Best of luck to you and your partner.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. I thought that story was so cute. And, Miriam and your partner as well, good luck with the English relationship. That’s really cool to have one partner speaking one language natively—I think Miriam’s a German speaker and it sounds like her partner is from Finland so he’s probably a Finnish speaker, but they have English as their language of love. I think that’s really, really awesome. So thanks again, Miriam. And thanks to all of our listeners out there who have been leaving us reviews and subscribing to Culips on all of your favourite podcast apps. This really is appreciated by us. And of course, it helps other English learners from around the world connect and learn with us as well. So please, please keep it up.

And with that being said, Anna, I think we can jump in to our main topic here for today, which is one that you suggested, actually, and I thought it’s a good one. And I was a little surprised that we haven’t really covered it on Culips before. You know, sometimes those topics that seem a little bit basic, like, they’re so common, so every day that you don’t even really think to talk about them, but when you brought it up and suggested it, I was, like, “Yeah, of course, we have to talk about bread on Culips, that’s an amazing idea.” So, we’ll do that today.

Anna, maybe to kick off this conversation, I’ll ask you the question about why you suggested this topic. Why did you want to talk about bread? Because I thought your reason was pretty interesting.

Anna: This is actually inspired by one of my friends. She’s also a teacher. And she’s always been really clear about bread. And she’s always said, “Look, bread should be free.” And she’s like, “If I were president, I would make bread free.” She’s like, “Bread should be free for everybody.” She’s very, very clear about this. And she’s very clear about the fact that bread is something that should be shared by everyone. And that kind of gave me the inspiration for this episode.

And whenever we meet, or sometimes when we meet, we talk about bread. We're like, "Oh, have you tried this new bread?" or "This bread is really nice," or ... So I mean, and I talk about bread with people, you know, so I thought, well, this would be a great topic. And everybody has bread. I mean, like, in different cultures have different types of bread or maybe slightly different forms. But it's something that, I mean, a lot of cultures have as part of their food, part of their diet. So I think it's something that, as we said in the intro, everybody can relate to. So that was the reasoning behind this episode. Did you think I was a little strange Andrew you when I suggested, let's talk about bread?

Andrew: Of course, I didn't think you were strange. But I thought it was one of those topics that seems just like so obvious that it didn't ever pop into my mind. And I don't think any of our listeners have ever suggested it, either. But I think we have a lot to talk about. And I like your friend's idea about free bread for everyone. I could get behind that if there was, you know, somebody running as president with that, as their campaign promise. Maybe they would get my vote. I'm not sure, but I like it anyways.

So, Anna, I'm really curious about one thing here, and maybe this will help to bring all of our listeners on the same page as well. And that is, in the UK, or in your mind at least, what do you mean when you say bread? What falls under the category of a bread to you? Are you talking about like a loaf of bread? That is kind of the basic image that comes to mind, but do you think about, like, bagels and scones and doughnuts. Are these all bread as well? Like, what exactly is a bread in your mind?

Anna: Well, for me, bread, I think has always been like a savory thing rather than a sweet thing. So when I think of bread, I think of baguettes, OK, the classic baguette in the basket. I think of toast, for example. In the UK, it's very big for people to have these kind of, I guess, factory-produced bread where you have the loaf, and you have the slices, I don't know if they have that as well in Canada, Andrew, where it's kind of a –

Andrew: Yeah, just like a basic bread that you would use to make a sandwich, for example, that you can buy at a grocery store, usually comes in a plastic bag. And like you said, it's produced in, like, a baking factory, right? It's not like fresh-made daily at a local bakery. It's sort of mass produced at a baking factory.

Anna: Sure. So that's very much like what I would have been used to in the UK. But then in Spain, they have this beautiful culture of fresh bread, baguettes, the local bakery, which I absolutely love about Spain. So, I mean, I love bread, obviously, as you can tell, I wouldn't have suggested it if I didn't like it. So, I really love freshly made baguettes. And there's so many different types that you can have now, which is great. They've really, you can get lots of healthy bread without gluten or whatever. So, yeah, I mean, that would be my definition. Would that fit your idea of bread as well?

Andrew: That's exactly what I think of as well. And the reason that I wanted to clarify that is, is because when I first came to Korea, and I think any Westerner that comes to Korea might have a similar experience as I did. And that is when you talk to Korean people, they will call kind of any baked item as bread. So it could be a Danish, and they'll call that bread. It could be a muffin, they'll call it bread. It could be a croissant, they'll call it bread. And that kind of blew my mind because I was, like, this is not bread, this is not bread, this is a muffin, this is a Danish, etc., etc.

And so I wanted to make sure that all of our listeners know that when we talk about bread, we're specifically talking about a baked good that's not sweet and that's usually, you know, served as toast or with a sandwich or maybe just plain with butter, something like that. We're not talking about different kinds of dessert breads. It's much more savory, non-sweet bread, unsweet bread.

Anna: Oh, wow, that would really mess me up, everything called bread. You must have been like, hold on a second, wait a second. This is not what we, I would think of as bread.

Andrew: I think the Korean word for bread just has a much wider definition than the English word for bread. It's not necessarily that Korean people were mislabelling bread. It was that I didn't really understand how wide of a word the Korean word for bread is. But I think that can maybe cause some confusion for Korean people learning English, as well, because they might have the same problem as I did, learning the Korean word when they learned the English word. So, bread in English is just a very narrow definition. And as you said, Anna, these days, there are many, many different types of bread.

But I want you to talk more about the Spanish bread because I'm really liking the imagery that's coming into my mind hearing you talk about this fresh-baked bread daily that you can get at the bakery. Could you talk a little bit more about what bread is like in Spain?

Anna: Absolutely, I would love to. So a big part of their culture here is that, and obviously, this is from my experience, so you know, I'm seeing it through my lens. But a big part of their culture here is every day, you go to the bakery and you buy a loaf of bread or a baguette, for example, especially if you're a family and you have that bread with your lunch. So, bread is a common thing that's eaten in Spain with lots of different meals. For breakfast, you have toast, which is quite common in lots of cultures. And you have a piece of bread with a meal, for example, at lunchtime.

So it's really part of the culture to go to the bakery, maybe not every day. Obviously, I'm, like, one person, so eating a loaf of bread every day probably isn't the best nutritional advice. But you go and you get this fresh bread. And it's just gorgeous. I mean, I just love that aspect. And I think if I actually moved back to the UK, I would really miss that part of the culture. So, fresh bread and bakeries are a big part of Spanish culture and I'm very happy about that.

Andrew: So, I'm curious, how much does a loaf of bread in Spain cost, then, if you go to the bakery and you buy a fresh loaf of bread? Is it expensive? Is it cheap? What's it like there?

Anna: Well, I don't think it's expensive. But, I mean, you could be talking about maybe €1, maybe a little bit less than a euro, depending on where you live. Obviously, I live in a city centre, so I guess the prices are going to be a little bit more expensive. But I mean, it's not expensive if you want to buy, kind of, a standard kind of loaf, of maybe €1, let's say €1.20. And then if you want to buy something that's maybe a little bit more, let's say, luxury, or I don't know –

Andrew: Premium bread.

Anna: Premium bread, let's say, yeah, then it's going to cost you a little bit more. But your standard loaf of bread or baguette would be, like, I don't know, let's say around €1. I think I'm getting that right, but may be off by a couple of 10s. But, yeah, €1 or something like that. So, it's cheap, which is why I think lots of people buy it, but it's cheap and it's amazing and it tastes incredible. So, it's wonderful. Do they have things like this in, where you are in in Korea? Do they have kind of bakeries or this kind of culture?

Andrew: Yes, but it is new. I have to say that when I first came to Korea for the very first time, which was way back in around 2008 or 2009, bakeries weren't really a thing. There were some, like, chain, franchise bakeries that all serve very similar kind of bread products. But it was really suited to match the Korean palate, I think. So Korean people enjoyed it but as an outsider, I thought that the bread was too soft and too sweet, or too creamy. And it just didn't really fit the definition of what I had in mind when I thought of bread.

However, that's changed. One of the awesome things about living in Korea is things change really, really quickly. And I'm **happy to report** that there are some amazing bakeries. Even in my neighbourhood, very close to where I live, there are some great bakeries. And I have to say that I think they're as good if not better than the bakeries that I'm used to back in Canada. So Koreans have really nailed down how to make bread that tastes just as good as I'm used to, at least.

And there is a bakery pretty close to my house that sells sourdough bread, which is my absolute favourite. And that was the one bread that I was really missing and I couldn't find in Korea anywhere. And then maybe like a year ago or so I discovered that this bakery in my neighbourhood sells it and I was so happy to find it. And it's delicious. It's amazing. The only negative thing is that it's very expensive. So, one loaf of sourdough bread at this bakery costs around \$16 American. \$16 American.

Anna: What? What's it made of? Does it have gold inside or something? Oh my goodness. Wow. OK, that's slightly **on the pricey end**.

Andrew: Right. So this is what we're talking about when we said premium bread, right? It's not like your everyday loaf. When I buy it, they sell it by the half loaf, so I only buy half a loaf and I'll put it in the freezer. And to be honest, although I love bread, I try not to eat too much of it. So, I'll just pull out a slice from time to time. If I'm having a meal where bread would be a good fit for that meal, then I'll pull out a slice from the freezer and enjoy it that way.

But, yeah, unfortunately, it's really expensive. I think one of the reasons why is because the bakers at this bakery studied abroad. So they went to Europe, they learned all of the bread-making techniques from Europe, they bought all the equipment. And in a country where, you know, the baking technology, maybe the baking knowledge, and the ingredients even, are not as common, I think this all goes into why it's expensive. It's also rare, like, that's one of the few bakeries that I've ever seen in this country that sells sourdough. So, perhaps because of that they can charge a premium price for the premium bread.

Anna: I think so. Yeah. I mean, that's, I wasn't expecting you to say around \$16. But as you said, it's like a premium thing. And the industry is kind of just starting out.

But what is it about sourdough? I have to say that I haven't tried it, but I've heard loads of people rave about sourdough. They're, like, can't wait to get my sourdough. Does it taste sour?

Andrew: It tastes slightly sour. There's a slight sourness to it, it's not bitter in any way. It's just that, like, almost like a tang, it's a little bit tangy and it's fermented. So there's a whole process that goes into making that kind of bread. It's not just as easy as putting all of the ingredients in a bowl and mixing them up and then baking the bread. You have to go through this whole long process of fermenting the dough before you can make the bread. So there is a process in that, as well. It's more labour intensive. But, Anna, you gotta try it. Oh my god, you're gonna love it. Sourdough is the best.

Anna: My personal favourite, I'm really into brown bread, like I really don't like eating white bread. And I know there's been a lot of **bad press**. White bread has got a bit of a bad reputation nowadays that it's, you know, not good for you. Maybe it's got a lot of sugar. And I'm like you Andrew, I try not to eat bread very much. And I think the best strategy for me is just not to buy it. If I don't buy it, it's not in the house, I can't eat it. It doesn't work for me to put it in the freezer because if I know it's in the freezer, I'll get it out anyway. So, I have to just kind of have the technique where I don't buy it. And then I won't eat it.

And my real vice is, like, a piece of bread with butter. Oh, that's just, a nice piece of toast and then putting a big, thick slab of butter on the top, which is, I know, a calorie bomb. But I mean, it's just gorgeous. So, I try not to do that too often but that is my vice with bread. I'm just, like, that big slab of butter on the top. It has to be very thick, as well, a lot of butter. Not a little bit, a lot.

Andrew: Now, would you eat that for breakfast? Is that a breakfast food or a snack? Or when would you eat that kind of bread and butter?

Anna: I mean, if I'm being honest, it could kind of be at any type of day, it could be any time, it could be for breakfast. I mean, I think for breakfast, a thick slab of butter for me is a little bit much. But I mean, it's perfect as a snack, a mid-morning snack, for lunch with a soup or in the afternoon. I mean, really, honestly, I could eat at any time of day, I've got to be honest. And that's the thing I just love about bread. It's just like you can eat it whenever. It's just incredible. And it's just flour and water, essentially, more or less. I mean, obviously there are some premium breads that have some different techniques. But I mean it is essentially just flour and water.

But I've never actually tried to make my own bread. That's one thing I haven't stepped into. Have you ever made your own bread, Andrew, or attempted, I guess, to make your own bread?

Andrew: Yeah. So, I have several times tried to make bread. When I was a kid my mom had a bread machine, which at the time I think these were kind of new appliances. They had just come onto the market and you could just put the ingredients in this machine and plug it in, set the timer, and then you'd wake up in the morning and you'd have a fresh loaf of bread. So I remember when I was a kid we would make bread in the bread machine. And it was amazing because you'd wake up and your house would smell so good, like with fresh-baked bread, wafting throughout your house. It was amazing. One of the best smells ever, I think. So I have good memories about that.

But as an adult, I haven't had as much success. I did actually try to make my own sourdough bread. And I couldn't get the fermentation process to happen correctly. So, you know, you have to, like, take this yeast and I had it in a jar. And I had to cover the jar with plastic wrap and poke holes and wait for it to try and ferment and change it every few days and do all of these things. And it just didn't work. It just ended up becoming moldy and I had to throw it out. So my sourdough bread adventure was a failure.

But recently, throughout last winter, I made banana bread, which isn't really the same thing as the bread that we're talking about. It's called bread, but I would really say this is more like a dessert. Banana bread is a sweet bread that's made with bananas, and it has a very banana-y flavour. And, yeah, it's a great thing to do for when you buy too many bananas, and you can't eat them before they start to turn brown and black. Even if they have turned brown and black, you can use those bananas, you don't have to throw them out. You can make banana bread with those almost rotten bananas, they're not quite rotten yet, but they're almost there. And so I've experimented with making different kinds of banana bread. And it's been delicious. It's great to have just with a cup of coffee in the afternoon. Also good with butter, if you put butter on the banana bread, very delicious. So, I guess that is the bread that I'm best at making, is banana bread.

Anna: How could I forget about banana bread? I'm sitting here thinking how could I be so stupid? At the beginning I said no bread can be sweet. And then I completely was overlooking banana bread. And I'm the same as you, in the past couple of years, especially during the pandemic as well, I think a lot of people tried to make banana bread because it's really, really easy to make. It's super simple. It tastes great. It's fantastic. But then I guess the argument would be, is it a bread or not? I don't know. But it's wonderful, as you said, with like a cup of coffee.

And actually, here in Spain they don't say banana bread, exactly. They kind of call it like a sponge cake, I guess. But banana bread is a big thing that, what people were doing during the pandemic, I think because I think a lot of people started baking during the pandemic because they didn't have anything else to do when they were at home during quarantine. So, I think a lot of people started baking.

Andrew: Actually, my in-laws came over to our house for a visit. And of course, they are Korean. And they, I think maybe this is the first time they visited our house or the second time, I think the first time they visited our house for a meal. And they said, "Oh, Andrew, you have to cook us something Canadian." And I was like, oh my god, what am I going to make because there's no real Canadian food. Canada doesn't have a strong food identity, as some other countries and cultures have like a really strong food culture and tradition. But Canada, unfortunately doesn't really have that.

So, I was kind of **stumped** about what I should make. And then my wife suggested like, "Hey, you've been making this banana bread recently, why don't you make a loaf of banana bread for everyone?" So, I said, "OK, yeah, that's a good idea. I'll do that." So, I made it and they politely ate it. But I don't think anybody was like crazy over the top in love with my banana bread. I don't really like cooking for other people, like I find that's a lot of pressure.

Anna: Oh, it's **nerve racking**.

Andrew: Yes, but it turned out all right. I think it was good enough. But, yeah, that's my banana bread story from this last winter.

Anna: It's the thought that counts and, look, I'm the same as you. It's really **nerve racking** cooking anything or baking anything for anybody because you like, it's really funny when you cook something, you feel like you've got a lot of expectations. And I personally don't like to be there when other people eat my food because I'm worried of that kind of reaction where they're kind of, like, oh, yeah, it's really nice. And really behind the eyes, you can see that they're kind of, like, oh, this is horrendous. But no, I know what you mean the pressure of having to cook something is high. But, yeah, it's the thought that counts. It's the effort that goes into it, I think that's the important thing to remember. So, I'm always grateful if somebody cooks me something even if it's not the best.

But, yeah, bread, never tried baking my own bread, but maybe I'll try that now after this episode. I feel like I kind of am compelled to do that now that we've done an episode of bread I should really try and make my own.

Andrew: Yeah, the next kind of bread that I want to try to make is similar to banana bread is called zucchini bread. So I've never actually had zucchini bread before but I saw some recipes online. The only thing is that zucchini is kind of seasonal. I think it's usually around the end of summer that it's available, so I have a little time to wait until zucchini is in the market again. But as soon as it is, that's the next type of bread that I want to bake because I think maybe that's like the next step up from banana bread. And I'll slowly climb my way up the ladder towards the goal of doing a sourdough one day.

Anna: But wait, zucchini is courgette?

Andrew: I've always called it zucchini, it's just like a squash, looks like kind of like a gigantic cucumber.

Anna: OK, yeah, so this is an interesting point because in British English we don't say zucchini. We say courgette.

Andrew: Courgette, interesting.

Anna: Yeah, this can be a little bit confusing because, yes, zucchini is courgette for British people. I've always got confused because I thought it was a different vegetable but it's not. It's just we have a different word for it. I have no idea why but, yeah, we say courgette and you guys **across the pond** say zucchini. No idea.

Andrew: Zucchini. Yeah, I imagine that is an Italian word, doesn't sound like, like a native English word. Sounds like maybe UK English borrowed the French word maybe. And we borrowed the Italian word in North America.

Anna: Yeah, I mean, it sounds way better than courgette. I mean, zucchini sounds way more exotic. I mean, we should have just used zucchini but, no, we got stuck with courgette. But, yeah, just so if any of you listeners hear people, it's the same vegetable, it's just a different word. Courgette for me, zucchini for Andrew.

Andrew: Yeah, another interesting one is eggplant. In North America we say eggplant. And I think in the UK, you guys say something like aubergine?

Anna: Aubergine. Yeah, aubergine.

Andrew: Which I think is also maybe the French word.

Anna: Yeah, in that case, I prefer aubergine, so you can keep eggplant. You can keep eggplant, and we'll have aubergine on that one. So for that one, our word is a little bit better, I have to say.

Andrew: Well, Anna, I think we can wrap things up here for this conversation. So, everyone, that's it for today. Thank you for listening, and congratulations on making it to the end of this episode. You did a great job. You got your English listening practice in. And, of course, now you've heard what Anna and I have to say about bread, but we would like you to add to the conversation. It is your turn. So let us know what you have to say by leaving a comment or posting on the discussion forum on our website, which again is Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Anna: If there was a part of our conversation that you didn't understand, you can always rewind and listen to it again as many times as you want. Or you can always become a member and download the study guide and transcript from our website.

Andrew: And if you like Culips, please support us. There are many ways that you can do that. For example, you can tell your friends who are learning English to check us out. Or you could follow us on Instagram or YouTube or whatever your favourite social media platform is. Just search for Culips English and you'll be able to find us. You could also subscribe to Culips on your favourite podcast app and leave us a positive review. Or, finally, you could become a Culips member and for information about all the awesome benefits you get when you're a member, just check out Culips.com.

Anna: We'll be back very soon with another episode, and we'll talk to you all again then. Bye-bye.

Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Happy to report Expression

Happy to report is often used when sharing or announcing good news or an update on something. You'll hear this in any situation, from formal, professional settings to casual conversations. That's because report in this expression can be an official, formal update at work (for example, an employee may say to their boss, "I'm **happy to report** that we've completed the project") and it can also be a casual, personal update (for example, you may tell your significant other that dinner is ready by saying, "Honey, I'm **happy to report** that dinner is ready and nothing is burned").

In this episode, Andrew talks about how, when he first moved to Korea, bakeries weren't very popular and there weren't a lot of different types of bread available. Now, he's "**happy to report** that there are some amazing bakeries." This is good news, since he can now buy bread that suits his palate.

Here are a couple more examples with **happy to report**:

Sophie: Welcome back! How was your vacation? Did you go to the place I recommended?

Haleema: We did! It was a bit more expensive than you'd mentioned, though.

Sophie: Oh, I'm sorry the price was more than I'd said it would be. It has been a few years since we went.

Haleema: No, no, don't be sorry. It makes sense that the prices would have gone up since you last visited. Plus, I'm **happy to report** that the experience was worth it! We were all really glad we went there. So thank you for the recommendation!

Ichirou: Has Toru returned from school yet?

Akiko: Yes, he's up in his room doing his homework. Why do you ask?

Ichirou: Yesterday he said they were announcing who made it on the school basketball team. Did he tell you if he was on the list?

Akiko: Oh, yes! I'm **happy to report** that he made the team!

On the [adjective] end/side Idiom

When something is **on the [adjective] end** or **on the [adjective] side**, it has some qualities of that adjective, but you might not use the adjective to describe it. For example, if you say that a candy is **on the sour side**, that means it's a normal, sweet candy that's also a bit sour.

In this episode, Andrew mentions that he found sourdough bread that costs \$16 at a bakery in Korea. Anna says, "That's slightly **on the pricey end**." The bread is pricier than most breads, but it's not technically expensive.

Here are a couple more examples with **on the [adjective] end/side**:

Shop employee: Ma'am? How does the dress fit? Do you need any help with the zipper?

Eun-Jung: The dress is beautiful! But it's a little **on the short side** for me. Do you have something similar but with a longer skirt?

Shop employee: Hmm. I do believe we have a similar style where the skirt falls below the knees. Would that length be better for you?

Eun-Jung: Yes, that sounds perfect. May I please try that one?

Shop employee: Certainly! I'll go fetch it.

Arjun: I read over your team's project report and I have a few suggestions. Do you have a moment to talk it over?

Dominic: Great, thanks! I have a meeting in a few minutes, but after I'll be free. Do you have any general feedback I can share with the team?

Arjun: Oh, sure. Overall, it was a very solid report. All the information is there. However, it's a bit **on the wordy side**, so the important details are lost in places. I've highlighted where you might be able to cut down the text.

Dominic: This is perfect. I'll bring this to the team and call you when the meeting is done so we can discuss further. Thanks again!

Bad press

Noun

Bad press is negative or unflattering news published in the media (in the newspaper, online, on the radio, or on television). **Bad press** is often repeated and announced on more than one medium. It can also be criticism that's repeated in a public forum or location.

In this episode, Anna mentions that there's been a lot of **bad press** about white bread. Studies have shown that white bread contains more sugar and is less nutritious than brown bread. Media outlets published articles about this, making for **bad press**.

Here are a few more examples with **bad press**:

Yong: Why is the company president so popular? Everyone I know talks about how great he is, but every time I check the news he's involved in some new scandal.

Francis: I dunno, man. He often gets such **bad press**, yet everyone who meets him likes him. Maybe he's just got a really good personality?

Yong: He must be really charming!

Hayley: It's really quiet in the café today. Is there some sort of event going on downtown that everyone's attending or something?

Raphael: No, unfortunately. It's been like this all week. Ever since we got **bad press** in Sunday's paper, we've hardly gotten any customers.

Hayley: Really? That's ridiculous. Who wrote the article? I'll go tell them to write a new one talking about how good our café is!

Raphael: No, it's OK. I'm sure that people will forget about the article eventually.

Myung: Did you hear? Apparently, the reason there's more security on campus is because students have been running around after the school's closed.

Rebecca: Really? I'm here late every night and the only people I see running around are teachers and staff. These poor students often seem to get all the **bad press**.

Myung: Sounds like the article I read totally had the wrong facts.

Stumped

Verb

Stumped means to be confused, unable to answer a question, or unable to understand or explain something. In this episode, Andrew was kind of **stumped** about what he should make for his in-laws. He wasn't able to decide, so he couldn't answer the question of what to cook.

You'll most often see this used in its -ed form, as in "He's **stumped**," "The question **stumped** them," or "I'm **stumped** right now." That being said, the verb does appear in other tenses, such as in "This question is designed to **stump** the contestants" or "We're **stumping** our friends on purpose." In all tenses, it means the same thing: to confuse or be unable to answer a question.

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

Darren: You interviewed a potential employee yesterday, right? How did it go? Is he worth hiring?

Kevin: I don't think so. He seemed **stumped** by our questions and kept looking around with this really confused face. I'm not even sure he knew he was in a job interview.

Darren: Oh, that's really unfortunate. Do we have any other applicants?

Kevin: We do. I'm interviewing two more this week.

Gertrude: Have you seen my cat? It's her dinnertime and but I can't find her anywhere in my apartment.

Naomi: I haven't seen her in the hallways. Did you see her this morning before you left for work?

Gertrude: Yup. I gave her breakfast, then left for work as I always do. I have to say, I'm completely **stumped**. How did she manage to escape?

Naomi: Are you sure she escaped? Maybe she's hiding under the furniture?

Gertrude: I didn't see her there, but I'll check again. If you spot her, can you let me know?

Naomi: Of course!

Nerve racking

Adjective

Nerve racking means stressful or anxiety inducing. **Nerve-racking** things are difficult to do and cause people a lot of worry or stress. In this episode, Andrew talks about baking banana bread for others and Anna replies, "Oh, it's **nerve racking**." Since Andrew mentions that he feels a lot of pressure (or stress) when he's cooking for other people, **nerve racking** is accurate.

This adjective spelled in two ways: **nerve racking** or **nerve wracking**. Both mean the same thing. Also, in written English, you'll see this hyphenated as well. That is because we hyphenate two-word adjectives when they appear before the noun they describe. So, when it appears before the noun, it is written as "the **nerve-racking** test." When it appears after the noun, it is written as "the test was **nerve racking**."

Here are a couple more examples with **nerve racking**:

Ji-Soo: I see your son is driving now. Please pass my congratulations on to him for getting his driver's licence.

Seong: Thank you, I will. He was very worried he wouldn't pass, and he told me that the driving test was a very **nerve-racking** experience.

Ji-Soo: Well, he must be glad that it's over and done with now. Does he enjoy driving?

Seong: He does! And I enjoy the fact that I don't have to drive him everywhere!

Deborah: Are you free on Saturday? There's this shop I want to go to, and I just know you're going to love it!

Keira: I can't, I've got my first shift at my first real job!

Deborah: You got a job? Congrats, girl! I didn't even know you had an interview.

Keira: Yeah, I didn't tell anyone just in case I didn't get the job. The interview was totally **nerve racking**. I can't even begin to explain how scared I was.

Deborah: Oh, for sure. I haven't had to do one yet, but I know I'll have to and I'm really not looking forward to it at all.

Across the pond

Expression

Across the pond means on or to the other side of the Atlantic Ocean. It's most often used to describe travel or distance between the United Kingdom or England and the United States or Canada. People from those countries use **across the pond** to refer to places on the other side of the Atlantic. For example, if a Canadian or American says, "The bread **across the pond** is delicious," they mean, "The bread in the United Kingdom or England is delicious." However, if a European says the same phrase, they're referring to bread in Canada or the United States.

Andrew and Anna's conversation about courgette and zucchini is a great example of this. Anna, who is from England, says, "I have no idea why but, yeah, we say courgette and you guys **across the pond** say zucchini." She says "you guys **across the pond**" to refer to Canadians and Americans. However, if Andrew, who comes from Canada, said the same phrase, he would be referring to the British and Europeans.

Here are a couple more examples with **across the pond**:

Caller: Hello there. I'm calling from the telephone company. I'd like to speak with a Mr. Henry Hammersfield.

Receptionist: I'm afraid Henry is **across the pond** in our London office this week. Is there anything I can do to help?

Caller: Do you know when he'll be back?

Receptionist: He should be back in the office on Monday.

Caller: OK, then, I'll try back on Monday. Thank you very much.

Tanisha: Do you have any big plans for the holidays this year?

Mitsuaki: I don't know if you'd call them big plans but, well, I have relatives living **across the pond** in Boston so we may go there. We haven't decided yet.

Tanisha: Oh, that'd be fun. I'd love to go travelling too, but unfortunately I can't afford it right now. Hopefully soon, though.

Mitsuaki: Well, if we go, I'll take lots of pictures and bring you back a souvenir.

Tanisha: Aw, thanks!

Quiz

- 1. Recently, you've noticed that the news has had nothing but criticism for a local restaurant. What would you call that?**
 - a) bad food
 - b) bad manners
 - c) bad news
 - d) bad press

- 2. Which of the following means on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean?**
 - a) across the pond
 - b) over the pond
 - c) above the pond
 - d) beyond the pond

- 3. Your colleague thinks that the upcoming meeting will be nerve racking. What will the meeting be like?**
 - a) peaceful
 - b) boring
 - c) stressful
 - d) loud

- 4. Which of the following means someone is about to share good news?**
 - a) happy to repose
 - b) happy to replace
 - c) happy to reply
 - d) happy to report

- 5. Your friend mentioned that they're feeling on the hungry side. What do they mean?**
 - a) they're not hungry at all
 - b) they're a little bit hungry
 - c) they're hungry
 - d) they're very hungry

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is your favourite bread and why? Or, if you don't have a favourite, why not?
2. Have you ever made bread? Was there anything in the recipe that stumped you? (Or, if you've never made bread, is there any recipe you've made that has stumped you?) What was it and why was it confusing?
3. Do you prefer bread that's on the sweet side, like the bread Andrew found at Korean bakeries? Why or why not?
4. Andrew and Anna both mentioned that cooking for other people feels nerve racking. How do you feel about cooking for others?
5. What are the traditional types of breads in your country? Which have you tried and what were they like?

Quiz Answers

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

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