

Chatterbox #295 – Life as a digital nomad

Episode description

Where is your office? Is it located in a big building owned by the company you work for, or are you a digital nomad, able to work anywhere in the world? Andrew and Anna talk about what it must be like being a digital nomad and discuss the good and the bad that comes with this lifestyle.

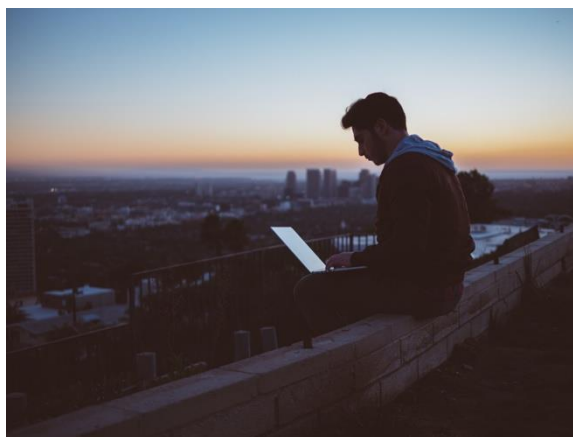
Culips' Chatterbox series is designed for intermediate and advanced English learning. All Chatterbox episodes feature natural conversations between two native English speakers. Listening to these audio lessons helps to improve your grammar, vocabulary, and listening skills so that you can become fluent. You'll be able to speak English naturally while also learning what it's like to be a digital nomad.

Fun fact

As of 2021, there are over 35 million digital nomads in the world. Curious about where they live? Well, 51% live in hotels, 41% live with friends or family, 36% live in Airbnbs, and 16% live in hostels.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Living the dream
- Not all it's cracked up to be
- I.e.
- Location freedom
- Never say never
- Hit the nail on the head



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: My name is Anna.

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

Hello everyone, welcome back to Culips. This is Chatterbox, the Culips series for intermediate and advanced English learners, featuring natural, unedited conversations between native speakers. Today, I'm joined by my cohost, Anna. Hello, Anna.

Anna: Hello, Andrew and hello, listeners. So, everyone, in this episode, Andrew and I are going to talk about being a digital nomad. Over the last few years, more and more people have embraced this kind of professional lifestyle which, on the surface seems like a dream come true but is it really? Well, we're going to discuss some of the pros and cons and the ins and outs of being a digital nomad in just a moment. But before we do, Andrew, how about we tell everyone about the study guide for this episode?

Andrew: Anna, you read my mind, that is a great idea. So, everyone, we made a study guide for this episode, just like we do for all of our Culips content. And in the study guide, you'll find detailed vocabulary definitions and examples of the key and important vocabulary that you'll hear Anna and I use today. There's a quiz in the guide, there are prompts that you can use for speaking and writing practice and we recommend following along with the guide and with the transcript while you listen to this episode. Now to get the study guide, you just need to sign up and become a Culips Member and you can find all the details and sign up by visiting our website [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com). Becoming a member helps support the work that we do here at Culips, but it also gives you access to the learning materials and tools that we make to help you improve your English and get fluent faster.

Anna: Another way to support us is to follow us on social media like Instagram or YouTube, tell your friends who are learning English to check us out. Or leave us a five-star rating and positive review on Apple Podcasts or whatever app you usually listen to us with. And to those of you out there that have become members or have left a review or a follow on social media, thank you so much for your continued support. We couldn't do it without you. And with that being said, let's transition into our main topic for today, which is being a digital nomad. Now I think a good place to start with this conversation is with a definition. So, Andrew, could you break it down for us a little? What is a digital nomad exactly?

Andrew: Yeah, sure. So, a *digital nomad* is someone who does all of their work remotely on the Internet. And as a result, you know, they don't have to go to the office every day, they're on the internet working completely remotely. So, where they do their work is really irrelevant as long as they have their laptop, or they have their smartphone—and an internet connection, most importantly, an internet connection—then a digital nomad can really work anywhere. So, given this freedom, digital nomads travel from place to place around the world, working and travelling at the same time. Now the words *nomad* and its adjective form as well, *nomadic*—these words originally describe people and societies that don't settle down in one place, and they wander and move from place to place traditionally taking all of their belongings and their animals as well, with them.

So, I think, Anna at least when I think of nomads, I think of the Mongols back in the day, famous nomadic people, also the Romani in Europe, but there were many nomadic societies that existed around the world. And I think these days, that culture, that nomadic culture has largely disappeared, but I did a search on Wikipedia, and I saw a stat that said, as of 1995, there were an estimated 30 to 40 million nomadic people on earth still living this kind of traditional nomadic lifestyle. So, I think it's still around but just definitely not in the same way that it used to be back in the day. So, anyways, guys, these days then a digital nomad is a person who travels from place to place, but instead of taking their herd animals with them and their tents, this kind of thing, instead, they take their laptops and their smartphones with them, so that they can stay connected to the internet and do their work. So, Anna, I'm wondering, I guess I have a lot of questions for you about this topic. But I'm wondering, does this kind of work sound appealing to you? To me it sounds pretty good. But I'm wondering about you, how do you think? What do you think about it?

Anna: So, I guess I've seen a lot of these digital nomads on Instagram, a typical place where people sell this ideal, or we would say in English, **living the dream**. It seems like they're **living the dream**, like big time, you know, they're in these gorgeous places like Bali or South America or Europe, and they're travelling around everywhere. And of course, that appeals to me. I mean, I think it appeals to everybody. That's the point, wouldn't everybody just love to be travelling around the world and working at the same time earning a living, and also getting to experience all of these things? Of course, it appeals to me. But I think they obviously have to show one side of this life. And a lot of these people actually they try to recruit people to do the sort of things that they do. And so, I guess I've got a couple of things in my head.

Number one would be I'd like to know how many of these digital nomads are really truly digital nomads, I mean, moving around all the time, or I'm a little bit suspicious that maybe they're not showing everything on social media, which would completely make sense. But I think I'm actually more of a I like to kind of stay in one place, I'm quite happy having things kind of settled. And it does appeal to me, I think that's the point, it just looks like you're **living the dream**. But I mean, we have that expression in English, which is, you know, if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. Let's be honest, they're still working at the same time. It's not like they're just living and not working. So, I mean, I don't know, I'd love to

hear really a true perspective from a digital nomad about what it's really like, moving around all the time and not being at one place. I don't know, I guess it could be really exciting, but also quite stressful as well moving around all the time. What do you think Andrew, does it appeal to you?

Andrew: Yeah well, the inspiration for this episode actually comes from my wife because she is living a one-week digital nomad, fantasy out. She works at a company and the company transitioned to online work because of the pandemic and slowly as life is returning to normal, you know, I think most people are back to the office here in South Korea, most company workers, but for whatever reason, because she works in tech, I think, tech has kind of stayed online. And so, she hasn't had to go back to the office yet. So, she's still working at home, doing all of her work online, which is great. But she has a feeling that that is going to change soon. And she's got like the sense like, oh, I think my company is going to call everybody back to the office really, really quickly maybe within the next few weeks. So, before she has to go back to the office, she wanted to try living like a digital nomad for a week. So, she is away right now, she is on an island called Jeju Island, which is the quote unquote "Hawaii of South Korea." It's about a one-hour flight from Seoul and it's beautiful. There are amazing beaches and palm trees and it's semi tropical. It's a really amazing place.

So, she is on day three of seven of her digital nomad adventure. And I talked to her right before we started recording and I asked for her mini review like after 2 days. How is it? How is working as a digital nomad? And she said, "You know, it's great, it's cool, but it's **not all that it's cracked up to be.**" And I asked her about that, like, why isn't it **all that it's cracked up to be**? She said the first thing is that it's really difficult to travel with all of the equipment that you need to work. So, she wanted to just pack light, you know, she's only gone for a week. But because she has to bring her laptop with her, she needs her mouse. She needs her headphones. She has some other accessories that she needs to use. She works with mobile design, so she needs to have a couple of different smartphones to look at the designs. So, it's all these things that you need to bring, and they are heavy. So, you got to truck those around with you and when those things are taking up all of your space in your bag, then you either need to bring another bag or you need to just have very few items of clothing and accessories that you bring with you. So, she said that is the first thing that is not so good.

Secondly, it's a little bit stressful, because you don't know exactly how good the internet connection is going to be where you're at, or you can't really depend on the environment being quiet. So, I guess this depends on the line of work you're doing, you know, maybe if you're just like a freelance programmer or something, that's not as important. But for her, she does a lot of collaborative work. She has meetings all the time, daily scrum meetings in the morning. And if you can't join those meetings, or if it's really loud in the background or something, it's not going to fly. So, she said, that's already been stressful for her and she's only 2 days in. And she's also in South Korea, which has some of the best, fastest internet in the world. So, I could only imagine, like, I think a lot of digital nomads go to

Southeast Asia, Southeast Asia, or South America, and maybe in these places, the internet is not as quick as it is here. So, yeah, I think you're absolutely right, that it seems appealing. And it definitely sounds appealing to me as well. But maybe it's not all that I thought it was initially.

Anna: Yeah, I mean, look, it's like, you've got to weigh it up, haven't you as well, I mean, like, you know, you're—in the case of your wife, that you've got to think about, especially if you already own a house or you rent somewhere and you also want to be a digital nomad at the same time, you've got to weigh it up and think, oh, I'm doubling up here, because you're paying for your rent, you're also paying to go and stay somewhere, I assume in some kind of accommodation as well. So, I don't know how many people actually really are living place to place, **i.e.**, they don't have a house or a rented house or an owned house or whatever, that they don't then have as a base, and then they travel around. I think probably more people do that model than having just like, I don't rent anywhere, I just move around because I mean, literally for tax purposes and things like that. I think you've got to be resident somewhere, right? You've got to pay taxes somewhere, I think, I assume, I don't know. I think it's an interesting way of life and I have partial **location freedom**. So, **location freedom** is another term that's kind of thrown around as well, in this kind of space and I do have part of that. So, I have part of my week, that's totally up to me, I could be anywhere, I could be in England, I could be in Bali, I could be in New Zealand, wherever I want. And I don't feel I've really made the most of that so far. And actually, I feel quite inspired by your—by your wife to go away and try and do that, maybe for—for a couple of weeks.

But at the end of the day, you are working. So, it comes back to that, right? You're not on holiday and I'm the same as your wife. Like, look, I work with people all day. I'm talking all day. I need a quiet space, a space where I'm not going to annoy the hell out of people because I'm speaking all the time. And I need a good internet connection. So, it's—I feel the most comfortable I feel is at home with my desk, I've got all my things here. OK, yeah, I'm not looking at the beach, but I'm comfortable and it works for me. So, I don't know. I want to try it though. I think there has to be some something fun about being out of the norm doing something a little bit different being in a different space. And there's so many good things that that brings.

But I think like you said it's **not all it's cracked up to be** nothing is like if it looks too good to be true, it probably is. There's gonna be some people that really suit that lifestyle. They love that lifestyle. But I think for the majority, I think most people prefer to have a base and then work from that. I don't know, I probably need to take advantage of the more of the **location freedom** that I have, because I do have much more **location freedom** than other people that are tied to one city, one space, one office, one street. Where would you like to work? I mean, imagine Andrew if you could you know, jet off tomorrow and become a digital nomad. Where would you—where would you go? Would you go to the same island?

Andrew: In Jeju Island? Yeah. Great question. I don't know. I guess I am sort of attracted to the same countries that are famous for digital nomads, maybe going to Indonesia or Bali or just I guess wherever is on my travel bucket list anyways, right? Like, some of the places that I want to visit are Australia and New Zealand and South America, Brazil. Those places are on the top of my travel bucket list. So, I guess I would just go there, but I don't know Anna, like, in the past, I guess it's not really being a digital nomad, because I was just travelling, the goal was travel. But, you know, I maintain the Culips podcast so I'm always thinking about the podcast, always working on the podcast, even when I'm travelling. And so, in the past when I've gone on longer trips for, you know, two weeks, three weeks, a month, I've always brought equipment with me, brought my microphones, brought audio recorders, brought my laptop so that I could work while I'm travelling. And always at the start of the trip, I have these plans, you know, like, oh, I'll wake up and I'll do a couple hours of podcast work and it will be great and it is always so hard to squeeze the work in. Like, it's really hard to stay focused, once you go to a different country, adjust to the time zone. And you don't really want to work in that kind of situation. It's hard to stay focused.

So, I guess maybe it's different, like if you have set meetings, and you have to, you know, report to a boss or something. But if you're a freelancer, and you're on your own schedule, I think you'd really have to stay disciplined, and I'd be worried about that. Also, like you mentioned, you brought up some tax—tax issues, visa issues, you know, like, is it legal to do that? Like, if I just packed up and went to Bali for 3 months and worked, like, what is the legality of doing that? I know, some countries actually have digital nomad visas. But I don't know, I think that there probably are a lot of people—a lot of digital nomads that are doing it illegally, maybe?

Anna: Who knows, but there has to be some—I mean, you have to, honestly, I'm not an expert in this area but I imagine just from my very basic knowledge, I mean, you've got to pay taxes somewhere. I don't know how it works. But I guess people will flock to the type of countries that offer these—these things more flexibly, obviously, that would make complete sense. But it's interesting I mean, I think, ultimately, the way that I try and when I see these things, and I actually, you know, because when you see these people on the beach, they've got the laptop, or they're by the pool, and they're like, oh, yeah, just sending a few emails making 3 million in 2 minutes. And, you know, come and join me. You know, you've kind of got to take it with a bit of a pinch of salt, you're like, OK good for them, they seem like they're having a great life, like, I really don't feel envious of that type of people because I think, "Good for you." Like, if you've managed to set that up, like all to you, like fair play, lots of people would never be able to do that. So, good for you.

But I always think, you know, actually my personality in the way that I am probably it wouldn't—it wouldn't suit me very much. And look, they're still working wherever you go, you're gonna have to work in some form, whether it's for yourself, or whether it's for a company or whatever. I mean, you're always gonna have to work at some point. So, I mean, it's never going to be like you're on holiday for the rest of your life. You know, that's

not what it's about. So, I always think about that. But I do remember that I did read something in a book that I read, and it was a quote by somebody, and I'm really sorry, I don't know who said this, but they said that actually, a lot of the problems that we have in life are because we settle down in one place. And we—you know, because as humans in the past, like you said, there were so many nomadic tribes, we moved around, we moved to new places, we explored. I mean, I'm talking about obviously, many, many years ago. And actually, a lot of the problems we have is because we settled down, which is a really interesting perspective and I never thought about it like that because often a lot of the thing that we want to do is we want to settle down, like that's kind of how our life goes. It's like you kind of get to this point where you want to be in one place, OK? Settled and having everything together, per se. And they were like, oh, no, no, that's actually the problem that people have is because we don't move around enough is because we spend too much time in one place, we settle down. And so, I thought—I thought that was quite interesting, but I've never thought about it like that, that maybe we do need to be a little bit more nomadic, maybe we do need to move around a little bit more, experience things, but it's difficult as well. I mean, you know, being able to afford to do that is one thing. It's difficult to afford just to do things in your own country, let alone, you know, pack off and run around another country. So, yeah, I don't know, I think if you can do it, if you love that lifestyle, all to you, and enjoy it, but I think you have to take everything like this with a pinch of salt, they're always going to try and reel you in with these, you know, amazing pictures and, you know, snazzy titles, you know, like, I made 3 million in 5 minutes, and I was eating a croissant, you know? Which may be true, but the likelihood that you're going to be able to do that is actually really small, you know, the percentage of people that can live that lifestyle that earn a lot of money working around the world, it's a small percentage. But you know, if you want to try it, try it. I mean, who knows?

Andrew: I think for me, personally, and I **never say never**, but I think I like my work to be my work and my travel to be my travel and I would rather just stay in one place, have one home base, and then you know, get all my work done. And then I'm lucky enough as a university instructor that I do get vacations when the students have vacations, you know, sometimes I teach summer classes or winter classes, but sometimes I have vacation in that period as well. And so, if I do have the opportunity to travel, then that's a great time I can get it done and it's fantastic. And I like that I don't think I could mix the two, I think I would just feel too stressed out all the time to be honest with you about those issues that we mentioned earlier about not being able to guarantee strong internet connection or a quiet space. But it does, I guess really depends on the line of work you do, right? If you're a blog writer, maybe you just have total freedom, you get a couple of hours of writing done, and then you could have the rest of the day to hang out in a tropical location. I guess maybe I'm just sort of mapping my work on to being a digital nomad. But if you had a different career, or if I had a different career, then yeah, it could probably work a lot better.

Anna: I've kind of got this image in my head of—you know, I'm in an Airbnb. I'm in an apartment by the beach, you know, I've got my laptop on the balcony. And I'm like, yeah,

but I couldn't do that because I'd be annoying the hell out of everybody in the—in the apartment block with my persistent English or like, oh, no, that's not right or correcting people. I mean, it would just drive people crazy. So, even though I have this image in my head of like, what it would look like, I'm sure it probably wouldn't be quite like that. But I would like to do something a little bit like what your wife did, where maybe I take one week I go, maybe I try and reschedule some of my work and just spend some time thinking about like, things that I want to do this year, or planning things or being a little bit more creative. So, I think I would like to make a little bit—I'd like to take advantage more of my **location freedom**. I think every now and again, I think it's a good idea maybe to just OK, maybe I'll go to a different town or a different city or whatever, just to try it out. Why not? I mean, if you can, I think it would be almost an insult not to. So, I think I should—do take advantage of that a little bit more, but I don't think you're gonna see me and in Bali anytime soon, you know, with my laptop on a swing by the beach. But **never say never, never say never, never say never**. Maybe I'll end up there, who knows. But I think it's a very small percentage of people that really, truly live this lifestyle and are successful doing it. I think it might be difficult to be successful and be able to keep it up because obviously you've got to earn money, you've got to keep going, you've got to get new business or—so I really don't know, I have no idea of the statistics, but I imagine it's a small percentage of people that can really make it work. But if you can make it work, and you like that kind of lifestyle, then why not?

Andrew: Why not? Yeah, one final advantage that I should mention that just came to mind now, and I'm not sure what it's like in Spain but here in South Korea, the weekends are when most people travel. So, if you go to Jeju Island on the weekend, everything is more expensive. And I guess that doesn't go just for Jeju Island that goes for all tourist destinations in the whole country. So, hotels are more expensive, flights are more expensive. They're also more difficult to book they sell out really quickly on the weekends, because that's when people can travel. But if you live this kind of digital nomad lifestyle, you could do what my wife did, and she left on Tuesday. So, this week on Tuesday, she departed, and the flights were way cheaper, hotels were way cheaper, everything much, much cheaper. And then she's already on the island for the weekend. So, now, you know, Anna, you and I are recording here on Friday. She's logged out of work now and she's already on the island ready for the weekend. So, like everybody else that works in the office during the week, if they wanted to go to the island for the weekend, maybe they're only at the airport now checking in, right? So, gives you that advantage of being in the spot that you want to be at when you do have time off to explore, like over the weekend. So, yeah, I think there's pluses and minuses, just like there is for everything. But Anna, I have one final question here for you and then we'll wrap this up.

Anna: Okay.

Andrew: And that is, you know, now as remote work is more and more popular, and **location freedom** is becoming a benefit that many people across many different sectors can enjoy, do you think there will be an explosion of digital nomadism in the future?

Anna: Not particularly. I think that it's still quite a niche area. I think most people are used to being in one place. I think most people want to settle down more or less around one place. I think it'd be very popular with people who are, you know, in their early 20s or exploring or going out and doing things obviously very difficult if you've got a family for example. So, no, I don't think there's going to be a huge explosion of people doing it. I think it will still be sold as a very attractive lifestyle and people will still try it but no, I don't think there's going to be a huge explosion, I think the way that we work in that way I think will stay more or less the same. I think we might see more movement within where people are, for example, moving to different places like moving from the city to the country, rather than moving from being settled to moving around all the time. But that's my very inexperienced opinion. What about you, Andrew?

Andrew: Actually, I think you **hit the nail right on the head**, I have exactly the same opinion. And really, like you said, this is a very niche amount of people that can actually do this anyways, right? You couldn't be a plumber and be a digital nomad. It's just not gonna work. You can't build houses and be a digital nomad, there are so many jobs that still require you to be in a certain location. So, it's only a niche amount of the workforce that could do this in the first place. And then it's only a certain segment of that small segment that would actually like to live this lifestyle. So, I think you're absolutely right, that this probably works well for people in their 20s who have a lot of freedom who aren't tied down. And, you know, I think that's perfect. That's awesome. If you could do that when you're young. Go for it. But yeah, I don't think that you know, we're gonna see a huge explosion of people living this digital nomadic lifestyle in the future. I don't see it happening.

All right, everyone that will bring us to the end of this episode. So, thank you for listening, and good job on getting in some English listening practice today. If you liked this episode, and if you like Culips in general, we would really appreciate it if you could support us. There are several ways that you could do that. The best way is by signing up and becoming a Culips Member on our website [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com). Visit the website to learn about all of the details. But that's not the only way you can support us. You could also tell your friends who are learning English to check out Culips. You could leave us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcasts or your favourite podcast platform. Or you could follow us on social media. We will be back soon with another brand-new episode, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Anna: Bye, everyone.

Detailed Explanations

Living the dream

Idiom

Living the dream means to have the kind of life you've always wanted. Someone **living the dream** is achieving all their goals in life, from the perfect job to the perfect family. They can buy everything they need, like food and shelter, and can also buy things that bring them joy, like sports cars or fancy jewellery.

This idiom most often describes the life of the rich or famous, especially those people who have only recently become wealthy. It also describes people who have succeeded in careers that you yourself dream of. For example, let's say you want to start your own cat toy business. You then discover someone who has a successful dog toy business. You could say that that person is **living the dream**.

Here are a couple more examples with **living the dream**:

Sung-Min: Do you remember Seo-Yeon? She was that quiet girl in our art class. She graduated the same year as us.

Yong: Oh, yeah! I remember her. I loved her drawings. I remember one she did of a cat and it was so cute.

Sung-Min: Yeah! I found her Instagram page and guess what? She's a cartoonist now. Looks like she's successful, too.

Yong: Whoa, she's **living the dream**! Well, an artist's dream, anyway.

Sung-Min: I agree! I even bought some of her work. I'm going to hang it in my office.

Jim: I just got the best job! I'm gonna be testing video games, and I get to travel to gaming conventions all over the world!

Mitchell: No way! That's really awesome, dude. You're going to be **living the dream**!

Jim: I'm really excited. I start next Monday, and I can't wait!

Not all it's cracked up to be Idiom

Not all it's cracked up to be means it's not as good as you thought or expected. In fact, it's disappointing. When something is **not all it's cracked up to be**, it doesn't live up to your expectations and what other people have said about it does not match how it is in person. For example, in this episode Andrew's wife is experimenting with being a digital nomad and when Andrew asks her how it is going, she said, "You know, it's great, it's cool, but **it's not all that it's cracked up to be**." That's because her experience as a digital nomad isn't as good as what other people have claimed it would be like.

You can use this idiom for anything. From things you buy online to restaurants and movies, all of these can have good reviews yet end up being not good at all. You can then describe these things simply by saying: **It's not all it's cracked up to be**.

Here are a couple more examples with **not all it's cracked up to be**:

Claudia: Planning a vacation is so hard! Like, do we book the plane, hotel, and all that stuff separately, or are these package holidays better?

Yuki: Oh, no. I say book things separately. Package holidays are **not always all they're cracked up to be**.

Claudia: Really? But it looks so much easier.

Yuki: Sure, it's easier, but the quality isn't there. And if you want to upgrade or change anything, you can't do it through the hotel or the airline. You must go through the company that you bought the package. It ends up being way more complicated.

Jia: Did I hear that you started your own business last year? How's that going? Do you like being your own boss?

Aiden: Oh, man. The business is doing well so far. About where I expected it to be a year in. But let me tell you, being your own boss is **not all it's cracked up to be**. A lot of late nights and stress.

Jia: That makes sense. You are the final decision maker after all. Hopefully you'll be able to hire some good staff to help you out so you can at least go to sleep on time!

i.e.

Abbreviation

i.e. means “that is” or “in other words” and is used to introduce a word or phrase that clarifies an earlier statement. It introduces additional information to explain or define a term or concept that readers may not know. For example, in this episode Anna says, “I don’t know how many people ... are living place to place, **i.e.**, they don’t have a house or a rented house or an owned house or whatever.” Anna uses **i.e.** to show that the next statement “they don’t have a house” clarifies what she means by “living place to place.”

i.e. is an abbreviation of the Latin “id est”, which directly translates to “that is”. You don’t often hear people use this in conversation; it’s used most often in written form. You’ll see **i.e.** with periods, like we’re using here. Sometimes it’ll appear without periods (ie). It acts as a conjunction, linking two separate phrases or ideas together.

Warning: The best way not to confuse **i.e.** with e.g. is to replace them with their definitions.

The hotel is closed during low season, **i.e.** from October to March.

The hotel is closed during low season, *that is* from October to March.

We should try not to make grammar mistakes, *e.g.*, confusing **i.e.** and e.g.

We should try not to make grammar mistakes, *for example*, confusing **i.e.** and e.g.

Here are a couple more examples with **i.e.**:

Evangeline: There’s a big conference this weekend and it’s super important for my job. But I really don’t know what to wear. I’ve been told to wear business casual, but what does that even mean?

Milly: Oh! I know this one. It’s like, professional clothes, **i.e.**, a button-down shirt or blouse and dress pants. Definitely some nice shoes but not like the kind you’d wear to a wedding or whatever.

Evangeline: Well, I’ve got a lot of nice blouses. Okay, yeah. I know exactly what I’ll wear! Thanks!

Minoru: I’m putting together a fruit platter for the office tomorrow. Do you have any preferences?

Shōhei: I like citrus fruits, **i.e.**, the juicy, edible fruits with leathery, aromatic rinds.

Minoru: Okay, I’ve made a note and I’ll see if I can get some.

Location freedom

Noun

Location freedom, also known as location independence, is the ability to live and work according to your own desires. You can go anywhere on the planet at any time. People with **location freedom** have the flexibility to travel, work on their own schedule, spend time with family and friends, and basically do whatever they want. All without having to worry about their bills or finances.

Digital nomads have **location freedom**. They're not tied to a specific geographic location. But **location freedom** isn't limited to just digital nomads. Some companies offer their employees a certain amount of **location freedom**. Entrepreneurs, company owners, and other high-level executives likely have **location freedom** as well.

Here are a couple more examples with **location freedom**:

Interviewer: So, that about covers all the questions we have about your experience and skills. Now, I'd like to ask you a more personal question. What are you looking for in a job?

Steve: Well, I'd love a job with a lot of **location freedom**. I work best when I can make my own schedule and work from anywhere, so if my job allows me to do that, I know I'll be able to stay with it long term.

Interviewer: Interesting. We do give our employees a certain amount of freedom to set their own schedules and since it's a remote position, where you work is up to you. That being said, we do expect you to be available for meetings and other time-sensitive events.

Steve: Of course, and that's well within my expectations.

Mitsuaki: Oh man, I, like, wish I could travel and stuff.

Peter: Why don't you?

Mitsuaki: I can't afford to take time off! I need to pay back my student loan.

Peter: Why don't you find a job that gives you **location freedom**?

Mitsuaki: What do you mean?

Peter: Aren't you a web designer? Pretty sure you can do that from anywhere, right? You could be like one of those digital nomads!

Never say never

Idiom

Never say never is a warning people give to tell someone that they shouldn't say they will never do something, because they might change their mind in the future. It's usually said in a cheeky or humorous way.

It's a bit like saying: "Do not say that something is impossible, that it will never happen, or that you will never do it, because anything is possible." For example, in this episode, Anna says: "I don't think you're gonna see me in Bali anytime soon.... But **never say never**. Maybe I'll end up there...." Even though she doubts she will be able to live as a digital nomad in Bali, she understands that there is a chance that she will do it in the future. By saying "**never say never**", she acknowledged that it might happen one day.

Here are a couple more examples with **never say never**:

Felicia: I saw you out in the field the other day practicing with the soccer ball. You've got a lot of skill!

Verity: Thanks... but I'll never be good enough to make the city team. They're all like, super stars that can dribble circles around me.

Felicia: Hey now, **never say never**. Just keep practicing and you'll get there!

Kyoko: How was your camping trip last week?

Alec: It was kind of bad. Don't get me wrong, the scenery was amazing. We went on this hike through the woods and saw a whole herd of deer! But like, the sites where you pitch your tent were close together, so we could hear our neighbours whenever we were there.

Kyoko: That's not all that fun. Would you ever go to that campground again?

Alec: Well, I'll **never say never**, but I'm certainly not planning to go there anytime soon. Maybe if all the other campgrounds are booked up and they're the only place with a site available.

Kyoko: Haha, that makes sense. Well, it's good to have you back. We're behind on all our projects.

Alec: Of course we are. Let's get to work.

Hit the nail on the head

Idiom

Hit the nail on the head means to describe a situation or problem perfectly, to find the correct answer, or to say something completely true. If you say that someone has **hit the nail on the head**, you think they are exactly right about something.

In this episode, Andrew and Anna talk about whether there will be more digital nomads in the future. Anna mentions that she doesn't think so; instead, we may see more people moving and settling in different cities or countries. Andrew replies, "I think you **hit the nail right on the head**, I have exactly the same opinion." Since Anna's answer matched Andrew's thoughts, he used this idiom to express that.

Here are a couple more examples with **hit the nail on the head**:

Niall: Now, that meeting sure was enlightening. What did you think of David's comment about our new toy?

Annabelle: I think David **hit the nail on the head** when he said that kids won't want to play with this toy. I agree with his suggestion that we market it as a collectors' item for adults who grew up watching the original classic version of the cartoon.

Niall: I do too. I just wish we'd known that before we started preparing the marketing materials. Now we have to go back and redo like, several hours of work.

Annabelle: Sometimes being ahead of schedule is a good thing. And sometimes, it's not. But whatever. We'll get it done!

Yoshirou: My boyfriend has been talking about getting a car, and I don't know why but I can't really agree with that, you know?

Xue: I know how you're feeling! I think it's because it's more convenient to have a car when you live in the suburbs than it is when you live in a city. Like, in the city, it's so hard to find parking anywhere and you need to have a safe place to keep the car overnight. There's a lot more stress than in the suburbs where you just, like, park it in your driveway.

Yoshirou: I think you've **hit the nail on the head**! It's so nice to hear someone else feels the same way I do. But it is his decision on how he spends his money. And at least we'll be able to go outside the city on the weekends!

Quiz

1. Which of the following might you say to a friend who claims they won't ever do something?

- a) Never say forever
- b) Never say you won't
- c) Never say never
- d) Never say you will

2. Digital nomads have location freedom. What does that mean exactly?

- a) They have multiple homes around the world
- b) They have unlimited roaming on their phones
- c) They can't live according to their own desires
- d) They can live according to their own desires

3. Which of the following might you say when you realized that the thing you bought isn't as amazing as people said it was?

- a) It's not all it's cracked up to be
- b) It's all it's cracked up to be
- c) It's not all that
- d) It's not what I ordered

4. You love browsing a specific celebrity's social media because you think they're living the dream. What are they doing?

- a) Sleeping all the time
- b) Living a great life
- c) Living a terrible life
- d) Daydreaming all the time

5. Which of the following might you say to tell someone they've perfectly described a problem you're having?

- a) Hit the nail on the head
- b) Hammered the nail on the head
- c) Smacked the nail on the head
- d) Bashed the nail on the head

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. In your opinion, are digital nomads living the dream or do you think being a digital nomad isn't all it's cracked up to be? Why?
2. If you had location freedom, i.e., you could work from anywhere in world, where would you go and why?
3. If you're a digital nomad, describe what you do in a typical day. If you're not a digital nomad, imagine you were and describe your perfect day.
4. In your opinion, did Andrew and Anna hit the nail on the head when it comes to whether there will be more digital nomads in the future?
5. What's one thing you said you would never do, but you ended up changing your mind?

Quiz Answers

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

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