

## Chatterbox #327 – Kidults and nostalgia (ad free)

### Episode description

In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew and Anna talk about the "Kidult" trend and how strong nostalgia can be. They talk about their favorite childhood toys, like Barbies, Beanie Babies, Legos, and video games. They also discuss how many adults today are returning to these toys by collecting or playing with them again. Plus, they chat about how the toy industry has changed to focus on adults and whether there's any stigma around adults buying toys for themselves.

### Fun fact

Lego has seen a huge increase in sales to adults. To cater to this market, they've created complex sets like the Lego Architecture series and the Lego Creator Expert line, which include models of famous landmarks, vehicles, and more.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To geek out
- To blow up
- Glory days
- Hand-me-downs
- The skip / the dump
- One's saving grace



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## Transcript

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

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**Andrew:** Chatterbox episode 327, "Kidults and nostalgia." Featuring Andrew and Anna. Joining me now to talk about kidults and nostalgic toys and the power of nostalgia is my co-host, Anna. Hey there, Anna. How's it going?

**Anna:** Hi, Andrew. I'm very well, thank you. And you?

**Andrew:** I'm doing great. And I got to say, I'm excited for this episode. I think it's going to be a fun one. I don't know. Maybe I'm a kidult. Maybe I'm one of these people because I'm more excited for this episode than I usually am.

So yeah, I don't know. Anna, I guess maybe a place where we could start our conversation is just talking about the kinds of toys that we enjoyed when we were young. I don't know. I wonder if I could guess, Anna, what kind of toys would you have been into? I actually have no idea because we're like a different generation. So, I think the toys that you played with, I was probably like, you know, a teenager when you were just young playing with toys still. So, I really have no idea. What were you into?

**Anna:** OK. I was a massive Barbie girl.

**Andrew:** I was going to guess, but I thought that's going to be too cliched.

**Anna:** Right. I know. You probably felt a bit nervous about saying that, but yes, no, no, no. I was an absolute Barbie girl. Anything to do with dressing things up. You know, I had the little kitchen with the fake plates. Also, Polly Pocket. These were the little things that you opened, and you could do that. I was also a big fan of the Sylvanian Families, the kind of little rabbits that you would put in a house.

I mean, anything like that. That was my jam, let's say. I was also really obsessed with Beanie Babies. Beanie Babies were like little bears that you could collect that had different outfits and they were like collectibles. So, you could get different little Beanie Babies. So those were kind of the things that I really liked. So, I was definitely more in that direction. I wonder about you, Andrew. I wonder what type of toys. I don't know. Maybe I'm going to take a guess actually. Maybe things like, I don't know, cars or trains, maybe like a train set, maybe like comic books, maybe something related to comics and characters.

**Andrew:** Not so much.

**Anna:** No.

**Andrew:** Not so much. I loved Lego. Lego was my jam. Yeah. Lego. I was really into Lego. I also liked Playmobil. Do you remember Playmobil? I remember my mom's friend visited us one time and she brought us, me and my brother and sister, a gift. And it was this huge Playmobil set, like this African Safari Playmobil set. It came with this awesome Jeep. So, I guess maybe I did like cars a little bit.

But I was really into, yeah, Playmobil and I loved looking at the catalog and, like, seeing all the different sets that you could order and Lego catalogs too. Oh my gosh. Back in the day when you had a Lego set, it would come with, like, a catalog for all the different Lego sets that were available. And I loved looking at those catalogs. Those were awesome. Of course, Nintendo, super into Nintendo. That was probably the best toy if I had to choose just one. Yeah. Nintendo and then later Super Nintendo N64 as I got older. Anything Nintendo. I liked Sega too, but I didn't have a Sega. My friends did. I'd play Sega at my friend's house.

Yeah. Not cars and stuff so much. Not action figures so much. My brother was into like action figures like GI Joe's and stuff, but I was more into Lego, specifically city Lego. I really **geeked out** on like making my own cities and that was something that I was really into. Yeah. I was into collecting things too. In Canada, we collected hockey cards.

**Anna:** And that's just reminded me. Yeah. The car is like Pokémon cards. Oh my goodness. That... that blew up when I was about five or six or seven or something like this. Like, it was crazy. Like, people were fighting over those things. Like, people were stealing them and all sorts of stuff. It got crazy.

So, I remember the cards, that was a big era, specifically from my age, it was Pokémon cards, but there were a lot of like football cards and things like this that people would trade, and you'd buy them from the shop, and you'd want to get the shiny one or, you know, Charizard or whatever it was that was the Pokémon that everyone was looking for. So yeah, there were loads of things like that. Those kinds of collectible things that really sort of **blew up** around that time as well.

But Lego, how can we forget Lego? Goodness me. I wasn't a big fan, but my brother was, I think I remember, but I know what you mean about the catalogs. I was like that with the Barbies as well. 'Cause you'd kind of want to get the set, like the house with the bed and the little kitchen. And you'd always get really jealous if you'd go to your friend's house after Christmas and they'd have like, I know the mega house set or something like this. And, you know, I just got sort of a little chair or something. I'd be like, oh, you know, make you feel really bad or something. But yeah, there were so many fun things now that, you know, I don't have any of those things now, actually.

**Andrew:** Yeah. It's a little bit sad, you know, I guess it's just, everything is online now, but yeah, in the Lego sets, you would get a catalog. If you bought a video game, you would have a book that came, an instruction manual that would explain how to play the game. And there'd be an address that you could write to like a fan club or something. And you could sign up for a magazine or a subscription and get things in the mail. If you had a CD or a record, there'd be like a little book that came with it, right? And it was always just fun to go through the printed materials that came with the toys and media that you purchased.

But these days, not so much. I think that's something that I'm nostalgic for are like those catalogs and the printed materials, the physical materials that came with our toys and

media back in the day. Unfortunately, I think we've lost that probably forever, but yeah, something to look back fondly on. Anna, I guess maybe we could transition now a little bit into the main topic for today, which is like this renewed interest in some of these toys from our childhood.

And, you know, it's really interesting now. Adults are like the main purchasers of toys. I mean, I guess they probably always were because they'd be buying toys for kids, right? But they're buying them for themselves. And I read one article that was really funny. Like this dad was talking about how he was buying Lego for himself and also for his kid, but he was more willing to spend like a lot of money on Lego for himself. He's like, "I got to spend more on myself because these nostalgic Lego sets are more expensive." So, he's like buying his kid a present and buying himself a present at the same time. But he's like, "I can only buy my son like this cheap set, but I have to spend more money on myself." So, I guess, yeah, adults purchasing toys for themselves. This is like the biggest segment of toy sales these days. It's very, very interesting. How do you feel about that? I don't know. Like, are you going to go out and buy some Barbie sets for yourself so you can revive some of your **glory days** from the past?

**Anna:** No, definitely not. So, this is definitely one trend that for me is I get it. I get the feeling of nostalgia. I get kind of looking back and thinking like, "Oh, you know, I used to have these beanie babies and Pokémon and Barbie," but I am not going to be spending my money on buying a Barbie because for me, I'm like very practical. So, I'm like, why do I need a Barbie? What am I going to do with a Barbie? Like absolutely nothing. It's just going to sit on a shelf.

I don't get any satisfaction just from looking at the Barbie and being like, "Oh, great. It's a Barbie." Like for me, I'm like very minimalistic. I'm like, I want to get rid of things. So, for me, it's like an odd trend, but I do have one friend and this kidult thing, it just reminds me absolutely of him because he would buy, Oh my goodness. He would buy the mugs. He would buy these little characters from games. He would put them all over his room. He would have like posters and things like this.

And I mean, he was the same. He was older than me actually at this point. So, I mean, he was in his sort of late twenties or something like this. And he was like the definition of a kidult, and he loved it. He loved collecting all these things and having these toys that he really enjoyed spending his money that way. So, it's not better or worse. It's just different. I just don't want to buy a Barbie or a beanie baby. I think it's cute. I think it's nice. I can feel nostalgic, but I personally, I wouldn't spend my money on it, but I can understand why people do because people are thinking about the past. Like you said, they're like, "Oh, I want that catalog." You know, things aren't the way they used to be. So, I can understand it, but it's not something that I... I would do. What about you, Andrew? Have you bought any Lego recently? Any Lego sets?

**Andrew:** You know, I want to say to this question, I will say yes and no. I will say no to buying Lego sets. Although I have, I have visited, there's a Lego store in the department store that we usually go to. And every time I go to the department store or here in Korea, we call them department stores, but they're really more like shopping malls. So, every time I go to the mall, I go to the Lego store, and I look at it and you know, it's different these days. It's not like the same product that I used when I was growing up.

So, I think it's really easy for me. Like Lego has really changed a lot over the years. So I go, I always kind of get excited. Like, "Oh, it's the Lego store. Let's go check it out." And then I'm disappointed. It's not really the same. I think if it were the same, then I'd have a problem. Then I might be like, I want to buy this Lego set, but because it's a little bit different, I am not tempted to buy it, but not necessarily with toys, but with some other items. Like I have a t-shirt that's a Street Fighter 2 t-shirt, which is a video game that I played a lot when I was a kid.

And yeah, so I have that t-shirt and also, I have like some Walkman, like some tape decks and I have a CD Walkman as well. They don't take up a lot of space. I don't use them, but I just think they're really cool. Like archives of this, like interesting time in engineering history and like the design of these kinds of products are really cool and also nostalgic and sentimental because I did use them when I was younger. So, I think they're just going to

disappear sometime within the next like 20, 30 years. So, to have them now, it's like, I know I won't lose them if I have them.

So yeah, I do have a drawer with a couple of tape decks and some Walkmans and stuff. I have an old iPod. And to be honest, I've also been searching eBay for iPods because I... I'm worried. I'm like the same thing. I'm like, "These are going to totally disappear." And this was a really cool piece of like design history and also really nostalgic for me and like revolutionary and they're kind of cheap to buy. And I don't know if I'll use it too much, but it would just be nice to have. Like, I don't know. So yeah, my answer to that is like, yes and no. No, I haven't necessarily been buying toys per se, but some other kind of, I think it's more like audio and electronics and video games, those kinds of things. I'm much more tempted to like maybe dabble in purchasing.

**Anna:** Yeah. My boyfriend has the same thing with the consoles. He's like, "I really want to buy that old console." I'm like, "Why? Like, what are you going to do with it?" Because he doesn't, he won't use it. He just like likes having it. So, we'll have it there in a drawer somewhere. And every now and then he'll take it out of the drawer, look at it, clean it or something like this. I'm like, "But it's not serving a function. Why are you using it? Or why do you want it?" He's like, "Yeah, but it's just like you said, he's like, because it's, it's sentimental. It's nostalgic. It's something I used when I was young." So, I was like, "OK, we don't agree on this." So fine.

I think the only thing I do collect some things, the only thing I keep to have as a memory are things to do with trips. So, for example, if I ever go on a trip, I keep the maps from the trip and I keep like the little tickets and things from the transport and stuff like that, or anything significant that we got when we were on the trip. So those are the only, only things that I keep for nostalgic reasons. And I guess my idea is that in the future, maybe I'll make like a book with like different things from where we went or different trips that we went on.

But apart from that, I really don't keep anything. Like I'm always getting rid of stuff. I'm like, I really enjoy just emptying my house of anything that I don't need. So, I think that's just



my, I don't know. That's just the way I am. So, I think I'm less likely to buy something just to have it for whatever sake. Like it's just not my, it's just not my thing, but I can totally understand it. And people get super obsessed with the consoles. And like you said, the iPods and because they are kind of vintage now, they're like vintage tech. And like you said, it represents an era of our, of your life. So, I do understand it. I do understand it.

**Andrew:** I was just in Japan last month, just for a little bit. And I was in a store that was selling vintage video game stuff. And I looked long and hard at some of the used Nintendo 64s and Dreamcasts. And I was thinking, where could I put these in my house? How could I convince my wife that we need one of these? 'Cause they're actually really affordable too in Japan, much, much cheaper than you would expect them to be. So, I looked at them in the display case for a long time and then decided I can't do it but did bring up a lot of good memories.

And yeah, I'm curious, Anna, what do you think about this? Like we've been talking so far about kind of revisiting our youth by just having these items, right? So, like, I have a t-shirt that has Street Fighter on it. I have an iPod in my cabinet here beside my computer. That's kind of cool to look at and, you know, play with a little bit, but is there a difference between collecting vintage things from our youth and playing with toys? If I told you that I bought Lego and played with Lego, like I built the Lego set and I was down on the floor playing with my Lego car or something that I built, do you think that's different? Is there like a psychological difference between just collecting and then actually trying to revisit where we were when we were children by actually playing with the toys?

**Anna:** Sure. Maybe. I mean, I guess when you're playing with something like Lego, I mean, for me, that's kind of like a board game in a way, you know? So, it's kind of like you're playing a board game with Lego because it's like, you're solving a problem. You're trying to put the pieces together. So, for me, it's kind of like a board game or a puzzle, maybe. That's kind of how I think about Lego.

But yeah, if you're just collecting something, it's like you really have that longing for the past because it doesn't serve any function at all, really, other than making you feel better.



You know, at least with Lego, I suppose what you're trying to do is you're trying to, you're trying to solve a problem. You're trying to get to an end result. It's like a little mini project, right? You've got a purpose, you've got an aim and you finish it. But with like, just having the collecting collector items, but some people absolutely love it. Like, for example, my partner's dad, he has this huge cabinet, enormous, just full of like little soldiers. And this is another thing that people sometimes collect from their childhoods as well, when they were playing with like trains and military things. God, how could we forget soldiers and things like this? So, he just has this huge cabinet and it's just full of all these tiny little soldiers. And I'm like, "Why?"

**Andrew:** Especially in the UK, and definitely in Canada, but I think probably even more so in England, this is a thing is like our parents' generation or maybe grandparents' generation. There'd always be the one guy in the neighborhood who like decked out his basement with the model train set, right? Like his kids left the house, he took over the basement and just built like this replica train set of some city or something and just went to town making like miniatures and building it up in his basement. So, I guess maybe it's not such a new thing now that I'm thinking of it, because yeah, looking back at like the grandpas in my neighborhood, there was always somebody who was into, yeah, like you said, action figures, soldiers or train sets, maybe model airplanes, or model cars. So maybe we don't, you know, we don't always grow up. Maybe this kidult thing is not such a new trend. It's been around forever.

**Anna:** And I really don't know about the psychology behind collecting things, but I guess maybe it would be something about the fact that it's part of your identity. So, you kind of have it there to kind of remind yourself of, I don't know who you are or whatever, but it's also about showing who you are as a person, right? By wearing that t-shirt, for example, you said you wear that t-shirt that says, what was it, Andrew, you said?

**Andrew:** Street Fighter.

**Anna:** Street Fighter. So, when you wear that t-shirt, what you're saying to other people is this is who I am. This is part of me. Like this was part of my childhood. It's part of my identity. So, by wearing that, you're telling people something about you that you feel is important to tell people. So, do you know what I mean? So, I guess that's also a reason why people do it. Or why would you have a mug? I remember my friend had this mug, which was like a Pokémon or something like this, and he would take it to work. Well, why would you do that? Because you're trying to tell people something about who you are, about your identity. So yeah, and I guess it's nice. People want to share those things. Why else would you wear a t-shirt with a logo on it other than the fact that you want to tell people something about who you are?

**Andrew:** Yeah, absolutely. So, Anna, do you think there's a kind of stigma involved with adults buying toys? Like, do you think some people in society see it as being immature or kind of lame?

**Anna:** Well, I've got to be honest. I think there is that aspect of it. Like, for example, this friend that I was talking about before, I think there was part of me that was like, "OK, really? Another Pokémon mug? Are you sure? Is it really necessary?" I think maybe you're a little bit too old for this now. But on the other hand, who knows? I don't know. Yes, of course. It probably has this stigma of like Peter Pan, you know, never growing up, like wanting to be a kid. But then also at the same time, you know, we are all kids inside, in a way, you know.

So sure, maybe there's a little bit of stigma. But I think, you know, who knows what's right or wrong? And who cares, really? If you enjoy collecting your train sets, or whatever, then do whatever you want. Like, who cares? So yes, maybe there is a stigma, but do what you want. What do you think, Andrew?

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think, you know, maybe it's just like, me and the people that I hang around with. But I think there's no stigma at all, really, at least within my social circles. I could imagine in some social circles, there are some people who would be like, "Yeah,

grow up, like, what are you doing?" But because all of my friends and yeah, my social circle are kind of nerdy and geeky anyways, it's no big deal. Anna, do you know this word "*otaku*"? Have you heard this word before?

**Anna:** Never heard of it before, no.

**Andrew:** So, it's originally a Japanese word. And I'll have to ask our Japanese listeners to chime in and tell me exactly what it means in the Japanese language, because I'm not exactly sure what it means in Japanese. But this word is also used by some in Korea as well. And so, I can speak about it in a Korean context. And I think in English as well, we do use this word in some maybe like video game / anime circles, maybe not in the wider English world. But I think a lot of people will know what an *otaku* is.

But essentially, as far as I know, it's just like a person who's hyper obsessed with maybe a video game or hyper obsessed with an animation series, and sort of sounds like your friend, maybe your friend could be an *otaku*, like collecting different memorabilia surrounding that. And I think at first, this word was kind of used in a derogatory sense, like you say, "Oh, that guy's an *otaku*," like he's a nerd, he's a geek. But now, it's kind of been reclaimed. And so, people use it as kind of like, "Yeah, I'm an *otaku*," like, or "I'm a geek," like, there's no shame in being that it's just like who you are. It's what you like, it's what you enjoy. And I think that's good, right? Like, if it makes you happy, and you're not hurting anyone, then why not? So yeah, I think that maybe there has been a shift just from, you know, some people being ashamed of what they like, to just owning it and being like, this makes me happy. I like it. It's who I am. And if you don't like it, you can leave, but I'm gonna do it. And I think that's a good thing.

**Anna:** Sure, absolutely. I mean, look, if one of my friends invited me to their house, and then when I went there, they had a huge cabinet of beanie babies or something. Well, it might not be my cup of tea. But I mean, if that's what they want to spend their money on, then perfect. I don't know. You spend your money, however you want to spend your money. If you want to buy an old console, then great. There's nothing wrong with it at all.

But of course, like you said, that doesn't mean that other people don't think that maybe, "Oh, it's a little bit grow up" or a little bit strange or whatever. But people always have opinions about everything. So, you know, who cares really, at the end of the day, people are always going to say something about whatever you do, what you want to do, you spend your money how you want to spend your money.

**Andrew:** Sure, can't please everyone for sure. Anna, final question here, and then we'll wrap things up. I'm just wondering, have you noticed any ways that like, toy companies, the toy industry, maybe video games, electronics will expand it to all of these things. Have you noticed any specific marketing for adults? You know, we're talking about Barbie at the start of the show, there was the Barbie movie. I'm wondering if that could be like an example of them. You know, I think it's Mattel is the company that produces Barbie. I wonder if they saw an opportunity like, "Hey, let's jump on this trend. Let's make it into a movie." It would be interesting to know if Barbie doll sales rose as a result of that movie. I'm sure it didn't hurt it.

**Anna:** Absolutely not. I don't know. That would be an interesting that would be an interesting episode, maybe the Barbie effect or something like this. I haven't personally, but then again, we have to remember that probably marketers are not going to target me for that type of stuff because when I'm online and when I'm searching for things, I'm not going to be searching for it. So, I wonder whether there might be also a little bit of that as well is that it's just not my thing. So probably I won't get hit with marketing about it. But the only thing I would say is that, for example, there's a big department store in Spain and I went in there the other day to their flagship store, and they now have like a big section for toys and kind of anime and comics and, but it looked really nice. Like it wasn't like the toy store where a kid designed for kids, it was like very slick. It was kind of like a bookstore. And so, I thought, wow, this is really kind of targeted for more younger adults or adults or whatever. So, I did notice that it seemed like they had actually created a place in that store. So, if they've created the place, they obviously want it or think it's going to be profitable where they were selling this type of collector items. So that was interesting, but

that's the only thing I've seen in terms of them catering to maybe more the adult market. What about for you, Andrew, have you seen any sort of changes or any specific marketing targeting adults?

**Andrew:** Not so much, to be honest with you. And I think the reason why is like, if you think about it, at least somebody from my perspective, I'm interested in the original things. So, like if Lego starts making a new Lego set, I'm not really interested in it. I'm interested in the one that I had specifically when I was younger and same with like the video game stuff, the Street Fighter t-shirt that I have is obviously marketed towards me because I was of the age where I played that when I was young and I still have really fond memories about that game. So, like that t-shirt, when I bought that, that was obviously made for me. It's not made for like a young kid who never played Street Fighter 2. They don't even know what that is, right? There's probably much better games out now. So yes and no. Like I think for a lot of things, it's the vintageness of the product that's interesting, not the new one. But when you do go into stores and you see like t-shirts or merch with, you know, old TV shows, old anime shows, old video games, like that's obviously marketed towards people in my age demographic. So yeah, to an extent, I guess some of these companies who have the copyright on these brands, right, they're repurposing them and still making money off them today. That's amazing. They've been having these franchises make money for them for so long.

OK and we're going to keep our conversation going here for just a few more minutes for all of our members, some bonus content for you all, just as a way to say thank you for your support. And Anna, I'm going to turn things over to you. You got a question here to kick off the bonus content?

**Anna:** I do. Andrew, and I guess you guys can think about this as well. Have you still got any of those toys that you talked about, the Lego or any of the things that you used to play with when you're younger? Do you actually still have them?

**Andrew:** I don't have any of my toys, I think, from when I was a kid, unfortunately, I would love to have not necessarily the Lego, but like the video game stuff. I don't know. I was recently back in my hometown and my parents, after all of us kids moved out, they downsized from our family home. Now they live in a condo. And so, they actually have a storage with a lot of the stuff that was from our house, that's just like thrown into the storage. And I asked them, could I get into that storage container and look? Cause I wanted to find my old CDs. I had a huge CD collection, book collection that I just kind of left in the house when I moved to go to university and then never returned to it. And thankfully they didn't throw that out, but they were like, do we really have to open the storage? Like it's going to be a pain in the neck to get in there and find all your stuff. And so, I didn't push them too hard on it, but I was curious if there were any video game stuff in there too. Could be cool to find. But yeah, as far as I know, all of my toys, like I had little cousins, and my mom was really close with all the families in our neighborhood. And I think when they had, you know, it was just handed down to the next family. When we grew out of our toys, they were just passed on to little cousins or other families in the neighborhood. And I don't think any of that stuff remains. No. How about you, Anna?

**Anna:** No, I don't. I don't think I've got any of that stuff. I think my mom sort of asked me similar type of thing. She's like, do you want any of this stuff? I was like, no, she's like, OK, it's going out. It's going to the skip.

**Andrew:** What does that mean? I don't know that one. "The skip."

**Anna:** Yeah. She's like, we're going to take it to the skip. It's a place where you have to go with your car and it's where you can put more rubbish, like things that you can't put in the bin. So, for example, you go there with like trees that you've cut down or like big white goods, like wash. Well, goodness me, I forgot the word there. Washing machines, dishwashers.

**Andrew:** Big white machine.

**Anna:** So, things like that. Right. Yeah. Big white machine. So, things like that, that you can't just put in your everyday average bin. So, she's like, I'm taking it to the skip.

**Andrew:** OK.

**Anna:** And I think my kind of sister got the **hand-me-downs** Barbie dolls, you know, where I'd sort of cut all their hair off and, you know, written all over them as well, which is another interesting thing, which is kind of why with some of the Barbies, you would sort of destroy them and make them look really ugly. And, you know, with others, you'd make them look really nice, kind of weird. But, you know, some of them, I remember I just kind of chopped all their hair off. A little bit like in Toy Story. I don't know if any of you guys remember, there's that like evil Barbie that's been sort of like completely disfigured and sort of attached to the body of a duck or something like this. I was like, well, I do remember cutting off their hair and then also instantly regretting it afterwards. Like, oh, I think that was a mistake because it looked really bad, but it was too late, of course.

**Andrew:** Interesting. Maybe we could save that for a different episode. I think we could probably do a deep dive on the psychology of how kids play with their toys. To circle back, **"the skip"** in North American English, we would call **"the dump"** guys, "the dump." So, yeah. Anna, I have one final bonus question here that we can talk about. And that is, and I think I know the answer. I can sometimes in my head predict what you're going to say, but I never know. So, I do have to ask you, that is, has social media, have you noticed on social media, I should say, any kind of influencers talking about, you know, nostalgic products or toys from when they were a kid, anything like that?

**Anna:** I do follow one person who also works in the English space, and she plays a lot of video games, and she plays this one game, which I've actually forgot to mention, which I was obsessed with, which was the Sims.



**Andrew:** Oh yeah. Love the Sims, the original.

**Anna:** Right. Yeah. So, she always talks about this, and she talks about playing other games as well. But I remember her mentioning that and thinking, wow, that's nostalgic. Because I used to remember playing the Sims for hours. Like my mom and dad had to put limits on me because I was going crazy. I was there for like eight hours. But the weird thing is, is that I was doing that weird thing where I would like build the house, burn it down. Or I'd be like, or I'd be like, build the house, but I wouldn't give them like a toilet or something. Like I was kind of evil. Like I was an evil dictator on the Sims. But I would spend hours on it. And I also tried to learn all the different tricks where you could get like more money. So, there was one way that you could kind of just get like unlimited money. So, they'd be like billionaires. And, you know, so it was weird, but that really gave me a lot of nostalgia for the past. It didn't make me want to buy the Sims now though, because I'd be worried that I would like be totally unproductive and I'd have to end up leaving my job or something. Cause it would take over my life. But yeah, I remember that about the Sims. Yeah. That was crazy times. The Sims, my goodness, that was an era.

**Andrew:** The company that made the Sims is called Maxis. I believe Maxis. And they had a whole bunch of different Sim games. Like the Sims was one of the, their later games, but they had a whole bunch of them before. Like there was an ant simulator called Sim Ant. There was Sim Earth, Sim City, a bunch of different ones. And I, I played them all, but yeah, the Sims too. Great, great games. Very fun. I think my answer to this question is social media, YouTube is like **my saving grace** because it's an outlet for me for exploring nostalgia without buying things. Like one of the video games that was huge for me was this game called Age of Empires.

And this is really nerdy and almost a little bit embarrassing to admit, but sometimes I go onto YouTube, and I just watch people playing that game. And that's like my kind of outlet. I sometimes, yeah. On a Friday night after my wife has gone to bed and I'm staying up a

little bit later cause it's the weekend. I'll go to that corner of YouTube where I watch people play old video games or I like to watch, like I'm into Mac computers, Apple computers, especially older ones. So, I'll watch guys, like they'll buy like some old beat-up Apple computer off of eBay and they'll restore it and fix it. And I love watching that. And that's like a cool way to restore like these vintage products. But if there weren't those corners of the internet, then I'd probably be that guy playing Age of Empires with my friends, or I'd be that guy buying old Macs and trying to restore them myself. So, I'm really happy that there are other people doing it and then I can just spend like an hour a month, every six weeks, I'll go over to that corner of the internet and sort of get my fix. So yeah, I would say I'm thankful that there are other people doing it, doing it on my behalf.

**Anna:** Yeah. It's always found that fascinating how some of the most watched videos are those ones where other people are playing video games and other people are watching it. It's fascinating really because you think there must be something, you know, it's obviously interesting. It's obviously people really enjoy watching them, like you said, but it's so fascinating. It's like, why, I guess that's the big question is like, why is it so fascinating? Why are people so, why are people interested in watching other people play the game? But my brother does that all the time. Like he watches a lot of YouTube stuff about video games and things like this. And another one I remember playing a lot, which has just popped into my head was rollercoaster tycoon.

**Andrew:** Oh yeah, that was a great one. I love that one.

**Anna:** Similar type of thing, you know, where you build the park and everything goes wrong and then you try and build the rollercoaster, but you run out of money. So, people just kind of end up running off the rollercoaster and things while it was an age. Oh, I want to play it now.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Just go on to YouTube. You can watch somebody else play it. You'll get your fix after 15 minutes and then you can move on. That's my advice.

**Anna:** Thanks for the advice.

**Andrew:** All right. Well guys, I think we'll leave it at here for today. Please take care and we'll talk to you in the next Culips episode. Goodbye!

**Anna:** Bye, guys. See you soon.

**Andrew:** That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye.

## Detailed Explanations

### To geek out

Phrasal verb

Andrew tells Anna that he “really **geeked out** on making his own cities” with Legos when he was a child. This means that Andrew became very excited and interested in making Lego cities.

A “geek” is a person who has deep knowledge and a strong, often obsessive, interest in a specific subject. It’s often related to something technical, scientific, or a hobby such as collecting trading cards or playing video games. **To geek out** is a phrasal verb that means to get really excited about a specific topic or hobby and focus on it a lot. When you **geek out**, you spend a lot of time learning or talking about that thing because it makes you happy.

For example, you might say, “My little brother **geeks out** about trains and knows everything about different types of locomotives.” This means he loves to learn and talk about trains – it’s a passion and a hobby of his. Another example might be, “When the new Marvel movie came out, my girlfriend **geeked out** and watched it three times!” Usually people don’t watch the same movie several times in a short period. However, since the speaker’s girlfriend is a big fan of Marvel, she got excited and saw the new film three times. This passionate, obsessive behavior is a great example of **geeking out**.

Because **geeking out** means getting really excited or passionate about a hobby, you should NOT say this about something you know a lot about *but don’t care about*. For instance, you may be excellent at mathematics at school, but if you aren’t passionate or interested in the subject, then you would NOT **geek out** about math.

Here are a couple more examples with **to geek out**:

**Richard:** I saw you stayed late after work yesterday. What were you up to?

**Josie:** I was **geeking out** over some new coding techniques. Once I start learning something new in programming, I can’t stop!

**Emily:** Amelia told me that you spent the whole weekend watching all of the Harry Potter movies. Did you really finish all of them in one weekend?

**Nathan:** I did! I **geeked out** so hard. I even started reading all the behind-the-scenes facts online.

## To blow up

Phrasal verb

When talking about her childhood, Anna says, "Pokémon cards **blew up** when I was about five or six." Here, Anna means that Pokémon cards suddenly became very popular and everyone wanted them. When she uses the verb "**blow up**," she's not talking about an explosion, but rather how quickly and massively people got excited about them.

You may already be familiar with the verb **blow up** meaning to explode. In this situation, **to blow up** means to suddenly become very popular or in high demand. It is often used for things like trends, music, videos, or products. For example, a video on social media can **blow up** if many people watch it in a short time. A contestant on a singing competition can **blow up** after their appearance on the show, meaning they instantly acquire a large fan base.

In order to remember this phrasal verb, imagine the literal meaning of "**blow up**" – to explode. Just like how an explosion is a big event that happens all of a sudden, a trend or a musician can experience a sudden surge in popularity all of a sudden. By **blowing up**, they experience an explosion of popularity.

Don't use **blow up** to talk about something that *slowly* became famous. **To blow up** means to experience a sudden huge increase in popularity and interest.

- Correct: The musician **blew up** within a week.
- Incorrect: The musician gradually **blew up** over five years.

Some synonyms for **blow up** include "to become a sensation," "to spread like wildfire," and "to go viral." However, "go viral" is specifically about things that gain popularity online, like videos or memes.

Here are a few more examples with **to blow up**:

**George:** This song is everywhere! I think this is the tenth time I've heard it this week.

**Rebecca:** I know, it **blew up** after the artist performed it live on TV.

**Mark:** I posted a video of my cat doing a backflip, and now I have over 100,000 views!

**Tina:** No way! That **blew up** fast. Did you expect it to get that much attention?

**Mark:** Not at all! I just thought it was funny, but people are loving it.

## Glory days

Expression

When discussing the concept of “kidults” and the trend of adults buying toys they used to play with when they were young, Andrew asks Anna if she’s going to buy some Barbies to “revive some of [her] **glory days** from the past.”

**Glory days** means a period in someone’s life when things were especially exciting, fun, or successful. People often use this phrase when talking about their younger years or a time when they felt they were at their best. It’s a nostalgic phrase that reflects on positive memories.

For example, you might say, “In my **glory days**, I played on the high school basketball team and won a championship.” This means you were really proud of that time and feel happy thinking about it. You may feel that you cannot play high school as well as you used to and this time during your life – your **glory days** – represents the peak of your abilities.

Another example might be, “My dad always talks about his **glory days** when he traveled the world with his band.” This suggests that your dad had an exciting or proud time in the past when he was traveling and performing with his band. He may feel nostalgic about that time because he isn’t with his band anymore or life has gotten more difficult since then.

Some similar expressions to **glory days** include “halcyon days,” “the good old days,” and “in one’s prime.”

Here are a few more examples with **glory days**:

**Samantha:** I was just looking at some old photos from our college years.

**Robby:** Ah, the **glory days**. Life seemed so simple and fun back then.

**Samantha:** We didn’t have to worry about things like mortgages and retirement plans back then.

**Robby:** Yup. It was all about partying, hanging out, and going to class.

**Benjamin:** Lisa told me you used to run marathons when you were in your twenties. I didn’t know that about you!

**Violet:** Yeah, back in my **glory days**. I used to train every day and travel for races. It was such a great time. I gave it up after a few repeated hip injuries, though.

## Hand-me-downs

Noun

Anna tells Andrew that her sister got the "**hand-me-down**" Barbie dolls she used to play with after Anna outgrew them. This means that after Anna was too old to want to keep playing with the Barbies, she gave them to her younger sister.

"**Hand-me-downs**" are items, usually clothes or toys, that are passed from one person to another, especially between older and younger family members. These items are not new; they were first used by someone else. It is common in families for younger siblings to receive **hand-me-down** clothes or toys from their older siblings.

For example, you might say, "I used to wear my sister's **hand-me-downs**." This means that when your sister outgrew her clothes, you received them to wear. Another example might be, "My brother gave me his bicycle as a **hand-me-down** when he got a new one." This means that you received his old bike when he no longer needed it.

The term **hand-me-down** comes from phrasal verb "to hand something down" from one person to another. The word "down" in this case means to pass to someone below you or younger than you. When you're talking about family heirlooms, you might say, "This vase **has been handed down** in my family from generation to generation."

Because **hand-me-downs** refer to used items, you would NOT use this expression for something new. For example, if your parents buy you new shoes, you would NOT say, "These are **hand-me-downs**." **Hand-me-downs** are always items that were used by someone else before being passed on to you.

Here are a few more examples with **hand-me-downs**:

**Nick:** You've got a really cool collection of books!

**Sophie:** Thanks! Most of them are **hand-me-downs** from my mom. She used to read these when she was my age and passed them down to me.

**Nick:** That's so special! It's nice to have books with a family history.

**Dominique:** Where did you get that jacket? It looks vintage!

**Jim:** Oh, this? It's a **hand-me-down** from my older brother. He used to wear it in high school and now it's mine.

**Dominique:** Wow, it's in great condition!



## The skip / the dump

Noun

Anna tells Andrew that her mom took old, unwanted things to "**the skip**," which confused Andrew since he didn't know the term. Anna explains that "**the skip**" is a place where you take big trash items that don't fit in regular bins, such as old appliances or large pieces of furniture. Andrew adds that in North America, people call this place "**the dump**."

"**The skip**" (in British English) and "**the dump**" (in North American English) both refer to a place where you take large or heavy items that can't go in regular household trash bins. These items might include things like broken washing machines, old furniture, or yard waste.

For example, you might say, "We took our old couch to the **skip**," or, "We're heading to **the dump** to get rid of some old appliances." The word "**skip**" comes from an old term for a large container used for waste, and in the UK, it's now used to describe a place or large container where people throw away rubbish. In North America, "**dump**" comes from the idea of "dumping" or throwing trash into a large site.

Because "**the skip**" and "**the dump**" are for large or heavy items, you would NOT use these terms for regular, small household garbage. For everyday trash, you would use the term "bin" or "trash can."

For example, if you're throwing away kitchen waste, you would NOT say, "I'm taking this to the **skip / dump**." Instead, you would say, "I'm throwing this in the bin" or "I'm throwing this in the trash."

Here are a couple more examples with **the skip / the dump**:

**Carla:** Our garden is full of branches and leaves from trimming the trees.

**Kyle:** You should take all that to **the skip**. They have a special section for yard waste.

**Carla:** Great idea!

**Donna:** I see you've got a trailer hooked up to your car. What are you doing today?

**Matthew:** I'm heading to **the dump**. We've been renovating the house, and there's so much old wood and broken tiles that need to go.

**Donna:** That makes sense. Renovation waste can pile up quickly.

## One's saving grace

### Expression

Andrew says, "YouTube is like **my saving grace** because it's an outlet for me for exploring nostalgia without buying things." Here, "**saving grace**" means YouTube is something that helps him enjoy memories of old video games without spending money. It is something positive in a situation that could be difficult (in this case, spending too much money).

"**One's saving grace**" refers to a good thing or quality that makes a bad or difficult situation better. It is something that helps or saves you when things could be worse. For example, if a movie is boring but has great music, the music is the "**saving grace**" of the movie. You might also say, "It was raining during the trip, but our hotel's warm pool was **our saving grace**."

Don't use **saving grace** for something that makes a perfect situation. It's only used when things are difficult or not ideal.

- Correct: The weather was awful and the hotel was uncomfortable, but the **saving grace** of the trip was the beautiful sunset.
- Incorrect: The weather was perfect, the food was amazing, and the view was breathtaking. The **saving grace** of the trip was the beautiful sunset.

Some similar expressions include "silver lining," "lifesaver," and "redeeming feature."

Here are a few more examples with **one's saving grace**:

**Monica:** How was the dinner party at Sarah's?

**John:** To be honest, the food wasn't great and the conversation was kind of dull, but the **saving grace** was the dessert. She made the best chocolate cake I've ever had!

**Monica:** Sounds like the dessert saved the night!

**Chris:** I heard your project got delayed again. How are you holding up?

**Ilana:** It's been really stressful, but **my saving grace** has been working from home. At least I can manage my time better and avoid the long commute.

**Chris:** That sounds like a big relief, especially during such a hectic time.

**Ilana:** It has definitely made things a little more bearable.

## Expressions Quiz

- 1. If someone says, "That video blew up overnight," what do they mean?**
  - a) The video was accidentally deleted.
  - b) The video became extremely popular very quickly.
  - c) The video was removed for inappropriate content.
  - d) The video was played by only a few people.
  
- 2. If someone says, "The meeting was boring, but the saving grace was the free lunch," what do they mean?**
  - a) The free lunch made the meeting more tolerable.
  - b) The free lunch had no effect on the meeting.
  - c) The free lunch was not enough to make the meeting bearable.
  - d) The free lunch made the meeting worse.
  
- 3. Which of the following situations could someone describe as "geeking out"?**
  - a) They spend hours researching every detail about their favorite TV show.
  - b) They reluctantly do their homework because it's required.
  - c) They ignore their favorite hobby to focus on something else.
  - d) They don't enjoy learning about new topics.
  
- 4. In British English, what does "taking something to the skip" mean?**
  - a) Taking something to be repaired.
  - b) Donating something to a charity.
  - c) Taking something to be stored for later use.
  - d) Throwing something away in a large container or area meant for big trash items.
  
- 5. If your friend says, "I used to wear my brother's hand-me-downs," what does he mean?**
  - a) He borrowed his brother's new clothes.
  - b) He shared clothes with his brother.
  - c) He wore clothes that his brother used before passing them down to him.
  - d) He bought clothes for his brother.

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## Listening Comprehension Quiz

6. What does Andrew say about his excitement for the "kidult" topic?
7. What toys did Andrew geek out on as a child?
8. Why does Anna say she wouldn't buy Barbies for herself now, even though she loved them as a child?
9. What did Anna mention about her friend who collects memorabilia?
10. Why does Andrew mention YouTube as his "saving grace"?

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Describe your childhood and what kinds of toys and games you played. Do you still have any interest in playing with those toys or playing those games today?
2. How do the toys and games played by children today differ from the ones you played when you were a kid? Are any of them the same?
3. Do you feel an urge to hold on to nostalgic items from your childhood, or do you throw such items away? Why?
4. Do you think adults who spend a lot of time and money on nostalgic toys are "**geeking out**" in a positive or negative way? Do you think they're being immature and childish, or do you think this kind of behavior is normal and understandable?
5. Have you ever had an experience where a hobby or nostalgic activity became your "**saving grace**" during a difficult time? What do you do when things are going wrong, and you need to de-stress?

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## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.a    3.a    4.d    5.c

6. He feels like he might be a kidult himself because he still gets excited about toys.

7. He mainly geeked out on Lego sets, Playmobil toys, and Nintendo.

8. She prefers to be practical and doesn't see a reason to buy toys anymore.

9. He buys mugs and characters from video games because they remind him of his childhood.

10. It allows him to explore nostalgic video games without spending money.

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### Episode credits

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