

Chatterbox #37– Job Interview

Transcript

Maura: Hello everybody!

Harp: Hello! This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura. And we're really excited, because Culips is becoming more and more popular, and we really appreciate your nice comments that you send us and your emails. We really do read every one.

Harp: We love you!

Maura: We love you guys!

Harp: And we're here at Culips bringing you a Chatterbox episode.

Maura: And in Chatterbox episodes, what we do is chat, about something cultural, something interesting that might be happening in North America, and we also interview people.

Harp: Exactly. And make sure you go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can sign up, become a member, and then you have access to the Lipservice, which has a complete transcript, a detailed explanation, and even a quiz.

Maura: And on our website, you can listen to all our previous podcasts for free. So check it out!

Harp: Yeah, free ESL podcasts, what more do you need?

Maura: And we're always focused on natural English. So, today, **back by popular demand**, we're going to get Harp's **advice** about the job market. So, I'm going to interview Harp and ask her some questions about job interviews. So you can tell us how people can get prepared and do the best they can when they have a job interview.

Harp: And just in case you don't know, I am a recruiter, so I interview people for a living.

- Maura: She's a serious professional. But actually, this is really great **advice**. This is good **advice** for Canadians who already live in Canada and might need some **tips**, but it's especially good if you're thinking about coming over to North America and you want to do well in your interview. This way, you'll know a little bit more about what you can do.
- Harp: Yeah, or if you're in North America and you're getting ready for your first job interview.
- Maura: Yeah, it's really helpful **advice**, I think. First, Harp: you have an interview, you got the call, you're excited, you're **pumped**, you're feeling good. What can you do to prepare for the interview?
- Harp: The first thing you should do is research. Research the company, find out what it does, look for the company website, find out things about the culture of the company, find **press releases**, **google it**. Find out about the company you're gonna be interviewing at.
- Maura: That's good **advice**, because then you know a little bit more of what to expect and you can also think about some questions you might want to ask them, because you know about their company and you can be specific.
- Harp: Exactly. It shows enthusiasm. It shows that you took the time to research the company. It **sets you apart**.
- Maura: And, would it be a good idea to practice with someone?
- Harp: For sure! I recommend practicing for the interview—before—to everyone. It's a good idea to practice for some of the typical questions that get asked in an interview.
- Maura: To be honest, I had never really done this before, and then recently I practiced a lot with a good friend of mine. We practiced interview questions, and then when I went for the interview, it was so much easier and I answered so much more clearly. Because even if they didn't ask me the exact question, they asked me a similar question, and so my answer just came so much more easily. It's really good **advice**. You're right.

- Harp: Yeah, so, an easy way to find out sample questions is, again, to go on the Internet and just search *sample interview questions*. And a big trend that's happening in North America is behavioural interview questions. Behavioural interview questions are questions that are trying to find out your behaviour, so how you acted in certain situations. So, an example question could be "Tell me a time when you had to deal with conflict in work and how you reacted to it." So they're asking, from your past, how you reacted to situations and how you dealt with situations, so that's why it's important to practice so you have examples of situations where you had a problem and had to deal with it, of **thinking on your feet**. There are so many different types of behaviours they could be looking for.
- Maura: And often, **the trick** with those kinds of questions is to turn something negative and **put a positive spin on it**, in some way.
- Harp: For sure, so practice your answers.
- Maura: Now, another thing that always stresses me out when I have an interview is getting there, because sometimes it's far and I've never been to that area of town before. So what should you do in that case?
- Harp: It's so important to know where you're going, how long it's gonna take. Just go online. MapQuest it or look on Google and figure out the best way, and the easiest way of how to get there, and estimate how long it's gonna take and then add at least 15 or 20 minutes or 30 minutes to get there, because being on time is very, very, very important in North America.
- Maura: I'm usually so paranoid that I leave way in advance and get there so early, but I would rather have that than get there too late.
- Harp: Exactly. If, for some reason, you're late, let's say there's a big accident on the road or you're stuck in traffic, you should call the person you're meeting and tell them you're gonna be late and apologize. And the first thing that you should say to them is *I'm sorry I'm late*.
- Maura: Yup, Canadians are known for apologizing, so this is an example when you definitely should say *I'm sorry*.
- Harp: Exactly, because you can be late, I understand that things happen, but the first thing you should say is *I'm so sorry I'm late*. Then that makes me understand that you appreciate being on time and that, in the job, you'll be on time.

- Maura: Yeah, that's a good point. Now, another question I have is about dressing, because some people don't know whether to wear a suit or dress more casually.
- Harp: I think that you should dress professionally, and there's always that saying, ***dress for the job that you want, not the job that you're interviewing for***, so if you want to be a manager, wear a suit. It's better to be **overdressed** than **underdressed**. So don't wear jeans, don't wear something you would wear to go clubbing, don't wear anything that's ripped. Wear clean, professional-looking clothes, even just a sweater and dress pants if they're clean, ironed, professional looking.
- Maura: That's good **advice**. So, you must have some **advice** for us now during the interview, when everyone is the most nervous. What can we do to be successful?
- Harp: You know, before I went into recruitment, one of my friends told me she goes into in an interview always telling herself she can get this job. So she's so confident. You know, she's passed every single interview? She's gotten every single job she's interviewed for.
- Maura: That's pretty impressive.
- Harp: Yes. She's not arrogant, but she's confident, so then she speaks slowly, she comes across as very professional, she's clear with her answers, she's prepared. She knows she can do the job and she's the best person for it. So it's important to have that feeling that you're confident, because it's projected to the person.
- Maura: Yeah, that's a good point. And one thing, again, that I've only learned myself rather recently is to take time when answering questions, because I know that I have a tendency to want to answer right away, but I've learned that that's not always the best.
- Harp: For sure. Take your time to think about it and if you didn't understand the question, it's not a big deal to ask, "Oh, can you repeat the question please?" It's OK; everyone knows you're a bit nervous, so it's better to ask for the question to be repeated, to take your time to think about it, to make sure that you answer the correct question in a good way.
- Maura: Good **advice**. So hopefully that eases some of your worries out there if you're nervous about an upcoming job interview. So Harp, now, you've gone through the interview, you've gotten dressed up, you got there on time, you were confident. Now what?
- Harp: OK, so the interview's almost over, and I think almost every person who's

interviewing someone is going to ask: “Oh, do you have any questions for me?” I believe that it’s super important to ask at least one question. Something about ... if they didn’t mention salary, you can ask the salary range. You can ask if the recruiter thinks that you’re a good fit for the position. When will you hear from the person about the job if you got it? Always try to ask at least one question. And you know, I’m really impressed when someone comes in with a list of questions; it shows that they’re prepared. And oftentimes, if they come with questions, at the end they’ll say, “Oh, you answered all my questions.” And that’s OK, because it shows that they’ve prepared beforehand, that they don’t need to ask a question then.

Maura: That’s really interesting and I think that that is a secret insider **tip**, because I’ve never heard that before.

Harp: I think it’s really great and it gives a really good impression.

Maura: Good. Now, after the interview is done?

Harp: Make sure you thank the person for their time when you’re saying good bye. Shake their hand—firm handshake—and afterwards, always send **a thank-you email**. This does not happen enough and will **set you apart** from other people.

Maura: It must be a relatively new thing.

Harp: Actually, I think it’s a very old thing that people are forgetting to do.

Maura: Hmm, interesting, because, yeah, I’d never heard of it before today. So I’m learning something too. Send an email after the interview just saying *thanks for your time*.

Harp: That’s all: ***thank you so much for taking the time to meet me***. That’s it. That’s all you need to say.

Maura: So, if you want an example of what kind of things you should include in an email, in **a thank-you email**, you can check out our Lipservice, which you can access once you become a member, and we’ll have a couple example emails that you could use when sending your **thank-you email**. And is it appropriate to call?

- Harp: It is. I would recommend: send **a thank-you email** the day, or maximum two days, after the interview and then in two weeks, if you haven't heard, call the person and ask, "Oh I was just wondering if you have any news about the position." Ask for some feedback. If you weren't selected, ask why you weren't selected. Ask if the person has any **tips** for you. This is great, and most have no problem answering these questions.
- Maura: Yeah, I think that that's hard for a lot of people, because it's critical, but it's also a great way to learn and be better for next time.
- Harp: For sure. And the recruiter or the person you interviewed with will probably remember you more, because not everyone does this.
- Maura: One more thing that I want to add is that, often, when you go for an interview, you don't hear back from the people. Sometimes they even promise that they're going to get back to you about the position, and you never hear anything. Obviously, unfortunately, you didn't get the job, but it happens fairly often.
- Harp: If that happens, I still recommend that you ask for feedback. If anything, you'll remind the person of yourself and maybe they'll think of you for the next position that's open. It keeps you fresh in their mind. Don't call the person every day for weeks and weeks, but call once to ask for feedback.
- Maura: Yeah, I guess keeping contact is good.
- Harp: Exactly. Because jobs are found through connections.
- Maura: It's all about the connections.
- Harp: Exactly. And leaving a good impression makes you more connected to that person.
- Maura: OK, great, Harp. There must be some funny stories that you've experienced recruiting people for jobs, and you must have seen a wide variety of people.
- Harp: For sure. And, you know, on the **advice** side, I forgot to mention this, but one of my candidates forgot to turn his telephone off. Remember to turn your phone off! Not silent—off completely, because if it vibrates, I can still hear it. But this candidate forgot to turn his phone off, so it rang in the interview and he reached into his pocket, took his phone out, and I thought OK, he's gonna turn it off, like everyone else.
- Maura: Yeah?
- Harp: He answered the phone!

- Maura: OK, that seems very wrong and not a good thing to do at all.
- Harp: It was horrible.
- Maura: So, did he just say “Sorry, I’m in an interview, I have to go now”?
- Harp: No! You know the worst and the funniest thing?
- Maura: What?
- Harp: He scheduled another interview in this interview!
- Maura: That is unbelievable! That’s crazy.
- Harp: It’s classic. I should write a book.
- Maura: Oh my gosh, you should write a book.
- Harp: It was so funny when he answered the phone and started scheduling another job interview.
- Maura: I suppose, Harp, that that might leave a bad impression.
- Harp: Yup, he didn’t get the job, nor would I call him again.
- Maura: Oh my gosh, I can’t believe that.
- Harp: Yeah, so turn your phones off when you’re going into an interview.
- Maura: Yeah, and don’t have conversations if the phone rings. That’s crazy.
- Harp: Yup. That is by far the funniest thing that’s happened to me in an interview. I had to laugh about it after, because I thought *did that really happen?*
- Maura: OK, great. So, that was a funny story, but there was also a lesson, which is: turn your phone off.
- Harp: Yeah, turn your cell off.
- Maura: So this episode, I’m sure, was helpful for anyone who’s going to have a job interview or especially is going to come to Canada for a job interview.
- Harp: For sure.

- Maura: And I know that our previous episode that you did with **advice** about looking for jobs was one of our popular episodes, so I'm sure this one will be popular too and people will really appreciate it.
- Harp: Well, I hope so!
- Maura: Yeah. I think it's very helpful. And remember, if you want to learn more about English, you can go to our website and find the transcript, detailed explanations, and a quiz by becoming a member.
- Harp: Exactly, that's Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com
- Maura: And remember, listening to our podcast is always free.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: See you later!
- Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

Back by popular demand

When someone or something is described as being **back by popular demand**, this means that it was popular before and has come back again because it was so popular the first time. For example, a band that played a concert in a certain city and then comes back some time later because their first concert was so popular with people is **back by popular demand**. **Popular demand** may also mean that many people asked, or demanded, that the band return.

In this episode, Maura says that Harp is **back by popular demand** because Harp did a previous episode about job hunting, or looking for work, and now she is back to talk more about job interviews. The previous episode about looking for work is one of our most popular episodes at Culips, and that's why we created another episode with a similar theme.

Here are a couple more examples with **back by popular demand**:

Rebecca: Remember those great T-shirts they used to have at the store downtown?

Donna: Yeah.

Rebecca: Well, they're **back by popular demand**.

Concert announcer: And **back by popular demand** ... It's Pavement!

Crowd: Yeah!

Tips and advice

Tips and **advice** are almost synonyms. Saying **tips** is more casual than the word **advice**. In this episode, Harp gives lots of **tips** and **advice**.

There is an important difference between how these words are used. **Tip** is countable, and so you can give someone one **tip**, or many **tips**. **Advice** is not countable, so it is always **advice** without an s. It is always some **advice**, even if you only give **advice** about one thing.

Here's an example using **tip** and one using **advice**, so you can see the difference:

Ben: Can I give you **a tip**?

Oscar: Sure.

Ben: Make sure the paint is dry before you do the second coat.

Ben: Can I give you some **advice**?

Oscar: Sure.

Ben: Make sure the paint is dry before you do the second coat.

Tip also has other meanings, like leaving money for your server at a restaurant, which is common everywhere in North America.

To be pumped

We did a whole episode about being **pumped** this past May. If this expression interests you, check out that episode.

To be pumped is to be excited and enthusiastic about something. In this episode, Maura says that when you get a call for an interview you might feel **pumped**.

Press releases

A press release is a statement that an organization or person creates to communicate with the public. This statement is often given to the media in order for them to distribute the message to the public. If you go to the website of an organization, they might have a **press release** section. **Press releases** have the most recent information about an organization or person that they would like to share.

Press releases are often turned into articles in newspapers or magazines, or topics for discussion on the radio, on television, or online.

Celebrities also have **press releases** to communicate about their lives. **A press release** might also be written for a new film or book being released. **A press release** could be created for anything that a person or organization wants to communicate with the public.

To google

Probably the most popular search engine in the world, **Google**, has become a verb: **to google**—sometimes used with a capital G. **To Google** means to use the search engine Google to search for information online.

In 2006, **google** was entered in the Oxford English Dictionary as a real word, so it's official!

Here are a couple of examples with **to google**:

Harriet: I wonder what the weather is like in the southern part of China right now.

Brian: **Google** it!

Kevin: Yesterday I **googled** how to knit.

Cindy: Did you find anything?

Kevin: Yeah, tons of great videos.

To set you apart

Harp uses this expression twice in this episode. First she uses it to say that researching the place where you are going to have a job interview and knowing about the company will **set you apart**. Sending a **thank-you email** will also **set you apart** according to Harp.

To be set apart means that you are special and different from the rest, in a good way. The full expression is **to be set apart from the rest**. **From the rest** is not always said because it is implied. So by following Harp's advice, you can **set yourself apart** and look special to the people who might give you a job.

This expression is not only used to talk about getting jobs. Here are some other examples with **to set you apart**.

Penny: The hard work Shelly did on her art project really **set her apart** from the other students.

Mike: Yeah, she did a great job.

Lucy: The bright colours in these flowers really **set this bouquet apart**.

Ned: Yeah, it's by far the best.

To think on your feet

To think on your feet is to think quickly in the moment when something is happening. Harp says that in interviews they may ask you about a situation that you had to deal with in the moment. This is a moment when a person would **think on their feet**.

If you are **on your feet**, you are standing and doing something, and you have to think and react quickly to whatever is happening or whatever the problem may be. In these situations, you don't have a long time to think about it, you have to act immediately.

Here is another example with **to think on your feet**.

Dave: So what happened when the projector didn't work?

Olive: We all had to **think on our feet**. Luckily, Sarah remembered that there was an old projector in storage, so it was OK.

The trick

Trick is a word that has a variety of uses and meanings. A magician can do a magic **trick** or you can play a **trick**, or joke, on someone. In this episode it is used in a different way.

Maura says that often **the trick** with negative questions is to give a positive answer. In this case, the meaning is a great skill or technique for doing something that often solves a problem. In an interview you need to have the skill of making the answer to a negative question sound positive.

Here are some more examples with this use of **trick**:

Justin: Do you know what **the trick** is to staying warm in the winter? Always wear a hat!
Shannon: Yeah, and it's a good idea to wear long underwear too.

Doug: How did you fix my computer?
Jamie: Just rebooting the system did **the trick**.

Lisanne: I have **a trick** for keeping the face looking fresh.
Sean: What is it?
Lisanne: Give yourself a mask of egg yolk!

To put a positive spin on something

To spin something is to turn it around. You can **spin** a chair around in a different direction. You can **spin** a car. There is even a traditional toy called a top that is **spun** (the past tense of **spin**) around and around.

In this episode we are not talking about an actual object. **To spin** information is to influence it with a certain perspective or bias. So when Maura says that you need to put a positive spin on your answer to a negative question, that means that you need to change your answer or **spin** it. This is always done subtly, so that often people do not realize that the information has been **spun**.

Spinning information is most notably done in the media about certain news stories, like those involving politics or celebrities' lives. When a negative story is changed to sound positive it has been **spun**.

Dress for the job you want, not the job you're interviewing for

As Harp says, this is an expression that gives advice on how a person should dress for an interview or for work. Often this expression is said as ***dress for the job you want, not the job you have***. The simple meaning of this expression is that you should dress well.

If you want to be a manager, dress like manager does. If you want to work at a restaurant, you might not need to dress up as much. What people see you wearing will influence their ideas about what you are capable of.

Overdressed and underdressed

In any situation, especially job interviews, people can **overdress** or **underdress**. **To overdress** is to dress too formally or professionally. **To underdress** is to do the opposite, to not dress well enough. For example, if you wore a ball gown to a job interview, you would be **overdressed**, and if you wore a tank top and jean shorts, you would be **underdressed**.

Overdressed and **underdressed** can also be used to talk about the amount of clothes that you wear. If you're **overdressed**, it can mean that you're wearing so many clothes that you feel too hot, and you're **underdressed** if you're not wearing enough and feel cold.

A thank-you email

In a **thank-you email** you can write, like Harp says, "Thank you so much for taking the time to meet me." In an email it's usually appropriate to have at least two sentences.

Here's a list of other possible sentences that you could include in your **thank-you email** to a potential employer:

I really appreciate your taking the time to meet with me the other day.

I wanted to touch base with you regarding my interview.

I hope to hear back from you soon about the position.

Please feel free to contact me if you have any additional questions.

Thank you for inviting me to be interviewed for the _____ position.

Here is a sample of a **thank-you email**:

Mr. Jones,

Thank you so much for inviting me in for an interview. I am still very interested in the position and I look forward to hearing back from you.

Thanks,

Joe Smith

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

1. Which of the following expressions means that someone is back because the previous time they were very popular?

- a) the return of the popular
- b) demanding to be popular
- c) back by popular demand
- d) back by demanding

2. Tips and advice mean almost the same thing, but how are they different?

- a) *Tips* is countable and *advice* is not.
- b) *Tips* is less formal and *advice* is more formal.
- c) *Tips* is more formal and *advice* is less formal.
- d) a) and b)

3. Which search engine name has now become a verb?

- a) Yahoo
- b) Bing
- c) Google
- d) Alta Vista

4. Erin: If you do your best, I'm sure your project will _____.
Matt: Thanks. I hope that they'll like it!

Please fill in the blank with the expression that means Matt's project will be special compared to the other projects.

- a) set your aside
- b) set you apart
- c) set you a place
- d) get set

5. Which of the following expressions means to figure out how to solve a problem in the moment it happens?

- a) to think on your feet
- b) to do the trick
- c) to be pumped
- d) to overdress

6. If you are asked a negative-type question in an interview, it is a good idea to _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) put a positive spin on it
- b) spin your chair
- c) speak negatively about yourself
- d) ignore the question

7. Dress for _____, not the job you have.

Please fill in the blank for this saying.

- a) the job you had
- b) the job you want
- c) your first job
- d) a board meeting

8. **Overdressing** means to dress too formally and **underdressing** means to dress too casually. But what else can these two words mean?

- a. *Overdressing* also means to wear too many clothes, and *underdressing* means to wear not enough.
- b. *Overdressing* also means to wear not enough clothes, and *underdressing* means to wear too many.
- c. *Overdressing* also means to wear a hat, and *underdressing* means to wear a scarf.
- d. There is only one meaning for *overdressing* and *underdressing*.

9. What advice does Harp give about what to do after a job interview?

- a. Wait outside the office building for at least one hour.
- b. Never call the interviewer again.
- c. Visit the interviewer at work the next morning.
- d. Send a thank-you email.

Answers: 1.c 2.d 3.c 4.b 5.a 6.a 7.b 8.a 9.d