

## Catch Word #214 – Fire up this bad boy!

### Episode description

Are you in the market for a new car, motorcycle, lawnmower, or the like? In today's Catch Word episode, Andrew and Jeremy introduce you to some words related to machines.

### Fun fact

The first gas-powered motorcycle was invented in Germany in 1885. It had a wooden frame and a gas engine attached to it. However, it was extremely uncomfortable to ride, due to its low-tech tires.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Bad boy
- Sucker
- Manly
- A spin
- To ooze [something]
- Wacky



## 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.

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Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English Podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And I'm Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Jeremy, how are you doing?

Jeremy: I'm having a good day today. How about yourself?

Andrew: Oh, my day's off to a rough start, Jeremy. You just saw that I spilled my coffee all over myself here about 10 minutes ago.

Jeremy: Oh, no. I hope you didn't burn yourself.

Andrew: I didn't burn myself, but I did make a bit of a mess. But it's all right, it's Friday today, so I'm in a good mood and things are looking up.

Jeremy, today we're doing a Catch Word episode. And for anyone that doesn't know, Catch Word is our series where we teach all of our listeners interesting and useful English vocabulary, slang, phrasal verbs, anything related to words. And in today's episode, we'll teach you guys how to use English expressions to describe turning on or starting up a machine or vehicle. Now I know this sounds like a pretty weird topic, but once we get into it, you'll notice that we actually do use these types of vocabulary all the time. So they're good expressions to be aware of.

Jeremy: If you want to get the most out of this episode, you can do so with our study guide. It has a transcript, as well as a bunch of awesome activities that we have designed to help you improve your English. It's available for download on our website, Culips.com. Go check it out.

So what is our Catch Word for today, Andrew?

Andrew: Well, we actually have two. They are **bad boy** and **sucker**, **bad boy** and **sucker**.



- Jeremy: These both have other meanings.
- Andrew: Yeah, well, we're gonna stick with them related to machines today, mostly machines, OK?
- Jeremy: OK.
- Andrew: And so let's start with **bad boy**. **Bad boy, bad boy**, OK? Now, of course, literally a **bad boy** could be, like, maybe a toddler, for example, right? A kid who is misbehaving is a **bad boy**.
- Jeremy: Who's breaking something.
- Andrew: OK, but we can also use it to describe objects, like, usually vehicles or machines.
- Jeremy: Something that makes a sound or moves on its own. So, machine.
- Andrew: Yeah, kind of machine, and usually one that I guess we think of as being kind of **manly**, Like a sports car or a barbecue or a boat.
- Jeremy: Tough, masculine.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Jeremy: Loud.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Jeremy: Strong. These kind of things.
- Andrew: Right. If there's a machine that we can associate with that kind of thought, then we could call it a **bad boy**.
- Jeremy: For example, what are some things you can think of?
- Andrew: Yeah, well, just kind of what I just mentioned there, like a sports car, right? A sports car.
- Jeremy: Sports car.
- Andrew: Or ...
- Jeremy: Like a chainsaw?

Andrew: Yeah, a chainsaw. Motorcycle, anything with an engine, I suppose. Could even be like a tractor, right? You don't think that a tractor **oozes masculinity**, but since it has an engine, when you start the engine you could fire up this **bad boy**.

Jeremy: What about like a sledgehammer? A big, heavy sledgehammer? I can imagine someone holding a big sledgehammer saying, "This **bad boy**, this will break through anything," you know? I can imagine that, but I agree—usually it's something with moving parts or something that makes a sound, like a loud rumbling sound.

Andrew: Yeah, I don't think there's too much more to explain with this expression. Why don't we listen to a couple of examples to see how we can use it in a real-life context?

Jeremy: Sounds good.

Friend 1: Like my new ride? I just picked it up this afternoon.

Friend 2: No way, you bought an Audi? Awesome.

Friend 1: Yeah, man. How about we take this **bad boy** out for a **spin**?

Friend 2: Can I drive?

Friend 1: No way. Only in your dreams, dude.

Jeremy: In this example, a guy just bought a fancy new car. He's proud of his new set of wheels, so he calls the car his **bad boy** when he asks if they should take this **bad boy** out for a **spin**. He's asking his friend if he wants to go for a ride in his cool new car.

Andrew: Do you think only men use this expression, or would a woman call her car a **bad boy**, too?

Jeremy: Yeah, it's definitely possible, but I imagine she would use it in a masculine way. Like the expression itself is sort of a masculine thing. You wouldn't call something that is associated with femininity or beauty or something subtle or soft like a rose or even a tree, you wouldn't call something like that a **bad boy**. It tends, even the term boy shows that it is sort of a masculine term associated with masculine qualities.

Andrew: I completely agree. I think it could be used by woman and probably many women do use it, but I think it's more of a masculine-sounding expression and, because of that, it's mostly used by men.

Jeremy: All right, Andrew, should we get into the second example?

Andrew: Yeah, let's do it. Let's take a listen right now.

Neighbour: Hank, good morning. Looks like you got a new lawnmower. How does it run?

Hank: This **bad boy** runs like a dream.

Neighbour: I'm looking into buying a new one for myself, as well.

Hank: Well, I can't recommend this one enough. It's worth every penny.

Andrew: In this example, Hank just bought a brand-new lawnmower, and his neighbour is admiring it. Now, Hank says that his new lawnmower, his **bad boy**, runs like a dream, and this means it's perfect. It just operates very smoothly with no problems. If something is going like a dream, we can use this expression in other contexts, too. Then it just means it's going perfectly. There's no problems at all. Just like this episode, right, Jeremy? It's going like a dream.

Jeremy: Like a dream, it's just wonderful, great. Good job, Andrew.

Andrew: Thank you very much, sir. For people that don't know, a lawnmower is a machine that cuts the grass that you have in front of your house or behind your house in a typical North American house.

Jeremy: Yeah, we call that kind of grass a lawn, L-A-W-N.

You said we have two expressions. What is our second expression in this episode?

Andrew: Yes, it is **sucker**. **Sucker**.

Jeremy: **Sucker**.

Andrew: Now, this word has a lot of different meanings in lots of different contexts.

Jeremy: It can be a lollipop, right?

Andrew: Yeah, it could be a lollipop, and I think that's one of the first images that pops into my mind when I hear **sucker**, actually. It could also talk about your mouth, like if you punch somebody in the **sucker**, it means you're punching them in the mouth. And there are lots of other different ways we can use this word. So we won't go into all of them today, but the one that we wanna focus on is when we use this word to describe an object, and its kind of used like **bad boy**, right? It's a term of endearment for a machine that we like, that we feel an infinity to or a closeness to.

- Jeremy: It's always positive, but the word **sucker** and **bad boy** actually are originally negative terms. Very strange.
- Andrew: English is **wacky**.
- Jeremy: Yeah, this is common, I think, in our style of humour, we use sarcasm a lot. We say the opposite of what we mean and this makes it funny or interesting somehow. Yeah, this one sounds very similar to **bad boy** to me.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's kind of like, you know, how the, if we were to think about high school, how the students who are often misbehaving and have a bad attitude, somehow they're the coolest students, right? It's kind of, we have this idea in Western culture that being a little bit bad is kind of good.
- Jeremy: Or, like, we say, I want to eat that cake really bad. I want to really bad. I want to go really bad to the party or something. The bad actually means, like, a lot, strongly.
- Andrew: It's very interesting how negative words can have a positive meaning.
- Jeremy: Yeah, very strange.
- Andrew: And so, as we mentioned, **sucker** is used to talk about machines that we like, that we feel a closeness to, that we admire. And I think, Jeremy, the best way to see how we use **sucker** is through some examples. So let's listen to the first example using **sucker** right now.

- Kid: What's in the box, Dad?
- Dad: Why don't you open it and find out?
- Kid: Oh, now I'm curious. Oh my god, is this a Razer Blade 15? This is supposed to be the best gaming laptop on the market.
- Dad: How about we light this **sucker** up and see if it's as good as everyone says.

- Jeremy: In this example, a father surprises his son with a new gaming laptop. When the son gets extremely excited, the father suggests lighting this **sucker** up. **Sucker**, as we learned, is a term we use to talk about a machine we really like and, in this case, a gaming laptop. Light it up means to turn it on. So the father and his son are both dying to turn that **sucker** on and see how well it works.
- Andrew: Yeah, I can remember feeling this kind of excitement when I received my first Nintendo as a kid.
- Jeremy: Yup.

- Andrew: You know, “I just wanna light up that **sucker** and see how it goes.”
- Jeremy: I think my dad used to say fire it up. He would say, “Let’s fire this **sucker** up” in the same context. Yeah.
- Andrew: Fire it up. Light it up. Start it up. All phrasal verb constructions, right?
- Jeremy: Yup.
- Andrew: Yeah, they’re all interchangeable. Very, very common to use in that context.
- Jeremy: As an English learner, if you use phrasal verbs accurately, it will make you sound much more natural, much more like a native speaker.
- Andrew: I completely, completely agree. I used to teach native speakers—French—English. And they spoke English at a very high level because they were in Quebec. And the one thing I noticed, though, is that they never used phrasal verbs, because they would just like to stick to cognates that were words that they could use from French and just transfer to English. And so one of the things that really made their English sound more natural is when they started to use phrasal verbs more often.
- Jeremy: And if you use a lot of cognates in English, at least, you end up sounding very formal, overly formal sometimes.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Jeremy: So be careful.
- Andrew: Yeah, they’re beautiful in that you get a lot of vocabulary for free. You don’t have to do too much work, studying new vocabulary, but then you do sound like a university academic all the time.
- Jeremy: True, true. So we recommend you continue listening to Culips and putting these phrases to use in your real life.
- Andrew: Totally. All right, Jeremy, we have one final example, so I suggest that we listen to it right now.
- Jeremy: Here we go.



Neighbour 1: How's it going?

Neighbour 2: I've been working on this **sucker** all afternoon. But I just can't get it running.

Neighbour 1: Man, you should just call it quits and take it to the mechanic.

Neighbour 2: I'm not a quitter. I'll have her up and running in no time, just watch.

Andrew: In this example, a man asks his neighbour how he's doing at fixing his car. He's working on it in the garage and the neighbour replies that he's been working on this **sucker** all day, but he can't get it to start up. He can't get it to turn on. So **sucker**, as we heard before, is a term of endearment for a machine, but it can also be a machine that is causing some trouble. So in this case, the car won't start, but the neighbour won't give up. He's not gonna take the car to a mechanic, he's just gonna keep working on it himself. So this is kind of another way that we can use **sucker**, and that's to talk about a machine that's causing some issues and creating problems for us.

Jeremy: Yeah, I think I said earlier that this term is usually positive, but there are some cases in which it can be used in a negative way.

Andrew: Indeed.

Well, guys, just to summarize, we looked at two expressions today, **bad boy** and **sucker**, machines that either we feel a closeness to or that are causing us some problems. And remember that these are kind of masculine expressions, as well, so just keep that in mind because it's important to know the tone that these expressions convey.

So thank you for listening, everyone. As always, we really appreciate you, and if you have any comments or questions or even suggestions for a future episode, hit us up. Get in contact with us. You can find us on social media, Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube. Just search for Culips English Podcast and you'll be able to find us. Or if you'd rather email us directly, our address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com).

Jeremy: You can find more episodes of the Culips Podcast at [Culips.com](http://Culips.com) or wherever you listen to podcasts.

Andrew: We'll be back soon with another episode, so stay tuned and we'll talk to you then. Bye, everyone.

Jeremy: Take care.

## Detailed Explanations

### Bad boy

Noun

**Bad boy** is the first main expression of this Culips episode. **Bad boy** is a term of endearment for a machine to which you feel a special connection. **Bad boy** is often used to describe machines that bring their owner pride due to their high power, manliness, or coolness factor.

Here's one more example with **bad boy**:

Berni:	Are you sure that saw is strong enough to cut through this log? It's pretty thick.
Dante:	This <b>bad boy</b> ? Oh, yeah. It can cut through this log like a knife through butter. No problem.
Berni:	OK. If you say so, I believe you. Turn it on and give it a whirl.

### Sucker

Noun

**Sucker** is the second of the main expressions learned in this Culips episode. **Sucker** is another term of endearment used to talk about machines that we like and feel connected to.

Here's one more example with **sucker**:

Carlos:	Look at that! Kev, did you buy a boat?
Kevin:	Yeah, isn't she a beauty?
Carlos:	She really is. Has she been in the water yet?
Kevin:	Nope, this is her maiden voyage.
Carlos:	Then come on! Let's get this <b>sucker</b> in the water and see what she can do.
Kevin:	Hell, yeah!

\*Boats are often called "she" in English instead of "it."



## Manly Adjective

If something is described as **manly**, then it has qualities or characteristics that are typically associated with men. Things that are strong, brave, or powerful, for example, can be described as **manly**. This word is similar to the word masculine. Likewise, womanly and feminine are words that describe things associated with women, such as things that are pretty, sincere, or heartfelt.

These words are based on common male and female stereotypes and are not necessarily true indicators of what it means to be **manly** or womanly.

Here are a couple more examples with **manly**.

Rachel: What do you think of these pants?

Cara: They look good.

Rachel: Really? You don't think they make my legs look kind of **manly**?

Cara: Of course not, silly. They look good on you.

Rachel: Hmm. Should I buy them?

Cara: Well, if you think they make you look **manly**, then I wouldn't buy them. It's up to you.

Rachel: You're right. I'm gonna pass on these. They're just not my style.

Alejandro: Hey, Trent. What's the matter? You don't look so good.

Trent: It's my dad. He's always busting on me.

Alejandro: What's he mad about this time?

Trent: I told him I wanted to try out for the gymnastics team. He got mad, and said he wished he had a son who was **manlier**.

Alejandro: Don't listen to him. This is the 21st century. Girls can play football and boys can do gymnastics. He's just stuck in the past.

Trent: Yeah, I guess so. But it still hurts to hear.

Alejandro: Just do your thing. He'll come around eventually.

## A spin

Noun

The verb **spin** means to quickly revolve around in a circle. In this case, however, the noun **spin** is slang for a short ride in a vehicle. In this episode, one of the dialogues had the sentence, “How about we take this bad boy out for **a spin**?” This sentence is referring to the new Audi that one of the friends bought. He wants to take the Audi for a short drive around the town, so he asks if his friend wants to take it out for **a spin** with him.

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

Derrick:	Oh my goodness! Dad, did you get me a motorbike for Christmas?
Dad:	Yeah, you’ve only been talking about how much you wanted one all year.
Derrick:	You are the best! I think I’m in heaven.
Dad:	Why don’t you go take it for <b>a spin</b> ?
Derrick:	Seriously? I can right now?
Dad:	Yeah, go on. We’ll prepare dinner while you’re gone.
Derrick:	All right. See you in a bit!

Car dealer:	So what do you think? You wanna take it for <b>a spin</b> and try it out?
Chris:	Yeah, sure. How far am I allowed to go from the dealership?
Car dealer:	Well, I’ll be coming with you, but we can go for a nice 20- or 30-minute drive. That way you can get a good feel for the car in a bunch of different settings.
Chris:	Wow, sounds great. Let’s hit the road, then.
Car dealer:	Sounds good. Right this way, sir.

## To ooze [something]

Verb

**Ooze** has multiple meanings, but the literally meaning is to seep or trickle out slowly; for example, blood **oozes** out of an open wound. However, **to ooze [something]** usually refers to a feeling, emotion, or state that someone is experiencing in great amounts. For example, if someone **oozes positivity**, it means that she is extremely positive and that positivity is practically **oozing** from her body.

In this episode, Andrew says that tractors don't **ooze masculinity**. He thinks that tractors are not very masculine machines. Guns and football could be considered things that **ooze masculinity**.

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

Gina:	Look at Chelsea over there flirting with Josh.
Ada:	Why do you care? You broke up with him, remember?
Gina:	Yeah, but it's only been a week and she's already marking her territory. I mean, look at her. She's practically <b>oozing sweetness</b> over there with her smiles and hair flips.
Ada:	Do I detect some jealousy?
Gina:	Of course not! I am so over him!

Chad:	Look at Dad over there. He's practically <b>oozing with pride</b> .
Francis:	Well, he did get the leak in the sink fixed without having to call the plumber.
Chad:	Big deal. We could do that in half the time by watching a couple of YouTube videos.
Francis:	How about I go break it again and you try that theory out yourself?
Chad:	Haha, very funny.



## Wacky Adjective

The word **wacky** means silly, crazy, or nonsensical. In this episode, Andrew says that English is **wacky**; it has silly language rules that often contradict each other.

**Wacky** is used to describe anything that is strange or odd, but usually in a positive way. For example, the sentence “My grandma is so **wacky**” means that Grandma is a little bit weird, but in a sweet and loving way.

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

Geoff:	Did you see the moon tonight? It's awesome! It's a supermoon and a blood moon.
Bryce:	No way! That's <b>wacky</b> ! It's enormous!
Geoff:	Yeah, isn't it so cool?
Bryce:	It's straight out of a horror movie or something! Did you take a picture?
Geoff:	No, my camera sucks, but you can try.

Dalia:	How was your birthday party last week?
Helena:	It was interesting. Mom brought her <b>wacky</b> new boyfriend.
Dalia:	<b>Wacky</b> ? How so?
Helena:	Oh, nothing bad, really. He just has this crazy puffy white hair like Einstein and he loves to do magic tricks. He's strange, but also kind of charming.
Dalia:	From the way you describe him, it makes me really want to meet him. He sounds nothing like your father. Your father was always so clean-cut and serious.
Helena:	Yeah, I think that's why Mom likes this new guy. She needed some light and fun in her life after Dad passed away. He's <b>wacky</b> , but perfect for her.

## Quiz

**1. Which is not a synonym for wacky?**

- a) crazy
- b) loony
- c) weird
- d) stuffy

**2. True or false? Boats are often considered feminine and referred to as “she” rather than “it.”**

- a) true
- b) false

**3. Which activity is typically not considered manly in Western culture?**

- a) monster truck fights
- b) boxing
- c) yoga
- d) excessive drinking

**4. Which of these is something that you can’t ooze?**

- a) confidence
- b) boredom
- c) blood
- d) rocks

**5. What is another name for a ride?**

- a) a link
- b) a spin
- c) a bittle
- d) a trump



## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is your favourite machine that you own? Why is it so great?
2. Do you have any endearing names like bad boy or sucker in your own language? Are they common?
3. If you didn't have to worry about money, what new machine would you like to buy and why?
4. What characteristics are considered manly in your country, but might not be considered manly in Western culture? How about characteristics that are considered womanly?
5. Describe something wacky that you've heard about recently.

## Quiz Answers

1.d    2.a    3.c    4.d    5.b

### Episode credits

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