

Catch Word #234 – I think you went a bit overboard

Episode description

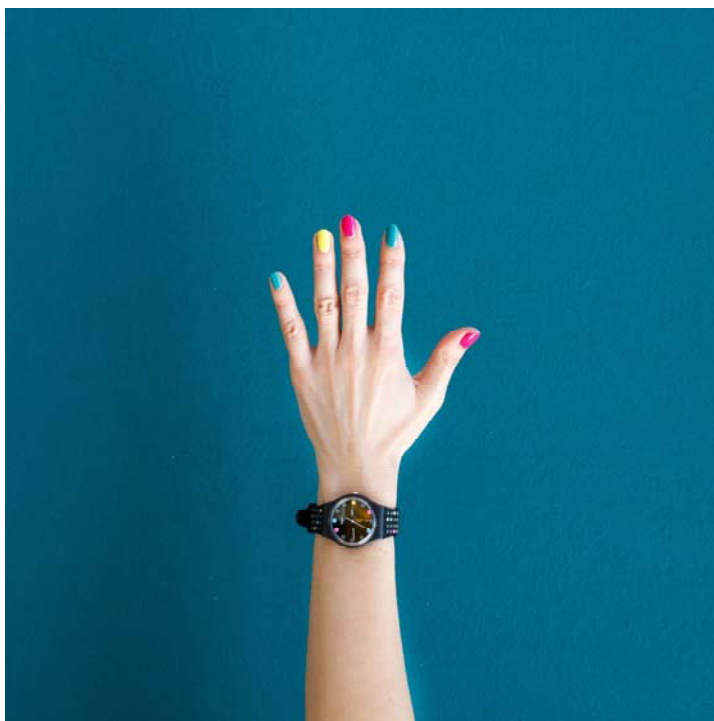
Have you ever eaten too much of your favourite food? You know you shouldn't eat that much, but it's just so good! That situation is a perfect example of going overboard. In this Catch Word episode, hosts Andrew and Jeremy share various expressions you can use when you overdo things.

Fun fact

Overboard is the name of a 1987 Hollywood movie starring Goldie Hawn and Kurt Russell. The movie didn't do so well at the box office, but it later became a classic. In fact, it was remade several times in multiple countries and languages.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Overkill
- To go overboard
- To go above and beyond
- Going out of business sale
- How could I resist?
- Liquid



Transcript

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

Andrew: Hello, everyone. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: Hello, everyone. My name is Jeremy.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Andrew: Hi, everyone. Welcome back to Culips. This is a Catch Word episode, our vocabulary series where we teach you useful idioms or phrasal verbs or just interesting expressions. There is a study guide available for this episode on our website, Culips.com, and we recommend that you follow along while you listen to us today. And joining me for this episode is my cohost, Jeremy. Jeremy, hello.

Jeremy: Hey there, Andrew. So what are we gonna talk about today?

Andrew: We are going to study and learn two very common everyday expressions that we can use to talk about situations that are excessive, when someone does too much. They **go above and beyond** what is needed. And I think, Jeremy, both of these expressions are interchangeable. So it means they have a very similar meaning and you can use them both in the same situation. And another thing that they have in common is they both include the word over. Over.

Jeremy: Over. The word over is a preposition, which usually relates to one thing, going above and past something else. So if I throw a ball over your head, then the ball will go above your head and past you. Now, over is also commonly used in many phrasal verbs and idioms. And it usually relates to going above and past, but not in a physical way. Sometimes it is metaphorical, we could say.

Andrew: Exactly. And the two expressions that we are going to study today both use over in this way to talk about doing something excessively. It's like too strong, too much, too much emphasis. This is the core meaning of over that we'll see in these two expressions. And I think the best way to start here is just to take a look at the first one, Jeremy. It is a noun and it is **overkill**. **Overkill**, O-V-E-R-K-I-L-L, **overkill**.

Jeremy: Now, there is no space in between these two. So this is one word, although over and kill are words in and of themselves. Very commonly in English, when two words get used together a lot for a long period of time, they sometimes get smashed together and become one word like this one.

Andrew: So when something is **overkill**, it just means that it is too much, that you have done more than is required. You put more effort in then is needed. And it's almost like a problem, right? It's not a good thing.

Jeremy: In order to understand this expression, I think it would be helpful to start with the word kill. So let's say Andrew is a hunter and he is hunting a deer. He shoots one arrow at the deer and kills it. Then he goes very close to the deer and shoots 25 more arrows into the deer.

Andrew: Oh no, poor deer.

Jeremy: Oh dear! Yes, that is **overkill**. So this is a more literal use of the word. But we very commonly use it in other situations, which maybe our example dialogue today will help our listeners to understand.

Andrew: I think that's a great idea. So let's take a listen to the first example conversation and then, after we do, we can break it down a little bit and talk more about this expression.

Friend 1: Are you ready to go?

Friend 2: Yup. Can you help me load the gear into the car?

Friend 1: Gear?

Friend 2: Yup, I'm bringing a tent, sleeping bags, a cooler, some snacks, a Bluetooth speaker, a portable fan, a couple of camping chairs, a hammock, and a camp stove.

Friend 1: Dude, don't you think that's **overkill**? We're just going for a picnic at the beach, not a week-long camping trip.

Andrew: So in this conversation, two friends are getting ready to go on a picnic to the beach. But one of the friends is planning to bring a lot of gear. And gear is a word that we use to talk about equipment or supplies. So this friend is bringing a lot of, like, camping supplies, outdoor stuff, right? Tents, sleeping bags, snacks, etc. And he's bringing way too much stuff. You don't need all of that gear to go on a simple picnic at the beach. So it's **overkill**, right? Bringing that much stuff is **overkill**.

Jeremy: So in this example, there is no killing going on, of course. But in the sense that if the goal is to go to the beach and have a nice picnic, bringing all of that gear is excessive. It's not needed. Just like 25 arrows in a deer that has already been shot is excessive. So this is the, sort of, meaning of this expression.

Andrew: Exactly. All right. Let's take a listen to another conversation example using this expression **overkill**.

Friend 1: I'm thinking about buying a new TV.

Friend 2: Oh, cool. What kind?

Friend 1: I don't know. But I want a big one.

Friend 2: Yeah? How big?

Friend 1: Like maybe an 85-inch?

Friend 2: Don't do it. That'd be **overkill**. You don't need such a huge screen in your little apartment.

Friend 1: Yeah, but it'd be awesome.

Friend 2: No, no, it'll just hurt your eyes. I think a 32-inch TV would be perfect for your small space.

Jeremy: In this example, two friends talk about buying a new TV. One of the friends wants to buy a very, very large TV, but he lives in a small apartment. So his friend says that that would be **overkill**. If his goal is to buy a new TV, buying an 85-inch TV would be excessive for accomplishing his goal.

Andrew: Exactly. Yeah, Jeremy, two things came to mind when I was listening to this example. The first thing is that even though Canada uses the metric system—metric system is like metres, centimetres, millimetres—when we talk about TV size, we still use inch.

Jeremy: Funny.

Andrew: So I don't know why we do that but, in Canada, we use inches to talk about TV size. And the second thing is just a quick tip here for all of our listeners. And that is when you are using a measurement as an adjective to describe the shape of something or the size of something, then we don't pluralize the measurement word. So we heard 85-inch and 32-inch TV in that conversation. Not inches, right? 32-inch, not 32-inches. And we do this all the time when talking about objects, you know, it's a 100-foot yacht, not a 100-feet yacht.

Jeremy: Or a 25-dollar book, not a 25 dollars, but if someone asks you, "How much is that book?" then you would say, "This book is 25 dollars," and you would say it in the plural form. So if the word dollar or the measurement comes in front of the noun, then it is usually not plural. But if the measurement comes after the verb, then it is usually plural.

Andrew: And this is something that I hear English learners make mistakes with often. So, guys, just be careful with this kind of sentence.

Jeremy: So what's our next expression for this episode, Andrew?

Andrew: It is **to go overboard**. So the first expression, **overkill**, was a noun and now we have a verb construction, **to go overboard**. Actually, this is almost like a phrasal verb, right? **Overboard** is not necessarily a preposition, but this feels like a phrasal verb to me, the way that we use it.

Jeremy: I agree, because I think almost all the time this is used with the verb go. You can't just say that's **overboard**, although some native speakers might make that mistake, because it's similar to **overkill**. But to me, that doesn't sound right.

Andrew: Maybe some of our listeners are familiar with this word, **overboard**, if they've watched, like, the *Pirates of the Caribbean*, or *Hook*, or some kind of pirate or sailing movie. Because I think the first thing that pops into people's heads when they hear **overboard** is to think of a person or some thing that has fallen off of a ship. So if you **go overboard**, it means you fall off of a ship. This is one of the meanings of this expression. But it has a second meaning, and that's what we're going to explore today. And it's really the same as **overkill**. So when you **go overboard**, you do something excessively. And it's too much in a bad way.

Jeremy: If you go on a boat, you board the boat, right? So if you walk off the edge of the boat, then you **go overboard**. You go past the end of the board.

Andrew: The boarding zone.

Jeremy: Exactly, then you end up in the water.

Andrew: So, Jeremy, if we think of your image here of staying on the boat, as the boat of being a safe place, right? And then if you fall off of the boat, it's too excessive. You've crossed the line into a place that is dangerous. And I think that would help us understand the core meaning of this expression, which is to do more than you should and to be excessive.

Jeremy: So let's listen to our first example dialogue.

Andrew: All right, let's take a listen.

Friend 1: Thanks again for inviting me over for dinner.

Friend 2: Oh, no problem, man. I hope you're hungry. I made a lot of food.

Friend 1: Yeah, I am hungry. What are we having?

Friend 2: Well, to start, a garden salad, crab cakes, and chicken parmesan meatballs. Then for the main course, I roasted a chicken and made a lasagna. For dessert, I prepared cheesecake and a cherry pie.

Friend 1: Wow, that sounds delicious. But isn't that too much food? I mean, it's only the two of us. I thought we'd just barbecue hamburgers or something.

Friend 2: Yeah, I guess I went a bit **overboard**. But, oh well. Let's eat.

Andrew: So in this example, two friends have gathered together to have a kind of mini dinner party, it sounds like. And the host prepared a huge meal for the two of them, all the way from appetizers, a main course, and even dessert. And the host mentions that he may have went a bit **overboard** when preparing the dinner. Like, he made too much food. It's a little bit excessive for just two people, right?

Jeremy: So I think if we explained this one much more, we might be going a bit **overboard**. So let's move on to the next dialogue.

Friend 1: What did you do today?

Friend 2: I went to the mall to go shopping.

Friend 1: Did you buy anything?

Friend 2: Yeah, I bought 10 pairs of sneakers.

Friend 1: 10 pairs? Don't you think that's **going overboard**?

Friend 2: Yeah, but there was a **going out of business sale** at the shoe store. They were all, like, 70% off. **How could I resist?**

Jeremy: In this example, two friends talk about going shopping. One of the friends bought 10 pairs of sneakers. Sneakers is another word for shoes, but it's usually used for casual shoes that you might wear to walk a lot.

Andrew: Or, like, basketball shoes, sports shoes, athletic shoes. Any kind of casual shoe, we could call a sneaker.

Jeremy: His friend responds by saying that buying 10 pairs of shoes is **going overboard**. The act of buying so many pairs of shoes is **going overboard**. In other words, he is saying that he thinks that is excessive. You don't need to buy 10 pairs of shoes at one time. I agree with that.

Andrew: But the reason that he bought the shoes is that it was a **going out of business sale** at the shoe store. And from time to time, you can find these kinds of big sales when a business has failed and they need to sell all of the remaining inventory. Sometimes they will have very, very big sales just to get rid of their stock and their inventory. Right? So you are a keen shopper, sometimes you can find these deals.

Jeremy: And when businesses have **going out of business sales** like this, that is called liquidation, liquidation. So when they have inventory sitting in their store, that inventory is worth money, but they can't spend that money. So they need to sell it quickly for a very low price to make **liquid** cash. So money is sometimes referred to as water or **liquid** in this sense. And if cash is **liquid**, then it means that you can use and spend that cash money on other things. You can't use shoes to buy food. So you sell all your shoes for very cheap so you can take that money and buy food.

Andrew: And when I was a poor student, I used to shop at a store called Liquidation World.

Jeremy: Oh, wow.

Andrew: Liquidation World, which was kind of, like, a centre where a bunch of businesses would just sell all their products for very, very cheap because they were going out of business. So it was like a depot for businesses that were going out of business. Funny, funny store name, Liquidation World.

Jeremy: It's a bonus term for this episode, everyone.

Andrew: Jeremy, let's wrap things up. Before we do, we should recap and review what we studied today. So we learned two everyday expressions that are used to talk about situations that are excessive, or when somebody goes above and beyond what is required. And this is a negative thing. It's not a good thing. The two expressions that we studied were **overkill** and **to go overboard**.

Jeremy: Thanks for listening today, everyone. If you would like to get in contact with us here at Culips, you can send us an email to contact@Culips.com. Or you can find us all over social media, Facebook, YouTube, Instagram, Twitter, wherever you go, we are there.

Andrew: And these days, we are most active on Instagram. So if you're an Instagram user, definitely check us out.

Andrew: Don't forget the study guide for this episode is available on our website, Culips.com, for all Culips members. If you'd like to sign up and become a Culips member and support the podcast, then just visit Culips.com to learn how to do that. If you like Culips and enjoy learning English with us, then please do us a favour, leave us a five-star rating and a nice review wherever you get your podcasts. This could be Apple Podcasts or even a different service. That would really help us out and we would appreciate it.

Andrew: We'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Jeremy: Bye, everyone.

Detailed Explanations

Overkill

Noun

The first expression Andrew and Jeremy talk about in this episode is **overkill**. **Overkill** is when you have too much of something for a given situation. In the first example dialogue, one friend brought an excessive amount of camping gear for a simple picnic. In the second example, the person wants a television far too big for his apartment. In both situations, the people have more than what is necessary. That's **overkill**.

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

George: I'm coaching my son's football team for the first time next week.

Helen: That should be fun. What drills do you plan on doing?

George: For starters, I was thinking of having them run 10 kilometres to warm up.

Helen: 10 kilometres?

George: After that—

Helen: Wait. That's totally **overkill**. After that, they will be too exhausted to do anything.

George: Do you think so?

Helen: For sure. Just have them run a few laps around the field to warm up.

Rita: Are you all packed?

Erik: Yes, I am.

Rita: Why haven't you left yet?

Erik: I'm waiting for John. He's still packing his three suitcases.

Rita: Oh, geez. That's **overkill**. Why does he think he needs three suitcases?

Erik: He always does this. He packs way more than he ever uses.

To go overboard

Phrasal verb

The second expression in this episode is **to go overboard**. **To go overboard** is to do too much of something. Think of being on board of a boat. If you walk straight over the edge and into the water, you **go overboard**. That is the same as when you are doing something normal, but just too much of it. Everyone eats, but eating too much can be **going overboard** with food. **To go overboard** applies to all kinds of regular activities.

Here are a couple more examples with **to go overboard**:

Fred: I thought you were going to the mall with your wife. Why are you still here?

Edward: She refused to go with me.

Fred: What? That's absurd.

Edward: She says that I always **go overboard** with my shopping.

Fred: Oh. Is that correct?

Edward: Actually, yes. I don't blame her for thinking that.

Olive: Are you hungry?

Dina: I'm pretty hungry, yeah.

Olive: How about some sushi?

Dina: Sounds good.

Olive: I could also go for some spaghetti. Or maybe some chicken wings.

Dina: Let's not **go overboard**. How about we start with one and then see if we're still hungry?

To go above and beyond

Phrasal verb

To go above and beyond is most commonly used for positive actions. When a police officer **goes above and beyond** the call of duty, he or she is providing greater service than in a normal situation. If the staff at your hotel gives you exceptional service, you can say they **went above and beyond**. This expression works for services as well as for simple favours between friends.

Here are a couple more examples with **to go above and beyond**:

Gina: I see you're ironing your best suit. What's the special occasion?

Rex: My son is receiving a medal of honour.

Gina: That's amazing! I hadn't heard. What is the medal for?

Rex: For **going above and beyond** the call of duty in the service of the people.

Gina: Wow. I'd love to hear the story.

Rex: You know what? I'll let him tell you later.

Trey: I have to go buy a gift for Jessica.

Hanna: Oh, really? Why is that?

Trey: I asked her to help me for a couple of hours on the weekend and she ended up spending the entire day with me.

Hanna: That's just like her. She always **goes above and beyond** for her friends.

Going out of business sale

Phrase

In the fourth example dialogue, one friend says he bought 10 pairs of sneakers because there was a **going out of business sale**. When stores go out of business, they often hold a sale to get rid of the stock they don't need, as well as to make some money. An event like this is called a **going out of business sale** or a **liquidation sale**. Prices are often extremely reduced during these sales.

Here are a couple more examples with **going out of business sale**:

Dave: Look at this set of dishware.

Yuri: It's nice.

Dave: I've had my eye on this set for a while. I think today's the day I'm going to finally buy it.

Yuri: Maybe you should wait a little. I saw something similar at the S Mart. They're having a **going out of business sale** right now.

Dave: They have a set just like this one?

Yuri: I believe so. It's worth going to check it out before you buy this one.

Patty: I went by your store earlier today.

Tyler: Oh, that's nice. Did you pick up anything?

Patty: Yeah, a few shirts that had a ridiculously low price. In fact, so many items were marked down. Are you having a sale?

Tyler: Actually, we're having a **going out of business sale**.

Patty: Oh no! I'm so sad to hear that.

How could I resist?

Idiom

In the example dialogue where the man bought 10 pairs of sneakers, he defends his actions by saying, “**How could I resist?**” To resist is to stop yourself from doing something. He says this because he doesn’t really want to accept responsibility for going overboard. It’s as if the store made him buy the shoes, and he had no choice. You can say “**How could I resist?**” when you do something that you probably wouldn’t or shouldn’t otherwise do. If you eat an entire pizza by yourself because it was so delicious, you can say, “**How could I resist?**”

Here are a couple more examples with **how could I resist?**

Wendy: Look at this. I just bought a \$50 plane ticket to Toronto. Isn’t that great?

Vanessa: That’s so cheap. What kind of business do you have in Toronto?

Wendy: None.

Vanessa: OK. Why are you going, then?

Wendy: It’s a \$50 ticket! **How could I resist?**

Gerry: Is that a new laptop?

Marie: Yes, it is. I bought it yesterday.

Gerry: Didn’t you just buy a laptop last month?

Marie: Yeah, but the discount on this one was crazy. It was 70% off. **How could I resist?**

Gerry: That’s easy. Just don’t buy things you don’t need.

Liquid Adjective

Near the end of this episode, Jeremy talks about businesses wanting to sell off their inventory for **liquid** cash. **Liquid** refers to assets you can use and turn into cash, as opposed to assets that you cannot easily turn into cash. For example, if you own a house, it may be worth a lot of money but you cannot spend that money. You would need to sell your house, and then you can have **liquid** cash. **Liquid** is most often used with assets. An example of a **liquid** asset is the money in your bank account. That can be easily turned into usable money. The noun associated with this is **liquidity**.

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

Linda: Did you buy your new car yet?

Vicky: No, not yet.

Linda: How come?

Vicky: I have no money!

Linda: What? Don't you have tons of stocks?

Vicky: I do, but those aren't **liquid**. I can't cash them in for another 5 years.

Ronald: Do you think we can expand our store's floor space next year?

Kyra: It looks unlikely. We don't have much cash lying around these days.

Ronald: But we have a lot of **liquid** assets.

Kyra: Really? Like what?

Ronald: Remember when we loaned \$100,000 to Mark so he could start up his business?

Kyra: That was about 7 years ago.

Ronald: Yes, but he told me he'll be able to repay that loan in January. We'll be rolling in cash!

Quiz

1. Which of the following does NOT mean overkill?

- a) too much
- b) just enough
- c) way too much
- d) excessive

2. True or false? To go above and beyond is considered a good thing.

- a) true
- b) false

3. Which of the following expressions is similar to a going out of business sale?

- a) a super sale
- b) a liquidation sale
- c) a 1-week sale
- d) an opening day sale

4. When would you say, “How could I resist?”

- a) when you didn't do something
- b) when you tried to do something
- c) when you don't want to take responsibility for your actions
- d) when you actually did resist doing something

5. In financial terms, what does liquid mean?

- a) you're swimming in money
- b) you have assets that can easily be turned into cash
- c) you're so nervous about money that you're sweating
- d) you don't have cash readily available

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is something you tend to go overboard doing?
2. Tell about a time that you went above and beyond at work.
3. Do you try to keep a balance between liquid assets and long-term investments?
How closely do you monitor your finances?
4. How often to you shop at going out of business sales?
5. What is something you simply can't resist?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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