

## Chatterbox #102 – Canadian myths

### Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone. This is Maura.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: And we are here with another Culips English Podcast.

Harp: And check out our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can sign up and become a member. When you're a member, you have access to the Learning Materials. And what do the Learning Materials include?

Maura: In the Learning Materials, you have transcripts, you have more detailed explanations of the expressions that we use, you also have a quiz. And you have this for every single Culips episode that we have ever recorded.

Harp: And there are a lot of them.

Maura: That's right. And if you haven't listened to them, go to our website and check them out.

Harp: And we're also on Facebook, so come on over there, say hi, and if you have a question, you can leave it there. Before we get started, Maura, how was your weekend?

Maura: Actually, it was pretty good, because I had an old friend from high school who visited. And I like to have visitors once in a while, because it makes the city seem more interesting and exciting to me. I get **to see it through their eyes** a little bit, take them around, and show them the best of Montreal.

Harp: Yeah. Sometimes when we're in our routines, we don't realize we live in such a cool city.

Maura: Yeah, that's right. So it's kind of fun to see someone experiencing Montreal for the first time.

Harp: That's cool.

Maura: Yeah. So, let's get started now with our episode.

Harp: Today we're gonna do a Chatterbox episode, and that's where we chat. We interview people or we pick a topic about Canadian culture and we talk about it.

Maura: Now, this time, we are taking another fun idea from a Culips listener,

Alejandro Castillo. On Facebook, you asked us about Canadian myths and you thought maybe that would be an interesting topic for an episode. So, this episode is for you. Harp and I have put together an episode about Canadian myths.

Harp: Yeah. We're gonna start with talking about myths, what they are, are they true. Then we're gonna talk about Canadian myths.

Maura: That's right, Canadian myths. So first of all we're gonna talk about myths. And what is a myth?

Harp: What is a myth, Maura?

Maura: Well, it's a traditional story that has been told over time, and it usually explains something. It could be a natural phenomenon, it could be something cultural, but a myth tries to explain or create or story, an explanation.

Harp: Yeah. And they're often passed orally or they can be written into a story.

Maura: Yeah. Traditionally myths have been passed on by **word of mouth**. They are something that has existed for generations.

Harp: Yeah. And usually you have a storyteller who passes this story on by telling it to each generation.

Maura: Nowadays with myths, it's a bit more casual, but you might hear it from a friend or a family member, or you might hear a story about something that happened in your country or in your culture when you were a kid and it's just something that everyone, kind of, has heard about.

Harp: Yeah. And we don't really know if myths are true or not.

Maura: That's right. Some myths might be true but often myths don't seem to be true. They're not usually based in science or they're not usually logical. But some people do believe in myths. They're mysterious.

Harp: They are mysterious. And I think one reason why they don't seem believable is because so many people are telling the story that they become more exaggerated and more unreal as more people tell the story.

Maura: It's true, you know. You might hear someone say something like "Oh, **that's just a myth**." And that really means that's not true. So myths have a reputation for not being very reliable.

Harp: And you know, when Alejandro suggested this topic, I had to really think about because in Canada, we don't really have that many myths.

Maura: That's the first thing I thought: "Canadian myths? I've never even heard

those words together.” Because we don’t really have myths. Now, one reason for this is that we’re such a new country. We don’t have that many **long-standing** traditions.

Harp: Yeah. We’re such a young country. We’re 145 years old. It’s not that old.

Maura: When I think about how long other countries have existed, 145 years is not even as old as their oldest building.

Harp: That’s true.

Maura: Yeah. So a lot of myths—or what we would call Canadian myths—are Native myths, stories that explain the origin of things. This is the closest thing that we might have to a Canadian myth.

Harp: We have a couple of Canadian myths. Should we move on to that topic?

Maura: All right, let’s do that. Even when Alejandro suggested the idea of Canadian myths, I really wasn’t sure what we were going to be able to come up with.

Harp: I had a couple of ideas, and when I started doing research, I was quite excited about this episode.

Maura: OK. So, I’m originally from Ontario, and to be honest, I can’t think of any myths or stories that I heard about things going on around my part of Canada.

Harp: OK. Well I grew up in British Columbia and in Alberta, so I thought of a couple of myths that I remember when I was younger.

Maura: All right. **Do tell!**

Harp: The first one is **Bigfoot**.

Maura: Oh, really?

Harp: Yeah. **Sasquatch**.

Maura: So, **a sasquatch**, or **a Bigfoot**, are the names for a really big, hairy kind of animal that looks and walks like a human—except for the hair all over its body, I guess.

Harp: Yeah. **A Bigfoot**, or **a sasquatch**, is this large, hairy animal that looks kind of like a human.

- Maura: Right. And they live in the wilderness. So they live in, usually, the mountains or a big forest; someplace where a lot of animals live and humans don't. OK, so I've definitely heard that in lots of different parts in the world there have been people who've seen, or are said to have seen, **Bigfoot**.
- Harp: Yeah, that's true. There have been sightings in other places. There are so many big forests in northern BC, and even in the south, that there have been a lot of **Bigfoot** sightings.
- Maura: Really?
- Harp: A lot of people claim to have seen the **sasquatch**.
- Maura: Now, the next question I have is: Is there any photographic evidence of this?
- Harp: **That's the thing**. When you talk about **Bigfoot**, it's usually kind of a joke, because so many people have created fake pictures of **sasquatches** or created footprints, really big footprints, to say that they saw the **sasquatch**. They never have.
- Maura: Yeah. When I think of someone saying that they've seen **Bigfoot**, I think "It must be **a hoax**."
- Harp: I don't know. I think it could exist. The forests are really big and deep, and there aren't people living there, so we might not know all of the animals living there.
- Maura: It's true. I guess if I think of my own experience hiking out in the woods, sometimes I can't get my camera out fast enough to take a picture of some of the animals I see.
- Harp: I think this is why I don't like camping, because of stories like **sasquatches**. Because I always think whether he's gonna come visit us, whether we're going to see **Bigfoot** when we're camping.
- Maura: Really? I'm mostly scared of bears, but I guess **Bigfoot** could show up.
- Harp: Really, any sort of big bear-like animal would scare me, whether it's **Bigfoot** or a real bear.
- Maura: All right. So Canadians have their own **Bigfoot**. Interesting. Now, are there any other myths that you heard out West?
- Harp: Yes. The other one—I love this one because I love his name—the **Ogopogo**.

- Maura: OK. **The Ogopogo**. I have to say, I don't think I've ever heard of that. What is it?
- Harp: You've never heard of **the Ogopogo**?
- Maura: No, tell me about it.
- Harp: Well, **the Ogopogo** is a lake monster, and he exists in the Okanogan Lake.
- Maura: OK. So, I have heard of the Loch Ness Monster, which is a really famous kind of thing—monster—that lives in Scotland. It's the same idea then, right?
- Harp: Exactly. **The Ogopogo** is similar to the Loch Ness Monster. People who have seen **the Ogopogo** claim that it's big and it's almost like a snake, but really, really big and it can go in the water. And again, I grew up in BC and I have family who live near the Okanogan Lake, so I went many times and I remember every time I went one of my cousins would say, "Oh! I see **the Ogopogo**."
- Maura: That is fun. But it does seem like something that kids might play around with. Were the adults afraid too?
- Harp: Nope, not at all. But again, I remember growing up and seeing people who had claimed to have taken a picture of **the Ogopogo** monster, but I'm not sure if he really existed.
- Maura: Are there any other of these kinds of lake monsters around Canada?
- Harp: Yeah, there are. When I was doing research, I found a couple of other ones. There's the Manipogo, which is another lake monster, apparently in Lake Manitoba. And there is also one in Quebec, the Memphre, which is a lake monster that's supposedly seen in one of the lakes in Quebec.
- Maura: Hmm. Either we have a lot of lake monsters, or we have a lot of people who think they've seen lake monsters.
- Harp: Well, we do have a lot of lakes, so, maybe there are lots of monsters in these lakes.
- Maura: I'll **give you the benefit of the doubt**, Harp.
- Harp: We don't know for sure either way.
- Maura: Now, I have heard a little bit about another story, this time not in the western part of Canada, but in the eastern part. Do you know much about **the Ghost Ship of Northumberland Strait**?
- Harp: I have heard about it, and it is a fascinating myth. So basically, it's a ghost

ship that people have seen in this strait. The Northumberland Strait is on the East Coast, between Nova Scotia and Prince Edward Island, and apparently people there have seen this ship and it looks like it's burning; it looks like it's on fire. And you know, the thing that's so interesting is that many people have seen it at different places along the strait.

Maura: Hmm. That is interesting.

Harp: Yeah. So imagine on one night, many people, at different areas, separately claim that they've seen this ship.

Maura: Wow. Now, a lot of times with myths, there is some scientific person who comes along and says, "No, there's a scientific explanation for this." Has anyone tried to explain this phenomenon of seeing a ghost ship burning?

Harp: Yeah. There are some explanations to do with the reflection of the stars on the water, but it's bizarre because people think that they're really seeing a ship, so much so that sometimes people send out boats to go save the people that are on this ghost ship, and when they get there, there's no ship.

Maura: Wow. That's kind of creepy.

Harp: It is!

Maura: You know, even though myths might not be true, it's kind of fun to believe in the possibility.

Harp: Yeah. Especially the possibility of **the lost mines**.

Maura: Oh, what's that one?

Harp: Well, there are a couple of different ones across Canada, but basically, the myth is that there are **lost mines**, so either gold mines or diamond mines, in different parts of Canada.

Maura: Hmm. But no one knows where they are?

Harp: No one knows exactly where they are. They can't find them. For example, one of the famous ones is the Pitt Lake's Lost Gold Mine and this is in, again, British Columbia. Apparently it's supposed to be this gold mine that has so much gold, but we don't know exactly where it is. Could you imagine if you found it?

Maura: Well that seems **fishy** to me. If you knew there was a gold mine, with lots of gold, how could you **lose track of it**?

Harp: But there are **lost mines** in British Columbia, in Ontario, in Quebec.

- Maura: Hmm. I guess I know what I'm going to do this weekend: go look for **lost mines** and get rich.
- Harp: Good idea.
- Maura: OK, so that about does it for this week's episode, where we talked about Canadian myths.
- Harp: Yeah. First we talked about myths and what they are and why Canada really doesn't have too many myths.
- Maura: And then, I learned a whole bunch, because Harp knew about some Canadian myths, especially the ones from the western part of Canada.
- Harp: Yes. And remember everyone: check out the website, Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Maura: And there you can become a member. And when you become a paid member, your money goes to Culips and helps support us, so we're able to continue making these episodes for you.
- Harp: Yes. And remember to say hi to us on Facebook. That's it for us this time.
- Maura: We'll talk to you again soon. Bye.
- Harp: Bye.

## Detailed Explanation

To see something through another person's eyes

**To see something through another person's eyes** is to imagine experiencing something from another person's point of view. One reason that somebody might like **to see something through another person's eyes** is because this other person has a more interesting perspective or experience. A person might like **to see something through another person's eyes** because they want to understand what that person is feeling in a certain situation.

In this episode, Maura says that she likes to have visitors in Montreal because she can **see the city through their eyes**. This means that she imagines experiencing the city as if she didn't know it very well, just like her visitors. It is often more exciting to visit a city that you don't know very well, right?

Here are a couple more examples with **to see something through another person's eyes**:

Brian: I brought my daughter to Niagara Falls this past weekend and she loved it!

Selena: Oh, that's fun. I bet it was cool **to see it through her eyes**.

Ivan: I can't believe Sarah got to work on that project.

Lisa: Try **to see if through her eyes**. She worked really hard to be chosen.

### Word of mouth

Sometimes information is passed by one person telling another. This is called **word of mouth**. Stories were traditionally passed on to younger generations this way. Myths and other popular stories are still often communicated orally. Nowadays, with the Internet and other popular media, people share information with each other in a variety of ways.

The term **word of mouth** is also used in marketing, where it describes when people hear about a business because it is recommended to them by another person. When one person tells another, for example, that Jim's Toy Store sells great toys at cheap prices, Jim's store may become more popular if enough people are spreading this message by **word of mouth**. This kind of free and valuable advertising is not only focused on oral communication, but includes personal recommendations in any form.

### That's just a myth

As we say in this episode, myths could be true or untrue. Some people believe in some myths and other people don't believe in any myths. Since most myths are not scientific or logical, it is common for people to think they are untrue. This is why the expression **that's just a myth** means that something is untrue. It's like saying *that's just something people say, but it is untrue*.



For this reason, when people call something a myth, it can have two kinds of meanings. It could be because it is a traditional story that explains something about humanity or nature, or it could also mean that it is something untrue.

Here are a couple more examples with ***that's just a myth***:

Hank: You know that story you told me the other day, the one about our mean boss being a crazy rebel in his 20s? I think ***that's just a myth***.

Sharon: I don't know if it's true or not. It's just what I heard!

### Long-standing

When something is described as **long-standing**, this means that it has existed for a very long time. You might see this word written as one word (***longstanding***), or with a hyphen, (***long-standing***), as we've written it. You might also see it incorrectly written as two words.

***Long-standing*** is used in this episode to talk about Canadian myths. Maura says that we do not have many **long-standing** traditions in Canada. Most countries with myths are much older than we are. We don't have a long history and so any traditions or myths that we do have are often not very old.

### Do tell

Here's a cute little expression that can be used to encourage someone to tell you more about something. Saying ***do tell*** also expresses that you are interested in and curious about what someone has just told you. This expression is often used after someone has revealed some gossip or introduced an intriguing story.

Harp says that she knows a Canadian myth about Bigfoot. Maura has just previously said that she doesn't really know any Canadian myths, so when she hears about Bigfoot, she is interested and wants to know more. She says "***Do tell***," and then Harp tells Maura what she knows about Bigfoot.

Here are a couple more examples with ***do tell***:

Carmen: Did you hear that Cynthia got engaged last night?

Olive: Oh! ***Do tell***!

David: So last week I was downtown and ran into Fred. Remember the guy who got fired last month?

Pete: Yeah, I remember him. What happened? ***Do tell***.

We also have a similar expression: ***pray tell***. This means the same as ***do tell*** but is much less common.

### Bigfoot/sasquatch

These are two of the the names given to a large, hairy animal that walks on two legs just like humans. They are said to live in wild areas in the north western part of North America. People have claimed to have seen **Bigfoot** at different times and locations in Canada and down into the United States. There have even been some photos taken of this creature, but many believe that the photos are not real.

In this episode, we talk about **Bigfoot** and **sasquatch**, which are both names for the same kind of creature. The word **sasquatch** comes from the Halkomelem language, which is the language of a group of First Nations people who live in British Columbia. Yeti and the abominable snowman are also names for a kind of mythical creature that lives in the woods of snowy areas.

### That's the thing

When we say **that's the thing**, we are emphasizing the importance of what we are about to say. In response to what another person has just said, someone might say **that's the thing** because they are going to agree or disagree. Some people start with saying *here's the thing* when they introduce a new topic that they find important.

The good news is that when someone says **that's the thing**, it doesn't change the meaning of what they are going to say. People use this expression to emphasize the importance of what they are saying for all different reasons.

In this episode, Harp says **that's the thing** after Maura asks her whether there is any photographic evidence of Bigfoot. Harp uses this expression to emphasize what she is about to say. She then says that Bigfoot is often treated as a joke and that the photographic evidence isn't taken seriously. It is important for everyone to know that Bigfoot is not a monster that most people believe in or take seriously. This is why Harp uses this expression.

Here are a couple more examples with **that's the thing**:

Hector: I just got an interesting message on my online dating site, but it kind of sounds like she didn't actually read my profile.

Joshua: **That's the thing** about dating websites. It's hard to know whether the other person is just sending the same message to tons of people.

Hector: It's definitely hard to tell sometimes.

Irina: I think the economy is in bad shape right now.

Pete: I see what you're saying, but the thing is, the situation has actually been improving over the last few months.

You might also hear **that's the thing about...** followed by the topic. There is no difference between **that's the thing about...** and **that's the thing**. If Harp had used **that's the thing about...** in this episode, she would probably have said, "**That's the thing about Bigfoot.**"

### A hoax

**A hoax** is something organized to trick other people. **A hoax** might be just for fun, but more often it is planned to make people believe something that isn't true. You may even hear of **hoaxes** that are reported in the media!

Many people believe that any photos of Bigfoot or sasquatch are just **a hoax**. It is believed that some people have created photographs with someone dressed in a hairy costume or have taken unclear pictures of large animals and say that it is Bigfoot.

Nowadays, there are more and more **hoaxes** online, through the use of email and social media. These often involve a person believing something that is not true and donating money.

Here's one more example with **a hoax**:

Helen: I got an email from someone yesterday saying that she lost her purse and all her luggage and she's stuck in another country. She needs some money in order to get home to Canada.

Mitchell: That sounds like a classic **hoax** to me. Just delete the email.

### The Ogopogo and other Canadian lake monsters

**The Ogopogo** is best described as a lake monster that looks like a large serpent. There have been many sightings in Okanagan Lake in British Columbia since the 19th century. But only unclear photographs and film of this monster exist.

There are actually about 15 other lake monsters in Canada! The descriptions are bit different from each other, but in all cases there exists no solid evidence that these monsters are actually real. Many of the stories about sightings of these monsters have been around for a long time. Do you think there is any truth to these Canadian myths?

### To give someone the benefit of the doubt

**To give someone the benefit of the doubt** means to choose to believe something they have told you, even though what they've told you is hard to believe. It might also mean that even though you have reason to not like someone, you give that person a chance to change your mind.

The person benefits from the fact that there is some doubt in your opinion. For example, imagine that Sam told you that someone is giving away new cars downtown today. You find that hard to believe, but Sam is usually an honest person, so you **give him the benefit of the doubt**. You decide to believe him, unless you get more information that shows he is not correct.

In this episode, Harp says that there are lots of lakes in Canada, so it is possible that we have monsters in them. Maura then says that she will **give Harp the benefit of the doubt**. This means that Maura doesn't really believe that there are any monsters in Canadian lakes, but she will agree with Harp that there is a possibility.

Here are a couple more examples with ***to give someone the benefit of the doubt***:

Zack: There's something about Claudia's new boyfriend that I just don't like. I'll **give him the benefit of the doubt**, since he hasn't done anything specific, but I just don't trust him.  
Jen: He seems all right to me. I guess only time will tell if he's a good guy.

George: Sheila told me that she didn't take the \$20 bill I left on my desk last night, so I guess I have to **give her the benefit of the doubt**.  
Luke: I wonder who else it could have been then.

### The Ghost Ship of Northumberland Strait

The Northumberland Strait is the water that separates Prince Edward Island from Nova Scotia and New Brunswick on the East Coast of Canada. This is the place where a ghost ship has been seen at different times, usually in the fall, for more than 200 years.

Like we say in this episode, people have even gone out to try and rescue the people aboard the ship on fire, and when they get closer, the ship disappears. The most famous rescue attempt happened in 1900.

### Lost mines

There are stories of **lost mines** all over the world. There are also a variety of reasons explaining how the mines were lost. One reason might be that the only person who knew where the mine was located died and never told anyone where it was. All of our Canadian **lost mines** are in the northwestern part of the country, in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, and the Northwest Territories.

### Fishy

If something is described as being **fishy**, this means that it is suspicious. When something is called **fishy**, it means that there is something curious or strange about it. Check out our episode called *Fishy* from a couple of years ago to learn more.

In this episode, Maura says that the existence of **lost mines** seems **fishy** to her. This means that she doesn't believe that there are really any **lost mines** and the stories about them are unlikely and they don't seem believable.

Here's another example with *fishy*:

Martha: Brian told me that Joanna isn't coming to your party tomorrow because she's sick.  
Christopher: That sounds **fishy** to me. I just saw her this morning and she didn't look sick at all.

### To lose track of something

**To lose track of something** means to not know where something is. Saying that you **lost track of something** is a more indirect way of saying that you once knew where it was, but now you don't. In contrast, if a person is keeping track of something, this means that they know where it is at all times.

This expression is often used to talk about something that is moving around. When a person tracks something, they follow it around and know where it is as it moves. Originally, this expression was likely used to talk about animals, as we follow animal tracks, we know where they are. Nowadays, you can track many items, like packages. If you send a package by mail, sometimes you can track the package online and know where it is even before it reaches its destination. An employee might **lose track of paperwork** in an office. This might be because the employee has a lot of paperwork to organize and somehow they cannot find the papers.

People might also use this expression, **to lose track of something**, even when the item is not moving around. When someone uses this expression, it might be to show that they were responsible for an item or that they recently knew where it was, but no longer do. This expression sounds less serious than saying directly that you don't know where something is.

In this episode, Maura uses this expression to talk about lost mines. She questions how someone could **lose track of a mine**. In this case, mines can't move around! Maura uses this expression because someone was responsible for the mine and she doesn't understand how this person could have forgotten where it is.

**Quiz**

**1. Which of the following means to experience something through another person's perspective?**

- a) to wear another person's glasses
- b) to hear something through another person's ears
- c) to see something through another person's eyes
- d) to understand another person's shoes

**2. When someone says "That's just a myth" what does this often mean?**

- a) That's a really interesting story.
- b) That's not true.
- c) That is true.
- d) That is a really old story.

**3. Two businesses have had a relationship for a long time. They have a \_\_\_\_\_ relationship.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) long-standing
- b) stand-up
- c) outstanding
- d) shortstop

**4. When does a person use the expression *do tell*?**

- a) when they have heard enough about a story
- b) when they want to hear more about a story
- c) when they cannot hear you very well
- d) when you are speaking too loudly

**5. Which of the following is another word for Bigfoot?**

- a) sasquatch
- b) saskatchewan
- c) snowman
- d) none of the above

**6. When is the expression *that's the thing* usually used?**

- a) when the speaker is going to stop talking
- b) when the speaker is not going to say anything important
- c) after the speaker says something important
- d) before the speaker says something important

**7. Ariana: Jon says that he's finished his work. I'll give him the benefit of the doubt.**

**What does the above example mean?**

- a) Adriana believes Jon but she is suspicious that he hasn't finished.
- b) Jon doesn't think Adriana believes him.
- c) Adriana completely believes Jon and is sure that he has finished his work.
- d) Adriana thinks that Jon is a very hard worker.

**8. What does it mean when something is described as *fishy*?**

- a) it is a myth
- b) it smells like saltwater
- c) it looks like a shark
- d) it is suspicious, curious, or strange

**9. If a person loses track of something, what does this mean?**

- a) They don't know where it is.
- b) They were responsible for it.
- c) A and B
- d) none of the above

**Answers:**

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