

Chatterbox #110 – Harp's big trip

Informal Contractions in this Episode

Informal contractions are unofficial short forms of other words, and they're usually only used in casual conversation. For example, when a native English speaker talks casually, they might say *gonna* instead of *going to*, or *whaddya* instead of *what do you*. Even though informal contractions are usually only used in spoken English, we include them in the Culips written transcripts to help you get used to how they're used and what they sound like

These are the informal contractions used in today's episode, along with their meanings:

- **'cause**: because
- **kinda**: kind of
- **gotta**: got to

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Andrew: And I'm Andrew.

Harp: And we're here at Culips bringing you another exciting episode.

Andrew: That's right.

Harp: Make sure you 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. And when you're a member what do you get, Andrew?

Andrew: You get access to the transcripts of every single word that we say. That includes detailed descriptions of every special expression that we mention. And you also get a quiz.

Harp: Exactly! And also on the website, you can find all older episodes, which are great.

Andrew: And don't forget to check out our Facebook page and our Twitter, if you use Twitter.

Harp: Yes, for sure. So today we're going to do a Chatterbox episode. And that's where we chat.

Andrew: Yeah. And today's topic is actually Harp's vacation. You just were away for three weeks, was it?

- Harp: Yeah. I was away for 20 days.
- Andrew: That's a long time to be away from home.
- Harp: It was a really long time actually. It was super fun, but I was so happy to be home when I got back.
- Andrew: And you went to many countries I believe. Can you tell us what countries you went to?
- Harp: Yup. I started in London, and then I went to Singapore. Then I went to Hong Kong, and then I went back to Singapore. Then I went to Dubai, and then I went back to London.
- Andrew: All around the world.
- Harp: I feel a bit tired thinking about it all.
- Andrew: How many time zones is that? Did you count?
- Harp: I couldn't even think about time zones. I had to just readjust. That was the only way I could deal with my **jet lag**.
- Andrew: Yeah. No doubt. And what place did you like the best out of all the cities you visited?
- Harp: I would have to say that Hong Kong was my favourite.
- Andrew: Wow. And what made it your favourite? Was it the food? The scenery?
- Harp: It was everything. Hong Kong is an awesome, awesome place. I suggest everyone goes to visit it. I don't know. The lifestyle there is great. I went to go visit my best friend, and she lives in the central area of downtown Hong Kong, and there are all of these cafes and restaurants and people just seem to really love life. But there's also a cool business scene, and we went and saw some music. It's just so lively. And the food is amazing.
- Andrew: Yeah. I really want to visit Hong Kong. I've only ever been to the Hong Kong airport. I've never actually been outside the airport.
- Harp: The Hong Kong airport is actually quite nice.
- Andrew: It is pretty nice, yeah.
- Harp: Yeah. I took ten different flights in 20 days.
- Andrew: Whoa. You got to see lots of airports then.

- Harp: I did. Yeah, I did. And I got to see which ones were my favourite and...
- Andrew: And how was the weather? Like in Dubai, let's say. Was it just extremely hot?
- Harp: It was ridiculously hot. I sat in the shade outside, and I was sweating. It was extremely hot so you couldn't walk outside. We had to do most things inside.
- Andrew: And what sort of activities do you like to do? Do you like to go to museums? Do you like to do hiking and see some of the outdoor areas in different countries?
- Harp: I have to be honest, for this trip I did absolutely **zero** planning. Because I was going to visit my best friends in each place. So in London, my friend booked us tickets to go to see the polo match, which was awesome. And it was just such a British thing to do. Everyone was all dressed up. It felt really posh.
- Andrew: Was it the horse polo where they're playing on horseback or was it in water?
- Harp: It was horse polo, yeah.
- Andrew: OK. I've never seen a polo game before. That would be interesting.
- Harp: Me neither. I have to be honest; I didn't know anything about polo before I went.
- Andrew: Are you a fan now?
- Harp: Love it.
- Andrew: Yeah?
- Harp: Yeah. Super fun. Really interesting sport to watch. And I have to be honest; I hate watching sports.
- Andrew: Yeah. Well it's nice to see the horses too, I guess.
- Harp: Oh, they're beautiful. They just move so fast, and they're amazing.
- Andrew: And you had friends in every city?
- Harp: In every city.
- Andrew: That's amazing.
- Harp: Yup. So I had my friends from college in London and Dubai. My sister lives in Singapore, and a best friend from travelling lives in Hong Kong.

- Andrew: Yeah. It's always way better when you have friends in a city that you're travelling to.
- Harp: It's amazing. I got to go to all of the cool places that the locals go to.
- Andrew: Right. And you have a translator, and you have a place to stay. And, yeah, it works out.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Andrew: OK. And then after London, you went to Singapore. And I've heard great things about Singapore.
- Harp: It's amazing. It's so clean and it's so lush and tropical. It's really, really green everywhere. And, like I said, it's so clean. Really, honestly, the streets are immaculate. It's beautiful.
- Andrew: And I know that they speak a lot of languages in Singapore. Were you able to speak English with people there?
- Harp: Yeah. Everyone. I don't think I met a single person there who didn't speak English.
- Andrew: Wow. That's amazing.
- Harp: Yeah. I don't know if it's the national language, but almost everyone there spoke it.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's common for most people I think.
- Harp: Yeah. Exactly. And my sister lives there, like I said. And she's a teacher. So I went to her school and met the little kids.
- Andrew: Oh. Elementary school teacher?
- Harp: Yup. She teaches at the Canadian International School.
- Andrew: Oh. Ok. That's cool.
- Harp: Yup. So I went and saw the kids and they're from all sorts of different nationalities, and their parent are expats working in Singapore. So it was cute. They were really excited.
- Andrew: Yeah, I bet. Yeah. And what else did you do in Singapore?

- Harp: Well, my sister had to work during the day so I had to kind of entertain myself. But I saw most of the sites. I went to the Raffles Hotel, which is this beautiful old hotel in central Singapore. Honestly, it's one of the most beautiful hotels I've seen in my life. It's just ornate, and it feels like you're back a hundred years ago.
- Andrew: That's really cool.
- Harp: And that's actually where they created the **Singapore Sling**.
- Andrew: Ah, yeah. I've heard of that.
- Harp: Yup. Which I've never tasted before but I decided to go to this hotel to taste it.
- Andrew: So you tried it from the original source where it was invented.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Andrew: And was it good? Did you like it?
- Harp: Mm. Not really.
- Andrew: No? It wasn't **worth all the fuss** in the end?
- Harp: It was really sweet and I don't like sweet drinks. So if you do I'm sure you'll like it.
- Andrew: Yeah. And did you do anything else? You had the **Singapore Sling**. You saw your sister.
- Harp: Yup. I got to see a couple of really amazing views. I went to the top of a couple of buildings. And Singapore is just such a beautiful place. But I also got to see my favourite thing.
- Andrew: And what was that?
- Harp: **The Merlion**.
- Andrew: Now I've been to Banff, and in Banff, they have a merman.
- Harp: Oh!
- Andrew: And of course there's the famous Disney movie The Mermaid, The Little Mermaid. But what is **The Merlion**? This sounds extremely interesting.
- Harp: It's the national animal of Singapore, and it's half-mermaid, half-lion.

- Andrew: That's hilarious. Where does it live?
- Harp: I'm not sure, but I saw the statue and it's actually really cool looking. I'll post a picture with this episode, for sure.
- Andrew: Yeah. I'd love to see that.
- Harp: That was pretty cool with Singapore.
- Andrew: **The Merlion.** Ah.
- Harp: When my sister told me, "Ah, there's **The Merlion**," I didn't think mermaid lion. I didn't know what to think.
- Andrew: That's an interesting combination. Is it based on like a mythological story?
- Harp: I didn't do any research, but I will and will add it in the detailed explanation.
- Andrew: OK. Sounds good. And what did you eat in Singapore?
- Harp: I ate so well in Singapore. It's really a **foodie's** wonderland. You can eat all sorts of different types of cuisines and all sorts of different types of Asian food. I had the chilli crab, which is the national dish, and it was amazing.
- Andrew: Yeah. That sounds really good.
- Harp: And the crabs were huge. I'm used to the crab in Canada, which is quite small, but it was so good.
- Andrew: King crabs.
- Harp: I don't think it was a king crab. It was just a snow crab, but huge.
- Andrew: Wow! Wow. Wow,
- Harp: Yup. And then I also went to the hawker stands.
- Andrew: What's a hawker stand?
- Harp: It's sort of like a mall food court, but a million times better. And it's outside, so there's just lots of different stands where they sell one kind of cuisine, and they're all trying to get you to go to their stand. Hence the name, Hawker stand. And the food was just amazing.
- Andrew: Well, that sounds great.
- Harp: It was. I wish my sister took me there on my first day because I'd have went everyday.

- Andrew: Was it affordable? Was it a place that you could travel to on a budget?
- Harp: Not at all. Singapore is extremely expensive.
- Andrew: Wow. Really?
- Harp: Yeah. Extremely. The hawker stands were the only affordable thing I saw in Singapore at all.
- Andrew: OK. Well if I go I'll **hit up** the hawker stands I guess.
- Harp: You have to.
- Andrew: All right. So the first place you went to was London, and second was Singapore, and then the third place was Hong Kong.
- Harp: Yes. My favourite place, Hong Kong.
- Andrew: Your favourite place, yeah. And what were some of the highlights of your Hong Kong visit?
- Harp: I actually did a lot of shopping there.
- Andrew: Wow. Yeah.
- Harp: They have amazing fashion and really cool markets, so that was awesome. Eating. A lot, a lot of eating. It's got these mountains. And, again, it's really lush and tropical. The weather wasn't fantastic when I was there. It was kind of drizzly every day.
- Andrew: Right. I've heard that Hong Kong gets a lot of rain in the summertime.
- Harp: Yeah. It's not an ideal time to go at all. But it was the only time I had, so I went anyway. And I got to see some of the sites. I went to Stanley, which is like a beachfront boardwalk, and it's really pretty. And you go around to the backside of the island, which is less commercial and less developed. It's a lot more mountainous, and it was so beautiful. And I went to the peak, so that's at the very top. And you get this view of Hong Kong, and it's just spectacular.
- Andrew: That sounds great.
- Harp: Yup. And I think those are all the touristy kinds of things. Just lots of walking and seeing.
- Andrew: Yeah. I'm sure you got lots of exercise on this trip just walking around.
- Harp: I totally did, but I ate so much that it counteracted everything.

- Andrew: As long as you come back even then nothing wrong there.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Andrew: OK. And you said the food in Hong Kong was amazing. Was there anything in particular that you remember?
- Harp: I had some delicious **dim sum**. I had that twice, and it was great. But the funniest experience was we went kind of outside of Hong Kong, past Kowloon. And we went to eat kind of very traditional Chinese food. And we get to this restaurant, but they have no English anywhere, on any menu. And no one spoke English. And, so, we were looking and trying to figure out what to do, and we ended up walking around the restaurant seeing what other people were eating and pointing at it.
- Andrew: And, did you get what you wanted? What did you end up eating?
- Harp: I definitely got what I wanted. I pointed, and they brought me that, and it was actually delicious.
- Andrew: Then it worked out.
- Harp: I have no idea what it was, but it was delicious.
- Andrew: That happened to me while i was living in Korea in my first few weeks that I lived there. I was living in a small town, and there was not very much English in the restaurants. And the waiting staff didn't speak much English, so I often just pointed. I picked a dish and pointed at it and said, "Bring me that! And we'll see. I'll get to know the cuisine that way."
- Harp: Yeah. It's a fun, adventurous way of eating.
- Andrew: Very adventurous. And, yeah, sometimes it can work out really well. OK. So after Hong Kong you then went back to Singapore for a second time. What happened on that visit?
- Harp: The second visit I was there for a couple more days and we actually stayed in a couple of different hotels, my sister and I. She wanted me to have a little bit of a pool experience and relax 'cause this was a very exhausting trip. But the thing that was happening in Singapore, I think it's still happening. I hope it's cleared up, is that there's a haze over the city right now.
- Andrew: A haze? Like smoke?

- Harp: Yeah. There are some sort of forest fires going on in Indonesia and the whole city is full of smog and smoke and you can't see as clearly as you normally would. The views are all ruined. And it's really tough on your lungs. The pollution was at 400, I think. It was crazy.
- Andrew: That is crazy. And actually it's funny that you say that because while you were gone, in Montreal we also had really hazy, smoky weather for a couple of days because there were forest fires in the northern part of Quebec.
- Harp: Yeah. When I came back there still was a little bit. So it was just tough on my throat. I had a cough.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's hard to breath in a smoky weather.
- Harp: Yeah. I felt bad for everyone who lived there because I was only there for a couple of days so I survived, but it went on for quite a while. I hope it's all cleared up now.
- Andrew: Were people wearing little facemasks?
- Harp: A lot of people were wearing facemasks.
- Andrew: Yeah. You **might as well** if it's smoky.
- Harp: Yeah. And actually they were wearing them in the pool.
- Andrew: In the pool!
- Harp: Yeah. It was kind of funny. They weren't really swimming. They were kinda just hanging out in the pool and they were wearing them.
- Andrew: That's a funny mental image of people wearing masks in the pool. But, hey, **you gotta do what you gotta do**.
- Harp: Yeah. People wanted to enjoy the pool but they wanted to be as safe as well.
- Andrew: Protect yourself.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Andrew: So the next place that you went to after Singapore I believe was Dubai?
- Harp: Yes. Exactly.
- Andrew: And why did you go to Dubai?
- Harp: I have another friend living there so why not stop and visit?

- Andrew: Right, yeah. I don't know too much about Dubai other than that it has just exploded in the last maybe ten years or so.
- Harp: Yeah. I didn't know too much about it. But the thing that I found is that it's exactly that. It's really new so when you're driving it actually feels like a city from the future.
- Andrew: Wow.
- Harp: Yeah. The buildings are just - they're really nice - but they have this kind of futuristic look to them. So it really felt like I was in the future.
- Andrew: Yeah. That's cool. And did you do anything in particular?
- Harp: I went and tried the Emirate food, which was delicious.
- Andrew: Cool.
- Harp: And I went to the marina area.
- Andrew: Marina? Oh yeah, they have nice beaches in Dubai, don't they?
- Harp: Yup, they do. They have beautiful beaches, but it was like 50 degrees, so it was too hot for me to be outside.
- Andrew: Right. That's unbearable for anybody.
- Harp: Yeah. And I went to the Sailboat Hotel.
- Andrew: Oh yeah!
- Harp: It's special. It's very extravagant; there's lots of colour and gold. It's fancy.
- Andrew: Yeah. There's a lot of rich business travellers in Dubai, so they have really exquisite facilities for business meetings and that sort of thing.
- Harp: Yeah. Exactly. I just went there for a coffee in the afternoon, so I didn't have the full experience, but it's beautiful.
- Andrew: Yeah. I'd love to go to Dubai someday and see what it's all about.
- Harp: Yeah. And I went to the world's tallest building. I didn't even get to go to the top, to the observatory. But I went to the 122nd floor, and it's pretty high.
- Andrew: Do they have a glass panel on the floor, so you can see down?
- Harp: No. And I would have not gone on those. I have a fear of heights.

- Andrew: That's really high. 122 **stories**.
- Harp: I couldn't go too close to the window. I felt a little bit dizzy.
- Andrew: I don't think I'd like that either.
- Harp: Yeah. So Dubai was interesting. I was there for a couple of days. You have to drive everywhere, which I didn't love, but it was too hot to walk anywhere, and things are quite spread out.
- Andrew: Did you take any public transit while you were travelling in any of the cities?
- Harp: I only did in Hong Kong.
- Andrew: And how was it? Did you take the subway or the bus?
- Harp: Yup. I took the subway, and it was fantastic.
- Andrew: Better than Montreal's?
- Harp: Yes. Air-conditioned.
- Andrew: Oh. **Big plus**.
- Harp: **Huge plus!** When I came back, and I had to take the subway here I was sweating. It was hot and humid down there.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's not nice in the summer.
- Harp: No. Definitely not. I also took it in London, and I've taken it there before. It's great there.
- Andrew: Yeah. London's is good as well. And so after Dubai you were making your way home, and you stopped in London for one more visit.
- Harp: Exactly. It was just a quick night stop. I was there for just a couple of hours, but I got to see my friend and have some traditional fish and chips.
- Andrew: **There you go**.
- Harp: Yeah, it was great.
- Andrew: And then you flew back to Montreal.
- Harp: I flew back to Montreal. And I have to be honest, I was really good with the **jet lag** on my trip, but when I came back I was dead. I was so tired.

- Andrew: Oh no. Did you have any time to recuperate or did you have to go right back to work the next day?
- Harp: Right back to work the next day.
- Andrew: Oh, that's painful.
- Harp: Yup. At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon I was almost asleep at my desk.
- Andrew: Yeah. After travelling you really need that day to catch up and get back into the normal routine.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. I needed to just sleep.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Harp: But, yeah, it was an amazing trip.
- Andrew: Yeah. I'm jealous. It sounds awesome.
- Harp: It was very, very cool.
- Andrew: Yeah. Cool.
- Harp: I'll definitely post some picture on Facebook though.
- Andrew: Yeah. You should do that. I'd love to see them, and I think our listeners would like to see them as well.
- Harp: So should we wrap up now?
- Andrew: I think that's about it, yeah.
- Harp: So remember, always check out our website, Culips.com. C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Andrew: And we're on Facebook and Twitter, so if you use those services, check us out there.
- Harp: Yes. So that's it for us today. Bye everyone.
- Andrew: Bye bye.

Detailed Explanation

Jet lag

Jet lag is an expression used to describe the tired feeling people have after travelling to a different time zone. Time zones are the different areas of the world that have different time schedules. The time that the sun is high in the sky in Australia for example, is very different from the time the sun is high in Canada's vision of the sky. Because of this, Australia is in a different time zone than us. When it is 12:00 in the afternoon in Ontario, it is 2:00 in the morning in Australia. When people travel to different time zones, their bodies have to get used to it. When they come home, they have to readjust once again, and it makes them feel tired sometimes. It is called **jet lag** because it describes the **lag**, or slowness, that people feel after travelling on a plane or jet.

Here is another example of **jet lag**:

Lucila: It's so good to have you back at work! It's not as much fun around here without you. How was your trip?

Varvara: Too short! There's so much to do in Indonesia. I wish I could have stayed there for longer.

Lucila: It must be difficult to come back home and see snow on the ground, too!

Varvara: Yeah, but the worst part is the **jet lag**. It's 9:30 at night there right now! I'm so tired now.

Lucila: Wow, that's a big time difference!

Zero planning

Zero planning means no planning. It is used when no preparation or scheduling has been done before something happens. **Zero** is used casually this way when someone wants to emphasize how little or small something is. It is used as an exaggerated version of the word no or none.

Here is another example of **zero** used this way:

Octavio: This is an awesome party. You must have put a lot of work into it!

Rodolpho: Actually, I did **zero** planning for this. Things just came together really well, and everyone pitched in, so it turned out to be a success.

Octavio: Wow. Well, it looks fantastic. You definitely can't tell that there was no preparation put into it!

Posh

Posh means upper class or expensive. It can be used to describe something that is very luxurious and costs a lot of money, or something that just looks very luxurious and expensive. Commonly **posh** is used to talk about something that feels or looks very deluxe and lavish, like an expensively furnished apartment.

Here is another example of **posh**:

Nikolay: How's the new apartment?

Mel: I love it. It came partly furnished, too. The furniture is so **posh**.

Nikolay: Yeah, Sarah told me it was very luxurious and expensive-looking.

Mel: It is. I'll have to be extra careful not to damage it while I live there!

The Singapore Sling

The Singapore Sling is the name of a cocktail that was invented in South-East Asia in the early 1900's, in a Singapore Hotel. The word **sling**, when talking about drinks, means a mixture of liquor and sweetened water. It is unknown what the original **Singapore Sling** was made of because the recipe was never written down; it was passed on from bartender to bartender by word of mouth. It is believed that the first **Singapore Sling** contained gin, cherry brandy, and either orange juice, limejuice, or pineapple juice.

Nowadays, a typical **Singapore Sling** will contain simple sugar syrup, usually made with red currants or pomegranates, gin, and cherry brandy. The recipes vary but always include a sweet and sour syrup, gin, and cherry brandy. Often, club soda is added to give the drink some fizziness.

Not to be worth all the fuss

Not to be worth all the fuss means that something is not important enough to worry or trouble over. **Fuss** is a verb dating back to the 1700s that describes an unnecessary excitement or controversy over something that's not very significant. When something is **not worth a fuss**, it means that the amount of excitement over something does not correspond with its value or worth.

Here is another example of **not to be worth all the fuss**:

Makiko: Have you tried out that new community swimming pool yet?

Yoshimo: Yeah, but I really don't see **what the fuss** is about. It's really not that great, and it's more for little kids than adult swimmers.

Makiko: Oh, that's too bad. I was really looking forward to it, and everyone seems to be making such a big deal about it.

Yoshimo: I know. I'm really not sure **what all the fuss is about**, though. Maybe the people making such a big deal out of it all have little kids that can use it.

Makiko: Yeah, that's probably what all the excitement is about.

The Merlion

The Merlion is a mythical creature that has the head of a lion and the body of a fish. It is a creature that is closely related to another fictional creature: the mermaid. The mermaid has the head of a lady and the body of a fish. The *mer* part of **merlion** comes from the French word for sea, which is **mer**. Singapore was built on the sea, and was originally a fishing village. The lion part of **merlion** comes from the fact that Singapore's original name was Singapura, which means lion city. So, combining the fishing element and the lion element created a national mascot that they call a **merlion**.

In this episode, Harp talks about visiting **The Merlion**. What Harp is referring to is the statue of **The Merlion** in Singapore, which is a popular tourist attraction.

A foodie

A foodie is a relatively new word that describes someone who really likes cooking and/or eating and view food as a type of art or hobby, and not just a physical requirement.

Foodies used to be called *gourmets* or *epicures*, but those expressions are now reserved for an older generation of **foodies**, who are more concerned with finding the best foods.

Foodies today are seen to be more about the excitement of trying new foods and finding new ingredients, not just looking for the best food. There is a growing popularity in food science and interest in ways of eating. For example, *locovores* is also a relatively new term that refers to people who only eat food grown locally. These people are seen a **foodies** because of the interest they take in food, not just as a requirement, but for the social aspects. **Foodies** today look at the cultural implications of food, the history of eating, and the ways you choose your ingredients. What makes a good meal nowadays is different than what made it good several decades ago. The more daring, interesting, and unusual a dish is, the more that **foodies** want to try it.

Here is another example of **foodie**:

Nico: I'm craving pasta. Do you want to go out to eat?

Lou: Sure! Pasta sounds good. There's a new place where they make all their pasta out of cauliflower and I really want to try it. They season it with black truffle oil, too.

Nico: You're such a **foodie**! I was just thinking about traditional spaghetti with meatballs, but we can go for something more unique if you want.

Hawker stands

Hawker stands are outdoor or open-air centres found mainly in South-East Asia that sell inexpensive foods. **Hawker stands** are a bit like what North Americans know as food courts in malls, and they are a bit like farmers' markets. They are like a mix between a food court and a flea market. There are usually lots of varieties of food at **hawker stands**, with the food vendors competing for customers' attention and money. This can make **hawker stands** very busy and hectic areas! **Hawker stands** are usually found near busy public area that see a lot of traffic, such as train stations, so that the vendors can make as much money as possible. The name **hawker stand** comes from the fact that to **hawk** is a casual term that means to sell something in a public place.

Here is another example using **hawker stands**:

Jose: That's the biggest sandwich I have ever seen! Did you bring it for home, or did you go buy your lunch?

Cala: I went to the train station at lunch because I wanted something cheap. There's a huge **hawker stand** at Broadview station that I really like.

Jose: Oh yeah! I've been there! I have to be in the right mood to go though, because it can be stressful with all those people around.

Cala: The next time I go I'll see if you want to come with me.

To have went

In this episode, Harp tells Andrew that she wishes she'd known about **hawker stands** earlier in her trip, because she'd "**have went** everyday". **To have went**, although often used and understood in English, is a common mistake English speakers make. "**Have**" and "**went**" should never appear side by side to form a verb tense. The correct form of "I'd **have went** everyday" is "I'd **have gone** everyday."

Went and **have gone** are often confused even by native English speakers because they both express forms of the same verb: **to go**. **Gone** is the past participle of the verb. **Went** is the simple past form. **Have gone** is the present perfect form, and **had gone** is the past perfect form. For example, you can say that your friends **went** to the movies, **have gone** to the movies, or **had gone** to the movies, (before they did something else).

Each verb tense suggests a slightly different thing. The past simple, “they **went** to the movies,” suggests the action happened at a fixed point in time in the past. For example, “they **went** to the movies yesterday,” where “yesterday” is a fixed point in time. The present perfect tense, “they **have gone** to the movies,” suggests the action happened in the past, but the exact time it happened isn’t what’s important. We call this the present perfect, perhaps because the actions expressed in this tense often affect the present. For example, “my friends are not here, because they **have gone** to the movies.” The reason the friends are not present in this present moment is because they **have gone** to the movies. The past perfect tense, “they **had gone** to the movies,” suggests the action took place before another event in the past. For example, “they **had gone** to the movies before they **went** to the theatre,” suggests the action of going to the movies happened before the action going to the theatre.

To confuse things even further, the corrected form of what Harp is saying is neither in the past simple, the present perfect nor the past perfect, but the past unreal conditional. “If I had known about the hawkers stands earlier, **I’d have gone** everyday.” In this sentence, Harp is talking about an unreal situation in the past that would have taken place had the right conditions been there. **I’d have gone** is formed with the subject “I” along with the contraction of the conditional verb “would” plus the present perfect of the verb **to go**.

Gone without the auxiliary verb **have** is not a verb at all, but an adjective, as in “the pen is **gone**.”

You can see why even native English speakers confuse **went** and **have gone**!

Here is an example using both **have gone** and **went** correctly:

Guicho: I heard that Tomas and Zack went to the new Spiderman movie last night. Did you go with them?

Branco: No. I really should **have gone** with them, but I was too busy with homework.

Guicho: Well, I’m going tomorrow if you want to come with me.

Branco: Sounds good! Thanks!

To hit up

To hit up is a very casual expression and can mean a few different, but related, things. **To hit up** can mean to contact someone, or it can mean to ask someone for something. **Hit up** can also mean to go somewhere or check something out. In all cases, **hit up** means to make contact, either with someone or someplace.

In this episode, Andrew uses the expression **hit up** when he talks about visiting the **hawker stands** if he ever goes to Singapore. Here is another example of to **hit up**:

Parker: Want to come to the bookstore with me?

Keiko: Sure! I actually need to get a new book for one of my classes.

Parker: Ok, great. I have to **hit up** a bank machine first, then I'll come by your apartment and we can go together.

Keiko: Perfect. See you soon!

Dim sum

Dim sum is a style of Cantonese food and a specific way of serving the food. It describes bite sized, small or snack portions of food. There are similar styles of food served in other cultures as well, such as finger foods, appetizers, or the French hors d'oeuvre. **Dim sum** is usually served in small steamer baskets, and is unique because it is not ordered beforehand. When people go to a restaurant for **dim sum**, the food is precooked and a server carts around the dishes and the customers take what they want from the cart. This unusual way of eating at a restaurant makes going for **dim sum** popular for a lot of people because it's such a unique experience and you don't have to wait for your order to be prepared for you.

Here is another example of **dim sum**:

Mac: I want to go out to eat tonight, but I have no idea what I want to eat!

Noni: Well, we could go for **dim sum**, and then you have lots of options to choose from.

Mac: Oh, that sounds great.

Might as well

Might as well is an expression that means that it is probably better to do something than not to do it. It implies that there is not much more effort or work to do something than not to do it, so you **might as well** do it. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression **might as well** to talk about people wearing face masks in Singapore to protect themselves from the smoggy air. What Andrew is saying is that it's better to wear the mask because there is no real work or effort in wearing the mask, and it's better to be safe and cautious than risk breathing in the smoke.

Here is another example of **might as well**:

Halina: Do you know what the weather is supposed to be like today? I'm wondering whether I should bring my umbrella.

Marcelo: You **might as well** bring it. It's just a little one and can fit in your bag.

Halina: Yeah, I guess you're right. Better to be on the safe side.

You gotta do what you gotta do

You gotta do what you gotta do means that in order to reach your goal, you may have to do something unpleasant or unfair. It could also be used to describe doing something that you feel obligated to do, even though it may hurt someone else or you may not like it. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression to talk about people in Singapore using facemasks when swimming in the pool in order to avoid breathing in the smog. Even though wearing the mask may be a bit uncomfortable, it is something people feel like they need to do to keep themselves safe.

Here is another example of **you gotta do what you gotta do**:

Piper: I'm really sorry for not inviting you to the carnival. I could only fit people in my car, and my mom wanted me to take my brothers and my sister with me.

Angela: That's understandable. **You gotta do what you gotta do**. We can go another time.

Stories (in a building)

Stories, when used in reference to buildings, means levels or floors. If an apartment building has four **stories**, or is four **stories** tall, it means that there are four levels or floors to the apartment building. **Stories** are generally seen as a bit different than levels or floors because **stories** actually refer to the group of rooms on each level. So, if a building doesn't have rooms on each level, you would use floors or levels instead of **stories**. This distinction is often ignored; however, and even buildings without rooms are said to have **stories**. For the most part; however, **stories** is used in reference to buildings where people live, such as houses or apartment buildings.

Here is another example of **stories**:

Yazmina: Are they building a new condominium in your neighbourhood? I think I saw something in the newspaper about it.

Omar: Yeah. It's going to be pretty big, too.

Yazmina: Yeah. I read that it will be 50 **stories** high! That seems really tall for a condominium building.

Omar: It is, but there's a lot of people who have been moving to the city lately. I'm sure all the apartments will be gone soon.

Yazmina: How many condominiums are going to be in there?

Omar: Well, there's 4 apartments on each **story**, so there will probably be at least 200.

A plus

A huge plus means a big advantage or benefit. In this episode, the expression **huge plus** and **big plus** are both used to describe something that was a major bonus on Harp's travels, such as air conditioning on the subway. **Plus** is a word that means increase or addition. So, when something is **a plus**, it is an additional benefit or addition to something, or another factor that makes something even better than it already is.

Here is another example of **a plus**:

Laura: How's the new job?

Estrella: So far I really like it. It's only a 10-minute walk from my house, as well.

Laura: Oh, that's always **a big plus**. You can go home for lunch every day!

Estrella: Yeah. I think I'll save a lot of money that way, so it's a huge benefit.

To make your way somewhere

To make your way somewhere means to get to a destination eventually but slowly, maybe because you stop along the way or something else prevents you from going straight to your destination. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression to talk about how Harp stopped in London on her way home. By using this expression Andrew is implying that London was not a destination but a place that she stopped along the way to her destination, which was home.

Here is another example of **to make your way somewhere**:

Satoshi: Are you going to Greg's tonight?

Trung: Yeah, but I probably won't **make my way** there until about 9:00. I have some errands to run first.

Satoshi: I won't be there until later as well. See you tonight!

There you go

There you go is usually used as a response to something being done appropriately, or something working out well. It can be used to mean good job or I guess it all worked out. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression **there you go** when Harp talks about how she got to meet up with her friend and even enjoy a meal with her even though she was only in London for a couple hours. What Andrew means when he tells Harp, "**there you go**," is that she did a good job getting some quality time with her friend in even though she had a very limited amount of time in London.

Here is another example of **there you go**:

Miles: Those are really great jeans, and they're only 20 dollars!

Valmer: Yeah, but I'm on the short side and they're way too long for me.

Miles: Oh, that's too bad.

Valmer: Although, I do have a sewing machine so I can easily hem them.

Miles: **There you go!** That's a good idea. They're too good to pass up.

Quiz

1. What is jet lag?

- a) when an airplane runs out of gas
- b) the tired feeling travellers get from travelling though time changes
- c) the speed at which airplane's travel
- d) when you lose your luggage at the airport

2. What does posh mean?

- a) luxurious and expensive-looking
- b) well-travelled
- c) boring and common
- d) a Vietnamese food

3. What does the word *merlion* mean?

- a) a new breed of dog
- b) A type of cruise ship
- c) when a lion learns to swim
- d) a creature with the body of a fish and the head of a lion

4. What is a foodie?

- a) someone who eats very small portions
- b) someone who views food as a hobby and interest, not just a necessity
- c) someone who doesn't like to spend money on food
- d) someone who hates to cook

5. What is a hawker stand?

- a) a zoo for hawks
- b) a place where they keep wild birds as pets
- c) another word for an airport
- d) an outdoor centre where vendors sell food at very cheap prices

6. What is dim sum?

- a) a type of meatball
- b) a style of serving food in China
- c) a Chinese politician
- d) the name of the most popular Chinese airline

7. What does stories mean, when referring to buildings?

- a) the amount of living space in a house
- b) the number of windows in a building
- c) the levels or floors
- d) the partly furnished rooms in an apartment

Answers:

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