

Chatterbox #114 – Cell phones

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
- **gonna**: going to
- **kinda**: kind of
- **sorta**: sort of

Transcript

Andrew: Hello everybody. This is Andrew.

Harp: And Harp.

Andrew: And we're here with another Culips episode.

Harp: Yes. Make sure you check out our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Andrew: And while you are checking out the website make sure to sign up for a membership; because, when you do that you get complete transcripts of all of our episodes. And you also get access to detailed explanations of all the interesting and difficult terms and expressions that we talk about.

Harp: Yes. And there's also a quiz.

Andrew: That's right. So for those of you that like writing quizzes, you get quizzes.

Harp: Exactly. And remember if you wanna communicate with us, we love hearing from you, so check us out on Facebook or on Twitter.

Andrew: Yeah. Give us a like, and send us a message.

Harp: And you can also rate us on Stitcher Radio or on iTunes.

- Andrew: Cool. Very cool. So Harp, how have you been?
- Harp: Pretty good. You know, it's fall now, so I'm getting used to the colder weather. How about you?
- Andrew: Yeah. I'm slowly adjusting to the fall. Like today I was in the grocery store, and I kind of had **a wake up call**; because, I saw that all of a sudden they were selling tons of Halloween supplies and Halloween candy, and I was like, "No, I still want it to be summer."
- Harp: I totally know what you mean. I went to the store a couple of weeks ago and I thought the same thing, "Halloween already? It's still the summer."
- Andrew: Right. But I guess we just have to accept that it really is the fall now.
- Harp: Yup. I guess so. Summer will be back soon enough though.
- Andrew: Yup. Just another nine months or so.
- Harp: Don't depress me, OK.
- OK. So today we're going to bring you a Chatterbox episode, and that's basically where we chat. We talk about cultural events. We talk about different things happening in the news, or sometimes, we interview people.
- Andrew: Right. And I think we have a pretty interesting topic today, and that is cell phones and communication.
- Harp: Yup. Exactly. We're gonna talk about cell phones. And we're gonna start by talking about kind of the evolution of cell phones and how they've just become so popular.
- Andrew: And then we're gonna talk about etiquette and kind of how acceptable behaviour for talking on the phone has really changed over the last ten years or so.
- Harp: Yup. Exactly. And then we're gonna talk about: Do cell phones really make communication better or worse? Interesting.
- Andrew: Very good, very deep question, and we'll talk about that third.
- Harp: OK. So let's get started with the evolution of cell phones.

- Andrew: Sure. So I remember when I was maybe seven or eight years old, my uncle got a cell phone, and this was big news because it was the first person in our family to get a cell phone. And looking back on it now, he still has it actually. And it's hilarious because this phone was massive. It was so huge and it had a massive, big, long antenna that came out the front of it. It had big push buttons, and you really just had to hold it up to your face with two hands almost to talk into it.
- Harp: That's so funny. No one in my family ever had one of those, but I've definitely seen it on a lot of movies.
- Andrew: Yeah. And the sound quality was horrible, the reception was bad, and you really couldn't use it as a cell phone because it was too big to carry along with you.
- Harp: Yeah, but it was still revolutionary. I remember people talking about how they could use their cell phone in a car or when they were walking somewhere. It's a pretty big idea for people who are used to having their phones at home.
- Andrew: Totally. It would have been a really exciting new invention.
- Harp: I remember I would have to call my friends, but usually I would have to talk to their parents or siblings. And it was always just more awkward.
- Andrew: Right. I guess that's something that kids these days don't have to deal with at all. They can just talk directly to their friends on their cell phones. But back when we were kids, when you wanted to talk to your friends, you'd have to call their home, and then talk to their parents, and then ask if they were allowed to speak on the phone.
- Harp: And then usually I would get yelled at by my parents for being on the phone too long.
- Andrew: Right. I come from a kind of a big family, and there's only one phone for everybody, so there'd be a lot of anger over the telephone.
- Harp: I know. And that's crazy now because pretty much in every household, when the kids are a little bit older, everyone has their own cell phone.
- Andrew: Right. Do you remember that really awkward period of a couple years when we didn't have high speed Internet yet, and we didn't have cell phones, and so somebody would be trying to use the Internet, but it was over the phone line? So if you were online you couldn't use the phone, and it was just a disaster.

- Harp: I one hundred percent remember that. And I remember the busy signal. You know, you don't get a busy signal now. You get someone's voice mail, or they'll pick up the phone because they have **call waiting**. I remember calling my friends and just getting a busy signal over and over and over again.
- Andrew: Right. Because somebody's just on the Internet using up the line forever. Yeah. It was a difficult times for communication over the phone.
- Harp: Yeah. But it's funny now because do you even have **a landline**?
- Andrew: No. I haven't had **a landline** for maybe five or six years.
- Harp: Yeah. Me too. I only have my cell phone. I don't have a house phone anymore.
- Andrew: Yeah. I think my parents still have **a landline**. But other than that, I don't think that anybody I know does.
- Harp: That was exactly the same thing I was going to say. My parents still have their house line. They have the same number that they had when I was a kid.
- Andrew: Right. Yeah. Some things never change, but I guess for the younger generation, they do.
- Harp: Yeah. I remember though, when I was younger, if I was out somewhere I would have to call my parents or even to call a friend. And you used to have to use payphones and have quarters, or find a quarter. And now I can't remember the last payphone I saw.
- Andrew: When I was living in Korea, and I came back to Canada. When I came back to Canada last year, I first went to Vancouver, and I didn't have a cell phone yet 'cause I had just moved back to the country. And I had to make a call. And I was looking for a payphone, and there were practically zero payphones. It was impossible. I had to just eventually ask somebody if I could borrow their phone to make this call because they disappeared. When I left Canada, there were payphones, and when I came back a couple years later, they were totally gone.
- Harp: That's funny. That's quite a drastic change in a couple of years.
- Andrew: Yeah. I guess they're just not worth running as a business anymore.
- Harp: Nope. I don't think so. And now, for your cell phone, do you have a smart phone?

- Andrew: Well, this is a sad story, actually. I did have a smart phone and just this week the screen broke so I'm currently phone-less. I don't have **a landline**; I don't have a cell phone. I'm **off the grid**.
- Harp: You have no phone right now!
- Andrew: Yeah. It's really, really difficult. I'm learning how obsessed I am with my phone; because, when it's gone, I really miss it.
- Harp: Yeah. I'm sure, I'm sure. I'm constantly checking my phone. I have a smart phone as well, and for the listeners a smart phone is a phone that has a screen where you can check your Internet. You get access to the Internet, you can check your email, you can check Facebook. There's all sorts of apps. It's a phone that interacts.
- Andrew: That's right. And I have a little story, actually, that happened to me this week. I woke up, and on my road, they were redoing all of the electrical wires and everything. So they completely turned electricity off to my street. And this day was a rare day when I had no school and no work. It was a total free day for me. And I was excited about that. But the electricity was turned off, and my cell phone was broken, and it was rainy and grey outside, and I woke up and I was just completely bored. I had no idea what to do.
- Harp: That's so funny. We're so dependant on electricity and things like our phones and computers.
- Andrew: Yeah. It was insane. So what I did is I went to the library, and I borrowed a book, and I ended up reading one hundred pages of that book in one day, which is something that I haven't done in years, which is kind of sad, but it just really shows how dependent I am on technology and my phone. And when it was gone, I was able to do something productive. It was kind of cool in the end.
- Harp: Andrew, I'm a little bit disappointed in you. You haven't read a book in how many years?
- Andrew: Not for pleasure. Not for pleasure. I read for school all the time.
- Harp: Oh yes. I remember the days when I was a student as well, so I'll forgive you this time. But start reading more books!
- OK. Let's move on to our next topic about cell phones, which is about cell phone etiquette.
- Andrew: Right. And this is a topic that really can get some people really **worked up**.

- Harp: Yeah. Because now that we all have cell phones, and especially with the smart phone where you have so much entertainment on your phone, I find that people are using their phones in inappropriate places, for example.
- Andrew: Well one thing that annoys me is when people use their phone in the library.
- Harp: Oh. That would annoy me.
- Andrew: Yup.
- Harp: It's a quiet space.
- Andrew: Yup. I'm there to study and to get some work done, and people are always using their phones and even when their phone is on vibrate, it still is such a quiet environment that when it buzzes on the desk it's really distracting. So, yeah, that annoys me.
- Harp: My place where I find that it's very annoying and very inappropriate for people to use their cell phones is in the bathroom.
- Andrew: Oh yeah.
- Harp: You have no idea how many times I've been in a public bathroom, and I hear someone talking on their cell phone in the bathroom stall.
- Andrew: I don't know if that happens in the guy's washroom. It probably does, I haven't heard it.
- Harp: I'm sure it doesn't happen as much in the guy's bathroom because most of the time it's not stalls. But in the woman's bathroom, it happens a lot.
- Andrew: Yeah. That's really just an awkward place to have a phone conversation.
- Harp: Exactly. And everyone can hear what you're talking about. And I find most people are really **weirded out** by it.
- Andrew: Yeah. I hope nobody ever calls me from the woman's washroom.
- Harp: Exactly! That's what I'm thinking when they're on the phone. Do people talk to me on the phone when they're in the bathroom? It's kind of disgusting.
- Andrew: Right. I'm going to have to ask my friends, "Where are you right now?" before we have a deep conversation.
- Harp: Yeah. Now, an interesting thing I find for cell phone etiquette, and I'm intrigued to hear what you think: How do you feel about using a cell phone at the dinner table?

- Andrew: I'm not really a fan of it. I, of course, sometimes do use my cell phone at the dinner table, but I try not to.
- Harp: I know. I agree. I don't think it's good. I think dinner tables are the place where everyone gets together, and they have a conversation over food. It's a place to connect. But now I go for dinner with friends at a restaurant, and half of them have their cell phones out and they're checking it and they're doing this and they're doing that. They're texting. Focus. Focus on the people in front of right.
- Andrew: Right. Exactly. I always kind of feel like I'm not very important. You know, here we are, we've come to meet, we've come to hang out and you're prioritizing your other friend over me. Like what is this all about?
- Harp: Yeah, it's ridiculous. For example I remember that one of my best friends who lived in Vancouver came to Montreal but only for like two hours in the airport, so I went to the airport. I got up super early just to meet her and have breakfast with her. And at the table while we're eating she Tweets that she's having breakfast with me in Montreal.
- Andrew: Right. Yeah.
- Harp: Focus on me! We're at a table together, and we only have two hours.
- Andrew: Right. One thing that kind of annoys me these days is **Instagram**. And my friends are constantly taking pictures to put on their **Instagram** page. So not only are they using their phones, but they're taking pictures of everything that's happening. Instead of just enjoying the moment, they're trying to make themselves look cool or something. I'm not sure what's going on, but it's annoying.
- Harp: Yeah. Yeah I agree. People get really focused on taking pictures of everywhere they are and posting them. Just enjoy the moment.
- Andrew: Yeah. I agree.
- Harp: Now, another place I find it's rude where people are on the phone is when they're paying at a store. And they're about to start a transaction, and they're on the phone and they just continue talking to the person. They ignore the cashier, and they just pay the money, and they just walk away. They don't say hello, they don't say thank you, they don't say anything. I find it very rude. What about you?

- Andrew: Yeah. It's totally rude. You should be a human being and interact with the people that are around you. It's kind of, yeah, it's just rude. You're ignoring the person that's just trying to do their job, trying to do a good job and provide you with some nice customer service. And you're just sort of brushing them off and not even acknowledging them as being there.
- Harp: Yup. And you know, we've actually kind of started our third conversation. Our third topic already, because do you think cell phones make communication better or worse?
- Andrew: It's a good question, and I would probably say that they make communication better, but like we mentioned there are also some downsides that come along with cell phones.
- Harp: It's definitely a hard question for me to answer because I think in so many ways it's made communication better because it's so easy for me to send a quick text to friends when I think of them, even if they're far away and to have a quick conversation with them that way, which normally I wouldn't. But I find people are communicating more but less at the same time, if that makes sense.
- Andrew: Right. Yeah, the communication is kind of superficial. Like you said, you'll send a text and you are able to communicate with your friends and keep in touch with them, but I find that I don't have as many meaningful conversations now that cell phone culture has really risen.
- Harp: Yeah. I agree. Now, for you, do you call your friends often or are you always texting?
- Andrew: Yeah. I barely talk on the phone anymore. Actually I just changed my plan to a total text plan, and I think that I only have 50 minutes a month for talking, and I don't think that I would even use the 50 minutes a month. I'm just completely a text guy.
- Harp: Interesting. Yeah.
- Andrew: What about you?
- Harp: I definitely text more, but if I didn't have a talking plan I think my mother would be very angry with me.
- Andrew: Well, when I talk to my family because they're so far away I always just use Skype. I don't use my phone anyways.
- Harp: OK. I get that.
- Andrew: So, yeah. I'm able to do **the text-no-talk thing**.

- Harp: Oh yeah. I have Skype but it's on my cell phone, so, again, I'm using my cell phone.
- Andrew: Yeah. Right. I do have Skype on my phone as well. **Or did.**
- Harp: The thing I find about texting though is that it's lacking tone. When I call someone they can hear my voice so if I'm making a joke, if I'm saying something seriously. When I text someone, sometimes there's that miscommunication. I'll get a text back, are you mad at me? Or why are you saying this? It's not as good communication I find as it is talking to someone.
- Andrew: That's right. Especially when I'm trying to organize things. I hate texting. That's one of the main instances where I need to get on my phone. Sometimes you text back and forth and back and forth trying to figure out a plan, and it's just so much easier to pick up the phone and call the person that you need to talk to and get things sorted out.
- Harp: Yeah. I agree with you. I try to talk more and more on the phone because I feel like I'm missing the connection. And also sometimes you're just texting for hours about something. Why don't you just pick up the phone and have a good thirty minute chat instead?
- Andrew: Right. Totally. You get things just out of the way and finished in a shorter amount of time.
- Harp: Yup. And you know the reason why I thought of this topic today is because of that video that's all over the Internet.
- Andrew: Yeah. There's this new, I guess it's a short film about cell phones and how they connect us and disconnect us from the people that we talk to at the same time.
- Harp: Yeah. Basically this video is two minutes where it follows a woman through her day from the start to the end. And she wakes up and her boyfriend's texting on the phone and basically all of her transactions of when she's talking to people, they're distracted by their phones. There's a complete lack of communication with people around her, and it's quite sad I found.
- Andrew: Yeah. It kinda just shows how things have changed now and how people are just so plugged in and so into their cell phones that they sorta ignore the world around them.
- Harp: Yeah. We'll post a link for this video on Facebook so you can see what we're talking about. But really it's all over the Internet, so I'd be surprised if you haven't heard of it yet.

- Andrew: Yeah. We'll post it for you. Check it out and let us know what you think.
- Harp: Yeah. So, I don't know about cell phones. I don't know if they make communication better or worse. I think it's important to have a balance and not use your cell phone too much for just texting and Internet. Make some real human connections.
- Andrew: That's right. Step back from your cell phones every once in a while and just enjoy your company.
- Harp: Exactly. OK. So should we do a quick recap of what we talked about?
- Andrew: Yeah. That sounds good. So the first thing that we talked about was cell phone history and the evolution of the cell phone.
- Harp: Yes. And then we talked about some cell phone etiquette and when people should get off their phones.
- Andrew: That's right. Put down your phone right now if you're looking at it. Listen to us.
- Harp: You're probably listening to us on your phone, so that's OK.
- Andrew: And, finally, we talked about cell phones and the nature of communication and how that's really changed since cell phones have become popular.
- Harp: Yeah. And whether it makes communication better or worse. It's a bit of a debate.
- Andrew: Yup. So why don't you tell us your opinion about what you think of cell phones. And, yeah, I think that's it for today.
- Harp: Yeah. I'd love to hear what you think about cell phones. Whether you have a cell phone, how often you use it. Respond to us on Facebook when we put the link up for this video.
- Andrew: Yeah. And thanks for listening. That's it for now.
- Harp: Remember to check out the website Culips.com. That's it for us today. Bye everyone.
- Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanation

A wake up call

A **wake up call** is when you are woken by somebody calling your telephone to tell you to wake up. Wake up calls are very popular in hotel rooms where people may not have their own alarm clock and need to wake up early. The front desk will call your room number when you need to wake up. When used the way Andrew uses it in this episode, a **wake up call** can describe any sort of alarm or sign that gets your attention and makes you realize something that you didn't realize before. Andrew says that seeing Halloween candy in a store was his **wake up call** that summer is over and fall has begun. You can have a thought that's a **wake up call**, or an experience.

Here is another example of a **wake up call**:

Henrique: What did you do this weekend?

Arshad: I volunteered at the Food Bank all day on Saturday.

Henrique: Good for you! How was it?

Arshad: It was great. The diners really enjoyed it, and it was a big **wake up call** for me.

Henrique: How so?

Arshad: Sometimes I forget how lucky I am. I never have to worry where my food is coming from, but some of those people didn't have enough money to eat three hot meals a day like I do.

Henrique: Yeah, volunteering can be very enlightening.

Call waiting

Call waiting is a telephone line feature that lets you know when someone is trying to call you when you're already on the phone. If you're talking on the phone and another person calls, without **call waiting** they would get a busy signal. With **call waiting**, however, the person on the other end of the line hears a normal ring tone, and the person on the phone can hear a beep, which means that there is another person trying to call him or her. The person having the conversation can then hit a button and talk to the 2nd caller while the 1st caller waits. This telephone feature was very popular in the 1990s, when there weren't a lot of cell phones yet. The feature was especially popular for families with teenagers who liked to talk on the phone, because it allowed more important calls to come in even if the teen talked for hours on the telephone.

Here is another example of **call waiting**:

Savina: I'll call you tonight about tomorrow's plans.

Richelle: OK, sure. I'm willing to bet my brother will be on the phone all night, though.

Savina: Oh, should I wait for you to call me then?

Richelle: No, we have **call waiting**, so he'll answer your phone call even if he's on the phone.

Savina: Ok, talk soon then!

A landline

A landline is a telephone line that doesn't use cellular signals. **A landline** is literally an electrical cord running through the ground that connects telephone wires to your home phone. A telephone hooked up to **a landline** is plugged into the wall and has a separate mouthpiece and receiver. Unlike cell phones, telephones that use **landlines** have to be plugged into the **landline** to work. **Landlines** are not very popular anymore because of the popularity of cell phones, but a lot of people over 50 years old still have **landlines** because they have had them for so long and are more comfortable having conversations on them.

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

Sawyer: I can't hear you very well, I can only hear a lot of static.

Andrey: Oh, yeah, sorry. I'm on my cell phone and there's bad reception in the basement.

Sawyer: Do you have **a landline** you can call me from instead of a cell?

Andrey: Yeah, I'll call you back on the **landline**.

Off the grid

Off the grid means removed from technology. Sometimes the expression is used to describe people who are completely separated from any sort of public utilities, such as drinking water or electricity. Nowadays, the expression **off the grid** is most commonly used to describe being off of the Internet, with no access to Facebook, Twitter, or other social communication tools.

In this episode, we hear Andrew use this expression when he is talking about breaking his cell phone, and how much it affects him to be **off the grid**.

The origin of this expression is from a reference system used by the British military during WWI and WWII. Each area of Britain was separated into sections, each having their own two-letter code. These sections were further broken down inside each area. This reference grid was used within their military to communicate locations to each other, without giving their exact location away to anyone who might be listening in. If a soldier or an enemy was **off the grid**, their location was unknown, and they couldn't be contacted.

Here is another example of **off the grid**:

Joy: How was the cottage?

Virve: It was amazing. So nice to just sit quietly and read with no phones vibrating and no catching the kids checking their Facebook every two minutes.

Joy: Yeah, it's so good to get **off the grid** sometimes and not be disturbed by technology.

To get worked up

To get worked up means to get excited or animated. Getting **worked up** means getting provoked, as in something triggering a strong feeling in you. Andrew uses the expression **to get worked up** in this episode to talk about how strongly people feel about the issue of cell phone etiquette. Generally speaking, people have passionate beliefs about the use of technology nowadays, so when it is discussed people **get worked up**.

Here is another example of **to get worked up**:

Daniella: Wanna come to a movie with me and Thuy tonight?

Carol: Which movie?

Daniella: "50 years and Counting"- it's a new political movie. It's about American government and politics.

Carol: Oh, no. Thuy always **gets so worked up** over that subject. I don't feel like getting into a big discussion tonight. I'm too tired to keep up with her!

Daniella: OK, I understand. Have a good evening!

To be weirded out

To be weirded out means to be disturbed by something you think is strange. Similarly, if you **weird someone out**, you make them uncomfortable by acting strange. There are other expressions that end in 'out', like freak out, flip out, or chill out. The reason there is an 'out' after the words weird, freak, flip, and chill is to change an adjective (a describing word) into a verb (an action word). For example, weird is a good adjective for describing something that *is* strange, but when something is making you *feel* weird, changing weird into a verb like 'weird out' is easier than saying 'it made me feel weird', even though they are essentially the same thing.

Here is another example of **to be weirded out**:

Una: Have you met the new guy yet? I think he's working in the finance department.

Gabriela: I have, yeah. He kind of **weirded me out** on our first meeting.

Una: Really? How so?

Gabriela: Well, he asked me if he could have some of my lunch!

Una: What? Really?

Gabriela: Yeah! I thought maybe he was just hungry, so I offered to buy him something, but he didn't want anything else, just half my sandwich!

Una: Strange. I mean, you make good sandwiches, but I've known you for 5 years, and I don't think I'd been comfortable enough to ask you for half your sandwich!

Gabriela: Yeah, I know. Other than that he seems pretty nice though. Maybe he's just a bit eccentric.

Instagram

Instagram is a very popular photo sharing application that people use on their smart phones. If their smart phone has a camera and they've download the **Instagram** application, they can take a picture and post it to their account. That photograph can then be seen by anyone who follows them from their own **Instagram** account.

Instagram is unique in its photo format in that it is confined to a square, usually with a frame, and resembles an old Polaroid picture. You can manipulate your photos by adjusting the brightness and contrast, and you can also give it special filters to make it look vintage. **Instagram** is a social network, but differs a bit from the other popular social networks like Facebook and Twitter because it is only personal pictures that are posted, with the only text being the descriptions of the photographs.

Instagram is also the origin of a social phenomenon called selfies. A selfie is when the person with the **Instagram** account takes a picture of himself or herself, usually standing in front of a mirror, and posts it to their account. Selfies are very common, especially with those under and in their 20s.

The text-no-talk thing

In this episode, Andrew says he is comfortable with **the text-no-talk thing**. When the word "thing" is used the way Andrew uses it, it means trend or idea. Andrew could have just as easily have said that he's comfortable with texting- not talking instead of adding 'thing' at the end of the sentence, but in making **text-no-talk** a noun rather than a verb and adding 'thing' at the end, Andrew changes the expression. The expression now implies an idea or phenomenon rather than a specific, personal experience. When Andrew says **the text-no-talk thing**, it implies that texting instead of talking is a 'thing', and 'thing' is a colloquialism meaning trend or fad. Andrew using 'thing' implies more people than just Andrew prefer texting over talking. Adding thing to the end of a word or expression is simply a casual way to make a verb or noun an idea rather than a single, specific thing.

This can be a difficult expression to grasp, so here are a couple examples to illustrate it:

Jason: Are you going to the prom?

Jo-Anne: I'm not sure yet. I'm not really into the whole **dancing thing**.

Jason: You can still go and not dance. I don't dance either. We could just hang out at the table.

Jo-Anne: Well, it is pretty fun to dress up and see everyone else dressed up. Maybe I will go.

Jeff: Did you end up figuring out what was missing from the cupcakes you baked? They were still good, even if they were a little dry.

Suba: Well, I wasn't missing any ingredients. I think I was just missing talent!

Jeff: Ha ha. Well, that's OK if you're not into the whole baking thing. It's a very difficult thing to do. It's so precise.

Suba: Yeah, I'll stick to knitting for a hobby!

Or did

In this episode, Andrew tells Harp that he has Skype on his phone - **or did**. Andrew says '**or did**' because his phone is broken, so he no longer can talk about his phone in the present tense. On its own, **or did** emphasizes something is over, usually recently. The person using **or did** has likely spoken as if something is not over and then says "**or did**" when they realized it's finished.

Here is another example of **or did**:

Marielle: I can't believe we're finally done high school!

Chantale: I know. I'm a little sad, actually. I really like high school. **Or, did**.

Marielle: Yeah, but the friends you made here will still be your friends. You're just leaving all the homework!

Chantale: Yeah, but you know me. I actually love learning!

To get things out of the way

To get things out of the way is an expression used when doing chores or something unpleasant in order to attain a goal or move onto something more pleasant. In this episode, Andrew uses it when he and Harp are talking about texts that are very complicated and long. Andrew suggests that it would just be easier to talk on the phone if the text gets too long, and that actually talking would be **to get it out of the way** (in this case the 'it' being making plans) so that they could go on and enjoy their evening.

Here is another example of **to get things out of the way**:

Mandy: Do you want to go out for coffee tonight?

Trudy: Well, it depends how quickly I get my Christmas shopping done. I only have two more gifts to get.

Mandy: But it's only late October! Christmas is not for another couple of months!

Trudy: I know, but I like **to get it out of the way**, so I can avoid the busy season and just relax and enjoy Christmas.

To be plugged in

To be plugged in is similar to **off the grid**, except it means the exact opposite. **Off the grid** means isolated or being away from technology, while being **plugged in** means being close to and using technology. The origin of the expression is pretty literal, not so much nowadays because everything is wireless. **Plug in** is the action of powering up an electronic by attaching the wire to the electrical outlet. So, when you're **plugged in**, you are using and/or nearby electronics. Even though you can **plug in** a lot of things, such as a toaster or hairdryer, being **plugged in** generally suggests being on the Internet or on your smart phone. Being **plugged in** implies you are connected to others, or that you are aware or in tune with what's going on. Much like an actual plug is connected to the wall, being **plugged in** means you are connected to social networks and other forms of electronic communication.

Here is another example of **to be plugged in**:

Poly: Did you hear about what happened in Italy this morning?

Crenea: I did, yeah. I have a phone application that wakes me up to the news, and my homepage on my computer is Twitter, so I always stay informed of what's going on in the world.

Poly: Wow, you're really **plugged in** to what's happening then!

Crenea: Yeah, I may even know a bit more than you do about it!

Quiz

1. What is a wake-up call?

- a) Any conversation you have over the phone
- b) Another word for a rooster
- c) Something that makes you realize something you never thought of before
- d) A prize given out to people who create websites

2. What is call waiting?

- a) A second phone line that allows you to put one person on hold and speak to another person at the same time
- b) When people stand in lines to wait for the newest gadget, like they do when a new iPhone is released
- c) When someone tries to call you but gets a busy signal
- d) A phone service that calls a taxi for you

3. What are two defining elements of a landline?

- a) It is wireless and works through cellular signals.
- b) It is only used for emergency purposes, and it only calls emergency numbers like 911.
- c) It can only receive calls but not make calls, and it has to be left on the floor for it to work.
- d) It plugs into the wall and does not use cellular service.

4. What does it mean if you're off the grid?

- a) that you never make telephone calls and only communicate through the Internet
- b) that you don't know how to use social networks
- c) that you cannot be contacted through technology
- d) that you have a different name or alias on all your social networks

5. Besides Facebook and Twitter, what is another popular social sharing application?

- a) Instagram
- b) Photobomb
- c) Polaroid
- d) Snapshot

6. If someone says they want to get something out of the way, what are they saying?

- a) that they don't have a driver's license
- b) that they want to get rid of all their social network accounts
- c) that they have a lot of followers and friends on social networks
- d) that they want to finish something first before they do something more pleasant or in order to achieve a goal

7. What does it mean if someone says that you are plugged in?

- a) that you only have a landline and no cellular phone
- b) that you are very informed or up-to-date, usually through technology like the Internet and social media
- c) that you want to get rid of all your electronic devices
- d) that you are easily excitable or full of energy

8. If someone says 'or did' as a stand-alone sentence after they've just stated something, what do they mean?

- a) that they are unsure of the sentence they said before they say 'or did'
- b) that they regret saying what they just said and want to rephrase what they said
- c) that they accidentally talked about something in the present when it was actually in the past. Usually happens when something has finished very recently and the person is not used to talking about it in the past
- d) that they are exaggerating

Answers:

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