

Chatterbox #124 – High school cliques

*The words and expressions that appear in **bold blue** text throughout the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanation section that follows the transcript.*

Transcript

Andrew: Hello everybody. This is Andrew.

Maura: And I'm Maura.

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

Maura: That's right. And don't forget to go to our website. And if you've already been there, maybe you want to go back. It's Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Andrew: And while you're there, please sign up and become a member. Becoming a member is really great because you get access to transcripts, and detailed explanations of some of the key expressions that we talk about, and a quiz. You don't get that just for this episode, but for all of the episodes that we've recorded.

Maura: That's right. So you can do that on our website. And to listen, you can also hear our episodes on iTunes and on Stitcher.

Andrew: That's right.

Maura: So Andrew, you recently moved. Are you settled into your new place yet?

Andrew: Yeah. I just moved, actually, a couple days ago. Not 100% settled in yet, still unpacking boxes and getting everything organized. But, yeah, it's all **coming together**, and I'm really enjoying my new apartment.

Maura: It's a long process, isn't it? It definitely takes a few weeks, packing and unpacking.

Andrew: Yeah. Moving's the worst. I hate it. I never wanna move again. I think I'm in this apartment for life.

Maura: And I have to ask. How was moving in the winter?

Andrew: Yeah. I did a winter move for the first time and it was awful. It was just the worst thing in the world. Like, carrying a bunch of heavy boxes in the snow, in, I think it was minus 16 degrees Celsius, so it was freezing cold. It was just absolute torture.

Maura: Well, at least it's over, right?

- Andrew: Yeah. It's finished. I'm happy about that.
- Maura: OK, good. So let's get to today's episode then. This time we're gonna do a Chatterbox episode, and that is where we chat about all kinds of different topics. Sometimes we interview people, sometimes we discuss something cultural, and that's pretty much what we're gonna do today. Right?
- Andrew: Yeah. Today we're gonna talk about a cultural thing, and this is about high school **cliques**.
- Maura: Right. So, all of the, kind of, stereotypical kinds of people who actually exist all over the world, but especially in high school.
- Andrew: Yeah. High school especially. And maybe you will be familiar with these groups of people because you've seen them in movies.
- Maura: That's right. Often, if there's an American movie that's about teenage life or that takes place in a high school, the characters are often very stereotypical, and they fit into one of these kinds of categories.
- Andrew: Yeah. And when you're attending high school, you know, you're a teenager and you sort of... You're not fully mature yet, and you're a little bit just not the greatest person all the time. And so, people in high school don't always get along really well. They get divided into these groups and they tend to stick together. That's what we're gonna talk about today.
- Maura: Right. So, first we're gonna tell you about the names for these different kinds of groups or individuals, and then we're going to share some of our own high school experiences.
- Andrew: Yeah. We will go back to the past and re-live some high school memories with you all.
- Maura: That's right. **For better or for worse**.
- Andrew: Yeah. Absolutely.
- Maura: So first I wanted to mention this word, **cliques**. Well, we've already mentioned it, but I wanted to talk about it because there are really two different ways you can pronounce this word.
- Andrew: Yeah. So **a clique** is just a group of people who are friends and hang out together, and the spelling is C-L-I-Q-U-E-S. And like you said, there are two pronunciations of this word. The first is 'klik. The second is 'klēk.

- Maura: Yeah. That's right. I'm guessing that 'klēk is the, kind of, original pronunciation, but it doesn't sound very English, so often, when a word has an origin in another language, in English we just make it sound more English, so now we say 'klik.
- Andrew: Yeah, totally. This looks like a French word. And I guess if you were, you know, speaking French, you'd say something closer to 'klēk, but now that it's in English, we just say 'klik.
- Maura: And you know, because of that, I bet a lot of people misspell this word, and instead of writing C-L-I-Q-U-E, they actually write C-L-I-C-K, because it sounds like what we're saying.
- Andrew: Yeah. Actually, I made that mistake today. When I texted you about this episode idea, I spelt the word C-L-I-C. So, yeah, it's a tough one.
- Maura: Mhmm. OK, so let's talk about some of the typical kinds of people or groups of people who you'll see in high school.
- Andrew: Yeah. So, one of the major groups that you always see in high school movies is **jocks**.
- Maura: That's right. **Jocks** are the athletes. They are the kinds of people who play sports; and usually not just one sport on one team, but often, **a jock** plays on a few different teams and is involved in whatever sport they can be a part of.
- Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. These are the people who really love sports, play on all the teams, watch all the games, and really sort of make it known throughout the school that they are the athletes. So they'll wear their team jerseys all the time, even when they're not playing sports, and they'll always hang out together and talk about sports. And yeah, these are the **jocks**.
- Maura: Yeah. And when I think about **jocks**, I especially think about football players, but this term doesn't have to just talk about guys. It can talk about girls too; girls who are athletes and play a lot of sports.
- Andrew: Yeah, for sure. At my high school, we didn't have a football team, so when you watch an American movie, the **jocks** are always football players, usually. But at my high school, the **jocks** were hockey players.
- Maura: Yeah. At my high school, we did have a football team, but we also had a hockey team. I would say those were the biggest teams, but we also had basketball and volleyball. Those were probably the four biggest sports.
- Andrew: Yeah. Basketball, volleyball, hockey; those are all famous **jock** sports.
- Maura: Oh yeah; we also had soccer, and I think for a while we had rugby, too.

- Andrew: And, yeah, so the term **jock**, or **jocks**, it derives from a piece of protective equipment that guys use to protect themselves, I guess, while they're playing sports.
- Maura: Exactly. And if you want to know more about the origin and what **a jock** is, you should become a member, because we'll tell you more about it in our Learning Materials. It's a very, shall we say, sensitive area.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's interesting for sure. You'll wanna read about it.
- Maura: OK, so those are the **jocks** that you might see at a high school.
- Andrew: Yeah. I definitely was not **a jock** in high school.
- Maura: OK, let's look at another kind of **clique**, which is the **nerds**.
- Andrew: Yes. The **nerds**. Now, the **nerds** are the kids who are very smart, sometimes maybe not very popular, maybe they don't have a ton of friends, but they do really well in school. Those are the **nerds**.
- Maura: That's right. So you could call them **nerds**. You could call them geeks.
- Andrew: You could call them teacher's pets.
- Maura: That's right. These are the kinds of kids who aren't very social, they're not going out and partying hard all night, they're maybe spending time studying or they're more introverted. They're kind of quieter personalities, most of the time.
- Andrew: Yeah. And **a nerd** probably is really into computers and technology. He's probably really good at math and science, especially.
- Maura: So, because these are only stereotypes, we can only really tell you the qualities of the stereotype. There could be **a nerd** who doesn't really like computers, or there could be **a nerd** who maybe is only good at some subjects and not others, but we're just kind of giving you the general overview of **a nerd**.
- Andrew: Yeah. These are very, sort of, broad descriptions that we're giving. **A nerd** doesn't have to be exactly the way that we're describing it. But that's just the sense.
- Maura: So **nerds** are also generally thought of to be less social, and awkward. They maybe don't have a good style or fashion sense. And very stereotypically, **nerds** wear glasses, although recently glasses are kind of cool.

- Andrew: Yeah. Glasses are pretty cool these days. But you're absolutely right; if you see **a nerd** on TV or in the movies, they're always gonna be wearing glasses.
- Maura: Yeah. And maybe their pants will be too short, or the style of their clothes is really outdated. They're not very trendy people.
- Andrew: And they probably talk with sort of a higher voice. Yeah. Something like that.
- Maura: Mmhmm. And there we have another group, called the **nerds**. And if you have watched any American movies, there are often **nerds**, the group of kids who are just not very cool.
- Andrew: Yeah. Unfortunately. Poor **nerds**.
- Maura: You know, there's an American TV show that was out probably 10 or 20 years ago and it was called *Freaks and Geeks*, and it was about kids at high school who were not very cool.
- Andrew: Yeah. They were sort of the outsiders, I guess, and there were a couple **nerds** in that TV show, if I remember correctly.
- Maura: Yeah. There was also another kind of **clique**, which is **stoners**.
- Andrew: Yes, **stoners**. Now, **stoners** are kind of the lazier students. They don't really care about high school very much, and that's because...
- Maura: That's because they're often into drugs, usually smoking pot or drinking. That's sometimes what teenagers get into, and so, often, at high school, you see this kind of **clique**; kids who are especially into that.
- Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. They're more interested in just having a good time and they're not really concerned with keeping up with their studies, and, yeah, they just try to enjoy their life, I guess.
- Maura: Yes. **Stoners** are also the kind of students who maybe don't come to class all the time, or miss tests, or fail classes, too.
- Andrew: Yeah. And they're probably getting into trouble a lot. I feel like **stoners**; they're probably really into music and movies. And, yeah, they're just not concerned with school.
- Maura: That's right. They're concerned with partying and having a good time.
- Andrew: Yeah. And maybe **a stoner's** parent would be like, "You gotta go to school. You gotta study." And they just wouldn't care at all.

- Maura: Yeah. That's right. And there's a couple other kinds of kids that we can talk about that you might see in high school.
- Andrew: Yeah. There are some kids, like, if you're really into studying arts, so maybe drama, for example. The **drama kids**, we could say **drama kids**, they would all hang out together. That's another **clique**: **drama kids**.
- Maura: Right. So these are the kinds of students who are in the school plays or musicals, and if they have an assembly at the school—that's where all of the students go to the gymnasium or if the school has a theatre, they go there—and the **drama kids** usually are performing in some way, whether it's a skit or they're just giving a speech or delivering the information to the students.
- Andrew: Yeah. And so I feel like the **drama kids** always hang out and talk about books and plays and poetry. They're really into, sort of, literature and the arts, I guess.
- Maura: Interesting. I don't... Were you a **drama kid**?
- Andrew: No, definitely not.
- Maura: So really, you're just guessing at what they're talking about.
- Andrew: Well, I had friends who were **drama kids**. You know, I was on the edge. I saw inside that **clique**.
- Maura: So, yeah. They could be going over their lines if there's a play coming up, or talking about auditions for the next musical, whatever.
- Andrew: Yeah. And wearing **black clothes**; lots of **black clothes**.
- Maura: Because that is a very artistic look.
- Andrew: Yes. The tortured artist look, yeah.
- Maura: And **in that same vein**, we also have **band geeks**. And you heard this word earlier when we talked about **nerds**. We said they could be called geeks. This is a specific kind of geek. It's **a band geek**, where the students are in the school band. They like playing musical instruments.
- Andrew: Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So **a band geek** is somebody who's just really, really into playing a musical instrument, and is in the school band. So most high schools have a jazz band, and a concert band, sort of like an orchestra. And if you played in one of those bands, you were **a band geek**.
- Maura: You know, I'm wondering if this has changed since I was in high school, but I feel like being in a band at school is less geeky than it used to be.

- Andrew: Yeah. I don't know. I hope so.
- Maura: Yeah. I don't know either. Maybe depends on the school. I mean, there is the show *Glee* that's quite popular, and maybe that has changed the image of what being into music at school was.
- Andrew: Yeah. I hope so, because I played in the band.
- Maura: Well...
- Andrew: I liked high school band, so if it is now really cool, that's awesome. That's great for all the little musicians out there.
- Maura: Maybe you **had a hand in** making it cool, Andrew.
- Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. No doubt about it.
- Maura: And one last group is the cool kids or the popular kids. Now, what can we say about them?
- Andrew: Well, they're **on the top of the totem pole**, I suppose. They are the kids who everybody else in school—the **nerds**, the **stoners**, the **drama kids**—are always a little bit jealous of these kids, because they're the most popular.
- Maura: And I guess... What else do they do? I guess they hang out with each other and...
- Andrew: Yeah. And they make fun of all the other **cliques**, I think. That's what they do.
- Maura: I don't think that's what they really do. They probably just go to a lot of parties and have fun. But, yeah, definitely, sometimes popular kids do make fun of the other groups, and that is especially depicted in movies, as well.
- Andrew: Yeah. Well I think part of the **cliquey** nature of high school is that each group makes fun of the other groups. It's not just one... not one group alone.
- Maura: That's true, that if you're part of a group, you can observe the other groups, and, yes, you make your observations, which are not quite mature or intellectual observations, we'll say.
- Andrew: Yeah. The world of high school is very strange and this is what happens.
- Maura: Yeah. Sometimes I think that all of these, kind of, types of people do exist when you get older, but it's just less intense. When you're in high school, it's such a small group of people pushed together, and so all of this just kind of gets exaggerated.

- Andrew: Yeah. Well, high school's not really like the real world. You're with a bunch of people who are the same age as you, who you've known for a really long time. And once you get outside of that, you meet people from other places and different ages and experiences. So, yeah, I think to an extent these groups still exist in society, but it's just not as intense, like you said.
- Maura: Yeah. Well, let's now talk about our own experiences, then. Andrew, tell us. Do you see yourself fitting into any of these categories? It's hard put yourself in a category, but...
- Andrew: I'm sure if you asked anybody, they would say the same answer that I'm about to say, and that's, like, I feel like I was a little bit of everyone.
- Maura: Oh! OK, come on.
- Andrew: Yeah, well, like I said, I did play in the band, so I guess I was a bit of **a band geek**, but I was also kind of **a nerd** 'cause I was really into studying and I kind of did well in school and I did enjoy it. So I guess I would be **a nerd** and **a band geek**, but there was also a little bit of me that was **a stoner**, not that I did drugs and alcohol in high school, but I hung out with a lot of kids who did, and I sort of liked hanging out with them 'cause they were usually really relaxed, usually. And I also played sports, so I was a bit of **a jock**.
- Maura: **You know what?** Some schools are not as **cliquey** as others, and in some schools, all the different kinds of kids do mix, where, maybe, **a nerd** hangs out with **a stoner**, or **a jock** hangs out with **a band geek**. In some schools, it does happen, or there are just some people who also kind of float between groups. And, for example, maybe there is a cool kid who plays a lot of sports and so she's gonna be friends with the **jocks**, but she's also gonna have her own friends in her own **clique**.
- Andrew: Yeah, totally. You don't have to fit into just one of these categories.
- Maura: That's right. You know, we were talking with Harp before we started recording this episode.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Maura: And she shared with us which group she fit into. Now, before we tell you, we'll give you a couple seconds to guess. Do you think that Harp was **a jock**? Or **a nerd**? Or was she **a stoner**? Do you think that Harp was **a drama kid**? Or **a band geek**? Or was she one of the cool kids?
- Andrew: Well, have you made your guess up? The answer is: Harp was **a nerd**.

- Maura: Yeah, she admits it. And when we asked her, that's the group she thought that she was most likely a part of. She has shared, I think on past episodes, that she was quieter in high school and she liked to study and do well. And one **telltale sign** is that she really didn't enjoy high school. She hated it and she would never wanna go back.
- Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. And she wears glasses.
- Maura: That's true. That is one of the typical—stereotypical—signs of **a nerd**. But, hey, I wear glasses sometimes.
- Andrew: Yeah. Well, were you **a nerd** in high school? Like, you haven't shared your story with us yet. Where were you?
- Maura: I actually didn't wear my glasses in high school. And when I was in high school, I was in a really **cliquey** school. Some people, like I said, changed between groups, but everyone mostly hung out with a certain group, and I was actually part of the cool kids in high school, but I promise that I wasn't making fun of the other groups.
- Andrew: The funny thing... I'm laughing right now, because when you say "I was part of the cool kids," it sounds so uncool.
- Maura: It's funny, because I feel strange talking about it, but if I'm really honest, when I look back, that is the group of kids that I did hang out. I was not **a jock**. Um... I did well in school, but I don't feel like I was **a nerd**. I wasn't **a stoner**. I wasn't in any high school plays, and I didn't play in the band. I hung out with my friends and I socialized and chatted and went to parties on the weekend. I just liked talking and hanging out. That's all I did.
- Andrew: Yeah. That's fine. And did you go to a big school? You said your high school was really **cliquey**. I kind of feel like a bigger high school sort of supports more **cliques**.
- Maura: Yeah. It was quite a big high school. I think at the time there were 1800 people, so eighteen hundred kids. And that was from grade 9 until grade 13, because when I was in high school, we still had grade 13.
- Andrew: OK, yeah. so that makes sense. If you were in a big high school like that, you would sort of break down into smaller groups. I understand that.
- Maura: Mhmm. Yeah. That's the way it was. You know, sometimes I look back and I think that it's too bad, because there were definitely people at the school who I didn't get to know just because I only hung out with my friends all the time.

- Andrew: Mmhm. Yeah. Actually, my high school just... We had our 10-year reunion in the summer. And I didn't go, because I was living in Seoul still. But I saw the pictures on Facebook, and I was like, "Oh, some people, you know, I never knew them, but it would have been nice to reconnect and see how other people live nowadays."
- Maura: Yeah. I would love to go to a high school reunion, but I don't think that we've had one. Sometimes when I'm in my hometown, I run into people that I knew in high school or I went to high school with, and it's definitely fun to see how everyone's turned out. Facebook is also good for that.
- Andrew: Yeah. Facebook's the best. Yeah, you can spy on all your old classmates, see what they're up too.
- Maura: And I think that no matter what **clique** you fit into, most people have a strong feeling about high school. Like Harp, they hated it and would never want to go back, or maybe more like me. I actually loved high school. I thought it was really fun, but...
- Andrew: I'm in the middle somewhere. I guess I liked high school at the time. I didn't hate it. But now that I'm out, I think especially because I was in a smaller city, I kind of associate high school with that city, and going back is just... It wouldn't be the same.
- Maura: You know, I'm actually a high school teacher now, and sometimes I joke that I loved high school so much that I had to find a way to go back, and the only way I could go back was as a teacher.
- Andrew: Yeah. You never wanted to leave.
- Maura: But as a teacher, I definitely have a different opinion, a different view, of the **cliques**. I don't see them as much. I don't understand them as much. But I definitely notice that within my class, certain people always wanna work together, always wanna sit beside each other. And I actually really love making people work with different people. I think it's really important for everyone, not just teenagers, to interact with people who they might not necessarily want to interact with, or might not be their kind of person. But I think it's really important to have contact with everybody.
- Andrew: Yeah. So you could say that you're a **clique** breaker.
- Maura: Yeah. I kind of **get a kick out of** when I see, say, a **jock** working with a really, kind of, quiet, more, I'll say, **nerdy** student, and I see them getting along. I really **get a kick out of it**.

- Andrew: Yeah. I think that's cool. And that's great training for the real world. Like we talked about, once you're outside of high school, you have to... You're forced to interact with people who you're not super comfortable with, so that's great training. Good job, teacher.
- Maura: Thanks. OK, let's go over the **cliques** that we talked about today one more time.
- Andrew: Sure. So the first one was **jocks**, and then we talked about **nerds**, followed by **stoners**, **drama kids**, **band geeks**, and finally, the cool kids.
- Maura: That's right. And if you want to know more about these terms or some of the other expressions that **popped up** in this episode, you should become a member. Because when you're a member, you have access to our transcripts, more detailed explanations of the expressions we use, and a quiz.
- Andrew: Yeah. And check us out on Facebook and Twitter, send us a message, let us know what kind of student you were in high school. We'd be super interested to hear about that. And, yeah, until next time, bye bye.
- Maura: Goodbye.

Detailed Explanation

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
- **gotta**: got to (have to)
- **wanna**: want to

To come together

In this episode, Andrew says that he's unpacking, and that it's all **coming together**. When used this way, **to come together** means to take shape or form, or to become complete. When two things **come together**, they join up. So when something **comes together**, it sort of falls into place and begins to become whole or full.

Here's another example with **to come together**:

Arsha: How's your latest painting coming along? Troy told me you're working on a landscape painting this time.

Aurelie: Yeah. It's really starting **to come together**. I finished the outline a week ago and I've just begun the shading.

Arsha: I can't wait to see it! I always love your artwork.

Aurelie: Thank you. That means a lot to me.

For better or for worse

When we say that something is **for better or for worse**, it means that something is not necessarily good or bad, but it generally leans on the OK or fine side of things. When this expression is used to talk about a situation, it means the situation exists or happens whether its results are good or bad. To break it down, **for better** means that something happened and the result was good. **For worse** means that something happened and the result was bad. Putting these together, it means that the result can go either way, but you're going to go ahead with it anyway.

Here's another example with **for better or for worse**:

Miles: Hey, I found an old yearbook yesterday. Wanna look through it with me?

Florian: Oh, wow. I think I threw all of mine out. OK, let's look through it. It's going to be a scary walk down memory lane!

Miles: For sure, but **for better or for worse**, it should be an interesting read!

Florian: Yeah! I'll meet up with you after work and we can look at it together.

A clique

A clique is a small group of people, usually teenagers, who spend a lot of time together and share interests or other things in common. Usually, **cliques** do not readily or freely allow others to join them. They may be seen by others as the popular kids, and maybe even as snobbish, because they don't readily allow people into their group.

Here's another example with **a clique**:

Rhea: How's your new high school? I'm still so sad that you had to move across town.

Udi: Me too. The new high school is so different. There are so many **cliques** here.

Rhea: Oh, no. Are you fitting in with any of them?

Udi: Well, I think because I'm new and because my clothes aren't very trendy, I've sort of been lumped into the nerd group.

Rhea: Oh, no. Are there nice people in that **clique**?

Udi: Yeah, actually. So far I've made a few friends. I just hate that it's so separated into groups though. I wanted to meet more people.

Rhea: Yeah, It can be very **cliquey** in big-city high schools. I'm glad to hear you're making some friends though.

A jock

Jocks are usually teenagers who are really good at sports and play on a lot of teams. They are usually seen as being muscular and tough, but not very smart. This is because they focus their attention on sports, and typically not on their other subjects like math or English.

As Maura and Andrew mention in this episode, the term **jock** has kind of a funny origin. It comes from the word *jockstrap*, which is a piece of protective equipment, kind of like hard plastic underwear, that men and boys wear to protect themselves while playing sports. Wearing a jockstrap is like wearing a helmet, but for your crotch instead of your head! Over time, guys who play sports a lot started to be referred to as **jocks**, since they often wore jockstraps. Today, this is a very common term, and isn't considered rude at all, even though it originally came from the name for a type of underwear!

Here's another example with **a jock**:

Freddy: Are you going to try out for the basketball team this year?

Atin: I might. It's sort of weird to try out for a team when I'm going to a new school though. All the other players are already friends and have been friends for a long time.

Freddy: Yeah. We have a lot of close-knit **jocks** like that at our school, too. Maybe they'll welcome you, though. It's worth a shot.

Atin: Yeah. I love basketball enough to try to make my way into their group. I'll see how it goes.

A nerd

Nerds are usually teenagers who are really good at school subjects, who get good grades, and who don't like breaking rules. People often make fun of **nerds** because **nerds** focus more on their grades than on their appearance, which can mean that they dress in a way that the popular kids don't consider stylish. **Nerds** are usually good at the science and math fields of school subjects.

Here's another example with **a nerd**:

Keisuke: How was your day at school?

Damanpret: OK I guess. A bit weird.

Keisuke: Why?

Damanpret: Well, I didn't have any place to sit for lunch, so I had to eat lunch with the **nerds**.

Keisuke: Oh no. How did that go?

Damanpret: Surprisingly well. They started talking about Star Wars, and I actually really love those movies and science fiction in general, so we had a lot to talk about.

Keisuke: Oh, that's good. It's always nice to make new friends.

Damanpret: Yeah. I may even eat lunch with them again tomorrow!

A stoner

Stoners are usually teenagers who are aloof, detached, or spaced out because they do or are associated with drugs, usually marijuana. They are seen as being always distant or detached from whatever else is going on, and tend to hang out with other **stoners** so that they can do drugs together. They don't get good grades in school because they rarely attend class, and when they do, they are often high on drugs.

Here's another example with **a stoner**:

Ricardo: Who are those kids hanging out by the trees? I don't recognize them.

Francesca: Oh, those are the **stoners**. You probably don't recognize them because they never go to class.

Ricardo: Oh, that makes sense. I'll try to avoid them. I don't want my parents to think I do drugs.

Francesca: I don't think they all do drugs. I know for sure that Steven and Emily don't. Some of them are really nice; they just like to hang out with the **stoners**.

Ricardo: OK, good to know. Thanks.

A drama kid

Drama kids are teens who are really interested in theatre, the dramatic arts, and other things that require role playing. Others may see them as being obnoxious or intolerable because they always seem to be playing a role rather than just being themselves, and they are always over-dramatizing things to practice their skills.

Here's another example with **a drama kid**:

Saeid: Can I study at your place tonight? My dorm roommates are being so loud. I can't concentrate.

Yukie: Sure. Why are they being so loud? Can't you ask them to be quiet?

Saeid: Well, it wouldn't really be fair to ask them to quiet down. They're rehearsing for a play. All my roommates are **drama kids**.

Yukie: Oh, that must be annoying sometimes. Sure, drop by my place any time to study.

Saeid: Thanks. I appreciate that.

Black clothes

In this episode, Maura and Andrew talk about a certain group of teenagers—drama kids—wearing **black clothes**. In high school, kids who wear **black clothes** a lot are often drawn to the arts and music, and are sometimes called goths or emos. They dress in dark clothes because they're drawn to the darker or sadder side of the arts and spirituality. Sometimes they're seen as always listening to sad or depressing music.

Here's another example in which people wearing **black clothes** are classified as being in a group:

Marcel: How was your shopping trip?

Yufu: Pretty good. I realized, though, when I got home, that people are going to think I've totally gone goth!

Marcel: Why?

Yufu: Everything I bought was **black**! It was just a coincidence, though.

Marcel: Well, as long as you mix it with some colours, I'm sure nobody will confuse you with a goth.

Yufu: I hope so. I really don't like depressing music at all!

In the same vein

In the same vein means similarly or likewise. If two things are **in the same vein**, they are in the same category or style. Other ways of saying this are *in a similar vein* and *along the same vein*.

Here's another example with **in the same vein**:

Siraj: Have you read any of *The Hunger Games* books yet?

Vitalia: I haven't read any of them yet. They've been out for a while. I really should read them. I have no idea what they're even about.

Siraj: Well, they're **in the same vein** as the *Ender's Game* books, and you liked that series, right?

Vitalia: Yeah, I did. I love dystopian science fiction.

Siraj: Then you'll really like *The Hunger Games*.

Vitalia: Great. Thanks for the recommendation!

A band geek

Band geeks are high school kids who are really into musical instruments. The term *geek* is very similar to the term *nerd*, and both words refer to someone who is very serious about education and studies very hard. So, **band geeks** are very serious about the school subject of band, which is where they learn how to play musical instruments.

Here's another example with **a band geek**:

Rosa: How was your weekend?

Kevin: It was really fun! I hung out with the **band geeks** all weekend.

Rosa: What? Why? You don't play a musical instrument!

Kevin: I know, but my brother does, and he had the whole band over to practice. They're actually really cool people. I may even take up an instrument just to hang out with them more!

Rosa: Awesome! Invite me next time!

To have a hand in something

To have a hand in something means to play a part in or be a part of something. In this episode, Maura tells Andrew that maybe he **had a hand in** making being in a school band cool. What Maura means is that maybe Andrew played a part or contributed to making the idea of being in a band in high school cool.

Here's another example with **to have a hand in something**:

Richelle: I hope your birthday party was a surprise! It was so hard to keep it a secret!

Pina: I had a feeling you probably **had a hand in** organizing it! I was really surprised. It was so awesome. Thank you so much.

Richelle: You're welcome!

At the top of the totem pole

At the top of the totem pole means the highest rank or the most important thing. A totem pole is a Native American structure carved out of wood. It symbolizes the hierarchy or order of something. The vertical order of images on the totem pole is widely believed to be a significant representation of importance. For example, if a totem pole represents the paternal side of a family tree, the grandfather may be at the top, the father in the middle, and the sons at the bottom. When used in conversation, the expression **at the top of the totem pole** generally means the most popular or important.

Here's another example with **at the top of a totem pole**:

Asma: Have you talked to Tracy about coming to your party yet?

Marta: Not yet. I'm a little nervous.

Asma: Why?

Marta: Well, she's really popular, and it's sort of intimidating.

Asma: She's definitely **at the top of the totem pole**. But she's actually really nice. You have nothing to worry about.

Marta: OK, I'll ask her at lunch. Thanks.



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You know what?

You know what? is a rhetorical question, meaning that it looks like a question but it's actually an implication or reference to something. **You know what?** is used to indicate or emphasize that what you're about to say is a reference or educational piece of advice, or that it's something that you should pay attention to.

Here's another example with **you know what?** used in a casual conversation:

Chika: Have you decided what you're going to take for your last elective class?

Marcel: **You know what?** I think I'll take that art class. I know I've never taken art before, but maybe I'll end up really liking it.

Chika: That's a great idea. I think everyone should take at least one art class while they're a student.

A telltale sign

A telltale sign is a definite signal. Other ways of saying **a telltale sign** are *a sure bet*, *a dead giveaway*, and *a clear signal*. This expression comes from nautical terminology. A piece of cloth that's attached to a ship's mast is called a tell-tale. When the wind blows, the way that the cloth moves lets the sailors know which way the wind is blowing. So, when something is **a telltale sign**, it gives a clear indication or signal of something.

Here's another example with **a telltale sign**:

Aladden: Are you blushing?

Ajisai: What? No. Are my cheeks red?

Aladden: Yeah. And you just talked to Mike. Blushing is **a telltale sign** that you have a crush on someone!

Ajisai: No. Blushing just means I'm nervous. I get nervous talking to people I don't normally talk to.

Aladden: Well, I still think you have a crush on Mike!

Ajisai: Maybe a little bit.

To get a kick out of something

To get a kick out of something means to be amused or entertained by something. **A kick** is another word for a thrill or a boost.

Here's another example with **to get a kick out of something**:

Delio: Did you see the latest school play yet? It's pretty funny.

Mariella: I went yesterday with my parents. My dad really **got a kick out of it**, but I didn't find it that funny.

Delio: Yeah, it's sort of a more mature comedy about adult life. That's probably why your dad liked it.

Mariela: Hearing him laugh made me laugh, though. So I had a really good time too.

To pop up

To pop up means to suddenly and unexpectedly appear or come into existence. If you think of something popping, like a balloon or a bubble, it happens very suddenly and without notice. Similarly, when something **pops up**, it happens very unpredictably.

In this episode, Maura mentions the expressions that **pop up** in our episodes. She's talking about the expressions that we don't specifically plan to talk about, but that just come up naturally and unexpectedly as we talk.

Here's another example with **to pop up**:

Branda: I can't believe it's only the second week of school and everyone has already formed their own little cliques.

Jamie: It's weird when groups just **pop up** like that. I guess like-minded people are just naturally attracted to each other.

Branda: Yeah. That must be why you and I became friends so quickly!

Jamie: Yeah, good point!

Quiz**1. What is a clique?**

- a) a school book club
- b) a type of boat
- c) a group of similar people who hang out together
- d) a school subject

2. Teenagers who are good at sports are sometimes called _____.

Fill in the blank.

- a) twerks
- b) pips
- c) jocks
- d) geniuses

3. Teenagers who are good at science and math are sometimes called _____.

Fill in the blank.

- a) jocks
- b) prom queens
- c) twins
- d) nerds

4. Teenagers who like being in school plays are sometimes called _____.

Fill in the blank.

- a) drama kids
- b) band geeks
- c) soap operas
- d) movie mavens

5. Teenagers who like to play musical instruments in the school band are sometimes called _____.

Fill in the blank.

- a) music mites
- b) band geeks
- c) instrument insects
- d) sound sissies

6. Teenagers who are perceived as always doing drugs and not attending class are sometimes called _____.

Fill in the blank.

- a) stoners
- b) boulders
- c) pebbles
- d) jocks

7. If someone is at the top of the totem pole, how do they rank?

- a) They are the best.
- b) They are the worst.
- c) They are neither bad nor good.
- d) They aren't even ranked.

Answers:

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