

Chatterbox #144 – An interview with Marshall

Episode Description

Do you like to relax by playing video games? If so, you're not alone! In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew gets an inside look at the video game industry. Join him for a special interview with his friend Marshall, a real cool guy who tests video games for a living.

Sample Dialogue

Andrew: Today, I wanted to talk to you about video games.

Marshall: Yes.

Andrew: Because you're in **the biz** of video games.

Marshall: Yes. I'm a video game tester.

Andrew: A video game tester. And what does that mean? What does a video game tester do?

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials:

- A loft
- The canal
- The biz
- Colloquial language versus jargon
- To freeze
- To beat a video game
- A bug
- To be a big thing for someone
- Muscle memory
- For sure
- Shoot
- To go along for the ride
- Goldilocks



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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the detailed explanations section that follows the transcript.

Transcript

Andrew: Hello everyone. How's it going? I'm Andrew and you're listening to the Culips Podcast. Today we have another great episode for you but before we start, I'm going to remind you to check out our website at Culips.com. C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

On our website, you can listen to all of our past episodes and you can sign up to become a Culips member. Membership gives you access to our Learning Materials. And if you really wanna get serious about studying English, I recommend that you consider becoming a member. Because with the Learning Materials, you get access to transcripts for each and every episode, you can read the text while you listen, and this will really help your comprehension. You also get detailed descriptions of the important expressions and idioms that we talk about on the podcast. And finally, you get quizzes that will help you test your understanding.

On our website, we have some free samples that you can check out of the Learning Materials. So go on over to Culips.com and give them a try because I know you'll enjoy them and there's really no better way to study.

Also make sure to check us out on Twitter and Facebook and leave us a comment to let us know what you think of the show. We love to get feedback from you, so if you have an idea for an episode or have some suggestions that could help us make the podcast better, please let us know.

Well, those are enough announcements for now, I think. Don't you? How about we get started with the show?

Today's episode is a Chatterbox episode, and that's where we chat. We discuss interesting events and Canadian culture, and sometimes we even interview our friends. And actually, that's what you'll get to hear today. I recently interviewed my friend Marshall, and we had a cool little talk about living in Montreal and playing video games for a living. How cool is that? So, I had a great time talking with Marshall and I hope you'll enjoy this show. So here it is: my interview with Marshall.

So, I'm here today with my friend Marshall. Marshall, what's up?

Marshall: Uh, not a lot. I'm being interviewed and that's nice.

Andrew: Yeah. Thanks so much for agreeing to do this.

- Marshall: No problem, my pleasure.
- Andrew: We're recording today in your apartment.
- Marshall: Yes.
- Andrew: And your apartment is a little bit different than a regular apartment because it's **a loft** apartment.
- Marshall: Yes, **a loft**.
- Andrew: **A loft**. And what is the difference between a regular apartment and **a loft** apartment?
- Marshall: I would say that **a loft** apartment is different in that it has more space. It's often a space with tall ceilings and less rooms than a normal apartment.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. More, like, of an open layout?
- Marshall: Yeah. Open concept, I would call it.
- Andrew: Nice. Yeah, the ceilings are really high in here. It's, like, double the height of my apartment, probably.
- Marshall: Yeah. I wonder if you can hear the difference.
- Andrew: Yeah. There's probably good acoustics in here.
- Marshall: Not the best, actually.
- Andrew: Oh, really?
- Marshall: You'd be surprised.
- Andrew: Yeah. And so, your apartment is really just two rooms but it's quite big.
- Marshall: Yeah. I'd say, compared to many other apartments of my friends, I'd say it's more, like, square feet. It's actually more, like, area... more area than other spaces.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: But it's just mainly one big room.
- Andrew: Did this place use to be a warehouse? Is it a converted space?

- Marshall: I believe so. I think, um, the neighbourhood is mostly built off of old, um, I think storage and warehouse and factory spaces that have been converted, years ago, into apartments.
- Andrew: Yeah, yeah. It's very cool. I would like to live in a place like this, I think.
- Marshall: I think you could if you wanted to.
- Andrew: I probably could find a place because there's lots of **lofts** in Montreal.
- Marshall: Yeah. I think it was because of Montreal being... When it first started, there was a lot more industry and manufacturing and storage-type places. And then when all that business went away, people saw it as an opportunity to create living spaces.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: I know this neighbourhood, particularly, being close to **the canal**, there was a lot of industry here that turned into spaces like this.
- Andrew: Ah, that makes sense, yeah. Because you live right by **the canal** and they would have had the boats going up and picking up stuff and dropping it off.
- Marshall: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Yeah, it makes perfect sense. Well, it's a very cool place and thanks for letting us record here. And today, I wanted to talk to you about video games.
- Marshall: Yes.
- Andrew: Because you're in **the biz** of video games.
- Marshall: Yes. I'm a video game tester.
- Andrew: A video game tester. And what does that mean? What does a video game tester do?
- Marshall: Um, there's a few different types of jobs at the place that I work at. What I mostly do is called functionality testing. And it's... Basically, you're testing the functionality of the game, which is the playability and how the game actually works. So, a lot of what we do is try to break the game and make it so that it will stop working.
- Andrew: Oh really?

- Marshall: Yeah. So *break the game* is kind of, I guess it's kind of **colloquial**, but that's just trying to find ways that you can make the game stop functioning or function in a way that's not intended, so that the video game developers can go back and fix these issues.
- Andrew: Right. Because you don't wanna sell the game to somebody....
- Marshall: Yeah.
- Andrew: ...who's playing it and then it just **freezes** or stops working.
- Marshall: Yes. So that's the big challenge, is trying to make the game so that when it gets to the consumer, all the issues have been found and fixed so that, ideally, when it is consumer-ready, there are no problems with the game and anyone can play it with no issues.
- Andrew: Yeah. So I think when people first hear, "Oh, I'm, like, a video game tester." It sounds like the perfect job, you know? You get to work and play video games. This is awesome. But I think it might be a little bit frustrating too.
- Marshall: Yeah. I think it's kind of... It seems, like, not really glamorous, but it seems like, "Oh, you just get to play video games all day," which, that is a part of my job.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: But I also spend a lot of time writing reports and working through checklists. And often, as I mentioned, breaking the game, you're playing the game in a way that's not exactly... like, you're trying to find these issues and recreate them so you can be sure that it's an issue.
- Andrew: Right.
- Marshall: So you spend a lot of ways... a lot of time playing the game not the way that a normal consumer would.
- Andrew: Yeah. So your goal isn't **to beat the game** and to win. It's to find these **bugs**.
- Marshall: Yeah. Sometimes it is. Like, there's different things we have to do and sometimes a check will be, like, can you **beat this game**?
- Andrew: Oh, OK.
- Marshall: Yeah, and your job is **to beat the game**. So that can be, like, a really time-consuming check.
- Andrew: Yeah. To make sure that it's not too difficult or something?

- Marshall: Yeah. Difficult or at least a progression. Like, just make sure that if a consumer was to sit down and start playing the game, they could progress to the end of the game naturally, without having to use any of the tools that we have to work through things.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: So that there can be a natural progression to the game. And the user can make it to the end of the game without... without being stopped.
- Andrew: Cool.
- Marshall: Yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's very cool. It sounds like an interesting job.
- Marshall: I'd say it is. It's something I never really pictured myself doing and then I found an opportunity to do it and it turned out to be something I quite enjoyed, actually.
- Andrew: Cool.
- Marshall: Yeah.
- Andrew: And so Montreal, I think, from my understanding anyways, is that Montreal has a pretty big video game industry. And there's actually quite a few people employed in Montreal that work in video games.
- Marshall: Yeah, absolutely. I think, from what I have been told, it... There was a time in the early '90s, maybe? Or mid-90s, where there was a lot of incentive for video game companies to come here. They were offered a lot of tax breaks and stuff like that.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: So a lot of companies came here and I think that's changed now but there's still, like, a lot of things have a home base here so they're kind of sticking around.
- Andrew: Yeah, that's very cool. It's an industry that I didn't know really existed in the city until recently.
- Marshall: Yeah. No. It's definitely a big part of the city. And I think, in terms of the world, there's, like... Montreal's one of the main places where game developers and game testing happens.
- Andrew: It's a gaming hub.

Marshall: Yeah. I'd say so.

Andrew: Right on. So, in order to get this job, I'm assuming that you're pretty good at video games. Is this true or false?

Marshall: I'm not the most amazing at video games, but I think I have a history of playing video games. I've played them my whole life, so I was able to, when I started this job, kind of be able to play different games and understand different games pretty quickly. And that's a more important part of the job, I think, than being good at it, is just being able to figure out how to play it in a way that kind of makes sense and you can navigate the game with ease and understand the expected behaviour that's a... kind of a term we use...

Andrew: Insider **jargon**?

Marshall: Yeah. That's, like, kind of an industry... an industry term, at least where I work. It's like, the expected behaviour is what you think the game should do.

Andrew: Right.

Marshall: So a lot of the times it's, like, "Oh, this is what I think the game should do but it's not. So this is the issue."

Andrew: OK, cool. So, looking back at your history of video gaming, throughout your life, what is your favorite video game?

Marshall: I have a few. I think Pokémon.

Andrew: Pokémon.

Marshall: Pokémon for the... the Game Boy is something I've played my whole life, a lot of different versions of the game, going back to when I was a kid. And then I had a PlayStation. That was my first of my own gaming consoles.

Andrew: First one you owned?

Marshall: Yeah. *Crash Bandicoot* was a **big game for me**.

Andrew: Yeah, classic.

Marshall: It's a fun, like, jumping adventure game.

Andrew: Yeah.

Marshall: And what else? I love *Halo*.

Andrew: Yeah.

- Marshall: The *Halo* series for the Xbox. And those are my main three favorites, I would say.
- Andrew: It's funny that you say that you're, you know, just OK at video games, because right now you own an Xbox and when we hang out, we play *Halo* together and you always beat me, like, really, really badly. I just lose right away. So, I think you're pretty good.
- Marshall: Yeah, I guess, I guess there are some things I'm better at. And *Halo's* a game I've played since I was maybe 16 or 17, and played a lot in my teenage years. So I think it was... I had an advantage in my experience and, kind of, the **muscle memory** that comes with playing games. Because that's a big part of it and I think it does develop a lot of, kind of, hand-eye-type skills, and so that's been helpful for me, learning to play video games, I think.
- Andrew: Yeah. And it's funny because I... I played video games growing up. I had a Nintendo, a Super Nintendo, N64, a PlayStation, a Dreamcast. I had all of them...
- Marshall: Wow.
- Andrew: ...up until a certain point. And then I stopped playing, when I was in high school, I guess. But I feel like I had those essential skills from when I played as a kid.
- Marshall: Yeah.
- Andrew: But I've lost them, or I just never had them, or it doesn't matter. I don't know what the answer is.
- Marshall: Maybe. I don't know. I think it is definitely, like, something, you know, if it's, like, if you think of it as a muscle, it's something that can kind of go away if you don't do it for a long time. I know when I moved to Montreal, I didn't have a lot of money or a lot of space for video games. So there was a good 3 years where I didn't play video games at all. And I really quite missed it.
- Andrew: Yeah?
- Marshall: And whenever I got the chance to, I would. But then I got my Game Boy a few years ago and I got the newest version of Pokémon at the time and I played that a lot. And then I got the Xbox here, that was last summer. So we spent most of the winter playing Xbox here.
- Andrew: Yeah. I think in Montreal, actually, playing video games is a great activity for the winter.

- Marshall: It is a great activity for the winter. A nice indoor activity. It's... It's exciting. It's a good way to pass the time, I think.
- Andrew: Yeah. **For sure.** So, if you had the choice between reading a book or watching a movie or playing a video game, which would you choose?
- Marshall: I guess it's hard to say. I mean, are we talking about, like, the same source material? Like, a book, like, watching *The Lord of the Rings* movie or reading *The Lord of the Rings* book or playing *The Lord of the Rings* video game?
- Andrew: Sure. Let's do it like that.
- Marshall: I'd probably say video game, because it's more interactive, and I think it's more engrossing in a lot of ways and it's something that you can, kind of, become more involved in and kind of feel like you're part of the action. And you're not as, like, as much of a passive... passive viewer as with movies. Or I guess you don't have to use your imagination as much as in reading a book.
- Andrew: Yeah. You get all the elements, the story and the action, all in one...
- Marshall: A good game will give you that.
- Andrew: Yeah, yeah, yeah. And video games are getting so huge. I heard a stat the other day that compared to all the income from movies and music and TV that's sold in North America, video games make more money.
- Marshall: I wouldn't be surprised. It's a really huge, huge industry and kind of involves a lot of people. A lot of people work. I mean, even, I watched this film about video games...
- Andrew: Oh yeah?
- Marshall: And they were talking about... It's interesting, because when you're making a video game, compared to, like, say, the team behind a blockbuster album or a blockbuster film, making a video game can really just employ the most amount of people, comparatively. Because you've got your developers, you've got your people animating. And there's just a huge team that goes into creating the game. And then there's even, from my perspective, there's, like, the testing too, and that's a small industry unto itself. So I think video games are big business in that way, that they employ a lot of people and can be a large project.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. So a lot of times, parents... I know my mom would always get mad at me... Not mad at me but get frustrated at me for playing video games too much and not going outside. But you gotta think of the big picture, you know? Maybe these are good things. It can lead to a career in the future, just like it has for you.

- Marshall: Yeah. I guess I would have never known, but that could've been my excuse back then when my mom told me to go outside and play instead of playing video games. I could have just said, "I'm training for my future job."
- Andrew: So, if you're a teenager and you're listening to this now, now you have an excuse to tell your parents. OK, well we're almost near the end of the interview but before I let you go, I want to ask you five random questions. This is something I do with everybody that I interview and it's always fun for me. Hopefully it's fun for you too.
- Marshall: All right. **Shoot.**
- Andrew: OK, so question number one: If you could only eat one meal for the rest of your life, what would you eat?
- Marshall: Off the top of my head, I'll have to say pizza, because pizza is a very versatile dish and is something that I quite enjoy, and I always have.
- Andrew: I actually agree with you. I would choose pizza too. You have so many different toppings, different types of cheese.
- Marshall: Options.
- Andrew: Yeah, lots of options. If you're eating it every day, that's what you want. OK, question number two: If you had to be someone other than yourself, who would you be?
- Marshall: Hmm. Brian Eno.
- Andrew: Brian Eno?
- Marshall: Yeah. Well, I guess it's just, like, that he's my idol in a lot of ways. So if I had to pick a person to be, it would be Brian Eno.
- Andrew: That's cool. For people that don't know, Brian Eno is a musician from the UK.
- Marshall: Yes.
- Andrew: And is very famous for his studio work and for his synthesizer work.
- Marshall: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: A very cool guy. That's a good answer. I like that one. OK, next question, question three: Would you rather be the best player on the worst team or the worst player on the best team? If you were an athlete, let's say.

- Marshall: Yeah. I'd say worst player on the best team, because you'd still get to be the champion.
- Andrew: Yeah, I agree.
- Marshall: Yup.
- Andrew: You don't have to show off; you just get the championship ring. You get **to go for the fun ride**.
- Marshall: You do what you gotta do. Hopefully you're contributing something to the best team. Even as the worst.
- Andrew: You're still the winner at the end of the day. I like that answer too. OK, we got two more here. Uh... Number four: If you had to move to a different country, where would you move to?
- Marshall: Hmm. Oh, I was thinking about this the other day.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: Where would I move to? I don't know. I don't like things that are too hot.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: I don't like places that are too cold. Is there a place that's right in the middle? Just the sweet spot every day?
- Andrew: The **Goldilocks** country?
- Marshall: Yeah. I don't know.
- Andrew: Maybe somewhere like the south of France.
- Marshall: Yeah, maybe, yeah, maybe the south of France or, like, Portugal or something. You know, just live on the beach somewhere but not a too-hot place.
- Andrew: Yeah. It looks hot there but it doesn't look boiling hot. But I don't know. I've never been.
- Marshall: Me neither, so I'll say Portugal.
- Andrew: Yeah. If you're listening in Portugal, let us know. Does it get really hot there? OK, good answer. And the last question that we have, it sort of wraps it back, it's a career question.
- Marshall: OK.

- Andrew: When you were a kid and someone would ask you, "Marshall, what do you want to be when you grow up?" What was your answer? What did you want to be when you were an adult?
- Marshall: Wow. Um, when I was, like, a little kid?
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Marshall: I wanted to be a lawyer because I wanted to be rich. I really thought I was gonna just be rich.
- Andrew: That's cool. Not many kids would say they want to be a lawyer.
- Marshall: No, and I don't know why I did, either. And I really strayed quite far from the path, because growing up to be a video game tester / musician / bum...
- Andrew: Yeah. That's... Well, I wanted to be a fireman when I was little and I'm definitely nowhere near a fireman at all, so, you know, there's a lot of variation.
- Marshall: Yeah, well it's... It's funny. The way a kid might think and what actually happens. When you grow up, you kind of realize... Your perspective changes and you realize that that might not be something you'd be so interested in. And I wonder how many people become the things they want to be when they're, like, you know, six or seven years old.
- Andrew: Yeah. That'd be interesting. Probably not that many people.
- Marshall: I'm guessing not. Unless... There'd be, like, a lot more marine biologists around.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's true. And fireman.
- Marshall: Yup.
- Andrew: OK, cool. Well, thanks a lot, Marshall.
- Marshall: Thank you Andrew.
- Andrew: We'll talk to you later.
- Marshall: All right. Bye.

Andrew: That concludes my interview with Marshall. I hope you had as much fun listening to the episode as I had recording it. I'm going to remind you again to visit our website, at Culips.com. And also check us out on Facebook and Twitter. If you listen to this program through iTunes and you like the show, head on over to iTunes and leave us a five-star rating. This will help spread the word about Culips and help our audience grow. So we would really appreciate it if you could do that. Thanks for listening, everybody. We'll talk to you next time.

Detailed Explanations

A loft

At the start of this episode, Andrew and Marshall chat about Marshall's apartment. Marshall lives in **a loft**. This is the name for an apartment that is built in a former factory or warehouse. **Lofts** feature open living spaces, high ceilings, many windows, and brick walls.

Lofts are commonly found in Montreal and other big cities where industry and manufacturing have recently declined.

So, an apartment that is found in an old warehouse or factory is called **a loft**.



Here's one more example with **a loft**.

Jackson: I'm thinking about moving out of my place. I'd like to try living in a new neighbourhood.

Trisha: Just the other day I saw an advertisement for some new **lofts** that are being developed downtown. I bet that'd be a really cool place to live.

Jackson: Nice. Yeah, I've always wanted to live in **a loft**. I should check it out.

Trisha: Do it!

The canal

While talking about lofts, Marshall mentions that his apartment is located close to **the canal**. He is referring to **the Lachine Canal**.

The Lachine Canal was built in the 1820s and is 14 kilometres long. It runs through the south-west section of the island of Montreal. It was built so that boats could easily access Montreal. Before **the canal** was built, boats had to navigate through dangerous rapids to reach Montreal.

The canal created an economic boom in south-west Montreal. Many factories were built along **the canal** and the area became an industrial hub, where iron, steel, and wood products were created.

In the 1950s, **the canal** was decommissioned because it was not big enough to accommodate big, modern ships. The south-west region of Montreal went into economic decline and many of the factories went out of business. This explains why there are so many loft apartments near **the canal** these days.

Although **the canal** is no longer operational, it has been turned into a park and is now designated as a National Historic Site of Canada. There are walking and cycling paths along the sides of **the canal**.

Here's a picture of downtown Montreal. You can see **the Lachine Canal** in the foreground:



The biz

In this episode, Andrew says that Marshall is in **the biz** of video games. The word **biz** is a shortened version of the word *business*. This is an informal way to refer to the type of job someone has. Usually, **the biz** is used to talk about the entertainment industry, and the expressions **the music biz**, **the entertainment biz**, and **the movie biz** are commonly used.

So, when we talk about **the biz** someone is in, we are talking about their business and what kind of job they do for a living.

Here are a couple more examples with **the biz**:

Frank: So I hear you're leaving us for California.

Jackie: Yeah. It's true.

Frank: Where will you be moving to?

Jackie: I'm moving to Hollywood. I've always wanted to be an actress and this will be a good opportunity for me to try and break into **the biz**.

Frank: Good luck! We'll miss you.

Jackie: Thanks!

Abe: What do you do for a living?

Tracy: I'm in **the entertainment biz**, actually.

Abe: Oh, really? That sounds interesting. What do you do specifically?

Tracy: I work for an agency that represents some emerging talent.

Abe: Wow. That's super cool.

Tracy: Yeah. I love my job!

Colloquial language versus jargon

In this episode, Marshall says that the expression *to break the game* is **colloquial**. If a word or expression is **colloquial**, then it is informal and found in everyday conversation. Since this expression, *to break the game*, isn't really found in everyday conversation, we should instead say that it is **jargon**.

If a word or expression is used only by a certain group of people or is unique to a business or industry, then it is **jargon**. The expression *to break the game* is really only used in the video game industry, and because of this, we can say that it is **jargon**.

Because these two terms, **colloquial language** and **jargon**, are similar in meaning, it is easy to get them confused. As you hear in this episode, even native English speakers sometimes have difficulties using these words.

Here are a couple more examples with **colloquial language** and **jargon**:

Pat: You had a meeting with your lawyer today, right? How did it go?

Ivan: I always hate meeting with my lawyer. It is so hard to understand him sometimes.

Pat: Why? Because he uses a lot of law language and **jargon**?

Ivan: Yeah. I feel like I need a translator there to help me understand him.

Pat: I know the feeling. I feel the same way every time I visit my lawyer, too.

Sheila: Would you mind helping me with my essay?

Trevor: Nope, not at all. I'm happy to help.

Sheila: OK. Can you take a look at the third paragraph? I don't think it's very good.

Trevor: OK, let's take a look. Hmm... See where you wrote "If I were president, I'd end world hunger"?

Sheila: Yeah. What's wrong with that?

Trevor: Well, the contraction *I'd* is **colloquial**. We use it in everyday speech but in a formal situation, like your essay, we should instead use *I would*.

Sheila: Ah, OK. Thanks! Anything else?

Trevor: Nope. The rest of your paper looks good.

Sheila: Perfect! Thanks.

To freeze

In this episode, Marshall says that a big part of his job as a video game tester is to try to make the video game **freeze**. When a computer, cell phone, or video game **freezes**, it locks up and stops functioning.

The display remains on and you can still see information on your screen, but moving the mouse or the video game controller does nothing. Everything is locked in one place and nothing will move. The only way to fix an electronic device that is **frozen** is to reset it.

So, if an electronic device stops working and nothing on the screen will move, then it is **frozen**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to freeze**:

Sunny: Darn it!

Philip: What's wrong?

Sunny: I was just trying to make a call and my phone **froze**.

Philip: It's so annoying when that happens.

Sunny: Yeah. It's been **freezing** at least once a day for the last week.

Philip: You should take it in to get it fixed.

Sunny: Yeah, you're right. I'll make an appointment today.

Luke: Can I use your laptop for a second to look something up?

Pete: Sure, no problem.

Luke: Thanks. Uh oh, I think something's wrong. Can you take a look?

Pete: Ah, it probably just **froze**. I'll reset it for you.

Luke: OK, thanks!

To beat a video game

While talking about what it's like to be a video game tester, Andrew asks Marshall whether video game testing is frustrating because instead of trying **to beat video games**, Marshall has to try to break video games.

When you **beat a video game**, it means you completely finish the game. The goal of most video games is **to beat the game**.

These days, video games are becoming bigger and more complex, and many modern gamers complain that it takes too long **to beat video games**. Some video games can take up to 100 hours of play before the gamer can **beat the game**.

Activision, a large video game company, did a survey in 2011 to find out how many gamers **beat video games**. They found that 90% of gamers do not complete the games they buy. Activision says there are two explanations for this. The first is that video games take too long to finish. Gamers just don't have enough free time **to beat the games**. The second is that there are so many video games on the market. Gamers simply buy new games if they lose interest in their current games.

So, when someone **beats a video game**, they finish the game.

Here are a couple more examples with **to beat a video game**:

Simon: Want to play Pokémon with me?

Ashley: No. Could we play a different game instead? I **beat** Pokémon last week.

Simon: Wow. Congrats. I still have a long way to go.

Ashley: Yeah. It took a long time but it was fun. You should go ahead and play without me.

Simon: OK, thanks. We can hang out some other time.

Ashley: Sure. Sounds good.

Trevor: Have you ever played any of the Zelda games?

Kim: I **beat** the first three of them but then I stopped playing that series. Why do you ask?

Trevor: It's one of my favorite video games of all time.

Kim: Yeah, I agree. The first few were really good.

A bug

Another one of Marshall's responsibilities as a video game tester is to find **bugs** in the games. When we talk about software **bugs**, computer **bugs**, or video game **bugs**, we don't mean insects. Instead, we use the word **bug** to mean a problem with the coding or design of a computer or electronic system.

In other words, Marshall is responsible for finding problems in the video games he tests. When he finds **a bug**, he writes a report and gets the computer programmers to fix the **bug** and eliminate the problem.

So, a programming or design error that causes computers or other digital systems to fail or have problems is called **a bug**.

This expression has an interesting origin. In 1946, the computer programmer Grace Hopper was working on an early version of a computer, called the Mark II. One day, the computer was malfunctioning and while her team was looking for the cause of problem, they noticed that a moth was stuck in the computer. It turned out that the moth was the source of the problem. Ever since then, the term **a bug** has been used to refer to computer errors that are caused by coding problems or bad design.

Interestingly, the verb *to debug* means to fix a computer **bug**.

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

Connor: Did you make the hotel reservations for our trip to London?

Sarah: I tried to last night but the website wouldn't work.

Connor: Must be **a bug**.

Sarah: Yes. I'm going to call the hotel today to make the reservation over the phone.

Connor: Great!

Ralph: Hey, nice phone. Is it new?

Cindy: Yeah, brand new. I just got it yesterday but I think I need to return it.

Ralph: Why's that?

Cindy: It's really **buggy** and I'm having a bunch of problems with it.

Ralph: Yeah, take it back to the store then. You shouldn't have any problems exchanging it for a new one.

To be a big thing for someone

In this episode, Marshall mentions that *Crash Bandicoot* was a **big video game** for him. When something is a **big thing for you**, it means that thing is very important and significant in your life.

In other words, Marshall is saying that *Crash Bandicoot* was a very important game to him. It holds a lot of significance for him because it was one of the games that really made him enjoy playing video games.

When something from the past means a lot to you, is very important to you, or is significant to you because it helped you become the person you are today, you can say that it was a **big thing for you**.

We can use this expression to talk about how something influenced us in the past and changed our perspective. For Marshall, the video game *Crash Bandicoot* is one of the video games that are responsible for making him love video games. Because of this, he says it was a **big game for him**.

This expression can also be intensified by changing the word *big* to an even stronger word. For example, you could say that something was a massive or a huge thing for you.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be a big thing for someone**:

Sally:	What made you decide to become a writer?
Thomas:	I've always been a reader. When I was a kid, I read all day long.
Sally:	Oh, really? What types of books influenced you?
Thomas:	I loved fantasy novels. <i>The Lord of the Rings</i> series and <i>The Chronicles of Narnia</i> were big books for me .
Sally:	Awesome. I loved those books too.

Valerie:	Happy New Year!
Gina:	Happy New Year!
Valerie:	Did you make any New Year's resolutions?
Gina:	No. I just want to keep enjoying my life. The past few years have been big years for me , but I think this year will be the best year yet.
Valerie:	I think so too!

Muscle memory

When you have **muscle memory**, you are able to perform a task or activity automatically, without effort. **Muscle memory** is a type of long-term memory that is developed from repeated practice. For example, we can say that knowing how to ride a bike is a type of **muscle memory**. Once you learn how to ride a bike, you can do it automatically without having to consciously pay attention to the fact that you are riding a bike.

In this episode, Andrew and Marshall talk about a different type of **muscle memory**: playing video games. If you play video games for long enough, certain actions become automatic, like hitting the buttons on the controller and moving the joystick. After practising, you don't need to think about doing these things, they just become natural.

Other actions that can eventually be done by **muscle memory** include typing on a keyboard and playing musical instruments.

So, when a physical action becomes automatic after repeated practice, we can say that it is done by **muscle memory**.

Here's one more example with **muscle memory**:

Ronnie: Wow. You're a crazy fast texter! Your fingers are flying!

Jess: Yeah. Well, I've been texting my whole life.

Ronnie: Me too, but I'm nowhere near as fast as you are.

Jess: It's just **muscle memory** now, I guess. I don't even think about it. I just type on my phone.

Ronnie: Cool. Well, you're great at it.

For sure

In this episode, Andrew uses **for sure** to respond to Marshall's comment that playing video games is a good winter activity. The expression **for sure** has several different meanings, depending on the context it is used in.

When Andrew uses **for sure** in this episode, he uses it to agree with Marshall's comment. In this context, **for sure** means *yes, I completely agree*.

Here's an example with **for sure** used to agree with a statement:

John: The party last night was so much fun. I had such a good time.

Taylor: Yeah, **for sure**. It was one of the best nights of my life!

In different contexts, **for sure** has slightly different meanings. When **for sure** is used to respond to a yes or no question, then it means *yes*.

Here's an example with **for sure** used to answer yes to a question:

Lisa: Wanna grab sushi for dinner tonight?

Jenny: **For sure**. Sounds good.

Finally, when you use **for sure** when making a prediction, then it means *certainly* or *definitely*.

Here's an example with **for sure** used to make a prediction:

Emma: The New York Knicks are **for sure** going to win the championship next year.

Hailey: You think so? I don't know.

Emma: Yeah, 100%. They're definitely going to win.

Hailey: Only time will tell!

In all three of the above contexts, **for sure** is very informal. It is usually only used in casual situations and avoided in serious contexts.

Shoot

Towards the end of this episode, Andrew tells Marshall that he will end the interview by asking five random questions. In response to this, Marshall says **shoot**. In this context, **to shoot** means to go ahead and ask the questions you want to ask.

We can use the expression **shoot** when we want someone to say something that they want to say. So, if someone asks you if they can ask a question, you can respond by saying **shoot**. This means that it is OK for them to go ahead and ask you a question.

This is a very informal expression. You should avoid using it in formal contexts, especially in job interviews.

Here are a couple more examples with **shoot**.

Richard: Hey, do you have a free second? I wanted to ask you a question about the meeting on Wednesday.

Lizette: OK, **shoot**.

Richard: It is being held at 10am in the conference room, right?

Lizette: Yes, it is at 10am, but it will be held in the board room.

Richard: OK, perfect. Thanks for clearing that up.

Lizette: No problem. See you at the meeting.

Whitney: I've got a quick question for you.

Kyle: **Shoot**.

Whitney: What was the app you were telling me about last week that you use to post pictures online?

Kyle: Instagram?

Whitney: That's it! Thanks.

Kyle: No problem.

To go along for the ride

When you are enjoying an activity without playing a major part in it, you are **going along for the ride**. In this episode, Andrew asks Marshall whether he would rather be the best player on the worst team or the worst player on the best team. Marshall answers that he would rather be the worst player on the best team. This is because he would be able **to go along for the ride** if he was the worst player on the best team.

In other words, he would be able to enjoy the success of being on the championship team, without having to work very much. He would be a champion without participating too much in the team's victory.

So, when you **go along for the ride**, you enjoy something without working too hard for it.

Here are a couple more examples with **to go along for the ride**:

Pat: Janet! Funny running into you here. I didn't know you'd be at this conference.

Janet: Well, I'm not presenting or anything. Actually, my husband will be giving a talk and I'm just **going along for the ride**. Coming to this conference gave me the chance to get out of the city for a bit.

Pat: Ah, I see. Well it was great to run into you!

Janet: Yes. Take care.

Peter: So what did you think of the play? Thanks so much for coming out to watch it!

Lee: I thought it was amazing! You were amazing!

Peter: Oh, thanks! But I really didn't have a big role. The other cast members were the real stars. I just **went along for the ride**.

Lee: No, it was really fantastic. You all did a great job.

Peter: Thanks so much!

Goldilocks

In this episode, Andrew and Marshall talk about a country they would live in if they had the chance to move to a different country. Marshall says he would like to live in a **Goldilocks** country, one that is not too cold but not too hot.

When we use the adjective **Goldilocks** to describe a thing or a place, we are making a reference to the children's story *Goldilocks and the Three Bears*. In this story, a girl named Goldilocks breaks into a bear family's house while the family is out. The girl notices three bowls of porridge on the table and tries eating the porridge from each bowl. She finds that the papa bear's porridge is too hot, the baby bear's porridge is too cold, but the mama bear's porridge is just the right temperature.



The girl then notices three chairs and decides to sit down for a bit. The papa's chair is too firm, the baby's is too soft, but the mama's is just perfect. Finally, she takes a look at the three beds in the house and decides to take a nap. Again, she tries all three beds and decides that the mama's is just the right size. When the bear family gets home, they find the girl sleeping in the mama bear's bed. The girl wakes up and runs away.

So, when we describe something as being **Goldilocks**, it means that is in the middle of two extremes.

Here are a couple more examples with **Goldilocks** used as an adjective:

Ted: I heard on the news the other day that scientists have discovered a new **Goldilocks** planet in the solar system.

Yasmin: What does that mean?

Ted: Well, they think this planet might be perfect for hosting life. On this planet, the temperature is not too hot and not too cold.

Yasmin: So aliens might live there?

Ted: Who knows? Maybe!

Salesperson: How can I help you today?

Customer: I'm looking for a new mattress.

Salesperson: No problem. I'll be happy to help you find the perfect mattress for you. What type would you like?

Customer: I'm looking for a **Goldilocks** mattress. You know, not too firm, not too soft, somewhere in the middle.

Salesperson: Sure, no problem. Why don't you follow me and I'll show you what we have in stock.

Customer: Perfect. Thanks!

Quiz

1. Which of the following is NOT a typical feature of a loft?
 - a) high ceilings
 - b) big windows
 - c) brick walls
 - d) many rooms

2. Which of the following is a colloquial expression?
 - a) What's up?
 - b) a core competency
 - c) an assignment capsule
 - d) bullish

3. The expression *the biz* is usually used when talking about which industry?
 - a) the entertainment industry
 - b) the finance
 - c) the forestry industry
 - d) the manufacturing industry

4. What does a computer do when it freezes?
 - a) turns off
 - b) locks up
 - c) blows up
 - d) turns to ice

5. Which title of a children's story has now become an adjective that means *just right*?
 - a) *Cinderella*
 - b) *Bears*
 - c) *Goldilocks*
 - d) *Snow White*

6. Which of the following skills best demonstrates muscle memory?

- a) singing
- b) weightlifting
- c) speaking a foreign language
- d) playing the piano

7. Which of the following verbs means to finish a video game?

- a) to bash a video game
- b) to bust a video game
- c) to beat a video game
- d) to break a video game

Quiz Answers

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

Episode Credits

Today's guest: Marshall
Host: Andrew Bates
Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates
Audio editor: Andrew Bates
Transcription and transcript editing: Andrew Bates
Learning materials writer: Andrew Bates
Learning materials editor: Jessica Cox
Webmaster: Hussain Mohammed
Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima
Project managers: Harp Brar and Maura Smith