

Chatterbox #147 – Around the Culips water cooler

Episode Description

Office workers often gather around the water cooler to gossip, share news, and talk about what's going on in the world. In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew and Harp have a water cooler conversation. Join them as they chat about local and international current events!

Sample Dialogue

Andrew: They're going to install charging hubs for electric cars.

Harp: Oh. That's interesting. I haven't heard of that one.

Andrew: Yeah. So, I don't know if you drive an electric car. I don't. But I guess they're anticipating that in the future more people will, and you need to charge 'em up. So go to Saint Catherine Street to get that done.

Harp: Yeah. And you could charge your car and go shopping at the same time.

Andrew: Yeah. It's a nice idea.

Harp: Yeah. You could **kill two birds with one stone**.

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- A feast for the eyes
- A new take on something
- Water cooler conversation
- What a something
- To nickel and dime
- To be backed into a corner
- Everything under the sun
- Across the board
- The bottom line
- A vicious circle
- The main drag
- To kill two birds with one stone
- To be worth a something



Chatterbox #147 – Around the Culips water cooler

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

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Andrew: And I'm Andrew. And we're Culips.

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

Andrew: And we recommend that you sign up to become a member while you're visiting our website. 'Cause when you're a member, you can really take your English studies to the next level. We give you transcripts and detailed explanations and quizzes for every episode. And this will really help you study English.

Harp: Yup. We definitely recommend that. And remember that we're also on Facebook and Twitter, so come on over and say hi, and leave us a question if you have it or something you want to hear about. And if you're listening to us on iTunes, give us a five-star rating. You know you want to.

Andrew: It will help us out, and it will help spread the good news about Culips.

Harp: Yes. So how are you?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty well. How are you, Harp?

Harp: I'm good. Anything new? Do anything fun lately?

Andrew: Hmm. Good question. Oh, there is one thing. Recently, I went to a festival here in Montreal called MUTEK.

Harp: Ah. I've heard of it. It's the electronic music festival?

Andrew: Yeah. It's a big electronic music festival, and actually, I saw a dance performance. It wasn't really musical, but there were some musical elements. And it was one of the coolest things I've ever seen.

Harp: Oh, wow. Really?

Andrew: Yeah. There was this artist/choreographer/super-talented guy from Japan. And he did a dance performance in a big theatre in front of four different projectors. And there were different projectors displayed on him and displayed on the walls, and it was just really cool. It was a visual treat; it was **a feast for the eyes**.

- Harp: Wow. Was it just one guy dancing?
- Andrew: It was just one guy dancing. And you know what? Maybe on the Culips Facebook page, I will post a video, so everybody can see what this looks like 'cause it's hard to describe, but it's amazing to see.
- Harp: Wow. It does sound amazing. That's cool.
- Andrew: Yeah. It was a great experience.
- Harp: Nice. Well, let's get started with today's episode. Today we're gonna do a Chatterbox episode. And that's where we chat. We talk about current events. We interview people. We talk about some exciting topics.
- Andrew: Yeah. And today we have sort of **a new take on** the Chatterbox episode. We're going to have some **water cooler conversations**.
- Harp: Yes. So when we say **water cooler conversation**, it basically means things that people are talking about on the street or at work with their friends and colleagues.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. You know, in the office, it's common for people to sorta hang out around the water cooler. They wanna get up and get a drink, and while they're there, they sort of stop and chat with their colleagues and talk about current events and new things.
- Harp: Yup. Exactly. So that's what we're gonna do here for you at Culips.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. And so the first story that we're gonna talk about is about travelling, flying on Air Canada.
- Harp: Yes. And how they are gonna become very strict on their carry-on luggage.
- Andrew: Yeah. So, from what I understand, now if you wanna fly on Air Canada, or any airline in Canada, you have to pay a \$25 fee to check your bags on the plane.
- Harp: Yup. So this is an idea that's been in the US for a long time, for a couple of years, and with Air Canada, it used to be two pieces of checked luggage that you could check in for free. And now, they've recently changed it. I think it's been at least 6 months that it's been changed.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Harp: And so, since it changed, most people got creative and started jam-packing their carry-on luggage and getting really big suitcases to try to bring on the plane with them. And now they're gonna get all strict about it.

- Andrew: Yeah. So before, whenever you just carried your luggage onto the plane, there were always size restrictions, but nobody was strict about checking how big your bag was.
- Harp: Or how heavy it was.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. But these days, because people have to pay a fee to check their bag, they're—like you said—cramming more and more things into their carry-on baggage, and this is becoming a real problem for the airline.
- Harp: Yup. It's slightly ridiculous, but I find their \$25 check-in bag fee ridiculous. Ludicrous! It really makes me angry.
- Andrew: I agree with you. Now, before the \$25 fee, were you the type of person who would check a bag and pack a lot of stuff? Or would you just sort of try and travel light and just carry a bag on?
- Harp: It really depended where I was going. If I went to Toronto for just the weekend, I would definitely do just a carry-on. But I often go home to visit my parents in Edmonton, and I'm gonna go for a week, so I can't live with just a carry-on. And I always have to take a larger-sized suitcase. It might not be full, but I like to check it in. And I just recently went to visit my parents, and I had to pay the extra \$25 both ways. And to me, I think they should just put it in the price of the ticket if they're gonna charge me, rather than make me pay it when I get to the airport. I just found it so annoying.
- Andrew: It is annoying. I agree. And a lot of people are complaining that it's actually slowing down the service because now you need to have extra staff members check your bags before you get onto the plane. And even when they check your bag, it still means that more people are bringing their bags onto the plane. So the overhead bins are full, and people can't find a place to store their bags. It's making the flight attendants angry, and **what a mess**.
- Harp: It is a mess, and I'm sure it's gonna be... end up being the same thing that happens in the US when you travel, where they... People bring on carry-on luggage, but they don't have enough space, like you said, in the overhead compartments. And they make you check it in when you get to the airport anyway, but they don't charge you then because it's only a carry-on size. So, it just becomes ludicrous, I find.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. You know what? This happened to me last time I flew, too. Maybe I'm a part of the problem. I don't know. But I had a bag that I just carried on that was too big, and so they said, "Oh. You have to check it, sir." But then I didn't have to pay the fee because I already got the bag onto the plane.
- Harp: That makes me so angry right now because I had to pay both ways.

- Andrew: Yeah. So I scammed the system.
- Harp: Next time, I'm gonna do the same thing.
- Andrew: Right. So this is a problem when I'm flying. And it's gonna be interesting to see how the airlines react to this customer backlash.
- Harp: Yup. And a lot of people are talking about this, and they're just getting annoyed with the airlines. People hate being **nicked and dined**, and so they try to avoid paying this fee.
- Andrew: Yeah, but we're kind of **backed into a corner**. There's not much that we can do. If you need to fly somewhere, you have to fly there, really. Driving is too slow. The alternative is not a good alternative.
- Harp: Yeah. Definitely. If I wanted to visit my parents and drive, that would take me 3 days there, to drive there, and 3 days to drive back, so I would have about 2 days to spend with them.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's not gonna work.
- Harp: No. Not at all.
- Andrew: OK. Well, I think maybe we should move on to our second topic of conversation.
- Harp: OK. Let's do it.
- Andrew: So, our second story is about technology and the computer program Adblock. You know this one, Harp?
- Harp: I think I've heard of it before. That's basically where you put a program on your computer, and it blocks all the annoying ads.
- Andrew: Exactly. So when you install Adblock onto your Internet browser, it blocks all of the really annoying ads, like, pop-up ads. It blocks commercials on YouTube. It blocks a lot of different types of Internet advertising.
- Harp: But does it discriminate, or it blocks **everything under the sun**?
- Andrew: Yeah. It just goes all **across the board** and blocks everything.
- Harp: OK. So now the news is that this is gonna be moving to mobile devices.
- Andrew: Yeah. And I think this is very exciting news. Very soon, Adblock will come out with a version for Android and for iOS, so you can install it on your smartphone.

- Harp: I'm hearing a lot of talk about this and how it's really gonna affect companies' **bottom lines** because they depend on getting advertising out there. And if everyone's blocking it, people aren't seeing their ads. They're not clicking on it. They're not making money.
- Andrew: So, it's **a vicious circle**, really. Because what the Internet publishers do is make really annoying ads to grab your attention, right? They have pop-up ads or maybe a loud video will start playing while you're visiting a website. And so people download the ad blocker to block these ads 'cause they don't wanna see them, but then Internet publishers go out of business. So, I don't know. It's a tough one for them.
- Harp: Mmhmm. It's definitely tough. Do you actually use ad blockers?
- Andrew: Of course. What about you?
- Harp: Yeah, me too. No, actually I don't have it. And I kinda don't mind ads sometimes because I feel like they are really catered to you. Like, I'll search something on Google, and then I'll start seeing some ads. And I'm like, "Oh, that's kind of interesting. Oh, yeah, that's what I was searching about." So, I'm one of those people that actually get taken in by the ads.
- Andrew: Oh, OK. So you're the demographic that the Internet publishers need to target.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Andrew: Yeah. I just find ads on the Internet very annoying, and so the ad blocker is great for me. There are some situations where I'll actually turn it off. Like, in Canada, we have the CBC, the big public broadcaster, and I know that this is a struggling company, and I wanna support the CBC. So when I view content on their website, I actually turn my ad blocker off. And I don't mind seeing an ad for 15 seconds or something. But every other situation? Adblock's on.
- Harp: OK. Well, I'm happy to... to hear you're supporting the CBC.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Yeah. But it'll be interesting to see how the Internet evolves once Adblock is available to everybody on a mobile device. I think right now they have over 200 million users of their product, so it's very popular.
- Harp: Oh, that's interesting. And a lotta people use their mobile devices to browse the Internet, so if people put it on there, it's gonna be... It's gonna be big news.
- Andrew: Totally. So, let's wait and see what happens with this one.

- Harp: Let's move on to the last topic for our water cooler episode. All right, so our first topic was a very Canadian topic, with Air Canada. Then we did a little bit more of an international topic, with ad blockers. But now we're gonna focus on a local topic.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Bringin' it back home.
- Harp: Yes. Back to Montreal. And this is all about how Saint Catherine Street is gonna be renovated.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. So, if you've never visited Montreal, you might not know about Saint Catharine Street.
- Harp: It's basically a long strip. It has a lot of big stores and small independent shops on it. And it's a big pedestrian shopping area.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Whenever I go down Saint Catherine Street—it's one of **the main drags** downtown—I always kinda feel like I'm in a shopping mall.
- Harp: Yup. Exactly. Me too.
- Andrew: Like, a big outdoor shopping mall. So it's a very busy street and a big commercial hub.
- Harp: Yup. So now, it's been recently announced that they're gonna completely renovate it, and there're some really interesting things that they wanna do.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. So they're going to widen the sidewalks, make the street a little bit narrower, and they're going to heat the sidewalks.
- Harp: Yes. Heated sidewalks. I was really fascinated when they talked about this.
- Andrew: Yeah. So, I guess a heated sidewalk would be very nice in the winter because the snow would just melt right off it automatically.
- Harp: I personally think—if they can do it in an ecological way and not waste a lot of energy with these heated sidewalks—that it's gonna be great. Because that's one of the things for people walking on Saint Catherine. It's not even the cold, it's that the street and the sidewalks are so icy and full of snow that it's not easy to walk, so people don't wanna go there shopping in the winter.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. But let's be honest. Even if there were heated sidewalks, would you still go shopping outdoors in the winter?
- Harp: I... I think I would, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah?

- Harp: 'Cause you get that little bit of cold, then you go into a store and you warm up. Then you go outside, then you warm up. It's not, like, always cold.
- Andrew: OK. Yeah. I see your point. I mean, it encourages me to go if there is a heated sidewalk. It's a selling point of the street, I guess.
- Harp: Yeah. I was actually talking about this with some colleagues at work. And we all agreed that we would prefer this, with the heated sidewalks that were all clear of snow and ice and being able to go in and out of stores, rather than going to a mall and being inside the whole time. Because then you're so hot with your big winter jacket, and you have to carry your winter jacket. It's just not very comfortable.
- Andrew: Yeah. That's a good point you raise there.
- Harp: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Another feature that they are going to implement into Saint Catherine Street is free Wi-Fi.
- Harp: Oh. That'll be great and a big tourist draw. Because tourists usually don't have a data plan when they come to Canada, so they need the Wi-Fi if they wanna stay connected and be able to search restaurants to go to or where other shops are.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. And, yeah, I'm excited about this because it's surprisingly difficult to find free Wi-Fi downtown. So, yay! Free Wi-Fi!
- Harp: Yeah. That's gonna be a very good feature.
- Andrew: Another kind of eco feature is that they're going to install charging hubs for electric cars.
- Harp: Oh. That's interesting. I haven't heard of that one.
- Andrew: Yeah. So, I don't know if you drive an electric car. I don't. But I guess they're anticipating that in the future more people will, and you need to charge 'em up. So go to Saint Catherine Street to get that done.
- Harp: Yeah. And you could charge your car and go shopping at the same time.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's a nice idea.
- Harp: Yeah. You could **kill two birds with one stone**.

- Andrew: But there is a little bit of opposition to this renovation plan. Because a lotta the small businesses that operate on Saint Catharine Street think that the construction time is going to hurt their business and maybe even put them out of business.
- Harp: Well, that's a very legitimate concern because it seems like whenever they do construction on the big streets here in Montreal, like how they did on Saint Laurent a couple of years back, a lot of stores end up going out of business because people can't park because there's too much construction. People can't walk easily, and people don't wanna go there when it's under construction. So I can understand their concerns for sure.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Especially in Montreal, when sometimes the construction tends to go over the projected time, too.
- Harp: You're so nice by saying *sometimes*. I feel it's every time.
- Andrew: Yeah. So I understand their concerns, and I think that's a legitimate issue. But in response to this criticism, the mayor said, "You know, sometimes you have to suffer a little bit. The short-term sacrifice will mean rewards in the long term."
- Harp: Yup. And I think that you can see it when you go on Saint Laurent, because this is, like I said, a street that had been renovated a couple of years back, and it just looks beautiful now compared to before.
- Andrew: Yup. For sure.
- Harp: So, hopefully it happens quickly, and miraculously on time, or before they're supposed to deliver the project.
- Andrew: Yeah, maybe they'll put this into a high-priority setting.
- Harp: Yes, hopefully.
- Andrew: All right. Well, I hope that you enjoyed listening to our **water cooler chat**. We talked about a story specific to Canada—the Air Canada baggage fiasco—an international story, with the Adblock being released for mobile devices, and a local story about Saint Catherine Street, right here in downtown Montreal.
- Harp: Yeah. Let us know what you think of this episode. It's a... It's a bit of a new style, but we enjoyed doing it.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. So if you wanna hear more shows like this, just let us know, and we can keep doing them.

Harp: Yes. And remember to check out our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Because there we have hundreds of old episodes, but they're all... They're all great episodes.

Harp: Mmhmm. **Worth a listen** if you haven't heard them before.

Andrew: Yes. So that's it for us today. Bye everyone.

Harp: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

A feast for the eyes

When something is very cool to look at and is visually pleasing, we can say that it is **a feast for the eyes**. In this episode, Andrew talks about going to the MUTEK festival and seeing a performance by Japanese artist Hiroaki Umeda. Andrew says that Umeda's performance was **a feast for the eyes** because it was really great to watch and was visually stimulating.

The word **feast** refers to a very large meal where there is lots and lots of delicious food to eat. So, when something is **a feast for the eyes**, there are lots and lots of amazing things to look at and see.

Be careful not to confuse this expression with a similar-sounding idiom: *to feast your eyes on something*. The two expressions have similar meanings but are used slightly differently. Usually when we use *to feast your eyes on something*, we are telling someone else to look at something that we think is cool. For example, if a really neat-looking car drives down the street and you want your friend to take a look at it, you could tell your friend, "Hey, feast your eyes on that!"

On the other hand, the expression **a feast for the eyes** is used to describe something that looks cool or pleasing.

Here are a couple more examples with **a feast for the eyes**:

Jack: I'm going to see the movie *Dinosaur Rampage* on Friday night. Want to come?

Beth: Definitely! I heard it is amazing. The special effects are supposed to be incredible.

Jack: Yeah. I read a review online that said it's **a feast for the eyes**.

Beth: Awesome! I'll see you on Friday then.

John: How was your trip to New York?

Mary: It was great! There's so much to see. It's **a real feast for the eyes**.

John: What was the best thing you saw?

Mary: It's hard to narrow it down, but I really enjoyed seeing the Statue of Liberty.

John: It's beautiful.

Mary: It absolutely is.

A new take on something

The expression **a new take on something** is used when something old is presented in a new or fresh way. For example, this episode is **a new take on** a Chatterbox episode. This is because the format of this episode is slightly different from previous Chatterbox episodes. In most Chatterbox episodes, the Culips hosts talk about one specific topic. However, in this water cooler episode, Andrew and Harp talk about three current event news stories.

So, when something is updated or reinterpreted (like a recipe, a movie, a play, a song, or a way of doing something), it is **a new take on** the old version of that thing. A new approach to doing something is **a new take on** that thing.

Here are a couple more examples with **a new take on something**:

Sally: What are we eating for dinner tonight?

Jin: We're going to have **a new take on** an old recipe my mother used to make: barbecue salmon.

Sally: Interesting.

Jin: Yes. When my mom used to make it, she added dill, but this time I've substituted a blend of other spices that I think will go nicely with the fish.

Sally: Sounds delicious. I can't wait to try it out!

Steve: What's this were listening to?

Hiro: It's **a new take on** a classic Louis Armstrong record.

Steve: Oh really?

Hiro: Yeah. A local jazz band recorded the album last year.

Steve: Very cool. It sounds fresh and exciting but still timeless.

Hiro: I know, right? That's exactly why I love this record.

Water cooler conversation

Today's episode is a **water cooler conversation** episode. When employees at an office chat around the water cooler, they gossip with each other or talk about current events during a work break.

An office's water cooler is a place where employees run into each other often. We call the brief conversations that employees have with each other when they go to get a drink of water **water cooler conversation**.

So, **water cooler conversation** is the type of conversation that office workers have with each other when they have a break. We called this Chatterbox episode a water cooler episode because Harp and Andrew have a conversation that is similar to the kind of **water cooler conversation** that two co-workers might have at the office.



Here's one more example with **water cooler conversation**:

Joan: Did you watch the big game?

Paul: Yeah! Wow. Was it ever exciting!

Joan: Absolutely. I'm so happy the Yankees won. The pitcher was amazing!

Paul: Right! And what about that home run in the ninth inning? What a finish!

Joan: I know! That game is going to go down in history.

Paul: I think you're right. I know it will definitely be a hot topic for **water cooler conversation** at the office tomorrow.

Joan: Yup. People will be talking about that game for a long time!

What a something

When you want to make a strong statement, you can use the expression **what a something**. In this episode, Andrew says **what a mess** when he talks about the new airline baggage rules in Canada. What he means is that the new rules are causing a lot of disruption on airplanes. Andrew strengthens his statement by using **what a mess** to describe the situation. This statement is stronger than just *it's a mess*.

So, when we want to emphasize a point or make a very strong statement, we can use **what a something**. For example, if you walk through the park and you say **what a beautiful day**, you are very impressed by the weather and really appreciate the nice day. The weather on this day isn't simply beautiful, it's exceptionally beautiful.

Saying **what a beautiful day** is stronger than just saying *it's a beautiful day*.

When we add **what a something** to a statement, it strengthens the statement.

Here are a couple more examples with **what a something**:

Vinny:	Hey, check out that car over there!
Antonio:	Oh man! What a beauty!
Vinny:	What is that? A '66 Ford Mustang?
Antonio:	Yup, I think so. I'd love to have a car like that.

Natalia:	Today at work my co-worker ate my lunch.
Kira:	What do you mean?
Natalia:	I put my lunch in the fridge when I got to work, and when I opened the fridge on my lunch break, my lunch was gone. I looked around the lunch room and I noticed one of my coworkers eating my lunch!
Kira:	What did you do?
Natalia:	I went up to him and said that he must have made a mistake and that he was accidentally eating my lunch. He just stared at me and said, "Oh well."
Kira:	What?! What a jerk!
Natalia:	I know, right? He didn't even apologize or offer to buy me a new lunch. I'm starting to suspect that he ate my lunch on purpose.
Kira:	Well, I'm sorry that happened to you. Come on, I'll buy you a sandwich.

To nickel and dime

In this episode, Harp says that people hate being **nickeled and dimed**. When a business **nickels and dimes** a customer, they charge them small fees for services that should be free. Many people who travel on airplanes in Canada feel **nickeled and dimed** because they now have to pay a fee to check their baggage. This service used to be free.

So, when someone **nickels and dimes** someone, they charge a fee for a service that should be free.

In Canada and the USA, a nickel is the name of a 5 cent coin and a dime is the name of a 10 cent coin. So, when you get **nickeled and dimed**, you get the sense that you have to use up all of your small change to pay pointless fees.

If you have to pay a small fee for a service that you think should be free, then you've been **nickeled and dimed**.

Here are a couple more examples with *to nickel and dime*:

Quinton: My car needs a few repairs. Can you recommend a reliable mechanic?

Jenna: Hmm... No, I don't know anyone good. Sorry. But whatever you do, don't go to Leo's Car Repairs. He'll definitely **nickel and dime** you. I have a friend who had a really awful experience there. He ended up spending about \$500 more than he needed to on some basic car maintenance.

Quinton: Yikes! Thanks for the warning. I'll make sure to avoid going to Leo's.

Jenna: Yeah. But other than that I can't be of any help. Sorry.

Quinton: No problem!

Pierre: Did you hear that taxes are going up again?

Wes: Is that so?

Pierre: Yup. Starting next year, sales tax will be going up by 1%.

Wes: I understand that taxes are necessary, but I can't help feeling that I'm being **nickeled and dimed** by our very own government.

Pierre: Yeah. I feel the same way too. When you pay a tax here and a different tax there, there isn't too much left over.

Wes: That's for sure!

To be backed into a corner

When you are in an unpleasant or difficult situation that you can't escape from, you are **backed into a corner**. In this episode, Andrew says that Canadians are **backed into a corner** because they can't avoid having to pay a fee to check their baggage when they fly. Although this is a situation that Canadians would like to avoid, they have to pay if they want to check their bags.

This expression is easy to visualize. Imagine a person being chased into a corner. Once the person is in the corner, there is nowhere to escape. Although this is a scary situation to imagine, it describes this idiom exactly. When you are **backed into a corner**, you are in an unpleasant or difficult situation and are unable to avoid it or escape.

We use this expression as a metaphor to talk about all sorts of unpleasant situations that are unavoidable.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be backed into a corner**.



Vanessa: How's work these days?

Lee: Honestly, I'm not enjoying it. I don't get along with my co-workers and I feel like my boss doesn't challenge me enough.

Vanessa: I'm sorry to hear that. Why don't you just find another job?

Lee: I wish it were that easy. I'd love to leave this company but I'm **backed into a corner** because I still have 2 years remaining on my contract.

Vanessa: What a bummer!

Andrea: How are things going with your girlfriend these days?

Ian: She wants to get married and have kids but I don't think I'm ready quite yet.

Andrea: I faced the same situation with my ex.

Ian: I just feel **backed into a corner**. I love her, but I'm not ready to settle down.

Andrea: I think the best thing to do is just to talk to your girlfriend and try to reach a compromise you're both happy with.

Everything under the sun

In this episode, Harp asks whether Adblock blocks **everything under the sun**. The idiom **everything under the sun** refers to everything that you can imagine or that exists. In other words, Harp is curious whether Adblock blocks every kind of Internet advertising or only certain kinds of ads.

So, when we talk about **everything under the sun**, we talk about all the possibilities or things that exist. This expression is a playful and creative way to talk about everything.

This expression is easy to visualize. If we imagine the sun being over the earth, then everything that exists on earth is under the sun. So, when we mention **everything under the sun**, we include everything that exists.

This expression can also be modified so that it is more specific. Instead of talking about **everything under the sun**, we can talk every specific kind of thing that exists. For example, if you were searching for a new apartment to live in and had had no luck with your search, you could say “I’ve looked at **every apartment under the sun** but haven’t found one I like.”

Here are a couple more examples with **everything under the sun**:

Lucy: How are you feeling? Do you still have a cold?

Derek: Yeah, I do. I’ve tried **everything under the sun** to get rid of it, though.

Lucy: You saw the doctor then? What did he say?

Derek: The doctor told me to take it easy and get lots of rest.

Lucy: I think that’s the best advice. If you rest, you should feel better in a few days.

Bruno: Your wedding is less than 2 months away. Have you found a wedding dress yet?

Helen: Not yet! I’ve been to every dress shop and tried on **every wedding dress under the sun**, but I haven’t found the perfect dress quite yet.

Bruno: What are you going to do?

Helen: I think I just have to keep looking. I’m planning to take a trip to Toronto next weekend to look for dresses there. I’m crossing my fingers that I’ll find something I like.

Bruno: Good luck! I hope you find the perfect dress.

Helen: Thanks. Me too!

Across the board

When something affects people or things **across the board**, everyone or everything is affected equally. In this episode, Andrew says that Adblock blocks all ads **across the board**. This means that all ads are blocked. Adblock does not pick and choose which ads are blocked; it just blocks all ads equally.

So when everyone or everything is equally involved in something or affected by something, they are affected **across the board**. When something applies to everything or everyone, it applies **across the board**.

This expression has an interesting origin. It was first used in the 1950s in the USA and referred to a type of bet on a horse race. If you placed a bet across the board, you bet equal amounts of money on the horses that you thought would finish first, second, and third. Nowadays, the expression is used in a more general sense to refer to anything that affects things or people equally.

Here are a couple more example with **across the board**:

Claire: I'm so happy! I just found out I'm getting a raise!

Chad: Wow. Really? Congrats! You must be working really hard over at your office.

Claire: I'd love it if I were singled out and rewarded for my hard work but that's not the case. My company decided to raise wages for all employees **across the board**.

Chad: So everyone is getting a raise?

Claire: Exactly.

Chad: That's awesome! Very good news.

Benny: Who are you going to vote for in the election?

Patricia: I'm not sure yet. What about you?

Benny: I am going to vote for John Smith from the Democracy Party.

Patricia: Oh yeah? Why is that?

Benny: Well, he is proposing **across-the-board** tax cuts for everyone, and I really like that.

Patricia: Sounds like an interesting proposition. I'll have to take a look at the details but that sounds like it could be a good idea.

The bottom line

The bottom line is how much money a company earns or loses. It refers to the profits and losses of a company or business. In this episode, Harp says that Adblock will affect many companies' **bottom lines** because less money will be generated by advertising if Internet users can easily block ads with the Adblock application.

If you look at a financial document, the last item always shows the total profit or loss. That item is called **the bottom line**.



In the photo shown here, on the very last line (**the bottom line**), the profits are displayed.

So when we talk about a business's or company's **bottom line**, we refer to their finances and whether they are making money or losing money.

Here are a couple more examples with **the bottom line**:

Harvey: I've decided to sell my investment in the ABC company. Their performance has been very weak recently. Sales are down and the future looks bad. I'm going to get out before their **bottom line** is affected and I lose all my money.

Bill: Good thinking!

Harvey: Thanks. I'll be looking for new investment opportunities, so if you know of anything, please let me know.

Bill: Sure, no problem.

Sally: I've got exciting news! I'm going to be opening a second café!

Deena: Wow. Really? That's great!

Sally: Yes. Business has been really great at my downtown location. Ever since we started selling sandwiches and iced coffee, business has been steadily increasing. Our **bottom line** has been looking really good. So I've decided to open a second location and build my business even more.

Deena: I'm so happy to hear that you're finding success. I'm so proud of you!

Sally: Thanks so much! I'm happy that all my hard work is paying off.

A vicious circle

A vicious circle happens when one problem causes another problem and that makes the first problem even worse than it originally was. When **a vicious circle** occurs, problems keep getting worse and worse.

In this episode, Andrew says that Internet advertising is **a vicious circle**. Internet advertisers react to people using Adblock by creating new types of ads that are louder and more annoying than previous ads because they have to try and find new ways to capture people's attention. However, these ads are so annoying that they cause more and more people to use applications like Adblock to block ads online. Internet advertisers find themselves in **a vicious circle** because their attempts to reach a bigger audience backfire and they end up advertising to a smaller audience instead.

So, when **a vicious circle** happens, one problem causes a second problem and this causes the first problem to just get bigger and bigger.

Here are a couple more examples with **a vicious circle**:

Jarvis: How are you feeling these days, Wally?

Wally: Well, I'm feeling pretty depressed lately.

Jarvis: I'm sorry to hear that. What's the problem exactly?

Wally: Well I look at myself in the mirror and I'm just very unhappy with what I see. It makes me feel depressed. Eating makes me happy so I just eat to try to cure my depression. But in the end I just feel worse and put on more weight.

Jarvis: That is **a vicious circle**. I have a friend who used to be in a similar situation. I can put you in touch if you'd like. Maybe he'd be able to offer you some advice.

Wally: That would be fantastic, actually. Thanks.

Tony: A couple of my friends and I are going to the casino tonight. Wanna come?

Amanda: Nope, no way. If I go to the casino, I'll come back with no money!

Tony: Hmm... OK.

Amanda: Gambling can be **a vicious circle**. If you lose a little money, you have to make a bigger bet to try to win your money back. But often, you lose again and then you're really in trouble.

Tony: Yeah, I understand. We're not serious gamblers, but if you feel like the casino isn't the right place for you, I totally understand if you don't want to come.

The main drag

The main drag is the main or most important street in a city. In this episode, Harp and Andrew talk about Saint Catherine Street in Montreal, one of the city's **main drags**. This street is **a main drag** because it is very busy, has many shops and restaurants, and is a major street in downtown Montreal.

Back in the 1800s, people in North American cities travelled by horse-pulled wagons. The roads they travelled on started to be called drags because the horses dragged the wagons down the street. These days, we don't use the word **drag** to mean street anymore except for in the expression **the main drag**.

So, **a main drag** is a main street or an important street in a city.

Here's one more example with **the main drag**:

Jarred: Could you tell me where the post office is?

Valerie: Sure. Just head straight for about five blocks then take a left. You'll be on Richter Street. It's the city's busy **main drag**, so you'll know you're on it. Continue for four blocks and you'll reach a big brick building. That's the post office.

Jarred: OK, perfect. Thanks so much.

Valerie: No problem. Have a great day.

Jarred: You too!

To kill two birds with one stone

When you solve two problems at the same time by doing only one action, you **kill two birds with one stone**. In this episode, Harp says people will be able to **kill two birds with one stone** when the upgrades to Saint Catherine Street are finished because they will be able to charge their electric cars and shop at the same location.

So, when we can solve two problems or achieve two goals by doing just one thing, we **kill two birds with one stone**.

This expression first started to appear in English in the 1600s. Experts aren't certain where **to kill two birds with one stone** originated. Some speculate that it is related to the mythological story of Daedalus and Icarus, while others think it is an update of an earlier expression, *to stop two gaps with one bush*.

These days, we use the expression **to kill two birds with one stone** when we solve two problems or achieve two objectives with only one action.

Here are a couple more examples with **to kill two birds with one stone**:

Danny: What are you doing today? Wanna hang out?

Kate: I'm pretty busy today, sorry. I don't think I'll have time.

Danny: Oh yeah? What do you have to do?

Kate: I just have to run a bunch of errands. I have to drop off some dry cleaning and go grocery shopping.

Danny: You should just go to the mall. You'll be able to do all that there.

Kate: Ah, yeah. I guess that would **kill two birds with one stone**. Anyway, I gotta go. Busy day today!

Danny: Sure! See you later.

Greg: Hey, check this out.

Peter: What's up?

Greg: I just bought this phone last week but it's already acting very weird.

Peter: Oh yeah. It looks like your screen is damaged. It should be much brighter.

Greg: I know, right?

Peter: You should make a complaint to the company.

Greg: You know what? I think I'm just going to take it back to the store. I'll be able **to kill two birds with one stone** that way. I can complain about the quality of the phone and also get a refund at the same time.

Peter: Oh yeah. That's a good idea!

To be worth a something

We use the expression **to be worth a something** when we want to recommend something to other people. In this episode, Harp recommends the more than 300 Culips episodes that are available at Culips.com by saying that they are **worth a listen**. In other words, Harp says that these episodes are worth listening to, and wants Culips listeners to check them out.

So, when you want to recommend something to someone, you can use the expression **to be worth a something**.

Here are a couple more examples with ***to be worth a something***:

Betty: Last night, Dan and I went to the new Thai restaurant downtown.

Lisa: Oh, I've been hearing good things about that place. What did you think?

Betty: It was absolutely delicious. Definitely **worth a visit** next time you're downtown.

Lisa: Awesome. I'll make sure to check it out!

Betty: Yeah, you won't regret it!

Phil: Have you read any good books recently? I'm looking for something new to read.

Kim: Have you ever read any of Margaret Atwood's books?

Phil: Nope.

Kim: I think you'd like her work. She's **worth a read** for sure.

Phil: OK, cool. Thanks for the recommendation. I'll see if the library has any Atwood titles available.

Kim: Let me know what you think of her.

Phil: OK, will do!

Quiz

- 1. Where does a water cooler conversation usually take place?**
 - a) at home
 - b) at school
 - c) at the office
 - d) at church

- 2. When something affects people across the board, who is affected?**
 - a) everyone
 - b) no one
 - c) more than 50% of the people
 - d) less than 50% of the people

- 3. Which of the following could be described as a feast for the eyes?**
 - a) a turkey dinner
 - b) a clock
 - c) a dark night
 - d) fireworks

- 4. What does it mean when you kill two birds with one stone?**
 - a) You solve two problems with one action.
 - b) You hunt two birds in one hunting trip.
 - c) You see two friends on the same day.
 - d) You make a mistake when doing something important.

- 5. When a business charges a small fee for something that should be free, you might feel like you're being which of the following?**
 - a) nicked and dined
 - b) drawn and quartered
 - c) loonied and toonied
 - d) dollared and cented

6. A main drag is a city's what?

- a) uptown
- b) downtown
- c) main street
- d) side street

7. What is a business's bottom line?

- a) their inventory
- b) their investments
- c) their projected sales
- d) their overall profit or loss

8. Joe: Is your car still making a weird noise?

Mike: Yeah, it is. I've tried _____ to fix it, but I've had no luck.

Fill in the blank.

- a) everything on land
- b) everything under the universe
- c) everything under the sun
- d) everything under the moon

9. The expression *to be worth a something* is used to do what?

- a) insult something
- b) start an argument
- c) make a recommendation
- d) give an apology

Quiz Answers

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

Episode Credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Harp Brar
Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates
Audio editor: Andrew Bates
Transcription: Nancy Miller
Learning Materials writer: Andrew Bates
Transcript and Learning Materials editor: Jessica Cox
Webmaster: Hussain Mohammed
Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima