

Chatterbox #151 – Dreams

Episode Description

Do you dream every night? In this episode, Andrew and Harp take a trip to dreamland. Join them as they talk all about dreams, nightmares, and bizarre sleep habits. Don't sleep on this episode. It's not to be missed!

Sample Dialogue

Andrew: I think, scientifically, we do dream every night, but I can't remember them very often.

Harp: Yeah. I know a lot of people keep, kind of, dream journals by their bed so they remember. Because you forget by the time you're awake in the daytime. But, no, I've tried that once and when I woke up, it was just **gibberish** and I couldn't read my own writing.

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- Flabbergasted
- To recharge your batteries
- A trigger
- An old wives' tale
- To dial something back
- Gibberish
- Far-fetched
- To sleep like a log
- To pass out
- A pet peeve
- Like nails on a blackboard
- The heebie-jeebies



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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

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Andrew: And I am Andrew. And welcome back. We're here with another Culips episode for you.

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

Andrew: And while you are visiting the website, we recommend that you sign up and become a Culips member.

Harp: Yes. You should definitely do that, because when you do, you get access to the Learning Materials, so that includes complete transcripts, detailed explanations, and even a quiz.

Andrew: Mmhmm. So you can take your English studying to the next level with the Learning Materials by becoming a Culips member today.

Harp: Yes. And remember, we're on Facebook and on Twitter, so come on over and say hi or leave us a comment or a suggestion for an upcoming episode.

Andrew: Mmhmm, good idea. And if you listen to Culips through iTunes, then please leave us a five-star rating on iTunes. It will help us spread the good news about Culips.

Harp: Yes. That would be wonderful.

Andrew: So, Harp, what's new with you?

Harp: You know, I heard a crazy story today.

Andrew: A crazy story. Please share.

Harp: Well, one of my friends is going to a retirement party tomorrow.

Andrew: A retirement party, OK.

Harp: Yeah. So I didn't really think anything of it until he started telling me about the person who is retiring, and she is retiring after working at the same place, as a secretary, for 55 years!

- Andrew: Wow, 55 years.
- Harp: Yeah. She started when she was, I think, 18 or 19 and she has worked at the same place in the same position for 55 years!
- Andrew: That's unbelievable.
- Harp: I can't even imagine.
- Andrew: Wow. So that's, you know, more than half a lifetime.
- Harp: Exactly. The things she's seen. I'm **flabbergasted**. She should write a book.
- Andrew: Yeah, because 55 years ago she would have been, you know, doing all her work probably on a typewriter and she would have transitioned to computers and the Internet. Wow! Yeah.
- Harp: And apparently she did all the changes really well and really transitioned into technology and using technology quite easily. So now she's in her 70s and she's on top of it. She can do email and use the Internet, but it's just time for her to retire.
- Andrew: I imagine so. You wouldn't go much longer than 55 years.
- Harp: No, exactly. I think it's enough. I think she's put in her time.
- Andrew: So this whole time, she didn't get any promotions or didn't change positions.
- Harp: She never wanted a promotion.
- Andrew: Really?
- Harp: She always wanted to just stay as a secretary. She loved the interaction with all the clients that came in. That's what she wanted to do and she was really great at it, apparently.
- Andrew: Yeah, I would imagine so; they kept her around for a long time.
- Harp: All right, so I think we should get started with today's Chatterbox episode.
- Andrew: In a Chatterbox episode, we have a conversation. We simply chat about an interesting topic.
- Harp: Yes. So today we're gonna talk about sleeping.
- Andrew: Sleeping, yeah, interesting.

- Harp: Yeah, I think it's gonna be an interesting conversation.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. So, I love to sleep.
- Harp: Me too.
- Andrew: It's one of my favourite things.
- Harp: I agree with you.
- Andrew: Yeah. There's nothing like, you know, after a long day, just going to sleep and **recharging your batteries**.
- Harp: Except if you have a nightmare.
- Andrew: Except if you have a nightmare, yeah. Do you have nightmares often?
- Harp: Not often. Every once in a while. But when I do, it's traumatic, I find.
- Andrew: Really?
- Harp: I usually have the sensation of trying to wake myself up and then finally waking up and then feeling relieved that it was actually a nightmare and not reality, and still feeling afraid of what happened in my nightmare, so I really dislike when it happens.
- Andrew: Aw, that sounds awful.
- Harp: Yeah, it really is.
- Andrew: Are there certain **triggers** that will bring on a nightmare? Like, if you watch a horror movie, will you have a nightmare that night?
- Harp: One hundred percent. That is why I don't watch scary movies. No horror movies for me.
- Andrew: Really?
- Harp: I'm telling you the truth; I really cannot watch a horror movie at all.
- Andrew: Yeah. That never happens for me.
- Harp: Do you have any **triggers** for nightmares?
- Andrew: You know what? I don't have any **triggers**, like, if I watch something or see something. That won't scare me. But this is funny: I find if I eat a piece of cheese before bed, then I always have really crazy dreams.

- Harp: That's so funny.
- Andrew: Yeah. And I don't know if this is **an old wives' tale** or if this is actually science, but I've heard that if you have dairy before bed, this will bring on, like, some crazy dreams.
- Harp: I think it's **an old wives' tale** because I drink milk pretty much every day before I go to bed.
- Andrew: OK. And it doesn't do it for you?
- Harp: No.
- Andrew: Hmm. And I find it's true for me, but maybe it's just a placebo effect or something. I don't know.
- Harp: Maybe.
- Andrew: Yeah. What about you? Do you have any other **triggers**?
- Harp: You know, when I was growing up, there was this park near my house. And if ever I went to that park, I would always have a nightmare. And even now, when I think about the park and I recall a memory from there, I'll always have a nightmare.
- Andrew: Oh no. Are you gonna have a nightmare tonight?
- Harp: I hope not, but probably.
- Andrew: So what is so special about this park?
- Harp: I don't think anything, but I remember going there often with a lot of my cousins. They were older and they would tell me scary stories, so it just always **triggered** nightmares because of all their scary stories, more so than the park.
- Andrew: Huh. That is very interesting.
- Harp: Yeah. I was one of the youngest in the family, so they scared me at every opportunity, which is why I think I don't like horror movies now.
- Andrew: It all makes sense.
- Harp: Yeah.
- Andrew: So what about just dreams in general? If we **dial it back** from nightmares. Do you dream every night?

- Harp: Not that I remember, no. Um... Sometimes I have really vivid dreams which seem like reality. When I wake up the next day, I'm sure they actually happened. But not every day, I would say. What about you?
- Andrew: Yeah. I think, scientifically, we do dream every night, but I can't remember them very often.
- Harp: Yeah. I know a lot of people keep, kind of, dream journals by their bed so they remember. Because you forget by the time you're awake in the daytime. But, no, I've tried that once and when I woke up, it was just **gibberish** and I couldn't read my own writing.
- Andrew: That is so funny because, actually, I tried this recently. I heard a friend of mine talking about lucid dreaming. Do you know this?
- Harp: No. I don't know it.
- Andrew: So, lucid dreaming is apparently... I don't know if this is real or not, but when you can gain consciousness in your dreams and you can control your dreams, so you can sort of decide what happens in your dreams.
- Harp: That sounds like something from a sci-fi movie.
- Andrew: I agree, but he said that the way that he was able to achieve this lucid state was by keeping a dream journal. So I thought, "Hmm. OK. Let me try this." But the same thing happens. I was just writing notes on my phone about my dream, you know, as soon as I woke up. And then when I went to review, it was just **gibberish**. I couldn't understand it at all.
- Harp: That's funny. Yeah, I've never been able to keep a dream journal.
- Andrew: Yeah. And then I decided that I don't really care about lucid dreaming, so I just gave up.
- Harp: You know what happens to me sometimes? It'll be in the middle of the day and I'll have, kind of, that déjà vu feeling and I'll be like, "Why was I...?" And I'll realize, no, it was actually a dream that I had the night before.
- Andrew: That's why you've already seen it. You've already felt it in the dream.
- Harp: Yeah. Or I'll see a friend who was in my dream and then I'll start laughing because I remember some random dream that I had about them.

- Andrew: Have you ever had a reoccurring dream?
- Harp: Again, with the scary story, with the nightmares from the park, yes. That one was always a reoccurring nightmare, so... Not really reoccurring fun dreams, though, just nightmares.
- Andrew: Yeah. I've had a reoccurring dream, and it's not necessarily the same dream all the time, but the same thing happens, and I find myself falling in the dream.
- Harp: Oh, interesting.
- Andrew: You know, I find... I climb up a mountain and I fall down or I fall off some high building, or something happens, and so I think this maybe has some significance.
- Harp: Oh. Do you believe in dreams having meaning?
- Andrew: Hmm. I don't know. If I remember correctly, if you find yourself falling in a dream, you're stressed out or anxious about something, and I do think these dreams tend to happen when I find myself very stressed, so there might be something to it.
- Harp: Yeah. There definitely could be something to that.
- Andrew: Do you believe in dream meaning?
- Harp: Not really, because I've heard of things like if someone is in your dream and they die in your dream, that means they're gonna get married. Have you heard that?
- Andrew: No, I've never heard that.
- Harp: Yeah. There's lots of random things for the symbolism in your dreams and I think it's just not true.
- Andrew: Yeah. I think something like that seems pretty **far-fetched** to me, but I think maybe if something bad happens in your dream and it's related to you being stressed out, maybe there's a connection there. I don't know.
- Harp: Yeah. Some people really believe in dreams and what they mean and they take it for a fact and...
- Andrew: Yeah, no. If you ever just Google "dream meanings," there are tons of websites dedicated to this topic.
- Harp: One hundred percent. And what about your friend with the lucid dreaming? Does he believe in meanings in dreams? Or why is he doing it?

- Andrew: That is a good question. I guess he just likes to do whatever he wants to do, you know? If you wanna just spend your time flying around and exploring all sorts of different things, then you can do that.
- Harp: Ah, that is interesting. That could be kind of fun to be able to control your dreams. Yeah, to get that sensation of flying or...
- Andrew: Yeah. Or doing whatever you want, you know? You wanna experience driving an F1 car really fast and winning the race? Well, you can do that in your dream, maybe, in your lucid dream. Something that would be impossible in real life.
- Harp: Hmm. Very interesting.
- Andrew: Now, what about your sleep habits? Are you a very calm sleeper?
- Harp: No.
- Andrew: No?
- Harp: No. I move around a lot.
- Andrew: Yeah?
- Harp: Yep. I've been known to sleep-talk.
- Andrew: Sleep-talk? Huh.
- Harp: A lot.
- Andrew: A lot?
- Harp: Yeah. I remember, actually, the first time I went to India, with my parents, I had also taken a couple of friends with me, and all of us were sleeping in the same room, because just the way my family's house there is, there were six or seven beds all in one room.
- Andrew: OK.
- Harp: And apparently I woke up in the middle of the night and I was sleep-talking but in Punjabi.
- Andrew: Really?
- Harp: Yeah.
- Andrew: What were you talking about?

- Harp: Oh, I have no idea, and none of my friends spoke Punjabi, so they had no idea.
- Andrew: That is hilarious.
- Harp: Honestly, I sleep-talk all the time, and people have really tried to have conversations with me. Like, friends, if they're sleeping in the same room as me, have tried to have conversations, but I usually fall asleep if someone tries to talk back to me.
- Andrew: It's funny that... I mentioned earlier, the sleep app on my smartphone that I would use to make my sleep journal for a little while? It also had a feature where if you start snoring very loudly, or talking in your sleep, the phone would turn on and record that, so you could hear it back the next day. And I tried this for a couple days, but it didn't turn on so I figure I'm not a snorer and I'm not a sleep-talker, so I'm very, very happy about this.
- Harp: So you're a very calm sleeper, then.
- Andrew: You know what? I think I am a pretty calm sleeper, yeah. I just **pass right out, like a log**.
- Harp: Ah, that's nice.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Harp: What about sleepwalking?
- Andrew: Hmm. Sleepwalking, yeah. My dad is a sleepwalker.
- Harp: Oh, really?
- Andrew: Mmhmm. And my mom has found my dad just wandering around in the house walking. She one time found him in the backyard.
- Harp: Is he doing anything? Like, did he try to take out the lawnmower or something?
- Andrew: I can't remember, but I remember hearing that she found him in the backyard one time. And I think this is also related to stress; he does this when he's stressed out. But, yeah, not for me; I'm not a sleepwalker.
- Harp: No, me neither, but I've... Actually, my sister is a sleepwalker. She sleep-talks and sleepwalks, and it's kind of freaky to find someone in the middle of the night who's sleepwalking because they seem like they're awake but they're not awake and it's just... It's really odd.
- Andrew: Have you seen the movie *Sleepwalk with Me*?

Harp: No, but I've heard of it.

Andrew: Yeah. It stars this actor and comedian, Mike Birbiglia, and it's a really, really interesting movie about a true story that he experienced, where he was staying in a hotel and he was sleepwalking, and he actually walked right out of the window, of the front of his hotel room, and he fell three storeys and landed on the grass in front of the hotel.

Harp: Oh wow! Was he OK?

Andrew: He was OK. He woke up and didn't know what he was doing or where he was. He was covered in glass and blood, and so he had to go back into the hotel lobby and talk to the guy that worked at the hotel, and said, "Uh, excuse me sir. I've had an accident. I'm a sleepwalker and I just walked right out of the front room of the hotel.

Harp: Wow! That's crazy.

Andrew: Yeah. They took him to the hospital and everything was OK in the end. But this movie is about his experiences sleepwalking. So if you're interested in this topic, I recommend you check it out. It's very interesting.

Harp: All right, because I'm sure he's had more adventures with sleepwalking.

Andrew: Yeah. So now, when he sleeps, he has to sleep in a sleeping bag wearing mittens.

Harp: Really?

Andrew: Because first, he just tried the sleeping bag, but he would still wake up and unzip the sleeping bag and walk around, but when he wears the mittens, he can't undo the zipper, so he's stuck in there.

Harp: Ah, that's pretty ingenious.

Andrew: I guess that's one of the best cures for sleepwalking, because there's not a lot of good medicines that can control it.

Harp: Ah, that's so interesting, because it could be dangerous like that.

Andrew: Yeah, this can happen. He could have died in that situation but he made it through, thankfully.

Harp: Thankfully, indeed.

- Andrew: Yeah.
- Harp: So a sleeping bag with mittens.
- Andrew: A sleeping bag with mittens, just like if you're camping in the cold weather.
- Harp: Yep, I guess that's true. You know, you touched on it before, but there are some really annoying things that people do when they're sleeping, like snoring.
- Andrew: Snoring is pretty annoying.
- Harp: Yeah, it's intense. My dad was a big snorer and he snored so loud that I could hear him from my bedroom, which was not that close to my parents' bedroom, and he was a snorer. I'm not sure how my mom slept in the same room as him, it was so loud.
- Andrew: I guess it's just one of those things you get used to. I think... Like I said, I don't think I'm a big snorer, but I do think that I have a little bit of sleep apnea, because every once in a while, when I'm sleeping, I suddenly wake up in the middle of the night and I have no breath in my lungs. I'm, like, gasping for air. And I don't know what this is. It's not that I'm stressed out. It's just that I'm not breathing very well, and I think this is what they call sleep apnea.
- Harp: You should take the sleep test for that.
- Andrew: There's a sleep test?
- Harp: Yeah. You wear, like, a mask and you wear, kind of, monitoring equipment and they check if you have sleep apnea. But then, if you have sleep apnea, pretty much the only cure is to wear a mask to sleep all the time.
- Andrew: It's really not a problem that happens very often, just maybe once a month. It always happens when I'm sleeping in public.
- Harp: Really?
- Andrew: Yeah, like if I'm on a bus or an airplane and I fall asleep, I always wake up and I'm always embarrassed because I'm like, "Ah!" And then I'm like, "Oh, where am I? Oh my gosh."
- Harp: Oh wow. So it's never happened to you when you're at home?
- Andrew: It does occasionally, but a hundred percent, it will always happen if I **pass out**, you know, like, on an airplane or something.
- Harp: So maybe it's more stress-related.
- Andrew: It could be. Yeah, I don't know, it's weird.

- Harp: Yeah, another annoying habit that people can have is grinding their teeth.
- Andrew: Yes, grinding your teeth. A friend of mine does it so bad he has to wear a mouth guard.
- Harp: Yeah, I have a friend who does that as well and it's annoying to hear it. They just sound like they're in pain when they're doing it.
- Andrew: It is one of my **pet peeves**, listening to that sound. It's **like nails on a blackboard**. It's eh.
- Harp: Yeah, it gives me a creepy feeling that they're just oh, it's gross.
- Andrew: **The heebie-jeebies**.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Andrew: Yeah. Another phenomenon, or something that I experience that's always a little bit weird, is if I'm waking up in a new place. So maybe I'm on vacation and I'm in a hotel room or something, and I wake up and I have no idea where I am. For 3 or 4 seconds, I'm completely freaked out and then it comes back to me.
- Harp: I know exactly what you mean. That's such a weird feeling, when you're like, "Oh! Am I supposed to be here? What am I doing here? How did I get here? What am I doing?"
- Andrew: Exactly. And I actually love that feeling because it's just complete surprise.
- Harp: Yeah, well I like it when it's over and I'm like oh, yeah, now I know where I am and I can sleep and relax more.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's one of those feelings you don't get to encounter very often, so I enjoy it when it happens.
- Harp: That's funny.
- Andrew: Yeah, well do you have anything more that you'd like to add about sleep today?
- Harp: No, I think that's good. I think I'm ready for a little nap.
- Andrew: Yeah. I'm feeling a little bit tired myself.
- Harp: All right, so remember everyone, check out the website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and come on over to Facebook or Twitter and say hi.

Andrew: Mmhmm, and if you're on iTunes, please give us a five-star rating.

Harp: Thanks everyone. Talk to you soon.

Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Flabbergasted

In this episode, Harp talks about a secretary who is retiring after working for 55 years. Harp says that she is **flabbergasted** when she thinks of all the experiences the secretary would have encountered during her long career. When you are **flabbergasted**, you are fascinated, astonished, or very surprised. In other words, Harp is amazed by the secretary's career and all of the fascinating experiences she must have had.

Flabbergasted is an interesting word, and it has a unique sound that is different from many other English words. Experts don't know how the word entered the English language, but we do know that the word was probably first used in 1772. Some suggest that it is a blended word made up of flabby and aghast. This is definitely a possibility, but the true origin of the word may never be known.

So, if something shocks you or astonishes you, you are **flabbergasted**. When you feel **flabbergasted**, you are quite surprised or amazed. Sometimes when you're **flabbergasted**, you are at a loss for words and find it difficult to express your feelings.

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

Amanda: Yesterday I was at work and the phone rang. So I picked it up and it was my daughter's school principal. He said my daughter was in trouble because she got caught cheating on a test.

Duane: Oh no!

Amanda: I was **flabbergasted**. I couldn't believe it. She's always been a great student. I never thought she would resort to cheating. My husband and I are meeting with her and her teacher today after school.

Duane: Well, I'm sure she had a good reason to cheat. She's a good kid. She was probably just stressed out.

Kristy: Hey, nice haircut!

Eddie: Thanks. But I hate it.

Kristy: Well, it's a little different than your usual look, but I think it looks cool.

Eddie: Really? I asked the hairdresser to just give me a trim but she pretty much cut off all of my hair! When I got a chance to look in the mirror, I was **flabbergasted**.

Kristy: I really think it looks good. If you don't like it, just wait a month. It'll grow back.

To recharge your batteries

In this episode, Andrew says that he loves getting a good night's sleep and **recharging his batteries**. He isn't talking about charging his phone or laptop batteries but is instead talking about getting a good rest so he can feel fresh and energetic again. When somebody **recharges their batteries**, they rest and relax so that they can feel refreshed and new.

This idiomatic expression is a metaphor that compares the human body to a machine that relies on batteries to operate. Just like an electronic device that needs to be recharged when its batteries are low so that it can function correctly again, humans need to rest and relax when they become tired so that we can feel strong and energetic again.

So, when you **recharge your batteries**, you take a break, go to sleep, or relax in order to regain your energy.

Here are a couple more examples with **to recharge your batteries**:

Marcia: Hey, a few of us from the accounting department are going to go out for dinner and drinks after work. Wanna come along?

Sonya: That sounds really fun. When are you meeting?

Marcia: At 7pm.

Sonya: OK, perfect! I'm feeling a little tired so I'm going to make a quick trip home right after work and **recharge my batteries** for half an hour, then I'll meet you guys at 7pm.

Marcia: Great. See you then.

Shelia: You want to go to the park or something?

Andrea: Sure, but I'm feeling pretty tired. Can we go in an hour or two?

Sheila: Yeah, no problem. Why don't you lie down for a few minutes to **recharge your batteries**? Then we can meet up later on and go to the park.

Andrea: Sounds great!

A trigger

Something that causes a negative occurrence, event, or reaction is called **a trigger**. In this episode, Harp and Andrew ask each other whether they have any nightmare **triggers**. In other words, they are curious about what causes them to have nightmares. Harp responds by saying that horror movies act as **a trigger** for her nightmares and Andrew suspects that eating dairy might be **a nightmare trigger** for him.

This expression is the noun form of the verb **to trigger**, which means to set off or make something happen. So, when something acts as **a trigger**, it causes something else to occur.

We usually use this expression when we talk about negative events occurring. In this episode, Andrew and Harp use it when they talk about nightmares. A current trend is to issue **trigger** warnings before magazine articles, movies, and TV shows that contain graphic or violent content. These **trigger** warnings serve to alert readers/viewers that the content they are about to see might act as **a trigger** for people who themselves have survived violent or traumatic situations.

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

Sabrina: Hey, I'm having a little dinner party at my place on Saturday. Want to come?

Lester: Sounds fun! You don't have a cat, do you?

Sabrina: I do, actually. Is that a problem?

Lester: Oh, that's too bad. I have really bad allergies and cat hair is one of the main **triggers**. If I get too close to a cat, I break out in a really bad rash.

Sabrina: Oh no. Well, you might just have to skip the party then.

Lester: Yeah, I guess so. Oh well!

Art: Thanks so much for agreeing to watch the kids today.

Marge: No problem! Before you go out, is there anything special I should know?

Art: Well, just make sure that you put Johnny down for a nap at 2pm. He sometimes has temper tantrums, and not getting enough rest is the usual **trigger**. As long as he takes a little nap though, he is a very well-behaved kid.

Marge: OK, perfect! See you later tonight.

Art: If you have any problems, just call my cell. My wife and I will be home tonight around 11pm.

An old wives' tale

In this episode, Andrew and Harp wonder whether eating dairy before bed really acts as a trigger for nightmares or whether it's just **an old wives' tale**. **An old wives' tale** is a superstitious or traditional belief that many people think is true, even though it is not.

The concept of **an old wives' tale** has been around for hundreds of years. **Old wives' tales** are about subjects that traditionally were talked about by women: pregnancy, cooking, health, etc. **Old wives' tales** are stories of traditional wisdom that are passed down from one generation to the next. Although they were once believed to be true, science has proven **old wives' tales** to be myths.

So, **an old wives' tale** is a piece of traditional wisdom that was once thought to be true but is now known to be false.

Here are a couple more examples with **an old wives' tale**:

Nathan: Hey, you want a chocolate? My boss gave me a box of chocolates today at work.

Brittany: No thanks. I don't eat chocolate. It makes my skin break out in pimples.

Nathan: Really? I thought that was just **an old wives' tale**.

Brittany: No. For me, it really does affect my skin.

Nathan: OK. More chocolate for me!

Toby: You look a little different. Did you lose weight or get a haircut or something?

Martin: Actually, I shaved my arms. I'm a swimmer and I have a race coming up. Having no body hair makes me swim faster.

Toby: You do realize that the hair is going to grow back in really, really thick, right?

Martin: Nah. That's **an old wives' tale**.

Toby: I don't know about that.

Martin: Trust me. It'll be fine.

Toby: OK, whatever you say. Good luck with your race.

Martin: Thanks.

To dial something back

When you **dial something back**, you reduce its strength or intensity. In this episode, Andrew uses this expression to transition the conversation from an intense topic (nightmares) to a more general topic (dreaming). In other words, Andrew changes the mood of the conversation from intense to calm when he **dials it back**.

This expression is easy to visualize. Imagine the volume knob on a radio. When you **dial back the volume**, you turn the knob counter clockwise to make the radio quieter. So we can think of **dialing back** to be similar to turning down. **Dialing back** is a way of reducing the intensity of something.

This expression is known as a separable phrasal verb. So you can use it in two different ways that are both correct. You can **dial something back** and also **dial back something**. The direct object of the sentence can be placed in between the main verb (**to dial**) and the preposition (**back**) or after the preposition. It's your choice!

Here are a couple more examples with **to dial something back**:

Brenda: I can't wait until the weekend!

Ismael: Why?

Brenda: It's your birthday party on Saturday! It's going to be so much fun!

Ismael: It will be fun, yeah, but it's just going to be a small gathering with a couple of my friends. You can **dial back your enthusiasm**.

Brenda: No way! I love birthdays! It's going to be the best time!

Ismael: Well, it sounds like you are even more excited than me and it's my birthday!

Brenda: Yeah. I just can't help myself.

Kelvin: Look at that idiot in front of us! He is driving so slowly! I'm going to be late because of him.

Nathaniel: He does seem to be going kinda slowly.

Kelvin: Kinda slowly? He's clogging up the whole road! I'm going crazy! What a jerk!

Nathaniel: Hey, **dial it back** a bit, OK? He's not worth having a heart attack over. Just take a right at the next intersection and we can take a different route.

Kelvin: Sorry. You're right. I just get really angry when I encounter bad drivers.

Gibberish

Gibberish is speech or writing that is impossible to understand because it is nonsense.

In this episode, Harp tells a story about keeping a dream journal. She used to write a journal entry about her dreams immediately after waking up from a dream. These entries were written in the middle of the night while Harp was still half asleep. When Harp looked at her journal when she woke up in the morning, she found that they were all **gibberish**. In other words, Harp's journal was impossible to read because it made no sense and was unintelligible.

The exact origin of this expression is unknown. However, we do know that it was probably first used in the 16th century. Most likely, **gibberish** is an onomatopoeia: a word that imitates the sound it describes.

Any writing or speech that is totally incomprehensible and makes no sense is **gibberish**.

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

Son: Hey Mom, what was my first word?

Mom: You actually didn't start talking until you were about 3 years old!

Son: Really?

Mom: Yeah. You babbled and spoke **gibberish** for a really long time. Then finally when you were around 3, you started to talk. Your first word was *Mama*.

Son: I wonder why I took so long to start talking.

Mom: I don't know, but once you started, you really started to learn quickly!

Son: Very interesting!

Josephine: Your English is great. How long have you been studying?

Lila: Well, it's been almost 10 years now. I remember when I first started to learn English. It was so weird at first because I couldn't understand anything anyone was saying. It was all just **gibberish** to me. But gradually, over time, I began to get better and better.

Josephine: You should be proud. You're a really great English speaker now.

Lila: Thanks!

Far-fetched

Something that is unlikely to be true and is difficult to believe is **far-fetched**. In this episode, Andrew says that he thinks dream symbolism is **far-fetched**. In other words, Andrew finds it difficult to believe in the idea that dreams have meaning and significance that can affect someone's life. For example, if someone dreams about money, Andrew thinks it's unlikely, or **far-fetched**, that it means that person will win the lottery in real life.

This expression's origin is interesting. It first started to be used in the 1500s and is related to the Old English verb *fecchen*, which meant to go and get something. Over time, this verb evolved into its Modern English form, *to fetch*. These days, the meaning remains the same. When you fetch something, you go and get it. So, the adjective **far-fetched** is closely related to the verb *to fetch*. We can imagine that if something is **far-fetched**, it is metaphorically too far away to go and get. In other words, **far-fetched** things are difficult to believe in or to take as truth.

Here are a couple more examples with **far-fetched**:

Shannon: I'm so excited for our road trip! Just to make sure I understand the plan correctly, can we go over the schedule?

Boyd: Sure.

Shannon: So, we're going to leave Montreal on Friday morning and then arrive in Chicago by Friday afternoon?

Boyd: I think it's pretty **far-fetched** to expect us to make it all the way to Chicago in one morning. More likely we will reach Chicago by Saturday afternoon. It's almost 1,400 km away from Montreal.

Shannon: Oh really? Good to know. For some reason I thought it was closer.

Shawn: Do you think there will be flying cars one day?

Kent: You never know. I don't think the idea is too **far-fetched**. It could happen.

Shawn: Yeah. That'd be so cool.

Kent: It'd be really cool, you're right. But don't you think it would be dangerous with all those cars flying around all over the place?

Shawn: Yeah, it'd be chaos. The government would have to put some regulations in place.

Kent: Yeah, definitely.

To sleep like a log

In this episode, Andrew says that he is a calm sleeper. When he falls asleep, he **sleeps like a log**. When someone gets an excellent and refreshing sleep, we can say they **sleep like a log**. This expression compares someone who sleeps deeply to a log that has fallen in the forest. Just like the log remains still and unmoving, someone who **sleeps like a log** sleeps very deeply and calmly.

A related expression is *to sleep like a baby*. This has the same meaning as **to sleep like a log**. When someone sleeps like a baby, they have a very calm, deep, and refreshing night of sleep.

In this episode, Harp says that she is a restless sleeper. She moves around a lot while sleeping and sometimes even talks in her sleep. Although she feels refreshed when she wakes up, we wouldn't say that she **sleeps like a log**, because she is very active while she sleeps. Andrew, on the other hand, is a calm sleeper. He **sleeps like a log**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to sleep like a log**:

Randy: Do you know what's up with Bill? I gave him a call but he didn't pick up.

Joey: Oh, he worked the night shift last night. He's probably **sleeping like a log** right now.

Randy: Ah. That explains it.

Joey: Yeah. Try giving him a call later tonight.

Randy: Cool. Will do.

Elijah: Man, I'm so tired.

Ron: Yeah, me too. I was up all night studying for this afternoon's exam.

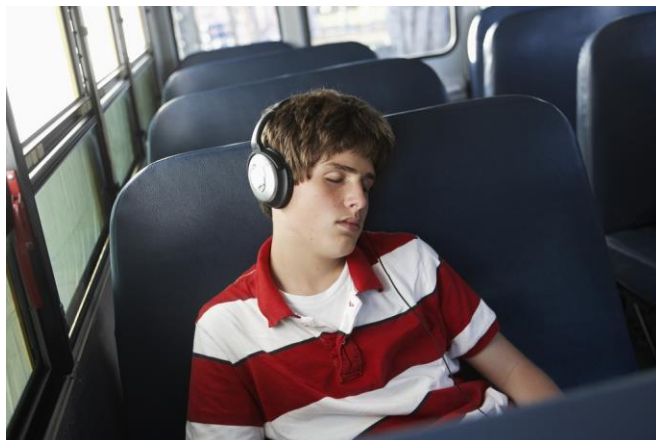
Elijah: Same here. I'm going to go to bed as soon as I get home from school.

Ron: Yeah, me too. I'm definitely gonna **sleep like a log** tonight.

To pass out

The phrasal verb **to pass out** has two meanings. The dictionary definition is to faint or to lose consciousness. However, in this episode, Andrew uses the verb's slang definition. He says that he **passes out** on airplanes. This means that he falls asleep while he flies on airplanes.

So, when you **pass out**, you go to sleep. Because this verb has two quite different meanings, the environment you use it in is very important. For example, if someone says they **passed out** after a long day of work, then it is safe to assume that they went to sleep. On the other hand, if someone says they skipped breakfast and then **passed out**, it is likely that they fainted. Context will determine the verb's meaning.



Here are a couple more examples with **to pass out**:

Mario: How was your flight?

Dorothy: It was great! I **passed out** as soon as I got on the plane and slept the whole way!

Mario: Oh, perfect!

Dorothy: Yeah! It was very relaxing, actually.

Mario: Glad to hear it!

Ralph: What did you get up to last night?

Paul: Not much, man. I **passed out** right after dinner. What about you?

Ralph: I was pretty tired last night too. I watched the game on TV then went to bed.

Paul: What exciting lives we lead, hey?

A pet peeve

Is there anything that really bothers you but doesn't seem to affect anyone else as much? If so, you have **a pet peeve**. Something that really annoys you is **a pet peeve**. In this episode, Andrew says that one of his **pet peeves** is the sound people make when they grind their teeth. This sound is unpleasant for Andrew to hear. It annoys him and he hates it, so it is one of his **pet peeves**.

An interesting thing about **pet peeves** is that they don't bother everyone. For example, Andrew finds the sound of teeth grinding very annoying but this doesn't mean that everyone will. Usually, **pet peeves** only annoy certain people, while others are not bothered by them as much or at all.

This expression is relatively new. It first started being used in the early 1920s. These days, it is a common expression for describing things that are annoying.

Here are a couple more examples with **a pet peeve**:

Laurie: I had the worst service at a restaurant last night.

Kristina: That's so annoying. It's **a major pet peeve** of mine.

Laurie: Yeah, we had to wait over an hour just to get our food.

Kristina: Was it busy?

Laurie: That's the thing! The restaurant was dead.

Kristina: They really have no excuse then.

Laurie: Exactly. I won't be going back there any time soon.

Mandy: Are you eating lunch at your desk?

Leroy: Yeah, why?

Mandy: Well, why aren't you eating in the lunchroom?

Leroy: There was someone eating in there who was chewing with his mouth open and chewing very loudly. I couldn't stand it. Noisy eating is **a huge pet peeve** of mine.

Mandy: Say no more! I understand. That bothers me too.

Like nails on a blackboard

Many people find it very irritating or painful to listen to the sound of someone scratching their fingernails on a blackboard or chalkboard. We use the expression **like nails on a blackboard** to make a comparison between the noise of fingernails scratching a blackboard and other noises that may annoy us.



For example, in this episode, Andrew mentions that the sound of teeth grinding is **like nails on a blackboard** to him. In other words, Andrew finds the sound of teeth grinding to be equally as irritating as the sound of someone scratching their fingernails on a blackboard.

So, we can use the expression **like nails on a blackboard** to describe any sound that is annoying, irritating, or painful to hear.

Here are a couple more examples with **like nails on a blackboard**:

Victor: What's that noise? It sounds like a car alarm or a fire alarm or something.

Simon: I don't know. Where's it coming from?

Victor: Sounds like it's coming from outside. Wow, it's awful. It's so high-pitched!

Simon: Yeah. This kind of sound drives me crazy. It's **like nails on a blackboard**.

Victor: Agreed!

Sammy: Hey, do you mind turning down the TV a bit?

Clara: Why?

Sammy: I have a headache right now and the sound of the TV is **like nails on a chalkboard** for me.

Clara: Oh sorry. I didn't realize. I'll turn it down for you.

Sammy: Thanks!

Clara: No problem. Feel better soon.

The heebie-jeebies

When you have **the heebie-jeebies**, you feel scared, nervous, worried, or creeped out. In this episode, Harp and Andrew mention that the sound of teeth grinding gives them **the heebie-jeebies**. In other words, the sound creeps them out and makes them feel uncomfortable.

This expression is an American idiom that first appeared in a cartoon in the *New York American* magazine in 1923. Shortly after the cartoon's publication, the expression began to be used widely in the English-speaking world.

There are two verbs that are commonly used with this expression. The first is **to get the heebie-jeebies**. When you get **the heebie-jeebies**, you feel scared or creeped out. The second is **to give someone the heebie-jeebies**. This verb is used when some person, place, or thing makes someone feel scared or creeped out. For example, a haunted house might give you **the heebie-jeebies** because of its scary appearance.

Here are a couple more examples with **the heebie-jeebies**:

Lee: Ah! There's a spider over there!

Amelia: Ew, gross.

Lee: Can you kill it for me?

Amelia: No way! Spiders give me **the heebie-jeebies**! You kill it.

Lee: I don't like spiders either. I'll just open the window and hope it crawls out.

Amelia: I hope it does!

Edwin: Are you sure this is where the dinner party is?

Cary: Yeah, I'm pretty sure. But you're right. This house looks super creepy.

Edwin: Yeah. This place is giving me **the heebie-jeebies**.

Cary: Let's double-check the address. What is it again?

Edwin: 99 Davy Avenue.

Cary: Oh, no way. This house's address is 199 Davy Avenue.

Edwin: We're in the wrong place. Let's get out of here!

Cary: Yeah, let's go!

Quiz

1. When you sleep very deeply, you sleep like what?

- a) a mountain
- b) a stone
- c) a tree
- d) a log

2. What's a pet peeve?

- a) something that seems bad but is actually good
- b) someone who likes to be alone
- c) a puppy
- d) something annoying

3. We can describe an annoying sound by saying it sounds like what?

- a) a baby crying
- b) chewing with your mouth open
- c) nails on a blackboard
- d) a dental drill

4. How do you feel if you have the heebie-jeebies?

- a) surprised
- b) confused
- c) intrigued
- d) nervous

5. Which adjective describes something that's hard to believe?

- a) far-fetched
- b) gibberish
- c) heebie-jeebie
- d) flabbergasted

6. Which phrasal verb means to reduce the intensity of something?

- a) to pull something in
- b) to dial something back
- c) to switch something on
- d) to slide something up

7. Traditional wisdom that has no scientific foundation is called what?

- a) an old wives' tale
- b) a wise uncle's wisdom
- c) great grandpa's insight
- d) mother knows best

8. How do you feel if you're flabbergasted?

- a) blissful
- b) irritated
- c) shocked
- d) outraged

9. What's gibberish?

- a) nonsense
- b) trivia
- c) sleep
- d) flowers

Quiz Answers

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

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