

Chatterbox #162 – Emailing, Part One

Episode Description

Sending and receiving email is something that lots of people do every day. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne talk all about email. Join them as they chat about their first email addresses, how emailing has changed over the years, and their email habits. Plus, Suzanne reveals a hilarious problem she has with her inbox!

Sample Dialogue

Suzanne: Because I had my last name @gmail, there was someone looking for a gentleman that has my last name, and so they emailed a bunch of different versions of the last name within the email address.

Andrew: OK. Well, that's **a stab in the dark**.

Suzanne: And so I got emails from these random people that I never knew had my last name, because we came from Italy, so they were immigrants. So I was like, "Well, maybe these people are family."

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- The socials
- To be dying to know something
- To lose your cool
- AOL
- Dial-up
- Post
- A mascot
- Tartan
- A stab in the dark
- A chain email
- Spam
- To trail off
- An email thread



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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: Hey, everybody. I'm Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne, and welcome to another episode of Culips.

Andrew: Yeah, we are back with a new episode for you, but before we start, we want to remind you about some things, like our social media. Where can you find us on **the socials**, Suzanne?

Suzanne: You can find us on Facebook and Twitter, and when you follow us, you will be kept up to date on all the latest episodes and goings-on.

Andrew: Also, remember to check out our website at Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, 'cause that's the place where you can find all of our past episodes. And, even more importantly, it's the place where you can sign up to become a Culips member. When you're a Culips member, you get access to our learning materials, which we have designed to make English understandable. So if you are serious about studying English, you want to take that next step, we recommend that you become a member.

Suzanne: So, how are you today, Andrew?

Andrew: I'm pretty good, I'm pretty good. I'm excited to record this episode because we're going to be talking about emailing.

Suzanne: Oh.

Andrew: Yeah, and the reason that I was inspired to talk about emailing today is because I have a really funny email story that happened to me recently.

Suzanne: OK, so you have to tell me because I am anxiously awaiting the story.

Andrew: You're **dying to know**?

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: Well, maybe I should say it's kind of interesting, it's not super interesting. But have you ever signed up for an email list?

Suzanne: Yes, I have.

Andrew: So, you know, we know each other from going to university. And when I was in university I was a very good student and I signed up for mailing lists of some journals so that if new research came out, I would get an email and I would know right away what's going on.

Suzanne: OK, like a notification?

Andrew: Exactly, a notification. So I'm on this mailing list for a journal called *The Heritage Language Journal*.

Suzanne: OK.

Andrew: And they send out a quarterly newsletter just updating their readers on what's going on with them. And one person decided that they didn't want to be on the mailing list anymore and so they replied to that newsletter. And usually this would just go back to the webmaster. It wouldn't go to everybody. So this person, they would reply to the email and it would go back to whoever sent the email, and the people that are on the list wouldn't see it.

Suzanne: Right.

Andrew: Right, that's how they work. But something went wrong and everybody got this message of this one reader saying, "I don't want to be on this list." And so this just sparked an avalanche of emails of people responding, saying, "Oh, you know what? I also don't want to be on this list," "I don't want to be on this list," "I don't want to be on this list." And it was just email after email after email coming to everybody on the list, and it was so distracting. I couldn't get any work done this day because every 2 seconds my phone would buzz and the message would pop up on my computer. And it was hilarious.

Then, as time went on, you had people saying, "Don't reply to any more emails because everybody is getting the email," and this started another conversation. I must have gotten about 200 emails that day.

Suzanne: Oh, my goodness. Wow.

Andrew: Yeah, it was crazy. And the funny thing was, it was all academics that are on the list. They're doctors and librarians and professors, and they are people that work on their computer all day too, so they were being distracted by all these emails. And they were starting to get pretty angry by the end of the day, after they were getting all these emails. So it was hilarious to notice the shift in tone.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: From the start, people are very polite, and at the end of the day they're really angry in their emails. But I thought it was hilarious to think of angry librarians and professors.

Suzanne: Professors, and... Right, sitting at their desk and **losing their cool** and getting... becoming very uncouth or very short with their answers.

Andrew: Exactly. It was funny. It's not an experience that I would want to go through again, but it was cool just to see how people respond to this situation.

Suzanne: Did you get off the email list?

Andrew: Mmhmm, I unsubscribed. So, I don't know, that was my funny email story for the day, and I hope it doesn't happen to you because it's no good.

Suzanne: That is no good.

Andrew: But yeah, today we are going to talk about email, actually, because—I don't know—if you're like me, you spend a lot of time in your Gmail inbox.

Suzanne: A lot of time; time that I wish I could get back, actually. I spend too much time on email.

Andrew: Yeah. So we're going to do a Chatterbox episode today, and Chatterbox episodes are where we chat about an interesting topic. And like we said, today the topic is email. And we're going to start the episode by talking about our first email accounts. OK?

Suzanne: Can you believe it? I actually had an **AOL** account.

Andrew: An **AOL** account? I never had **AOL**.

Suzanne: I'm older than you, I think. I don't know if anyone out there listening had an **AOL** account, but I did, and when you logged on... At this time, it was in the early '90s when the Internet had just become more widespread and mainstream.

Andrew: Like, in the **dial-up** days?

Suzanne: Yes, and so you logged on and it would *creeeaaorr*, make these kinds of noises.

Andrew: The modem.

Suzanne: The modem would be firing away and you would hear this crazy *creeeaaorr* and it would go... I mean, it would echo through the whole house and everyone knew you were on the Internet.

Andrew: Right.

Suzanne: And when you logged on, finally, it would say, "You've got mail."

Andrew: Oh, yeah.

Suzanne: Yeah. And I have a good friend living in England, living in London, and one day she told me, "When I log on, it says, 'You've got **post**.'"

Andrew: Oh, no way. That's cool.

Suzanne: Yeah, so I thought that was pretty funny.

Andrew: Like UK Online, or something.

Suzanne: Exactly. So it was this **post**, instead of *mail*.

Andrew: Oh, that's cool. Hmm, that's an interesting question. I imagine that British people refer to it as email, not as **post**, e-post.

Suzanne: I'm not sure. I don't think it's e-post, but I remember in those days, before it maybe became email, **AOL** would say, "You've got **post**."

Andrew: Cool. I like that.

Suzanne: What was your first email provider?

Andrew: Provider? I used a **dial-up** service as well, called Sympatico.

Suzanne: Oh, yeah.

Andrew: I don't know if you know Sympatico. I think it was regional to Western Canada. And, yeah, my first email account was through Hotmail.

Suzanne: OK.

Andrew: Yeah, Hotmail. And it's always embarrassing to tell your first email address. I was like maybe, I don't know, 10 or 11 years old.

Suzanne: Sure.

Andrew: And I was really into... I was such a geek, I was really into Medieval history, and especially Scottish history, because my family comes from Scotland.

Suzanne: OK.

Andrew: So my first email address was scottishking@hotmail.com.

Suzanne: Nice.

Andrew: Which was... yeah, it was pretty funny. What was your first address? Do you remember?

Suzanne: It was really boring. It was... I think, actually, it was Suey, because my family—my younger cousins—would call me Suey. They were babies and they called me Suey, so it was suey@aol.com. And then, quickly after that, I went to college and I got a... you know, a more collegiate email address. And I went to Carnegie Mellon, so it was @andrew.cmu.edu, because Andrew is actually not just you, Andrew.

Andrew: There's another one?

Suzanne: There are other Andrews. But Andrew Carnegie, who was also Scottish...

Andrew: Oh, yeah. Yeah, yeah. Oh, is that... The university is named after him?

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: Oh, I didn't know that.

Suzanne: Andrew Carnegie and Andrew Mellon were the founders of Carnegie Mellon, and also Scottish. And, in fact, our **mascots** wore **tartans**. I don't know what that even means, but ...

Andrew: They were wearing **tartan**, or they ...?

Suzanne: And a bagpiper, I think. Yeah.

Andrew: It's funny, yeah, I used to be really into this side of my heritage, and now I'm not really so much anymore. But yeah, back in the day I was really into it.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: So, that's cool. I thought you might have a really embarrassing email address, like princesssparkle@...

Suzanne: Oh, no, I never did. I always had my name. I think my name is not very common, so they always... When I sign up, they just give me my name as an example, so I keep it, yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, that's sweet.

Suzanne: Yeah, I actually was one of my first of my family to sign up for Gmail. And so when we went to a family reunion after I had gotten just the last name @gmail.com—which is rare, to be able to get, like, smith@gmail.com—and I went to a family reunion with all the family members on my father's side with that last name, and they said, "You! You're the one. You're the one who took the email address." And I said, "Yeah. It was me!"

Andrew: Nice. Yeah, that's awesome that you have that. I was an early adopter of Gmail, too. I remember being invited by one of my tech friends. Before they released it to the public, there was a beta.

Suzanne: Right, and you had to be invited.

Andrew: You had to be invited.

Suzanne: Same with me, yes.

Andrew: That was very cool.

Suzanne: Yeah, it felt very important.

Andrew: It totally killed Hotmail for me. There was no going back. Once Gmail came out, it was just so much better than Hotmail.

Suzanne: Yes, I agree. In fact, I received... Because of the last name, because I had my last name @gmail, there was someone looking for a gentleman that has my last name, and so they emailed a bunch of different versions of the last name within the email address.

Andrew: OK. Well, that's **a stab in the dark**.

Suzanne: And so I got emails from these random people that I never knew had my last name, because it's... We came from Italy, so they were immigrants. So I was like, "Well, maybe these people are family. Maybe? I don't know."

Andrew: It could possibly be, yeah.

Suzanne: Distant. Apparently they own a really amazing chocolate factory in Arizona, and I got so excited. I was on this email list.

Andrew: Yeah. Similar to my story?

Suzanne: Not from hell, it wasn't so bad. It wasn't so bad because I was learning about this other branch, possibly, of my family.

Andrew: That's really cool.

Suzanne: That... I looked them up and they owned a chocolate factory. And I started a correspondence with one of the guys. And he said, "Hey, if you're ever in Arizona, email me and we can take you on a tour of the chocolate shop." I never emailed him about it, but I should really do that.

Andrew: Yeah, right, next time you're in Arizona. Yeah, a chocolate factory, that's really cool.

Suzanne: It was cool.

Andrew: OK, so the second part of this episode: we're going to talk about emailing today; how we email. And we mentioned that we both use Gmail.

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: Yeah. I want to ask you your perceptions of how you think email has changed over time.

Suzanne: OK.

Andrew: For example, when I was younger, maybe 10 years ago, my mom used to forward me lots of **chain emails** and just email forwards in general. So I'd get emails with pictures, you know, and these would go around to thousands of people and people would just get this message and forward it on, or, like, an inspirational story or something. I don't get any of those anymore. Do you?

Suzanne: I do get some of them from my mom—exactly—or my father sends really funny ones, which he knows I would think are funny, or I would find humorous. But it's really just the two of them, just my parents that do that. In a sense, it is, like, an older-generational thing, perhaps.

Andrew: Yeah. I wonder if it has something to do with smartphones and tablets being more popular, and that people, maybe they can't access pictures as easily on a phone. Like, it's too much effort to look at a big picture on a phone, or something, in a phone application. So maybe... It seems to coincide with, like, the iPhone becoming popular, that those **trailed off**. I don't know.

Suzanne: Yeah, it's true. I feel like most people get inundated with so many different updates and ads and things.

Andrew: **Spam.**

Suzanne: There are so many email lists that I had never signed up for that I think I'm on now, and I really need to unsubscribe in the proper way. And so I feel, because of that, people don't have a lot of time to really send those kinds of silly emails, in a sense. They're more time-wasting, I find.

Andrew: Yeah, it's interesting how they just died off.

Suzanne: Yeah, on my iPhone, it will tell you in the icon of the app for the mail, it will tell you how many emails you have. And I have three email accounts that are active right now, because for my business stuff, personal, and then some that I give to another... like, I use it to sort of deflect any weird sign-up, email sign-up lists. It says on my iPhone maybe close to 30,000 emails.

Andrew: What?

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: I was going to ask you that question.

Suzanne: My friend saw it on the... I was clicking on it on the metro and someone looked over my shoulder and was like, "Oh, what? You have 30,000 emails?" And I said, "Yes, but it's from, like, three email addresses and I haven't deleted, and..." I was very embarrassed.

Andrew: Thirty thousand emails. That's actually crazy.

Suzanne: I know. Before you arrived I was actually deleting **threads of emails**.

Andrew: OK, I'm going to have to step in and stop things here because we are out of time for today. Tune in next week to hear the end of the conversation that Suzanne and I had about emailing, because it's really fun and really interesting. Before I let you go, I want to remind you about our website. It's Culips.com. And, also, we're on social media; on Facebook and on Twitter. That's it for now. Talk to you next time. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

The socials

In this episode, Andrew asks Suzanne where Culips can be found on **the socials**. **The socials** are social networking websites. So, in other words, Andrew asks Suzanne about Culips' social media presence.

The socials usually refers to the most popular social networking sites, Facebook and Twitter, but it can also be used to talk about LinkedIn, Tumblr, and Instagram. This is a casual expression and should be avoided in formal contexts.

Here's one more example with **the socials**:

Courtney: Hi, I'm Courtney. Nice to meet you.

Kevin: Nice to meet you, too. I'm Kevin. Here's my business card.

Courtney: Thanks. I don't have a business card, but you can find me on all **the socials**—Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter.

Kevin: Perfect. I'll be sure to get in touch.

To be dying to know something

When you really, really want to know something, you are **dying to know** that thing. In this episode, Andrew asks Suzanne whether she is **dying to know** about his email list horror story. In other words, Andrew asks whether Suzanne really wants to hear his story.

This expression can also be used with other verbs. For example, if you are dying to try a new restaurant, you are very eager to try that new restaurant. Or if you are dying to go on a holiday to Europe, you really want to visit Europe soon.

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

Paul: Did you hear that Tom and Sally are having a baby?

Rina: Yes! Do you think it will be a boy or a girl? I'm **dying to know**!

Wes: I'm just **dying to know** what my wife bought me for my birthday.

Josie: Well, you're turning 40, so I'm sure it's something special.

Wes: I hope it's a new set of golf clubs!

To lose your cool

When you **lose your cool**, you become angry or frustrated and lose your composure. You go from being calm to being upset when you **lose your cool**. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne joke about the professors and librarians who **lost their cool** and became upset when they started to receive tons of email from the journal mailing list. Because their inboxes were flooded with emails, they got angry and **lost their cool**.

So, when someone who is usually calm has become angry, frustrated, or upset, that person has **lost their cool**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to lose your cool**:

Hector: How was your day today?

Ursula: Not so good. I **lost my cool** in a meeting with my boss and colleagues.

Hector: It happens from time to time. Don't worry about it.

Ursula: Yeah, it's OK. I've been under lots of stress. I'll apologize to everyone tomorrow.

Andie: I see you rode your bike to work today. Where's your car?

Frank: I always **lose my cool** when I get stuck in traffic, so I've decided to start biking to work. It's good exercise and I feel less stressed.

Andie: Great idea!

AOL

In this episode, Suzanne talks about her first Internet provider, **AOL**. **AOL** is an acronym for America Online. **AOL** was one of America's largest Internet providers in the 1990s, and they provided dial-up service to millions of Americans.

One of the things most people remember about **AOL** is the email notification sound. When a new email message arrived in your inbox, the **AOL** software would say, "You've got mail."

If you want to hear the announcement, follow this link:

<https://youtu.be/DGOgSPVBmIE>

Dial-up

In this episode, Suzanne and Andrew talk about **dial-up** Internet. **Dial-up** refers to the type of connection that uses a phone line to connect to the Internet. It's called **dial-up** because the modem in your computer has to dial a phone number to make an Internet connection.

In Canada, **dial-up** Internet has been replaced by high-speed, broadband Internet. However, in the United States, an estimated 2.3 million Internet users still connect via a **dial-up** connection.

In the early days of the Internet, **dial-up** was the only way to connect to the Internet. Now, most people prefer a high-speed connection.

Here's one more example with **dial-up**:

Martin: Do you remember the days of **dial-up** Internet? Things were so different then.

Olive: Yeah, any time someone would pick up the phone while I was on the Internet, I'd get disconnected.

Martin: Exactly! And I used to get a lot of busy signals when I tried to call my friends. Everyone was on the Internet, so they were hard to reach.

Olive: I'm glad those days are behind us.

Post

In this episode, Suzanne tells a story about her British friend. Whenever her friend received an email, her computer said, "You've got **post**." In the United Kingdom, mail is called **post**.

In North America, people use the words *post office*, *postman*, and *postal service*, but call the letters and packages that they receive *mail*.

So, even if you're more familiar with North American English, the next time you hear a British person talking about the **post**, you'll know they're referring to the mail.

Here's one more example with **post**:

Valerie: Was there any **post** this morning?

Thomas: One letter from my mum and a couple of bills.

Valerie: Nothing for me?

Thomas: No, sorry.

A mascot

A **mascot** is an animal or character that represents an organization, like a sports team or a school. In this episode, Suzanne talks about the **mascot** at her old university, Carnegie Mellon. The school's **mascot** is named Scotty the Scottie Dog, and he wears a Scottish-style kilt.

Most professional sports teams in the USA have **mascots**. Some famous baseball **mascots** are the Philadelphia Phillies' Phillie Phanatic and the New York Mets' Mr. Met.

Here's a dialogue example with **mascot**:

- Betty: Did you play any sports when you were in high school?
- Robert: Nope, but I was the **mascot** for my school's basketball team.
- Betty: Really? Did you have to dress up in a silly costume?
- Robert: Yup! It was really hot in there!

Tartan

Tartan is a type of fabric pattern that is popular in Scotland. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne briefly talk about Scotland. Suzanne mentions that she went to Carnegie Mellon University, a school that was founded by two Scottish men. Because of this, the school's mascot wears a **tartan** uniform.



Here's one more example with **tartan**:

- Ian: Did you do anything interesting this weekend?
- Heather: I did, actually! I spent time with my aunt, and we talked about my family history.
- Ian: Very cool.
- Heather: Yeah, I learned that my family is originally from Scotland. I learned about where my family used to live, what clan they belonged to, and my family's **tartan**.
- Ian: That's super interesting!

A stab in the dark

When you make a wild guess about something, you take **a stab in the dark**. This slang expression is used when someone makes a guess without any information to inform their decision.

You can imagine someone trying to shoot or stab a target in a dark room. They would have no idea where to aim and would just have to guess where the target was located. This imagery is the basis of this expression.

An alternative expression is *a shot in the dark*. This means the exact same thing, and the two expressions can be used interchangeably.

In this episode, Suzanne talks about someone who shares her last name and who emailed her to see whether she was one of his relatives. Andrew comments that this man took **a stab in the dark**.

So, **a stab in the dark** is an uninformed guess.

Here are a couple more examples with **a stab in the dark**:

Keith:	Wanna go see a movie tonight?
Danielle:	Yeah, sure. What time does it start?
Keith:	I don't know. I'll take a stab in the dark and say 7:00 p.m.
Danielle:	OK, we better check the movie listings online.
Keith:	Yeah, definitely.

Sandy:	It's Patrick's birthday party this weekend.
Wade:	Do you know how old he's turning?
Sandy:	I dunno. He's turning 15 maybe?
Wade:	Are you sure? I don't think he's that old already.
Sandy:	Yeah, I'm not actually sure. That was just a stab in the dark .
Wade:	OK, I'll call his mom and ask. We want to make sure we get the right kind of birthday card.

A chain email

A **chain email** is an email that asks the recipient to forward the message to other people. In the early days of the Internet, **chain emails** were popular. These days, they're rare.

In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne talk about **chain emails**. Andrew mentions that he used to receive these kinds of emails but doesn't anymore. Suzanne says she occasionally receives **chain emails** from her parents.

Because **chain emails** often display the email addresses of all the people the message has been sent to, they are considered a security risk. This is one of the reasons why **chain emails** are not often seen these days.

Here's one more example with *a chain email*:

Erin:	My mom forwarded me the cutest chain email .
Lane:	Oh yeah?
Erin:	Yeah, there's a ton of adorable pictures of puppies.
Lane:	Oh! Send it to me, too.

Spam

Emails that are unasked for and unwanted are called **spam**. **Spam** emails are usually advertisements or scams.

In this episode, Suzanne says that her inbox gets inundated—or flooded—with **spam** such as ads and updates. In other words, Suzanne receives a lot of junk email.

So, email that is annoying, advertising, a scam, or an unnecessary update is called **spam**.

Here's one more example with *spam*:

Jackie:	I get so much spam in my inbox; I think I'm going to go crazy.
Leo:	Oh, I can fix that for you.
Jackie:	Really? How?
Leo:	You just need to turn your spam filter on. It will put all the spam messages in a separate folder, and you won't need to see them.
Jackie:	That's amazing! Thanks!

To trail off

When something loses volume, intensity, or popularity, that thing **trails off**. In this episode, Andrew mentions that chain emails **trailed off** at the same time that smartphones became popular. In other words, Andrew noticed that he stopped receiving chain emails once smartphones hit the market.

This expression is frequently used to talk about sounds, music, and voices. If someone's voice **trails off**, it gradually becomes quieter and quieter until it is inaudible.

So when something has become quieter or less intense than it was before, that thing has **trailed off**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to trail off**.

Hank: I'm glad I got you on the phone. How about we meet at 10:00 a.m. and then... about 4:30 p.m.?

Daisy: Sorry, could you repeat that? Your voice **trailed off** for a second.

Hank: Oh, yeah, no problem. I said how about we meet at 10:00 a.m. and then drive to the mountain, ski all day, and head home at around 4:30 p.m.?

Daisy: That works for me.

Talia: Do you still travel a lot for work?

Scott: Not as much as I used too. Because of video conferencing software, the need for me to travel has really **trailed off**. I probably only take one or two business trips a year now.

Talia: That's a big change. You used to take at least 20 trips a year.

Scott: Yes, but I like this much more. I get to spend more time with my family this way.

An email thread

An email conversation, or a series of emails that contains all the messages sent between recipients, is called **an email thread**. When you send multiple messages back and forth with someone, that whole series of emails is called **an email thread**.

In this episode, Suzanne talks about her email problem. She has over 30,000 unread messages in her inbox. One of the ways that she's solving this problem is by deleting old **email threads** from her inbox.

So, a grouping of emails that contains all the messages recipients have sent back and forth to each other is called **an email thread**.

The popular email provider Gmail automatically organizes email conversations into **email threads**. The most recent email is displayed at the bottom of the thread and earlier messages are shown at the top.

Here's one more example with **an email thread**:

Helen:	Did you see Mark's reply to my email?
Elijah:	No, I didn't.
Helen:	You might have missed it. It was in the middle of our email thread , with the subject "Next week's meeting."
Elijah:	OK, let me just double-check my inbox. Oh, here it is. I found it.

Quiz

1. **In this episode, Andrew says that the man who randomly emailed Suzanne to see whether he was related to her took a stab in the dark. What is a stab in the dark?**
 - a) a certainty
 - b) a repair
 - c) a guess
 - d) a quote

2. **Which of the following is another name for an email conversation?**
 - a) a needle
 - b) a yarn
 - c) a thread
 - d) a spindle

3. **In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne joke about university professors and librarians losing their cool. What does it mean when someone loses their cool?**
 - a) They are injured.
 - b) They are insulted.
 - c) They become very hot.
 - d) They become angry or upset.

4. **What is the word for mail in UK English?**
 - a) dispatch
 - b) sent
 - c) delivery
 - d) post

5. **Which of the following expressions means to really want to know?**
 - a) to be killing to know
 - b) to be dying to know
 - c) to be forced to know
 - d) to be late to know

6. What is unasked for and unwanted advertisement email called?

- a) spam
- b) ham
- c) spim
- d) h.a.n.d.s.

7. Something that trails off becomes less intense. True or false?

- a) true
- b) false

8. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram are examples of what?

- a) the socials
- b) the situational
- c) the sociologies
- d) the sitcoms

Quiz Answers

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

Episode Credits

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