

## Chatterbox #163 – Emailing, Part 2

### Episode Description

Checking our inbox is something most of us do every day. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne conclude their chat about email. Join them as they discuss some useful expressions to use, and some expressions to avoid, when writing emails!

### Sample Dialogue

Andrew: If you are an English learner who, you know, is more likely to make spelling and grammar mistakes than a native speaker, why don't you just write all of your emails with the **signature** "Sent from my iPhone"? Nobody is going to know, and this means that people will be more open to these errors. I think it's a **win-win** situation.

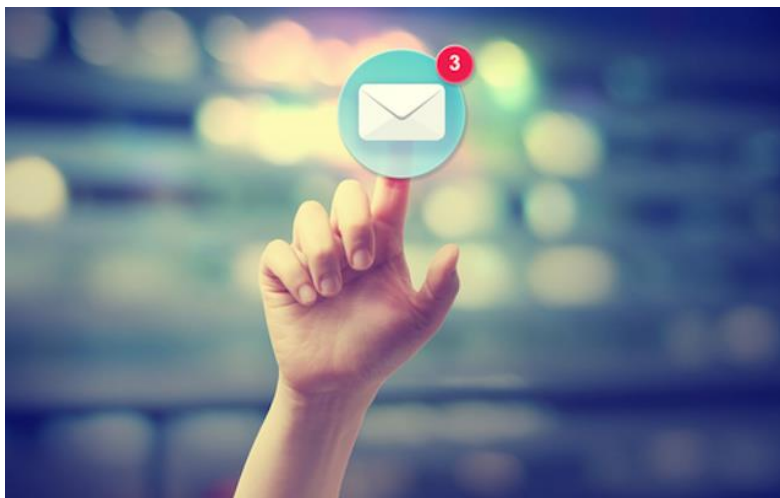
Suzanne: That's really funny. That's a really good idea.

Andrew: Yeah, so I think that's my...

Suzanne: That's like an **email hack**.

### Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- To dive into something
- Big
- An email signature
- A lightbulb goes off in your head
- A win-win
- A hack
- So-and-so
- A common courtesy
- A cover letter



## Catch Word #163 – Emailing, Part 2

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, everyone. Welcome to another episode of the Culips podcast. Here at Culips we teach English through natural conversation. Listening to Culips is one of the best ways to improve your listening skills and learn idioms and expressions that are used in everyday conversation by native English speakers. So we're really happy to have you here with us, and we hope that you enjoy this episode.

Today we're going to let you listen to the second part of the Chatterbox conversation Suzanne and I had recently about emailing. If you haven't listened to the first part of this episode, I recommend you head on over to [Culips.com](http://Culips.com) and take a listen before you **dive into** this episode.

OK, without any further delay, here is the conclusion to the chat Suzanne and I had about emailing.

Suzanne: I know that you use Gmail, but do you also use other things like Group Text or Facebook Messenger as a way to contact? And what do you think is the, kind of, difference between Facebook and email?

Andrew: Yeah, I use, actually, three applications on my phone to talk to people. I use Facebook Messenger to talk to all my friends in Canada. I use WeChat to talk to my friend who lives in China. I only have one friend, but he uses WeChat and it's convenient for him to use this application, so that's what we use. And I use another program called KakaoTalk to speak with all my friends in Korea, because that's the **big** application that Koreans use.

Suzanne: OK, cool.

Andrew: Yeah, this has definitely affected how I email, because I don't email friends anymore, I message them over these applications. What about you? Do you use Facebook Messenger?

Suzanne: I do. I use Facebook Messenger a lot, exactly the same way. If I'm going to set up a meeting with one person, I might email them, but if I need to set up, maybe, a weekend getaway with a group of friends to go to a chalet in Quebec, maybe, or a ski trip or something, we'll do a group message. And this way, we all can be chatting at the same time and giving input as far as what we want to bring, activities we'd like to do, or the menu, maybe, the food we want to buy at Costco; sometimes we go there.

Andrew: Yeah, that's great.

Suzanne: But the bad thing is that, for example, when you get a response on Facebook Messenger, it pops up to the top of your Messenger, and if you're not careful, you can reply to the wrong message group.

Andrew: OK. I see, I see.

Suzanne: So, for example, I was planning a surprise party with another girlfriend of mine for a third girlfriend. And we had three couples, so my boyfriend and I, my friend—we'll call her Dee—and her boyfriend, and then the girl whose surprise party it was, and her boyfriend, all in this group chat.

Andrew: OK.

Suzanne: OK. And because we were planning a brunch... Also, D and I had a second email—or Messenger, I should say—open, where we were planning this surprise party. And instead of replying to just D, I replied to the big...

Andrew: The group. Yikes.

Suzanne: The group message. And I said, OK, I'm so excited for seeing you on Saturday and then we can talk about [Marlene's] special weekend, blah, blah, blah.

Andrew: You gave away the secret?

Suzanne: Yeah. And the girl messaged back: Well, I think you should ask me first which weekend I am available. And I had realized I had ruined the surprise. I completely ruined the surprise. Well, she doesn't know what we're going to do, but she does know that...

Andrew: Oh, it hasn't happened yet?

Suzanne: The weekend for Marlene's party has not happened yet, but she does know something is happening now.

Andrew: OK. So this is a good word of warning.

Suzanne: Yes. So my advice is to... because you can do it, you can label your Messenger chats. You can label them “Chat for brunch” or “Chat for...” You know, you can label them so you don’t mix them up.

Andrew: OK, very good. Good to know.

OK, we are going to transition to the final part of today’s episode, and this is where we will talk about email dos and don’ts.

Suzanne: Do you have any advice, Andrew, as far as, you know, how to write an email to a professor, or a teacher, or a colleague, maybe, that’s not exactly a close, close friend, but more someone you work with, that kind of thing?

Andrew: Yeah, so a more professional situation?

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, I think the best email tip that I can give is just to be concise. Keep it short, keep it simple, and stay to the point, especially with your subject. Your subject line needs to be relevant to the message, because, in the future, if you need to find this email again, this is how you are going to find it, is by the subject. It’s important to have a relevant and accurate subject.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: I read online the other day about a study that had just been done, looking at grammar and spelling mistakes in emails. And this study looked at normal emails that were just from a regular account, and from emails that had the **signature** “Sent from my iPhone” at the bottom.

Suzanne: Oh.

Andrew: And when people had the **signature** “Sent from my iPhone” at the bottom, people were much, much, much more forgiving of their spelling and grammar errors, just because people assume that you’re writing on a cell phone, and it’s difficult to type.

Suzanne: And you’re on the go.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: Like, you’re, you know, travelling.

Andrew: Exactly.

Suzanne: You know, you’re not sitting down actually writing a thought-out message.

Andrew: Yeah, you might be on a crowded bus and it's hard to type, or something. So I think, you know, a **lightbulb went off in my head** when I read this, and I thought, if you are an English learner who, you know, is more likely to make spelling and grammar mistakes than a native speaker, why don't you just write all of your emails with the **signature** "Sent from my iPhone"? Nobody is going to know, and this means that people will be more open to these errors. I think it's a **win-win** situation.

Suzanne: That's really funny. That's a really good idea.

Andrew: Yeah, so I think that's my...

Suzanne: That's like an email **hack**.

Andrew: Yeah, an email **hack**. That's my "do," is add that to your **email signature** and you're good to go.

Suzanne: I also like the idea of being polite and grateful for any help that maybe the person you're emailing has helped you with. For example, when I write to my professor, I like to... maybe if it's Monday I'll say "Hello, Professor..." I usually call them by their first name because in our school, they prefer that you call them by their first name.

Andrew: Sure.

Suzanne: But you know, you can check on that in different parts of North America. Different schools have different ways of responding to that. But I'll say "Hi Professor **so-and-so**, hope you had a great weekend," or "I hope this finds you well," or "Thank you again for sending me that information about the data, it really was so helpful, I was also wondering if blah, blah" ... You know, and then I'll go into my request or question. And then I'll really be polite at the end again: "Thanks again for everything."

Andrew: It goes a long way, right, that little bit of politeness? People are going to be much more open and receptive to your request if you are polite. If you just say, do this, nobody is going to be willing to help you. You have to be nice, this is a **common courtesy**.

Suzanne: Yeah, and I think it also helps to acknowledge the other person. Sometimes when we are writing—as opposed to being in a conversation in real time—sometimes then we are writing we will just acknowledge what we feel and what we think and what we want, and not acknowledge, hi, I'm speaking to another person in this message, in this email.

Andrew: It's true. That's a good point. I have a question for you.

Suzanne: Yes?

Andrew: The number one question I get from my students is: How should I end my email?

Suzanne: Yes, yes.

Andrew: And should I say “Sincerely,” “Regards,” “Best,” “Best wishes,” “From”?

Suzanne: I hear you.

Andrew: You know, there’s so many different ways to end an email, and now I just say: Say “Sent from my iPhone.” But other than that...

Suzanne: Well, that would be after your closing remarks, though, right?

Andrew: Yeah. So how do you end your emails? That’s my question.

Suzanne: So, for me, in general, if I am speaking to a professor or someone I don’t know, maybe an agent that I am just introducing myself to, or, for example, I did a voiceover last week with a studio producer, and he emailed me for my demo and I emailed him back. But I don’t know him very well, he’s just a new colleague, or a professor, I usually say “Best,” or “Regards.” I don’t say “Sincerely.” “Sincerely” is very formal. Perhaps if you’re putting in a grant letter or if you’re putting in maybe a job application letter with a packet of a CV or a résumé, this kind of thing. I think the “Sincerely” works in that, more formal, letter.

Andrew: That’s the only time I use “Sincerely,” is on a **cover letter**.

Suzanne: Me too, a **cover letter**, yeah.

Andrew: When I am applying for a job.

Suzanne: Exactly. In reference to, maybe, someone of importance, but that you want to eventually be in your circle and know, I say “Best,” or “Regards.” Or “Best regards,” you can say.

Andrew: That’s interesting because I never, ever use any of those.

Suzanne: Really? Which ones do you use?

Andrew: I just say “Thanks.”

Suzanne: Oh, OK.

Andrew: I end every email with “Thanks.” I don’t know.

Suzanne: You know, and I think, for example with my supervisor, currently, I work with him very closely so I can say “Speak with you soon,” comma, Sue. You know? Or “Thanks again.” It’s a little less formal. With friends, sometimes I put “Cheers.”

Andrew: Yeah, “Cheers” is good.

Suzanne: “Cheers.” Or, like, “Talk soon.”

Andrew: Right. But if it’s a formal email, if I’m emailing my boss, if I’m emailing a professor when I was in university, any sort of, you know, professional situation, I just end it with “Thanks.” I think... I don’t know, it just works for me.

Suzanne: I think that there is sort of two ways to look at it. I feel like when you’re asking for something, “Thanks” at the end is really good in any situation. If you’re like: “Could you? Is this correct? Am I doing this right, Professor? Is this...? You know, hey, can you take a look at this for me? Thanks, Sue.” Now, if you’re just stating something like: “Hey, Andrew, I think we should meet at 4:00.” I might say “Cheers,” or I would say “That time works great for me. Best, Sue.”

Andrew: Yeah, that totally works.

Suzanne: I feel like if you’re stating something, maybe “Best” would work.

Andrew: Yeah, that’s a good point. I’m going to stay with “Thanks.” I like that, to me, it bridges the gap between formal and casual. You know, it works for both situations. And I’m not a very formal person; I’m very laid back, so I want to communicate this, and I think “Thanks” is a way to do that.

Suzanne: That’s good. That’s good. I’ve also, if I’m going to see someone else, I also say “Looking forward to meeting you,” or something.

Andrew: Oh, now that’s a good one. If you’ve set up a meeting, especially a first meeting, like a job interview.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Yeah. “Looking forward to speaking with you soon,” or “...Meeting with you soon.” Definitely.

Suzanne: Or I also say, right before my closing, right before “Sincerely” if it’s a formal letter, I’ll say “Thank you again for your consideration.” So I am again being grateful, and showing them that I am a polite, easy-to-work-with, grateful person.

Andrew: Yeah, you want to show your personality and show that you are polite and that you would be good for the job, right?

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: Well, who knew there was so much to talk about, about email?

Suzanne: I know, something we do many times a day, every day.

Andrew: Yeah, but it's not something that we talk about, really, is it? It's just...

Suzanne: No, a lot of the rules are implied.

Andrew: Yeah, it's interesting to chat about it.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: I think that wraps it up for us. I want to thank everybody for listening, and remind you that our website is Culips.com, and that's the place where you can sign up to be a Culips member. So, until next time, thanks, everybody, and we'll talk to you soon.

Suzanne: Thank you, bye.



## Detailed Explanations

### To dive into something

In this episode, Andrew tells listeners that this is the second part of a two-episode series. He warns anyone who hasn't heard Part 1 to listen to it before **diving into** the second part.

When someone **dives into something**, they start to do something enthusiastically. In other words, Andrew wants listeners to hear Part 1 of this episode before they start to listen and enjoy Part 2.

Whenever you start to do something with a lot of enthusiasm, energy, and excitement, you **dive into** that thing.

This expression is often used to talk about starting new activities, hobbies, or projects. If you **dive into** an activity, you commit 100% to doing that activity, and you take it seriously.

Here are some examples with the expression to **dive into something**:



Vivian: What are you doing this weekend?

Keith: I just bought a new video game. I can't wait **dive into** it. I'll be playing all weekend.

Vivian: Oh, cool—have fun!

Dan: Want to see a movie tomorrow night?

Lorna: I can't, sorry. I have to go to the gym.

Dan: Wow, you sure do exercise a lot. Didn't you just go to the gym yesterday?

Lorna: Yeah, I did. But you know me, once I **dive into something**, I take it seriously. I have a strict exercise schedule to follow and I don't want to ruin it by taking a night off. I'll see a movie with you on the weekend, if you like.

Dan: OK, cool. Let's do that.

## Big

When someone or something is **big**, it means that the person or thing is very popular. In this episode, Andrew says that the instant messaging app KakaoTalk is **big** in South Korea. In other words, KakaoTalk is a very popular instant messaging app in South Korea.

So a popular person or a popular thing can be described as **big**.

When we use the expression **big in**, it means something is popular in only a certain region. For example, Andrew says KakaoTalk is **big** in South Korea. This means that the app is popular there, but may not be popular in other parts of the world.

Here are a couple of examples with **big**:

Abby: Do you like Drake?  
Hector: Who is Drake?  
Abby: You know, Drake—the rapper.  
Hector: I have no idea who he is.  
Abby: Wow, that's weird. He's pretty **big**.  
Hector: I guess I don't pay attention to pop culture.  
Abby: Fair enough. You should check him out, he's great.

Marshall: Can you recommend a TV show for me to watch?  
Roberta: You've seen *House of Cards*, right?  
Marshall: Nope.  
Roberta: Really? It's the **biggest** show out there.  
Marshall: Is it good?  
Roberta: So good! Watch it!

### An email signature

An **email signature** is an image or block of text that appears at the bottom of an email and contains the sender's information, such as their name, phone number, and address.

In this episode, Andrew mentions a study that found that email readers are more forgiving of spelling and grammar errors if the sender has “Sent from my iPhone” in their **email signature**.

So, an **email signature** is the part of the email that contains the sender's name and contact information.

Here are two examples with **email signature**:

Helen:	Do you know what Brenda's phone number is?
Beth:	No, I don't. Why don't you look at one of her emails? Her number should be in the <b>signature</b> .
Helen:	That's a good idea. Thanks!

Marc:	What did you do this morning?
Lee:	I spent a couple of hours redesigning my <b>email signature</b> .
Marc:	How's it look?
Lee:	I'll send you an email so you can check it out.
Marc:	Cool!

### A lightbulb goes off in your head

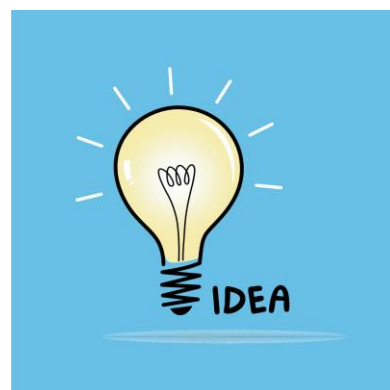
In this episode, Andrew says that a **lightbulb just went off in his head**. While talking about the “Sent from my iPhone” email study, Andrew thinks that English language learners should put this quote into their email signatures so that readers would be more forgiving of spelling and grammar mistakes.

When a **lightbulb goes off in someone's head**, it means that person has just thought of a great idea. If you suddenly think of a great new idea, you can say that a **lightbulb just went off in your head**.

This expression might seem weird because it uses the phrase *goes off* to talk about a lightbulb turning on. This is just one of many strange things about the English language. The important thing to remember is that when a **lightbulb goes off in your head**, you suddenly have a great new idea.

You can also call the time you think of a great new idea a *lightbulb moment*.

Here are a couple of examples with a **lightbulb goes off in your head**:



Fatima:	How did your exam go?
Carlos:	It was tough!
Fatima:	Oh no.
Carlos:	My mind went blank when I had to write my essay. But then, suddenly, a <b>lightbulb went off in my head</b> and I got an idea about what to write.
Fatima:	That's great.
Carlos:	Yes, but it was still a hard exam. I'll get my results next week.

Reggie:	One day I'd like to own my own business.
Sam:	What kind of business?
Reggie:	I'm not sure. I just need a <b>lightbulb to go off in my head</b> . Once I think of a great idea, I'll open my business.
Sam:	Sounds like a good plan!

## A win-win

In this episode, Andrew says that including "Sent from my iPhone" in your email signature is a **win-win**. A **win-win** situation occurs when everyone is satisfied with the results or outcome. So including this line in your email is a **win-win** because email writers don't get judged for making spelling or grammar mistakes, and email readers don't get bothered by reading spelling or grammar mistakes. Everyone wins!

So, when all the people involved in a situation are happy or satisfied with the outcome or result, it is a **win-win**.

Here are a couple of examples with this expression:

Hank: Hey, do you think I could borrow \$20?

Sara: I'm not sure.

Hank: Come on. I'll pay you back tomorrow and I'll also buy you brunch. It's a **win-win**.

Sara: OK. OK, sure.

Jessie: I heard you're getting transferred to the Toronto office. We'll certainly miss you around here. How do you feel to be leaving?

Harvey: Well, in a weird way, it's actually a **win-win**. My wife's family all lives in Toronto, and we had been thinking about moving there anyway.

Jessie: Great.

Harvey: Yeah, so the company is happy I'm willing to move to Toronto, and my wife and I are happy to move because we'll be closer to our family.

## Hack

A **hack** is a method or technique that makes doing something more efficient or useful. In this episode, Suzanne says that writing "Sent from my iPhone" in your email signature is an email **hack**. In other words, it is an easy modification to make to your email signature that will make your readers more likely to forgive any spelling or grammar mistakes you may make when writing emails.

These days, life **hacks** are very popular on the Internet. There are many blogs and YouTube videos dedicated to sharing **hacks** or tips and tricks that make doing something more efficient. It's easy to find information about language-learning **hacks**, kitchen **hacks**, or even **hacks** that will change your life. If you want to find easier and more efficient ways to do things, just Google "**hacks**."

So, a **hack** is a technique that makes doing something easier or more efficient.

Here are some examples with this expression:

Jason: I just read an article on the Internet about 25 kitchen **hacks** that will improve my cooking.

Tina: Oh, cool.

Jason: Yeah, there was some really useful information in the article. I'll email it to you.

Tina: Yeah, do that. I'd like to check it out.

Peter: Do you have any hobbies?

Michelle: I really like playing chess.

Peter: Wow! That game is too hard for me.

Michelle: I thought that at first too. But then I read a book about chess **hacks** and tips, and it really improved my game.

Peter: Nice. I might have to borrow that book from you!

### So-and-so

In this episode, Suzanne gives us some examples of expressions she uses when she writes emails. In one of the examples, she says "Hi Professor **so-and-so**...." Whenever we give a hypothetical example and we are talking about a fictional person, we can call that person **so-and-so**.

The expression **so-and-so** can also be used when you can't remember someone's name, or when using their name isn't important.

For example, imagine someone in your office always did something annoying, like leave his dirty dishes in the lunchroom sink. When talking to a different coworker one day, you might say, "I hate how **so-and-so** never cleans up after himself."

You would call this person **so-and-so** because calling him by his real name would be rude. Both you and your coworker know who **so-and-so** is, but you can avoid being rude and directly naming that person by instead referring to him as **so-and-so**.

So, the expression **so-and-so** is just an expression we can use when talking about an example or a hypothetical situation, when we can't remember someone's name, or when it is rude to call that person by their actual name.

In all of these cases, you can only use **so-and-so** when you are talking *about* someone, not when you are talking *to* that person. For example, if you ran into an old classmate on the street but couldn't remember her name, you would NOT say, "Oh, hi **so-and-so**, how are you?"

However, if you talk about running into your old classmate with a different person, you could say, "I saw **so-and-so** from high school the other day. She's doing well."

To see how this expression works in a conversational setting, check out these two dialogue examples:

Laura:	Are you going to the party tonight?
Ollie:	Whose party?
Laura:	Ah, you know, <b>so-and-so's</b> from the office.
Ollie:	You mean Richard?
Laura:	Yeah, Richard's party. Are you going to go?
Ollie:	Yeah, I think so. How about you?
Laura:	Yeah, I might drop in for an hour.

Sara:	My neighbour's dog keeps digging up the flowers in my garden.
Andrea:	You should talk to him about it.
Sara:	Yeah, I want to, but I don't know what to say. It's awkward.
Andrea:	Just go over and knock on his door and say, "Hey, Mr. <b>so-and-so</b> , your dog keeps destroying my flowers. Could you please make sure he stays out of my garden from now on?"
Sara:	Yeah, that's a good idea. I'll try it out.

### A common courtesy

A **common courtesy** occurs when you treat people the way that you would like to be treated. In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne mention that it's a **common courtesy** to be polite when you write emails. Because no one likes reading a rude email, it is a **common courtesy** to be polite when you send emails.

Some other examples of **common courtesy** include holding a door open for someone and not rushing into a subway car before the departing passengers have had a chance to exit.

So, any time you treat other people the way you would like to be treated, you are showing a **common courtesy**.

Check out these two examples with this expression:

Matthew: I wish people would stop smoking in public. I hate breathing in secondhand smoke while I'm walking down the sidewalk.

Josie: I agree! It's just a **common courtesy**.

Matthew: Yes, exactly!

Brian: Hey, Stella, I know you don't have to work tomorrow but I do, and I have to get up at 6:00. Could you please pay me the **common courtesy** of keeping the TV volume down?

Stella: Oh, sorry, I didn't realize you were trying to sleep. I'll turn it down.

Brian: Thanks!

### A cover letter

A **cover letter** is the document that you submit along with your résumé when you apply for a job. A **cover letter** contains all the important information about you, such as why you want the job and why you would be good at the job. A **cover letter** also outlines your skills and experiences. In a **cover letter**, you sell yourself to your potential new employer.

In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne talk about formal expressions that are appropriate to use in a **cover letter**. For example, both Andrew and Suzanne say that they only use "Sincerely" when they write **cover letters**.

So, a formal letter that you use to apply for a job is called a **cover letter**.

Here are a couple examples with this expression:

Angie: Do you have any plans this weekend?

Ian: I'm working on a job application. I have to write a **cover letter**.

Angie: Oh, you'll be busy then. Good luck!

Ian: Thanks.



Maggie: Guess what happened last night?

Chuck: I don't know, what?

Maggie: My hard drive died.

Chuck: Oh no! That's the worst. You had everything backed up though, right?

Maggie: Nope. I lost everything I had saved. All my files! My school files, my pictures, my résumé, my **cover letters**. Everything!

Chuck: Oh, I'm so sorry! That's awful!

## Quiz

1. **In this episode, Suzanne and Andrew say that being polite is a common courtesy. When does a common courtesy occur?**
  - a) when you are rude to other people
  - b) when you treat other people the way you want to be treated
  - c) when you are not polite to other people
  - d) when you are bothered by other people
  
2. **What is a technique that makes doing something easy or efficient?**
  - a) a trap
  - b) a smack
  - c) a hack
  - d) a crack
  
3. **When do you send a cover letter?**
  - a) when you apply for a job
  - b) when you send an email to your friend
  - c) when you write a letter to a newspaper or magazine
  - d) when you receive a letter from a pen pal
  
4. **In which situation can you NOT use the expression *so-and-so*?**
  - a) when you can't remember someone's name
  - b) when it is rude to use someone's name
  - c) when you are giving a hypothetical example
  - d) when talking directly to the person whose name you want to avoid using
  
5. **If a band is big in Japan, what does it mean?**
  - a) The band has very tall members.
  - b) The band is popular in Japan.
  - c) The band is touring in Japan.
  - d) The band is not well known in Japan.

- 6. In this episode, Andrew says that a lightbulb went off in his head. What does this mean?**
- a) He turned on the lights.
  - b) He suddenly had a great idea.
  - c) He couldn't remember someone's name.
  - d) He was late for an appointment.
- 7. True or false. An email signature contains the sender's contact information.**
- a) true
  - b) false
- 8. Fill in the blank. When you dive into something, you start doing something \_\_\_\_\_.**
- a) lazily
  - b) slowly
  - c) quickly
  - d) enthusiastically

## Quiz Answers

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

### Episode Credits

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