

Chatterbox #166 – The Royal Family

Episode Description

Here's a fact that might blow your mind: Canada has a queen. Join Andrew and Morag as they discuss how Canada ended up with a queen, some notable royals, and their personal opinions on the monarchy.

Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- A kick-off
- A big deal
- A warm welcome
- In the public eye
- To blow your mind



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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: Hi, I'm Andrew.

Morag: And I'm Morag.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

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Andrew: So Morag, how's it going?

Morag: Pretty well, thanks Andrew. And how are you doing in Korea?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty well as well too. We are recording at opposite times of the day.

Morag: Yeah, almost completely opposite. It's pretty funny.

Andrew: Yeah. So I woke you up early this morning to record, and I'm staying up a little bit later than I usually do. But I think this will be fun.

Morag: I think so. It's multinational and exciting.

Andrew: Definitely. So today, we're going to record a Chatterbox episode, and this is where we have a conversation about a subject that we think is interesting. It might be something to do with pop culture or history or Canadian culture.

Morag: Or when all three of those things intersect in something like the Royal Family.

Andrew: Exactly. And that's our topic today—the Royal Family.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: Maybe a lot of our listeners don't know that Canada actually has a Royal Family.

- Morag: We have the same monarchy that the British Isles have.
- Andrew: Yeah. And so a lot of times, even I forget that we have a Royal Family. And one of the recent reminders that I got that we have a Royal Family is one of my students back in Canada. He's from France originally, and he just became a Canadian citizen.
- Morag: Well, that's wonderful.
- Andrew: Yeah, yeah. I was pretty happy for him. And as part of the ceremony, he had to swear allegiance to the Queen.
- Morag: That's really weird.
- Andrew: It's weird, right. And he thought it was super weird.
- Morag: Well, I guess it's because it's not a very big or prominent part of Canadian culture. You could easily live in Canada for a long time, and except for maybe the money and a couple of other things, not really know that we have a Royal Family.
- Andrew: Yeah, that's true. Even I forget, as I just demonstrated.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: So today, we're going to break our episode into three parts. We're going to start by talking about the history of the Royal Family in Canada, and we'll just talk briefly about that. And in the second part, we'll talk about some notable royals or some fan favourites, you could say.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And then in the final part of today's episode, we will talk about our opinions on the Royal Family, and we'll share our views.
- Morag: Well, that sounds like fun.
- Andrew: It sounds like fun, yes.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: So Morag, I think maybe you actually know more than me about the Royal Family. So could you tell me and our listeners a little summary of the history of the royals in Canada?
- Morag: Yeah, no problem, Andrew. So as a former colony of Britain, Canada has never been without the Royal Family. We've always had them in some way or another. They used to have more power back in the day, in 1600 to 1700s. Now, it's more of a ceremonial role. They don't have much power at all. It's a

very light legal role. Although technically, we have ... We owe our whole system to them. Technically, the Queen could say no to any of our laws, and then, they wouldn't be able to go through. But that never happens.

Andrew: Right. In theory, the Queen could exercise some power, but in reality, she never does.

Morag: She never ever would. There would be ... it would be terrible for the system. And it just would never happen. She also, in Canada, currently, she has no direct influence. She acts through someone called a Governor General, who signs things on her behalf. It's her representative in Canada.

Andrew: Right. And the Prime Minister is the head elected official in Canada.

Morag: Yes.

Andrew: And he recommends a Governor General to the Queen, I believe.

Morag: Yes, it's definitely ... It's not directly chosen by the Queen, and I don't think in a very long time there's been any problem with the recommendation from the Prime Minister. We almost in ... We are an entirely self-governing nation, but we just have this interesting leftover from our status as a colony many years ago. Where we technically have a queen.

Andrew: Yeah. It's so interesting to me, the Queen of Canada.

Morag: The Queen of Canada, yes.

Andrew: Yeah. And well, she's also the Queen of Australia and New Zealand, and the UK. So wow! Lucky, lucky her.

Morag: Yeah, it's funny to see her age through time. I remember when I was a little kid, she was much younger on the money.

Andrew: It's true. Actually in doing some research for this episode, I was looking on Wikipedia at some pictures of old Canadian money, and when you see the bills from the 70s and the 80s, she's much younger. And now, on our more recent bill, she's older. She's aged.

Morag: Quite a bit. Yeah, she's ... I think she is the longest—by she, we're talking about Queen Elizabeth II, currently, who is the reigning monarch. She is the longest reigning monarch in British history.

Andrew: Is that so?

Morag: Yes. Queen Victoria, she was the longest reigning monarch. She lived for a very long time. But this one, Queen Elizabeth II, she just keeps on going.

- Andrew: OK. That's interesting. I always thought that it was Queen Victoria that was the winner, but I guess she was surpassed.
- Morag: She has very recently been surpassed, yes.
- Andrew: OK. Good to know. I can answer some trivia questions correctly if this comes up in the future.
- Morag: Who knows.
- Andrew: And I think this is a good time to transition to some of the famous, or the more well-known, Royal Family members because some of them are quite popular, and others aren't so popular. So let's talk about maybe some of the more popular Royal Family members.
- Morag: Sure. Well, I mentioned Queen Victoria just now. She's probably the most recognizable member of the British Royal Family in quite a long time. She was the one that ... The little woman who wore all black, and she's very short and strange looking.
- Andrew: She was strange looking wasn't she.
- Morag: Yes, she was. There are statues of her all over Canada.
- Andrew: Yeah, as well as a city we've both lived in before. Victoria is named after her.
- Morag: Absolutely is. As is Victoria Day, which is a holiday in May, I think?
- Andrew: Yeah, towards the end of May.
- Morag: Towards the end of May in most of Canada, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, not across the whole country, but most of the country. And I always like Victoria Day. It seems to come at the right time of the year when you need a holiday.
- Morag: Yeah, it's a nice 3-day weekend. It's usually nice weather, and a good parade or something. It's lovely, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's kind of **a kick-off** to the summer.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And I think actually the camping season officially starts on Victoria Day. Lots of families will go on Victoria Day long weekend.
- Morag: That's interesting. I was just thinking about camping ...
- Andrew: Mmhmm.

- Morag: When we were talking about Victoria Day, but I didn't know why. So there you go.
- Andrew: Yeah, there you go.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: Cool. Well another ... Maybe the most famous member of the Royal Family, in my opinion, was Princess Diana.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: I remember. Maybe it was just because I was a kid when she was really famous and **in the public eye**. It seemed like her face was everywhere all the time on the news because her life, I guess, was short. But also filled with scandal.
- Morag: Very much so. She was definitely one of the most famous, recent royals. And interestingly, she was not originally a part of the Royal Family. She married into it.
- Andrew: Mhmm.
- Morag: She was part of the gentry.
- Andrew: The gentry?
- Morag: The gentry, which is a class of people in the United Kingdom that hold titles.
- Andrew: Mhmm. Yeah, the rich people.
- Morag: The historically rich and noble people. She came from that group of people, but was not actually royal before marrying Prince Charles.
- Andrew: Mhmm. And so she married Prince Charles, and they had two sons together: William and Harry. And I think they are both pretty popular too. Harry is kind of the bad boy, and William is the apple of his parents' eyes. Maybe because now he's married as well and has a daughter.
- Morag: Does he have two children?
- Andrew: Yes, they do have two. You're right.
- Morag: Yeah, two.
- Andrew: Prince George and Princess Charlotte.

- Morag: Yeah. Well, that's good too because Princess Diana's husband, Prince Charles, who is the son of Elizabeth II, he is the next in line to become King of England. But that's very unlikely because he's getting quite old now.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, yeah.
- Morag: So William is the most likely next person to take the throne. So he has a lot of popularity and a lot of attention toward him because he's probably going to take the position.
- Andrew: I don't know if you remember, but a couple of years ago, he visited Canada and it was **a big deal**. I remember on the TV, on the CBC, the public broadcasting channel that we have in Canada, they dedicated a whole day of live coverage to his visit.
- Morag: Really?
- Andrew: It **blew my mind** that he was that popular that people would want to tune in and watch this coverage. But I guess he's that popular.
- Morag: It's a little odd really. It's just a visit from a foreign representative. You know we don't ... Well, I guess we do get that much or close to that much coverage say when Obama comes to Canada.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, mmhmm.
- Morag: But there isn't the same crazy amount of ceremony and parades and all kinds of stuff. You know they get **a very warm welcome** when they come here.
- Andrew: It's very true. And I think his popularity is really high right now just because of his recent marriage, maybe 5 or 6 years ago. It was kind of a Cinderella story because—correct if I'm wrong—but I believe that his wife, Kate, was not a part of the gentry. She was more of a commoner.
- Morag: Yes, absolutely. And I believe they met at university.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Morag: And it was more of a love story. Say about 50 or so years ago, or even as recently as when Prince Charles married Princess Diana, that wouldn't have been acceptable for a royal to marry someone who's common. So this is more of, like, a love story, which I think everybody gets excited about.
- Andrew: Yeah, I think so. And you're right. It's something that we haven't seen with the Royal Family before. Usually, they're marrying people from other royal families in Europe to keep those royal ties strong. But things are changing.

- Morag: Which I think is pretty good. I don't know.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, and actually, maybe this is a nice time to segue into our final part of our conversation about our opinions on the Royal Family.
- Morag: Well, what is your opinion on the Royal Family, Andrew?
- Andrew: Well, my opinion is that it's kind of crazy. I think that it seems to be a very antiquated institution, and I don't know why. You know, people are just people. Why do they get to be so rich and so famous, and why do we, as Canada, recognize these people as our heads of state? It doesn't really make sense to me.
- Morag: Well no, I honestly ... I agree. It doesn't make any sense, unless you look at it as a historical progression. It only makes sense in the way that they used to have more power and take more money from us, and we lessened that so ...
- Andrew: Yeah, I get what you're saying. I understand the history. But I think it would be nice for our country, Canada, going forward to kind of break ties and be more independent. That's my opinion. But what do you think? Do you feel the same way as me, or do you like the Royal Family?
- Morag: I kind of like Queen Elizabeth. She's just been on the money for long enough that it would be really strange if her face disappeared from my life. That's not to say that it's important to me that she's there, but it would be weird to have somebody else on the back of the money. But that's pretty much the only thing that I think about with the Royal Family most of the time. It's funny though. I do know that, like, my grandmother who comes from Scotland would probably be reasonably upset maybe. Or there are many people who are expatriates of Britain who really, really are into the whole Royal Family. They follow their lives and feel like it's a cultural connection.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Morag: So for those people, it would be sad to see them go. I honestly just don't think it makes much of a difference at all.
- Andrew: Mmhmm, in our day-to-day life. I agree with you.
- Morag: My gosh no. Yeah.
- Andrew: It wouldn't make a difference at all.
- Morag: No.
- Andrew: But you're right about the cultural connection. I know a lot of my family members, especially the older ones, they do feel this connection with the UK

through the Royal Family. And especially since my family's heritage is from the UK too, this is something that's important to some of my family members.

Morag: Yeah. Although I still think, you know, we could get rid of them, and it would be just fine. But at least, the history is kind of interesting, or at least, I think so.

Andrew: It is an interesting history, definitely. And I think, you know, Canadians as a whole are kind of split on what to do. About 40% of Canadians support abolishing the Royal Family in Canada after the Queen's death. So that's a pretty high percentage. But again, this is not something that people are demanding from the government.

Morag: No, although it's ... When we were talking about it being cultural, it is interesting because it's 72% of Francophone Canadians support abolishing the monarchy. So you can see that without that cultural tie to the UK as much, the cultural tie is more to the French language and French history. It matters even less to them.

Andrew: Yeah I ... And I fully understand that perspective. I think ...

Morag: Yes.

Andrew: If I was a Francophone Quebecer, maybe I would not look kindly upon the Royal Family.

Morag: No, I can ... Yeah, I understand that.

Andrew: Very good. Well, I think that's all we have time for today. I want to thank all of our listeners for tuning in, and I hope you enjoyed the show. I want to remind everybody one more time to please visit our website at Culips.com. That's the place where you can learn more about what we do, and you can listen to all of our back episodes as well. So Morag, thanks a lot.

Morag: Thanks Andrew.

Andrew: And we'll talk to you next time.

Morag: All right. Bye everybody.

Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

A kick-off

The expression **a kick-off** means the start of something. The expression comes from both American and English football, as both games begin with someone kicking the ball.

In this episode, Andrew mentions that Victoria Day is **the kick-off** to the summer in Canada. By this, Andrew means that Victoria Day informally marks the beginning of the summer for many people.

You can also use **a kick-off** to talk about an initial event. For example, you might have **a kick-off** meeting with a new client to talk about their expectations. The meeting is not the only meeting (hopefully) that will happen, but it is the first one.

Here are a couple more examples **a kick-off**.

Pamela:	Can you believe we're almost done exams?
Alvin:	I certainly can! It's been a long year. I'm really looking forward to being on vacation for a couple months.
Pamela:	Amen! We should do something to celebrate the end of the school year. Any ideas?
Alvin:	Why don't we have a kick-off party? We can rent a cottage. And it wouldn't be too expensive if we got everyone to contribute!
Pamela:	That's a great idea! I'll see who I can find to come with us.

Laurel:	Hey! Are you still coming to the staff brunch this Sunday?
Quentin:	That depends. What time is the kick-off ?
Laurel:	Everyone is invited over to my place after 10:00 a.m., but the food will only be served around 11:00 a.m.
Quentin:	Well, 10:00 a.m. is a little early for me, but I think I can make it for 11:00 a.m.
Laurel:	Awesome! See you on Sunday.

A big deal

When something is important and special, it is **a big deal**. For example, Andrew mentions in this episode that Prince William's recent visit to Canada was **a big deal**. So Andrew is saying his visit was significant and meaningful to many people.

In your personal life, anything or anyone can be **a big deal**. It all depends on what you consider important. You can say that a person who is special to you is **a big deal**, or if you're worried about an upcoming test, you can say that doing well on the test is **a big deal**.

A big deal can also be used to talk about someone or something that is paid a lot of attention. For example, a news story that receives a lot of attention could be said to be **a big deal**.

Here are a couple more examples with **a big deal**:

Beverly:	How are things, Carl?
Carl:	Oh, pretty good. I went to a weird party yesterday though.
Beverly:	Do tell!
Carl:	It was for my niece's second birthday. Apparently, turning two is a big deal these days. Her party was not only catered, but also had an open bar!
Beverly:	Holy cow! I'm pretty sure I got a cupcake and a doll for my second birthday.
Carl:	Times have changed.

Margaret:	How's your internship going?
Ralph:	I dunno. Maybe it's me, but I don't think that my boss likes me.
Margaret:	That's not good.
Ralph:	To say the least! This internship is a really big deal . I'm so worried that this guy is going to give me a bad review, and the whole thing will be for nothing.
Margaret:	Don't be so down on yourself! You're learning new skills, even if the boss doesn't love you. You'll be OK!

A warm welcome

When someone receives **a warm welcome**, they receive a friendly, hospitable greeting or reception. They are greeted in a way that makes them feel comfortable and at home. In other words, the greeting makes them feel that the other person is happy to see them.

Be careful: **A warm welcome** is not always synonymous with *a warm reception*. Depending on the context, the expression *a warm reception* sometimes means the greeting is hostile or negative.

In this episode, Morag mentions that members of the Royal Family received **a warm welcome** in Canada. So, in general, Canadians were very welcoming and happy to have the Royal Family visit.

Here are a couple more examples with **a warm welcome**:

Keith:	Did you have a good time meeting your boyfriend's parents this weekend?
Gail:	Yeah, it was great! His mom went out of her way to give me a warm welcome . She made a special dinner the night that I arrived. It was really sweet!
Keith:	That's awesome. I'm so glad that it went well.

Mel:	I'm extremely angry with my roommate right now.
Alice:	What happened?
Mel:	Well, my brother arrived for a visit a couple days ago. He's a good kid, but can be really shy. It takes him a while to feel comfortable with new people.
Alice:	I remember. He was a cool guy once he opened up. What did your roommate do to make you so mad?
Mel:	I told my roommate not to be too aggressive, but the second my brother arrived, he tried to get him to drink beer and was teasing him about not having a girlfriend. I could tell my brother was uncomfortable immediately.
Alice:	Wow, that sounds like the opposite of a warm welcome .

In the public eye

In this episode, Andrew mentions that Princess Diana was **in the public eye**. In other words, Princess Diana was famous, and she was often talked about in the media.

Members of the British Royal Family are **in the public eye** their entire lives, as they are famous figures from the moment they are born. For example, both of Prince William and Princess Kate's children will be growing up **in the public eye**.

Any celebrity, politician, or public figure can be said to be **in the public eye**, as their lives and activities are recorded and displayed on the internet, on TV, and in magazines.

Here are a couple more examples with **in the public eye**:

Milton:	Did you hear about Adam from high school?
Ivy:	No, what about him?
Milton:	Remember how he was really into running? Well, he's an Olympic triathlete now!
Ivy:	Wow, that's amazing! How did you find out?
Milton:	I read an article online. I can't believe that someone from our little town is in the public eye !

Gavin:	How was your weekend?
Mimi:	Pretty quiet. I had a really lazy Sunday and watched a bunch of movies that I loved when I was a kid, like the remake of <i>The Parent Trap</i> . I'm still shocked by how cute Lindsay Lohan was when she was little.
Gavin:	I haven't thought about her in years! Is she still alive? Man, did she go downhill.
Mimi:	You know, I don't think that's fair. People are way too critical of child stars. It must be really rough to grow up in the public eye , and never have any privacy or a normal childhood.
Gavin:	I guess you're right. That must be why so many child stars go kinda nuts when they get older.

To blow your mind

To blow your mind is used to express disbelief or shock in relation to something new, different, or unexpected.

Imagine something that is so crazy, so strange, so exciting that your mind becomes overwhelmed and blows up, like in a cartoon. Despite the violent image, **to blow your mind** is often used to talk about something in a positive sense. It does not mean that your brain has suffered an injury.

If you want to share something new and exciting with a friend, you might say to them, “It was so amazing that it **blew my mind!**” So **to blow your mind** can be used to express overwhelming excitement in a positive way.

Here are a couple more examples with **to blow your mind**:

Benjamin: How was the concert last night?

Sophie: Unbelievable! It **blew my mind!** It was, by far, one of the best shows I’ve ever seen.

Benjamin: Sounds like you had quite the experience.

James: Hey Lana. Have you played any good video games lately?

Lana: Actually, I had a chance to try out a couple of virtual reality games recently. Let me tell you; virtual reality is crazy!

James: The last time I tried virtual reality was the early 2000s. I wasn’t very impressed. The graphics were terrible, and it made me feel sick.

Lana: The headsets definitely take some getting used to, but you should really try again if you get the chance. It feels so real that it will **blow your mind!** It’s amazing how far the technology has come since you last tried it.

James: Maybe I’ll give it a shot.

Quiz

1. If something is a big deal to you, you think it is _____.
 - a) important
 - b) normal
 - c) boring
 - d) scary

2. In general, how does a warm welcome make someone feel?
 - a) anxious
 - b) depressed
 - c) comfortable
 - d) disappointed

3. Which of the following professions most likely involves being in the public eye?
 - a) a teacher
 - b) a librarian
 - c) a politician
 - d) a banker

4. What does *a kick-off* mean?
 - a) the beginning of something
 - b) the middle of something
 - c) the end of something
 - d) the intermission of something

5. True or false: If something blows your mind, it means you require brain surgery.
 - a) true
 - b) false

Quiz Answers

1.a 2.c 3.c 4.a 5.b

Episode Credits

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