

Chatterbox #47 – Housing

Transcript

- Maura: Hello everyone out there! It's Maura.
- Harp: And Harp.
- Maura: And we're here with your Culips ESL podcast, where we teach you about different expressions and slang and vocabulary that English speakers are using all the time.
- Harp: Yes. And make sure you check out our website, that's Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Because at the website, you can become a member and then you'll have access to the transcripts, detailed explanations, and even a quiz. And also on the website, you can find all our old episodes.
- Maura: Right. And if you're listening to us on iTunes, don't forget to rate us. Now, let's look at our Chatterbox episode. And this is where we chat about all kinds of different things, whatever's going on in the world or different topics that might be interesting to you.
- Harp: Today we're going to be talking about buying a house.
- Maura: Mmhmm. Buying a house. So first, we're gonna talk about finding a place, finding a house or a home, what kind of place you wanna live in, where you wanna live. All that kind of stuff.
- Harp: Yes. And then we're gonna talk about saving for the **down payment**.
- Maura: Right, because houses are expensive. And the last thing we're going to talk about is moving into the house.
- Harp: Yes. So let's get started. Finding a place.
- Maura: So Harp, why don't you first tell us what inspired this episode?
- Harp: You know, I've been thinking more and more that I wanna buy a place.
- Maura: OK, so you're **in the market** for a house of your own.
- Harp: Not yet, but I'm starting to think about where I wanna live, what kind of houses are appealing to me.

- Maura: OK. So, do you want to live in Montreal, in the city, or outside?
- Harp: Definitely in the city. Yeah, I want to be very close to the city centre.
- Maura: OK. Would you ever think about living in the suburbs?
- Harp: No.
- Maura: OK.
- Harp: Not an option for me.
- Maura: So, if you're thinking about living in the city, then there aren't as many houses to choose from, because, really, in the core centre of Montreal, it's mostly apartments and **condos**.
- Harp: Yeah, I'm thinking more of a **condo** right now.
- Maura: OK. So you're looking for a **condo** in the city.
- Harp: Yes, exactly.
- Maura: Why don't you want to live in the suburbs or outside of the city?
- Harp: You know, I would like to have maybe, like, a small house, which is... You find them more in the suburbs, but I like city life. I like being able to walk to restaurants and walk places and to stores and movies. I like things being close to me. I don't like having to drive. I don't have a car right now. I don't wanna buy one. So I wanna be close to things.
- Maura: Yeah, it's true. In the suburbs, you're often far from a lot of things. The suburbs are always full of houses, house after house after house. And once in a while, you have a shopping centre, but other than that, there's not that much else, so I know what you mean. Being in the city, you have a lot of options, a lot of things to do. A lot of things close by that you can walk to.
- Harp: Exactly. So that's why a **condo** would be nice, because a **condo** is like an apartment, but you own it, so there are so many **condos** in Montreal.
- Maura: Yeah, you're right. And there are not as many houses in the centre of the city. So if you're going to choose between buying a house or buying a **condo** and you wanna live in a city, then a **condo** is a good option.
- Harp: Exactly.

- Maura: So, we should also say that **condo** is the short form for **condominium**, which is quite a long word, so most of the time when people talk about **condos**, they only say the short form: **condo**.
- Harp: Yeah. I never say **condominium**.
- Maura: No, it's too long.
- Harp: Yeah, it's very long.
- Maura: And we should also say what a **condominium** is.
- Harp: Yeah. It's an apartment, but instead of renting, you buy it.
- Maura: Right. So instead of paying rent to the owner of the building, you actually own the room or rooms that you live in, just like an apartment.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: **Condos** also tend to be newer.
- Harp: Typically, yes. I would agree with you. In Montreal there are a lot of older ones, which I like, because they have more personality and character to them.
- Maura: Yeah. But the concept of a **condo** really isn't that old. It's only been over the last few decades that **condos** have really gotten popular, where you can own a space like an apartment.
- Harp: Yeah. A lot of apartment buildings, where you could rent before, are being converted into **condos**, where people can buy them now.
- Maura: Yeah. So one of the reasons why a lot of people buy **condos**, especially in a big city, is because they're less expensive.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. There are houses in Montreal, and even in the city centre, but they're too expensive for me.
- Maura: Yeah, definitely expensive. And you don't get much area around your house.
- Harp: Yeah, no big backyards.

- Maura: There's one more thing I want to mention. Sometimes in Canada, we say something like, "I'm going to my house," or "Do you want to come back to my house?" but we don't actually live in a house.
- Harp: Yeah. We say that in a general term to mean our home.
- Maura: Yeah, our place. But some people might talk about their house, but they really mean their apartment. It's this funny thing that we do.
- Harp: Yeah, I don't know why, but we do it.
- Maura: So if you're in Canada and someone's talking about their house and then you're surprised to see they live in an apartment, that might be why. So are you thinking about buying a brand new place, or an older home?
- Harp: You know, I'm thinking of buying a **condo** that's a **fixer-upper**.
- Maura: Oh, cool. So you wanna buy an older **condo** and then make repairs and upgrade it.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. Fix it and do some repairs and then hopefully, in a couple years, I'll **flip** it.
- Maura: OK, so you're going to re-sell it and try to make some money.
- Harp: Exactly. I'm hoping.
- Maura: OK. But you're going to live in it for a couple years first.
- Harp: Yeah, it's gonna be my **starter home**, so I wanna live in it for a couple years, fix it up slowly, because I can't really do most of it on my own, so I'll have to pay for it. It'll be expensive, but eventually **flip** it and make some money.
- Maura: Sounds like a good plan. So, let's move on to our next topic now, because if you're thinking of buying a house, you must also be saving some money, or I hope you're saving some money
- Harp: I'm starting to save some money. I definitely want to put down a big **down payment**. Because houses are very expensive, obviously I can't afford to pay it all in one big shot. So what I'm going to do is put down a big **down payment**, which is like a deposit, and then over the next 30 years, I'll pay a **mortgage**.
- Maura: Right. And you can pay a **down payment** for lots of different expensive things. You could give a down payment for a car, or you could give a **down**

payment for an expensive piece of furniture.

Harp: Yes. So that means you just put a **lump sum** down in the beginning and then you **pay the rest of it off**.

Maura: Right. This is for big things, when you can't pay everything at once.

Harp: Yes. You don't put a **down payment** on a pair of jeans.

Maura: How are you working to save this money, Harp?

Harp: I have a couple of different action plans that I've put into place.

Maura: Yes. What's that?

Harp: Well, one thing is that I find that I have to just make it automatic, so every time I get paid, my bank account is set up to automatically put money into a new savings account.

Maura: I think a lot of people do that when they're saving. And it's a good idea, because then you can't even touch the money. It doesn't even feel like it's yours.

Harp: Exactly. It happens so quickly.

Maura: That's great. What else are you doing?

Harp: Well, I'm trying to cut out some things. You know, I have to really decide **what's a want and what's a need**. Like, I might **want** the pair of shoes, but do I **need** a new pair of shoes?

Maura: I'm actually pretty good at **talking myself out of** buying things. So, when I'm shopping and I see something I like, if I really think about it and realize that I don't need it, then I don't buy it. And I save a lot of money that way.

Harp: Yeah, no, me too. I usually give myself some time to think about it, leave the store. And then if I keep thinking about it, then I know that, OK, maybe I really **want it or need it**.

Maura: That's true. I use that trick as well.

Harp: Yes. But I'm really trying to think about **wants and needs** and what I really need, and trying to save some money for this **down payment**.

- Maura: Yup, for sure. It's a **big step**. OK, so we've talked about your search for a place, and where you might want to look, and what places you might wanna look at. Then we've talked about trying to save money for that big **down payment**. Now let's talk about when the fun happens, moving in.
- Harp: Yes. So you've put down your **down payment**, you've found a house you like, you bought it, then you move in.
- Maura: Right. So, sometimes people move themselves in and they ask their friends to help out, and sometimes people hire a moving company to move for them.
- Harp: Yeah. If I was really rich, I think I would hire a moving company, but I'll probably end up doing it myself.
- Maura: Yeah. So, that's one factor, is that if you hire a moving company, it's much more expensive. And if you ask your friends, they usually do it for free, but you have to buy them a pizza or something.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: And then after you move in, you have to decide where everything goes and put everything away.
- Harp: Yeah. You have to open all the boxes, put everything away, and **make yourself at home**.
- Maura: Yeah. It can take a long time—weeks. And if it's your first home, sometimes when you move in, you don't have enough things to fill your home, so some rooms don't have any furniture. And then once you start living there, you have to start paying the **mortgage**.
- Harp: Yes, which is basically a monthly payment to start **paying off** the big loan that the bank lent you to buy the house.
- Maura: Right. 'Cause like we said, it's so rare that someone could actually pay all the money for a house at one time. So you have to start paying the bank back, month by month. And the amount of money you borrow for a house is called a **mortgage**. It's a special word used just for buying property.
- Harp: Exactly. Then you get to throw a party, your **housewarming party**.
- Maura: Yes, that is fun. So, you invite all your friends over and you have a party.
- Harp: Yeah, it's a fun word: **housewarming party**.

- Maura: Yeah. To warm up the house and make it your own, make it lived in. And sometimes, at a **housewarming party**, your friends might bring you little presents to decorate your home. A classic **housewarming** present is a little plant.
- Harp: Yes. Because I feel plants give warmth to a room, so I like to give plants as **housewarming** presents.
- Maura: They do, they're good. What else might someone give as a **housewarming** present?
- Harp: Maybe a picture or some sort of decorative item.
- Maura: Yeah. Just something small. Usually your friends don't bring you a new TV.
- Harp: No. They might all **pitch in** and everyone gives a bit of money and then they buy you a big present if you need it.
- Maura: Yeah. But generally, **housewarming parties**, you don't even need to bring a present, but you might bring a little something just to add to the home.
- Harp: Yes. Did you know that that the average age of the first-time homeowner in Canada is 32 years old?
- Maura: Huh. So the age when people buy their first home, in Canada, is usually around 32. Huh. That's older than I would have thought. Does it surprise you?
- Harp: Yeah, that number's from 2006, and so they were saying that it's dropped, so it might be younger than that now.
- Maura: Hmm, that's interesting.
- Harp: OK, so today we talked about buying a house. We started with finding a place.
- Maura: Yup. And all the different kinds of places where you might want to live. And then we talked about saving for buying the place.
- Harp: And then moving in.
- Maura: The fun part. So, Harp, make sure you let us all know when you finally buy a place.
- Harp: Yeah. I don't think it's gonna be soon, but hopefully in the next year.

Maura: Very exciting. I can't wait to go to your **housewarming party**.

Harp: I can't wait to see your **housewarming** present.

Maura: OK, so, remember to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com

Harp: And we'll talk to you later.

Maura: This has been Maura.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: Bye!

Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

A down payment

When someone buys a very expensive item and cannot pay the entire price, they usually pay a **down payment**. This can be for any expensive thing, like a television or a car. It is especially true for buying a house.

Houses in Canada have a big price range. You can find some small, older homes in small towns for \$50,000 Canadian, and you can pay over one million dollars for large homes in the big cities. The average price for a Canadian home is approximately \$300,000.

When people want to buy a house, they usually need to borrow money from the bank. This is when they need to make a **down payment**. They pay a certain amount (the **down payment**) to the bank, for example, \$10,000, and then borrow the rest.

We usually say *to make a down payment*.

To be in the market

If someone is described as **in the market**, this means they are looking to buy something. When this expression is used, we often say what the person is **in the market for**. In this episode, Maura says that Harp is **in the market for** a home. This means that Harp is looking to buy a home.

You can be **in the market for** almost anything, but the expression is normally used for larger, more expensive items. You wouldn't likely be **in the market** to buy a pack of gum, because it's so cheap you don't need to look much!

Here are a couple of examples with **to be in the market**:

Elaine: I'm **in the market** to buy a new sound system. My speakers are broken.

Ray: Oh, I know a great place, with good deals.

Jack: I saw you looking at car advertisements. Are you **in the market**?

Krista: Yeah. My car isn't in good shape, so I need to start looking.

Condos

Condos is the short form for **condominiums**. **Condominiums** are apartments that people own. Sometimes there are also **condo** fees that owners must pay to take care of the common parts of the building. You find **condos** most often in bigger cities. As we say in this episode, **condos** began to be more common starting in the 1990s.

A fixer-upper

To fix up is to repair or to improve and make better. Some people buy an older house that is not in excellent condition to make repairs and make it beautiful again. In this case, we can say the owners are going to fix up the house.

When a house is bought in order to be fixed up, it can be called a **fixer-upper**. To call a house a **fixer-upper** is just like saying that it is in bad condition, but it sounds more positive.

To flip a property

Some people buy a home with the intention to sell it again. **To flip a house**, or any property, means that after you buy the home, you sell it again for a higher price to make money. Some people might choose **to flip** a home in a short time, but others can take a few years to do this.

To flip anything is to turn it from one side to the other, so imagine changing from buying to selling.

A starter home

Just as mentioned above, some people buy a house with the intention to sell it again at some time in the future. A **starter home** is the first home that someone buys. It is the beginning of their experience of owning a house, and often the plan is to buy something bigger and more expensive later on.

You can also use *starter* with other items that are the beginning or base of something. You could buy a starter kitchen appliance, or starter kits to help build a variety of things.

A mortgage

A **mortgage** is the money you need to pay back to the bank after you borrow money to buy a home. As you begin to pay back the initial amount of money borrowed, interest is also added to the total. The longer you take to pay back your **mortgage**, the more interest you have to pay.

A lump sum

A sum is an amount that is created by adding numbers together. The sum of 2+2 is 4. A **lump sum** is a big amount of money that is paid at one time.

To pay off

You **pay off** something when you completely pay the total amount of a debt, and do not owe any more money. After you buy a house, you have a mortgage. When you finish paying all the money back to the bank, you can say that you **paid off** your mortgage.

Wants versus needs

To want and **to need** are verbs. These can also be used as nouns. Something you **want**, or the desire for something, can be called **a want**. Harp gives the example of a new pair of shoes. The new pair of shoes is **a want** because it is something she **wants**, not something that's necessary for her to live.

A need is used to talk about something that you **need** to live, most basically food and shelter. People might debate about what is a real **need** and what's a **want**. Do you **need** a television? Do you really **need** to have a dessert after every meal?

To talk someone out of something

If someone wants to buy, for example, a new jacket, you can **talk them out of it**. If you **talk someone out of** buying a new jacket, this means that you convince them not to buy it. **To talk someone out of something** is to convince that person not to do something.

In this episode, Maura says that she **talks herself out of** buying things. This means that when she has the idea that she would like to buy something, she convinces herself that it is not a good idea to buy it.

You can **talk yourself out of** something, or one person can **talk another person out of** something. This does not have to be only about buying. Here are a couple of examples:

Jasper: I think I'm going to quit my job and try to find a new one.

Ben: Can I **talk you out of it**? I want you to stay. I really like working with you.

Marc: Mario was thinking of moving to a new city because he's bored.

Gwen: I know. But I **talked him out of it**. He's staying now.

A big step

People often talk about elements of their lives in **steps**. Each **step** is often related to progress and becoming closer to reaching your goal. You could talk about the **steps** you need to take to get the job you love. Going to school is one **step**, and getting experience is another **step**.

In this episode, Harp and Maura say that buying a house is **a big step**. This is **a big step** in life in general, related to being an adult.

Here is another example using **step** to talk about progress:

Amanda: Fred started school today for the first time!

Isla: Just another **step** in growing up.

To make yourself at home

To make yourself at home is to get comfortable in a certain place, often a home. Harp

talks about moving in to your new home and **making yourself at home**. This means that you are making yourself comfortable in your own new home by placing furniture and putting away your things.

This expression can also be used to invite a person to feel comfortable anywhere. When Doug arrives at Jane's home, she might say to him, "**Make yourself at home**," which means that he should feel as comfortable as if it were his own home. You might also hear this expression used in places other than homes. If a business colleague from another office arrives at your office, you could also invite them **to make themselves at home**.

Here are some other examples with this expression:

Cindy: Hi Luke. Welcome. **Make yourself at home**.
Luke: Thanks.

Hannah: Did our guest arrive yet?
Yvonne: Yep. She's just **making herself at home** upstairs.

A housewarming party

When people move into a new place, they often want to invite their friends and family over to see it. This is the reason why people like to have **housewarming parties**. They are the first parties in new homes.

Some people bring gifts to **housewarming parties**. If it is a small party with close friends or family, it might be more appropriate to give a gift. Some people who are throwing a **housewarming party** might even say that they do not want people to bring gifts. This might be because they don't want people to feel that they need to, or because they already have everything they need.

To pitch in

To pitch in is to contribute with others for something. Harp talks about people **pitching in** to buy a housewarming gift. In this case, people are contributing or **pitching in** money. People can also **pitch in** by helping in other ways. If someone helps you build a barn, they are **pitching in**. A person may also **pitch in** by contributing to a project for school. Here are a couple of examples with **to pitch in**:

Justin: If we all **pitch in**, we can get a really big birthday cake for Sheila.
Paula: OK, I'll call Victor and ask if he's **pitching in**.

Tatiana: Thanks for helping me move into my new place.
Zack: No problem. I don't mind **pitching in**.

Quiz

1. If you are looking to buy a house, you can be described as _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) in the market
- b) on the market
- c) off the market
- d) into the market

2. **Condo** is short for which type of home?

- a) a condor
- b) a condom
- c) a condenser
- d) a condominium

3. **Alison:** What kind of house did you buy?

Peter: It's not in very good condition. I need to do lots of repairs and some renovations.

What could Peter's house be described as?

- a) a down payment
- b) a fixer-upper
- c) a condo
- d) a mortgage

4. **What does it mean to flip a house that you've bought?**

- a) to sell the house later to make money from it
- b) to do lots of renovations
- c) to plan to live in the house for the rest of your life
- d) to plan to never live in the house

5. Jean: I just paid off my student loan!**Which is true about Jean?**

- a) He hasn't paid anything back to the bank yet.
- b) He completely paid his student loan back.
- c) He has to start paying his student loan back.
- d) He never had a student loan.

6. Joshua: Melanie was going to buy a new car, but I talked her out of it.**What happened?**

- a) Melanie bought a new car.
- b) Joshua convinced Melanie to buy it.
- c) They both bought the car.
- d) Joshua convinced Melanie not to buy it.

7. What might William do to make himself at home?

- a) make himself comfortable
- b) start dancing
- c) leave the building
- d) build a bed

8. What is the first party in a new home called?

- a) a shower
- b) a bachelor party
- c) an anniversary party
- d) a housewarming party

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