

## Chatterbox #52 – Chatting with Kara

### Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone out there!

Kara: Hello!

Maura: This is Maura with your Culips ESL podcast. And if you like our podcasts, don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, where you can have access to all of our past episodes and you can also get more learning materials, which include a transcript, more detailed explanation of some of our words and expressions, and a quiz. Now, today's episode is our Chatterbox episode, and in this episode we chat about all different kinds of things that might interest you. We might talk about something that's going on in the news, or talk about something related to Canadian culture, or, like today, we interview someone. And today we have a very, very special guest, because today I'm going to interview my sister, Kara. Of course, every once in a while, a few times a year, members in my family come to visit me because I'm not from Montreal, I'm from a city on other side of Toronto, quite far away from here. So, my sister Kara's visiting, and I thought this would be a great opportunity to interview her and let you, the listeners, get to know me and my sister a little bit more. So, Kara, tell us a little bit about yourself to start.

Kara: OK. So, as Maura said, my name is Kara and I live in a city called **Kitchener**. It's about an hour west of Toronto and I've come to visit Maura for a few days and I love visiting Montreal. Now, back in **Kitchener**, I'm an executive assistant to the CEO of an insurance company, so that takes up most of my time during the week. **Otherwise**, I have a few hobbies; I really enjoy working out and running, and I like training for certain things throughout the summer, like half marathons or little races that I do. So that takes up most of my time and **otherwise**, just like to spend time with my friends, 'cause all my friends live in the same city that I live in. **Otherwise**, if I have a few friends outside the city, I like to go visit them on weekends, so that also takes up some of my time, too.

Maura: So, by now you've been to Montreal a few times to visit me, or more than a few times, so you know the city a little bit. Although, there's still a lot of things you haven't tried yet. So I'm wondering if you can tell us what you like about Montreal and what are some of your favourite things to do here?

- Kara: I really enjoy Montreal, mainly because it's such a big city and I love visiting a big city. I love the food and the culture, would be my favourite things. I find that there's just so much to do because it's a big city. You can just wander around the streets and there's so much to look at. It's probably because I don't live here, so I find that there's a lot more to do just by wandering around, but I love going out and eating 'cause there are so many nice places to eat in Montreal. So, usually do a breakfast, lunch, and dinner, going out. And I just find that there's so much culture compared to Ontario, probably because of the French language. But even just the environment, everything you see around you is just so different than where I live, so there's so much to see and do, just by wandering around the city.
- Maura: Well, I'm very glad that you said *eating*, because whenever you come to visit, you're always talking about the restaurants we're gonna go to and the food we're going to eat. One thing that you always wanna do is have a **poutine**, or share the **poutine** experience with a friend that you bring with you who's never been to Montreal.
- Kara: That is correct. I love the **poutine** and I know that we have them back in Ontario, but they're just not the same as they are here because the french fries and everything just tastes so different, and it is my favourite thing to eat when I'm here.
- Maura: So, do you wanna explain exactly what is in a **poutine**?
- Kara: I would love to. A **poutine** is very good fresh-cut fries with cheese curds. It's a type of cheese, tastes a lot like a mozzarella but it's chunks of cheese. And then poured over top of it is a gravy, usually a brown gravy, and that melts the cheese and it gets all in between the fries and it's so good.
- Maura: Yeah. It is very good, but you don't wanna have it all the time, because it's not very healthy.
- Kara: Definitely not the healthiest thing on a menu.
- Maura: So... So you still live in **Kitchener**, where we were both born and raised and even both of our parents were born in **Kitchener**, Ontario. And a lot of our family still lives there. So, I'm wondering: how do you think that Montreal compares to **Kitchener**?
- Kara: Well, comparing the two is very hard, because it's like **comparing apples and oranges**. They're both very, very different. **Kitchener** is more of a suburban city, where you definitely need a car to get around. The public transit system is not like it is in the big city and there is not as much to do as there is in a big city. We do have a few things, but it's just... It's not fair to compare, I would say.

- Maura: Yeah. The **downtown** area in **Kitchener** is **pretty dead**. So I mean it's very quiet, there's not a lot of action going on down there.
- Kara: They are definitely trying to make it more of a walking city. I know that recently they've talked about shutting down the main King Street, which is the **uptown** and **downtown** area on Sundays to promote more of a walking city.
- Maura: There are some fun things to do around **Kitchener**, though. What would you do if you had someone visiting you? And actually, you just had a friend visiting you, so what did you do when a friend came to visit **Kitchener**?
- Kara: I did have a friend recently come to visit and she was there for a very short period of time, but the things that we did, as soon as she got there—it was a Saturday morning, and we have a very, very, very big market. I think it may be one of the biggest in Ontario. It's called the **St. Jacobs Farmers' Market** and it's where all the local farmers come and sell their fruits and vegetables. And it's very, very reasonably priced, so a lot of people go there and get their fruits and vegetables in the summer. Now, I know a lot of other things are sold there, meats, dairy, any dairy products, all their eggs, so there are lots of different things that you can get at the market. They also do flowers and pretty much anything you could get at a supermarket except for canned goods and boxed goods.
- Maura: And the one thing that I really love about it and appreciate since I don't live in the area is the **Mennonites**, because there are a lot of **Mennonites** that live in the area and a lot of them take food, like you said, fruits and vegetables or baked goods, other things that they've made, and they sell it at this market.
- Kara: Yes. And one of the main things that my friend picked up, and everyone should pick up if they come there, is maple syrup, because the **Mennonites** are known to make very good maple syrup, and it's very Canadian. And we even have a maple syrup festival that happens as well. So that's another thing to take someone to, but it's only at certain times of the year. But you definitely need to try the maple syrup when you come, so that's the best thing to do at the market. There's also a food item called an apple fritter, which is something that I got her to try as well, and that's just **a signature item** that they have at the market that everyone should try when they go there.
- Maura: And the one other thing I always associate with **Kitchener** and things that you can do there is **Oktoberfest**, but of course that's only once a year. And what that is is the traditionally German festival celebrating the fall and there's a lot of drinking beer involved. And we have a parade and different activities going on, and that's a really exciting time, because the city is really alive and people come from all around to celebrate it.

- Kara: Yes. That is a really big celebration that we have. And I know to start out that celebration, they tap a huge keg of beer, and that's to start it. And it's actually two weekends long and then they have an event to close out the two weeks of **Oktoberfest**, as well. It's a very big tourist attraction and lots of people come from the cities all around. I even know people that come from Toronto to go to this event, because it's just a really, really fun time to celebrate with friends and have a good time, and lots of beer.
- Maura: Yeah. That's usually what it's about, just having fun. So I wanted to ask you as well, if you think you'll stay in **Kitchener**, and **settle down** in **Kitchener**, or if you'll move somewhere else.
- Kara: Well, I definitely can tell you that being in Montreal makes me wanna move back to the big city, because there's just so much more to do, and especially now that the weather's getting nicer, it's just nice to walk around and have things to see and stop and have a tea somewhere or a **smoothie**. And I miss that a lot about the big city. So, I do like **Kitchener** because most of my friends are there and I do have a fun time with what you can do in **Kitchener**, but I have thought about moving to Toronto because it just offers a lot more than **Kitchener** does. And I miss living in the big city, 'cause I used to live in Sydney, Australia, and once you live in a big city, it's hard to go back to live in the suburbs.
- Maura: Yeah. It's interesting though because, as I said, you, right now, live in **Kitchener**, close to both of our parents, our families, our other sister, and I live very far away. And since you've had both experiences, living in **Kitchener** and then living very, very far away in Australia, what do you think are the benefits to living close to your family?
- Kara: Well, I definitely know when I moved places in Australia, I didn't have a lot of people helping me move, or when you get sick you can't call your mom to come and bring you some **chicken noodle soup**, so it's very hard. You have to rely on yourself a lot and there's a lot of things you don't get to see, like little babies growing up or, you know, even grandparents that get older. You **miss out** on certain things that happen in those people's lives that live back at home.
- Maura: Yeah. So it is a decision that people have to make. And in Canada, some people stay in the city where their family lives for that exact reason, to be close to them, and they don't even consider leaving. But other people really wanna move around, they wanna make a life for themselves that they like, and so they change cities. Or, like you're thinking of doing, going to Toronto, so you have a new city but you're not so far, so you'll still be close to family. Maybe mom won't bring you **chicken soup**, but on the weekend she'll be there and help you out and take care of you.

Kara: Hopefully that happens.

Maura: Yeah. So, the other thing I wanna ask you about is your time in Australia, because it's always interesting to go live in another country and experience another culture. And when you speak the same language, you really have a lot of access to what that culture is about, and you can get to know it very well. And you lived in Australia, in Sydney, Australia, for two years, so you got to know what it was like. Can you just tell us about your experience and what you thought of living there?

Kara: Yes. First, when I moved to Australia, I felt it was a lot different than Canada. People were very laid back compared to Canadians. The job that I worked in... I worked in an office, and compared to the office job I work now, it was just very different. People, you know, they just work at a slower pace. Another thing that I noticed was very different was the weather. Australia does have four seasons, like Canada, but they don't differ as much as the Canadian seasons do. Winter in Australia is nothing compared to the winter in Canada. The coldest morning I remember was 5 degrees, and that was very, very cold for Australians. And the summer was always in its 30s and it was close to 40s some days. So... And one of the major differences about Australian winter is the sun still comes out even if it's 5 degrees, and that was a cold morning, the sun would still be shining, so that was very, very different, and that's actually a very nice change compared to Canada, was always seeing the sun throughout the year. But you also can miss the snow if you ski and snowboard. But there are actually areas in Australia you can go to as well in the winter that have snow, so it offers a lot of the same things that Canada does, but warmer.

Maura: It's funny because I did notice you say that you can miss the snow in Canada, which means that it's possible that you can miss the snow if you like winter sports. But I **have a feeling** that you didn't miss the snow.

Kara: Well, I would say, one day a year I missed the snow, and that was on Christmas, because nothing's better than being with family on Christmas Day and looking outside and seeing the snow fall or going out and building a snowman, and you definitely can't do that in Australia.

Maura: Yeah. When I was in Japan over Christmas, it was still cold, so I can't imagine having a warm or hot Christmas. I also think there's a myth—that many people around the world think that Canadians like winter, or love it and enjoy it. Yes, it's cold. Yes, there's a lot of snow, but a lot of us that live here don't enjoy it and find it freezing and count down the days till it's over.

Kara: I definitely agree with that. We live for summer.

Maura: Yeah, I definitely agree. And another thing that I know is a bit different is that

looking for a job and finding employment in Australia is different than it is when you're looking in Canada. Can you tell us about that?

Kara: Yes. When I first went there, I had my resume all ready to go and I looked online and realized that it's almost all the jobs, you have to apply through a recruitment agency, and that is not like that here, at all. You usually apply directly to the company with your resume and your cover letter for a job that's posted, usually on a main website, for jobs, or on their company website. Now, when I went to look in Australia, they were all through different recruitment agencies. So when you apply for that job, what the recruitment agency does is they'll call you—especially when you're on a working holiday visa, which I was—they'll call you and they'll bring you in and you have to do testing with them, whether that's computer testing, some writing, communication testing, just to see what type of job you would fill. And then they keep that on record for other jobs that are coming up. Now, you can't even apply directly to the company even if you wanted to, mainly because the recruitment agencies don't tell you what the company is until you're closer to getting that job.

Maura: Yeah. That's a big difference, because we have recruitment agencies here, but they're not as popular as it sounds like it is in Australia. So, another thing that's different about Australia versus Canada is the language, and of course, yes, we all speak English, but there are some different expressions and slang that's different. So I was wondering if there's anything you can remember that is used differently in English over there compared to the way we say it over here.

Kara: I can definitely think of some words that they used that I had to get used to. And... first one would be, when I was working, using the word *cell*, like, for *cellular phone*. A lot of times people automatically assumed I was from the United States as soon as I said *cell phone*. Because what they say in Australia is *mobile* for *mobile phone*, so that's something I really had to get used to. And another thing that they also said was... If you were to take a call or answer a telephone and it wasn't for you and someone asked for someone that wasn't there, they would often say, "Oh, I'll get them to ring you back," or, "Oh, I'll ring them back later," instead of *call you back*, so I had to get used to that as well.

Maura: Yeah, they're really small things, but noticeable. So, if someone today, here in Canada said, "I'll ring you back," I would definitely know that that wasn't normal here. Either they would be speaking with an accent, or if they were Canadian, I would assume they had recently been to Australia or England, because it's just something that no one says here.

Kara: Yes. And I know I've been caught in that before. Recently, I said *the lift*, instead of *the elevator*, because they often say *the lift*. And when I said that



the other day, a friend said to me, “Do you think you’re in Australia or something?” Because she knew right away that that just didn’t sound right.

Maura: And, of course, the classic Australia line is *G’day mate*, and I really can’t imitate accents well, so that probably doesn’t sound good if you know what an Australian accent sounds like. But is it true that Australians actually say that, as in to say *hello*? What did you find when you when you were there?

Kara: Well, living in a big city, I didn’t hear anyone say that. I’m sure if you went out into the country, you may hear other people say that, but I never heard anyone say that. Now, one thing they did say, was they did use the word *mate*. Now, I assumed that would be *friend*, but Australians use that on a regular basis, I would say. If someone bumped into me into in the store, they would say, “Oh, sorry mate.” And it’s a nice gesture, because it feels like that person knows you and you get more of a warm feeling when someone apologizes or someone says something and they say *mate* at the end of it. It just seems more friendly than, “Oh, I’m sorry.”

Maura: No, I agree. It sounds, definitely, like you make more of personal connection. Because, like you, I think of *mate* meaning *friend* or *buddy*, and so when you say it to everybody, it just creates a kind of friendship with people who don’t know each other.

Kara: It was one of my favourite phrases.

Maura: So, thank you for being interviewed.

Kara: You are most welcome.

Maura: And I’m sad to see you go, because you’ve just been visiting for a few days, but you’re leaving tomorrow.

Kara: I’m sad to go too, and it will be a long train ride home, but I will be happy to sleep in my own bed again.

Maura: And I’ll see you again in the summer, when I come visit you. So, we hope you liked this podcast, and I hope that you enjoyed learning about my sister. If you want to know more about this episode or any of our episodes, please go to our website, Culips.com, that’s C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And we love to hear from you, so leave a comment, email us, or if you wanna help support us, please donate to help us keep making excellent podcasts. So, this has been Maura and...

Kara: Kara.

Maura: And I will talk to you soon. Bye!

Kara: Bye!

## **Detailed Explanation**

### Kitchener

**Kitchener** is Maura's hometown. She was born there, and grew up there until she went to university. **Kitchener** is a medium-sized city in southern Ontario, Canada. It was previously called Berlin because there were, and still are, many residents of German ancestry. **Kitchener** is beside the city of Waterloo, and the two cities are often referred to as twin cities. Like Maura and Kara talk about in this episode, **Kitchener** is best known for Oktoberfest, and its nearby farmer's market.

### Otherwise

**Otherwise** is used to discuss something under different circumstances or other situations. Kara talks about her full-time job, and then says that **otherwise** her time is spent on her hobbies. So she spends her time working, but other than that, she likes to spend time on her hobbies.

Often, **otherwise** can also have the meaning of *if not*. Kara says **otherwise** again later. When not working, spending time on hobbies, or hanging out with friends in Kitchener, Kara is visiting friends who live outside the city.

There are a few different ways that **otherwise** can be used. In this case, we are looking at it as meaning in other circumstance, or *if not*. Here are a couple examples of this:

Travis: Let's remember to take an umbrella, **otherwise** we'll get all wet if it rains.

Trish: Good idea!

Irene: What do you want to do this weekend?

Kevin: Let's go kayaking if we can rent a kayak.

Irene: All right. **Otherwise** we could go canoeing.

This word is sometimes used by people when speaking without thinking, without any significant meaning to their sentence.

### Poutine

**Poutine** is a greasy, delicious meal that we've also spoken about in previous episodes. Because we're based in Montreal, Quebec, where **poutine** is quite popular, it always comes up! As we say in this episode, **poutine** is french fries, cheese curds, and gravy. You can get it at many places throughout the province of Quebec and across Canada. It's generally considered a type of fast food, but you can also find it at some nicer restaurants.

There are many variations of **poutine**! Sometimes the gravy is replaced by tomato sauce. You can also get **poutine** with chicken or ground beef, or vegetables added too.



To compare apples and oranges

**To compare apples and oranges** is an idiomatic expression. When comparing two things is said to be **like comparing apples and oranges**, this means that the two things are so different that it's too difficult to compare them.

Apples and oranges could be considered to be very different fruits. Apples are sweet and crunchy, and oranges are acidic and soft. Of course, there are actually many similarities between apples and oranges, but the expression is based on their many differences.

Kara uses this expression when Maura asks her to compare Montreal to Kitchener. She says that it is too difficult because they are so different. Montreal is a large, internationally known city where French is the main language. Kitchener is a medium-sized, lesser known suburban city in English Canada.

Here are a couple more examples with **to compare apples and oranges**:

Karen: I don't know what to do. I have two party invitations for the same night.

Bruce: Well, which party do you think will be more fun?

Karen: I can't say. They're such different parties. It's **like comparing apples and oranges**.

Olivia: I think that Brad is a much harder worker than Chris.

Pascal: How can you say that? It's **like comparing apples and oranges**. Brad is so creative, and Chris is very logical and practical. They both have their own strengths and weaknesses.

This expression can also be said as **to compare apples to oranges**.

To be dead

**To be dead** is used in this episode as an expression. Maura says that downtown Kitchener **is dead**. How can a place **be dead**? In this case, when a place is described as **dead**, it means that it is not busy, there are not a lot of people, and not much action is happening.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be dead**:

Dot: Do you want to go to that new pub McCool's for a drink?

Claudia: Not yet. It's too early. That place **is dead** before 10pm.

Katherine: I used to love going out to eat at Sam's Resto.

Guy: Yeah, it used to be so popular. Now **it's dead**.

Uptown and downtown

Most people know **downtown** as the centre of a city. Kitchener's city centre is called **downtown**. Because the city centre of Kitchener connects to the city centre of the next city, Waterloo, city centre of Waterloo is often called **Uptown** Waterloo. **Uptown** is used, in this specific case, simply to distinguish between Kitchener's city centre and Waterloo's.

**Uptown** usually refers to a place that is the upper or more northern part of a city. **Uptown** can also refer to a wealthier or richer neighbourhood. Waterloo is a wealthier city than Kitchener, so this might also be the reason it calls its city centre **uptown**.

St. Jacobs Farmers' Market

This market is located just outside of Kitchener in the small town of St. Jacobs. The farmers' market is a big tourist attraction in the area. Many people come on tour buses to visit, and local people often shop there too. Kara explains much about this market in her interview! It's a great place for apple fritters.

Mennonites

**Mennonites** are a religious group. Some **Mennonites** dress the same way as people in mainstream society, but other dress very traditionally and simply. Many of the **Mennonites** who sell food at the St. Jacobs Farmers' Market live a very traditional lifestyle. They live on farms, grow their own food, and own a variety of animals. They do not have cars, but travel by foot, bike, or horse and buggy. They have separate schools and generally do not associate much with people who are not **Mennonite**.

A signature item

**A signature item** is any item that a company or organization is known for. It's an item that is special to the organization and the best that they make, and so you can't get an item exactly like it anywhere else.

At the St. Jacobs Farmers' Market, people can buy apple fritters, which are not made quite the same way anywhere else in the world! An apple fritter is a delicious apple doughnut. It's true that you can get apple fritters in lots of other places too, but not ones that taste just like the ones from this farmers' market.

**A signature item** doesn't have to be food. The best, most popular piece of clothing at a clothing store could also be called **a signature item**. Here are a couple more examples with **a signature item**:

Helen: Oh, I love the wallets they sell at this place!

Sophia: Wallets are their **signature item**. When the company started, wallets were the first thing they made.

Greg: So, what should I get to eat?

Manuel: Well, the **signature dish** is spaghetti and meatballs, but everything's good here.

### Oktoberfest

**Oktoberfest** is the German festival that occurs at the beginning of the fall season, when people get together and celebrate. In the city of Kitchener, there are various activities for kids around the city, like parades, but adults also get together to drink beer, dance, and play games. There's lots of German food for sale, and some people dress up in traditional Bavarian clothes. Kitchener's **Oktoberfest** is the biggest one in North America.

### To settle down

**To settle down** is often considered a part of growing up by many people in Western culture. After a period of lots of freedom, movement, and change, most people eventually **settle down**. **To settle down** can involve one or any combination of these: to marry, to get a serious job, to buy a house, or to have children. **To settle down** means to get into a routine and establish your life in a certain place, in a certain way, for a significant amount of time.

Maura asks Kara in this episode if she is going to **settle down** in Kitchener. What she's really asking Kara is if she is going to get married, buy a house, and live her life in Kitchener.

Here is another example with **to settle down**:

Henry: Is Jasper still travelling the world?

Nancy: Yep, and he loves it. I don't know if he'll ever **settle down**.

**To settle down** can also mean to become quiet and calm, or focused.

### A smoothie

**A smoothie** is a type of drink that has become quite popular in Canada in recent years. There are many different types of **smoothies**, but generally, **smoothies** are made by putting fruit and other liquids in a blender and serving it as a thick, cold drink. The liquids in **a smoothie** are usually milk, juice, or yogurt. Other ingredients could also be added, like granola, nuts, or vitamins.

### Chicken noodle soup

**Chicken noodle soup** is a very popular soup in North America. It is sometimes associated with being sick, because people traditionally eat this soup when they have a cold. In the past, some people even believed that **chicken noodle soup** could help cure the common cold!

When Kara says that living far from your family means that you can't call your mom to bring you **chicken noodle soup**, what she's really saying is that your mom is too far to

take care of you when you're sick.

### To miss out on something

**To miss out** is to miss an opportunity or to fail to have an experience. It is very similar to the simple meaning of **to miss**. Here's a comparison: Sheila missed a concert. She **missed out on** the chance to hear her favourite song live.

Kara says that living away from your family means that you **miss out** on seeing your family grow and change. When you **miss out** on something, you might never get another chance to experience it.

Here is one more example with **to miss out**:

Yasmina: Camping this weekend was so fun.

Ted: Oh, I'm so disappointed that I had **to miss out on** that because of work.

### To have a feeling

When someone **has a feeling** about something, it means that they believe that they know something, even though it has not yet been confirmed. Maura says that she **has a feeling** that Kara didn't miss the snow while she was in Australia. At that point, Kara had not actually said this. Maura thinks this because she knows that Kara doesn't really like snow.

Here are a couple more examples of **to have a feeling**:

Madge: I'm still not sure if he really likes me.

Julie: I think he does. **I have a feeling** he's going to ask you out soon!

Ted: I'm sure the party is going to work out fine.

Yvonne: How do you know?

Ted: **I just have a feeling**.

**Quiz**

1. **Jim: I like to grow my own fruits and vegetables. Otherwise \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) I like to eat my own fruits and vegetables.
- b) I have a garden.
- c) I buy from the local market.
- d) the fruits and vegetables are very big.

2. **In which Canadian province was poutine first made?**

- a) Quebec
- b) Ontario
- c) Nova Scotia
- d) Manitoba

3. **Trying to decide whether skiing in the winter or lying in the beach is more fun is a difficult comparison to make. It's like \_\_\_\_\_.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) comparing fruits to vegetables
- b) comparing apples to oranges
- c) comparing oranges to apples
- d) comparing fruits

4. **Laurie: The streets are dead today.**

**What does that mean?**

- a) The streets are dirty.
- b) The streets are very busy with people.
- c) There are not many people on the streets.
- d) The streets are very black.

5. **Who are Mennonites?**

- a) all the people who live in Kitchener
- b) a religious group
- c) a music band
- d) anyone who sells fruits and vegetables

**6. What is a signature item?**

- a) the best product made by company or organization
- b) the worst product made by company or organization
- c) an item that is no longer made by a company or organization
- d) an item with a signature on it

**7. What is chicken noodle soup sometimes associated with?**

- a) party time
- b) being sick
- c) going dancing
- d) wearing glasses

**8. Frank didn't go on the trip. He \_\_\_\_\_ a great experience.**

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) missed on
- b) missed out
- c) missed out on
- d) missed on out



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