

## Chatterbox #65 – Fears

### Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone, this is Harp.

Maura: And Maura.

Harp: And we're here with your Culips English learning podcast.

Maura: Yes, we are. And don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And there, you can become a member, and when you're a member, you have access to the transcripts for all of our episodes, more detailed explanations of the expression we use, and also a quiz to help test yourself.

Harp: Yes. And you can also check us out on Facebook. We have quite a lot of activity going on our Facebook page.

Maura: Sure, send us a message, because we love to hear from you.

Harp: So today, we're bringing you a Chatterbox episode, and that's where we discuss cultural topics, sometimes we interview people, sometimes we talk about life in Canada.

Maura: Yeah, all different kinds of subjects. And today we're going to chat about scary things.

Harp: Scary things indeed, things that we're afraid of, reactions people have when they're scared of something.

Maura: Yeah, general fears and different expressions you can use to talk about fears and feeling afraid.

Harp: Yup. So we're gonna start by talking about a couple of expressions that people use when they're afraid, then we're gonna talk about our own fears and what we're afraid of, and then we'll finish by talking about how we can overcome our fears, how we can become less scared.

Maura: And if you're at home right now and you wanna kinda scare yourself, you should listen to this in the dark.

Harp: You're silly. All right, let's get started. Now, I came up with the idea for this episode because of the expression **heebie-jeebies**.

- Maura: It's a pretty awesome expression, **heebie-jeebies**.
- Harp: Yes, *the* **heebie-jeebies**.
- Maura: So, you can say that something or someone gives you the **heebie-jeebies**.
- Harp: Yeah. So when someone or something gives you the **heebie-jeebies**, you feel anxious and afraid and nervous. It's not a good feeling.
- Maura: Yeah. I imagine the **heebie-jeebies** like a weird tickly feeling on your back and on your arms that makes you kind of move around because you're feeling so uncomfortable.
- Harp: Yeah, you're feeling kind of scared. When you get the **heebie-jeebies**, it's not a comfortable situation.
- Maura: Yeah. And I'm noticing that as we talk about **heebie-jeebies**, Harp and I both have our noses crunched up and we're moving around and moving our shoulders around.
- Harp: Yeah, we definitely are.
- Maura: So, when something gives you the **heebie-jeebies**, it kind of scares you and just makes you feel uncomfortable.
- Harp: Yeah. For me, sometimes if I'm walking somewhere in the dark and I feel a bit scared, it gives me the **heebie-jeebies**.
- Maura: Yeah. Or you hear a noise and it sounds very strange and you're alone, then maybe it might give you the **heebie-jeebies**.
- Harp: That's true. That's giving me the **heebie-jeebies** right now.
- Maura: I think I mostly feel the **heebie-jeebies** when I wake up in the middle of the night and it's dark and I hear a noise. That's when I get really kind of freaked out.
- Harp: Yeah. Actually, you know, last week, my neighbours have a cat, and I woke up in the middle of the night and I thought *someone's trying to open door, oh my goodness*. So I'm lying in bed, I have the **heebie-jeebies**, I'm so scared, finally I got the courage to get out of bed to go check, but I couldn't see anyone, and I have a big window in my door. So I went closer and closer because I could still that my door, someone was trying to open my door. And when I went closer, it was the cat.

- Maura: Cute.
- Harp: Not so cute when I got the **heebie-jeebies** but afterwards, yes.
- Maura: That's true, that's true. The **heebie-jeebies** is a feeling that you have that you're not comfortable, or you're scared.
- Harp: Yeah, it's definitely a feeling when you're scared, you're uncomfortable, you feel like you have the **heebie-jeebies**.
- Maura: Yup. It just means that you feel uncomfortable or nervous in a strange way.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: So, let's look at a couple other expressions. So, we could also say, when you feel afraid, that you had **shivers down your spine**.
- Harp: Yes, **shivers down your spine**.
- Maura: And a shiver is usually something that you feel from cold air and you kind of, you move around and it's like a cold feeling that comes over you.
- Harp: Yeah, it's a little bit like you're body's shaking a little bit because of something surprising.
- Maura: Yeah, and your spine is down your back, so you feel a cold breeze and you kind of get **goose bumps** all down your back.
- Harp: Yeah. So **shivers down your spine** is the same idea as **heebie-jeebies**. It's when you get this feeling that you're scared or that you're uncomfortable. It's just not pleasant.
- Maura: Yeah. I think the idea of having **shivers down your spine** comes from thinking that you've seen a ghost or had an experience like that because sometimes we associate, especially in the dark, a sudden cold breeze that comes from nowhere and passes by you is possibly a spirit in front of you, so then you get the **shivers down your spine**.
- Harp: Stop it, Maura. I'm getting the **shivers down my spine**!
- Maura: It's kind of scary, but it's fun. It's fun because we're all together and the lights are on.
- Harp: Yup. I do not like feeling scared normally.
- Maura: So, there's one more expression we wanted to mention, which was **to have the creeps** or **to give someone the creeps**.

- Harp: Yeah. So when something or someone **gives you the creeps**, it gives you that same feeling. You're anxious, you're nervous. It's not a good feeling.
- Maura: Yeah, so all of these are not describing a fear where you're gonna scream and run away, it's just this uncomfortable feeling where something doesn't feel right and you feel like something strange is happening and you're not comfortable. It's just a kind of ugh feeling.
- Harp: Yeah. So sometimes people say, like a building at an old school, it **gives me the creeps**. I don't like to be there alone. Or walking somewhere in the dark, that **gives me the creeps**.
- Maura: Right. And those things might **give you the creeps** because you think that someone could attack you or it might **give you the creeps** because you think the place is haunted.
- Harp: Yeah, it could be for a million different reasons.
- Maura: Yeah, but just... It doesn't give you good feeling.
- Harp: No. It's always the same kind of bad, negative feeling.
- Maura: All right, so that was *the heebie-jeebies*, *shivers down your spine*, and *the creeps*.
- Harp: Yes. All right, Maura, I think we should talk about our worst fears.
- Maura: Yes. Let's talk about our fears, Harp. Do you wanna start?
- Harp: Well, I'm gonna be honest. I'm a little bit of a **chicken**.
- Maura: Oh, so there'll be lots of things you're afraid of.
- Harp: Yeah, that's what I was gonna say. Let me start with... I'm afraid of spiders and mice and squirmy little things.
- Maura: Uh huh. I think that's a pretty typical one, usually for females too, they're afraid of things like that.
- Harp: Yeah, no, I just... Ugh. I remember once I had a mouse in my apartment and it just... Ugh, it really scared me and I didn't wanna be there.
- Maura: That's funny. I think I used to be afraid of, maybe, insects or at least it would give me the **heebie-jeebies**, but then I just **outgrew** it and I'm not bothered by them anymore.

- Harp: So what's something you are afraid of?
- Maura: Well, I think I can be a little bit afraid of the dark.
- Harp: Yeah, me too, I think.
- Maura: Not in my apartment, in a small place, but in a bigger house that's very dark, I can feel a bit uncomfortable.
- Harp: Yeah, so if all the lights went out because of a storm and it was a big house, yeah. It's kind of a scary feeling. I always think that it's like the beginning of a horror movie and all this bad stuff's gonna happen.
- Maura: Yeah, especially if you **let your imagination run wild**, you could imagine almost any scary situation happening.
- Harp: That's kind of my problem. I have a very **over-active imagination** and I can imagine bad scenarios in any situation. It's kind of bad.
- Maura: Yeah, that's not good.
- Harp: No, like, I don't really like amusement parks because the roller coasters, I'm like, "What if the roller coaster truck thingy falls?" It's bad.
- Maura: Oh, roller coasters are fun.
- Harp: I don't really like them.
- Maura: Something else that I have a bit of a fear of is heights.
- Harp: Yeah, I think that's a very common one.
- Maura: Right. So to have a fear of heights means that I don't like to be in high places, but mine is kind of particular. As long as I'm inside, in a closed space, I don't mind. But it's when I'm outside and I can imagine that I could fall. That is when I feel afraid.
- Harp: You know that's actually one I don't have.
- Maura: Oh.
- Harp: I know. I'm not afraid of heights.
- Maura: Maybe because you're tall.
- Harp: Maybe. That was funny, Maura.
- Maura: So what else is there on your list?

- Harp: That's all I'm gonna share for right now.
- Maura: All right, all right. Maybe another episode.
- Harp: Yeah. So, another thing I think we should talk about is the difference between being afraid something and having a **phobia** of something.
- Maura: Right. Some people have serious **phobias**. And a **phobia** is just an extreme fear of something. They actually have specific names sometimes to represent that extreme fear.
- Harp: Yeah, I always think about **arachnophobia** because of the movie.
- Maura: Yeah, me too.
- Harp: So **arachnophobia** is when you have a really, really big fear of spiders.
- Maura: Yeah, extreme fear of spiders. And **phobia** means fear and then *arachno* is spider. And there's all different kinds of **phobias** that people can have.
- Harp: A really common **phobia** is a fear of small spaces.
- Maura: Right. And a fear of small spaces is called **claustrophobia**. And a lot of people use this in everyday speech. Not a lot of **phobias** are used day to day, but this is one that most people know, **claustrophobia**.
- Harp: Yeah, so you could say "I'm really claustrophobic."
- Maura: Yeah. And people often use this term when they're in a small space. I think of an elevator when I hear *claustrophobic* because...
- Harp: 100%. That's the same thing I was thinking.
- Maura: People who are claustrophobic usually have a fear of getting stuck in an elevator for an extended period time. You know, I remember a few years ago, on a talk show, they were talking to people who had **phobias**. And I always remember there was a woman on who had an extreme fear of lettuce.
- Harp: What?
- Maura: Yes, she was extremely, extremely afraid of lettuce.
- Harp: Lettuce like the vegetable?
- Maura: Yup. She didn't like to see it. She didn't like to touch it.
- Harp: That is the most bizarre thing I've ever heard.

- Maura: Yeah. I think the theme of the show was people with strange **phobias**.
- Harp: I can't imagine ever admitting that to someone.
- Maura: OK, let's look at the last part and then I can tell you how the woman who was afraid of lettuce got over her **phobia**.
- Harp: All right. So our last section is where we talk about overcoming fears.
- Maura: Right. And what you can do if you don't wanna be afraid anymore and get over things.
- Harp: Yes. So I think my advice to myself when I start feeling afraid of something is to start to see the logic in it, or the illogical thoughts that I'm having. Like, really, a mouse is so small and so tiny and what is it gonna do to me? It can't harm me.
- Maura: Yup.
- Harp: It's just something small and kind of gross looking.
- Maura: For sure. I think that's exactly how I got over a fear of spiders and strange bugs, because when I really thought about it and I stopped and looked at it, it wasn't a big deal. But I think just growing up and seeing other people go "Oh gosh! It's a spider!" You have that reaction naturally too, but when you actually think about it, you're like, "Oh, it's just a spider, no big deal."
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. So when you analyze your fears and what you're afraid of, usually you realize there's not much to be afraid of.
- Maura: Yup, it's definitely true. What other advice do you have for people who wanna get over their fears?
- Harp: I think if you try to expose yourself a little bit, a little bit at a time to it. Like, if you're afraid of heights, try to take the elevator to the top and maybe stay for one minute. And then if you can't handle it any more, go back down. And then next time, stay for three minutes, and then five minutes, and then eventually you won't be afraid anymore.
- Maura: You know, that's how the woman on TV got over her fear of lettuce.
- Harp: Oh, really?
- Maura: Yup. They had different situations where she touched the lettuce for a little bit, but at first she was just in the room with the lettuce, and then it was longer amounts of time.

- Harp: I have to be honest, she sounds really crazy.
- Maura: It was crazy. And who knows if it's even true, but it's funny.
- Harp: It is very funny. Are you sure this wasn't in a comedy movie or something?
- Maura: Nope. It was on an American talk show.
- Harp: That's funny.
- Maura: So I think that's good advice, though. You slowly put yourself in that situation and then you feel more and more comfortable.
- Harp: Yeah. I think that's why I'm not afraid of heights, is because I exposed myself slowly to it and now, really, I don't think about it anymore.
- Maura: You know, I think I know why I'm a little bit afraid of heights.
- Harp: Why?
- Maura: Well, when I was in high school, we had this staircase in our school and it was from the second to the third floor and it went out into this really open space and my friend and I used to pretend to push each other around on it.
- Harp: Oh no.
- Maura: Yeah. And I think I started it, but because we did that, when I got a bit older, I started to feel afraid of heights.
- Harp: Oh, that's interesting.
- Maura: Yeah. And I still like to have a nice view from up high, so I do go close but every once in a while I look down or I do a certain movement and I totally get, like, the **heebie-jeebies**. I feel this flipped feeling in my stomach and then I kind of back away. But it just happens once in a while.
- Harp: Well that's good. You're maybe getting over your fear of heights.
- Maura: I would love to be over it, because I love being up high. But I sometimes still get this feeling, like, ugh. Very uncomfortable.
- Harp: I understand.
- Maura: So is there any more advice you have for people who wanna get over their fears?
- Harp: Just confront it directly. If you're afraid of the dark, just sit in the dark. Eventually you'll get over it.



- Maura: Right. Turn the lights off and walk around. In Canada, you could probably turn your lights off at four o'clock and it would be pitch black in your apartment.
- Harp: Oh goodness. See, I give this advice, but I would never do it.
- Maura: It's true though, it's hard and that's why people are afraid because they're scared so it's hard to confront or deal with these fears.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: Yup.
- Harp: You know, I'm curious to hear what all our listeners are afraid of.
- Maura: Yeah. I wonder if some of these fears are universal and people experience them all around the world, and which ones maybe sound more unique. Probably the lettuce one.
- Harp: That's true. All right, well, let's do a quick recap before we finish today.
- Maura: OK. So first we started off by talking about expressions that you might use when something scares you or makes you feel strange and uncomfortable.
- Harp: Yeah, we talked about *the heebie-jeebies*, *shivers down my spine* and *something that gives you the creeps*.
- Maura: Right. And then we talked about our own fears. Harp only shared some of them.
- Harp: Because I'm a **chicken**.
- Maura: And then we also talked about different ways you might try to get over your fears and confront them.
- Harp: Yeah. And we really wanna hear from you. I wanna hear what you're afraid of, if you've confronted anything, if you've gotten over a fear.
- Maura: Especially if you have a very strange or unique fear, that might be interesting to hear.
- Harp: Yeah, like if you're afraid of strawberries or something.
- Maura: You never know. People are afraid of strange things.
- Harp: It's true, apparently with the lettuce.

Maura: OK. So, don't forget to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and check out all we have going on there.

Harp: And check us out on Facebook.

Maura: We will see you soon. Bye!

Harp: Bye everyone!

## Detailed Explanation

### The heebie-jeebies

The expression **the heebie-jeebies** is used to describe an uncomfortable feeling about an experience. This uncomfortable feeling is usually connected to anxiety or nervousness. When a person is afraid, they might get the **heebie-jeebies** because they feel anxious or nervous. As we say in this episode, having the **heebie-jeebies** usually does not mean that you scream and run away, it's a bad feeling inside a person.

People don't feel the **heebie-jeebies** only when they're scared. They might also feel the **heebie-jeebies** for others reasons, like seeing something disgusting or mysterious.

We can say *to get the heebie-jeebies*, *to have the heebie-jeebies*, or *to give someone the heebie-jeebies*.

Here are a couple of examples with **heebie-jeebies** in situations when people are not scared:

Ted: How's the food in the cafeteria today?

Justine: I couldn't eat it. The way the cook was handling the food gave me the **heebie-jeebies**. I don't think she washes her hands very often.

Beatrice: What do you think of Sue's new boyfriend?

Mathilde: I find something about him strange. He gives me the **heebie-jeebies**. I just don't trust him.

A similar expression to **the heebie-jeebies** is *the willies*. It is used in exactly the same way as *the heebie-jeebies*.

### To have shivers down your spine

If someone has **shivers down their spine**, it likely means they are scared. A shiver is an involuntary movement that your body does when you suddenly feel cold. In this episode, we say that this feeling could have a connection with this expression. In the past, a sudden cold breeze, especially inside, was thought to be a ghost. The thought of a ghost makes most people scared, and so this is the meaning of the expression **to have shivers down your spine**!

Nowadays, **to have shivers down your spine** can also have another meaning. It can be something positive or exciting.

Here are a couple of examples with **to have shivers down your spine** meaning to be excited:

Amanda: I get so pumped when I think about our trip!

Olivia: I know! I get **shivers down my spine** every time I think about how fun it's going to be.

Lynne: Did you like seeing the Justin Bieber concert last night?

Michelle: Yes! I totally **got shivers down my spine** when he walked on stage.

Some variations of these expressions are **to send shivers down your spine** and **to get chills down your spine**.

### Goose bumps

When people feel afraid, they might also get **goose bumps**. **Goose bumps** are actually the bumps on the skin of birds, like a goose, where the feathers grow. These bumps on goose skin look like the bumps on a person's arms or legs when they feel scared.

There is a series of horror fiction novels for children and teenagers by R.L. Stine called *Goosebumps*. There are over 60 different novels of scary stories in the series.

Being scared is not the only reason why people might get **goose bumps**, and people who get scared might never get **goose bumps**. A person might get **goose bumps** for a range of intense emotions or they might just feel cold! Surely there's a word in every language for this human phenomenon.

The expression **goose bumps** is most popular in Canada and the United States. You might also hear **goose pimples**, **goose flesh**, **chicken skin**, or **chicken bumps**. There are likely other variations too, depending on where you are in the English-speaking world.

### To have the creeps/to give someone the creeps

If someone has **the creeps**, it means that they do not have a good feeling. Just like *the heebie-jeebies*, this expression can be used when a person feels scared, but it can also be used if a person has other uncomfortable feelings. If a person finds another person or thing disgusting or mysterious, this could also **give them the creeps**. This expression is always negative.

Here's an example where **to have the creeps** is used to talk about something mysterious:

Ivan: What do you think of Sean's abstract painting?

Lucy: To be honest, it kinda **gives me the creeps**. The dark, swirling colours are so intense and mysterious.

**To have the creeps** and **to give someone the creeps** are variations of the same expression and are used a bit differently. Here are a couple of examples to show this difference:

Janet: I **have the creeps** whenever I go to my aunt's house.

Kevin: Yeah, it's always really dark and cold, isn't it?

Janet: My aunt's house **gives me the creeps**.

Kevin: Yeah, it's always really dark and cold, isn't it?

### Chicken

This is an expression that keeps coming up at Culips. Maybe it's because Harp is a **chicken**! Someone who is scared can be called a **chicken**. Children are most likely to use this expression. Adults might also use it, but often only as a little joke.

Here's an example with **chicken**:

Stan: How did the cliff diving go?

Carmen: I loved it, but Stefan wouldn't go. He's such a **chicken**.

### To outgrow

**To outgrow** can be used to talk about people or things that grow and change. **To outgrow something** means to become too big for something. For example, a child **outgrows** their shoes when their feet continue to grow and the shoes become too small. A plant **outgrows** its pot when it becomes too big and must be moved to a larger pot.

Here's another example with **to outgrow**:

Greg: Raulston Company has **outgrown** its building.

Justina: I heard. They're expanding at such a fast pace. They'll be moving into a new place downtown by the end of the month.

In this episode, Maura says that she **outgrew** her fear of spiders and other insects. In this case, it is not a physical growth like the example above. As people get older, their likes and dislikes change and we can say that they **outgrow** something. This is what Maura means when she says that she **outgrew** her fear of spiders. She grew up and her feelings about spiders changed.

Here's another example like that:

Lisa: Does Johnny still like dinosaurs?

Rebecca: No, he **outgrew** that. Now he likes video games.

To have a wild/overactive imagination

If someone has an **overactive** or **wild imagination**, it means that they can imagine very crazy things happening. Often people with **wild imaginations** will imagine strange situations for themselves, which are also sometime negative. They may also believe these situations are real when there is no evidence to prove it. For example, a man with an **overactive imagination** may see a strange number on his wife's cell phone and start to think that she is dating another man. In this case, there are many other possible reasons for the strange number, but a person with a **wild imagination** might believe the craziest ideas.

Like Harp says in this episode, she has an **overactive imagination**. She says this because when she woke up in the middle of the night, she imagined that a sound she heard was someone trying to break into her apartment. It ended up just being a cat!

Here are a couple of examples with these expressions:

Kelly: I couldn't find my cat so I thought maybe she had run away and I would never see her again!

Ben: I thought your cat didn't go outside.

Kelly: She doesn't, but I have a **wild imagination**! She was just sleeping under the bed.

Nancy: My boyfriend said he wants to go out for dinner tonight. I'm so worried that he wants to break up with me.

Karla: You just have an **overactive imagination**. I'm sure everything's fine.

Harp also says that **her imagination goes wild**. This is a variation on the same kind of expression. You can also **let your imagination run wild**.

Phobia

A **phobia** is a fear of something, and makes you want to avoid that thing. *To have a fear* and *to have a phobia* are really the same. But if someone says they have a **phobia**, this generally sounds more serious. A doctor can test and treat a person who has a **phobia**, so it can even be used as a clinical term.

So many words in English have origins in other languages. **Phobia** is actually a Greek word that means fear. **Phobias** have special names that are also of Greek origin. For example, **agoraphobia** is the fear of public and open spaces. *Agora* means public and open space and **phobia** means fear. Most of the names for **phobias** are not commonly known or used in everyday conversation. For example, a fear of heights is called **altophobia**, but most people would not know what this is if they heard the word used.

Arachnophobia and claustrophobia

**Arachnophobia** is a fear of spiders. Harp and Maura remember this because there was a movie made in 1990 called *Arachnophobia* about spiders that killed people. Some people might know what this term means, but many people do not use the term **arachnophobia** to talk about their fear of spiders.

**Claustrophobia** is the fear of being in small spaces. As explained above, most people do not know most of the more clinical terms for fears that end in **–phobia**. But this is one exception to that rule. The word **claustrophobia** is widely used in conversations, especially when people are in small places and start to feel uncomfortable. In this case, people often use the adjective *claustrophobic* to describe themselves.

Here's an example with **claustrophobia**:

Owen: I hate using elevators. I must have **claustrophobia** because I feel so uncomfortable.

Shannon: If you feel claustrophobic, we can just take the stairs.

It is important to note that people who say they have **claustrophobia** usually have not been diagnosed by a doctor. If a person feels uncomfortable in small places, they might say that they are a claustrophobic.

**Quiz**

1. Which of the following is NOT how a person feels when they have the heebie-jeebies?
  - a) anxious
  - b) disgusted
  - c) guilty
  - d) scared
  
2. Other than feeling scared, what other reason might someone say they felt shivers down their spine?
  - a) feeling sad
  - b) feeling excited
  - c) feeling jealous
  - d) feelings grumpy
  
3. When some people feel scared, something happens to their skin. What is it?
  - a) goose bumps
  - b) loose change
  - c) bird bumps
  - d) beaver fever
  
4. If Nick gives Adam the creeps, who has the creeps?
  - a) Nick
  - b) Adam
  - c) Nick and Adam
  - d) No one
  
5. What animal can you call someone that means they are scared?
  - a) a bobcat
  - b) a chicken
  - c) a bird
  - d) a dog



**6. Yanni outgrew his clothes from last summer.****What does this mean?**

- a) Yanni's clothes are too big for him.
- b) Yanni's clothes shrunk in the dryer.
- c) Yanni's clothes are too small for him.
- d) Yanni can't find his summer clothes.

**7. Jerry has an overactive imagination. He lets his imagination run wild.****What does this mean about Jerry?**

- a) Jerry imagines strange things happening when there is no real proof for it.
- b) Jerry writes really amazing stories.
- c) Jerry often dreams that he can fly by flapping his arms.
- d) Jerry likes to imagine living with wild animals.

**8. What is claustrophobia?**

- a) a fear of spiders
- b) a fear of being in small spaces
- c) a fear of being in open spaces
- d) a fear of heights

**9. There are many different names for phobias, like arachnophobia. Which of the following is true about their use?**

- a) They are not used very much.
- b) They are used often in regular conversations.
- c) The words are of French origin.
- d) *Phobia* means chicken.

**Answers:**

1.c    2.b    3.a    4.b    5.b    6.c    7.a    8.b    9.a