

Chatterbox #89 – You're late!

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And your pal Maura.

Harp: Here at Culips English Learning Podcast, bringing you another wonderful episode.

Maura: And if you're on Facebook, come on over to our Facebook page and say hi. That's the best place to talk with Harp and me. We're still getting used to Twitter, so you can talk to us there too, but we're probably gonna be less responsive.

Harp: Yeah. It might take a little bit longer to respond. And remember also to check out the website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can become a member and by being a member you support us.

Maura: Yay!

Harp: And also, when you're a member, you have access to the Learning Materials. And in the Learning Materials, for each episode, you get a complete transcript, detailed explanations, and even a quiz.

Maura: That's right, so don't hesitate. Don't delay. Become a member. Now today is a Chatterbox episode, and that is where Harp and I get to chat about all different kinds of topics. Today's episode was actually suggested by a Culips listener on Facebook.

Harp: Yes. Hello Igor Alfa! Thanks for this suggestion.

Maura: Right. Thank you so much. Igor wrote to us that he was meeting one of his friends and he **showed up** late. His friend said to him, "**I'm getting old here.**" And so that's what Igor was writing us about. We'll explain this expression in just a couple of minutes.

Harp: Yes. So today we're gonna talk about being late. We're gonna first talk about the cultural importance in North America to be **on time**.

Maura: And then we're gonna look at some expressions, like Igor suggested, that are used to talk about when people are late. So, we have a proverb in the English language that is **better late than never**.

- Harp: Yes. **Better late than never.**
- Maura: And this means that it is better to be late than to never **show up**. Or it could also be used to mean it is better to finish something, like a project, late than to never finish it. But for this case, in this episode, we're just gonna be talking about people being late.
- Harp: Yeah. And in Canada, it's very important to be **on time**.
- Maura: It is important to be **on time**. When you make a plan to meet someone at 3 o'clock, you should be there at 3 o'clock. Seems quite logical to me, but I guess because I'm Canadian, that's why it makes sense.
- Harp: Yup. And we know in other places being late is very often normal and when you say 3 o'clock, everyone knows that you mean 4 o'clock, but here in Canada, if you say 3 o'clock you mean 3 o'clock.
- Maura: Right. And it's easy to figure out because you don't have to add another hour or be there early. The time that you're supposed to meet is the time that you should be there. It is of course important to be **on time** in Canada and the US, but how much time do you think is socially acceptable to be late?
- Harp: I would say maximum 15 minutes.
- Maura: Yeah. I would agree. If you're five, ten minutes late, or even 15 minutes late, it's probably still OK and no one is going to be super mad at you. And with the technology today, you can always phone people or send them a message saying why you're going to be late.
- Harp: Yeah. If you're gonna be late, it's nice to let people know.
- Maura: Yeah. Some people, though, are known to be more late than this and they're just late people and you know that when you invite them somewhere they're going to be later than 15 minutes. But if it's your friend, you just accept this.
- Harp: Why are you looking at me like that, Maura?
- Maura: I didn't say anything about you, Harp.
- Harp: All right, let's talk about it. Are you a late person or do you **show up on time** most of the time?
- Maura: You know, I do like to be **on time**. If I'm going to meet a friend, I definitely want to be **on time**. If I'm invited for dinner, I might be just a few minutes late, **fashionably late**. But I generally do like to be **on time**. I don't like the idea that someone is waiting for me. Maybe because I hate waiting.

- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: What about you, Harp? As if I don't know the answer.
- Harp: Well, I used to be really bad and late all the time, and late by a lot—20, 30 minutes, sometimes 45 minutes.
- Maura: Sometimes one hour, but, you know, **who's counting?**
- Harp: Exactly. I'll admit it. But I feel like I've gotten better lately.
- Maura: I will agree to that, Harp. You have gotten a lot better.
- Harp: But I'm still more on the late side. It's very rare that I'm early for something or that I'm **on time**.
- Maura: Right, but in this case, we're talking just about social gatherings, like meeting with friends, or going out to dinner, going to a party. At work, it's even more important that you be **on time**.
- Harp: Yes, definitely. If you have a meeting with your boss, or let's say you have a job interview, definitely be **on time**, if not a couple of minutes early.
- Maura: Yeah. For a job interview, I can't see that it is ever acceptable to be late unless you really call ahead and say why, because it's the first impression that they have of you and, as we said, being **on time** is really important.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. I understand that things happen but it's important to apologize or to call if you can.
- Maura: And what about you, Harp? Since you've admitted that you are a late person, socially, at work are you able to be **on time** to all of these important meetings and to start your day **on time**?
- Harp: Yes. I think now I have it **under control**. Sometimes in the morning I'm a little bit late but once I get to work, I have a very detailed calendar so I know when I need to be where I need to be. So I'm pretty good at work now.
- Maura: Yeah. Sometimes it just takes some practice. So as we said at the beginning, we do have an expression, which is **better late than never**. Even though, like we said, it's not acceptable to be very late, especially more than 15 minutes late, it still is better to be late than to never **show up**. That's a whole other story about people who **stand up** other people.

- Harp: Yeah, exactly. You should definitely **show up** even if you're gonna be really late.
- Maura: That's true. OK, so now let's look at some expressions that people can use when they are with late people.
- Harp: OK. And let's get started with Igor's expression.
- Maura: Right. He told us a story of a friend of his who was waiting for him, and when he finally arrived, his friend said to him, "**I'm getting old here.**"
- Harp: Yeah. This is an expression that's used between friends. ***I'm getting old here*** is used when you're waiting for someone and you're just waiting for a long time.
- Maura: Right. So it's like you're trying to say, "I've been waiting for so long that I can feel myself aging," that I've been waiting for so long, I'm becoming older.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. And this expression is used between friends. You would never tell your boss this or someone that you didn't know very well.
- Maura: Right. And depending on the tone that you use, it could be taken as a little bit of a joke or it could be taken as something more serious. Because, it's funny, even though it's considered rude to be late, it's also considered rude to tell someone that they're late.
- Harp: Yeah. And in Canada, we're known to sometimes be too polite, so when someone is late, they've been rude, so really you should be able say that: "Oh, thanks for being late," but we don't really do that.
- Maura: No. So there's a good example of our politeness gone too far. So this is the expression that Igor's friend used and there are a whole bunch of other ones that you could use. Another one that we're gonna share with you today is to say ***I don't have all day.***
- Harp: Yes. ***I don't have all day.***
- Maura: And this one is particular because it's usually seen as a bit rude and direct to say this to someone. You could use it in a joking way with friends, but usually if you tell someone ***I don't have all day*** when you've been waiting for them for a long time, it sounds like you're mad.
- Harp: Yeah, a little bit. I would definitely agree with that. ***I don't have all day*** is a bit more serious.
- Maura: Yeah. It's like saying, "***I don't have all day.*** I don't have a lot of time to sit and do nothing and wait for you."

Harp: Exactly. Like you have more important things to do rather than wait.

Maura: Right. So, why don't we give an example with ***I don't have all day?***

Harp: OK.

Harp: Jane, where are you?

Maura: I'm just getting changed inside, Mom. I'll be out soon.

Harp: I've been sitting outside for five minutes waiting for you. ***I don't have all day.***

Maura: All right, all right. I'm just getting dressed, and then I'll be out soon, OK?
Take a chill pill.

Harp: Hurry up.

Maura: In that example, it was a mother and daughter and the mother didn't want to wait for the daughter who was late. Oh, I made **a rhyme** there.

Harp: And often, with parents and children, children are late, so you could see that she said five minutes late. She's probably used to waiting for the kid all the time.

Maura: Right. So to say ***I don't have all day*** usually means that that person is mad.

Harp: Yes, it's serious. Hurry up.

Maura: Another expression that you can use to talk about someone who is late is ***to waltz in.***

Harp: Yes. ***To waltz in.***

Maura: I really like this expression: ***to waltz in.***

Harp: Yeah, me too, because I think about someone dancing into the room.

Maura: Right. A waltz is a dance, so if someone **waltzes in**, they're very casual, as if they're dancing. They're not in a rush, they're really relaxed, and that can be really annoying when you're the person waiting.

Harp: Yeah, definitely. Imagine, you're sitting at a coffee table waiting and your friend is 30 minutes late and you're just sitting there by yourself waiting and waiting and the friend just **waltzes in, without a care in the world**, doesn't seem to be in a rush to meet with you.

Maura: I have to say that people who are often late, often I find have this kind of attitude.

Harp: I agree. But not me.

Maura: OK. Let's give an example where someone **waltzes in**.

Harp: OK.

Harp: So how was coffee last night with Ginette?

Maura: Well, she was really late, as usual.

Harp: Oh no. What time did she end up **showing up**?

Maura: She **waltzed in** around 8 o'clock, which is pretty much an hour after we were supposed to meet.

Harp: Oh. That's so frustrating.

Maura: I know. I think **from now on**, if I wanna meet her at 7, I just have to tell her we're meeting at 6 and then she'll actually **show up on time**.

Harp: That's a good idea.

Maura: So there's an example where a person named Ginette **waltzed in**, which means that she was late and she was very casual about it. She wasn't worried; she had no problem **showing up** late.

Harp: Yeah, she didn't apologize, which is not very polite at all.

Maura: No. That's the first thing I do if I'm late. I always apologize, because, like I said, I hate making people wait.

Harp: Yeah, I know. I always apologize when I'm late, because I'm always late.

Maura: OK. So let's look at one more expression related to people being late.

Harp: Yeah. Another expression is **to grace us with your presence**.

Maura: Right. **To grace us with your presence**. So this expression basically means that the person who is late has decided to honour the rest of us by being there, which is a little bit like **to waltz in**; the person who is late feels that they're more important, maybe, than the other people. They're not worried about keeping everyone waiting and they casually come late.

Harp: Yeah. So when you say this to someone who's late, "Oh, thanks for gracing us with your presence," you're basically saying, "Well, thanks for caring and **showing up on time**" when the person doesn't seem to care.

Maura: Right. So again, if you say this directly to someone, thanks for gracing us with your presence, it is a bit rude or expresses that you're angry at this other person.

Harp: Yeah. And so you could use it with people you're close with, close friends or family, but definitely not with people you don't know well.

Maura: Yeah, definitely not. Let's use this expression to talk about someone who's late who isn't there. Let's do that.

Harp: OK.

Maura: Can you believe how late Dan was to the meeting yesterday?

Harp: I can't believe it. He just **waltzes in** 30 minutes late.

Maura: I know. It's like, "Thanks for gracing us with your presence, Dan." He doesn't care at all.

Harp: I know. I don't understand why the boss likes him.

Maura: I guess he must work hard or something.

Harp: Yeah, I guess, but it's so rude to be that late all the time.

Maura: In that example, two people were talking about Dan, who was late, who didn't seem to care. So they could talk about him using the expression **to grace us with your presence**.

Harp: Yes. All right, so let's do a quick recap of this episode.

Maura: First we talked about the proverb **better late than never** and we focused on how important it is in Canadian and American culture to be **on time**.

Harp: Yeah. So if you're having a meeting with someone who's Canadian or American, **show up on time**.

Maura: We also talked about how much progress Harp has made in **showing up** to our Culips meetings **on time**. Thank you, Harp.

Harp: You're welcome. I'm trying.

Maura: And then we also talked about some expressions related to people who are late.

Harp: Yes. So remember, check out the website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

- Maura: And there you can become a member, and when you're a member, you get access to extra materials that make these episodes even more educational and you help support us at Culips. And thanks again to Igor for this really interesting idea and making me remember that expression, ***I'm getting' old here.***
- Harp: Exactly. Thanks Igor.
- Maura: And we'll see you back on Facebook. We'll talk to everyone soon. Bye!
- Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

Better late than never

Better late than never is a common English proverb. A proverb is a popular saying that is based on common sense or practical experience. **Better late than never** means that it is better to be late for something than to never show up at all. As Maura says in this episode, the expression **better late than never** can be used when talking about showing up late to something like an event, or it can be used when talking about finishing a project. Either way you use it, the expression implies that it is better to do something even if it's late than to not do it at all.

Here is an example with the expression **better late than never**:

Jane: How's your history project going? You handed it in this morning, right?

Sally: I was supposed to, but I didn't make the deadline. It'll be done by this afternoon.

Jane: Well, you should still hand it in. It's **better late than never**. At least the teacher will know that you actually did the project.

To show up

To show up means to attend an event or to arrive somewhere. It means exactly what it sounds like: to show yourself or appear somewhere that you said you'd be. A lot of the time, this expression is used to talk about whether someone is going to arrive somewhere on time or not. Are they going **to show up**? Meaning, are they going to come at all? Will they **show up** on time or will they be late?

Here is an example with **to show up**:

David: How did your interview go with the new student?

Kim: He didn't **show up** for his appointment.

David: What? That's crazy. You should call him and figure out what's going on.

On time

To be **on time** means to arrive somewhere at the time that you were supposed to arrive there. Being **on time** means that something or someone arrives or happens at the exact moment that it was expected to arrive or happen. **On time** is another way to say punctual or prompt.

In this episode, Maura and Harp discuss how important it is in Western culture to be **on time**. Harp and Maura say that it's important in Western culture to be where you are supposed to be at the time you said you would be there.

Here is an example with **on time**:

Dave: Is Suzanne here yet?

Tracey: No, she's never **on time**.

Dave: I know, but this is a surprise party! It's very important to be **on time**.

Fashionably late

Fashionably late is a common euphemism used when someone is late for an event. A euphemism is a pleasant replacement word or phrase that is intended to replace an offensive word or phrase. In this case, being late is generally seen as offensive in Western culture, but describing someone as **fashionably late** is a way to make being late seem less offensive.

To be **fashionably late** means to arrive somewhere when everyone else is already there. It implies that everyone else turns to look at you because you've arrived late, making you fashionable or popular because of the attention you get.

Here is an example with **fashionably late**:

Courtney: Where's Tiffany? The dance started an hour ago!

Jack: Yeah, but you know Tiffany. She loves to be **fashionably late**. She'll show up in another 15 minutes or so, wearing something fantastic, I'm sure.

Courtney: Yep, she sure does like being the centre of attention.

Who's counting?

Who's counting is a sarcastic rhetorical question that expresses disapproval at yourself or someone else for being overly concerned about details. A rhetoric question is a question where the speaker does not actually expect an answer, and a sarcastic statement is one where the speaker means the opposite of what they are actually saying. So, in this case, **who's counting** is both a question that the speaker does not expect an answer to, and it is also sarcastic because it means that someone *is* keeping track of something. **Who's counting** is basically a way for someone to jokingly say that everybody knows how many times it's been, but we're all pretending not to.

In this episode, Maura asks Harp **who's counting** when she talks about how much Harp has been late. Maura knows exactly how late Harp has been, so the question is sarcastic.

Here is another example with **who's counting**:

Jake: I'm so sorry I'm late. I promise I'll buy you an ice cream cone for every time I'm late.

Tami: Well then, you already owe me 11 ice cream cones. But really, **who's counting?**

Under control

To have something **under control** means to be in charge of the situation. When you are in control of a car, it means you are driving it. In the same way, being in control of a situation means you are “driving” the situation—you are responsible for and in command of it.

To have something **under control** can also mean that you’ve corrected (or are close to correcting) a problem. For example, in this episode, Harp tells Maura that she has her problem of always being late **under control**. What Harp is saying is that she worked on her problem of being late and is now in control of her timing.

Here is an example with ***under control***:

Stacey: Do you want to get some ice cream after work?

Tom: No thanks. I really have to start eating better if I want to make the ski team.

Stacey: But you love sweet stuff! How are you going to eat better with your love of sugar?

Tom: I have it **under control**. The longer you go without having sugar, the easier it gets to avoid it.

To stand someone up

To stand someone up means to not show up somewhere that you were supposed to meet somebody. It means that you had plans to meet with someone and you didn't go, and didn't let them know you wouldn't be there. It can also be written or said as ***to stand up someone***. It is considered very rude **to stand someone up**. If you say you will meet someone but then can't go, you should let them know that you won't be there.

Here is an example with ***to stand someone up***:

Jack: How did your date go last night?

Sarah: Horribly. He didn't even show up.

Jack: **He stood you up?**

Sarah: Yep, he didn't even call me to tell me he wouldn't be there. It was embarrassing.

I'm getting old here

I'm getting old here is a playful expression that means that you've been waiting so long that you are aging or getting older. It's usually said casually, so sometimes it is written or said as ***I'm gettin' old here***, without the *g*.

In this episode, Maura and Harp talk about this expression and how it is only used among friends, because otherwise it could be considered rude.

Here is an example with ***I'm getting old here***:

Tabatha: Debbie, are you done trying on that dress? I want to use the change room.

Debbie: I'm almost finished. Hang on a minute.

Tabatha: Debbie, ***I'm gettin' old here***. Hurry up!

I don't have all day

I don't have all day is a phrase used when you are tired of waiting for something. Other variations include *I don't have all morning*, *I don't have all afternoon*, and *I don't have all night*. This phrase implies that you have other things to do during the day and you can't wait for very long. It is usually used in a kidding or joking manner among friends, when you have been waiting for them for any amount of time. Sometimes it is used seriously when someone really doesn't have a lot of time to wait.

Here is an example with ***I don't have all day***:

Doug: Sam, I'm ready to drive you to the mall now.

Samantha: Just wait a bit, OK? Jessica said she wouldn't be there for another 20 minutes.

Doug: OK, Sam, but ***I don't have all day***. I've got a lot of homework tonight.

Take a chill pill

Take a chill pill is a common English saying that is actually pretty modern, meaning that it hasn't been around for very long. It is a way of telling someone to calm down, to relax, or to chill out. This saying probably became popular because it rhymes. *Chill* and *pill* rhyme, and because pills are medication that can help you with a problem, telling someone to ***take a chill pill*** refers to an imaginary medication that helps you calm down. ***Take a chill pill*** is not a literal saying. When you say it, you are not really telling somebody to take medication. It's just a common way of telling someone to calm down. It's very important to remember that this phrase could be considered rude because it usually implies that someone is overreacting to something.

Here is an example with ***take a chill pill***:

Sally: Did you clean up your room yet?

Jane: I'm going to this afternoon.

Sally: Seriously, Jane? Mom was already so angry when she had to tell us the second time to clean up. Don't make her tell us again!

Jane: ***Take a chill pill***, Sally! I'll clean it up soon.

In the above example, Jane and Sally are sisters who are in an argument, so that is why the phrase ***take a chill pill*** is used. If this were a friendly conversation between friends or classmates, or between a student and a teacher, the phrase ***take a chill pill*** would not be used.

A rhyme

A rhyme is when two words that sound similar are paired together. For example, in this episode, Maura says the words *wait* and *late* in the same sentence, and then says that she made **a rhyme**. *Wait* and *late* are **rhyming** words because they both end with the same sound, which sounds like *ate*.

To rhyme means to sound the same. You wouldn't say that the words *seal* and *dolphin* **rhyme**, even though these animals both live in the water. However, you could say that *seal* and *eel* **rhyme**, because both words end in the sound *eel*. Rhyming is only about sounds, not the definition of words.

Here is an example with **a rhyme**:

Tom: Hey, wanna go biking this weekend?

Karen: Not really. I'm not into biking. But I love to go hiking!

Tom: Hey! You just made **a rhyme**! *Hiking* and *biking*!

To waltz in

To waltz in is an expression that means to walk into a place like you are not concerned about anything. This expression is usually used negatively to refer to someone who shows up late to something and then walks in as if they're not late or as if they don't care that they're late. This expression comes from the fact that a waltz is a dance, and dancing is something that is supposed to be fun and carefree.

Here is an example with **to waltz in**:

Deb: Did Karen show up for her school photos? Denis said she might be really late.

Trish: Yeah, she showed up. She **waltzed in** 30 minutes late as if she were perfectly on time.

Deb: Oh, wow. That must have really bugged the photographer!

Trish: Yeah! The photographer wouldn't let her sit down for her photos at all. Now she'll have no class photos from this year!

Without a care in the world

Without a care in the world is an expression that describes someone who is free from worry, or is carefree. Often, it is used negatively to describe someone who isn't considerate of other people's feelings. In this episode, we hear this term used to talk about people arriving late to things. Because being late can be considered rude, people who arrive late and act as if they did nothing wrong can be said to be **without a care in the world**.

Here is an example with the expression ***without a care in the world***:

Jane: That was a really great party you held last night.

Bob: Thanks, but I'm still pretty upset at Tina for showing up so late. It was supposed to be a surprise party so I really needed everyone to be there on time.

Jane: Yeah, that was pretty rude. She just walked in ***without a care in the world***, as if she had done nothing wrong. I don't blame you for being upset.

From now on

From now on means from this point in time and on into the future. This expression is usually used before you talk about a change that is going to begin. For example, if you decide one day that you are going to stop drinking soda pop forever, you could say, "***From now on***, I'm not drinking soda pop."

In this episode, Maura uses the expression ***from now on*** to tell Harp that she is going to start telling her friend to meet her earlier because her friend is always late. Maura is saying that from that point she will be telling her late friend to meet her earlier, and she will continue to do that into the future.

To grace us with your presence

To grace us with your presence is an expression used when someone honours someone or something with their attendance. If someone's attendance somewhere is really appreciated, the guests may feel honoured by the person's presence there. Most often though, this phrase is used sarcastically or jokingly when someone is late to show up to something. This is an example of sarcasm, which means that a normally serious phrase is used jokingly to convey the exact opposite meaning. In this case, ***to grace us with your presence*** is sarcastic because you would be using it to make fun of someone for being late. You would only say it to a friend or family member though, because it can be taken as impolite or rude.

Here is an example with ***to grace us with your presence***:

Toby: Glad to see you finally made it to class. You're 20 minutes late!

Scott: I know, but the bus broke down.

Toby: Well, it's nice of you to finally ***grace us with your presence***. We're honoured.

Quiz

1. If someone waltzes into somewhere, what are they doing?

- a) entering in a light, carefree way
- b) dancing in the front door
- c) not showing up to something
- d) calling to say they'll be late

2. What does the expression *better late than never* mean?

- a) It's better to not show up than to be late.
- b) It's better to do something late than not to do it at all.
- c) You should never be late for anything.
- d) You should always bring someone a gift if you're going to be late.

3. In Canada, what is generally a socially acceptable amount of time to be late?

- a) 45 minutes
- b) 2 hours
- c) It is never OK to be late.
- d) 15 minutes or less

4. What does it mean if you are fashionably late?

- a) You are never on time for anything.
- b) You are never late for anything.
- c) You arrive late on purpose so that people stop what they are doing and pay attention to you.
- d) You are less than 15 minutes late.

5. What does it mean to stand someone up?

- a) You don't show up to a date or appointment and don't call them to say you won't be there.
- b) You arrive places before anyone else does.
- c) You cause someone to be late for appointments.
- d) You never apologize for being late.

- 6. What does it mean to have something under control?**
- a) You have responsibility for and are able to manage something.
 - b) You are never late.
 - c) You are able to drive a car.
 - d) You have trouble making it to appointments on time.
- 7. If a friend is waiting for you and says, "I'm getting old here," what do they mean?**
- a) Their birthday is coming up soon.
 - b) They are not going to wait for you anymore because they're too angry.
 - c) They feel like you're taking a long time.
 - d) They do not want to be your friend anymore.

Answers:

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