

## Catch Word #121 – Birds of a feather flock together

### Transcript

- Maura: Hello everyone. It's Maura.
- Harp: And Harp.
- Maura: And you're listening to Culips English Learning Podcast.
- Harp: Make sure you check out our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can find all our older episodes and you can also become a member, because when you're a member, you have access to the learning materials. And there's a learning material that goes with each episode. And they contain a transcript, a detailed explanation, and even a quiz.
- Maura: That's right. Go to our website, Culips.com, especially if you haven't visited. And if you're not a member yet, **you don't know what you're missing**. So, today's episode is a Catch Word episode and that's where we look at different related expressions, slang, or idioms. And we explain them for you and we give you some examples of how you can use them.
- Harp: Yes. And today we're going to look at expressions and proverbs that are talking about two or more people who are alike, who are similar, who are very much the same.
- Maura: Right. So, all of the expressions in today's episode are used to talk about people who are similar. And I also want to say hello to Carlos from Mexico, because he wrote us on our Facebook page and he suggested the first proverb that we're going to look at in this episode. So the first expression, or proverb, in this episode is **birds of a feather flock together**.
- Harp: Yes. **Birds of a feather flock together**.
- Maura: Mmhmm. I'm going to say that one more time, just because it's kind of long and there may be some new words in it that you might not have heard before: **birds of a feather flock together**.
- Harp: What does this mean, Maura?
- Maura: Well, **birds of a feather flock together** means that birds that are similar to each other, that have the same kind of feathers, they fly together and they travel together. Now, of course, when we use this expression, we're not just talking about birds.

- Harp: Yes. We're talking about people who have similar tastes and who are **drawn to each other** because they have similar tastes.
- Maura: Right. So, this expression means that people who are alike, they are **drawn to each other** and they spend time with each other. And it makes sense because if you think about your friends, they're your friends because you have things in common with them. Maybe you don't look alike, but you might. And if you don't look alike, you probably have things in common like you enjoy the same kind of music or you like doing the same kind of things in your spare time.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. When you think about it, your friends have very similar tastes to you or often at least one or two things that you both like.
- Maura: Right. So, this proverb does **have some truth to it. Birds of a feather flock together**, or, people who like the same things spend time with each other.
- Harp: And when you think of this expression, ***birds of a feather flock together***, and you think about different communities in Canada, you can really see this working. For example, in most of the larger cities, you have **Little India** or **Chinatown** or **Little Italy**. People who have similar backgrounds or culture or language live around each other.
- Maura: Right. And this is even true when you live abroad. I know that when I lived in Japan, I had a lot of friends who were also English-speaking people from other countries. So it's also true for **expats**.
- Harp: Definitely. If I think of my parents, they have a lot of Punjabi friends who live close by, because it's easier to speak in Punjabi for them than English.
- Maura: Right. So, let's give an example now with this expression.
- Harp: Let's do it.

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|--------|--|
| Harp:  | Hey, did you see that Sam is already friends with the new guy who just started last week?  |
| Maura: | I did. But you know, I'm not surprised. When that new guy started I thought they looked almost like twins. They had the same haircut and a really similar style of dressing. |
| Harp:  | Well, <b>birds of a feather flock together</b> .   |
| Maura: | And in this case, that's definitely true.  |

Maura: So, there is an example where we can use the expression ***birds of a feather flock together*** to talk about two people who are similar and who become friends and spend time with each other, probably because of those similarities.

Harp: Exactly. They have similar tastes, so they became friends quickly.

Maura: All right. Let's give one more example with ***birds of a feather flock together***.

Maura: Oh, guess what movie I watched last night.

Harp: Which one?

Maura: *The Bridges of Madison County*

Harp: I love that movie. It's such a **tearjerker**.

Maura: I know. I **bawled** my eyes out. I love movies like that though.

Harp: Me too. Like, I love *The Notebook*.

Maura: Oh, me too. I love that movie.

Harp: Yeah. We have such a similar taste in movies and even music, we both like the same bands.

Maura: **Birds of a feather flock together**, I guess.

Harp: Definitely.

Maura: Yeah. Let me know if you have any recommendations.

Harp: Yeah, I will.

Maura: So, in that example, we had two people who in their conversation found that they have the same tastes. And so they said ***birds of a feather flock together***. They were talking and spending time with each other and realized that they were similar.

Harp: Exactly. Let's move on to the next expression, Maura.

Maura: All right. The next expression is ***like two peas in a pod***.

Harp: ***Like two peas in a pod***.

Maura: Mhmm. This expression is also used to talk about two people who are similar to each other. The expression is ***to be like two peas in a pod***.

- Harp: Yeah. And if you think of this expression, **like two peas in a pod**, and you imagine a pod that has peas in it, they all look the same. It's like a green envelope that has delicious peas inside. They all look the same.
- Maura: Right. I don't think that most people could tell apart different peas that are in the same pod. They look very similar.
- Harp: No, exactly.
- Maura: So this is a really old expression that dates back to the 1500s. It's really been around a long time, meaning that two people are very similar.
- Harp: And often, these people spend a lot of time together. That's why they're **like two peas in a pod**.
- Maura: Right. Sometimes when people spend a lot of time together, they become more similar and become more like each other.
- Harp: All right, so let's give an example with this expression, **like two peas in a pod**.

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|--------|---|
| Harp:  | I ran into my friend Susan last night.  |
| Maura: | Oh, really? Who's that?   |
| Harp:  | She's an old friend. We were best friends when we were seven years old and we just hung out together all the time and we played together, we would have sleepovers, we dressed alike. We were <b>like two peas in a pod</b> . |
| Maura: | Yeah, it sounds like it. So I guess you just <b>grew apart</b> ?  |
| Harp:  | Yeah, exactly, when I moved to another school. It was hard to stay in touch.  |

- Maura: So there's an example talking about two people who were **like two peas in a pod**. And in this case, they had a lot of similarities and they spent a lot of time together. So these two people were alike and very close.
- Harp: Exactly. Let's give one more example.

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|--------|---|
| Maura: | So have you seen Judy's sister? She's supposed to be here.  |
| Harp:  | Yeah. She's just over there.  |
| Maura: | Let me see. Oh yeah, that's gotta be her. Just the way she talks and the way she moves her hands. They're <b>like two peas in a pod</b> . |

Harp:	Yeah, look it, even the way she's laughing and throwing back her head. She looks exactly like Judy.
Maura:	I'm gonna go over and introduce myself.
Harp:	OK. I'll come with you.

Maura: So, there is an example, again, talking about two people who are very similar. This time they look alike and they act alike. And the reason this time is because they're related.

Harp: Yep.

Maura: So when we use this expression, **like two peas in a pod**, and with **birds of a feather flock together**, it could be for physical appearance, but it can also be for things that people like or enjoy, or a mixture of all those things.

Harp: Yes, exactly. OK, let's move on to the next expression.

Maura: The last expression is **great minds think alike**.

Harp: **Great minds think alike**.

Maura: Now, this is an older proverb as well, and in this case, someone says this expression, **great minds think alike**, in a situation where two people come up with the same idea at pretty much the same time.

Harp: I actually love this expression and use it quite often. So if I'm with a friend and we have a problem and we come up with the same idea, I always say **great minds think alike**.

Maura: Right. And that's like saying, "Wow, we're both really smart." Or if one person says it to the other person, it's like saying, "Wow, you're as smart as I am."

Harp: Ha ha.

Maura: So, when this expression is said, **great minds think alike**, it's always intended as a compliment to the two people who thought of this great idea.

Harp: Yes, exactly. When you say **great minds think alike**, you're thinking you're smart and the person is smart.

Maura: Right. Most of the time, one of the people who thought of this great idea uses this expression. But sometimes, another person who was just listening to both of these people think of the idea might also say it.

Harp: Yes, exactly. It could be the two people who are having the conversation or someone listening to the conversation who could say it.

Maura: Exactly. So, let's give you an example now with **great minds think alike**.

Harp: I'm so excited **to get on the road** and go camping. We're almost finished packing. We just have the tent left to put in the car.

Maura: OK, let's see. I don't think we're gonna be able to fit the tent in the trunk. It doesn't seem like there's enough room.

Harp: Oh, it is pretty packed back there. Uh...

Maura: What are we gonna do?

Harp: Let's put it in the front seat and move that over there.

Maura: OK, yeah. I was just thinking the same thing.

Harp: **Great minds think alike.**

Maura: So, there's an example where two people, two friends, had the same solution to a problem, pretty much at the same time. They both thought that they could put the tent in the front and then move a couple bags around in the trunk to fit everything.

Harp: Exactly. They both had the same solution to the same problem at the same time.

Maura: Right. And of course, it's rare that two people say their idea at the same time. But one person says the idea and then the other person says, "Yeah. I was just thinking that," or "I just thought the same thing," something like that.

Harp: You know, my sister always says that, and she says it so often that I'm like, "You're not thinking the same thing as me. You're just trying to pretend like you're as smart as me."

Maura: That's true that when someone says, "Oh, I had the same idea," you kind of have to believe them because you have no proof.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: OK, now there's something a little bit special about this proverb.

Harp: The thing that's interesting about this proverb is that there's an extended version. There's an addition that you can add to this expression and that's **and fools never differ**.

- Maura: Right. So, one person might say **great minds think alike**, and then another person, or even the same person, might say **and fools never differ**. And adding this little part to the end of this expression really changes the meaning.
- Harp: Yes. Instead of meaning that it's a positive thing, so this changes the expression to be negative.
- Maura: Right. To say **and fools never differ** really means that fools, which are people who are naïve or not intelligent, always think the same as other people. Fools don't think of something original or unique, they just copy other people. So this is saying that if you're thinking the same as someone else, you're probably a fool.
- Harp: Exactly. It's not so positive.
- Maura: Right. So, really, this is now saying, you thought the same as this other person and it doesn't mean that you're both very intelligent, it probably means you're both very unintelligent.
- Harp: I don't like this expression as much.
- Maura: It sounds quite mean when we break it down and discuss it, but when it's normally used, it's just a little bit of a joke.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: Right. When people say **great minds think alike**, they're not seriously saying, "Oh, wow, I'm so intelligent." It's just for fun.
- Harp: Exactly. So when someone responds and says **and fools never differ**, they're continuing the joke a little bit.
- Maura: Right. This proverb is used really only in fun and shouldn't be taken seriously.
- Harp: Let's give an example with this expression.
- Maura: Right. We're going to do the same example as we just did, but we're also now going to use **and fools never differ** and then we'll hear how the rest of the conversation **plays out**.
- Harp: Let's do it.



Harp: I'm so excited **to get on the road** and go camping. Let's finish packing the car quickly.

Maura: Yeah, let's do it. But it doesn't look like there's enough room to pack the tent. I don't know if we're gonna be able to fit it in the trunk.

Harp: I'm not sure if it's gonna fit there.

Maura: No, I don't think so.

Harp: What can we do?

Maura: Hmm.

Harp: I know. Let's move those bags back there and put the tent in the front.

Maura: Oh. That's just what I was thinking.

Harp: **Great minds think alike.**

Yoshi: **And fools never differ.**

Maura: Hey come on! It was a good idea.

Harp: It was totally a good idea. You don't have to be mean.

Maura: So, there is an example where we heard both parts of this proverb, **great minds think alike and fools never differ**. And as we said, it's usually used in a casual, fun way and not to be taken too seriously.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So, let's go over all of our expressions that were talking about people who were similar one more time.

Harp: All right. Well we started with **birds of a feather flock together**.

Maura: And then we looked at **like two peas in a pod**.

Harp: And we finished with **great minds think alike**.

Maura: **And fools never differ**. Don't forget the last part.

Harp: All right. And remember to check out our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Maura: Yes. And if you're curious about what you'll get if you become a member, check it out and you can see an example of our learning materials.



Harp: Yes. And also, if you have any ideas for podcasts, come to the Facebook page and leave us a little note.

Maura: And if you just want to say hi, say hi.

Harp: Exactly. That's it for us today. Bye everyone.

Maura: Goodbye.

## Detailed Explanation

### You don't know what you're missing

Here's an expression that means you're missing something great! It's most often used when one person is trying to convince another person to do something that they have never done before. It's like saying that something is so great, but you don't even know how great it is because you've never done it.

When one person tells another that **they don't know what they're missing**, this is true because they've never done it before. If you've never been to Chicago, you don't know what it's like to be in Chicago. If you've never been scuba diving, you don't know what it's like to go scuba diving. If you've never done something, **you don't know what you're missing**. This expression implies that there is something good being missed, which means that it is positive. It can be used for places or experiences.

At the very beginning of this episode, Maura says that if you're not a member at Culips, **you don't know what you're missing**. If you're not a member, you may not know what is in the Learning Materials and how much it could help your English and understanding of this podcast. **You don't know what you're missing** means that you're missing something great.

Here are a couple of examples with **you don't know what you're missing**:

Jenna: I went out dancing last night at this great place downtown called Bubbles.

Frank: Oh, really? I've never even heard of it, but I love dancing.

Jenna: Oh, you should go then! It's great. **You don't know what you're missing**.

Hannah: I really think that Jamie would like the woodworking course we're taking, but he refuses to sign up.

Michelle: **He doesn't know what he's missing**. This course would be perfect for him.

### Birds of a feather flock together

The expression **birds of a feather flock together** means that people who are alike are often friends and like to spend time together. This is like saying that birds that look similar, or have the same kind of feathers, stay together. This expression is used when there are two or more people who are alike and are also friends.

Here's another example with **birds of a feather flock together**.

Lucy: Look at that group of skateboarders over there. They all seem to be dressed exactly alike. I guess they have the same style.

Adam: Yep. **Birds of a feather flock together**.

To be drawn to something or someone

When a person is **drawn to a thing, person, or place**, it means they are attracted to it. **To be drawn to something** is to like it and want to know more about it. In this episode, Maura says that people who are similar are often **drawn to each other**. They are interested in knowing more about the other person.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be drawn to something or someone**:

Pauline: I really like that guy over there on the other side of the room. I think I'm gonna go start up a conversation.

Kiley: Why do you think you're so **drawn to him**?

Nancy: I've always wanted to go to India. I've been **drawn to it** as long as I can remember.

Heather: Then you should definitely make arrangements to go!

To have some truth to it

This is an expression that means what it says. When someone says that something **has some truth to it**, it means that it is true. When a person uses this expression, they might mean that something is completely true or that only some part of it is true. Usually a person will continue to explain their opinion after they say that something **has some truth to it**.

In this episode, Maura says that the expression *birds of a feather flock together* **has some truth to it**. She means that it is true in many cases that people who are friends are similar to each other.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have some truth to it**:

Greg: People always become more open-minded when they travel.

Terry: I think **there's some truth to that**. Most people become more open-minded while traveling, but I also know some people who just never seem to change no matter what amazing experiences they have.

Henry: Sherry doesn't think there's **any truth to global warming**.

Sam: Some people just don't believe in it.

Chinatown and other communities

Sometimes when people decide to live out of their home country, they live in communities with other people from the same native country. This happens in larger cities all around the world. It seems to happen naturally in most cases.

For example, when people from China first came to Toronto, they gradually started to live in the same area and now this is a place where many Chinese people live. You can get service in Chinese, signs are often in Chinese, and this is where some of the most authentic Chinese restaurants are. A Chinese community like this it is called **Chinatown**.

Here's a short list of the names of some other ethnic communities outside of their native countries:

- Little Italy
- Little India
- Japantown
- Greektown
- Irishtown

It's almost always the name of the country with the word *little* before or *town* after. Some communities in other countries do not have specific names, likely because the communities are not very large.

#### An expat

**Expat** is a short form of the word **expatriate**. An **expatriate** is a person who does not live in the country where they were born and/or raised. This person could be living away from their home country temporarily or permanently. Often, this term is used to talk about people you know from your home country who are living in other countries.

#### A tearjerker

**A tearjerker** is something that makes you cry. When a person cries, tears come out of their eyes. This expression is almost always used to describe a film or a book that makes you cry. A person cannot be **a tearjerker**. In this episode, Maura and Harp talk about two **tearjerkers**: *The Bridges of Madison County* and *The Notebook*.

Here's one more example with **a tearjerker**:

Melanie: How was that book you just finished reading?

Alison: I loved it, but it was **a real tearjerker**.

#### To bawl

**To bawl** means to cry loudly and uncontrollably. It is pronounced just like *ball*. There are actually a bunch of ways to say *to cry a lot*. Here are a few more of them:

- to sob
- to weep
- to wail
- to blubber

To be like two peas in a pod

This is another expression that describes two people who are similar to each other. People who **are like two peas in a pod** are similar to each other. In addition to this, people who **are like two peas in a pod** are also close friends and spend a lot of time with each other. Friends who are always together may be called **two peas in a pod**.

Here's one more example with *to be like two peas in a pod*:

Ken: Julie and Chris eat lunch together every day.

Mika: I know. They spend so much time together that they're even starting to talk the same way. **They're just like two peas in a pod.**

To grow apart

**To grow apart** is used to talk about two or more people or groups of people. These people were once close, usually in relationship or friendship, but as time passed they changed and are not close anymore. As time passes, people grow and sometimes they **grow apart**.

In a dialogue example, Harp says that she and a friend **grew apart**. This means that when they were young they were close friends, but as they grew older they were not close friends anymore.

Here's another example with *to grow apart*:

Kurt: I'm sorry to hear that you're separating from you wife. Can I ask what happened?

Wendell: Over the years, we just **grew apart**. It wasn't the same anymore.

**We grew apart** is one of the most popular reasons given when people divorce.

Great minds think alike

When two or more people have the same idea, you can use the expression **great minds think alike**. One of the people who had the idea can use this expression, or another person who is there could also say it. **Great minds think alike** means that two people had the same great idea because they are both very intelligent.

Here's one more example with *great minds think alike*:

Sarah: I was thinking that we could go to a movie tonight.

Jackie: That's what I wanted to do tonight, too. **Great minds think alike.**

And fools never differ

Here's the second part or optional addition to the expression *great minds think alike*. Sometimes when someone has used the expression *great minds think alike*, immediately afterwards, someone says **and fools never differ**. It could be the same person who says both parts, but often it is a different person who adds the second part of the expression, just like in this episode.

**And fools never differ** means that unintelligent people often think alike or copy others. This is really the opposite of what the first part of the expression says. When this expression is used, it's always as a joke and used for fun.

Sarcasm is often used as humour in English. For this reason, using an expression to tell someone they are a fool is not taken seriously. Here's an example showing this:

Jane: Let's get a cake for Sheila's birthday and bring it to work this week.

Carl: I had the same idea. Great minds think alike.

Pete: **And fools never differ**.

Jane: Hey! It's a good idea. Everyone will get to eat cake.

Pete: Yeah, I know. I'm just kidding around.

This expression can also be said **and fools seldom differ**.

To get on the road

**To get on the road** means to begin to drive, usually to a place that is far away. Harp uses this expression in the example where two people are talking about their camping trip. In this case, **to get on the road** means to begin driving to their camping destination.

We can also say **to be on the road**. This means that a person is already driving.

Here are a couple of examples with **to get on the road** and **to be on the road**:

Jack: I can't wait **to get on the road** again. We haven't gone on a road trip in ages.

Emily: Yeah. It's fun to have a nice drive when the scenery is great.

Nancy: **I'm always on the road** for work and sometimes it's so tiring.

Kyle: I bet! A long day of driving always makes me so tired.

To play out

**To play out** has a very different meaning from *to play*, which is often true with two-word verbs like this one. **To play out** means to develop until the end. **To play out** is used when people are waiting to see what happens or what the result of something is. It could be used to talk about a sports game or a movie or a discussion between two people.

Maura says “We’ll hear how the rest of the conversation **plays out**” to introduce a second dialogue example with the expression *great minds think alike and fools never differ*. This second example shows how the conversation develops differently when using the full expression. It’s like Maura is saying “Let’s listen to see what happens in this next example.”

Here are a couple more examples with **to play out**:

Dina: I can’t believe what happened on our favourite TV show last night! Did you see it?

George: Yeah, of course I did! I can’t wait to see how the bank robbery **plays out**.

Brain: The boss seems to be really upset at Julia today. And she seems really mad at him too!

Nathan: They’re both acting immature if you ask me, but I’m still curious to see how it all **plays out**.



## Quiz

1. When is the expression *you don't know what you're missing* most often used?

- a) when one person is convincing another person to do something they have never done before
- b) when one person is convincing another person to do something that they have done before
- c) when one person has just tried something they have never done before
- d) when one person is convincing another person not to do something

2. Felix: I can't get over how alike Celia and Becky are. \_\_\_\_\_

Please fill in the blank.

- a) Birds with feathers flock together.
- b) Birds of a feather flock together.
- c) Birds of a feather fly together.
- d) Birds with feathers fly together.

3. Brian has always been drawn to the ocean, so he's going sailing this summer.

What does the above sentence mean?

- a) Brian does not like the ocean.
- b) Brian really likes the ocean.
- c) Brian has never been to the ocean.
- d) Brian draws pictures of the ocean.

4. Which of the following is not an ethnic community outside of its home country?

- a) Japantown
- b) Chinatown
- c) Little Italy
- d) Canadaland

5. What is the term *expats* short for?

- a) expatties
- b) expatriates
- c) expatricks
- d) expatterns

6. The expression *like two peas in a pod* means that two people are very similar. What else can it imply?

- a) that the people are related
- b) that the people are not related
- c) that the people also spend a lot of time together
- d) that the people are not close friends

7. What is the additional part to the expression *great minds think alike*?

- a) And fools do too.
- b) And fools never differ.
- c) And fools always differ.
- d) And fools are fools.

8. What does it mean to get on the road?

- a) to go outside
- b) to go for a walk
- c) to walk on the road
- d) to begin to drive

9. Fred: The book I'm reading is so intense. I can't wait to see how the story \_\_\_\_\_.

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) plays up
- b) plays out
- c) plays off
- d) plays down

**Answers:**

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