

Catch Word #130 – Sleep on it!

Informal Contractions in this Episode

Informal contractions are unofficial short forms of other words, and they're usually only used in casual conversation. For example, when a native English speaker talks casually, they might say *gonna* instead of *going to*, or *whaddya* instead of *what do you*. Even though informal contractions are usually only used in spoken English, we include them in the Culips written transcripts to help you get used to how they're used and what they sound like.

These are the informal contractions used in today's episode, along with their meanings:

- **'cause**: because
- **gonna**: going to
- **mullin'**: mulling
- **wanna**: want to
- **ya**: you

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And it's Maura.

Harp: And we're here with Culips' English Learning Podcast.

Maura: That's right, with another awesome episode for you. And if you've never been—or if you haven't been lately—go to our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Because there, you can find all of our past episodes. You can also learn how to become a member. And when you are a member, you have access to a world of Learning Materials. You will have the transcripts to all of our episodes, more detailed explanations, and quizzes.

Harp: And we're also on Facebook, so come on over there and say hello. And leave us a question if you have one.

Maura: Yeah. We love, love, love, love to hear from you on Facebook, even if it's just a "Hey, how's it going?" We love to hear from you, so don't be shy.

Harp: So today we're bringing you a Catch Word episode, and that's where we take some expressions, we explain them, we give you examples.

- Maura: That is right. And today that's just what we're going to do. We're going to talk about expressions that are used when people are taking some time to think about something, to consider something. So these expressions in today's episode mean to take time to think about something more seriously.
- Harp: Yeah. It's about taking some time to think about a situation or a problem they're having or a decision they need to make.
- Maura: Right. It's usually kind of a big one, something more serious that you want time to think about.
- Harp: Let's get started with our first expression.
- Maura: The first expression in this episode is ***to sleep on it***.
- Harp: ***To sleep on it.***
- Maura: That's right, ***to sleep on it***. But of course when we native speakers speak, we say it quickly: ***to sleep on it***.
- Harp: ***To sleep on it.***
- Maura: And ***to sleep on it*** means to consider something, to think about something in depth. Now you may be wondering: What does this have to do with sleep?
- Harp: It basically means that you're taking the night to think about something, to make sure that you've thought about it at all angles and you really are going to make the right decision.
- Maura: Right. So if you say ***to sleep on it***, means that you're going to think about something and you'll have an idea or a response or a decision made, probably the next day.
- Harp: And oftentimes it's really good ***to sleep on it***, to take that extra time to calm down, to think rationally, to think about the decision you want to make.
- Maura: Right. Especially if it's a big decision, you don't want to be too hasty. You want to take the time to think about it. And sometimes if you've had some sleep, you wake up the next morning and you do have a different perspective. The morning after something happens, you can have a different perspective on a situation.
- Harp: Yeah. Giving yourself some time and some room to think about it.

Maura: You know, some people also believe that while you're sleeping, your mind is still working and you're still thinking about it. You're working it out in your dreams or your subconscious is figuring it out. And then in the morning, you feel better about what you're going to do.

Harp: Yeah. I think that's true.

Maura: I like **to sleep on it** if I have a big thing to worry about.

Harp: Me too.

Maura: All right. Now let's give you an example with **to sleep on it**.

Maura: So how was your interview this afternoon?

Harp: They offered me a job already.

Maura: Oh, that's great.

Harp: It is great, but I need some time to think.

Maura: Yeah, for sure. It can be a big decision, so it's best to take some time to think about it.

Harp: Yeah. So I told them I'm gonna take a day to think about it. You know, I'm gonna **sleep on it**; decide if I really want it.

Maura: That's a good idea. Well, good luck and let me know what you decide tomorrow.

Harp: Thanks.

Maura: And there was an example for you where someone decided **to sleep on it**. Now, this person got a job offer and wasn't sure if she was going to take it so she wanted some time to think about it. She said she was going **to sleep on it**. She told her friend that she was going **to sleep on it**.

Harp: Yes. But she told the company that she would think about it, because to use this expression, **to sleep on it**, in a professional setting is not ideal. I would use this expression more with my friends or family, more in a casual setting, not when it's professional.

Maura: I think you're right. It's definitely a more casual way to talk about things. And in a professional setting you want to sound professional.

Harp: Let's give one more example with this expression.

Maura: All right. Here is your second example with **to sleep on it**.

Harp: Hey. Where were you?

Maura: Well, I was just on the phone with Yuki. She's really upset because she and her boyfriend haven't been getting along and she's thinking about breaking up with him, **so, you know...**

Harp: Oh. That's not good. I didn't know it was that bad.

Maura: Yeah. Yeah. She's really thinking about breaking up with him. She said she's almost made her decision, but she's gonna **sleep on it** and, I guess, decide tomorrow if she's really gonna **go through with it**.

Harp: It's a big decision. It's a good idea that she's gonna **sleep on it**.

Maura: Yeah. I hope she feels better soon though.

Harp: Me too.

Maura: In this example, someone named Yuki had a boyfriend and she wasn't sure if she should keep going out with him so she was going **to sleep on it**, think about it, see how she feels the next day, and then decide whether she was gonna break up with him or not.

Harp: Yeah. It was a big decision to make so she was gonna take some time to think about, ponder it, make sure she was making the right decision for herself.

Maura: Yeah. That's something that is important. You wouldn't say *I'm going to sleep on it* if it weren't a big decision. For example, if Harp asked me if I wanted to come to her place for dinner on Friday, I wouldn't say, "Well Harp, I'm gonna **sleep on it**," 'cause it's not really a big decision. I would just say no if I weren't available, or "Yes." Of course I would go.

Harp: Yeah. It's an expression for serious, important things.

Maura: All right. Let's look at the next expression.

Harp: The next expression: **to mull over**.

Maura: Right. You could say **to mull over it**, or **to mull it over**, which means that you're thinking about something, you're considering something, you're taking some time to think.

Harp: Yes. **To mull it over** or **to mull over it**. And **mull** sounds weird, but it's spelled M-U-L-L. **To mull it over** is to think deeply about something, to consider it.

Maura: And you can **mull something over** for only a couple minutes, you could **mull something over** overnight (just like the expression **to sleep on it**), you could even **mull something over** for a week. So there isn't really a time restriction with this expression. **To sleep on it** means one night, but **to mull it over** could be for a short or a long period of time.

Harp: Yeah. It just means that you're **thinking it over** deeply and you're really looking at your options, as well.

Maura: Right. You're considering what you're going to do in a certain situation. Now, are you ready for an example? 'Cause we're gonna give one to you.

Maura: So did you make your plans for summer vacation yet?

Harp: Not yet. I'm **mullin' it over**. I don't know. Should I go to the mountains or should I go to the beach?

Maura: Yeah, it's a tough decision. You don't have that much time off in the summer and you wanna make sure you have fun.

Harp: I know. I love hiking, but I love relaxing on the beach. I don't know what to do.

Maura: I don't know what to tell you either. I guess **it's just a matter of time** before you figure it out.

Harp: I have to make a decision soon.

Maura: In that example, we had someone who was **mulling over** what to do on her summer vacation. So she was thinking about where she was gonna go and she was trying to make a decision.

Harp: Yeah. She's **mulling over** the idea of where to go on her summer vacation.

Maura: You know, that doesn't sound like too bad of a problem to me. I wouldn't mind having **to mull over** where I'm gonna go on vacation.

Harp: Yeah, definitely. But it's still an important decision because it's her summer vacation.

Maura: That is definitely true. OK, let's give one more example with **to mull over**.

Harp: So, how's the new position? Do you like being the big boss?

Maura: Well, I do like it, but I'm still **learning the ropes**. I actually just saw a whole bunch of presentations, and now I have to decide whose project I'm going to choose. It's hard.

Harp: You haven't decided yet?

Maura: No. I thought I would take a few days **to mull it over**. It's my first big decision, so I don't wanna **mess it up**.

Harp: That's a really good idea.

Maura: In that example, we had someone who was now a boss and had to make a big decision about which project to do. And, of course, she wanted **to mull it over**. She wanted to think about it, consider her options, and then make a decision.

Harp: Yeah. It was a good idea to take some time before making the first big decision.

Maura: You know, it's funny, because I was just thinking, "It's always a good idea to take time before making a decision." But you know, I think that sometimes I take too long to make decisions. I probably need to be faster.

Harp: Yeah. It can definitely happen that way.

Maura: OK. Now let's move on to the last expression in this episode.

Harp: Our last expression is **to think it over**.

Maura: Right. **To think it over**. So this means to think deeply, and to consider, and to try to figure out what you're going to do, how you're going to solve a problem, what you're going to say.

Harp: Yeah. **To think it over**. You think deeply about a problem or about a decision you need to make, you really consider all the options. You **think it over**.

Maura: That's right. So, we're going to give you an example now with this two-word verb, **to think over**.

Harp: Do you have a cat?

Maura: I do. I've got two of them.

Harp: So you're **a cat person**?

Maura: Well, I like all animals, but I love my cats.

Harp: Hmm. I have to make a decision. The kids really want a pet but I don't know if we should get a cat or a dog.

Maura: Well, cats are great because you don't have to take care of them as much. You don't have to take them for walks or clean up after them or bathe them. They take care of themselves.

Harp: Hmm. Good points. I have **to think it over**.

Maura: Yeah. You could do a bit of research, but **I'm telling you**, cats are **the way to go**.

Maura: In that example, we had a mother who was trying to decide whether she was going to adopt a cat or a dog for her children and she wanted **to think it over**. So she wanted to take some time to think about it. And this expression is just like **to mull it over**. If you **think something over**, it could be for a short amount of time or it could be for a long amount of time. It's not really specific.

Harp: Yeah. But it is about an important decision or a problem that you have.

Maura: That is definitely true. Getting a pet is a big decision. It's a big commitment.

Harp: It's a huge decision.

Maura: And a fun commitment, too.

Harp: I like your cats. I don't think I'm ready for my own.

Maura: OK. Let's give one more example with **to think it over**.

Harp: Hey. Are you OK? Why are you so late?

Maura: It's my car. You know, it's been giving me troubles **off and on** for what seems like forever now.

Harp: Oh no. Not again.

Maura: Yeah. It totally **conked out** on me this morning.

Harp: Oh no. How did you get to work?

Maura: Well, I ended up just taking the bus, because it wouldn't even start.

Harp:	Uh. What are you going to do?
Maura:	Well, I don't know. I'm just thinking it over . I don't know how much longer I can last.

Maura: And there was an example with someone who is going **to think over** what to do with her car. She's having car problems. It's not reliable, so she has **to think it over**. Is she gonna keep the car? Is she going to sell it? Is she gonna repair it or buy a new car? What's she gonna do?

Harp: Yeah. It's a big question, a big decision to make. What to do with the broken car?

Maura: Cars are another big thing in life, for sure. Mostly because they're expensive.

Harp: Yeah. And they cost a lot of money to maintain.

Maura: Mmhmm. All right. Now, let's go over go these expressions one more time.

Harp: OK. Well, we started with **to sleep on it**.

Maura: And then we talked about **to mull it over**.

Harp: And we ended with **to think it over**.

Maura: That's right. So again, if you haven't been to our website, Culips.com, go check it out. It is spelled C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: Yeah. And sign up and become a member because you're supporting us and helping us make more of these wonderful episodes.

Maura: And we always appreciate your support. Thank you to those of you who have already supported us.

Harp: And thank you to all of you who will become members.

Maura: Nice one. All right, so, again, if you're on Facebook, say hi and we're sure to say hi back. We'll talk to you again soon.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Maura: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To sleep on it

To sleep on it means to take the time to think about something, usually a decision, until the next day. You go to sleep at night and then the next day you've had the time to think about it. As we say in this episode, some people believe that while you sleep your mind continues to work on your problems.

With many expressions, we can either use the pronoun *it* or we can use the actual noun and say what it is, like *decision*. It is much more common to hear this expression used with *it*, but you may occasionally hear it used without it, like **to sleep on a big decision**.

Here's another example with **to sleep on it**:

Lena: So are you going to move to China?

Shayne: I'm going to give myself one more night **to sleep on it** and then I'll make a final decision first thing tomorrow morning.

So, you know... (at the end of a sentence)

Sometimes when English speakers talk, they end a sentence with **so, you know...** This is not proper grammar and **so, you know** should never be written at the end of a sentence. This phrase is used when the speaker assumes that the listener understands what was just said and also understands the further implications of what was just said.

In this episode **so, you know** is said in the dialogue example about Yuki and her boyfriend. Maura describes the situation with Yuki and her boyfriend and then says **so, you know...** Maura means that Harp can understand now why Maura was late and that Yuki was very upset. Even though Maura knew she was supposed to meet Harp, she was late because Yuki was upset.

Here are a couple more examples with **so, you know** used at the end of a sentence:

Shannon: Is Jim coming out tonight?

Pete: Well, he got a call from Julia, **so, you know...**

Shannon: Oh. They're probably going to be on the phone for hours then. I guess we'll see him in class tomorrow instead.

Ron: Are you going to be able to join me on my trip down south this winter?

Morgan: I was looking at my financial situation and I don't have much extra money right now, **so, you know...**

Ron: I understand. Maybe we can do it next year.

In the first example, with Shannon and Pete, the context is important to understand the use of **so, you know**. Shannon and Pete know that Jim really likes Julia and has been waiting to talk to her. When Pete says, **so, you know**, Shannon understands that Jim is not coming out with them tonight because he is going to talk with Julia on the phone.

In the next example, with Morgan and Ron, Morgan is not able to join Ron on a trip because he doesn't have enough money. He doesn't directly say that he cannot go, but he says that he does not have much extra money and saying **so, you know** implies that he does not have the money to spend on a trip.

To go through with something

Sometimes we think about doing something but we never actually do it! **To go through with something** means to actually do it. This expression is used to talk about actions that have been planned and thought about before. It is especially used when the action is risky or when the person wasn't sure whether they really wanted to do it. It's easy to think about doing something, but it can be a lot harder to actually **go through with it**.

In this episode, this expression is used in the dialogue example about Yuki. Maura says that Yuki will decide whether **to go through with** breaking up with her boyfriend. If Yuki decides to do this, it will be something that she planned and thought about before she actually did it. It is also something difficult and possibly risky, if Yuki is not completely sure it's the right decision.

This expression could also be used to talk about someone who wants to speak to his boss about a sensitive topic. For example, Daniel thought about speaking to his boss about feeling underappreciated at work. This is not an easy topic to talk about and because he didn't know how his boss would react, it was also risky. In this case, we could say that Daniel decided **to go through with** talking to his boss about his feelings. Or if he decided not to do it, we could say that he decided **not to go through with it**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to go through with something**:

Joan: I can't believe that Steve **went through with it**!

Kyle: I know! I never thought he would actually have the guts to go bungee jumping.

Oliver: I did it! I quit my job today!

Becky: I'm glad you were able **to go through with** doing it. You'll be so much happier now. That job was terrible.

To mull something over

To mull something over is to think about it and consider it deeply. People most often **mull over** a difficult decision they need to make.

Here's another example with **to mull something over**.

Alison: You look like you're deep in thought. What are you thinking about?

Brian: I'm just **mulling over** what to do for a certain project at school.

The verb **to mull** used with **over** has the same meaning as when it's used alone. The word *mull* also has other meanings unrelated to this expression.

To be a matter of time

When something **is a matter of time**, it means that it's sure to happen in the future. When the expression **to be a matter of time** is used, it is not known when exactly something will happen, but just that it will definitely happen at some point. It is just like saying that something is inevitable.

In this episode, Maura uses this expression in a dialogue example, when Harp is trying to figure out whether she should go hiking or to the beach on her vacation. Maura says that **it is only a matter of time** before Harp will decide what to do. At some unknown time in the future, it is sure that Harp will decide where to go on her vacation.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be a matter of time**:

Anika: I hope Kelly breaks up with Scott soon! He's such a jerk.

Dimitri: I know. **It's just a matter of time** before she realizes it.

Mika: I found a new apartment, so I'm moving in one month.

Nate: Congratulations. I knew **it was only a matter of time** before you found something!

This expression is also often used with *just* or *only*.

To learn the ropes

To learn the ropes means to learn how to do something new. The popular origin for this expression comes from sailing: a new sailor has to learn how to use the ropes and tie knots on the ship in order to learn how to sail well.

In this episode, the expression **to learn the ropes** is used the way it is often used in everyday conversation: to talk about work. When a person is learning a new job, they are often said to be **learning the ropes**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to learn the ropes**:

Lureen: As a new teacher, you should **learn the ropes** of lesson planning before you start teaching in front of a real class.

Joel: That seems like a good place to start.

You can also say *to know the ropes*, which means that you know how to do something, or *to show someone the ropes*, which means that you show someone how to do something new for them.

To mess up

To mess up means to make a mistake or to do something incorrectly. We recently did an episode all about **messing up** called *We all mess up sometimes*. Check it out if you want to know more about this expression.

Here's an example with **to mess up**:

Fiona: Matt really **messed up** this time. He didn't do his part of the project.

Emily: Maybe we should talk to the professor so we don't all lose marks for his mistake.

To think it over

To think it over means to think about something deeply, usually because you have to make an important decision. *To think about it* can be used in much the same way as **to think it over**.

Here's an example with **to think it over**:

Dave: I'm going **to think over** whether I should take that dance class with you and I'll let you know what I decide tomorrow.

Sharon: No problem. **Think it over** and let me know what you decide.

A cat person

A cat person is someone who loves cats. Sometimes **a cat person** is believed to have a certain personality, similar to a cat. **A cat person** might be seen as a quiet, independent person who likes to be alone.

You might also hear someone called **a dog person**, which is someone who loves dogs. **A dog person** might be believed to be athletic and energetic, just like many dogs. As cats and dogs are the most popular kinds of pets, it's not as common to hear someone called a *...person* with other animals. It is common for **cat and dog people** to feel passionate about their animal and not like the other.

I'm telling you

Sometimes we have natural expressions in English that say something obvious and almost unnecessary, but we love to use them anyway! The expression ***I'm telling you*** is used before or sometimes after one person tells another person something. It is used to emphasize that the listener should believe what was just said. The speaker could be giving someone some advice or trying to convince them of something. ***I'm telling you*** could be removed from the sentence without changing the basic meaning.

In this episode, in the dialogue example about pets, Maura says, "***I'm telling you***, cats are the way to go." Maura is trying to convince Harp that Harp should buy a cat. She is giving Harp advice on which kind of pet she should buy.

Here are a couple more examples with ***I'm telling you***:

Christine: ***I'm telling you***, Justin Bieber is the best star to come out of Canada in the last 10 years.

Olive: I'm not sure if agree with you about that.

Sylvia: What do you think I should do about school? I'm just not sure whether I want to go back.

Tomoko: If you're passionate about what you're learning, you won't regret it, ***I'm telling you***.

Because this is a casual way to speak, the word *you* in ***I'm telling you*** is often pronounced *ya*.

The way to go

When something is described as ***the way to go***, this means that it is the best option. Imagine having more than one option of how to travel, like by bus or by train or by airplane. If taking an airplane is ***the way to go***, this means that taking an airplane is the best way to travel to your destination. This expression is not only about travelling though.

In this episode, in the dialogue example about pets, Maura says that cats are ***the way to go***. This means that she thinks a cat is the best option for a pet.

Here are a couple more examples with ***the way to go***:

Henry: I think making a chocolate cake for Kate's birthday this weekend is ***the way to go***.

Ivan: Sounds good. She does love chocolate.

Jasmine: I'm not sure what colour to paint my room. I'm either going to do it yellow or green.

Lucie: I'd say yellow is ***the way to go*** because it's more neutral.

Off and on

When something is **off and on**, it means that sometimes it is happening and other times it isn't. When something is on, it means it is happening and when it's off, it is not happening. This means that something is not happening continuously.

In this episode, in the dialogue example about cars, Maura says that she's been having trouble with her car **off and on**. This means that sometimes she has trouble with her car and then sometimes she doesn't.

Here are a couple more examples with **off and on**:

Mitch: I've been having this pain in my leg **off and on** all morning. Do you think it's something to be worried about?

Lorna: I'd say wait until tomorrow and if it still continues then you might want to think about seeing a doctor.

Janie: You've been seeing Pierre **off and on** for 6 months now. How's it going

Carmen: I'm still unsure. We're so unstable. We keep breaking up and then getting back together.

This expression can also be used as **on and off**. There is also a variation with the word *again*, as in, **on again, off again**. This variation is almost always used to talk about relationships where a couple is together and then they are separated, and then back together again, and it continues this way.

To conk out

To conk out means to slow down or stop working suddenly. This expression is often used to talk about something mechanical, like a car. In this episode, **to conk out** is used to talk about a car that suddenly stops working.

Here's another example with **to conk out**:

Petra: So tell me what happened with your computer.

Dean: I have no idea. I was just using it as I normally do when it suddenly **conked out**. Now I can't even turn it back on.

There are a couple of other related meanings for **to conk out** that are not necessarily related to something mechanical. For example, a person can **conk out** when they fall asleep after being completely exhausted.

Quiz

1. John doesn't know whether he should book the ticket for his vacation now or wait a bit longer. So he has decided to _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) sleep in it
- b) sleep under it
- c) sleep on it
- d) sleep it off

2. Which of the following is true when you go through with something?

- a) It may be difficult or risky.
- b) It is probably easy to do.
- c) You have not made a plan before.
- d) You do it without thinking.

3. It's just a matter of time before Helen breaks up with Fred.

Which of the following must be true about Helen and Fred?

- a) Helen will break up with Fred at a certain time she has already decided upon.
- b) At some time in the future, Helen is sure to break up with Fred.
- c) Helen does not want to break up with Fred.
- d) A fixed amount of time must pass before Helen will break up with Fred.

4. Anthony is just learning the _____ at his new job as a waiter.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) sails
- b) strings
- c) ropes
- d) ways

5. Which of the following expressions means to make a mistake?

- a) to mull over
- b) to mess up
- c) to go through
- d) to think over

6. Which qualities are typically thought to describe a cat person?

- a) loud and aggressive
- b) strange and solemn
- c) active and energetic
- d) quiet and independent

7. Why do people use the expression *I'm telling you*?

- a) They are going to tell a story.
- b) Someone is trying to convince them of something.
- c) They are trying to convince someone of what they are saying.
- d) They are trying to distract someone.

8. In my opinion, buying Heather a book is the way to go.

Which phrase could replace the expression *the way to go* in the above sentence, while keeping the meaning the same?

- a) a bad option
- b) the best option
- c) a fun idea
- d) good for her trip

9. Troy is only working off and on.

What is Troy's work situation?

- a) Sometimes he works and sometimes he does not.
- b) He works days and nights.
- c) He has shift work.
- d) He has a stable job.

Answers:

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