

Catch Word #131 – Slowpoke

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:

- **kinda**: kind of
- **gonna**: going to
- **gotta**: got to (have to)
- **'cause**: because

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura.

Harp: And we're here at Culips English Learning Podcast, bringing you another episode.

Maura: That's right. And don't forget to visit our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there, and only there, can you become a member. And when you're a member, these episodes just become way more educational and fun. You get transcripts, more detailed explanations, and quizzes for every single episode, going back years.

Harp: Years! We have over 4 years' worth of episodes.

Maura: That's right. So check them out. And if you're online, you can also come over to Facebook or Twitter and see **what Harp and I are up to** or leave us a question.

Harp: Yeah. If you leave us a question, Maura, myself, or Jessie, our wonderful editor, will get back to you with an answer. So today we're doing a Catch Word episode, and that's where we look at some slang, we explain it, and we give you some examples.

Maura: And today we're going to look at slang names for people who are slow, or who generally waste time.

- Harp: Yeah. We have a couple of slang names for when people are walking slowly or they're just kinda taking a lot of time to do something.
- Maura: Right. They're not **getting down to business**. They're not doing what they need to do. And you know what? I'm really excited about this episode because these slang terms we're gonna look at are so funny. They're such funny words. I like to say them.
- Harp: Yeah. They are. They're fun words. So, Maura, I think it's time **to get down to business** and get started.
- Maura: All right. So the first slang expression today is **a slowpoke**.
- Harp: **A slowpoke**.
- Maura: **A slowpoke**.
- Harp: So **a slowpoke** is used to describe a person who moves slowly. Usually they walk slowly, they do things slowly.
- Maura: **A slowpoke** doesn't move fast, they move slowly. It even has the word *slow* in it.
- Harp: Yeah. It's **slowpoke**.
- Maura: Right. So **a slowpoke** is someone who does things slowly. Like you said, Harp, it could be walking or it could be that they complete work slowly. It could be anything. They're not fast. They don't do things quickly.
- Harp: Yeah. They're walking really slowly. They're **taking their time**. They're **a slowpoke**.
- Maura: Yeah. You know, I'm usually not **a slowpoke**, and when I really want to get somewhere, **slowpokes** kind of **bug me** a little bit. It's like, "Hurry up! Let's go! Come on!"
- Harp: I know. It's funny because I work downtown and often, on the main streets, so many people are **slowpokes**. And it's because they're on vacation, they're taking it easy, while I'm **in work mode** and I'm trying to get somewhere really quickly and they're just **slowpokes**.
- Maura: Yeah. But at the same time, **slowpokes** are normally laid back, they're not stressed, they're not in a rush. So I guess that's **the upside** to being **a slowpoke**.
- Harp: Yeah. Should we give some examples with this slang expression?

Maura: Yeah. Let's do it.

Maura: So how was your visit to your parents' place?

Harp: It was really fun. We had a really nice dinner and we went to the mall. But you know, the thing I forget when I'm not at home is that my mom is such a **slowpoke**.

Maura: Oh, really?

Harp: Yeah. We went to the mall and she just walks so slowly. She's always walking behind us.

Maura: Yeah. She likes **to take her time**, I guess.

Harp: Yeah. She's **taking time to smell the roses**.

Maura: So there is an example of somebody who was a **slowpoke**, and in this case, it was someone's mother who was slow. And this is often what happens when there's a **slowpoke** around: they delay something from happening. So if you're all going to go somewhere, you're late because of **the slowpoke**.

Harp: Yeah. And this is actually a real example from my life. My mom is a **slowpoke**. I usually try to tell her, if we have to be somewhere at 6:00, I tell her that we have to be there at 5:30, just so we're not late, 'cause she's slow.

Maura: That's a good plan. I think I've used that with you before.

Harp: I know you have.

Maura: And you know, there's another little expression that was used in the example, which was **to take your time**. And this is kind of a nice way to say that someone is slow. This person likes **to take their time**. It means that they move slowly, but it's just a very nice way to say it.

Harp: Yeah. It's a polite way of saying someone's a **slowpoke**.

Maura: Mmhmm. All right. Now, should we do one more example with **slowpoke**?

Harp: We definitely should.

Maura: Do you know where Moe is?

Harp: I think he's late.

Maura: That guy is such a **slowpoke**. I mean, he's always late for our meetings and then we always have to stay late because of him.

Harp: I know. It's really frustrating.

Maura: **What can you do?**

Maura: In that example, Moe was **a slowpoke**. He didn't move very quickly. He arrived late to things and it delayed the meeting for everyone else.

Harp: Yeah. I'm sure you can imagine someone that you know in your life who just **dillydallies, takes their time** to get somewhere, and who's often late. That person is **a slowpoke**.

Maura: That's right. OK, let's move on to another slang expression for somebody who moves slowly and generally wastes time.

Harp: All right. The next slang expression is **a dawdler**.

Maura: Mmhmm. **A dawdler**.

Harp: **A dawdler**.

Maura: So this kind of person, **a dawdler**, is somebody who **takes their time**, moves slowly, isn't in a rush to do anything.

Harp: Yeah. They move slowly, they walk slowly, they don't hurry.

Maura: Yeah. This person takes more time than necessary to do something. If they have to do some work and it would take most people 5 minutes, it takes **a dawdler** 10 minutes.

Harp: Yeah, exactly. It takes them longer **going from point A to point B**, or it takes them longer to finish a project. They **dawdle**.

Maura: That's right. So let's give you a couple of examples now with **a dawdler**.

Maura: So, have you started doing your homework over there?

Harp: Yeah.

Maura: All right. Let me **have a look**. Umm, it doesn't look like you've started yet. Stop being **a dawdler** and get to work.

Harp: Yes Mom.

Maura: In that case, the child was **a dawdler** because she wasn't getting to her homework right away. She was wasting time. She wasn't doing what she was supposed to be doing.

Harp: Yeah. And when I think of these expressions, **slowpoke** and **dawdler**, I often think of kids. They often take more time to do things. They get distracted and start doing something else. They move slowly.

Maura: Yeah. I definitely think of these expressions being used by parents. It's true for **slowpoke**, it's true for **a dawdler**, and it's going to be true for our last term as well, which we'll get to in a few minutes.

Harp: Before we get there, let's give one more example with **dawdler**.

Maura: Oh. I love walking in the park on beautiful days like these.

Harp: I know. It's so nice.

Maura: Yeah, the sunshine and... Oh! Look at the ducks over there in the pond. They're just so peaceful. Where'd you go? Oh, there you are.

Harp: Sorry. I was just **taking my time**.

Maura: I didn't know you were such **a dawdler**. I really walked ahead.

Harp: Yeah. I was just **taking my time**.

Maura: In that example, one person was **a dawdler** because she was walking slowly. So in this case, **a dawdler** was a person who actually was physically slow.

Harp: Yeah. The friend was walking slowly. They were being **a dawdler**.

Maura: Right. And these slang terms for slow people should usually be used only in a joking way or with close friends. Since they're slang, it's not really a word you'd want to use with someone you don't know, and it wouldn't be used in a professional way or in writing. It's just a cute little word.

Harp: Yeah. A cute little word that you use with someone you know, a friend.

Maura: And that, I think, is especially true for this last one.

Harp: Yes. It's definitely true for the last slang, which is...

Maura: **Lollygagger**.

Harp: **A lollygagger**.

Maura: I think this one is my favourite just 'cause it's so funny and strange to say: **a lollygagger**.

Harp: I'm gonna say it one more time 'cause it's quite a funny word: **a lollygagger**.

Maura: Right. **A lollygagger** is someone who doesn't do what they're supposed to do, **takes their time**, which might possibly delay other people. **A lollygagger** does things slowly.

Harp: Yeah. They move slowly, they don't care about being on time.

Maura: Yeah. And this word has a little bit of a fun feeling to it. **A lollygagger**. The person's just enjoying life and not really worried about moving quickly. OK, so let's give, now, a couple of examples for **a lollygagger**.

Harp: Let's do it.

Harp: I'm so frustrated.

Maura: Why? What's up?

Harp: Well, the party's already started and Marissa's not even here yet.

Maura: Yeah, I know. She's **a lollygagger**, but she's always slow, you gotta expect it.

Harp: I know. I'm just really excited to go to the party.

Maura: Well, hopefully she'll be here soon.

Maura: In that example, Marissa was the **lollygagger**. She was someone who was not moving fast and was making all her friends late for the party.

Harp: Yup. She was making them all late and they called her **a lollygagger**.

Maura: She probably wasn't stressed, she probably wasn't worried, she was just **taking her time** and slowly getting ready to go.

Harp: Let's give one more example with this fun word, **lollygagger**.

Maura: So how is the, uh, Johnson project coming along?

Harp: It's going pretty well. We finished all the marketing and we have the sales numbers. We're just waiting for the advertising. And of course we all know that Matt is just **a lollygagger**, so we're still waiting for those numbers.

Maura: Aw, too bad. Well hopefully you can put some pressure on him and he'll **finish up** soon.

Harp: I sure hope so, because it's due tomorrow.

Maura: Good luck.

- Maura: And there is another example of **a lollygagger**. This time the **lollygagger** was Matt, and he wasn't working fast enough. He was wasting time, not **getting down to business**, and so he caused a project to possibly be late or at least be done at the last minute.
- Harp: Yeah. He had the potential to make the project late because he was **a lollygagger**.
- Maura: Mmhmm. You know, when people are lollygaggers, it can be frustrating, but it's so fun to say, Harp. **Lollygagger!**
- Harp: It is really funny. It's a fun word.
- Maura: And there are actually even more words, more slang, that can be used to talk about slow people. We used the ones that are popular around here, but in other places where they speak English, they might use different expressions.
- Harp: Yeah. And before we sign off, let's just do one really quick recap of the three fun words that we explained to you today.
- Maura: The first was **a slowpoke**.
- Harp: The second was **a dawdler**.
- Maura: And then my favourite, **a lollygagger**. And if you're on Facebook, come on over and say hi to Harp and me. We love hearing from you and it's so great to know that people are listening from all over the world.
- Harp: So that's it for us, everyone.
- Maura: We will talk to you very, very soon. Bye.
- Harp: Bye everyone.

Detailed Explanation

To be up to something

In this episode, Maura invites listeners to go to Facebook or Twitter to see **what she and Harp are up to**. When used in this way, **to be up to something** means to be doing something. If you ask someone “**What are you up to?**” You are asking them what they are doing, or what they have been doing lately.

Here’s another example with **to be up to something**:

Sahar: Hi Fred! I haven’t seen you in a long time. **What have you been up to?**

Fred: I’ve been on holiday. Let’s meet for coffee next week and catch up.

Sahar: Sounds great.

To get down to business

To get down to business means to get moving or to get to work on something. This expression is often used when you are ready to do something, and when it is time to begin a task that you have been preparing for.

In this episode, Harp tells Maura that it’s time **to get down to business** after they finish introducing the episode. What Harp is saying is that it’s time to do the task they have prepared to do.

Here’s another example with **to get down to business**:

Naomi: Hey! It’s 8:00pm! American Idol is on TV. Let’s go watch it.

Julio: I really think we should work on this science project first. It’s due tomorrow.

Naomi: Aw, that’s no fun.

Julio: It might be. Science can be fun too.

Naomi: All right. Let’s **get down to business**.

Julio: OK, we have to start by reading chapter 12 of our textbook.

A slowpoke

A slowpoke is a person that is slow or late for things on a regular basis. This can describe someone who acts or moves slowly, or someone who works slowly. This term can be seen as having a slightly negative meaning sometimes.

The origin of this word is unclear, but *to poke*, by itself, can mean to move around aimlessly or without a purpose, so the word **slowpoke** probably originated from describing an action—to move around slowly and aimlessly.

Here's another example with **a slowpoke**:

Gerson: Where's Todd?

Billy: I guess he's running late.

Gerson: Well, that's not a surprise. He's always late.

Billy: That's true. He's quite **a slowpoke**. Should we wait for him?

Gerson: Yeah. Let's give him 5 more minutes.

To bug someone

To bug someone means to annoy or irritate them. A *bug* is also another word for an insect, which is actually where the expression **to bug someone** comes from because people see insects as annoying pests.

In this episode, Maura tells Harp that people who are slow tend **to bug her**. What Maura means is that she gets bothered and irritated by people who are slow.

Here's another example with **to bug someone**:

Ian: Have you finished your essay for English class?

Kevin: I'm still waiting for Stacey to give me the novel back that the essay is supposed to be written about. She borrowed it and still has it.

Ian: Really? The essay is due tomorrow!

Kevin: I know. She's really slow about returning things that she's borrowed.

Ian: Oh, that would really **bug me**. You should ask her about it.

To be in work mode

To be in work mode is a casual way of saying to be focussed on work. **To be in any mode** can mean to be focussed on that particular thing. People generally use this expression when they are explaining how much they are concentrating on something.

Here's another example with **to be in work mode**:

Thuy: Did you hear the latest celebrity gossip? It's all over the news!

Sabina: No, I've **been in work mode** for the last 2 days. I've hardly looked up from my computer.

Thuy: Oh, wow. You should really take a break. You must be exhausted.

The upside

The upside of something is the positive aspect or benefit of it. There is **an upside** to most things, and there can also be **a downside**. **A downside** is the negative aspect or disadvantage of something.

In this episode, Maura says that **the upside** to being a slowpoke is that slowpokes are never stressed. Maura is saying that the benefit or advantage of being a slowpoke is that you are never stressed or anxious about being late.

Here's another example with **the upside**:

Rashid: Where is Matthieu today?

Karolina: He's at home. He's got a really bad cold.

Rashid: Oh no, we have a paper due today for our business class.

Karolina: Yeah, he knows. He got an extension from the teacher and gets to hand it in tomorrow.

Rashid: Well, I guess that's **the upside** of being sick! He gets one more day to complete the paper.

To take your time

To take your time is a common way of saying to do things slowly. Saying that someone likes **to take their time** is a bit nicer than calling them a slowpoke, because it focuses on the fact that the person enjoys taking extra time to do something, instead of focusing on the fact that enjoying extra time makes them late for things.

Here's another example with **to take your time**:

Dasha: Sorry I'm late.

Ortega: That's OK. I know that you're always a bit late.

Dasha: I wish I weren't, but I can't help it!

Ortega: You just like **to take your time**. There's nothing wrong with that. As long as you let the people who are waiting for you know that you're going to be late.

Dasha: I guess so. You got my text saying I was running late, right?

Ortega: Yes, don't worry. I knew you'd be a bit late.

To take time to smell the roses

To take time to smell the roses means to take time to enjoy the simple pleasures in life. However, if somebody takes too much **time to smell the roses**, they might also end up being late. This expression can also be said as **to stop and smell the roses**. It implies that a person takes the time to enjoy the little things in life, like the nice smell of a rose. This phrase comes from the idea that the smell of flowers is one of those small pleasures that people who are busy forget to appreciate sometimes. Someone who stops to smell the roses is laid back and likes to take time to appreciate things that other people forget.

Here's another example with **to stop and smell the roses**:

Agata: How long does it take you to get to work in the mornings?

Billy: About 45 minutes.

Agata: Forty-five minutes? But you only live three blocks away.

Billy: Yeah, but I like **to stop and smell the roses**. It's a nice walk.

What can you do?

What can you do? is causal way of saying that there's no way to change something so you may as well accept it. It is a question asked when there is really nothing you can do.

What can you do? is a rhetorical question. A rhetorical question is a question where the speaker does not actually expect an answer, but the answer is sort of implied in the question itself. The question **What can you do?** is rhetorical because it is reminding you that there's nothing you can do to change something, so you may as well accept it.

Here's another example with **What can you do?**:

Ginger: Is Roger coming to pick you up from school today?

Tabitha: Yeah, but he'll be late.

Ginger: Oh, that's too bad.

Tabitha: Yeah, it can get annoying. He's always late. But **what can you do?**

Ginger: Well, at least you get a ride home.

To dillydally

To dillydally is a very light and friendly way to say to hesitate or to procrastinate.

Someone who **dillydallies** often can be called **a dillydallier**. This is slightly different than a slowpoke, because it doesn't necessarily mean that someone acts or works slowly. **To dillydally** means to stop what you are doing, often to do or look at something else, which could make you late for things. **Dillydallying** is similar to stopping to smell the roses, except that **dillydalliers** may not be appreciating the small things like the smell of flowers, they just may be easily distracted.

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

Sebastian: Hey let's check out this store! It just opened. Steven? Steven?

Steven: Sorry, I saw a shirt that I liked.

Sebastian: You always **dillydally** when we shop.

Steven: I know. I get distracted by all the cool stuff I want to buy!

A dawdler

A dawdler is someone who is slow and takes their time doing something, but usually because they get distracted by something else. **A dawdler** is very similar to *a dillydallier*.

Here's another example with **a dawdler**:

Chris: How long will they hold our table for? I made the reservations for 6pm.

Vern: I'm not sure. It's a really busy restaurant.

Chris: Well, maybe we should just go in without Sam. He's such **a dawdler**.

Vern: Yeah, he's on his way, but I'm sure he got sidetracked.

To go from point A to point B

To go from point A to point B means to go from one place to another, usually in the most straightforward or quickest way.

In this episode, Harp says that a dawdler takes longer **to go from point A to point B**. What Harp means is that a dawdler doesn't go from one place to another in the quickest and most direct way, and that they usually get sidetracked or distracted and linger for a while.

The expression **to go from point A to point B** is usually used in the literal sense to mean to go from one location to another, but it can also be used in the figurative sense to talk about someone going from one project to another or one idea to another. For example, Harp uses the expression to talk about a person finishing a project instead of going from one place to another. In this example, Harp is using the expression in a more figurative way to talk about someone going from one point (beginning the project) to another (finishing the project).

Here's another example with **to go from point A to point B**:

Octavia: How's is your Spanish course going?

Ted: It's going well, but it's difficult to follow the teacher's instructions.

Octavia: What do you mean?

Ted: Well, he's not very straightforward. He begins one sentence and then goes off into another topic. His lessons never **go straight from point A to point B**.

Octavia: Oh, that must be really difficult when you're trying to learn a new language.

Ted: It is. But, at least it makes me pay attention!

To have a look

To have a look means to look at something. This can refer to looking at an actual thing, or it can mean to examine an idea more closely.

In this episode, the expression **to have a look** is used in the example with the word *dawdler*. A mother asks **to have a look** at her child's homework. In this example, **to have a look** means to see, in this case, to see the child's homework.

Here's another example with **to have a look**:

Signy: Did you write that letter to your mom yet?

Allan: No, I'm having trouble expressing what I want to say.

Signy: Do you want help?

Allan: Yes please. Maybe you can help me figure out what I want to say.

Signy: All right, let me **have a look**. Well, it looks like you're off to a good start. I'm sure this will be easy.

A lollygagger

A lollygagger is another word for someone who is slow and takes their time doing things. This is a very casual word, so you would only use it with friends or family. **To lollygag** is the action of being slow and taking extra time to do something.

A lollygagger is someone who fools around, which makes them waste time or be late.

Here's another example with **a lollygagger**:

Trish: Aren't you late for class?

Felicia: Oh, gosh! I am. I just really love this library. I could stay here all day.

Trish: Well, come back after your class is done, then!

Felicia: I will. It's OK. My teacher knows that I'm **a lollygagger**. I won't get into trouble for being late.

Trish: OK, but you still better get moving.

Felicia: I will. See you after class.

To finish up

To finish up basically means the same as *to finish*, but it is used more casually than *to finish*. It's used when something is completed after it's been waited on for a while. *To finish* can simply mean to end, but **to finish up** usually implies finally finishing the last bit of something.

Here's another example with **to finish up**:

Devon: Mom, I don't like meatloaf.

Mom: Devon, you only have a little bit left on your plate. Eat the rest, please.

Devon: Can I go outside to play?

Mom: **Finish up** your meal, then you can go play.

Quiz

1. What is a slowpoke?

- a) a person who forgets to do their homework
- b) a type of turtle
- c) a person who collects tickets at a movie theatre
- d) a person who is very slow and late for things

2. What does the expression *to bug* mean?

- a) to annoy or irritate
- b) to play outside
- c) to always be on time and never late for things
- d) to finish chores early

3. What does it mean to be in work mode?

- a) to be very focussed on your work
- b) to have to stay late at work to finish something
- c) to change jobs
- d) to be late to a party

4. What does it mean to take time to smell the roses?

- a) to love gardening
- b) to be late for things because you get distracted by television
- c) to be slow because you are appreciating the small things in life
- d) to be irritated by people who are slow

5. What is a dawdler?

- a) a person who apologizes a lot
- b) someone who takes a lot of time to complete a task
- c) a type of fruit that has no seeds
- d) a good excuse for not doing your homework

6. Which of the following expressions does NOT mean to take a long time doing something?

- a) to dawdle
- b) to dillydally
- c) to be a slowpoke
- d) to run like a rabbit

7. What is a lollygagger?

- a) someone who like lollipops
- b) someone who takes a long time to do something
- c) someone who watches a lot of television
- d) someone who reads a lot of books

Answers:

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