

Catch Word #140 – That's so sketchy

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
- **gotta**: got to

Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone. It's Maura

Andrew: And I'm Andrew. And we're here with another Culips episode.

Maura: That's right. And don't forget to visit our website after you listen. That website is Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And it's only on that website where you can become a member. And what do you get if you become a member, Andrew?

Andrew: You get a lot of great stuff if you become a member. You get access to the transcripts of every episode. You also get detailed explanations of every term and special item that we talk about in our episode. And finally, you get quizzes to test your knowledge of what you've learnt by listening to our podcast.

Maura: That's right. And you can also listen to our episodes on iTunes and Stitcher, so you can check us out there.

Andrew: Yeah. And make sure to check us out on Facebook. Give us a like. And we're also on Twitter, so follow us on Twitter.

Maura: So, Andrew, since this is your first official episode with us...

Andrew: Yeah.

- Maura: People are still getting to know you. The listeners probably want to know more about you. So could you tell us, maybe, one of your hobbies or something you like to do in your spare time?
- Andrew: Sure. One of my favourite things to do in my spare time is play the guitar. I play in a couple bands. I've been playing since I was, maybe, 13 years old. And it's just something that I love to do.
- Maura: Cool. And how did you get into that? You just decided to take lessons when you were younger?
- Andrew: Well, I had **a paper route** that I was doing to make some spare money when I was 12 or 13. And one day, I decided to take all the money that I had saved up from my **paper route** and buy a guitar, just **on a whim**. And I'm really happy that I did because it turned out to be a great hobby that I've enjoyed for a lot of years.
- Maura: You know, your story makes me regret giving up on my piano lessons a long, long time ago. So today we are going to do a Catch Word episode, and that is where we talk about different expressions, we give you three expressions that are related to each other, we explain them for you, and we give you examples of how to use them. Isn't that right?
- Andrew: That's absolutely correct.
- Maura: And today we're going to look at expressions that describe people, places, and things that are questionable or curious. You know, when you just don't have a good feeling about something.
- Andrew: Yeah, when you have a feeling that just doesn't feel right. You expect everything to feel one way, but you just don't have that feeling. There's something weird going on.
- Maura: Right. It could be that something is dangerous, you might feel scared, or it is risky in some way, like you're not sure if something is safe or not.
- Andrew: That's right. It could be a feeling that it's unsafe, there's something dangerous that's about to happen, maybe something bad or immoral is gonna happen. It just doesn't feel right, the situation that you're in.
- Maura: Yeah. You don't trust the situation or the person or the place.
- Andrew: Absolutely. Something just feels wrong.
- Maura: And it's funny because it's hard to explain exactly, because this kind of feeling is different for every person.

- Andrew: Right. It's a premonition. It's not... It's not something that can be easily defined. It depends on how comfortable you are in that situation. And it usually happens, I think, in a new situation, when you're going into something that you're not familiar with. And you don't know what to expect, but it just doesn't feel right.
- Maura: All right. Now, let's get to the first expression today. And the first expression is **sketchy**.
- Andrew: Yeah, **sketchy**.
- Maura: Mmhm. So, something or a person or a place could be called **sketchy**.
- Andrew: Absolutely. And this is something that's just not clear. This place, or this person, this thing, you just have a sort of strange feeling towards it. You can't trust it completely.
- Maura: Right. This might be a time when you don't feel safe around a certain person or in a certain place. It's just a bad feeling, kind of like an instinct.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's almost like, if you're describing a **sketchy** person, that you think that maybe that person doesn't have a good intention; they're gonna do something bad towards you.
- Maura: So **sketchy** can also be used to describe a place. And when I think of a **sketchy** place, I think of dark streets with buildings that have broken windows and people walking around who maybe look a little bit dangerous. That's how I would describe a **sketchy** place.
- Andrew: Yeah. Maybe a part of town that has a bad reputation. Maybe there's a little bit of crime there, or something is dirty, or something is just not right with this part of town, and when you go there you're a little bit concerned for your safety. Maybe you've heard the word *sketch* before. And what a sketch is, it's a very simple drawing, it doesn't have very many details, it's very simple. And the words *sketch* and **sketchy**, are related because **sketchy** is a situation or a person or a thing that you don't know all the details about. There's some element of it that's unknown. And, yeah, that's where the link between *sketch* and **sketchy** is.
- Maura: Right. When something is **sketchy**, you don't know everything about it, it's unclear. And a sketch is usually not very clear either. It's not finished. So there is a connection.
- Andrew: Yeah.

Maura: OK. Now let's give a couple examples with **sketchy**.

Maura:	Hello?
Andrew:	Hey, it's me. I just wanted to call and make sure that you made it home OK.
Maura:	Yeah, yeah, I just got home, like, 5 or 10 minutes ago. I know, I shouldn't walk home that way. It's such a sketchy area of town, but it's so much shorter.
Andrew:	Yeah, well, I just wanted to call and make sure that you were OK, because last night on the news I saw that there was somebody that got beat up in that neighbourhood and I just wanted to make sure that didn't happen to you too.
Maura:	You know, I should be more cautious. Maybe next time I'll just stick to the main street.
Andrew:	Yeah, or take a taxi or something.

Maura: So in that example, we had two friends. One friend called the other friend to make sure that she got home all right because she walked through a **sketchy** part of town.

Andrew: Yeah. So we just had two friends talking on the phone. One friend was concerned about his other friend's safety, and so he wanted to call her to make sure that she **made it home** safe because she was walking through a **sketchy** part of town on her way back home.

Maura: And you know, dangerous parts of any city get even **sketchier** at night.

Andrew: Yeah, always. Night times are the **sketchiest** times.

Maura: Oh yeah, for sure. OK, so that example was about a **sketchy** place. Let's do an example with a **sketchy** person.

Andrew: OK. Let's do it.

Andrew:	Have you met Jane's new boyfriend?
Maura:	Yeah, just once.
Andrew:	And what did you think of him?
Maura:	To be honest... Now don't tell her I said this, but he was kind of sketchy .
Andrew:	Oh my god. I'm so happy that you think that, because I think the same thing.

Maura:	Yeah. I mean, I know that a lot of the times when they have plans, he cancels on her at the last minute.
Andrew:	Yeah. And have you noticed he's always checking his phone and texting other people? What's up with that?
Maura:	I know. It's really rude, right in the middle of conversations.
Andrew:	Yeah. I don't know. Something's just not right.
Maura:	I know. I don't trust him.
Andrew:	Me neither.

Andrew:	So in that example, we just heard two friends discussing Jane's boyfriend, and both of them thought that he was a little sketchy , that he couldn't really be trusted.
Maura:	Yeah. They had some reasons why they thought he was sketchy : because he texted all the time and because he cancelled their plans a lot of the time. But they also just had a bad feeling about him. They just didn't trust the guy.
Andrew:	Yeah. Something was just not right with Jane's new boyfriend, and that's why they didn't trust him.
Maura:	And, you know, in this situation, it could turn out that the boyfriend really is sketchy and breaks their friend's heart, but it could turn out that he is actually an OK guy and he's just addicted to his cell phone. You never know.
Andrew:	Yeah, he might be a knight in shining armour . We'll never know.
Maura:	But right, just because you think someone is sketchy , doesn't mean they actually are.
Andrew:	Right. It's just a feeling. It's not reality.
Maura:	Yeah. OK, let's look at our next expression now.
Andrew:	Yeah. The next expression that we're going to look at is dodgy .
Maura:	That's right. Dodgy .
Andrew:	Dodgy . And dodgy can be defined as something that's uncertain or unreliable.

- Maura: Right. You can use this word, **dodgy**, to talk about a person, a place, or a thing that is just suspicious; something you just don't have a good feeling about, something that is **dodgy**.
- Andrew: Right. And we should say that **dodgy** is more popular in the United Kingdom, in Britain, and in Australia. It's not used as often here in Canada or in the United States.
- Maura: That's right, but I would say that most people around here still know what it means.
- Andrew: Yeah. Everybody knows what it means and it is used sometimes, but just not as often as in the United Kingdom or Australia.
- Maura: Yeah, that's right. I remember when I was in England, and I was with a friend, and we were going to order from a fast-food restaurant, and you could see some of the food being prepared. And one of my friends said that the food looked **dodgy**. So it looked, maybe, unclear or not cooked well, or something just wasn't right about the food.
- Andrew: Yeah, you don't want to eat **dodgy** food. You might get sick.
- Maura: Exactly. OK. Let's give a first example now with **dodgy**.

- | | |
|---------|---|
| Maura: | This bus is moving so slow. I'm worried we're not going to make our flight. |
| Andrew: | This is the dodgiest bus ride I've ever been on. I don't know, I'm pretty stressed out. |
| Maura: | I don't know if this bus is going to make it. It sounds like it's gonna break down, like, any minute. |
| Andrew: | I know. Ah, I hope we don't miss our flight. But what else can we do? We just have to sit here and hope for the best. |
| Maura: | I guess you're right. |

- Andrew: So in the example you just heard, two friends were taking a bus ride to the airport and they were worried that they were gonna miss their flight. The bus ride was super **dodgy**, because the engine was making a bunch of really strange sounds.
- Maura: That's right. And one of the friends even said it was the **dodgiest** bus ride he's ever been on. That means it was probably the worst bus ride that he has ever been on.
- Andrew: Yeah, maybe the worst ride in his whole life.

Maura: You know, this example makes me think of when I've been travelling. And I've taken some pretty unsafe transportation sometimes.

Andrew: Yeah, sometimes when you're travelling, you just can't depend on the transportation system.

Maura: All right. Let's do one more example now with **dodgy**.

Andrew: Hey, do you happen to know of a good mechanic that you could recommend?

Maura: Yeah, I've got a mechanic that I've been going to for a few months. But I thought you already took your car in to get checked out.

Andrew: Yeah, I took it in last week to get checked out, but I'm not sure if I can trust my mechanic. He seems a little bit **dodgy**. I think my car only needs a little repair, but he told me that it would take \$2000 to fix my car, and **I just don't have that type of money** lying around.

Maura: Yeah. You probably want to get **a second opinion**. I'll give you the number of my mechanic and hopefully he'll be honest with you.

Andrew: I hope so.

Maura: In that example, we heard from a guy who was having some car troubles, and he'd had his car checked out, but he found that the mechanic was **dodgy**. So that means he didn't trust the mechanic and he wanted to get his car checked by someone else.

Andrew: Yeah. It's always good to get **a second opinion** when you're doing a big repair on your car. You never know if you can trust the mechanic. They have sort of a reputation for being **dodgy**.

Maura: Yeah. I think it's because, for me anyways, I don't know too much about cars and so you kind of have **to take mechanics at their word**.

Andrew: Yeah. Mechanics, computer technicians, anybody that has a lot of knowledge about a specific area and we have to trust them when our cars or computers break, they can take advantage of you. Sometimes they can be **dodgy**, so it's always good to get a recommendation from a friend.

Maura: And if they do feel **dodgy**, it's probably good to go somewhere else.

Andrew: Yeah, get that **second opinion**.

Maura: OK. Let's look at our last expression today, which is **shady**.

- Andrew: Yes, **shady**.
- Maura: Our last expression is **shady**.
- Andrew: And what does **shady** mean?
- Maura: Well, **shady** can also be used, like the first two expressions, to describe a person or a place or a thing. And, again, it's describing something that is suspicious, something you just don't have a good feeling about.
- Andrew: Yeah. You can use **shady** to describe, again, a person, a place, or a thing. And it just means something that you're unsure about; you have a bad feeling about something when it's **shady**.
- Maura: Right. It could be because it's dangerous. It could be because a person doesn't seem honest. You just don't have a lot of information, and so you don't feel safe.
- Andrew: All right. And **shady** is related to the word *shade*. And shade, if you're not sure what it is, it's sort of like a shadow. It's the area where the sun doesn't shine and it's darker. And when you're in the shade, it's kind of dark, you can't see very well. You don't really get the full picture of what's happening. And so that's where **shady** comes from, because something that's **shady** is also unclear and it's a little bit doubtful. You don't know totally what's going on.
- Maura: That's right, yeah. So, just like the first two expressions—**dodgy**, and **sketchy**—**shady** is when you just don't really know what's happening. Something is not clear, but you don't feel good about it.
- Andrew: And now let's do some examples with the word **shady**.

- Maura: You know, I bought tickets to this concert that I really wanted to go to, but I just realized that it's at this venue downtown that I've heard is kind of **shady**.
- Andrew: Oh no. It's not the Skeleton Bar, is it?
- Maura: Yeah. I've heard that they let **underage** people in, and also I think that people still smoke in there.
- Andrew: Yeah. And I also heard that sometimes there're fights that **break out** and the police are always there to break up the party at the end of the night.
- Maura: Yeah. So I don't know what I should do. I really want to go to the concert. Do you think I should just go anyway?
- Andrew: I would say just go, but, yeah, I've heard some bad things about that place.

Maura: Well, I'll let you know how it goes, after.

Andrew: Yeah, fill me in.

Maura: In that example, we heard from two people talking about a concert. And one of those people was worried about the concert venue because she thought it was **shady**. She didn't think it was a safe place. She knew that this place broke the rules, like letting in people who were not of legal age to drink, and letting people smoke cigarettes.

Andrew: Yeah. And the club was just **dodgy** because there was just a lot of bad stuff going on there that shouldn't happen, a lot of illegal things. And it's got a bad reputation.

Maura: All right. So, let's do one last example now with **shady**.

Andrew: Hey. So I heard that you had a job interview last week. How did that go?

Maura: You know, I was really hoping it was going to go well, but I think the job is kind of **shady**. They didn't really explain what I was going to be doing exactly, but I think I have to go out into the public and collect money somehow.

Andrew: Oh yeah. That totally sounds **shady**.

Maura: I know. The saddest part is I'm actually thinking about it 'cause I can't find any work.

Andrew: Does it pay well at least?

Maura: You know, I don't even know.

Andrew: Yeah, you can't trust that.

Andrew: So in this example, we heard two friends talking about a job interview that one of the friends just had this last week. And she was saying that she didn't really get a good feeling from the interview, because the job required her to ask for money and sort of make strangers feel uncomfortable. And she didn't even know how much the employer was going to pay her, either. It just seemed pretty strange.

Maura: Right. She didn't seem to have a lot of details about the job. And usually when you start a new job, they tell you exactly what you're going to be doing and how much you're going to make, and she didn't have these details.

Andrew: Yeah, and so we could definitely say that was a **shady** job interview.

- Maura: Yeah, and she shouldn't take it.
- Andrew: Absolutely. I wouldn't take that job.
- Maura: OK. So, let's go over the expressions we looked at one more time. The first expression we looked at was **sketchy**.
- Andrew: **Sketchy**.
- Maura: Right. And the second expression that we looked at today was...
- Andrew: **Dodgy**.
- Maura: That's right. And the last expression was **shady**. And all of these mean that you just don't have a good feeling about something. So, remember, you've gotta **trust your gut**.
- Andrew: Yeah, go with your gut.
- Maura: And, of course, I'm gonna remind you one more time to go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because that is where you can become a member. And if you had any questions about this episode or things you weren't clear about, maybe they are in our Learning Materials.
- Andrew: Yeah. And also make sure to check us out on Facebook. Come over to our Facebook page, give us a like, and leave us a comment. If you're on Twitter, take a look at our Twitter page as well. And Stitcher; Stitcher is a new audio app and you can hear us on Stitcher. So if you're into that, check us out there.
- Maura: All right. So that is it for us today. And Andrew will be back. This is his first official episode, but definitely not the last.
- Andrew: Until next time.
- Maura: Goodbye for now.
- Andrew: Goodbye.

Detailed Explanation

A paper route

A **paper route** is a very common job for young people in North America, usually when they are around 10 to 16 years old. When someone has a **paper route**, they deliver some kind of papers to houses in a certain neighbourhood. They may deliver newspapers, fliers, or any other paper that comes out regularly. This is a common job for young people because they can do it before or after school and it doesn't take up a lot of time.

The pay for having a **paper route** is very low. Normally you have to be a certain age to work legally, but for delivering papers, that age is much lower. A route is path or a direction. So having a **paper route** means that you have a designated, specific area (or route) where you deliver newspapers door to door.

The word **route** has two different pronunciations in English. Some people pronounce it as *root*, rhyming with *cute*, and others pronounce it as *rowt*, rhyming with *out*. Both pronunciations are correct, but *root* is more similar to American English, and *rowt* is more similar to British English.

Saying that someone has a **paper route** is kind of a funny way to talk about having a job. Usually, when we talk about jobs, we say that we are in a certain position, or we do certain things. For example, you may be a cashier, or you may mark essays. But with this expression, we describe a job as *having a paper route*, instead of *being a paper deliverer* or *delivering newspapers*. We could also describe having a **paper route** in those ways, but it's just more common to say that someone has a **paper route**.

Here's another example with **a paper route**:

Ren: What are you doing this summer? Will I see you at camp again?

Grace: Not this year. I decided to get a job to save some money for that new bike I've been telling you about.

Ren: Really? That's great. Although I'll miss you at camp. What's your new job?

Grace: Well, I have a **paper route** now. It's around my neighbourhood so it's really close.

Ren: That's great! Have fun!

On a whim

To do something **on a whim** means to do it suddenly or impulsively. When you do something **on a whim**, it means that you do it without thinking about it beforehand, and it's usually something light-hearted or fun. You wouldn't say that you did something **on a whim** if it was something bad that happened suddenly, or if something happened accidentally. This expression is only used when you do something fun or nice, and you do it without thinking about it first.

The expression **on a whim** comes from the word *whimsical*, which means unpredictable but fun. Something whimsical is very eccentric or unique, and it changes all the time, but it is always something pleasurable or fun. Someone who is whimsical never takes anything too seriously, and tends to change without reason or forethought. So, to do something **on a whim** means to do something whimsical.

Here's another example with **on a whim**:

Daiki: That's a great bag! Where did you get it? Is it new?

Nanami: Yeah, it's new. I was at the mall yesterday shopping for a birthday gift for my mom, and **on a whim**, I went into that new store that just opened up. There are so many great things in there! And this bag was one of them.

Daiki: Awesome! I'll have to go check it out.

Sketchy

Sketchy means vague or unclear. This adjective is used to describe someone or something that you feel negatively about because you're unsure of it and it seems scary or unsafe. The expression comes from the word *sketch*, which is a very rough drawing of something. Usually, a sketch doesn't have clear lines, and it is sometimes unclear what it is supposed to be a picture of. In this way, a **sketchy** place or person has the same features as a sketch drawing, because it is ambiguous or unclear, and you're not sure about it.

Here's another example with **sketchy**:

Furkan: I went to that new club on Perth Street last night.

Fatma: You did? I always thought it looked sort of **sketchy** so I avoided it. How was it?

Furkan: You were smart to avoid it. It was totally **sketchy**. I left after 5 minutes. It just felt like I wasn't welcome, and that they were hiding something.

Fatma: Yeah, it's best to stay away from those kinds of places.

To beat someone up

To beat someone up means to have a physical fight with someone and hurt them. This expression comes from the verb *to beat*, which means to strike or to hit.

Things are often described as beaten up when they are broken or really roughed up, like an old car that is rusty and missing some pieces. In the same way, when someone gets **beaten up**, they are defeated and hurt. If two people get into a fight and there is no clear winner, then nobody got **beaten up**. This expression is usually only used when someone is hurt by another person and loses the fight.

Here's another example with **to beat someone up**:

Lachlan: Are you actually going to the football game wearing that?

Freja: Yeah. What's wrong with my outfit?

Lachlan: Well, you're wearing the opposing team's colours. I just hope you don't get **beaten up** by the home crowd. They're pretty intense.

Freja: Good point. I'll go change into something else. Thanks for the warning.

To make it home

To make it home means to arrive home safely. This expression implies that getting home was a bit risky or scary. When someone has made it somewhere, this usually means they've succeeded or won something, even though it was doubtful or there was misfortune along the way. So **to make it home** means to succeed in getting home even though there was a chance you may not have achieved it.

Here's another example with **to make it home**:

Mathias: I think I'll walk home tonight.

Lucy: Why don't you take a taxi? It's past midnight, and you don't know this part of town very well. You might get lost.

Mathias: I have my phone with me. I'll be OK.

Lucy: OK, well, call me once you **make it home**.

Mathias: I'll be fine, don't worry. I'll text you when I get in the door.

To cancel on someone

To cancel on someone means to cancel your plans with somebody, usually at the last minute or in some way that upsets the other person and makes you seem unreliable.

There's a slight difference between just cancelling plans and **cancelling plans on someone**. **Cancelling on someone** means that the other person was really counting on you and relying on you to keep the plans, and then you didn't. Just cancelling is a little less serious or bad, and may not mean that you are unreliable, but just that you had to cancel for some reason. **Cancelling on someone** may be done without a reason, and it usually makes the other person feel a bit upset because they were depending on you.

Here's another example with **to cancel on someone**:

Juho: How did the move go? Moving houses can be so much work.

Nikola: Yes, it was a lot of work. And it didn't help that Micah decided **to cancel on me**, so I had to do it all by myself.

Juho: Oh, no. She's the one who owns a truck, right? Why did she **cancel on you**?

Nikola: She didn't even give a reason. I'm pretty upset about it, but I want to wait to let her explain why she cancelled before I talk to her about it.

A knight in shining armour

The expression **a knight in shining armour** is a metaphor for some kind of hero. A metaphor is visual representation of an idea. In this case, knights in shining armour are always rescuing people in fairy tales. So today, we use this expression to describe someone who rescues or helps someone when they need assistance, usually without being asked to do it first.

Here's another example with **a knight in shining armour**.

Sander: How are you doing? I heard you fell down the front stairs of the school yesterday.

Emilia: I did. If it weren't for Jess, I don't know what I would've done. He carried me to the clinic and phoned my parents and everything. He was definitely my **knight in shining armour**.

Sander: Yeah, you're so lucky he was there! You'll have to bake him some of your famous cupcakes to thank him.

Dodgy

Dodgy means questionable or suspicious. This adjective comes from the verb *to dodge*, which means to hide from view, to cover, or to conceal yourself. A person who is **dodgy** may be difficult to see in the literal sense, meaning they are hiding, or they may be difficult to see in the figurative sense, meaning that they are suspicious and difficult to judge.

The expression **dodgy** is commonly used in the UK to mean sketchy or shady, and sometimes it's used in North American English as well. It can be applied to both people and to places that are suspicious, but in the UK it's most often used to describe a person.

Here's another example with **dodgy**:

Quentin: Have you met the new guy at work? I can never seem to find him.

Petra: Yeah. He's sort of **dodgy**. I'm not too sure about him. I think he's hiding something. I'd stay away and just focus on your own work, if I were you.

Quentin: Good advice, thanks.

Not to have that type of money

Not to have that type of money actually means not to have that amount of money. This is a funny expression because it would be just as easy to say *amount* instead of *type*, and *type* usually means form or category, which is a quality and not a quantity. The fact that this expression uses the word *type* is probably due to the fact that we use this expression when talking about a large amount of money, which is a category that is different from a small amount of money.

Here's another example with ***not to have that type of money***:

Tim: Did you buy a new car on the weekend? You were looking at that white truck last week, right?

Iris: I was, but for some reason the price went up \$2,000 since I last looked at it.

Tim: Whoa! That's quite the price jump. Did they explain why?

Iris: They put a whole bunch of new features in it, like air conditioning. But I just **don't have that type of money** right now. I'll just have to keep looking I guess.

A second opinion

A second opinion is another, different opinion. This expression is often used when you are getting a quote on something that is going to cost quite a bit of money to have done.

Often, this expression is used when someone is trying to get something fixed, like a car or their computer. These sorts of things can be very expensive, and people who fix things like cars and computers sometimes give very different quotes on how much it will cost. This is because they are either trying to make more money for themselves, or their opinion on what needs to be fixed in order to get your item running again is different from another person's.

Here's another example with ***a second opinion***:

Lorenzo: Did you get your watch fixed yet?

Lotte: I tried to last weekend, but the place I took it to said that there was a lot more wrong with it than just the second hand breaking.

Lorenzo: Oh, that doesn't seem right. It's a pretty new watch, right?

Lotte: Yeah. It's only a year old. Maybe I should take it somewhere else to get **a second opinion**.

Lorenzo: Yeah. I don't think there's anything else wrong with it. You treat that watch really well. I'd get someone else to look at it.

To take someone at their word

To take someone at their word means to believe what they say without having any other evidence. If you **take someone at their word**, you accept what they say as true, even though there is no other proof available at that moment.

In this episode, Maura says that she doesn't know a lot about cars, so if she takes her car to be fixed by a mechanic, she has **to take him at his word**. Maura means that she has no other choice but to believe what the mechanic tells her, because she has no evidence telling her something different than what the mechanic says.

Here's another example with **to take someone at their word**:

Janez: My computer is completely broken. Can I use yours to type my essay?

Isobel: Sure. What's wrong with yours?

Janez: Apparently it needs a new mother board. I have no idea what that means, but I took it to a computer repair shop and that's what they told me. I don't know very much about computers so I have **to take them at their word**.

Isobel: Oh no. I hear that mother boards can be expensive. You should probably consider just getting a new computer altogether.

Shady

Shady means elusive, suspicious, and unclear. This adjective is often used to describe a place that has a bad reputation and should be stayed away from. The adjective **shady** comes from the word *shade*, which is the shadow that something like a tree casts on the ground, as a result of the way that the sun shines on it. Many people like to sit in the shade during the summer because it's cooler than sitting out in the sun.

Because shade is basically a shadow, it's fuzzy and moves depending on the location of the sun. Shadows are also something you cannot pin down, touch, or collect. Shade is not tangible, meaning it is not concrete or touchable. In the same way, something that is **shady** cannot be pinned down. It doesn't have a clear beginning or ending, and you can't touch it or pick it up. Something that's **shady** is mysterious and indescribable. Even though a shady spot under a tree is a wonderful place to sit, when something is described as **shady**, it should probably be avoided.

Here's another example with **shady**:

Vanessa: I'd like to try a new place for lunch today. How about that new burrito place?

Martina: I'd really like to check that place out, but the neighbourhood it's in is so **shady**.

Vanessa: No, I used to live in it when I was younger. It seems **shady**, but it's not that bad. If you come with me I can take your straight there. I know the area very well.

Martina: Oh, well that's OK then. Let's go.

Underage

Someone who is **underage** is below the legal age limit allowed to do something. There are different ages of **underage** depending on the thing you are describing, or the place where it's happening. The adjective **underage** is understood based on its context, meaning that the definition of **underage** can change, but the age you are talking about is understood based on what you're talking about.

For example, in many provinces in Canada, if we talk about someone being **underage** to drink, it means they are under 19, because that is how old you have to be by law to drink in many Canadian provinces. But if we're talking about someone being **underage** when it comes to working a construction job in a province like Ontario, we must be talking about someone who is under 16, since you have to be at least 16 years old to work in construction in Ontario.

Sometimes, **underage** is used as a general term to just imply that someone is probably too young to be doing something.

To break out

To break out means to erupt or happen all of a sudden. For example, if we talk about a fight **breaking out**, we mean that it was not planned, and that it happened suddenly or without warning. Other things that can be said **to break out** are an allergic rash or pimples. Rashes and pimples tend to appear suddenly, and without warning.

In this episode, Maura and Andrew use the expression **to break out** in one of their examples, to talk about a fight suddenly occurring at a party.

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

Adam: Have you ever seen a flash mob?

Erin: No. I don't think I even know what that is.

Adam: It's pretty great. It's a bunch of people who go to a place to do something as a group. They all know they're going to do it, but everyone else doesn't. So to the random people walking, it just looks as if a whole bunch of people suddenly **break out** into a song or dance at the same time. It's pretty great.

Erin: That does sound great!

To trust your gut

To trust your gut means to believe what your instincts or feelings are telling you. For example, you could **trust your gut** even though you are told something else, or you could **trust your gut** when there is no other proof or evidence of what is true.

This expression comes from the fact that *gut* or *guts* is a very old and common term for your insides, mainly your stomach area, or belly. When we are unsure or nervous about something, sometimes we can feel weird sensations in our stomachs, sort of like there are butterflies flapping around in there. Because our stomachs often experience physical sensations based on our feelings, our gut is linked to our feelings and our instincts. So **to trust your gut** means to trust what your inner feelings tell you about a situation.

Here's another example with ***to trust your gut***.

Sem: I'm not sure about this new job I got.

Nina: Why? What happened?

Sem: Yesterday was my first day on the job. I can't describe it, but it just feels like the wrong job for me.

Nina: Well, you should **trust your gut**. If you're really uncomfortable there, maybe you should look for something else.

Quiz

1. What is a paper route?

- a) another word for a tour guide
- b) someone who reads the newspaper every day
- c) a job that younger people get delivering newspapers
- d) a way to avoid using the Internet

2. If you do something on a whim, how do you do it?

- a) carefully
- b) badly
- c) without forethought
- d) with a bicycle

3. What does *sketchy* mean?

- a) unclear or not well defined
- b) resembling a painting
- c) unfamiliar and exotic
- d) clear and well planned

4. What does *dodgy* mean?

- a) friendly
- b) liking to play dodge ball
- c) suspicious
- d) feminine or girly

5. What does *shady* mean?

- a) elusive or uncertain
- b) masculine or boyish
- c) relating to newspapers
- d) eager to spend a lot of money

6. What does it mean to trust your gut?

- a) To believe what your friends say
- b) To believe what a book says
- c) To believe what your feelings or instincts say
- d) To believe what a fortune teller says

7. What are does it mean to take someone at their word?

- a) to want a second opinion
- b) to not believe them
- c) to not trust them
- d) to believe them

8. What is a knight in shining armour?

- a) someone who is not reliable
- b) a hero
- c) a newspaper deliverer
- d) a teacher

Answers:

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