

Catch Word #144 – Expressions with one

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
- **kinda**: kind of

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp

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

Harp: Yes. Make sure you check out our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com

Andrew: Yeah. And while you're there check out our archive, you can listen to every episode that we've recorded, and also make sure to sign up and become a member, because when you're a member you get complete transcripts, you get detailed explanations for every interesting term that we talk about and you also get access to a quiz.

Harp: Yes. And make sure you come say hi to us on Facebook or Twitter, and if you have a question you can leave it for us there.

Andrew: That's right. Well, shall we start, Harp?

Harp: Yes. But you were telling me a funny story that I want you to tell all our listeners.

- Andrew: Yeah. This is kind of a funny and a little bit embarrassing story, but it happened to me today. I was in the washroom, and I **went to flush** my toilet, and the flusher broke. And I was kind of upset at my toilet: why did it break all of the sudden? I didn't need this today. But anyways, I decided to investigate and see if I could fix the toilet, and usually this is something that I would never even attempt to do because I'm kind of **all thumbs**, I'm not great with my hands, I'm not great at fixing things. But I thought I'd give it a try. And I was super proud of myself because I actually fixed it, I fixed my toilet.
- Harp: Success! That's awesome.
- Andrew: Yeah. I was walking around with a big smile for about an hour today, just super proud of myself.
- Harp: Yup. That would have **made my day** too.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's a funny thing to have **made your day** but I guess it did.
- Harp: That's cool. Let's get started with our episode. Today we're gonna do a Catchword episode.
- Andrew: Yeah. And today's theme is a little bit different from what we usually do and it revolves around the number **one**.
- Harp: Yeah. We're gonna give you a couple of expressions, idioms, that have the word **one** in them.
- Andrew: Right. Usually we base our expressions around a certain theme to do with the meaning of the expressions, but today we're gonna switch it and talk about expressions that all have the word **one** in them. So they have different meanings but they're related because they all have the word **one**.
- Harp: They're super cool expressions, so we're gonna tell you what the expression is, we're gonna explain it, and we're gonna give you examples like we normally do.
- Andrew: That's right. So our first expression is...
- Harp: **One-horse race.**
- Andrew: That's right. **One-horse race.**
- Harp: Yes. **One-horse race.**
- Andrew: Yes. And what exactly is a **one-horse race**, Harp?

- Harp: Well, a one-horse race is when there's a competition and there are many people competing, but really there's one person who is just so much better than everyone else that they seem pretty likely to win.
- Andrew: Yeah. So **a one-horse race** is when there's a competition and one competitor that's just so much better than everyone else that you know that that person is going to win. **There's no question about it.**
- Harp: Yeah. It's pretty much a sure bet that they're gonna win.
- Andrew: For sure. So if you're a gambler it's good to bet on the person that you know is gonna win in a one-horse race.
- Harp: Yes. So it can be a competition of any type, it could be a spelling bee, it could be a pie eating competition, or it could be something like a singing competition like American Idol.
- Andrew: Yeah. It could be any sort of competition where one competitor is just **head and shoulders above everybody else in** the completion. And you know that person is gonna win.
- Harp: Yeah. So if you imagine a competition, and there's just that one person who's so much better, you kind of know that they're gonna win, that's a one-horse race.
- Andrew: That's right.
- Harp: I wouldn't like to compete in something where it's a **one-horse race** and I'm not the person who's the best.
- Andrew: Right. But if you are the person that's the best, but then a **one-horse race** is perfect. You know you're gonna win. You don't have to be stressed out.
- Harp: That's true. Should we give some examples?
- Andrew: Yeah. Let's do it.

- Harp: Hey. Did you go vote in the election yet?
- Andrew: No. I don't think I'm gonna vote. It's a one-horse race, I know Mayor Smith is gonna win re-election.
- Harp: Yeah. I guess that is true, he has won the last three elections.
- Andrew: Yeah. And the other candidates, they don't even try, they didn't talk to people on the street, they didn't advertise. It's a sure thing, Mayor Smith is gonna win, believe me.

Harp: I guess, but I'm still happy I voted.

Andrew: Yeah. I guess, it's a good thing if you go and vote, **no harm in it**, in expressing your opinion, right?

Harp: Yeah. Exactly.

Harp: So in this example, we had two people talking about an election for the mayor and the one person didn't even bother going to vote because it was **a one-horse race**. He knew that Mayor Smith was going to win.

Andrew: Yeah, and because he knows that Mayor Smith was gonna win, he didn't even vote; it was **a one-horse race**. He knew who was gonna win. and because of that, he didn't even think that he needed to vote.

Harp: OK. Let's give one more example with one-horse race.

Andrew: OK.

Andrew: I'm super excited for the Winter Olympics coming up. They're **right around the corner**.

Harp: Oh yeah. That's true they're coming up really soon. What's your favourite sport to watch?

Andrew: Of course, I love hockey.

Harp: Big surprise. I have to be honest. I don't really like the Winter Olympics.

Andrew: Really? Do you like the Summer Olympics?

Harp: I love the Summer Olympics.

Andrew: Yeah. What's your favourite event or sport?

Harp: I love the 100-metre dash. It's so fast and exciting.

Andrew: Oh, yeah. That one's good. Do you have a favourite runner?

Harp: Of course. Usain Bolt, he's gonna win for sure.

Andrew: Yeah, you think so? Why's that?

Harp: He is the best. He has the world record. He's just amazing. I think it's **a one-horse race**.

Andrew: Yeah, you're right. He is pretty fast. We'll see if he wins.

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| Harp: | We will indeed. |
|-------|-----------------|

Andrew: So in this example we had two people talking about the Olympics, both the Winter Olympics and the Summer Olympics. And the woman liked the Summer Olympics the best, and her favourite event was the 100 metre dash. And when the two people were talking about their predictions for who was gonna win, they thought that Usain Bolt was gonna win with **no questions asked**. It was **a one-horse race** because he's the fastest man in the world. He has the world record. He's better than all the competitors. It's a sure thing he's gonna win s, the 100 metre dash in the Summer Olympics is **a one-horse race** if Usain Bolt is running.

Harp: Exactly. So let's go on to our next expression with the word **one** in it.

Andrew: So, our next expression is **one-track mind**.

Harp: **One-track mind**.

Andrew: Yeah. **One-track mind**.

Harp: Yes. So what is **a one-track mind**?

Andrew: Well, a person has **a one-track mind** when all they think about and talk about is one thing.

Harp: Yes. So if they're thinking of just one thing, they're focused on one thing, they have **a one-track mind**.

Andrew: Yeah. Sometimes people have **a one-track mind** are a little bit different to hang out with. All they talk about, all they care about is one thing, and if you don't like that one thing, well that's tough.

Harp: Yup. And you'll be very bored with the conversation.

Andrew: That's right.

Harp: Yeah. So imagine a person who likes only football or who likes only hockey, they're gonna spend their whole time just talking about hockey or football, that means that they have **a one-track mind**.

Andrew: Yeah. So they're just constantly talking about football: did you see the game, do you know the stats, do you know the players, **football this, football that**. They have **a one-track mind** for football.

Harp: Yes. So if someone has **a one-track mind** about something, that means they're talking about it all the time, they're thinking about it. It's hard for them to concentrate on something else or to talk about something else.

Andrew: Yeah. They are just super obsessed with one thing.

Harp: Exactly. Let's give you an example.

Harp: Hey. Have you heard from Samantha lately?

Andrew: No, not for a while. What's new with her?

Harp: I don't know. I haven't heard from her in so long. I think it's been a couple months.

Andrew: Yeah. Well, the last time I talked to her, she just kept going on and on about how she wants to get promoted at work and eventually be the president of her company.

Harp: Yeah. That's actually the exact same conversation we had. She's obsessed with becoming the president. She's so ambitious.

Andrew: Yeah. She just has **a one-track mind**. That's all she cares about, is becoming the president of the company.

Harp: I think she might need to take it a bit easy and relax and enjoy life a little bit too.

Andrew: Yeah. Well it's ruining all her friendships, like we haven't talked to her forever.

Harp: Yeah. I'm gonna give her a call.

Andrew: Yeah. Good idea. Tell her I say hi.

Harp: I will.

Harp: So in this example. They were talking about Samantha, who is a friend of theirs, and she just had **a one-track mind** and all she focused on was becoming the president of the company where she was working. And she was super ambitious and super focused and didn't think about anything else, didn't talk about anything else. Didn't seem to be enjoying life, she was just really focused on one thing. She had **a one-track mind**.

Andrew: Yeah. So it destroyed her friendships with all of her friends. She just kept charging ahead, going for the presidency, **one-track mind** to become the president for the company. And that's all she thinks about, cares about, wants and yeah, so that's why she has **a one-track mind**.

Harp: Exactly. Let's give one more example with **one-track mind**.

Andrew: OK. Let's do it.

Harp: Hey. How's your sister Laura doing?

Andrew: She's doing pretty well, but actually her school success isn't that great these days.

Harp: Oh no. She's not studying very hard?

Andrew: Well. She's really just obsessed with video games. It's kind of funny, she's getting older now, but she just loves playing video games all the time. So her information technology, her computer classes, she's doing really well in those 'cause she gets to focus on video games, but in her other classes, she's kind of **falling behind**.

Harp: Wow. She has **a one-track mind**.

Andrew: I don't know. She's just obsessed, she just wants to play video games and talk about video games and think about video games all the time.

Harp: She should get into making these games.

Andrew: Yeah, I think that's her goal. That's what she will probably end being is a game designer.

Harp: Very cool.

Andrew: So in this example, we hear about the speaker's sister, and she is just completely in love with video games. And because of this, she's kind of **fallen behind** in her non-computer related classes at school. Why? Because she has **a one-track mind** for video games. That's all she wants to do is think about video games, play video games, talk to her friends about video games. She's just absolutely obsessed.

Harp: Yeah. She has **a one-track mind** for video games.

Andrew: That's right.

Harp: OK. Let's go on to our last expression that has the word one in it.

Andrew: And that is **one-two punch**.

Harp: **One-two punch**.

Andrew: That's right. **One-two punch**.

Harp: And what does this expression **one-two punch** mean?

- Andrew: Well, it's kind of a negative expression and it's not too happy to think about, but **a one-two punch** is when two bad things happen in a row.
- Harp: Yes. Exactly. So when one bad thing happens and then quite quickly after that, another bad thing happens, that's **a one-two punch**.
- Andrew: Right. And this expression comes from boxing. Because in boxing, the goal of this sport, of course, is to punch your opponent one time and then immediately hit him with the second punch while you dealt a pretty devastating blow, and you get lots of points for that. So that's where **one-two punch** comes from.
- Harp: Yeah. **One-two punch** is when two bad things happen in a row. OK. Well, let's give an example with **one-two punch**.
- Andrew: Sure. Sounds good.

- Andrew: Hey. What took you so long to get to work? You were supposed to be here almost two hours ago.
- Harp: Well, I just had the worst commute.
- Andrew: Really? What happened?
- Harp: Well, first there was that big storm.
- Andrew: Yeah. I guess, yeah.
- Harp: It didn't seem that big in town, but up north a lot of trees fell, and I couldn't go anywhere because there were all these branches on the ground.
- Andrew: Really? That's insane.
- Harp: It was crazy. The storm was so strong. And then I had to wait for people to come and clear the roads and then when I got into town, the power was out so all the streetlights weren't working, and I had to stop at each of them. It was just really slow and there was a lot of traffic.
- Andrew: That sounds horrible. You really got hit with **a one-two punch** this morning.
- Harp: I really did. I'm tired. I need my coffee.

Andrew: So we just heard an example using **one-two punch** where a woman was extremely late for work because of a big storm. And the storm hit her with a **one-two punch** because it knocked trees down on the road. So she was driving to work, she couldn't go anywhere really because there were trees all over the place and branches all over the place. And then secondly, when all the trees and the debris was cleared away, the power was out, and all the electricity to the traffic lights was gone. So she couldn't drive at a normal speed, in a normal pace because she had to stop for every single light to make sure that there were no other cars coming. So it was a **one-two punch** because two bad things happened. The first was the trees that fell and the second was the electricity that went out.

Harp: Exactly. Sounds exhausting that example. That's definitely a **one-two punch**.

Andrew: Yeah. I hope something like that never happens to me.

Harp: Exactly. OK. Let's give one more example with **one-two punch**.

Andrew: OK.

Andrew: Hey. Have you heard about Bob?

Harp: No. What happened to him?

Andrew: Well, he had a really bad stretch of luck this week.

Harp: What happened? Tell me everything.

Andrew: Ok. **Brace yourself**. This is really bad. So first of all, on the same day, this happened on the same day. He got fired from his job.

Harp: Oh no.

Andrew: And then after that, he went home, and him and his girlfriend broke up.

Harp: No.

Andrew: Yeah. They had been dating for almost five years, and she dumped him. So he got fired and dumped on the same day.

Harp: Oh, that's horrible.

Andrew: Yeah. He got hit with a huge **one-two punch**.

Harp: Yeah. That sounds brutal.

Andrew: Yeah. Poor Bob.

Harp: Yeah. I should give him a call and see how he's doing.

Andrew: Yeah. He's kinda depressed these days I think.

Harp: Yeah. I imagine.

Harp: OK. So in this example, we had Bob, who had been dealt **a one-two punch** because he got fired and then dumped in the same day. So two bad things happened to him, one right after the other.

Andrew: That's right. So it was **a one-two punch** because two bad things happened to Bob. First was he got fired and secondly he got dumped.

Harp: Yeah. Not a great day for Bob. OK let's do a quick recap of the expressions we used today.

Andrew: Yeah. So the first one was one-horse race.

Harp: Yes and **a one-horse race** is when there's a competition and there's one person who is just so much better than everyone else that you know they're most likely gonna win.

Andrew: That's right. And our second expression was **one-track mind**, and this is when one person is obsessed with just one topic, so that's all they talk about it, all they think about is one thing.

Harp: Yes. And we finished with **a one-two punch**. And **a one-two punch** is when two bad things happen to someone right in a row.

Andrew: That's right. Well I guess that wraps things up for us today.

Harp: Yup. Make sure you check out our website, Culips.com. C-U-L-I-P-S.com and become a member.

Andrew: And also check us out on Facebook and Twitter.

Harp: Yes. That's everything for us today. Bye everyone.

Andrew: Bye bye.

Detailed Explanation

To go to do

In this episode, Andrew begins the discussion by talking about some problems he's been having with his toilet. Andrew tells Harp "I **went to flush** my toilet" to explain how he was going to flush his toilet when he realized something was wrong. When people use the expression "I went to go" or "I **go to do**" before they describe an action (in this case, flushing) they mean that they attempted to or they began to do something, usually before they realize that they can't do the action or there is some sort of problem. In Andrew's sentence, he begins to flush the toilet before he realizes there is a problem.

Here is another example of the expression **to go to do**:

Homan: How was your day today?

Danilo: **OK**, but I had a pretty bad morning.

Homan: Why?

Danilo: Well, I got all ready to come to work. I showered, ate my breakfast, and walked the dog. Then, I **go to** reach for my keys to lock the door, and they're not hanging up on the hook.

Homan: Oh no, I hate losing my keys.

Danilo: Me too. And I spent an hour looking for them, so I was late for work, and I still couldn't find them!

Homan: Oh no, well, it's a good thing you keep a spare set of keys at your mom's house!

To be all thumbs

To be all thumbs means to be clumsy or not very coordinated with your hands. In this episode, Andrew says he is **all thumbs** when it comes to fixing things. What Andrew means is that he is usually not very good at fixing things. If you imagine a hand that has 5 thumbs instead of 4 fingers and 1 thumb, it wouldn't be a very coordinated or useful hand. So, when someone says they are **all thumbs**, they are basically saying that they are so bad at doing things with their hands that it almost seems like they have 5 thumbs because they are so awkward at handling things.

Here is another example of to be **all thumbs**:

Akiko: How are your piano lessons coming along?

Maneerat: Not great. I'd love to be able to play well, but I'm just not very coordinated. I'm **all thumbs**.

Akiko: Oh no. I hear it can take a while to learn though. Keep working at it and maybe you'll improve.

Maneerat: I'll try, but I think I'm just clumsy!

To make my day

In this episode, Andrew and Harp talk about how Andrew fixing his toilet **made his day**. When someone says something **made their day**, it means that something caused their day to be good, or it made them have a good day. Often, you will hear this expression after someone receives a compliment. The person who received the compliment may say that the nice comment **made their day**.

Here is another example of **to make my day**:

Licandra: I've never seen you skateboard before today. You're amazing!

Ayak: Really? Thank you. My sister's been teaching me.

Licandra: Well, you should keep at it. You'll be a professional in no time.

Ayak: Aw, thank you! I've been working really hard at it, so you just **made my day**!

A one-horse race

A one-horse race refers to a competition where there is a clear winner. If there is a horse race that only has one horse in it, then it's obvious that the horse is going to win since there are no other horses to compete with. So, if something is **a one-horse race**, it either means there are no other competitors or that there may as well be no other competitors because there is already an obvious winner. In this episode, Andrew and Harp use the example of a political election to explain the expression. They discuss Mayor Smith, and how he is so obviously going to win that there is no point in even voting. The election competition has such an obvious winner that they call it **a one-horse race**.

Here is another example of a one-horse race:

Mila: Do you want to play board games tonight?

Kiley: Maybe. Which game, and who's playing?

Mila: Well, we were considering playing Scrabble. It would be me, Thom, Keiko, Layla, and Doug.

Kiley: Oh, no. Playing Scrabble with Doug is **a one-horse race**. Ever since he started competing in spelling bees he knows so many words. There's hardly any competition.

Mila: Oh, yeah. You're right. Maybe we should play Clue instead.

Kiley: I'll come play, as long as it's not Scrabble!

There's no question about it

There's no question about it means that something is going to have an obvious outcome. It is similar to the expression **a one-horse race**, except that **no question about it** does not only apply to competitions or races. **There's no question about it** can refer to anything that is certain or any situation where there is no need to question what has been said because it is obvious or true.

Sometimes you will hear someone say that **there's no doubt about it**, which is the same as **there's no question about it**. Both expressions mean that there is no need to doubt or question something because it is certain or it is true.

Here is another example of **there's no question about it**:

Varvara: I'm so hungry, and it's still one hour until lunch!

Anna: Oh, don't worry. Mr. Alvin lets us go for lunch early every Wednesday.

Varvara: Are you sure?

Anna: Yep, **there's no question about it**. He coaches soccer every Wednesday at 11:45, so he has to leave class at 11:30.

Varvara: Oh, perfect!

To be head and shoulders above the rest

To be head and shoulders above the rest means to be winning or exceeding at something more than anyone else is. If you are **head and shoulders above the rest** at something, it means you are much better than them by quite a large amount. The expression comes from the fact that if you are **heads and shoulders above** someone you are higher up than them. So, if you are higher up or above someone at a certain skill or achievement, it is like your head and shoulders are taller than them.

Here is another example of **to be head and shoulders above the rest**:

Dafne: You're so good at skating. I wish I could skate like you.

Mimi: I've seen you skate, you're pretty good.

Dafne: Not like you though. You're **head and shoulders above the rest**.

Mimi: You can get there too. You just need more practice.

No harm in it

No harm in it is a common way to say that there is no danger in doing something so you may as well do it. It usually implies that if you are deciding whether to do something or not to do something, you should do it because there's no trouble that can come from doing it, but there might be harm from not doing it. It's close to the expression you might as well, which we looked at in an episode called Harp's Big Trip.

Here is another example of **no harm in it**:

Arshad: Are you going to the study group tonight?

Yvan: I'm not sure. I've been studying all week and know all the material pretty well.

Arshad: Maybe you should go anyway, just in case you missed something.

Yvan: Yeah, I guess you're right. There's **no harm in it**. OK, I'll go. See you there!

To be right around the corner

To be right around the corner is a very common expression that means very soon. Even though the expression sounds as if it is talking about something that is near in terms of space, it usually refers to time and something that is going to happen very soon. **Right around the corner** means very close, whether you are talking something close in terms of time, or close in terms of distance.

In this episode, Andrew uses the expression in an example to talk about how soon the Olympics were coming up. What Andrew is saying is that the Olympics are so close that they seem **right around the corner**.

Here is another example of **right around the corner**:

Jhon: What are you up to this weekend?

Daniko: I'm going to get started on my Christmas shopping.

Jhon: Christmas? But it's only October!

Daniko: I know, but October and November go by so quickly, and before you know it Christmas is **right about the corner**.

Jhon: Yeah, you're right. It always seems to come up pretty quickly. Well, have fun!

No questions asked

No questions asked is an expression someone uses to mean that there will be no investigation or questions about something, or that it is so certain that no questions are necessary. There is more than one way to use this expression, but it is often used when someone is asking someone to come forward and tell someone the truth or confess to something and they don't have to fear about getting in trouble or any other consequences.

In this episode we hear Andrew use it in an example when he talks about how Usain Bolt is a sure winner in a race. The way that Andrew uses it, **no questions asked** means there is no doubt or uncertainty about Usain Bolt winning. If there are **no questions asked** about something, it means that there is no doubt and everyone is sure about something. In the same way, **no questions asked** used the way Andrew used it means that there is so much certainty that questions are not necessary.

Here is another example of **no questions asked**:

Yoko: Did the police find out who stole your bike yet?

Thongthai: No, but I put out flyers yesterday.

Yoko: Oh, really? What did they say?

Thongthai: Just that if whoever took the bike brought it back, there'd be **no questions asked**.

Yoko: Well, that's good I guess. Maybe the person who stole it is just afraid of getting in trouble.

Thongthai: Yeah, I'm hoping it was just a misunderstanding and my flyer makes them return the bike. It's a very popular bike. It's possible someone took it and thought it was theirs.

Yoko: Yeah, I've been seeing those same bikes a lot lately. Well, if that's what happened then the flyer should help. Good luck!

One-track mind

A one-track mind is a way of describing a person who is only thinking about one thing, and it affects everything they do. The origin of the expression comes from trains. Most trains have more than one track, which lets them take different routes and go both ways to and from a destination. If they only have one track, however, they can only travel one way and only have one destination or one goal. In the same way, someone with **a one-track mind** has only one destination or goal in mind that makes them forget or ignore other things. Usually, this expression is used negatively, because people with **a one-track mind** can be forgetful or rude because they don't think about other people or other things beside their one focus.

Here is another example of **one-track mind**:

Julien: Why are you still here? I thought your brother was supposed to pick you up an hour ago.

Kaori: He was! I just had to call him to remind him. He totally forgot about me. He's on a date with his girlfriend.

Julien: Oh, man. He's been seeing a lot of her lately.

Kaori: Yeah I know. She's really nice and I like her a lot, but whenever she's around he's got **a one-track mind**. It's all he can think or talk about!

Julien: Yeah, that's pretty normal for teenagers. I'm sure he's not doing it on purpose.

Football this, football that

In this episode, we hear Andrew say football this, football that when he is talking about a person who has **a one-track mind** about football. When the words **this and that** are used after a subject the way Andrew has used them, it is a way of emphasizing how much a person is talking about or thinking about something. It is a common way to explain how much someone or something is focused on one thing.

Here is another example of this and that used the way Andrew used it:

Henrique: Are you going to Marianne's farewell dinner tonight?

Aldo: I'm not sure. To be honest, I'm getting a little tired of her always talking about her trip to Africa. She's only going for a couple months. And now she threw herself a going-away party!

Henrique: Yeah, it does seem a little much. But she's never travelled before so I guess she's excited. But yeah, lately it's **Africa this and Africa that**. I understand.

Aldo: I should really go to the party though. You're right, she's just excited. It's understandable. I'll see you there.

To fall behind

To fall behind means to start to decrease in grades or success in something in comparison to everyone else. When someone **falls behind**, it usually means that they are beginning to fail at something, where before they were succeeding. The origin of this expression comes from racing. When a runner **falls behind** other runners, it means that they are beginning to run slower than the others, and that makes them be behind the other runners where before they may have been in front of them or beside them.

Here is another example of **to fall behind**:

Wellington: Have you talked to your sister since she started boarding school in Switzerland?

Meriele: Yeah, I talked to her yesterday. She was doing really well in school, but now she's falling a bit behind.

Wellington: Oh no! What happened?

Meriele: Well, I don't think it's anything to worry about. She met some new friends who live in Switzerland and they're taking her around to all the tourist spots all the time. I think she's just excited about being in a new place and she's caught up in it. I think she'll get her grades back once things settle down a bit.

Wellington: Yeah, I bet it's pretty normal for that to happen to exchange students.

One-two punch

One-two punch means that someone had two things happen to them, either at the same time or very close together. **A one-two punch** implies that a combination of two incidents that happen right after the other is more effective than just one incident is.

The origin of this expression comes from boxing, where two punches delivered one after the other is a successful way of beating your opponent. In boxing, it is very common to punch once with your left hand, called a lead, followed by your right hand, called a right cross. This set of two punches is more effective than just punching once. In the same way, a one two punch of incidents or experiences affects someone more than just one thing would.

Here is another example of **a one-two punch**:

Khanh: Did you see the end of that trilogy on the movie network last night?

Jack: Yes! I knew the ending would be surprising, but I wasn't expecting that they'd find his twin brother and discover he was related to the fisherman at the same time!

Khanh: Yeah, it really was **a one-two punch**. I think it was a little overboard having those two things happen. One was shocking enough!

Jack: For sure. It was a great ending though. It definitely surprised me!

To brace yourself

To brace yourself means to prepare yourself for a shocking experience or an upsetting bit of information. In this episode, we hear Andrew use this expression in an example for the expression **one-two punch**. Andrew uses it before he tells Harp some shocking news about their friend Bob. What Andrew is telling Harp is to get herself ready because what she is about to hear is very upsetting or surprising. When someone hears something that really upsets them, they often feel dizzy or like they are going to faint and they need to hold onto something for support. Even though Andrew knows that what he is going to tell Harp probably won't make her faint, the expression is so common that it is used more for emphasis now, to exaggerate the fact that what someone is about to say is shocking.

The expression comes from the term brace, which is a word for anything that gives stability or strength to a structure. There are all sorts of braces used to support things. For example, a neck brace is a stiff collar or cast people wear when they have an injured neck to give them support. If you prop up a drooping flower with a stick, you could call the stick a brace. So, when someone tells you **to brace yourself**, they are warning you to strengthen yourself because what they are about to say or what you are about to experience is shocking.

Here is another example of **to brace yourself**:

Joonhoo: What did you do for your 30th birthday?

Quyen: Do you really want to know?

Joonhoo: Yeah, why? Is it a shock?

Quyen: Yep, you better **brace yourself**!

Joonhoo: OK, just tell me!

Quyen: I got a tattoo!

Joonhoo: Whoa! That is surprising! Wow, that must've hurt!

Quiz

- 1. What does it mean if you're all thumbs?**
 - a) that you get really good grades at school
 - b) that you are clumsy or awkward
 - c) that you're very good at gardening
 - d) that you have a fear of flying

- 2. If someone tells you that you just made their day, what did you likely do to them?**
 - a) got in an argument with them
 - b) punched them
 - c) told the teacher they were bothering you
 - d) gave them a compliment

- 3. What is a one-horse race?**
 - a) a competition where the winner is obvious before the competition even begins
 - b) a board game with 8 or more players
 - c) a common subject in college history classes
 - d) a name given to someone who travels a lot

- 4. What does it means if you are head and shoulders above the rest?**
 - a) that you are at least twelve inches taller than someone
 - b) that you are the shortest person in a room
 - c) that you are succeeding at something more than others are
 - d) that you cannot compete in something because you are not old enough

- 5. What does it mean if something is right around the corner?**
 - a) that it probably won't happen for a very long time
 - b) that it's never happened in the past so it probably won't happen in the future
 - c) that it is going to happen very soon
 - d) that it already happened

6. What does it mean if someone has a one-track mind?

- a) that they have a lot of different talents and interests
- b) that they are always on time and never late
- c) that they only think about one thing
- d) that they are not very good in competitions

7. What does brace yourself mean?

- a) to prepare yourself for something
- b) to make sure you have enough money to do something
- c) to get above-average grades in school
- d) to always win in competitions

Answers:

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