

Catch Word #158 – Give me a ballpark figure

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

dunno: don't know

gonna: going to

gotta: got to

whaddya: what do you

Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone. It's Maura.

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

Maura: **Yuppers.** So, I'm gonna remind everyone to go to our website, that's Culips.com. C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Because on our website, you can become a member. And when you're a member, you get access to the detailed explanations, transcripts, and quizzes for every single one of our episodes.

Andrew: That's exactly right. And we are also on the social media sites, like Facebook and Twitter. We also are on Stitcher radio, so check us out in all of those places.

Maura: Yup. You can send us a message or just say hi. We love to hear from you.

Andrew: That's right.

Maura: OK. So how have you been with this heat, Andrew?

Andrew: It's been difficult to handle. It's so hot lately. The summer just came really quickly and now it's here, on **full blast**.

- Maura: You know, it's funny, 'cause in Canada, a lot of people complain in the winter when it's so cold and so long, and so there's this kind of general consensus that we're not allowed to complain in the summer then. Because we complain in the winter that it's too cold, so when it's hot, we shouldn't complain. But sometimes it's just unbearably humid and so I feel like we should be able to complain, too.
- Andrew: I think so. It's a weird place that we live in. In the winter, it's just crazy cold and then in the summer it's, like you said, unbearably hot and the extremes are just all over the place.
- Maura: Yeah. We've actually had a few days that, with the humidity it feels like 40°C. I get scared when I see 4-0 in the forecast.
- Andrew: Yeah. I thought maybe as Canadians, we're just not used to real heat, but actually, the other day, I was hanging out with my friend who is from Colombia, and he was also complaining about the heat, so I feel like it's legitimate for me to complain about the heat because I think Colombia's a real tropical, hot place.
- Maura: Yeah. For sure. Wow! If he was complaining, yeah, I don't feel bad either.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's hot for sure.
- Maura: OK. So let's get to today's episode. And we're gonna do a Catch Word episode for you. That's where we give you three different expressions. Of course, we tell you what they mean and we give you examples of when you can use them.
- Andrew: That's right. And today's expressions are all about estimating.
- Maura: Right. An estimate comes in handy when you don't know the value of something or you don't know the quantity. You can estimate how much of something there is or its value. It's really a number that you're looking for.
- Andrew: Exactly. And, actually, today's episode is kind of interesting, because usually when we do a Catch Word episode, we describe and explain verbs. But today we're gonna talk more about nouns, so I'm excited about that.
- Maura: You sound like a really big grammar geek, that you're excited that we're gonna do nouns. But I know what you mean. It's a little bit different, so it's fun.
- Andrew: Exactly. Yeah. Every time you get to do something new, it's always exciting.

- Maura: OK. Let's get to it then. So let's get started. The first expression today is **a ballpark figure**.
- Andrew: Yup. **A ballpark figure**.
- Maura: Hey, yeah. We say that second word a little bit differently, don't we? I say **a ballpark figure**.
- Andrew: And I say **a ballpark figure**.
- Maura: Yours sounds actually right. It sounds like how it's spelled. Mine sounds strange.
- Andrew: Yeah, well, I think this is interesting because Canadians don't really have too much variation in their accent, but I am from the West Coast and you're from Ontario, and sometimes there are some slight vowels that we say differently and this is an example of that. I say *figure* and you say *figure*.
- Maura: Right. So, you can go with either one, and if you notice that it's different, don't worry about it. Just focus on the expression itself, which is **a ballpark figure**.
- Andrew: Mhmm. And so what is **a ballpark figure**?
- Maura: **A ballpark figure** is actually really just a long and fancier way of saying a kind of estimate.
- Andrew: Yeah. So it's when you guess something sort of **on the spur of the moment**.
- Maura: Right. When someone wants you to give a number, like, a quantity or a value, and you don't know, so in the moment, you might try to just take a guess with the information that you have.
- Andrew: Mhmm. And when I hear this expression, **a ballpark figure**, I always think that somebody is trying to estimate a price, especially. How much will something cost? So maybe you're talking to a contractor who you want to renovate your home, and you want to know roughly how much this renovation will cost, so you ask them for **a ballpark figure**.
- Maura: Right. When someone can't tell you exactly how much it's going to cost, they can guess. And just like you said Andrew, it's used by some professionals like contractors or other people who work with numbers, like accountants. In certain situations they can't give you the exact number so they give you **a ballpark figure**.

Andrew: Mmhmm. So when I hear this expression, I also think of baseball because we're talking about a ballpark, which is another word for a baseball stadium.

Maura: Yeah. Exactly. There are so many expressions that come from baseball. It's really quite surprising, actually. But, yeah, this one does too and there are a couple explanations as to how this expression started. So one of the possible origins is that at a baseball game, in the ballpark, the announcer would make an estimate as to how many people are at the game. So, after the game got started, they would count up all the tickets and they would know how many people were at the game. And so they would try to make an estimate of the number of people who were there.

Andrew: And sports announcers still do this. I remember when I was watching the World Cup recently, the announcer would say something like "There're around 80 000 people today here at the stadium watching this match." And I don't know why, but I guess sports announcers don't have a lot of things to say when the game is not being played, so they just, sort of, give everybody this, kind of, useless information.

Maura: It's funny though, because you're right. Why is that important information to have? But it is fun to know. I remember when I was younger and I used to go to Toronto Raptors games, and they would always say how many people were there. It's kind of fun to know how big the crowd is. It's exciting when there are a lot of people there.

Andrew: Yeah. Especially during really big events, when the numbers get really huge, like at the World Cup. Then it gets pretty interesting, I suppose.

Maura: Right. So, if you can remember this origin, it might help you remember the expression. So when you're at a ballpark, the announcer is possibly going to give you an estimate of the number of people who are in attendance. This is one possible origin. If you want to know more about some other origins, you'll have to become a member to view our learning materials, and then you can learn even more about the other origins of this expression.

Andrew: Yeah. So check out Culips.com and sign up and become a member.

Maura: OK, so, let's give some examples now.

Maura: So Bill, are you still **in the market** to buy a new car?

Andrew: Yeah. I'm thinking about buying a car, but I really don't have that much money to spend.

Maura: Well, could you give me, like, **a ballpark figure**? Because my uncle's a used car salesman, so you never know. He might find something.

Andrew: Really? Well, hmm, I guess I could spend around \$5000.

Maura: OK. Well, I'll let him know, and see if he has anything. Maybe I can get you a deal

Andrew: Yeah. That would be cool. Thanks a lot.

Maura: So there's an example where someone was asked for **a ballpark figure**. This is a kind of general idea, not a precise number, of how much he wanted to spend on a car. And he said \$5000. So that was just an estimate, a general idea, about how much he would want to spend.

Andrew: Exactly. It was kind of just off the top of his head, a guess, saying roughly around \$5000 is the amount of money that he has to spend. He didn't, like, go and check his bank account and see the exact number. He just guessed. He gave **a ballpark figure**.

Maura: You know, and I feel like we should say something about car prices in Canada, because our listeners might hear \$5000 and think that that's how much it is for a used car, but there's really a big range and, actually, depending where you buy the car in Canada, the price is quite different.

Andrew: Yeah. Exactly. Actually, it's interesting that you mention this because I've been looking into possibly buying a car right now, and the prices really vary. You can buy **a beater car** for maybe even under \$1000, and then they jump all the way up to thousands and thousands of dollars, so it's all over the place.

Maura: Yeah. That's true. But I would say for 5000, you could probably get a pretty nice car that's not going to cause you too much trouble, where you have to go to the garage a lot, for hopefully for at least a year or two.

Andrew: Yup. Absolutely. I agree. I think \$5000 is... It'll get you a good car, yup.

Maura: Yeah. OK. Let's give one more example now with **a ballpark figure**.

Andrew: Did you end up going to the party last night?

Maura: Yeah, I did. It was really fun. Quite **happening**, actually.

Andrew: Really? How many people showed up?

Maura: You know, I'm really bad with estimating. I don't know.

Andrew: Well, do you wanna just, ilke, give me **a ballpark** or something?

Maura: Um. I think maybe about a hundred people.

Andrew: A hundred? Wow! That's crazy. That must have been a real fun time.

Maura: Yeah. It was pretty good, It got a little bit hot 'cause there were so many people, but uh, when it got a bit later and it cooled down, it was really nice.

Andrew: I'll have to make it to the next one. I'm sad I missed it.

Maura: Yeah. There'll be another one next month so definitely show up for that.

Andrew: Yeah. Let's go.

Andrew: OK. In the last example that we heard, there were two friends talking about a party and the guy wanted to know how many people attended the party so he asked for **a ballpark**. And really, this is a shortened version of the expression that we're learning today, which is **a ballpark figure**. He just shortened it down to **a ballpark**. And what he wanted to know was an estimate, a guess, of how many people attended the party, and I think around a hundred people showed up, so it sounded like a pretty fun time.

Maura: Yeah. You know, this expression makes me think about my own experiences when people have asked me how many people are at a party. I feel like I was always really bad at trying to give an estimate of how many people were there. I would never know what to say. Some people just look at a whole room and take a guess. Other people might count 10 people and then kind of break it down.

Andrew: Yeah, well it's hard, 'cause it's usually darker and it's at night and, yeah, I don't know. It's tough.

Maura: Yeah. It can be hard to give **a ballpark figure** sometimes, but since it's not going to be 100% accurate, you might as well take a guess.

Andrew: Exactly. So, I think now is a good time to move on our next expression, which is a funny one, actually. It's *a guesstimate*.

Maura: Yeah. It is funny, because it always sounds funny when in English we have two words and we smoosh them together to make a new word, which is what happened in this case with *a guesstimate*.

- Andrew: Mmhmm. A *guesstimate*. So this is just a combination of the word *guess* and *estimate*. So it's a blended word.
- Maura: Right. And it's funny because the definition of *guess* and *estimate* are pretty similar. The one big difference is that when you estimate something, it is **an educated guess**. You have some information or some knowledge, so that when you're making your estimate, it's an informed kind of guess.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. Whereas a guess, on the other hand, is just really out of nowhere. You have no information to inform why you're making that choice or that guess. You're just thinking, using your brain.
- Maura: You know, it's interesting trying to explain the difference between a guess and an estimate, because sometimes there's not really a big difference. They can feel like kind of the same thing. But in a professional way, you don't want to say *just give me a guess*. You want something that is an estimate, because you want them to have a little bit of knowledge, a little bit of some idea of the number they're going to give you.
- Andrew: Right. An estimate, I think, it leaves for **a margin of error**. So, you know, it can go bigger than what you thought or smaller than what you thought, but at least you're sort of close with the estimate. You've used your knowledge and tools available to you to help inform your estimate.
- Maura: And something else that is worth noting about this expression is that it sounds pretty casual, so if you really want someone to give you a professional estimate, you wouldn't use this expression. It's mostly used in a casual way between friends or maybe even colleagues, but you're not going to take the number, the quantity or value, too seriously.
- Andrew: Exactly. It's one of those expressions that you just sort of want to avoid in formal situations, because it has a very casual feeling to it. And another interesting thing about this expression is that it arose in the 1930s and became popular back then, so it's actually pretty new.
- Maura: Yeah. It's funny, because the 1930s was a long time ago, but in terms of language, it's a pretty new term.
- Andrew: Mmhmm. I'm always surprised. A lot of the expressions that we talk about on this program, once I look into the history of them and the origin, I realize they're 500 or 600 years old. So for this one to be only about 80 years old is surprising. It's a brand new one.
- Maura: OK. So let's give some examples now with *guesstimate*.

Andrew: Hey. Whaddya think of this painting that I bought at a garage sale yesterday? I thought it looked kind of cool, you know, with these mountains and the orange sky.

Maura: Yeah. It's pretty cool. It's actually really well done, and it looks quite old. Do you know if it's worth anything?

Andrew: I don't know. I only paid 5 bucks for it, but that's why I picked it up. I thought maybe it had some value, maybe I could put it on eBay, I dunno.

Maura: Yeah. Well, maybe you should show it to Ron. He's always good at figuring out the value of stuff. He could at least give you a guesstimate.

Andrew: Yeah. That's true. He did major in art history, didn't he? Yeah. I'll give him a call and see what he thinks.

Maura: And if it's worth a lot, I want **a cut!**

Andrew: Yeah right.

Maura: In that example, we heard about a painting and the friends talking about it didn't know the value. But they thought maybe if they talked to their friend Ron, he could give a guesstimate. So he would have at least some knowledge to guess how much the painting is worth. Although he's not really a professional, so he couldn't give the exact number, but he could at least give some idea of how much the painting is worth.

Andrew: Exactly. He's just an art history major. So he's not a professional but he would have, maybe, perhaps, some idea about how much that painting is worth. And I'm crossing my fingers that it's worth a lot.

Maura: Yeah. It's always, I think, the dream of people who frequent garage sales to find something for a great price that's really valuable.

Andrew: Hidden treasure.

Maura: That's right. OK. Let's give one more example now with *guesstimate*.

Andrew: I've got a random trivia question for you. What is the population of Bogota?

Maura: Oh man. I don't know. I'm not good at that. Um...

Andrew: Just give me a guesstimate.

Maura: Pff. 5 million? What would you say?

Andrew:	I don't actually know. I was just curious. Let's look it up on the Internet. What does it say?
Maura:	Um. It says about 8 million. Just a little bit less than 8 million.
Andrew:	Ah, yeah. "The greater Bogota area has a population of around 8 million." OK. Well, the more you know .
Maura:	Mmhmm.

Andrew: So, in that last example, two friends were just hanging out and one friend asked just a random trivia question for no rhyme or reason about the population of Bogota, and neither of them knew the answer. They gave it a guesstimate and they were a little bit off. And they turned to the Internet to find the actual answer, which is something I think people do almost all the time nowadays. They'll find the real answer on the Internet. Uh, but, yeah, that was an example of using *guesstimate*.

Maura: Yeah. It's true. I guess we don't need to estimate as much as we used to about some things when we can just look up the answers. But once in a while there are situations where you might just have to use your brain and make a guesstimate.

Andrew: That's right. You never know when you're going to be away from your wifi.

Maura: OK, so let's look at the last expression, which is *your best guess*.

Andrew: OK. *Your best guess*. Now, what does this mean?

Maura: Well, it's a kind of guess, but you do have some information, there's some thought behind it because it's your best. So you didn't just guess really fast without thinking. You thought about it. You used whatever kind of knowledge or information you might have had, and you tried to guess the most accurately that you could.

Andrew: Right. So you're using all your brainpower, all your resources to put forward the best guess that you possibly can.

Maura: Right it's when obviously the person doesn't know the number, but they can still try to make a guess and do the best that they can.

Andrew: Exactly. So should we jump to some examples with this expression?

Maura: I would say that's a good idea.

Andrew: OK.

Maura: Oh wow. It feels so good to be out of the city and breathing the fresh air out here in the country.

Andrew: Yeah, it's great. I just love hiking. Getting out here, back to nature.

Maura: Yeah. It's so much cooler with the shade from the trees. And these trees are so huge!

Andrew: Yeah. How old do you think some of these trees are? They're pretty massive.

Maura: Oh man. I don't know. What would be your best guess?

Andrew: Yeah. I'm not sure either, but I'd say they'd have to be at least 100 to 150 years old.

Maura: Yeah. I would say even more than that. They're gorgeous.

Andrew: Hey. Look over there. There's a fallen tree. We could count the tree rings if you want. We could find the answer out.

Maura: Well, you start counting and I'll be back in an hour.

Andrew: OK.

Maura: I guess we'll never know.

Maura: In that example, we heard from two friends who were hiking in the outdoors. They were commenting on the trees and how beautiful they were and how old they were. They didn't know how old the trees were, but the one friend gave his best guess and he said maybe they were 100 to 150 years old. He probably used some knowledge, like, he looked at the tree and saw that it was quite big, so he thought it might be a bit older. But he didn't have any more knowledge, so he used his best guess, but a tree expert would definitely know more.

Andrew: Exactly. An arborist. Is that what you call a tree expert?

Maura: Something like that. That sounds good.

Andrew: Yeah? All right. Let's give another example using *your best guess*.

Maura: Hey, guess what? I won a hundred bucks this weekend.

Andrew: No way! How did you do that? That's crazy.

Maura: Well, I went to my friends' **stag and doe**. And you know how they have those little contests that you can participate in? Well, they had a big jar of gumballs and you had to guess the number of gumballs in the jar.

Andrew: And you guessed correctly? How did you do that?

Maura: Well I didn't get it exactly right, but I got pretty close. I just counted a few and then did a little bit of estimation. So I just really wrote down my best guess and luckily enough, I was only, like I said, about five or ten away from the exact number.

Andrew: Very good. Very impressive. You have good guessing abilities.

Maura: Now I just gotta figure how **to blow** this 100 bucks.

Andrew: I don't think it'll be too hard. You'll figure something out.

Andrew: In that example, we heard from a woman who had just won \$100 at **a stag and doe** party, because she was able to guess, to a very close degree, the number of gumballs in a bowl. And this is a type of game that sometimes people play. Especially you see this game, I think, at, like, a child's school fair or something. Kids like to do this. And, yeah, so she was able to correctly guess the number of gumballs and as a result won \$100.

Maura: That's right. And it was at **a stag and doe**, which is not a kind of party that happens everywhere, but it happens in some parts of the US, and it happens where I'm from, in Ontario. It's a kind of party that a bride and a groom have before their wedding to raise money for the wedding. But Andrew, where you're from, this doesn't really happen, does it?

Andrew: No. I'm from the West Coast of Canada, British Columbia. And yeah, we don't really have **a stag and doe** party culture out there. So, yeah, this is interesting, this episode, because this is twice that differences between western Canada and Ontario have popped up. Yeah.

Maura: Mmhmm. We're so alike, yet different in some ways.

Andrew: That's right, I suppose. Yeah.

Maura: OK. So let's go back over the expressions that we used today.

Andrew: Sure. So our first expression was **a ballpark figure**.

Maura: That's right. And then the next expression was *a guesstimate*.

Andrew: And then we ended with *your best guess*.

- Maura: So remember, all these expression can be used when you are estimating or guessing the number or value or quantity of something.
- Andrew: That's right. So next time you are in a situation where you gotta make a guess, give it your best guess and use one of these expressions.
- Maura: Right. So, don't forget also to go to our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And become a member. Because you'll only start learning more from these episodes and your money goes to supporting these episodes, the Culips Podcast.
- Andrew: That's right. And also find us on Facebook and Twitter. Send us your comments and feedback because we really enjoy hearing what you think.
- Maura: OK. That's it for us this time. We'll talk to you again soon. Bye!
- Andrew: Bye bye.

Detailed Explanation

Yuppers

Yuppers is an alternative way to say yes. It is a very casual and cute-sounding way to agree with someone or something. **Yuppers** is a variation of the word *yup*.

In this episode, Maura says **yuppers** to agree with a statement that Andrew makes.

Yuppers is a very relaxed expression, and is not appropriate to use in formal situations. However, it is often used on the Internet and in text messages. Sometimes you might see this word spelt with a Z instead of an S. Since this is a slang expression, there is no right or wrong way to spell it. Both **yuppers** and **yupperz** are correct.

Here are a couple more examples with **yuppers**:

Randal: Do you have any plans for the long weekend?

Betty: **Yuppers**, I sure do. I'm going camping with my cousins.

Randal: Oh cool. Have fun!

Anna: Hey, do you know what Ted's phone number is? I need to ask him something but I don't have his contact info.

Sara: **Yuppers**, one second. Let me check my phone. OK, it's 555-5555.

Anna: Thanks!

Full blast

When something is turned on to **full blast**, it means it is at its maximum strength and intensity. This expression is usually used to talk about heaters, air conditioners, and entertainment systems (stereos, radios, TVs, etc.). If a radio is turned on **full blast** then it is playing music very loudly. If an air conditioner is turned on **full blast** then it is blowing out a strong stream of cold air.

In this episode, Andrew uses the expression **full blast** to talk about the weather. He mentions that the weather is on **full blast**. This means that there has been severely hot weather recently. When something is on **full blast** it is operating at maximum strength.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Gordon: I was studying at the library the other day and some jerk was watching TV on his laptop with the volume cranked up to **full blast**. I couldn't believe it!

Ron: Really? That's really frustrating.

Gordon: Yeah. I couldn't concentrate at all and ended up just going home to study.

Evelyn: Can you turn the radio up a bit? I can't hear it very well.

Rex: You're joking, right? It's already on **full blast**.

Evelyn: Are you serious? I really can't hear it at all.

Rex: Maybe you should think about making a doctor's appointment to get your ears checked out.

Evelyn: Yeah, that's not a bad idea.

A ballpark figure

Maura and Andrew talk about the expression **a ballpark figure** at length in this episode. They explain that **a ballpark figure** is another way of saying an estimate. The origins of this expression are unknown, but there are many different theories of how **a ballpark figure** came to mean an estimate.

Maura and Andrew discuss one possible explanation in this episode. Baseball announcers often tell their listeners/viewers how many people are in attendance at the baseball stadium (also known as a ballpark) during each broadcast. Since the announcer usually doesn't know the exact number of people in attendance, he usually estimates the number. This figure of how many people are in the ballpark could be how this expression came into use.

Another theory suggests that the expression may be related to how baseball is played. When a baseball player hits the ball and the ball lands within the ballpark, the ball can be easily chased down by the opposing team. A ball that is "in the ballpark" is close to where the action of the game takes place. So, we can think of **a ballpark figure** as an estimate that is close to being accurate.

There is one more possible explanation for how this expression came to be used, and it doesn't relate directly to baseball! NASA, the space agency in the USA, may have used the term *ballpark* to describe the size of the acceptable landing zone for a spacecraft or satellite returning to Earth from outer space. If a spacecraft landed within the "ballpark," then it landed close to where NASA scientists estimated it would land. It is possible that the expression **a ballpark figure** evolved from this origin.

There are so many origin stories surrounding this expression that it is hard to determine which one is the truth. It could be that all of them may partially be responsible for explaining how the expression **a ballpark figure** came to be used to mean an estimate.

On the spur of the moment

Something that happens unexpectedly, suddenly, and without any planning happens **on the spur of the moment**. This expression is used to describe both actions and decisions. For example, if you decided **on the spur of the moment** to order a pizza for dinner, then you made that choice without any previous planning or forethought.

In this episode, Andrew describes the expression *a ballpark figure* by telling us that this type of estimate is often made **on the spur of the moment**. This means that the estimate is made on the spot, without any previous planning or calculations.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Allen: How long have you lived in Chicago?

Ivan: Nearly 15 years now.

Allen: Cool. Why did you move here in the first place?

Ivan: You know, it's really funny. I had some vacation time coming up at work and I wasn't sure where I wanted to go. **On the spur of the moment**, I decided to visit Chicago and fell in love with the city. I moved here shortly after.

Allen: Wow, that's so cool!

Dean: Wow, I love your sweater.

Julie: Really? I decided to buy it **on the spur of the moment** when I passed the store while walking home from work last night.

Dean: It looks amazing. You made the right choice.

Julie: Awesome, thanks!

In the market for something

When you are **in the market for something**, it means that you are interested in buying that thing. For example, if you are **in the market for** a new house, you are interested in buying a new house.

In this episode, we hear an example where Bill's friend asks him if he is **in the market for** a used car. In other words, Bill's friend is curious about whether Bill is interested in purchasing a used car.

If you're planning to buy something, then you are **in the market for** that thing.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Garrett: I'm **in the market for** a new laptop. I don't know anything about computers though. Where should I buy one?

Frieda: I'd recommend looking online. Usually you can get a good deal if you shop on the Internet.

Garrett: OK, I'll take a look tomorrow. Thanks!

Yvonne: Last week Mike and I drove out to the outlet mall that's about an hour outside of town. Have you ever been there?

Benny: Nope. I've heard good things though.

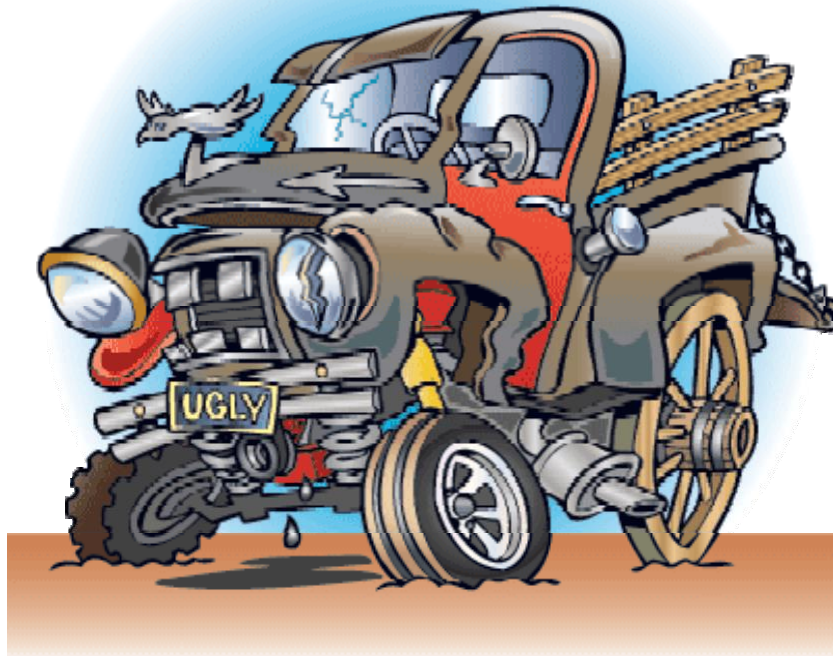
Yvonne: Well, next time you're **in the market for** new boots, I recommend that you drive out there. Mike got a pair of new boots for 50% off.

Benny: Great advice. Thanks!

A beater

A beater is an old car that doesn't work very well, looks ugly, and is unreliable. We call these cars **beaters** because they have been used heavily and are now beat-up. In the UK, these old and beat-up cars are called bangers.

In this episode, Andrew says that **beaters** are cheap, and can be bought for around \$1000. **Beaters** are sold at such a low price because they look unattractive and usually have mechanical problems.



Here are a couple more examples with **a beater**:

Shelia: Wow, that's a beautiful new car! When did you buy it?

Brooke: Thanks! Just last week. My old **beater** finally died so I went down to the car lot and picked up this new car.

Sheila: I love it. You'll have to take me for a spin sometime.

Brooke: Absolutely.

Wade: My first car was **a beater** that my uncle gave to me when I was 17. It looked awful, but it somehow managed to last me for almost 10 years.

Kara: That's so funny. My first car was also **a beater**. I saved \$500 dollars from my part-time job and then bought it. I wasn't so lucky though; it didn't even make it 6 months before it died on me.

Happening

In one of the dialogue examples in this episode, two friends discuss a party that was quite **happening**. When we describe an event or a place that is hip, cool, exciting, and fun, we can say that it is **happening**.

This expression originated in the USA in the 1960s. American hippies used to call parties and unplanned gatherings of people happenings. It is likely that this slang expression then evolved to be used as an adjective to describe any cool and exciting place or event.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Grif: I wish Jamie were here. This party is so **happening**; she would be having the best time.

Shane: Yeah, it's too bad she has to work tonight. You're right. She would be having a lot of fun right now.

Christina: Did you go to the club last night? How was it?

Dustin: Not very **happening**, actually.

Christina: Oh really?

Dustin: Yeah. For some reason it was empty. It wasn't very fun, so I didn't stay long.

Christina: Aw, that's too bad.

An educated guess

An educated guess is a guess that is likely to be fairly accurate because it is made based on knowledge and experience. As the expression suggests, when you make **an educated guess**, you use your education or what you have learned in your life to help inform your guess.

In this episode, Maura says that the expressions **an educated guess** and *an estimate* are very similar. When you make **an educated guess** or an estimate, you use what you have learned in life to help you make the most accurate prediction possible.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Eddie: How tall is the CN Tower?

Jan: I have no idea.

Eddie: Oh come on. You're an architect. Give me **an educated guess** at least.

Jan: Well, the Kingdom Tower that is under construction in Saudi Arabia right now is going to be 1 km high. That is significantly taller than the CN Tower, so probably the CN Tower is around 500 to 600 metres tall.

Eddie: Let me look it up on Wikipedia.

Jan: OK.

Eddie: Yeah. You're really close. The CN Tower is 553 metres tall.

Isabel: I was watching the news last night and I heard that the university is going to cut funding to the science department.

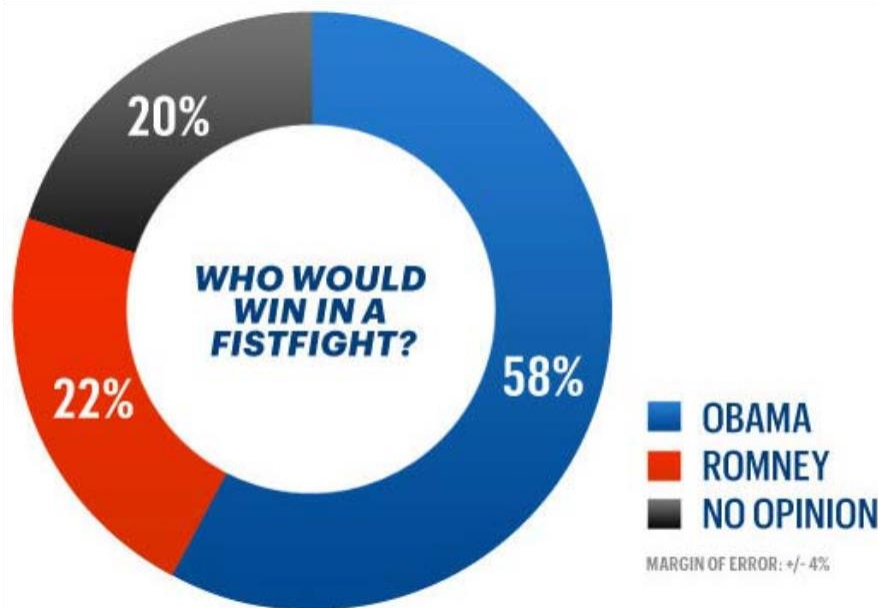
Corey: That's awful.

Isabel: Yeah. They interviewed a science professor and he said without the proper research funding, the best the department can do is make **educated guesses** about issues like climate change.

A margin of error

A margin of error is the amount that you acknowledge may be inaccurate when you make an estimate, calculation, or survey. **A margin of error** is usually expressed in a percentage.

Let's take a look at a silly example to explain this further. During the last presidential election in the USA, a popular news organization performed a survey. They asked citizens which candidate, Barack Obama or Mitt Romney, would win if they had to face each other in a fist fight. Here are the results of the survey:



Of all the people asked, 58% said Obama would win, 22% said Romney would win, and 20% had no opinion. **The margin of error** for the results of this poll is +/- 4%. This means that the news organization acknowledges that these numbers might not be totally accurate. When you interpret them, the news organization wants you to realize that each number reported may actually be 4% higher or 4% lower than is reported in the graphic.

Here are a couple more examples with **a margin of error**:

Ben: Did you see the new jobs report that came out this morning? It looks like Canada gained 1 million jobs this month.

Ethan: I did, but I'm going to remain sceptical. Did you see **the margin of error** that was reported? It was huge, +/- 20%. I have a feeling that those numbers are highly inaccurate.

Ben: Oh, I didn't catch that. I'll have to take another look.

Colleen: Did you see the survey in this week's school newspaper? Students were asked about their on-campus experience.

Nyla: Yeah, I did.

Colleen: The majority of students said that there needs to be more affordable housing options on campus.

Nyla: And **the margin of error** reported was really low, too. Something like only 2% I think. So we have to assume that it's a pretty accurate survey.

Colleen: Definitely. I hope this encourages the university to start offering affordable housing on campus.

A cut of something

In one of the dialogue examples in this episode, two friends discuss the price of a painting. If the painting turns out to be valuable and can be sold for a lot of money, one friend asks for **a cut** of the profit.

A cut of something is a share or a portion of something. Usually we use this expression when we talk about money or financial matters.



The image above illustrates the idea of giving someone **a cut** of money. Of course no one would actually cut money in half with scissors to share with others, but we can think of someone symbolically dividing money this way and giving each person their share or **cut**.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Francisco: Mary and I are moving to Toronto.

Hue: Oh, I'm sad to hear that. We're going to miss you guys.

Francisco: I know. You moved recently too, do you have a real estate agent you can recommend?

Hue: We actually sold our house by ourselves. A real estate agent takes a big **cut** of what you earn from selling your house, so we decided to do it on our own.

Francisco: Oh really?

Hue: Yeah, but it ended up being a lot of work. If you don't have the time, then I suggest using a real estate agent.

Francisco: Seems like I'll have to think about this a bit. Thanks for the advice.

Hue: No problem.

Dylan: Hey, my neighbour asked me to paint her fence. She said she'd give me \$200 to do it. If you help me out, I think we could finish in an afternoon. Want to do it?

Kim: Sure, as long as you give me **a cut** of the money.

Dylan: Oh yeah, of course. I'll split it with you 50–50.

Kim: Sure, I'm in.

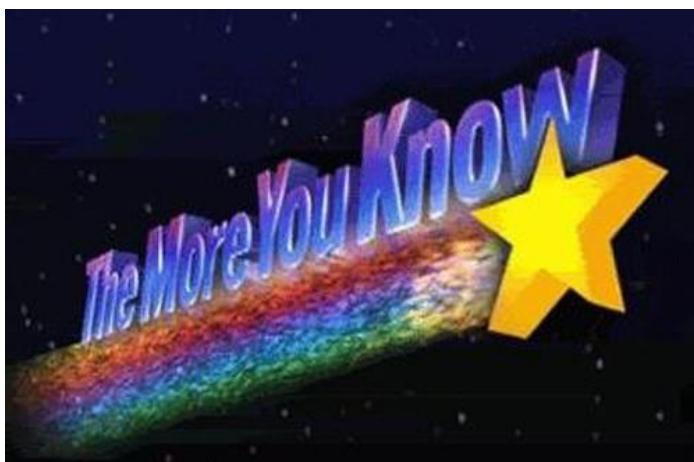
The more you know

In one of the dialogue examples in this episode, a man says “**the more you know**” after learning about how many people live in Bogota. This is reference to a series of public service announcements (also known as PSAs) that air on the American TV channel NBC.

PSAs are short commercials (30 seconds to 1 minute) that attempt to change the general public’s attitude about an issue. Usually they are narrated by a celebrity.

The More You Know PSA campaign started in 1989 and the PSAs are still produced and aired today. The topics covered by the More You Know campaign include education, diversity, and the environment.

Since the aim of the More You Know commercials is to sway public opinion and educate people about important issues, the expression **the more you know** is sometimes said after someone learns something new, just like the man in this episode’s example did.



If you want to learn more about the More You Know PSAs, you can visit their website at <http://www.themoreyouknow.com>.

Here is an example with **the more you know** used as an expression:

Harry: Did you know the province of Newfoundland wasn’t officially a part of Canada until 1949?

Justin: Wow, I had no idea.

Harry: Yeah, **the more you know**, hey?

Justin: Totally.

A stag and doe

In this episode, Andrew and Maura have a conversation about **stag and doe** parties. A **stag and doe** is a special party that acts as a fundraiser to help an engaged couple pay for their wedding.

These parties are called many different things depending on what area of the world you live in. In the UK, they're called stag and hens. In the USA, they're called stag and drags. In some parts of Canada they're called shags or wedding socials. No matter what the name of the party is, however, the purpose remains the same: to raise money for a soon-to-be married couple.

To help contribute money to the engaged couple, guests often buy a ticket to a **stag and doe**. Sometimes games are played that can help make money to put towards the cost of the wedding.

Andrew and Maura talk about some differences in Canadian culture in this episode. Andrew mentions that **stag and does** do not frequently occur in western Canada. Maura, however, informs us that they are quite common in central Canada.

The terms *stag* and *doe* are what we call adult deer. A stag is an adult male deer and a doe is an adult female deer. So a **stag and doe** party takes its name from the terms we use to refer to adult deer.

Here is an example with the expression **a stag and doe**:

Donna: I want to throw a **stag and doe** for Jenny and Sam. Will you help me plan it?

Adam: Wow, that is going to be a lot of work. I don't know....

Donna: I know, but it'll be so much fun and it will really help Jenny and Sam out.

Adam: You're right. OK, I'm down. I'll help you out.

To blow money

When you **blow** money, it means that you spend money quickly and foolishly. If someone **blows** money, then they have wasted that money by spending it on unimportant things.

In one of the dialogue examples in this episode, a woman has just won a \$100 prize. After winning, she wonders how she can **blow** the money. Since she did not have to work for the money, she feels like she can have fun with it by **blowing** it instead of using it responsibly or saving it.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Lisa: My ex-boyfriend was the worst. At first he seemed really sweet and kind, but then I found out that he was stealing from me and **blowing** all my money at the casino. He had a horrible gambling addiction.

Shawn: Oh wow. I'm sorry to hear that.

Lisa: Yeah. I'm glad he is out of my life now. I'm in a much happier place.

Peter: Hey, I'm going to go see a movie tomorrow night. You want to come?

Elizabeth: I don't think I can, sorry. I already **blew** all my spending money this week.

Peter: Oh really? Well, I can buy your ticket. I don't mind.

Elizabeth: Are you serious? OK, well then I'll go for sure.

Peter: Awesome. See you tomorrow.

Elizabeth: OK, great! Thanks!

Quiz

1. What is an old and unreliable car called?

- a) a bruiser
- b) a buster
- c) a braker
- d) a beater

2. Which object cannot operate at full blast?

- a) a TV
- b) a bicycle helmet
- c) an air conditioner
- d) a guitar amplifier

3. Which adjective is used to describe hip parties?

- a) happening
- b) becoming
- c) getting
- d) running

4. Fill in the blank.

Son: Can I borrow \$10?

Mom: Only if you promise not to _____ it at the arcade.

Son: Yeah, I promise. I'm going to use it to buy lunch at school this week.

- a) throw
- b) run
- c) blow
- d) wipe

5. What is a PSA?

- a) a popcorn salt allergy
- b) a protected savings account
- c) a person selling animals
- d) a public service announcement

6. Which expression is a blended word?

- a) an educated guess
- b) your best guess
- c) a ballpark figure
- d) a guesstimate

7. What does on the spur of the moment mean?

- a) spontaneous
- b) thoughtful
- c) planned
- d) determined

8. If you're in the market for something, what do you want to do?

- a) buy something
- b) sell something
- c) build something
- d) give something away

9. Stag and doe parties have different names in different areas of the world. Which of the following is NOT an alternative name for a stag and doe?

- a) a stag and hen
- b) a stallion and mare
- c) a stag and drag
- d) a wedding social

Answers:

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