

## Catch Word #176 – Dish it!

### Episode description

We all like to gossip sometimes. So come join Andrew and Morag for this Catch Word episode to learn the dirt and juicy expressions related to gossip.

### Fun fact

According to evolutionary psychology, gossip is more than idle talk. It is how we bond with others and considered to be an evolved social skill! It can even help to establish social norms and protect others from bad behaviour.

### Expressions included in the learning materials

- The dirt
- To dish/to dish out
- Juicy
- Aka
- Behind someone's back



## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

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Andrew: Hey everybody. It's Andrew.

Morag: And it's Morag.

Andrew: And we're back with another Culips episode.

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Andrew: Hey Morag. How's it going?

Morag: Hey Andrew. I'm doing very well today, thank you. And you?

Andrew: I'm good. I'm good.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: Good as always, thank you. I've got a quick question for you.

Morag: OK. Shoot.

Andrew: Are you a Halloween fan?

Morag: I'm a pretty big Halloween fan actually. It's my second favourite holiday.

Andrew: Ooh, it's actually, I would say, my first favourite holiday.

Morag: Ooh.

Andrew: Or **aka** my favourite holiday.

Morag: Well, I'm one of those people who actually really loves Christmas.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Morag: So, you know, one of those annoying people. So, um, that's number one. But Halloween is so much fun. I love it. It's the best weather. It's about, like, candy and having a party, getting dressed up. It's just ... It's the best.

Andrew: We should get started with today's show.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: And we're going to do a Catch Word episode. And so in a Catch Word episode, we talk about two related expressions, and we explain these expressions, define them, give you some usage examples. So by the end of the show, you should be able to incorporate them into your English-speaking life.

The two expressions that we will look at today are all about personal information and sharing personal information. And this could be information about yourself or other people, so rumours, gossip, this sort of thing.

Today's first expression is **the dirt**. OK? **The dirt**. And I'm not talking about **the dirt** that's in our gardens that we use for growing things. I'm talking about **the dirt** that is shocking or very personal information.

Morag: Yeah, it can also be gossip, right? It's related to things that people might say about you.

Andrew: Yeah, so **the dirt** is gossip or shocking information about someone or about something. It's kind of scandalous. It's scandalous information. And I don't know about you, but in my opinion, I hear this expression used a lot when people are talking about celebrity scandals or celebrity gossip.

Morag: I definitely experience that as well, although I think I hear it the most when say a friend of mine is asking how a date went.

Andrew: Ooh yeah. That's another good usage.

Morag: They'll say, "Ooh, give me **the dirt**. So tell me all about that thing that happened to you."

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: All the details.

Morag: Mmhmm, yeah, yeah.

Andrew: Let's get to some examples with **the dirt**.

Janet: I'm really excited for my vacation next week.

Co-worker: Yeah, you're gonna have the best time, Janet. Do you have any special plans?

Janet: Not really. I'm gonna kick back on the beach, relax, just take it easy. I know it's kind of lame, but when I'm on vacation, I love to read all of the gossip rags.

Co-worker: Oh yeah? Really? Well, you're gonna have to fill me in on all **the latest dirt** when you come back.

Janet: Oh, totally.

Morag: So in this example, a lady named Janet talks about her vacation plans. She says she's just going to relax on a beach and read gossip rags. So, you know, those magazines that talk about celebrity gossip and their lives, and all the rumours and scandals that they might be involved in. So Janet's co-worker asks her to fill him in on all **the latest dirt**. He wants to know about all of the celebrity gossip that Janet is gonna read about. So in this example, **the dirt** means celebrity gossip.

Andrew: Nice, yeah. Those gossip rags, I always look at them when I'm in the checkout line at the grocery store.

Morag: They're pretty funny. I haven't read one in a long time, but my mom used to buy them.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Morag: So for a couple of years there, I knew all **the dirt** about all the celebrities.

Andrew: Yeah, they're a laugh for sure.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: How 'bout we do one more example with **the dirt**?

Morag: All right.

Friend 1:	Can you believe it's already been 10 years since we graduated from high school?
Friend 2:	I know, right? Time really flies, but it's gonna be so great to catch up with everyone next month at the reunion.
Friend 1:	I can't wait to get caught up with all <b>the latest dirt</b> , you know? Like who married who, who's a millionaire, who's got three kids.
Friend 2:	Yeah, me too. Can't wait.

Andrew: In this example, two friends are talking about their upcoming high school reunion, and both of them can't wait to learn about all their classmates' **dirt**. So in other words, they're excited to see their old friends, and learn about their personal lives and what happened to everyone since they graduated from high school. And specifically, they wanna know the shocking information, like who's rich, who married other classmates, and who has a lot of children. This is **the dirt** that they're interested in.

Morag: I think that's some pretty interesting **dirt**, Andrew, you know? How do peoples' lives turn out?

Andrew: Yeah, nothing like a shocking story from an old high school classmate.

So let's get to our next expression, and this one is a verb. OK? So our first one was a noun, **the dirt**. And our second expression is a verb, and it is **to dish** or **to dish out**. Kind of a straightforward regular verb—**to dish**—and also the phrase-over form—**to dish out**. And Morag, what does it mean, this verb, **to dish**?

Morag: Well, **to dish** is the action of telling someone a rumour or something shocking or private information. So it's to tell someone **the dirt**, basically.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. When you are telling somebody something private or shocking, you're **dishing** it. You're **dishing** that thing. So when you disclose or you discuss a rumour about someone's personal life, you're kind of telling a secret almost. This is when you are **dishing** or **dishing out**.

Morag: Yeah, it can definitely have the connotation of talking about somebody or speaking **behind their back**, or that sort of thing.

Andrew: Mmhmm, yeah. It's not necessarily a negative verb, but when I think about somebody **dishing out** some personal information, I don't really think positively about this word. It's got a little bit of a negative connotation.

Morag: I think gossip in general is not the most polite activity.

Andrew: Yeah, some of my friends are not very reserved, and they will **dish out** all the personal details about their lives. They won't share details about other peoples' lives, but about their life. And I always find that very refreshing. I like people that are very honest about themselves. So it can go kind of two ways.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Morag: If you're talking about you, then it can be nice. But if you're **dishing out** details about other peoples' lives, other peoples' private lives, then yeah, it's no good.

Morag: Hmm. Yeah, I agree with you, Andrew. Should we, uh, pop into an example here?

Andrew: Yeah, let's do it.

Co-worker 1: I just got back from a meeting with HR. You're never gonna believe what I heard.

Co-worker 2: Ooh, **dish** it!

Co-worker 1: OK. Well, apparently, Dan, the VP of sales, he's gonna be fired.

Co-worker 2: Oh my God! Really?

Co-worker 1: Yeah, big scandal, right? He got caught submitting false expense claims or something, and I guess he tried to cheat the company out of thousands of dollars.

Co-worker 2: Wow, I can't believe it. He always seemed like such a nice guy.

Andrew: In this example, two co-workers are talking about the vice president of sales at their company. His name is Dan, and one of the co-workers heard some **juicy** gossip about Dan and just couldn't help **dishing** it out. So in other words, he told other people at the office about the scandal that Dan's involved in about submitting false expense claims. And this occurs when you lie about how much you spend on business expenses, like hotel stays or plane tickets and business dinners.

OK, so when you share a piece of gossip with someone else, you **dish** it. You **dish** that gossip. And this is exactly what happened in this example. OK, let's do one more example.

Student 1: So first week of school is done. What do you think? Do you like all our profs? What about our cohort?

Student 2: Oh man, I've got a lot to share, but we can't talk now. I have to run off to work. My shift starts in 30 minutes.

Student 1: Oh really? OK. Um, that's fine.

Student 2: But I'll call you up tomorrow, and we can **dish**.

Student 1: Ooh, yeah. That's perfect. OK, I'll talk to you then.

Morag: In this example, two students are talking about their first week of university. They want to know each other's opinions about their professors and the classmates that they have. But they don't have enough time to chat because one of them has to go to work.

But before she leaves for work, she says that she'll call up her friend tomorrow so that they can **dish**. They can share their true feelings and opinions about their classes and professors and classmates. It's kind of like they'll be talking **behind their professors' and classmates' backs**, so they can share their true opinions. And also just, you know, talking as friends.

Andrew: Mmhmm, I don't know about where you went to grad school, but in my grad school, cohort people loved **to dish** about professors **behind their backs**.

Morag: Oh yeah. I actually think that I might have been someone that people **dished** about.

Andrew: Yeah, I'm sure people **dished** about me as well.

Morag: Yeah. Yeah, definitely about professors too.

Andrew: Yeah, professors.

Morag: When it's a really, really small community, people tend **to dish out** the gossip.

Andrew: The scandalous lives of professors—hot topic, all the time.

Morag: Oh yeah.

Andrew: Anyways, Morag, I think that brings us to the end of today's Catch Word episode. Again, just to quickly recap, we talked about two expressions that are related to sharing or telling personal information about you or about other people.

And the first one was **the dirt**. The second one was **to dish** or **to dish out**. And if you're a Culips member, check out the learning materials because we will describe some of the different nuances in meaning between **to dish** and **to dish out**.

If you're not a Culips member, I recommend visiting our website, Culips.com—that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com—to learn more about becoming a member. It's the best way to study with us, and if you're serious about improving your English, it can really help you out.

So that's it for us today. Until next time, bye everybody.

Morag: Bye.



## Detailed Explanations

### The dirt

Our first key expression in this episode is **the dirt**. As Andrew and Morag explain, **dirt** is a noun that means gossip or scandalous information.

When you talk about **the dirt** on someone, you talk about information about their personal lives that could be considered disgraceful or shocking. If someone is in a stable, romantic relationship, that would not be **dirt**, but if they cheated on their partner, that certainly would be **dirt**. In other words, any gossip or information that could be damaging to someone's reputation is **dirt**, which means that you definitely don't want people to know **your dirt**!

Here are a couple more examples with **the dirt**.

Mary:	Have you met the new guy?
Kevin:	Yeah, I had lunch with him yesterday.
Mary:	Did you find out anything about him? Got any <b>dirt</b> to tell me?
Kevin:	No, he seemed like a nice, normal guy. I doubt he'll be the cause of any <b>juicy</b> office gossip in the future.

Jen:	Did you hear <b>the dirt</b> about Maria?
Joanne:	Tell me!
Jen:	She's pregnant! Apparently, she met some guy at a bar and had a one-night stand. She doesn't even have his phone number.
Joanne:	That's nuts! What is she going to do? Do you know if she's told her parents yet?
Jen:	Rumour has it that they are livid and threatening to kick her out.
Joanne:	I hope she is gonna be OK.
Jen:	Me too.

## To dish /to dish out

The second key expression in this episode is **to dish** or **to dish out**. In its simpler form, the verb **to dish** means to gossip. **To dish out** is the phrasal form of **to dish**. So you can **dish** or you can **dish out** the gossip.

The expression **to dish** is to talk about or to tell stories about someone, especially stories pertaining to their personal lives. If you are sharing private information about another person, you are **dishing**.

If you're talking about **the dirt** on someone or gossiping, then you are **dishing out the dirt**. In other words, **to dish out** means to give away the gossip. You can also use **to dish out** to talk about anything that you give to someone, whether it's an object, feeling, or information. For instance, if your friend is sad and you give them advice, you can say, "I **dished out** advice." In other words, **to dish out** can be used to refer to positive information that you share, not just negative information. So you can **dish out** food, gifts, punishment, or compassion.

Here are a couple more examples with **to dish/to dish out**.

Tim:	Hey Angela. I heard you saw something scandalous at the staff party last week.
Angela:	You heard correctly, but I'm not going to tell you what it was.
Tim:	Oh, come on! <b>Dish!</b>
Angela:	No. I don't gossip. You'll have to ask someone else.

Robert:	Oh, you're home early. Did your date go well?
Eva:	It was OK. The guy kind of made me nervous though.
Robert:	Why? Was he aggressive or something?
Eva:	Quite the opposite. He was so nice that it was creepy. He kept <b>dishing out</b> compliments.
Robert:	That sounds nice!
Eva:	Not if it happens once every minute. I can only say "thank you" so many times without feeling uncomfortable.

## Juicy

Aside from its most common meaning, full of juice, **juicy** is an adjective signifying sensational or exciting. It can be used to describe information that is interesting because it is shocking or personal. People often use **juicy** in this way when they are talking about gossip.

In this episode, Andrew uses **juicy** to describe gossip about an employee cheating their company out of thousands of dollars by submitting false expense claims. News about someone stealing a lot of money from a company is **juicy** because it is scandalous, exciting, shocking, and revealing.

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

Leah:	Did you hear the neighbours last night?
Sean:	No, what's going on?
Leah:	They had a huge fight, and I could hear everything they were saying. Apparently, the wife had an affair with her husband's brother!
Sean:	Wow, that's some <b>juicy</b> gossip!

Michelle:	Nicole, you will never believe what happened to Hayden.
Nicole:	What?
Michelle:	She got fired for stealing!
Nicole:	Whoa! I never would have pegged her for a thief. She's always so generous and kind. She seems like the type to tattle, not to take.
Michelle:	I haven't even told you the really <b>juicy</b> part. When the police went to arrest her, Jonas from accounting was taking a shower. They've been sleeping together and stealing together!

## Aka

**Aka** is an abbreviation of *also known as*. This abbreviation has two uses: to indicate an alternative name or to indicate an alternative explanation.

The official use of **aka** is to indicate an alternative name that someone is called. For example, think of Elvis Presley, a famous rock and roll musician from the 1950s and 1960s. Although everyone knew his real name, Elvis was also called “the King.” So if you read about Elvis, you might see him introduced like this: Elvis Presley **aka** “the King.” You can also use **aka** to indicate someone’s birth name (eg, Lady Gaga **aka** Stefani Germanotta) or to introduce someone’s nickname (eg, Matt **aka** “Ziggy”).

In casual conversation, **aka** is often used before an explanation or alternative description. Strictly speaking, when used in conversation, **aka** functions as a synonym for *that is* or *in other words*, rather than *also known as*.

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

Zack:	You were at the party a couple nights ago, right? My brother Mike was there! Did you like him?
Heather:	I didn’t meet anyone named Mike. I did, however, meet a cool guy there called JM. We talked about horror movies for a while, and even ended up exchanging phone numbers for a date.
Zack:	That dude you exchanged numbers with was my brother Jean-Michel <b>aka</b> Mike <b>aka</b> JM.
Heather:	OK. So not only do I know your brother, I have a crush on him.

Tina:	Hey Matt. How was the test last week?
Matt:	Fine.
Tina:	Whoa! Why so tight-lipped? Really, how did it go?
Matt:	Like I said, it was fine, or <b>aka</b> I don’t want to talk about it.
Tina:	Sorry I asked.

## Behind someone's back

If someone has their back turned, they cannot see what is happening or going on behind them. So when you do something **behind someone's back**, you do something without their knowledge, and usually without them being physically present.

In this episode, Andrew and Morag talk a lot about speaking **behind people's back** because that's often how people **dish**. Most **dirt** is shared **behind someone's back**. In other words, when other people share information about someone else's personal life, generally, the person being talked about is not there.

Talking isn't the only thing that can be done **behind someone's back**. You can use the expression **behind someone's back** when referring to any action or activity that is done in secret. If you engage in an activity without someone's knowledge, you can say you're doing that activity **behind their back**.

Here are a couple more examples with **behind someone's back**:

Jacob:	Did you end up going to that party last weekend?
Meredith:	I did end up going. Dave asked me not to go, but I went anyways.
Jacob:	Does he know?
Meredith:	No, I did it <b>behind his back</b> . He was being very unreasonable about the whole thing. I didn't want to get into an argument about it, so I just said nothing and went anyways.
Jacob:	I hope he doesn't find out!

Dominic:	How are the preparations for Josie's surprise party going?
Suzy:	Almost all the reservations are made, and I've sent out the invitations. I just feel weird about it, you know?
Dominic:	Why do you feel weird about planning a surprise party?
Suzy:	It's so strange to go <b>behind Josie's back</b> . She keeps asking if we're gonna do anything, and I keep lying.
Dominic:	Don't feel bad! You're planning a surprise party. The whole idea is that she doesn't know about it.
Suzy:	I know. You're right.

## Quiz

1. Juicy gossip is particularly \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) shocking
- b) false
- c) funny
- d) boring

2. What does *aka* stand for?

- a) alternative kept aside
- b) already kept aside
- c) after knowing anything
- d) also known as

3. Generally, the dirt is what type of information?

- a) financial
- b) scandalous
- c) detailed
- d) official

4. To do something behind someone's back is to do something without their \_\_\_\_\_.

- a) comfort
- b) guidance
- c) knowledge
- d) help

5. What is another word for the activity that you do when you dish?

- a) lie
- b) gossip
- c) confess
- d) eat

## Quiz Answers

1. a   2. d   3. b   4. c   5. b

### Episode credits

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