

Catch Word #181 – Peanuts!

Episode description

Being able to talk naturally and idiomatically about money is a useful skill. In today's Catch Word episode, we explain a couple useful terms for talking about small amounts of money: peanuts and chump change.

Fun fact

Did you know that peanuts aren't actually nuts? Despite having the word "nut" in their name, a peanut is a type of pea that grows underground. While this might be surprising, it's not rare. Many of the foods referred to as nuts in English aren't technically nuts, such as almonds, pistachios, cashews, horse chestnuts, and pine nuts.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- Peanuts
- Chump change
- To be in the same boat [as someone]
- Pretty much
- To add up



Transcript

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.

Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Morag: And my name is Morag.

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

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Morag: Hey, Andrew. What's up?

Andrew: Oh, not much. Just the same old, same old. How're you doin', Morag?

Morag: I'm doing all right.

Andrew: That's great.

Morag: Nothing super interesting has happened to me either.

Andrew: Hmm, sounds like we're **in the same boat**.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: Well, I suggest then that we get started with today's episode. Today we're going to a Catch Word episode. And in Catch Word episodes, we define and describe and teach you how to use a couple of interesting slang expressions. And today our expressions are all about money.

Morag: Mmhmm, particularly smaller amounts of money.

Andrew: Yeah, the type of money that people don't dream about having.

Morag: It might be more the type of money that you already have.

Andrew: Too true.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: So just before we get started, I want to let all of you listeners out there know that we have transcripts and learning materials available for this episode, as well as all of our episodes, actually.

And you can download them by becoming a Culips member, and you can do that on our website, Culips.com. So yeah, check it out. Check out our website.

Morag: I would definitely agree with Andrew, because using the learning materials is honestly the best way to study with us. So I would head on over to Culips.com and learn about becoming a member today.

Andrew: All right, Morag, let's get started. What is our first expression today?

Morag: Our first expression is **peanuts**.

Andrew: **Peanuts**.

Morag: **Peanuts**.

Andrew: **Peanut**, OK. Like the food **peanuts**?

Morag: Yeah, like the food.

Andrew: Yeah, it has the same spelling, same pronunciation, but a different meaning, right?

Morag: Mmhmm, very different.

Andrew: OK, so what does **peanuts** mean?

Morag: Well, **peanuts** means a very small amount of money, like **pretty much** nothing.

Andrew: Mmhmm, yeah, a very, very small amount of money is **peanuts**.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: But the interesting thing about this expression is that it varies depending on the speaker. So if you are a millionaire, \$1,000 might be **peanuts** to you, right? But if you are a student who wins \$1,000 on a scratch ticket, for example, well, then, that \$1,000 would be a lot of money to you. It wouldn't be **peanuts**.

So **peanuts** is a small amount of money, but it depends on the speaker to determine the value of that money.

Morag: Yeah. I think you could think about it as not enough money to do anything useful or interesting with.

Andrew: Hmm.

Morag: Yes, it's very much a personal amount of money. It's **pretty much** nothing.

Andrew: It's **pretty much** nothing to you. So **peanuts** is just a small amount of money that doesn't interest you, that's not exciting to you. But to some people, even **peanuts** is exciting.

Morag: Hey, I will grab any change I see lying around. 10¢? That's great.

Andrew: You're one of those people, are you?

Morag: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew: Hey, nothing wrong with that.

Morag: I mean, it **adds up**.

Andrew: OK, Morag, I think we should give a couple of examples with this expression, **peanuts**.

Morag: Let's go.

Friend 1: How did your job interview go this afternoon?

Friend 2: The interview went well, but in the end I turned down the job offer.

Friend 1: Oh, really? Why?

Friend 2: The salary, to be honest. They wanted to pay me **peanuts**. You know, at this point in my life, I just need to make a little bit more money.

Friend 1: I totally get it.

Morag: In this example, a company offered a man a job, but he turned it down because the salary was too low. In the man's opinion, they wanted to pay him **peanuts**, or just not enough money. Because of this, he ended up telling the company that he couldn't work for them.

Andrew: All right, very good. Let's give one more example with **peanuts**.

Friend: Whoa! Nice car, Chelsea. Is it new?

Chelsea: New to me, yup. I picked it up for **peanuts** at an auction last week.

Friend: That's awesome. I just love a good bargain.

Chelsea: Me too.

Andrew: In this example, a woman named Chelsea tells her friend about a car that she bought last week. Now Chelsea bought this car at an auction. This is a place where you can buy used items by bidding on them.

Often people can buy things for really great prices at an auction, and this was the case with Chelsea. She picked up, or bought, the car for **peanuts**. She got a really great deal on the car. Morag, have you ever been to an auction before?

Morag: Yes, I actually ... I quite like auctions, the whole experience of them. Especially because you can pick up things for **peanuts**, for nothing. Often there will be boxes of miscellany at smaller auctions, and you can just end up picking up mystery gifts and wonderful things, and see what's inside. Super fun.

Andrew: Boxes of miscellany, wow. I like this expression. So just random things, right?

Morag: **Pretty much**, just ... Yeah, random items. Often those sorts of boxes of miscellany end up at auction houses at the end of estate sales and things like that. If people are clearing out whole homes, you'll end up with just a box that gets donated to an auction house, and they'll just ... Yeah, get rid of things.

Andrew: That's really cool. And you know what, Morag? I think we should save talking about auctions for a whole Culips episode, because auctions and auction culture is really fascinating. So stay tuned for a Culips episode about auctions, everyone.

But for now, we should move on to our second expression, and it is **chump change, chump change**. Chump—c-h-u-m-p, change—c-h-a-n-g-e, like coins or small amounts of money, right? **Chump change**.

Morag: **Chump change**.

Andrew: Yeah. This one's a fun one.

Morag: What does, uh ... What does this one mean, Andrew?

Andrew: Well, it actually has the exact same definition as **peanuts**. **Chump change** is just a very small amount of money, an insignificant amount of money.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: And, again, it depends on the speaker, right? To a student, **chump change** might be \$1. But to a billionaire, **chump change** might be as high as \$1,000,000. It just depends on your perspective. But it's always an amount of money that's small to you.

Morag: Mmhmm. Because the word chump is an older slang term for someone who ... That was a real loser. It's money that a fool would think is a lot.

Andrew: Yeah, you'd have to be stupid to think that **chump change** is a lot of money.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: I remember this word chump used to be popular when I was an elementary school student. Kids would make fun of other students by calling them chumps. Like, "Oh that guy, he's such a chump."

Morag: That's great.

Andrew: It's very kind, right?

Morag: It's not that harsh a word, but it's a bit of an older slang term. So it's kind of adorable.

Andrew: So to summarize one more time, **chump change** is just a small or unimportant amount of money. And it's time for examples. We're going to give you two examples with this expression, **chump change**.

Dan: If I was a professional basketball player, ah, I'd totally drive a Lamborghini.

Friend: What? Are you serious, Dan? They're insanely expensive. Like over \$200,000 expensive.

Dan: What's your point? That seems like a lot of money to us, but to a pro athlete that's **chump change**. Come on!

Morag: So in this example, a guy named Dan tells his friend that if he were a pro basketball player, he would buy a brand-new sports car, a Lamborghini. Dan's friend thinks that's ridiculous because Lamborghinis are incredibly expensive.

Morag: But Dan doesn't agree. He thinks that because pro basketball players make so much money, that the \$200,000 price tag is just **chump change** to them. So, in other words, \$200,000 would be a small amount of money to someone who earns millions of dollars a year.

Andrew: I don't know. It still seems like a lot of money to anybody, \$200,000.

Morag: There's just so much you could do with that. You could buy like eight cars if you wanted to.

Andrew: So you would have to have a really high salary for that to be **chump change**.

Morag: Yeah, yeah.

Andrew: All right. Let's do our final example with **chump change**.

Friend 1: Hey, there's a really good concert this weekend. A jazz band all the way from New York City. It's going to be great! You wanna come?

Friend 2: Sounds cool but I don't know. Is it going to be expensive? I'm on a budget.

Friend 1: No! It's totally cool. Tickets are only five bucks.

Friend 2: Five bucks? What? That's nothing.

Friend 1: Yeah! **Chump change**.

Friend 2: OK, cool. Yeah, let's go.

Andrew: In our final example, two friends talk about going to a jazz concert on the weekend. However, one friend doesn't want to go because he's afraid that it will be expensive. After all, he's on a budget, which means he's trying to save money. But his friend tells him not to worry, the ticket price is really low. It's **chump change**. It's only \$5.

Morag: Now this one I agree with.

Andrew: Hmm.

Morag: Five bucks for a show? That's a good deal.

Andrew: That's a good deal. And a jazz band all the way from NYC at that.

Morag: Wow!

Andrew: Well, Morag, I think that's all the time that we have for today. As always, thanks for listening, everyone. If you have any comments, questions, or maybe even a suggestion for a future episode, drop us a line. You can send us a message via our Facebook page, at [Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast](https://www.facebook.com/CulipsPodcast), or you can even email me directly. My address is Andrew@Culips.com.

Morag: Or you can reach us through our website, Culips.com.

Andrew: We'll be back soon with another episode, so stay tuned.

Morag: Talk to you soon. Bye.

Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Peanuts

The first keyword from today's episode, **peanuts**, means an insignificant amount of money.

Most people use **peanuts** to talk about very small amounts of money, such as change. Change is what we call physical money that comes in coins, like dimes (10¢) and nickels (5¢). However, as Andrew and Morag discussed in this episode, **peanuts** is not actually a specific amount of money. How much money can be called **peanuts** depends on the person speaking. For example, a millionaire might think that \$200 is **peanuts**, but someone who only has \$20 in their bank account might think that \$200 is a lot of money!

So, the amount of money that **peanuts** represents varies, but it is an unimportant or small amount to the person who is speaking.

Here's one more example with **peanuts**:

Ronnie: Wow, Jessica, I love your shoes! How much did you pay for them?

Jessica: They cost me **peanuts**—only twenty bucks!

Chump change

Chump change is a very similar term to peanuts; it also means a relatively small or insignificant amount of money.

So, like peanuts, **chump change** doesn't refer to any specific amount of money. You can use **chump change** to talk about any amount of money you think is small in context. For example, imagine you have \$50 to spend. If you found a table and chairs for that much money, you could say they cost **chump change**. However, if you went out for lunch and spent all \$50 on a sandwich, you would never say that it cost **chump change**!

Here's one more example with **chump change**:

Bianca: How did your job interview go?

Bernard: They offered me the job, but I didn't take it. They wanted to pay me \$15 an hour when I make \$25 an hour at my current job.

Bianca: They were trying to pay you **chump change**!

To be in the same boat [as someone]

To be in the same boat [as someone] is an expression that means to be in the same situation as another person. This expression is easy to picture. Imagine you are sitting in the same small boat—like a canoe—as another person. Whatever happens to the boat, you will both be affected by. So, if you say that you're **in the same boat** as another person, you both are affected by the same circumstances.

Most of the time, we use **to be in the same boat** to when talking about negative experiences and situations. For example, if someone is complaining about not having any money—and you don't have any money either—you might say, "We're **in the same boat**. I'm also broke."

While **to be in the same boat** is mostly used for negative situations, you can also use it when talking about neutral situations. For example, in this episode neither Andrew nor Morag had anything exciting to share at the beginning of the episode. Andrew commented on the situation by saying, "Sounds like we're **in the same boat**." In other words, Andrew is commenting on the fact that they share a common experience or state—the experience of having nothing much to share. This is a neutral experience, so it's OK to use **to be in the same boat**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be in the same boat**:

Darrel:	Oh my god, I can't believe that I have three exams next week and I still have to work all of my usual work shifts!
Pearl:	Come on, it's not that bad. We're all in the same boat ! Everyone is really busy at exam time.

Eli:	Man, it's really difficult to find a job in this town! I can't believe I haven't found anything in 6 months!
Sheila:	I'm sorry to hear that!
Eli:	Do you know anyone who could help me—give me some advice, tips, leads?
Sheila:	I might be able to get you in touch with my friend Jane. She was in the same boat for a long time.
Eli:	Thanks, I would love to talk to her. I hope she has some useful advice.

Pretty much

Pretty much is an informal way of saying nearly or almost completely. This is a very common expression in casual conversation.

The easiest way to use **pretty much** is in any situation where you could use “almost.” In this episode, Morag mentions that peanuts means **pretty much** no money. In other words, peanuts means almost no money or close to no money.

You will also hear **pretty much** used as an affirmation in casual conversation. It’s common to use **pretty much** in place of “sure,” “OK,” or “close enough.” In these situations, you want to use **pretty much** to communicate mild or unenthusiastic approval.

Here are a couple more examples with both uses of **pretty much**:

Kristine:	Hey, you don’t look so great. Are you sick?
Edward:	Not anymore! I had a bad cold last week, though.
Kristine:	I don’t think you’re actually all better! You’re still coughing and you look like death!
Edward:	Well, I’m pretty much better. You should have seen me last week—it was so much worse.

June:	You remember that our flight is at 8 AM tomorrow, right?
Samuel:	Yeah.
June:	And that means we have to get up at 6:30 in the morning.
Samuel:	I know.
June:	Do you have all your stuff ready? Are you all packed?
Samuel:	Pretty much.
June:	What do you mean by being pretty much packed?
Samuel:	Well, I know what I’m going to take. I need to put it all into my suitcase.
June:	That’s not even close to being packed!

To add up

To add up is a phrasal verb that has a couple of meanings. The first is to increase by small amounts until there is a large total, and the second is to seem reasonable or make sense. Today we will focus on the first meaning of **to add up**.

In this episode, Morag uses **to add up** in this first sense, to increase slowly until there is a large volume or amount of something. When Andrew and Morag are talking about whether they pick up change from the ground, Morag says that she picks up dimes because “it **adds up**.” In other words, while a dime is a small amount of money, if you gather enough of them, they form a larger amount of money.

This meaning of **to add up** is most commonly used when talking about money. People will often talk about how important it is to save even small amounts of money, because savings **add up** over time. Saving money is the clearest example of something increasing by small amounts until you have a large total later on. For example, if you save \$20 a month, that **adds up** to \$1200 if you do it for 5 years!

However, money isn’t the only thing that **adds up**. You can use **to add up** to talk about any collection, group, or volume of something that slowly becomes larger over time.

Here are a couple more examples with **to add up**:

Troy:	Wow, you have a huge mug collection! Why do you have so many?
Cindy:	I didn’t mean to have so many! I just really like them, so I tend to buy a couple mugs a year. They really add up over time.
Troy:	No kidding—you must have dozens in this cupboard!

Omar:	Can you give me some advice about how to save the tip money from my new serving job? It’s so easy to spent it all when you’re paid in cash.
Jo:	Well, when I was a server, I used to have a change jar. I would put the change from my tips into the jar every night after work. If you don’t touch the jar for a couple months, you’d be surprised how much money is in there!
Omar:	That’s a great idea! I guess that even though it doesn’t seem like a lot of money, change can really add up .

Quiz

- 1. Chump change is a(n) _____ amount of money.**
 - a) common
 - b) insignificant
 - c) enormous
 - d) large

- 2. If you're experiencing the same negative or neutral situation as another person, you could say that you're both:**
 - a) Riding the wave
 - b) On the same airplane
 - c) In the same boat
 - d) Like peas in a pod

- 3. When something adds up, it increases by a(n) ____ amount over time.**
 - a) moderate
 - b) large
 - c) unknown
 - d) small

- 4. Pretty much is another way of saying:**
 - a) completely
 - b) almost
 - c) not at all
 - d) certainly

- 5. If you think something costs a small amount of money, you could say it costs:**
 - a) walnuts
 - b) peanuts
 - c) grapes
 - d) scones

Quiz Answers

1.b 2.c 3.d 4.b 5.b

Episode credits

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