

Catch Word #188 – Thunderstruck

Episode description

English has a lot of strange and amusing expressions! Join Andrew and Morag in today's episode to learn how to use two colourful expressions related to being surprised: to be blindsided and to be thunderstruck. Don't keep living under a rock; start listening and learn about these fun expressions today!

Fun fact

If you say the word thunderstruck to an English speaker, don't be surprised if they start singing the AC/DC song of the same name. Funnily enough, despite the song being popular enough that everyone knows the tune, the only country where "Thunderstruck" hit number one on the charts was Finland!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To be blindsided
- To be thunderstruck
- To chill
- No doubt
- To live under a rock



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! I'm Andrew.

Morag: And I'm Morag.

Andrew: And we're back with another Culips episode

Morag: Hey, Andrew. What's up?

Andrew: Oh, not much. You know, I'm really stoked that you're back. You were just recently on vacation. I missed you.

Morag: Oh, I missed you, too. Thanks, Andrew.

Andrew: So how was it?

Morag: Oh, it was really lovely! It wasn't a vacation vacation; I went back home to Victoria for a little while.

Andrew: To see your family and friends, I assume?

Morag: Yeah. Well, I didn't go over the holidays because it's so expensive and crazy to travel around Christmas, so I thought it made more sense to go back a little bit later. So I still got that time in and was able to see my family and it was really nice.

Andrew: Right on. Well, we're glad to have you back. And, yeah, today we're going to do a Catch Word episode. And in a Catch Word episode, we look at two expressions, or idioms, that are related. So they have a similar meaning and you can use them in similar situations. And I love this episode's theme.

Morag: I was about to say, we've got a fun one here.

Andrew: Yeah, so today we're looking at two expressions that you can use when you are shocked or you are surprised.

Morag: Yeah!

Andrew: So our first expression today is **to be blindsided**, **to be blindsided**, OK? Now the spelling is b-l-i-n-d, like you can't see something, **blindsided**, s-i-d-e-d. And, actually, you can spell this in a couple of different ways. You can put it together as one word or you can hyphenate it with a dash, or you can have it as two words. And this is just because English is wacky.

But for now, Morag, maybe you could give us a definition. What does it mean, to **be blindsided**?

Morag: **To be blindsided** is to be shocked and surprised by some information that you were not expecting.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. So when you're **blindsided** by something, you're shocked by something or some information that really comes as a surprise, right? You weren't expecting it at all.

Morag: Mmhmm, it comes out of nowhere. You can't see it coming. Almost like you were blind.

Andrew: Right.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: And, yeah, you can get a visual with this expression, right? It's actually used a lot in sports, in fighting, and in physical sports like rugby and American football. Because if somebody gets hit, they get **blindsided**, it means they get hit because they didn't see the opponent's attack. It was maybe from behind or from an area where they weren't able to see. So it hit them from the blind side.

Morag: Yeah, **to be blindsided** is all about getting shocked or struck by something that you cannot see coming.

Andrew: And we use **to be blindsided** many, many times, often to talk about a surprise that has a negative result.

Morag: You've just been attacked by new and shocking information.

Andrew: Yeah. You wouldn't say, "Oh, I was **blindsided** by a surprise birthday today at the office."

Morag: Probably not, no. Yeah.

Andrew: But there's a disconnect between being blinded and the niceness of the surprise birthday party, right? So you have to use **blindsided** with a negative shock or a negative surprise.

Morag: Mmhmm, I completely agree.

Andrew: One final thing I wanted to mention about this express, Morag, is that the D sound in blind is silent, right, for pronunciation. We don't actually pronounce the D, OK? So even though it's **blindsided**, when we put these two words together it comes out blindsided.

Morag: You're right.

Andrew: Thank you.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: So be careful, guys, when pronouncing this word. Drop the D, just blindsided. Let's listen to an example with this expression.

Friend 1: What're you up to tonight? You wanna grab dinner or something?

Friend 2: I'd love to but I just got **blindsided** by a big cell phone bill. I think I'm just gonna **chill** this weekend and save some money.

Friend 1: All right, no problem. Maybe some other time.

Andrew: In this example, two friends talk about eating dinner together, but one of the friends can't afford to go out for dinner because he was **blindsided** by a big cell phone bill. Let's listen to that part of the conversation one more time.

Friend 2: I just got **blindsided** by a big cell phone bill.
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Andrew: So in other words, he was surprised to see the big bill. He wasn't expecting it. He was **blindsided** by it.

Morag: And now he just has to relax and stay at home instead. Just gonna **chill**.

Andrew: Hey, it sounds good to me, actually.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: All right, Morag, let's listen to one more example with **blindsided**.

Student 1: That was a tough exam.

Student 2: **No doubt.**

Student 1: I was totally **blindsided** by that last essay question.

Student 2: Ah, me too. I had no idea how to go about answering it.

- Morag: In this example, two students were **blindsided** by a tough exam question. So it means that they weren't expecting the question to appear on the test, and so had no idea how to answer it.
- Andrew: Nothing worse than being **blindsided** on a test. It's very stressful.
- All right, so we are at that point in today's episode where we can move on to our second expression. And this one is a fun one.
- Morag: It's such a great word to say.
- Andrew: You have to sing it though, Morag.
- Morag: Oh no, oh God. OK. Oh no, I can't, I can't!
- Andrew: OK, OK.
- Morag: I'm pretty sure ... I'm pretty sure that it will be sung in the minds of everyone.
- Andrew: All right.
- Morag: So our second expression is **to be thunderstruck, to be thunderstruck**.
- Andrew: Yeah, to be **thunderstruck**.
- Morag: Thunda-struck!
- Andrew: You did it!
- Morag: Yeah, I know!
- Andrew: So if you don't know, then maybe you're **living under a rock**, but the band, the Australian band, AC/DC had a huge hit with their song "Thunderstruck." So now we're going to look at this expression. Morag, what does it mean if you are **thunderstruck**?
- Morag: Well, when you're **thunderstruck**, it's as though you're struck by lightning or shocked by thunder. So you're really, really shocked or surprised by something. I know that you will have experienced the big thunderstorms that happen in the summer around here in Montreal, Andrew, but sometimes that thunder can be really scary and surprising, shocking.
- Andrew: Right. If you hear some rolling thunder, it's a big crash boom sound, it surprises you, right? So you're kind of struck by thunder. You are shocked. And so, actually, we use this expression, though, to talk about any kind of big surprise. Could be with good news, could be with bad news, but any type of big surprise. Then you can say, "Oh, I'm **thunderstruck**."

Morag: OK, let's do some examples with **to be thunderstruck**.

Friend 1: I just saw the movie *Arrival*. It was amazing! The ending left me **thunderstruck**.

Friend 2: Yeah, I loved it, too. It's a beautiful film.

Andrew: In this example, two friends are talking about the movie *Arrival*. Did you see this movie, Morag?

Morag: I haven't.

Andrew: OK. Well, in the movie, aliens visit the earth and, actually, the movie centres around a linguist who tries to figure out how to communicate with the aliens. So if you're a sci-fi fan, check it out. But, anyway, in the example one of the friends said that the end of the movie left him feeling **thunderstruck**. So I don't want to give away any more of the plot details, but we can imagine from this friend's reaction that the movie has a surprise ending.

Morag: I've definitely been **thunderstruck** by the end of a film before. Usually if there is a surprise ending, or even if it's just really emotional.

Andrew: You sort of are sitting there going, "Whoa, holy cow! I didn't see that coming."

Morag: Yeah, "Oh my god! That was really intense and surprising," yeah, yeah.

Andrew: That's the sign of a good movie I think, yes.

Morag: I would agree.

Andrew: All right, let's listen to our final example for today's episode.

Friend 1: I just found out my sister is getting married.

Friend 2: That's great! Good for her.

Friend 1: Yeah, and apparently she wasn't expecting it at all. When her fiancé popped the question, she was completely **thunderstruck**.

Morag: In this example, a man tells his friend that his sister just got engaged. And apparently the sister was totally **thunderstruck** by the proposal. So she wasn't expecting it. She wasn't expecting to be proposed to. She was completely surprised. Let's listen to that part of the example one more time.

Friend 1: When her fiancé popped the question, she was completely **thunderstruck**.
When her fiancé popped the question, she was completely **thunderstruck**.

Morag: So when you're **thunderstruck**, you are surprised or shocked.

Andrew: You know, it's really funny that this example is in this episode, Morag, because just before we started recording I was reading the website Reddit and I saw a post from a woman who just got proposed to, and she was **thunderstruck** by the proposal, but in the opposite way.

Morag: Oh.

Andrew: She didn't wanna get married.

Morag: Oh no! I guess that's a problem with a surprise proposal. Probably the other person is going to be **thunderstruck**, but in a positive or a negative way, you don't know.

Andrew: And even the person that's doing the proposal could be **thunderstruck** if they don't get the answer they were expecting.

Morag: Well, I hope that doesn't happen to any of our listeners.

Andrew: Hey, guys, thanks so much for listening. We really, really do appreciate it. And if you have any comments or questions for us, maybe even a suggestion for a future episode, please drop us a line. My email address is Andrew@culips.com.

Morag: Talk to guys soon. Bye!

Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To be blindsided

The first key expression from today's episode is the verb **to be blindsided**. When you're **blindsided**, you experience an unexpected and unpleasant surprise.

For example, imagine that you've just received some bad news. If it's bad news that you were not at all expecting, such as the sudden death of a loved one, you are **blindsided**.

So, in any situation where you're shocked by a turn of events that has a negative consequence or is simply unpleasant to experience, you can say that you're **blindsided**.

Here's one more example with **to be blindsided**:

Harry:	Hey, Marina, you look pretty upset. Is everything OK?
Marina:	No, I'm not doing so well.
Harry:	What happened?
Marina:	My boyfriend just broke up with me. I'm completely blindsided ! I wasn't expecting this at all!

To be thunderstruck

Our second key expression in this episode is **to be thunderstruck**. **To be thunderstruck** is another term used to talk about being surprised. However, it doesn't have a positive or negative implication. You can be happily, neutrally, or negatively **thunderstruck**!

Put simply, when you are **thunderstruck**, you are astonished or amazed by something.

Here's one more example with **to be thunderstruck**:

Sasha:	How was your weekend?
Brett:	It was OK. I got a real shock on Saturday, though.
Sasha:	Oh yeah? What happened?
Brett:	My brother announced that he's moving to Norway. I'm was totally thunderstruck —I didn't think he'd every leave home, let alone move to another continent!

To chill

On its own, **to chill** usually means to lower the temperature of something, without making it extremely cold. For example, if you make food that's too hot, you might leave it out **to chill** before eating it.

However, this is not the meaning of **to chill** that was used in this episode. In one of the example dialogues, you heard someone say that they were just going to stay home and **chill**. This does not mean they were going to lower their temperature! This use of **to chill** is a shortened form of **to chill out**. **To chill out** means to relax or spend time doing relaxing activities. It can also mean to hang out, or spend time doing relaxing activities with other people.

So, if you hear someone say that they want **to chill**, they mean that they want to do something relaxing.

Here are a couple more examples with **to chill**:

Joel:	Hey, Brenda! You just came back from vacation, right? Did you have fun?
Brenda:	Yeah, I had a great time, although I didn't do very much!
Joel:	So you just spent time chilling at home?
Brenda:	Exactly! It was just the type of relaxing vacation I needed.

Mark:	What do you want to do tonight?
Laurence:	I was thinking that we could go dancing later!
Mark:	I could maybe do that.
Laurence:	Aw, come on—it'll be fun!
Mark:	OK, but can we just chill for the first part of the evening?
Laurence:	If you need to spend some time relaxing to get some energy for later, that's fine by me!
Mark:	Great, thanks!

No doubt

No doubt is a phrase that is used for emphasis or as an affirmative response to something someone has said. Saying **no doubt** is a way to emphasize that what was said is completely true or will probably happen.

For example, in this episode you listened to a dialogue example where one student commented that an exam was difficult. The second student responded by saying, “**No doubt**.” In other words, the second student agrees and affirms that the exam was difficult for them, too. This is an example of **no doubt** being used to say that something is true.

As mentioned earlier, **no doubt** can also be used to say that something is likely to happen. For example, imagine that you and a friend need to catch a taxi. Your friend might say something like, “We should go wait on Main Street. **No doubt** we’ll find a cab there.” In other words, your friend is saying that it’s highly likely that you’ll be able to find a cab on that street.

Here are a couple more examples with both uses of **no doubt**:

Rachel:	I don’t know what do get Dad for his birthday!
Zander:	I know the feeling. He’s impossible to shop for.
Rachel:	I know, but we still should figure out some kind of present.
Zander:	What if we both pitch in and get him tickets to see his favourite hockey team play? It’s a bit expensive, but he would like it.
Rachel:	No doubt! That’s a great idea. Let’s do it!

Diana:	Hey, what time do we need to get going?
Brian:	I want to make it to the concert venue at least half an hour early.
Diana:	OK, so do you think that we’ll be good if we leave at 7 pm? We still should wait for Samantha to get here.
Brian:	She just texted me. She’ll no doubt be here by then.
Diana:	Sounds good!

To live under a rock

To live under a rock is an informal idiom that describes someone who is unaware of what's happening in the world around them. It is usually used to refer to people who are surprisingly ignorant of popular culture, current events, or other changes in the world.

For example, in this episode Andrew says that if you've never heard of the song "Thunderstruck" by the band AC/DC, then you've been **living under a rock**. In other words, because that song is popular and widely known, if you've never heard of it then you likely don't pay much attention to popular culture.

So, if you meet someone and are surprised by their lack of knowledge regarding current events or popular culture, you can say that they're **living under a rock**. However, be warned that this statement is a negative judgement, so you might want to be careful about who you say it to!

Here are a couple more examples with **to live under a rock**:

Aaron:	Oh, man, I love this song!
Isa:	Really? I've never heard it before. Who sings it?
Aaron:	It's the new single by Beyoncé!
Isa:	Beyoncé? Who's that?
Aaron:	Oh my god, do you live under a rock ? She's one of the most popular musicians in the world!

Kyle:	Ugh, I had the most frustrating dinner with my family last night.
Eve:	That sucks! Why was it so frustrating?
Kyle:	Well, my mom made me sit next to my uncle. He's a really weird guy.
Eve:	Weird in what way?
Kyle:	He's been living under a rock for the past decade or so. He never reads the news or pays any attention to politics, but he has a lot of opinions on both subjects. It's so frustrating!

Quiz

- 1. Which of the key terms from today's episode means to experience an unpleasant surprise?**
 - a) to be blindsided
 - b) to be thunderstruck

- 2. Which of these phrases can be used to describe someone who is generally ignorant of news, events, and popular culture in the world around them?**
 - a) living off the grid
 - b) living under a rock
 - c) shouting at the moon
 - d) sitting under a tree

- 3. Which of the key terms from today's episode means to experience a surprise that can be positive, negative, or neutral?**
 - a) to be blindsided
 - b) to be thunderstruck

- 4. Which of these phrases can you use to agree with someone's statement and affirm that it's true?**
 - a) no worries
 - b) no surprise
 - c) no doubt
 - d) no stress

- 5. When referring to the act of relaxing, to chill is the shortened form of which phrasal verb?**
 - a) to chill out
 - b) to chill down
 - c) to chill in
 - d) to chill around

Quiz Answers

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

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