

Catch Word #59 – to bump into someone

Transcript

Robin: Hello everyone this is Robin.

Harp: And Harp, at Culips.com.

Robin: Yes, Culips—C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: Yeah, check out the website, become a member because then you have access to the Lipservice. And in the Lipservice you have a detailed explanation, complete transcript, and even a quiz.

Robin: And today we're going to do our famous Catch Word podcast, and that's when we take an idea or an expression and we break down similar expressions, related expressions.

Harp: Yeah, we give you examples, we show you how to use it.

Robin: So today, what's the main expression that we're going to get into?

Harp: Today's Catch Word is **bump into someone**.

Robin: **Bump into someone**.

Harp: Yeah, **to bump into someone**.

Robin: OK, well I know **bump**. **Bump** usually **deals with** moving and hitting someone, doesn't it?

Harp: Yeah, exactly.

Robin: So if I'm in a train station, there might be a lot of people and they might **bump into** me.

Harp: Exactly, but that's the literal meaning for the expression: when you **bump into someone**, when you physically touch them.

Robin: OK.

Harp: But the expression **bump into someone** means when you are walking down the street, or you're at a party, you're somewhere, and you see someone that you didn't expect to see there. For example, I was at the grocery store and I saw my old teacher; I **bumped into my teacher**.

- Robin: OK, so you saw this person unexpectedly and you talked to them.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Robin: So when you see someone unexpectedly and you talk to them, you **bump into them**.
- Harp: Exactly. Should we do a dialogue example?
- Robin: Absolutely. What a beautiful day it is outside. Oh, the birds, the sun—WOW, Harp, how're you doing?
- Harp: I'm good. How are you?
- Robin: Not bad. I can't believe I'm **bumping into you**.
- Harp: Yeah, it's so **random**.
- Robin: **Shouldn't you be at work?**
- Harp: I should. Today we had the **day off**. There was a fire alarm.
- Robin: Really? I decided to take **a vacation day**.
- Harp: Yeah, it's a beautiful day. You're enjoying the sunshine?
- Robin: Absolutely. Yeah, well, it's great seeing you here. I hope you enjoy the rest of your day.
- Harp: Yeah, it was nice **bumping into you**.
- Robin: Nice **bumping into you** too.
- Harp: OK, so that was a good example of how you can **bump into someone**.
- Robin: Yeah, it was unexpected. I was walking around enjoying the beautiful weather in Montreal and then all of a sudden Harp **showed up**, so it was unexpected.
- Harp: Yeah, you weren't expecting me because I should have been at work.
- Robin: Are there any other expressions related to **bump into someone**?
- Harp: Yeah, a synonym for **bump into someone** is **to run into someone**.

- Robin: OK, **to run into someone**.
- Harp: Exactly, **to run into someone**.
- Robin: And it means the same thing, essentially.
- Harp: Exactly the same thing.
- Robin: OK, so instead of **bumping into you** a second ago, I **ran into you**, in the park.
- Harp: Exactly, so when you see someone unexpectedly—you were just walking, doing your normal things, and you see someone that you weren't expecting to see.
- Robin: OK, Harp, have you ever **run into someone** whose name you didn't remember?
- Harp: This happens to me all the time, Robin. I remember someone's face and their name is **at the tip of my tongue**, but I just can't remember it.
- Robin: What do you do?
- Harp: Well, I just say something like, "Oh, it's nice **running into you** here. How are you?" I try to avoid saying their name.
- Robin: You know what? To all of our listeners, if you have any stories, write them on our website, 'cause **I'd be interested to hear...**
- Harp: Exactly, **of how you avoid being embarrassed** when you can't remember someone's name when you **run into them**.
- Robin: Absolutely.
- Harp: So Robin, what are some things you can say if you **bump into someone** or if you **run into someone**?
- Robin: Well if it's unexpected, you might say, "Well, **fancy seeing you here**."
- Harp: I love that expression. Yeah, yesterday I saw an old friend who I hadn't seen since high school and the first thing that came to me was, **fancy seeing you here**.
- Robin: **Fancy seeing you here**. It's a really nice expression. It sounds very sophisticated and classy.

- Harp: Yeah, I always say it with a big smile on my face 'cause I like the expression a lot. Yeah, so when I use the expression, **fancy seeing you here**, I'm saying, "Oh it's nice **running into you** here."
- Robin: Or "**It's a pleasure running into you**; it's so nice to see you."
- Harp: Robin, can you give me another expression that you could say when you **bump into someone**?
- Robin: Another expression that you might say is, "Wow, **small world**!"
- Harp: Yeah, **it's a small world**.
- Robin: **It's a small world**.
- Harp: Yeah. Robin, can you give me an example of when you used this?
- Robin: A few years ago I was travelling in Japan and as I was going to the western part of Japan, I was sitting on the train alone, with my backpack, and I looked up and I saw one of my best friends from elementary school, from Canada!
- Harp: You **ran into your best friend** from elementary school in Japan?
- Robin: Absolutely, it was unbelievable.
- Harp: Wow!
- Robin: It was like, Wow, **it's a small world. It's a small world**. And we talked and he ended up going to the same place that I was going. We were heading to Hiroshima, and we spent some time there and it was great.
- Harp: Wow, that's really fun! Yeah, it's funny because we think of the world as such a big place. Like, Japan is so far away, but **it's a small world**, you can **run into someone** anywhere.
- Robin: Absolutely. That was the most interesting time it happened to me but I'm sure it's happened to you as well, all of our listeners out there.
- Harp: Yeah, it's happened to me even just at a party in Montreal.
- Robin: OK, so let's recap. What were the expressions for today?
- Harp: The first expression was **to bump into someone**.

- Robin: ***To bump into someone.*** That means you meet them in public, or in some place unexpectedly.
- Harp: Yeah, you weren't expecting to see that person but you **bumped into them.**
- Robin: And it's the same thing as ***to run into someone.***
- Harp: Yeah, it means the exact same thing. So when you meet someone on the street that you didn't expect to see there or you meet someone at a party, you **run into them.**
- Robin: And when you do **run into someone** unexpectedly, you can always say "Hey, **fancy seeing you here.**"
- Harp: Yup, or you could say, "Oh, **it's a small world!**"
- Robin: And I think that about does it for our podcast. Thanks again for joining us. This has been Robin.
- Harp: And Harp. Bye everyone.

Detailed Explanation

To bump into someone

The expression **to bump into someone** is used often. It means that you see someone unexpectedly and that meeting that person was unplanned. You could **bump into someone** by seeing them across a room, by walking by them on the street, or by literally bumping into them.

Remember that even though this is an expression it is also a literal phrase. I could say, "I was walking down the street yesterday and I **bumped into a woman** walking a dog." One sure way to know the difference between the expression and the literal meaning of **to bump into someone** is to understand **who was bumped into**.

To bump into someone, meaning to meet unexpectedly, must happen with someone the speaker already knows. You can meet someone unexpectedly that you already know. If, like above, you **bump into a stranger**, it is impossible that you knew the person before. Also, with the literal meaning you can bump into *things* too, but you can only meet *people* unexpectedly.

Like many expressions with more than one meaning, considering the context is a good way to understand which meaning is being used. Let's look at some examples:

Last week I was shopping downtown and I **bumped into a friend** I hadn't seen in ages.
(met unexpectedly)

The other day Sheila was running in the park and **bumped into John**.
(met unexpectedly)

Yasmina: I am so sorry that I **bumped into you**.

Bernice: That's OK.
(literally bumped into)

Paul: I can't believe I'm **bumping into you**. It's been so long.

Xavier: I know. Crazy!
(met unexpectedly)

Jen: I can't believe I **bumped into the display** at the grocery store.

Lucy: That must have been so funny!
(literally bumped into)

To deal with

In this episode, Robin says, “*To bump into* **deals with** moving and hitting someone. **Deals with** in this sentence would mean that “moving and hitting someone” is part of “to bump into.” If we say one thing **deals with** another thing, we are making a connection between the two things. When one thing **deals with** another, it is contained as part of the first.

Here are some examples using **to deal with** in this way.

This book **deals with** English grammar.
(You can find information about English grammar in this book.)

The course you are taking **deals with** writing and editing.
(The course contains lesson on writing and editing.)

To deal with can also be used in other ways. The way described above is only one way to use **to deal with**.

Random

Random literally means something that happens without reason, or that comes in no particular order. For example if we are going to pick numbers at **random**, we could say, “10, 13, 15, 2, 5, 24, 6, 12, 13...” There is no order to these numbers. They are **random** numbers and so they have no significance or pattern.

Random is now being used as a way to describe something that was unexpected and happens with no reason. Harp says **random** in this episode to express that she did not expect to see Robin; she bumped into Robin.

Here are more examples using **random** in a slang way.

Jill: Hey Sam. What are you doing here?
Paul: Hi! That’s so **random** that you’re here.

Robert: Last night I won \$200!
Kevin: How did that happen?
Robert. It was **random**. At the bar last night they started giving away money for the best impressions of celebrities.

Shouldn't you be at work?

Robin asks Harp this negative question: "**Shouldn't you be at work?**" Why does Robin ask a negative question? Robin asks with a negative question because he knows that Harp would normally be at work. He is confirming the information that he already believes. If he asked "Should you be at work?" it would mean that he did not know what the answer was.

Here are some more examples:

Kyle: Don't you have a test right now?

Peter: No, that's tomorrow.

(Kyle asks about Peter's test because Kyle thinks Peter has one. In reality, the test is tomorrow.)

Jasmine: I'm so tired.

Bruce: Didn't you work last night?

Jasmine: Yeah.

Bruce: Well, that's probably why you're so tired!

(Bruce checks if Jasmine worked because he thinks that is why she is so tired. And he's right.)

A day off

A day off means that you do not have to work your usual job. Someone might have the **day off** because the person asked not to work or, because the office is closed. *To have a day off, to take a day off, and to get a day off* are all expressions that can be used when talking about **a day off**.

In this episode, Harp has **a day off** because of a fire alarm. This is not a usual reason to have **a day off** but if you work in a large building and the fire alarm sounds then everyone might have to stay out of the building all day.

A vacation day

This is another way to talk about taking a day off of work. We can also say that a person is taking **a vacation day** or has **a vacation day**; there are lots of variations. One difference between *a day off* and **a vacation day** is that **a vacation day** is one of the days an employee can request not to work. Any other reason for having a day off is not considered **a vacation day**.

To run into someone

This expression **to run into someone** has exactly the same meaning as *to bump into someone*. Both sound physical and aggressive, but both simply mean to see someone unexpectedly. Just like *to bump into someone*, **to run into someone** can also be used in a literal way.

Here are a few examples to practice distinguishing between the literal meaning and the expression:

Yvonne: I **ran into Samantha** at the pool last week!

Leon: Really? What a coincidence that you were both there!
(Yvonne met Samantha unexpectedly.)

Max: Last night I **ran into Shawn** by accident and I think I really hurt him.

Cara: Oh no! How did that happen?
(Max actually ran into and hit Shawn.)

Doug: I **ran into a girl** in my gym class yesterday.

Oliver: Really? Where did you see her?

Doug: No, I mean I literally **ran into her** in class.

Oliver: Oh! How fast were you running?

(This is an example of a misunderstanding between the literal meaning and the expression. This sometimes happens for native speakers too!)

At the tip of my tongue

When someone says that something is **at the tip of their tongue** it means that they can't remember something but that they almost remember it, or have some idea of it. After someone says that something is **on the tip of their tongue**, sometimes they are able to remember and then share the information.

In this episode, Harp gives the example of seeing someone and not being able to remember their name. Harp says the names are often **at the tip of her tongue**; she almost remembers what their names are.

At the tip of my tongue can also be said **on the tip of my tongue**. Here are some examples with these expressions:

Donna: Do you know Sylvie's address?

Anna: Yeah, it's 458...um... Oh, it's **on the tip of my tongue**.

Fred: Who else is coming to the party?

Oscar: Oh, what's his name? It's **at the tip of my tongue**.

Fred: Yeah, I can never remember his name.

Oscar: Oh! Robin! That's his name.

I'd be interested to hear...of how you avoid being embarrassed

Did you notice that Harp finishes one of Robin's sentences in this episode? This can happen in regular conversations too. When one person knows what the other person is going to say, sometimes they finish the sentence for them.

Robin says, "...**I'd be interested to hear...**" and then Harp says, "Exactly," and then continues to finish Robin's sentence. She says, "...**of how you avoid being embarrassed** when you can't remember someone's name when you run into them." If you remove the word *exactly* and the pause in between, we have one nice full sentence: "If you have any stories, write them on our website, 'cause **I'd be interested to hear of how you avoid being embarrassed** when you can't remember someone's name when you run into them."

Fancy seeing you here

So after you have bumped into someone, you can greet them and show your surprise by using the expression **fancy seeing you here**. **Fancy seeing you here** expresses that you are surprised to see the other person. You can also say **fancy meeting you here**. Like Harp says in this episode, this expression can sound a bit sophisticated and fancy!

Here is another example.

Bonnie: Hi Sue! How are you?

Curtis: **Fancy seeing you here**.

Bonnie: Yeah, I didn't even know that you lived in town.

A pleasure running into you/nice running into you

You might also want to tell someone that you were happy to meet them unexpectedly. In this case you can say **it was a pleasure running into you**, or **it was nice running into you**. (Of course, you can replace **running into** with **bumping into**.) Also note that **it was a pleasure running into you** is more formal.

Here are some examples.

Joel: I have to go back to work now, but it **was really nice bumping into you**.

Scott: Yeah, you too.

Sonya: It was great seeing you again. Good luck in the future.

Gerard: Yeah, **it was a pleasure running to you**.

It's a small world

When we say **it's a small world** it means that we are surprised to see someone, usually in a place that they would not expect to see that person. **The world is small** in that one person would unexpectedly meet another person they know.

Robin gives a great example of this: when he met a friend from Canada on a train in Japan! He definitely would be surprised to see an old friend so far from home. What a **small world**!

There are lots of variations on how we can say **small world** in a sentence, we can even simply say just that: "**Small world!**"

Here are some examples with **small world**:

Keegan: Oh my gosh! Leanne, is that you?

Leanne: Hi Keegan! How are you? What are you doing here?

Keegan: I just moved to the city a few weeks ago.

Leanne: Wow! **Small world!**

Reid: Hi Jeremy, how are you doing?

Jeremy: Hi. I'm good. Fancy seeing you here.

Reid: I know. **It's a small world**, isn't it?

Quiz

1. Which expression means to meet someone unexpectedly?

- a) to run up to someone
- b) to jump over someone
- c) to bump over someone
- d) to bump into someone

2. Adam: Guess what? I ran into a guy I went to school with at the concert.

Natalie: Really? That's cool. Was he sitting beside you?

Adam: Yep. What a coincidence!

What happened to Adam in this example?

- a) He hit someone from school.
- b) He saw someone from school unexpectedly.
- c) He expected to see someone from school.
- d) He sat on someone from school accidentally.

3. 18, 42, 3, 65, 8, 100. What kind of numbers are these?

- a) random
- b) rancid
- c) raggedy
- d) royal

4. Wanda took a day off this week. What does that mean?

- a) She is working.
- b) She is not working.
- c) She is staying in bed.
- d) She pulled the fire alarm.

5. **Lina:** Last night I bumped into an old woman because I wasn't looking where I was going.

Carmen: Was she OK?

Lina: At first I was afraid I hurt her, but she was fine.

What happened to Lina last night?

- a) She saw an old friend.
- b) She hit an old woman.
- c) She hurt an old woman.
- d) She bumped her head.

6. **What does the expression *on the tip of my tongue* mean?**

- a) I'm close to remembering something, but I forget.
- b) I remember something perfectly.
- c) I completely forgot something.
- d) My tongue hurts.

7. **Hannah:** Hey! How are you?

Ingrid: I'm good. What are you doing here?

Hannah: I just started taking classes here.

Ingrid: What a _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) big world
- b) small world
- c) bump
- d) runner

Answers: 1.d 2.b 3.a 4.b 5.b 6.a 7. b