

Catch Word #73 – Word blends

Transcript

Maura: Hi everyone! This is Maura.

Harp: And Harp!

Maura: And we're here with another Culips podcast.

Harp: Yes, today we're bringing you a Catch Word podcast. Make sure you go to our website, that's Culips.com—C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because at the website, you can become a member and you have access to the Lipservice. The Lipservice is a learning guide and it has a detailed explanation, a complete transcript, and even a quiz.

Maura: And today we're doing the Catch Word episode, where we look at different slang expressions, vocabulary, and today we're going to look at **word blends**. We're going to look at words in English that are made up of two words. What I mean is we have two words and then people put them together to form one new word.

Harp: Yeah, like Maura said, a **word blend** is where you take two words and put it together. These words are used all the time. They're very popular. They're not super professional, but they're very common. I think it's best to start with our first word. It's easiest to explain this way.

Maura: Exactly. So, the first example is the word **ginormous**.

Harp: **Ginormous**.

Maura: Yeah, **ginormous**. And this word is created from two different words.

Harp: Yes: *gigantic* and *enormous*.

Maura: Right. So first we start with two words—*gigantic* and *enormous*—and we put them together to create a new word: **ginormous**. Can you hear *gigantic* and *enormous* in the new word, **ginormous**?

Harp: Yup, **ginormous**, *gigantic* and *enormous*.

Maura: Yeah, you can hear the beginning of *gigantic* and the end of *enormous* in the new word.

- Harp: Exactly. So it's a word blend, because it puts the two words together into one word.
- Maura: Right. So, often with **word blends**, the meaning is pretty much the same as the original two words. We just have this new word to emphasize the meaning or make it seem very, very big and intensify it.
- Harp: Yeah. So, *gigantic* and *enormous* both mean really big, really large. And when you say **ginormous**, you mean really large, really big. You're emphasizing it.
- Maura: Exactly. So the meaning is essentially the same, you're just using this new **word blend** to emphasize how big it is.
- Harp: Exactly. I use the word **ginormous** all the time.
- Maura: Right. When you want to really emphasize that something was really, really, really big.
- Harp: Exactly. So today at work, I had a **ginormous** cookie. It was so big, it was like the size almost of my head. And I didn't eat all of it, but it was a **ginormous** cookie. It was gigantic.
- Maura: What kind of cookie was it?
- Harp: My favourite: **chocolate chip**.
- Maura: Mmm. That sounds good. OK, so let's use the word **ginormous** in a dialogue example.
- Harp: OK.
- Maura: OK. So, what did you do on the weekend?
- Harp: This weekend I went for a walk in this **national park**.
- Maura: Oh wow, with the really old trees that are really, really big?
- Harp: Yeah, the trees are **ginormous**. They're so big.
- Maura: Oh wow, yeah. I love seeing those huge old trees.
- Harp: They're beautiful.

- Maura: OK, good. So in that example, you used **ginormous** just to emphasize how big the trees were.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: You know Harp, when I was researching for this episode, I was really surprised to find that a lot of these **word blends** are in the dictionary.
- Harp: Really?
- Maura: Yeah, I thought that maybe they were very new, modern words and very slang, so that they weren't in the dictionary, but a lot of them were.
- Harp: Was **ginormous** in the dictionary?
- Maura: It was, and actually I saw that a few years ago, on the **Merriam-Webster** Online Dictionary, people were saying that it was their favourite word that wasn't in the dictionary. So I guess it became so popular that they put it in the dictionary.
- Harp: Yeah, **ginormous** is a very popular word.
- Maura: It is. Let's move on to another **word blend** that is also in the dictionary.
- Harp: OK, what word is this?
- Maura: It is **fantabulous**.
- Harp: **Fantabulous**.
- Maura: Mmhmm. Which is made up of which two words, Harp?
- Harp: *Fantastic* and *fabulous*.
- Maura: Yes. So, we take *fantastic* and *fabulous*, put them together, and we make **fantabulous**.
- Harp: You know, I didn't know this would be in the dictionary.
- Maura: I know. I was surprised too.
- Harp: 'Cause I use this word all the time, but I use it in a fun way, not thinking it's a real word.

- Maura: Yep. But it is!
- Harp: That's fun! **Fantabulous!**
- Maura: Yes! Great. So, let's give an example for this word too.
- Harp: OK. Maura, did you end up going to that show last night?
- Maura: I did. Harp, it was **fantabulous**. It was so fun, so entertaining.
- Harp: Really, that good?
- Maura: Yeah. **Fantabulous, all the way.**
- Harp: Awesome.
- Maura: OK, great. So, you use **fantabulous**, just like you use *fantastic* and *fabulous*.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly.
- Maura: Yep, just the same way, except when you use **fantabulous**, you're emphasizing how great it was. This one's actually been around for a long time too.
- Harp: Really?
- Maura: Yup, the first documented use of the word **fantabulous** was way back in the 1950s.
- Harp: What?!
- Maura: Yeah, it's pretty surprising.
- Harp: I'm shocked. I kind of thought maybe I invented this word.
- Maura: Maybe. OK, let's look at another **word blend** word. Do you have one?
- Harp: Yes, one of my favourites: **chillax**.
- Maura: **Chillax**.
- Harp: **Chillax**. This is fun.
- Maura: Yeah, and **chillax** is made up, just like all the others, of two words. And those

words are **chill** and *relax*.

Harp: Yeah. This one's kind of interesting because **chill** is a slang word for relax. When you're relaxing, you could say that you're **chillin'**.

Maura: Exactly. So the meaning is really the same. *To relax* and **to chill**, which is, like you said Harp, slang, but they both mean to relax, **take it easy**, not be too stressed. And when you put them together—**chillax**—well, you're very relaxed.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So, definitely people use this when they talk about the weekend and they're just hanging around relaxing. People might use this word.

Harp: Yeah, exactly. Let's use this in an example, Maura.

Maura: OK, good idea. Hello?

Harp: Hi Maura.

Maura: Hey Harp. How's it going?

Harp: Good. How are you?

Maura: Good, good, just **chillaxin'**, you know.

Harp: Ah, so you're just relaxing, just taking it easy?

Maura: Yeah, just lying on my couch watching a bit of television.

Harp: Nice, nice. OK, well, talk to you tomorrow.

Maura: OK bye. OK, so, in that example, I was relaxing, I was **chilling**, I was **chillaxing**.

Harp: Exactly. And now, something funny with this word is that, people use the word *relax* or **chill** to tell someone to relax. For example, if someone is really stressed out or really angry about something, you could say *relax*, **chill out**. With this, you can say the same thing. You can say **chillax** man, relax.

- Maura: Exactly. Yep. Good. Now, the next **word blend** that we have is a little bit different, because the two words are very different from each other. So, the next one uses the word **friend** and **enemy** to create the new word of **frenemy**.
- Harp: **Frenemy**.
- Maura: Yeah, **frenemy**. And, in the other words that we talked about, the two original words had the same meaning, like **ginormous**; *gigantic* and *enormous* have the same meaning: very big. But with **frenemy**, *friend* and *enemy* are opposites.
- Harp: So what does **frenemy** mean then?
- Maura: Well, **a frenemy** is a friend who is like an enemy.
- Harp: Oh.
- Maura: So, someone who is your friend but, maybe they get mad at you a lot or you argue a lot, but they're your friend. You fight, but they're still your friend.
- Harp: It's a good word.
- Maura: Yeah. Sometimes people have complicated relationships and in that case, you could use this word.
- Harp: OK. Let's use it in a dialogue example.
- Maura: OK, good.
- Harp: Maura, what's wrong?
- Maura: It's just this friend of mine, you know, Sue? We're always arguing.
- Harp: That doesn't sound like a good friend.
- Maura: Well, to tell you the truth, she's kind of becoming a **frenemy**.
- Harp: Oh no.
- Maura: Yeah, we've been friends for so long, but we're just always arguing. I don't know what to do. OK, good. So, in that case I had **a frenemy**: someone who's a friend but also like an enemy.

- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: So you can use that new word.
- Harp: You know, we've actually talked about a word blend in a previous Culips episode.
- Maura: Hmm. Oh yeah, I know which one you're thinking of.
- Harp: Yeah, we used the word **staycation** in our episode about vacations.
- Maura: Right, that was an episode that I did a few episodes ago with Ricardo. We were talking about vacations and we talked about a **staycation**, which is a blend of the word *stay* and *vacation*.
- Harp: Yes. So a **staycation** is when you stay at home, but you're on vacation.
- Maura: Exactly. So in that case, they also have different meanings, really: to stay at home and to go on vacation, but you put them together and you take a vacation, but you stay at home. It creates kind of a new meaning.
- Harp: Yeah.
- Maura: So, if you want to know more about **staycation**, check out the episode about vacations with myself and Ricardo.
- Harp: Exactly. It's a good episode.
- Maura: Now, there's one more kind of word blend that I think we should mention.
- Harp: Yes. This is a very cultural reference.
- Maura: Yes. Talking about celebrities.
- Harp: Yeah, when we blend two celebrity names together when they're in a couple.
- Maura: Exactly. So, this is a trend that I first remember starting with Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez.
- Harp: Yes, they became **Bennifer**.
- Maura: Yes. So they took his name, *Ben*, and they took *Jennifer* and they made it one word, because they were such a big couple. They called them **Bennifer**.

- Harp: Yeah. Any time a celebrity magazine talked about them, they wouldn't say Ben Affleck and Jennifer Lopez, they would call them **Bennifer**.
- Maura: Yeah, exactly. And they were together from 2002 until 2004. So I think that's about when this trend started, because now, they do this name blending for different celebrities.
- Harp: Yeah, another common one is **Brangelina**.
- Maura: Exactly. And that is Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie. They took Brad and Angelina, put them together: **Brangelina**.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: So really, it's happening all over the place. We're taking two words and making it one word.
- Harp: You know what I just thought of, Maura?
- Maura: What's that?
- Harp: **Culips** is a word blend.
- Maura: You're right.
- Harp: Culture and lips: **Culips**.
- Maura: Yeah, so maybe we can **take credit** for starting the trend.
- Harp: We're quite trendy people.
- Maura: Almost. But we weren't alive in the 1950s when **fantabulous** was started.
- Harp: That's a good point.
- Maura: One more thing we should let you know before we wrap up this episode is that these kind of words are not professional. They're fun and are used often in a casual way, but in a professional environment, it's better to not use these kinds of words.
- Harp: Yeah, don't write a school essay about something being **fantabulous** or don't write your boss an email about something being **ginormous**. Not very professional.

- Maura: Exactly. So, let's go over the words one more time. You just said one Harp, **ginormous**.
- Harp: Yes, **ginormous** is a word blend of *gigantic* and *enormous* and it means the same thing. **Ginormous** is when something is huge.
- Maura: Right. And the next one we looked at was *fantastic* and *fabulous*, and together that is **fantabulous**.
- Harp: Exactly. And then the third one was **chillax**, which is **chill** and *relax*.
- Maura: And the one after that was **frenemy**, which is made up of *friend* and *enemy*.
- Harp: Exactly. The last one we looked at was **staycation**.
- Maura: Right. So that comes from the words *stay* and *vacation*. And again, if you want to know more about that one, check out our episode about vacations. So, thanks for listening. We hope you enjoyed this episode on **word blends**. And don't forget to go to our website.
- Harp: At Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Maura: So, we'll talk to you later. Bye!
- Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

Word blends

When we put two words together to make one, we call it a **word blend**. People talk about these words in different ways. Many people believe that these kinds of words are not even real words. In this episode, we mention that many of these words were only put in dictionary in the past five years!

In English, the word *portmanteau*—originally a French word—can also be used to talk about two (or more) words that are blended together to make a new word. There are lots of official and unofficial words that have been created by blending two words. For example, *email* is a combination of *electronic* and *mail*.

Ginourmous

The first word blend we looked at is made up of *gigantic* and *enormous*. Both of these words describe something that is really big, so the word **ginormous** means the same, with extra emphasis.

Here's another example:

Hugh: That is a **ginormous** house over there.

Grace: Yeah, it is pretty huge.

Chocolate chip

This is probably the most well known type of cookie in North America. **Chocolate chips** are little pieces, or chips, of chocolate. They are most famously baked in cookies, but they can be used in almost anything sweet, like breads and cakes. **Chocolate chip** ice cream is also pretty popular.

Here's a short list of some of the most well known cookies that people bake at home in North America. There are just too many, including combinations and homemade variations, to name them all though.

Chocolate chip
Oatmeal
Peanut butter
Shortbread
Sugar
Ginger snap

National Park

In one of our examples in this episode, Harp says that she went for a walk in **a national park**. **A national park** is not just a regular park on a street with space for children to play. **A national park** is very large space of pristine nature, often including lakes, forests, and mountains.

A national park is protected by the national government. In Canada, we have 42 national parks, located across our country. You can camp, hike, and do many other outdoor activities in **national parks**, but you also must pay to enter.

Our oldest national park is Banff National Park, which is also a UNESCO World Heritage Site. This park is located in the province in Alberta, in the Rocky Mountains.

Merriam-Webster

There are of different English dictionaries, one of which is **Merriam-Webster**. You can easily access this dictionary online too. There is lots of information and interesting discussion about language going on at the site.

There are also many other online dictionaries. Try them out and choose one that you like the best. Other well known dictionaries include Oxford and Cambridge.

Fantabulous

The second word blend that we look at in this episode is **fantabulous**, made up of the words *fantastic* and *fabulous*. This is one of the first noted word blends, being used in the 1950s. *Fantastic* and *fabulous* describe something great, beautiful, and wonderful, and by putting these two words together you emphasize all this!

Here is one more example with **fantabulous**:

Kevin: How was your trip to Vegas?

Mindy: It was **fantabulous**! We had such a great time.

'cause

This word, **'cause**, is a short-form slang version of the word *because*. When speaking English in casual situations, people often say **'cause** instead of *because*. When writing English for very casual reasons people might also write **'cause** or **cause** (without the apostrophe).

Using **cause** (without the apostrophe) to represent *because* can create some confusion, because we also have the verb *to cause* and the noun *cause*. They both have different meanings and different pronunciations compared to the short form **'cause**. Even though

they have different meanings and it can create some confusion, English speakers do use **cause** as a short form for *because*. You can often tell the difference by looking at the grammar and context of the sentence.

Can you tell the difference? Here are some examples of **cause** meaning *because* and *cause* meaning *to cause* or *a cause*:

Sally: I don't understand why Jon did it.

Greg: Jon did it cause he thought it would help.

cause - because

Hilary: Why did Jen leave?

Peter: She didn't want to be the cause of any problems.

cause – a cause

Ned: I am going to check on the power cables.

Lavern: Be careful cause they are very old. It could cause a power failure.

cause 1 – because

cause 2 – to cause

'**Cause** can also be written as *cuz*, especially in text messaging. *Cuz* is not a real word, it's unprofessional, and it cannot be found in a dictionary.

All the way

To say that something is [*an adjective*] **all the way** means that it is that adjective to the extreme or to the maximum, in every way. It works just like an intensifier, like *really* or *very*, with an adjective, but is not formal. In this episode, Maura says that a show she saw was, "fantabulous **all the way**." Using **all the way** with an adjective is usually used for something positive.

Here are a couple more examples with **all the way**:

Amanda: How was your vacation?

Jim: It was great **all the way**.

Oliva: The concert was excellent **all the way**.

Tyrone: Glad to hear it because I'm going to see the same band tomorrow!

You can also say that something is [*an adjective*] **all the way around**.

To chill or to chill out

To chill actually means to make something cold, and a *chill* is a cold feeling. In slang, **to chill** is used to mean *to relax*. If you imagine that when you are mad or angry you are hot, then to become cold—to chill—is to relax from that anger. **To chill** and **to chill out** can be used interchangeably.

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

Susan: Oh, I'm so angry right now!

Oscar: Relax! You just need to **chill out**. Getting mad's not going to solve your problem.

Lucy: So, what do you want to do tomorrow?

Ivan: I don't feel like doing much. I just want to **chill** all afternoon.

To chillax

Another word blend, which puts *chill* and *relax* together, is **chillax**. **Chillax** is a word that emphasizes relaxing and chilling.

Don: I just want to **chillax** all weekend.

Manuel: That's all you ever want to do!

To take it easy

To take it easy is another expression that means *to relax*. This expression can also be used when saying goodbye to someone, and what you're really saying is that you hope that person feels good and relaxed. Although, if you asked most English-speaking people why they say **take it easy** when they say goodbye, they might not know the answer! It has become an expression that people use so often, sometimes we don't think about why we use it.

Here are a couple of examples with **to take it easy**:

Patricia: Whoa! **Take it easy!** You're going to break the TV if you keep hitting it like that!

Luke: Sorry, I just really want to try to fix it.

Justin: See you later then.

Ben: Yeah. **Take it easy.**

Frenemy

This word blend is different from the others because it takes two words that have different meanings and puts them together to make a new word with a new meaning. **Frenemy** puts the words *friend* and *enemy* together to make a word that means a friend who is like an enemy because they are always causing trouble.

Here is another example with **frenemy**:

Hannah: Jon is always getting mad at me. He creates so much drama in my life.

Sarah: He sounds like more of a **frenemy** than a friend.

Staycation

Staycation is word blend we used in a recent Culips episode about vacations. This word is made up of the two words *stay* and *vacation*. Like frenemy, **staycation** is made of two words that have different meanings. **A staycation** is when a person stays at home during their vacation from work.

For more about this word, check out our episode from September 12, called *Dream vacations, vacation memories, and staycations*.

Bennifer and Brangelina

Word blends are sometimes also created based on celebrity couples. The names of both people in the romantic couple are blended into one. This is usually only done with couples who are very famous, and whose names can easily be blended.

This trend began with Jennifer Lopez and Ben Affleck, when they became a couple in 2002. Jennifer and Ben put together was **Bennifer**. They are no longer a couple.

Brad Pitt and Angelina Jolie are still a couple and are sometimes called **Brangelina** or **Brange**.

Culips

Our own company name is a word blend that we created! **Culips** is made up of two words: *culture* and *lips*. It is really our own word invention, so if you didn't know about our free ESL podcast, then you wouldn't know this word!

To take credit

Credit in this expression means recognition or honour for something a person has done. In this expression, **credit** is not the kind you get on your credit card!

If someone **takes credit** for something, it means that the person gets recognition because they say that they did something. Sometimes a person **takes credit** for something that they did and sometimes a person may **take credit** for something that they did not actually do.

In this episode, Maura jokes that Culips can **take credit** for starting word blends. This means that Culips could be recognized as having started word blends. But really, Culips can't **take credit** for that!

Here are a couple of examples with **to take credit**:

Henry: The boss loves the new project we developed!

Andrew: Great! I'll **take credit** for my part in that.

Bob: I can't believe that Sarah tried to **take credit** for your work.

Paul: I know. I was really surprised. She's knows how hard I worked on that project.

You can also give **credit**. In that case you give honour and recognition to someone for work they have done.

A popular expression in English is *to give credit where credit is due*, which means to recognize and thank someone who deserves it because of all their hard work.

Quiz

1. ***Ginormous* is made up of which two words?**
 - a) Giggle and enormous
 - b) Giant and fantastic
 - c) Gigantic and fantastic
 - d) Gigantic and enormous

2. **Which of the following is NOT a popular kind of cookie in North America?**
 - a) Peanut butter
 - b) Chocolate chip
 - c) Oatmeal
 - d) Banana

3. **Which of the following is NOT a dictionary?**
 - a) Kingly
 - b) Merriam-Webster
 - c) Oxford
 - d) Cambridge

4. **'Cause is a short form of which word?**
 - a) Cause
 - b) Because
 - c) Cuz
 - d) Causes

5. **Jean: Chill out, Linda!**

What is Jean telling Linda to do?
 - a) to fight
 - b) to relax
 - c) to get cold
 - d) to get warm

6. When might people use the expression *take it easy*?

- a) to answer the phone
- b) to say hello
- c) when saying goodbye
- d) before going to sleep

7. Which is the best description of a frenemy?

- a) a person who is your enemy, but who you would like to be friends with
- b) a friend who always makes you angry or upset, like an enemy
- c) a friend who would never be an enemy
- d) an enemy from your past who is now your friend

8. Vince: Jamie took credit for the project.**What did Jamie do?**

- a) She took all the honour and recognition for having created the project.
- b) She did not do the project.
- c) She did not take the honour for having created the project.
- d) She created the project, but said that she didn't.

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