

Catch Word #94 – Clipped words

Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone out there. This is Maura.

Harp: And Harp.

Maura: And we're here at Culips English learning podcast.

Harp: And we're bringing you another fantastic English podcast. Make sure you go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there, you can find all our older episodes. As well, you can become a member and then you have access to our learning materials. And for each episode, we have a learning material, which includes a transcript, a detailed explanation, and even a quiz.

Maura: Right. You can also check us out on Facebook. Our Facebook page has been pretty active lately and I really love hearing from people and being able to talk to people a bit because it's nice to know that you're out there listening.

Harp: Yeah. Lots of activity on the Facebook page. It's great!

Maura: So, don't forget to check all that out. Today's episode is a Catch Word episode, and that's where we look at different slang or expressions, and we give you all kinds of examples and explanations to help you better understand them.

Harp: Yes. And today we're doing a little bit of a different Catch Word.

Maura: Yeah, we're going to look at **abbreviations**.

Harp: **Abbreviations**? That's a big word.

Maura: It's funny because it's such a big word, but an **abbreviation** is actually a short form of a word, so any word that is used in a short way. This can be done through just making it shorter or you might use acronyms; that might be familiar to some people out here, or initials. So, an **abbreviation** is just a way to make word shorter.

Harp: It's a big word to make other words shorter.

Maura: It is a long word, it's pretty funny actually. But, like I said, there are all kinds of **abbreviations**, but today we're just gonna talk about one kind of an **abbreviation**.

Harp: What kind of **abbreviation** are we going to look at today?

- Maura: We're gonna talk about words that aren't said completely, so that the last one or two syllables is dropped. We don't say the last one or two syllables. We just say the beginning of the word, and everyone understands the full word anyway.
- Harp: OK, so today we're going to look at words that we're gonna shorten by cutting out the last couple syllables.
- Maura: Yep. These kinds of **abbreviations** are also called **clipped words**, because, I suppose, you kind of clip off the last part of the word and you don't say it.
- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: Something else we should point out is that these kinds of **abbreviations** are not very professional and so you wouldn't use them in any kind of professional way or in some kind of formal writing.
- Harp: No, they're very casual, to be used with your friends. It's not a good idea to use these at work or with your boss.
- Maura: Yeah, in fact, most of them aren't usually written. If you check in a dictionary, sometimes they're not even there, because they're slang terms and not all slang terms are there.
- Harp: Yeah, they're just words you could hear on a TV show or in a movie or on the streets in Montreal or in Canada.
- Maura: Yup. And if you're texting or writing a letter to your friend, of course you can spell words and write however you want. So there, you might see them written as well, but generally they're not written.
- Harp: No, usually we just say them.
- Maura: All right, so now that we've introduced you to these kinds of **abbreviations**, we're going to tell you a story. We're going to act out a little story for you and it's a bit of a different format than we usually do, if you're a regular Culips listener.
- Harp: Yeah. So we'll give you a little conversation where we use some of these words and then we'll explain them after.
- Maura: Right. So **keep your ear out** for all of these kinds of **abbreviations**. Maybe you'll understand them and maybe you'll be confused by some of them, but after we're done the story, then we'll explain them all to you.
- Harp: Yes. So we're gonna give you a little story where a friend is showing her pictures from a recent trip that she took. So get ready to listen really closely.

Maura: OK, here goes our story.

Harp: Hey, how are you?

Maura: Oh, I'm good, good. How are you?

Harp: Good. When did you get back from your vacation?

Maura: I got back just last night. I'm really tired.

Harp: Oh, you must be!

Maura: Yeah. I still can't believe I'm back, and back to work. You know, it's rough.

Harp: It was a three-week vacation, I'm sure it's tough to be back.

Maura: Oh, yeah, yeah. It's hard, but it was a really great time in Europe. I mean, I saw, like, three different countries. I...oh, it was just great.

Harp: Oh, you have to show me your pictures.

Maura: Actually, I just uploaded my **pics** to Facebook, like, a few minutes ago. I can show you them now, I'm on break.

Harp: Oh, that'd be great.

Maura: OK, cool. **Grab a seat**. OK, so here's the first picture. So, this was the first meal that we had when we got to Italy.

Harp: Wow.

Maura: Yep. I think we were in Rome, and we went to this **cute little pizza place**. It was **delish**.

Harp: It looks amazing.

Maura: It was. It was so good. That pizza did not last long.

Harp: I'm sure.

Maura: Yeah, it was really good. All of the food was actually excellent. Um, OK, let's look at the next picture. Oh, and this is when we went fishing.

Harp: Oh, you went fishing in Italy?

Maura: Actually, yeah, we visited my cousin, who's been living there for about six months, and they took us to this little place and we caught this fish. Here, let me show you the next picture.

Harp: Wow. That fish is so big.

Maura: Yup. It was **a beaut**. I was pretty proud of it.

Harp: You should be.

Maura: Yep. It was pretty fun. It was good. Um, OK, let's look at the next one. Oh, and then, you'll never believe it.

Harp: Tell me.

Maura: Well, do you see the man next to me in the picture?

Harp: Yeah, who is that?

Maura: It's my **prof** from university. I just ran into him, walking around the streets.

Harp: No.

Maura: Yeah, pretty crazy, eh?

Harp: That's so crazy.

Maura: Yeah, so I asked him to take a picture with me because it was just such a coinkydink. And then we moved on to France. We stayed around the coast, you know, we spent some time in Nice.

Harp: Oh, these pictures are beautiful.

Maura: Yeah. And then, oh, yeah, this was our hotel.

Harp: Beautiful.

Maura: Oh yeah, It was **fab**. It was awesome.

Harp: It looks so cool.

Maura: Yeah, it was super nice and not even that expensive. I was happy we found it.

Harp: That's great.

Maura: And, oh, well that's all I've uploaded so far. There are a little bit more from when we went to Spain, too, but, yeah, we did all kinds of different stuff.

Harp: It looks like it was fun trip.

Maura:	Yup, it was. And I'll show you the pictures from Spain when I get them because I think that was my fave .
Harp:	Oh yeah, I love Spain as well.
Maura:	Yeah, yeah. I had a great time. Well, I guess we better get back to work.
Harp:	Back to the grind.
Maura:	See ya later.
Harp:	Bye.

Harp: OK, so we went through a lot of **abbreviations** in that conversation.

Maura: We definitely did. So let's go over them. We'll just make a list for you of all of the **abbreviations** that we used in that little conversation.

Harp: All right. The first one was **pics**.

Maura: Yes. And the second one was **delish**.

Harp: And the third one was **a beaut**.

Maura: And number four was **prof**.

Harp: Number five was **fab**.

Maura: And number six was **fave**.

Harp: All right. Let's explain all these now.

Maura: Let's get down to it. So, the first one was **pics**, which sounds a lot like the verb *to pick*, but it's not related to that at all.

Harp: No. **Pics** is short for *pictures*.

Maura: Exactly. Yup, that's it. I think this one is a more recent **abbreviation** and developed because people were always posting pictures online and on social networking sites, and then people started referring to their pictures as **pics**.

Harp: Yeah. It's recent to say, "Oh, look at my **pics**," "Oh, I uploaded some **pics**."

Maura: Yup. So, let's give one more short dialogue example with **pics**.

Harp: Sounds good. Let's do it.

Maura: So how was your visit with your family?

Harp: It was so good.

Maura: Yeah? And how's your niece?

Harp: She's adorable, as she always is.

Maura: Aw, that's fun. What'd you do?

Harp: We took her to the zoo and she loved it there.

Maura: Aw, cool.

Harp: Here, I have some **pics** on my phone. Let me show you.

Maura: OK, let me see. Oh, wow, she is cute. Wow.

Harp: She's cute and she's getting so big so fast.

Maura: Yeah, she's really photogenic.

Harp: Yeah, she looks adorable in all these **pics**.

Maura: OK. So there's another example where you might use **pics** to talk about pictures.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: Now, the second **abbreviation** we used was...

Harp: ***Delish.***

Maura: Oh yes, ***delish***. Which is the **abbreviation** of what word, Harp?

Harp: Delicious.

Maura: Yes, delicious. I guess it's a long word, so we might want to shorten it.

Harp: Yup. I love this word because I love food, so when something's delicious, I love being able to say, "Oh, this is so ***delish***."

Maura: Yeah. I was doing a lot of research online about these terms, and people have strong feelings about this word, ***delish***. Some people said, 'Oh, I don't use it.' And other people said, "Oh, I love using this word. It's so fun."

Harp: I definitely love using this word.

Maura: Yeah, it's fun. So, **delish** is an **abbreviation** of *delicious*. Let's give you one more example.

Harp: Hey, did you try that new French restaurant at the corner?

Maura: I did, I did, this past weekend.

Harp: And?

Maura: It's **delish**. It's so good. You gotta go.

Harp: I will go for sure.

Maura: Oh yeah, it's so good. Check it out soon. **Mmm!**

Maura: So, there's **delish**, just like *delicious*, it can be used to describe anything related to food that tastes good.

Harp: Yes, when it's good, it's **delish**.

Maura: And the next word, the next **abbreviation**, is to call something **a beaut**.

Harp: **A beaut**.

Maura: Yup. She's **a real beaut**. And **beaut** is short form for *beauty*.

Harp: Yes, but this is two words here we're saying: **a beaut**.

Maura: Right. And the word that's made shorter is *beauty* and we say **beaut**. So we call something **a beaut**. Now, obviously, this means that something is beautiful, lovely, nice, great, all of those good things that are associated with beauty.

Harp: But I would never use this expression for a person.

Maura: Yes, I wouldn't either. I wouldn't use it for, come to think of it, a lot of things.

Harp: It's very specific. For me, I would use it about cars.

Maura: Yup, people would say that a car is **a beaut**. They might also say a fish, like we did in our first example. So, you could call a fish **a beaut**.

Harp: Yes.

Maura: So, this word is really connected with, kind of, outdoor things, sports, hunting, cars.

Harp: Fishing.

Maura: Yeah, you wouldn't use it for a new dress or something like that.

Harp: No, exactly. For me, I use it only for cars and fishing.

Maura: Yup, it's pretty limited.

Harp: OK, so let's give an example with **a beaut**.

Maura: So, did you see Chad's new car?

Harp: No, I didn't.

Maura: Oh, it's **a beaut**. It's all red and it's a convertible. It's really sweet.

Harp: Oh, that sounds nice.

Maura: Yeah, I think he loves it.

Harp: He probably does.

Maura: OK, great. So there's an example where **a beaut** was used to describe a nice-looking car. Now, what was the next **abbreviation** we looked at?

Harp: The next **abbreviation** was **prof**.

Maura: Right. In our first story, the girl who went on the trip to Europe said that she ran into her **prof** and that would be short for *professor*.

Harp: Yes, **a prof** is *a professor*.

Maura: Yeah, and we only talk about *professors* when we're talking about university.

Harp: Yes, so a professor is a teacher, but at a university level.

Maura: Yeah. You wouldn't use this word to talk about high school or elementary school or anything like that. So, with the **abbreviation prof**, it's used to talk about professors, but not to talk to them.

Harp: Yeah, if I was in university, I would never say, "Oh, **prof**, can you answer this question?" I would say, "Oh, professor, can you help me with this question?" But if I was talking about him to my friends, I would say, "Oh, that's my **prof**."

Maura: Yup, exactly. So let's give an example of that: two students in university talking about their **profs**.

Harp: OK, let's do it.

Maura: So, did you get your schedule for next semester?

Harp: Yeah, I just got it.

Maura: Who's your **prof** for psychology?

Harp: I got Professor Truong. I'm really excited.

Maura: Yeah, yeah. I think she's a good one.

Harp: Yeah. I've heard she's a great **prof**.

Maura: Most of my **profs**, I haven't even heard of. I don't know what they'll be like.

Harp: Oh.

Maura: We'll see.

Maura: OK, so there's an example where we used **prof** to mean *professor*.

Harp: OK, let's move on to the next word, which is **fab**.

Maura: And this is a short form for *fabulous*.

Harp: *Fabulous* is a fun word, and we abbreviate it to **fab**.

Maura: Yup, it's a long one. and it makes it a bit more fun to make it short.

Harp: Yup.

Maura: So, lots of different things could be **fab**.

Harp: Really, anything.

Maura: Yeah, anything that's great and fun, people could describe it as **fab** instead. So, let's give another example with **fab**.

Harp: Let's do it.

Maura: So, what do you think of my new dress?

Harp: You look **fab**!

Maura: Aw, thanks!

Harp: It's a pretty dress on you.

Maura: Aw, thanks. I'm really excited to wear it. I bought it a few months ago and now I finally have a chance to wear it.

Harp: It **fits you like a glove**.

Maura: Aw, thanks!

Maura: So, there's an example with **fab**, anything can be **fab**. Harp, you're **fab**!

Harp: Thanks. You're **fab** too!

Maura: OK, and the last **abbreviation** that we looked at in our story was...

Harp: **Fave**.

Maura: Yes. And **fave** is short for *favourite*.

Harp: Yes.

Maura: So, **fave**, again, can be used, really, to talk about anything that is your favourite.

Harp: Yes, exactly, anything that you think is your favourite, you can say **fave**.

Maura: So you would use **fave** just like *favourite*, except...

Harp: You don't use it as an adjective.

Maura: You wouldn't say, "That's my **fave** movie" or "You're my **fave** person." You would just say, "That's my **fave**" or "He's my **fave**" and leave it at that.

Harp: Yes.

Maura: So let's give an example now with **fave**.

Harp: Let's do it.

Harp: Hey, did you decide what you're gonna bring to the potluck this weekend?

Maura: Yes. I'm gonna bring my **Nanaimo bars**.

Harp: They're my **fave**.

Maura: Oh, good. I can't wait for you to try them.

Harp: I love **Nanaimo bars** and yours are so good.

Maura: Well, thanks. I look forward to you eating them.

Harp: I look forward to eating them.

Maura: OK, so there is our last example with one of our **abbreviations**, which was **fave**.

Harp: OK, so to wrap this up, let's go through all of these **abbreviations** one more time.

Maura: So, our first **abbreviation** that we looked at was **pics** for *pictures*.

Harp: Yes, and then we did **delish** for *delicious*.

Maura: Next was **a beaut**, which is short for *a beauty*.

Harp: And then **prof** for *professor*.

Maura: Then there was **fab** for *fabulous*.

Harp: And my favourite, **fave** for *favourite*.

Maura: Nice. So, these are some of the most common, kind of, short-form **abbreviations** that we could come up with, but we're gonna do even more episodes about different kinds of **abbreviations**, because there's a lot of online texting **abbreviations** and those are actually starting to be spoken.

Harp: Yes, there are so many **abbreviations** out there that we can talk about.

Maura: Yes. So if you're interested in this, there are more episodes to come.

Harp: Keep on listening.

Maura: Keep on listening, and don't forget to go to our website, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. Check us out, become a member, where you can have access to the transcript, more detailed explanations, and a quiz for each of our episodes.

Harp: And go to iTunes and rate us, and Facebook and like us. And if you love us, donate a little.

Maura: And for those who've donated. Thanks so much!

Harp: That's it for us today, and we'll talk to you soon.

Maura: We'll be talking to you later. Bye!

Harp: Bye everyone!

Detailed Explanation

Abbreviations/Clipped words

There are all kinds of **abbreviations**. Every kind of **abbreviation** is a way to make a word shorter.

Here is a list of some of the different kinds of **abbreviations** that happen in English:

- **Clipped words** – such as the ones discussed in this episode
- **Contractions** – such as *can't* for *cannot* or *where's* for *where is*
- **Acronyms** – such as *scuba* for *self-contained underwater breathing apparatus*
- **Initialisms** – such as *USA* for *United States of America*
- **Apheses** (the loss of a vowel sound at the start of a word) – such as *lone* for *alone*
- **Syllabic abbreviations** – such as *Interpol* for *International Police*
- **Portmanteaus** or **blended words** – such as *fantabulous* for *fantastic and fabulous* (We already did an episode on this kind of abbreviation! Type “Word Blends” into the search bar at Culips.com to find it.)

The **abbreviation** of the word **abbreviation** is **abbrev** or **abbr.**

This episode is about **clipped words**, which are words in which the last one or two syllables at the end have been dropped. This is done when the word can be understood without saying the whole word. This is only appropriate for certain words, and which words can be clipped can depend on where you are. In this episode, we chose what we thought are some of the most common and widespread clipped words.

To keep an ear out

If someone is **keeping an ear out**, this means they are listening for something to be said or to happen. This could be something that is going to happen very soon, within moments, or something that might be heard in the next couple weeks or months.

The possible origin for **to keep an ear out** is related to walking through a forest or other natural area. In the cold winter, people wear hats or other head coverings to stay warm, but you still need to actually **keep an ear out**, or uncovered, so you can hear if there are any animals around you.

Now, of course, **to keep an ear out** just means to prepare to hear something. You might also hear **to keep your ears open**, which has the same meaning.

Here are a couple more examples:

Harry: If you're listening to the radio tonight, **keep an ear out** for our new song. They said they're going to play it!

Sophie: Wow! I definitely will.

Luke: Keep your ears open for the doorbell, because our guests should start arriving soon.
Oscar: You're right. I should turn down the music.

To grab a seat

This expression, **to grab a seat**, is a very casual way to say to find a place to sit and then sit down. When you enter a room and someone invites you to sit down, using any available chair in the room, this expression can be used.

To grab actually means to quickly take, and for this reason, grabbing something can sometimes be rude. When people use *to grab* in an expression like this one, it is not rude. There are a variety of ways that *to grab* can be used in an expression, such as grabbing food or other items.

Here are a couple more examples with *to grab* used as part of an expression:

Greg: Let's grab a spot to sit and then get some popcorn.
Justine: Good idea! I'll stay here, and save the seats while you go get it.

Kevin: I'll probably grab a bite to eat later this afternoon.
Adam: OK. We'll have dinner later then.

A cute little something

Cute means attractive and small, and *little* means small in size. You probably already knew these definitions! The reason **a cute little something** is included here is because these are words that are often said together. People often call something **a cute little [whatever]** when it is exactly that: cute and little.

In this episode, Maura describes a restaurant as **a cute little restaurant**. You can describe things, people, or places like this. Here's another example:

Nate: My four-year-old cousin is coming to visit. He's such **a cute little guy**.
Manuel: Oh! Have fun with him.

Pic

Pic is a word that became more popular as it was increasingly used online in place of the word *picture*. Most dictionaries say that **pic** is an old word, from the 1800s, but arguably, it wasn't commonly spoken until recent years.

Pic started out being written online in place of *picture* or *photo*, and now it's being spoken in conversation as well. As with most new vocabulary and slang, **pic** is most often said by younger people. Because it was popularized online, **pic** often refers specifically to a photo that is visible on a computer and/or posted on the Internet. It is also possible to use the plural, **pics**.

Delish

Delish is an abbreviated form of *delicious*. Its first noted use was about 100 years ago. There are two different possibilities for the pronunciation of **delish**, and also for *delicious*. The difference in pronunciation is in the first syllable. The first syllable in these words is usually said with a short e, but the first syllable can also be pronounced with a long e for emphasis, emphasizing just how delicious something is.

In this episode, we almost always say **delish** with the long e pronunciation. We didn't plan on doing this, but emphasizing how delicious the food was just came naturally to us!

A beaut

When something is called **a beaut**, this is always short for *a beauty*. The most important note about this clipped word is what it is used to describe. As we say in this episode, in Canada, **a beaut** often refers to cars or other vehicles, or to catches in fishing or hunting.

A beaut has different uses and meanings depending on where you are speaking English. This expression is slightly different in Australia and the UK.

Prof

Prof is the abbreviation of *professor*. Sometimes you might also see this written with a period at the end. **Prof.** with a period follows the style of other honorifics in Canadian and American English, like *Mr.* or *Mrs.*

Prof is used to talk about professors at a university, but it is not typically used to speak to them. Here are a couple of examples to demonstrate this:

CORRECT:

Nancy: I don't know who my **prof** is gonna be for my calculus course next semester.

Bette: I guess you'll have to wait and see.

INCORRECT:

Brain: Hello, **Prof** Jones. Could I ask you a question?

Professor Jones: Sure.

Fab

Possibly because *fabulous* is such a long word, people sometimes shorten it to **fab**. People especially tend to use this word when they are very excited about something that is very fabulous. **Fab** is most often used on its own and does not usually come before a noun, although it can in some cases.

Here's an example to show the difference in use:

Hannah: Trish, I love your pants. They're so **fab**.

Kylie: Yeah, where'd you get those **fab** pants, Trish?

Fave

Here's another clipped word: **fave**, short for *favourite*. This one has been around for a while, first noted in the early 1900s, but it's also become more popular with the use of the Internet. Like *fab*, **fave** is not often used before a noun as an adjective. **Fave** is usually used as a noun, like *my favourite*, *your favourite*, or *their favourite*.

Here's an example with **fave**:

Sally: Which podcasts do you listen to?

Nicole: I listen to a few different ones, but Culips is my **fave**.

Mmm

Mmm is not actually a word. It represents a sound. This sound is written or said to express that something tastes very good and that you are enjoying eating it. **Mmm** is often written with three *m*'s, but extra *m*'s can also be added to show that the sound is long.

Mmm is used in this episode during an example with the word *delish*. It makes sense, as these are both connected to tasty food. Here's another example with **mmm**:

Brad: **Mmm**, you gotta have a bite of this hamburger. It's so good! **Mmm**!

Carl: **Mmm**! You're right! That is good.

To fit like a glove

When something **fits like a glove**, it fits very well. A glove on a hand should fit just right, matching the size and shape of your hand and fingers. When something **fits like a glove**, it fits the person's body perfectly.

In one of our examples in this episode, Harp tells Maura that a dress **fits her like a glove**. This means that the dress fits her very well, as if the dress were made especially for her body.

Here's one more example with **to fit like a glove**:

Sarah: Fred's new suit **fits him like a glove**. It looks really great.

Mike: Yeah. Sometimes it's worth spending the extra money on good quality.

Nanaimo bars

Nanaimo bars are a dessert. This dessert was created in the Canadian province of British Columbia and is now known across the country and into the United States. Nanaimo is a city in British Columbia on the West Coast, where this dessert first became popular. A woman named Mabel Jenkins is credited with creating this dessert. Similar desserts also exist in other parts of the world and go by other names.

A **Nanaimo bar** has a wafer layer on the bottom, a custard butter icing layer in the middle, and a chocolate layer on top. You do not need to cook this dessert, and it can be served cold or at room temperature. Mmm!

Quiz

1. **Becky: We should _____ for any strange sounds.**

Please fill in the blank.

- a) keep an eye out
 - b) keep an ear out
 - c) try to hear
 - d) keep an ear open
2. **Which of the following is a casual way to tell someone to find a place to sit?**
- a) Grab a seat.
 - b) Get sitting.
 - c) Grab and sit.
 - d) Grab the seat.
3. **Which of the following two adjectives are most often said together (without a comma in between), as discussed in the detailed explanation?**
- a) cute small
 - b) cute large
 - c) cute little
 - d) cute petite
4. **When should you NOT use *prof*?**
- a) when talking about a professor
 - b) when you are at university
 - c) when addressing a professor
 - d) when you are in class
5. **What does *mmm* mean?**
- a) Someone is enjoying some food.
 - b) Someone is not enjoying some food.
 - c) Someone is sneezing.
 - d) Someone is crying.

6. Why did the abbreviation *pic* become more popular?

- a) People found *picture* difficult to pronounce.
- b) People started using cameras.
- c) The American president started using it.
- d) It started being used online.

7. What is important to note about the words *delish* and *delicious*?

- a) They do not mean the same thing.
- b) There can be different pronunciations of the first syllable.
- c) The *sh* sound is pronounced like a *k*.
- d) There is nothing important to note.

8. If something fits you like a glove, what does that mean?

- a) It does not fit you very well.
- b) It fits you very well.
- c) It is too small.
- d) It is too big.

Answers

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