

**Catch Word #122 – We're just shooting the breeze****Transcript**

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura.

Harp: And we're here at Culips bringing you another exciting episode.

Maura: And, if you haven't been to our website, what are you waiting for? It's Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Harp: Yeah, because at our website, you can find all our older episodes. You can also become a member.

Maura: Right. And when you become a member, you help support Culips. And by supporting Culips, that enables us to keep making episodes for you. You also get transcripts for all our episodes, more detailed explanations of the expressions we use, and quizzes to test yourself.

Harp: Yeah. I would recommend that you listen once without the transcript and then the second time listen with the transcript to see how much you understood.

Maura: That really is an interesting exercise when you're learning another language, because it can surprise you to learn new words and understand things that you didn't understand the first time.

Harp: Exactly. So today we're here with a Catch Word podcast. And that's where we look at some expressions, we explain them, we give you examples.

Maura: Right. So today, for this Catch Word episode, we're going to talk about expressions that mean to talk or chat about nothing really important. You know, sometimes we have very important conversations and serious discussions and sometimes we talk to people about whatever, about nothing really important.

Harp: Yeah. Sometimes you just chat. Sometimes you're just having a good time not talking about anything serious or important.

Maura: So, all the expressions in today's episode mean to chat, or to talk, about nothing important.

Harp: Yeah. So we're gonna look at three different expressions that are about talking about something that's not very important.

- Maura: The first expression in this episode is ***to shoot the breeze***.
- Harp: ***To shoot the breeze***.
- Maura: Right. ***To shoot the breeze*** means to talk about stuff that isn't really important.
- Harp: Exactly. It's when you're talking to someone and it's not a substantial conversation. You're not talking about world politics, you're just talking about something kinda simple, fun, nothing important.
- Maura: So, Harp, what kinds of topics do you think are not that important? What kinda stuff?
- Harp: That's an interesting question because it **depends on** who the person is. But if I'm telling you about how I went shopping and I bought some new clothes and a little story about when I was shopping, it's nothing too important, it's...
- Maura: Right. Or maybe you're telling a friend about what you had for lunch today or a delicious cake that you made last night; just some little story about your life that doesn't affect anyone, really.
- Harp: Yeah. When you **shoot the breeze**, it means you're just having a simple conversation about something that's not very important.
- Maura: Right. And the origin of this expression is really interesting.
- Harp: Yeah. I thought it was really interesting as well.
- Maura: It **has to do with** cowboys. Now, way back in the Wild West, when cowboys didn't have anything to do, they would go out into an empty field and they would take their guns and they would shoot their guns into the air. And really, the air is like wind, and *breeze* is another word for wind. So, the cowboys would actually use their guns to shoot into the breeze. And they weren't trying to kill anyone, they weren't trying to scare anyone, there was no reason for shooting, they just did it because they were bored.
- Harp: Exactly. So when you say ***to shoot the breeze***, again, you're talking about a conversation that's not important.
- Maura: That's it. So, let's give an example with this expression.
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|--------|--|
| Harp:  | Linda, you're finally off the phone. Great! Let's order pizza.                                 |
| Maura: | OK, yeah. Sorry about that. I was just <b>shooting the breeze</b> with my friend on the phone. |

Harp: No problem, but I'm **starving**.  
Maura: Yeah. I tried to get off the phone but my friend could just talk to me for hours.  
Harp: No problem.

Maura: So, there is an example where one person was **shooting the breeze** with a friend, which means they weren't talking about anything really important.  
Harp: Exactly. Let's give one more example.  
Maura: All right.

Maura: So you'll never guess who I ran into the other day.  
Harp: Who?  
Maura: Brian from high school.  
Harp: Oh yeah? How's he doing?  
Maura: Yeah, he's doing pretty good. You know, **same old** Brian.  
Harp: Yeah. **Same old** Brian.  
Maura: Yeah. He's still **as chatty as ever**. Before I knew it, we were **shooting the breeze** like the old days.  
Harp: Aw, gotta love that guy.  
Maura: Yeah. I got his number so maybe we'll all go for a drink.  
Harp: That would be fun.

Maura: So, there's an example where a friend and Brian were **shooting the breeze** like the old days when they used to just chat about whatever.  
Harp: Exactly. They were just having a nice casual conversation, nothing important, just like they used to.  
Maura: Right. So, let's look at another expression that also means to talk about nothing really important.  
Harp: All right. Our second expression is **to chitchat**.  
Maura: Right. **To chitchat**. You know, I find this word funny, because most of the time with slang and expressions, we like to make things shorter. But this expression, **to chitchat**, actually makes it longer.

- Harp: Exactly. Because it comes from *chat*.
- Maura: Right. And *chat* comes from *chatter*. Just like in the name of our other episode, *Chatterbox*.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: So, you can say that people are **chitchatting**. That just means that they're chatting about nothing important.
- Harp: Exactly. When they **chitchat**, it's something that's not serious. It's not an important conversation. They're just having fun.
- Maura: You know, it's funny because earlier I asked you what kind of topics would be not very important or not serious, but it's true that it **depends** who's talking. Because you might **overhear** some people talking and think, "Oh, they're just **shooting the breeze**. That's not important." But to the people talking, it might feel very important.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. And if it's someone who always has drama going on in their life, they might think it's super important. But if you're the friend listening, it could just be **chitchat** to you.
- Maura: That is definitely true. So, let's give one example with **chitchat**.
- Harp: Let's do it.

- Harp: Hey, Sarah. How's the new job?
- Maura: Well, it's all right I guess.
- Harp: Oh no. What's wrong?
- Maura: Well, nothing's wrong. It's pretty easy. But it doesn't seem like anyone works very hard at my office.
- Harp: Oh yeah?
- Maura: Yeah. It just seems like all day people are **chitchatting** and it's pretty distracting for me, too.
- Harp: Oh, that's interesting. That's weird.
- Maura: Yeah, well, we'll see how it goes.

- Maura: So there is an example where someone started a new job and they've noticed that a lot of people around them are **chitchatting**. And this doesn't mean that their new colleagues are talking about important business matters. This means that they're talking about their personal life, the weather, or what they saw on TV last night.
- Harp: Yeah. They're definitely not talking about business when they're just **chitchatting**.
- Maura: Right. So, we're going to move on to another expression that also means to talk about nothing important.
- Harp: Yes. The next expression is **to chew the fat**.
- Maura: Right. **To chew the fat**.
- Harp: Interesting expression, **to chew the fat**. But basically, it means the exact same thing: when you talk about something that's not important.
- Maura: Right. **To chew the fat**. Now, if you want to know more about the origins of this expression, we'll be explaining it more in the learning materials.
- Harp: Yeah. But the meaning is the same. **To chew the fat** means when you talk about something and it's not important. It's just a fun, simple conversation.
- Maura: Right. So, let's do an example now with **to chew the fat**.

- Maura: So what did you do on the weekend, Gloria?
- Harp: Not much. Saturday I went to see a movie, but Sunday I hung out with my mom all day.
- Maura: That's nice. What did you do?
- Harp: Not a whole heck of a lot. We just stayed at home and **chewed the fat**, caught up.
- Maura: That's nice though, to just take it easy, especially with your family.
- Harp: Yeah. It was super relaxing.

- Maura: So there's an example where a mother and daughter **chewed the fat**, which means they talked and they chatted, but they didn't talk about anything serious or important.
- Harp: Exactly.

- Maura: Now, there are actually a ton of expressions to talk about talking about nothing important. And **depending on** where you are, they might use different expressions. But we can mention a couple more that you might hear.
- Harp: Yeah. You might hear **to gab**.
- Maura: Right. **To gab** also means to talk, **to chitchat** about nothing really important. And another one is...
- Harp: **To yak**.
- Maura: Right. **To yak**, which also means to talk about nothing important. We'll give you one last example and this time we'll use **to gab** and **to yak**.
- Harp: Yes. Let's do it, Maura.

- Harp: I ran into Sally at the mall on the weekend.
- Maura: Oh no. Did she see you? Did she talk to you?
- Harp: Yeah. I **was in a rush**, so I just wanted to say hi, but she just wouldn't stop **yakking** away.
- Maura: Oh man. At the office she's always walking around **gabbing** to everybody.
- Harp: That girl just doesn't stop talking.
- Maura: **Verbal diarrhea**.

- Maura: So, in that last example, we did something a little bit different than we normally do and we used **to gab** and **to yak** in one example.
- Harp: Exactly. Because they mean the same thing. And we're talking about a girl at work who didn't stop talking.
- Maura: So, let's repeat all the expressions we've used in this episode.
- Harp: All right. We started with **to shoot the breeze**.
- Maura: **To chitchat**.
- Harp: **To chew the fat**.
- Maura: And then **to gab** and **to yak**.

- Harp: Yes. So make sure you check out our website, Culips.com. That's C-U-L-I-P-S.com. And become a member, because you can see all the detailed explanations, where we explain these expressions, more, and we give you some more expressions.
- Maura: Yep. It's a great learning resource. Now, if you're on Facebook, you can also come on over there and say hi. And remember, this was a very important episode. Harp and I just weren't **shooting the breeze**.
- Harp: We were talking about important things for you.
- Maura: Exactly. So, we will talk to you soon. Bye!
- Harp: Bye everyone!

## Detailed Explanation

### To shoot the breeze

**To shoot the breeze** means to talk about things that are not very important. Strangers may **shoot the breeze** when they first meet each other, or good friends may **shoot the breeze** for hours at a time. Of course, some people might believe they are having a very important conversation, while someone else who's listening might just think they are **shooting the breeze**.

As we explain in this episode, a possible origin for this expression is back in the Wild West, a period in the later half of American history. At that time, cowboys who were feeling bored would entertain themselves by shooting their guns into the breeze, or sky. They weren't trying to hit anything, but were probably just doing it to pass the time and because it was fun. Just like talking about nothing very important helps to pass the time and is fun!

Here's another example:

Helen: Where's Maria? I need to ask her something.

Brian: She's down the street **shooting the breeze** with one of our neighbours.

Some variations of this expression include **to shoot the bull**, **to bat the breeze**, and **to fan the breeze**, although these variations aren't very common these days in Canada.

### To have to do with something

When one thing is related to another thing, we can say that one thing **has to do with** another.

The expression **to have to do with something** indicates a general connection between two or more things.

In this episode, Maura uses this expression when she says that the origin of the expression *to shoot the breeze* **has to do with** cowboys. She then explains the connection.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have to do with something**:

Donna: What do you want to talk to me about?

Andrea: It **has to do with** what happened last weekend.

Derek: What does the money **have to do with** the party?

Kevin: If I don't get enough, I won't be able to buy any decorations.

You might also hear **to have nothing to do with something** or **not to have anything to do with something**. These expressions mean that there is no connection between one thing and another.



Here's an example:

Hannah: Why are you talking about what Janet said yesterday? That **has nothing to do with** why the meeting was cancelled.

Rebecca: Are you sure? I thought they might have cancelled the meeting after Janet said that she didn't want to go. But maybe I'm wrong and it **doesn't have anything to do with** that.

### Starving

To say that you're **starving** is a common, casual way to say that you're really hungry. This is an exaggeration to emphasize just how hungry you are.

If a person is actually **starving**, they have not eaten for a long time, and some people even die from starvation. There are many expressions that exaggerate a situation, and this is one of them!

Here's one more example:

Nathan: I need to get Mitchell something to eat. He's **starving**.

Kiley: I've got some crackers in the cupboard. Do you think he'd like those?

### Same old

When the words **same** and **old** are used together as an adjective to describe a person, a place, or a thing, it means that the thing is just like it was in the past.

In this episode, in the dialogue example about Brian, Harp says, "**Same old** Brian." This means that Brian was the same as when they knew him in the past, in high school.

Here are a couple more examples with **same old**:

Edie: Are you getting back together with your ex-boyfriend?

Catherine: No way. It'd just be the **same old** problems if I did.

Lucy: It was so much fun visiting my hometown. **Same old** place as always.

Greg: Yeah, it's like travelling back in time.

Like in the last example above and the example from this episode, *it is* (the subject and the verb) are often omitted from the sentence. The expression is often said as: **Same old**

**Same old same old** is also an expression. It is used as the response to a question about life or work, because one day often feels the same as the next day.

Here's an example with **same old same old**:

Dave: How's work?

Adam: You know. **Same old same old**. Nothing ever changes at that place.

#### As chatty as ever

With this expression, the word *chatty* can be replaced with any adjective or describing word.

When a person is described as being **as chatty as ever**, it means that they have always been chatty and that they continue to be chatty now. *Chatty* means talkative.

In this episode, Maura says, "He was **as chatty as ever**" in a dialogue example. This means that Brian was known as a chatty guy in high school and he is still chatty years later.

Here are a couple more examples with **as \_\_\_\_\_ as ever**:

Oliver: How's your son doing? I haven't seen little Justin in a while.

Dean: Great! He's **as energetic as ever**!

Luke: I can't believe how disorganized this meeting is.

Manuel: I know! I thought things might have changed while I was away on vacation, but nope, it's **as crazy as ever**.

#### To overhear something or someone

**To overhear** a conversation is to unintentionally hear a conversation that you are not a part of. A person **overhears** a conversation by chance because they are close by, not because they are trying to listen to the conversation.

It's sometimes difficult to tell the difference between **to overhear** and *to eavesdrop*, which means to intentionally listen to another conversation. Sometimes a person might start off by **overhearing** a conversation, but when they hear something interesting, they begin to eavesdrop. If someone has eavesdropped, they usually say that they just **overheard**.

Here's one more example with **to overhear**:

Kelly: I couldn't help but **overhear** that Sharon is thinking of quitting her job.

Mo: I hope that's not true. You must have heard wrong. Let's try to eavesdrop on her conversations for the next few days and see if we can find out for sure.

We can usually say *to hear* in place of **to overhear** with the same meaning. Using **to overhear** emphasizes that the person did not intend to listen.

To chitchat

**To chitchat** is another way we can say to talk about nothing important. We can also simply say *to chat*. Both of these come from the word *to chatter*, which also means to talk about nothing important.

This expression is also connected to the name of our Chatterbox Culips episodes. A chatterbox is someone who talks a lot, just like Harp and I do in every episode!

Here's one more example with **to chitchat**:

Devon: Sheila and Ted have been **chitchatting** all morning!

Mike: I know. They'd better get to work soon. If the boss notices, she'll be mad.

To depend on/to depend

In English, we have many words that are followed by a preposition. You often hear **to depend** followed by *on*. At one point in this episode, Harp says, "That's an interesting question because it **depends on** who the person is." Later in the episode, Maura says, "It's true that it **depends** who's talking." So now we have an example with **depends** without *on*. So which one is right?

Both of them are correct! Harp could have said, "That's an interesting question because it **depends** who the person is," and Maura could have said, "It's true that it **depends on** who's talking." In most cases where you can say **to depend on**, you can also just say **to depend**.

But there are two cases with **to depend** when you must use *on*:

1. When **to depend** is followed by a gerund

For example: Whether I get the job **depends on** your giving me a good reference.

2. When **to depend on** means *to rely on* or *to need the support of*

For example: I **depend on** my friends a lot for help.

Here are a couple more examples with **to depend on** and **to depend**:

Mac: Are you going to come to the movies with us?

Justin: Maybe. It **depends** what's playing.

Carmen: Whether I go to the party **depends on** whether Ashley will be there.

Oscar: I heard she's coming!

To chew the fat

**To chew the fat** is another expression that means to talk about nothing important. If you image a person chewing a piece of fat, their mouth is moving just like when a person is chatting. This is one possible explanation for where this expression came from. In the past, people would chew fat and it would look like they were talking.

Here's an example with **to chew the fat**:

Vince: Sometimes I love just sitting around and **chewing the fat** like this.

Jamie: I know what you mean! It's great to chat.

A variation of this expression is **to chew the rag**, but this variation isn't as common in Canada.

To gab & to yak

There are so many ways to say that people are talking about nothing important. We must do it a lot! We gave a last example with **to gab** and **to yak** in this episode, but here's a little list of even more expressions, in addition to the expressions we already mentioned above:

- to beat your gums
- to patter
- to wag your tongue
- to jabber
- to flap your chops

To be in a rush

When someone needs to get somewhere quickly, **they're in a rush**. *To rush* is a verb that means to move urgently in a certain direction.

When someone needs to go quickly from one place to another, it's natural to say, "**I'm in a rush**." If a person simply uses the verb alone, and says, "I'm rushing," this should also be followed by where they are going, like, "I'm rushing to get to my doctor's appointment."

Here are a couple of examples of this difference:

George: I'm **rushing** to get home, because I have to make dinner for 10 people tonight!

Jackie: Wow. I hope the traffic isn't too bad.

Val: **I'm in a rush** to get home tonight! I have to make dinner for 10 people!

Frank: Hopefully there's not much traffic.

This is just like the expression *to be in a hurry*.

Verbal diarrhea

When we say that a person has **verbal diarrhea**, it means that they talk as if they cannot stop!

To say that someone has **verbal diarrhea** could mean that they talk a lot all the time or it could describe someone who talks a lot at a specific moment. It is also implied that this person is not saying anything particularly important.

In the last dialogue example in this episode, Maura says, “**Verbal diarrhea.**” This is a comment on the girl who is described as talking non-stop. When the expression **verbal diarrhea** is used in a full sentence, it is used with the verb *to have*, as in, she has **verbal diarrhea**.

Here's another example with **verbal diarrhea**:

Ben: When Jack came home from school yesterday he had **verbal diarrhea**. He just couldn't stop talking about the play they were going to put on at Christmas!

Michael: Sounds like he was really excited.

The expression **verbal diarrhea** could be considered to be a little bit impolite by some people, so make sure that you don't use it in formal situations.

## Quiz

1. Which of the following is a variation of *to shoot the breeze*?

- a) to shoot the moon
- b) to kill the breeze
- c) to shoot the bull
- d) to push the breeze

2. “How well your brain works has to do with what you eat.”

**What does this statement mean?**

- a) There is a connection between how well your brain works and what you eat.
- b) If you eat more food, your brain works better.
- c) Your brain is not connected to what you eat.
- d) If you eat less food, your brain works better.

3. “Sandy partied so hard last night. Same old Sandy.”

**What does this mean?**

- a) Sandy didn't party a lot in the past.
- b) Sandy is old, but she likes to party.
- c) Sandy parties hard and it makes her look old.
- d) Sandy liked partying in the past and she still parties hard.

4. Anne: It was fun seeing Nathan last night. He was as funny as ever.

**Which of the following is NOT true about Nathan?**

- a) Nathan is a funny guy.
- b) Nathan was funny last night.
- c) Nathan wasn't always a funny guy.
- d) Nathan was a funny guy in the past.

5. To overhear is to hear by accident. Which of the following means to intend to hear?

- a) to hear
- b) to eavesdrop
- c) to drop in
- d) to listen up

6. Which of the following expressions is not related to *to chitchat*?
- a) to chat
  - b) to chatter
  - c) a chatterbox
  - d) chattel
7. Which of the following sentences is NOT grammatically correct?
- a) It will depend whether or not we see each other.
  - b) They depend on each other a lot.
  - c) My success depends your believing in me.
  - d) That depends on the situation.
8. Which of the following would sound unnatural on its own?
- a) She's in a rush.
  - b) I'm rushing.
  - c) They're rushing to see each other.
  - d) He's in a hurry.
9. Myron: When Paul gets excited about an idea, he just can't stop talking about it.  
Jenna: I know what you mean. He's definitely got \_\_\_\_\_.

**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) diarrhea
- b) verbal diarrhea
- c) verbal diabetes
- d) verbatim

**Answers:**

1.c    2.a    3.d    4.c    5.b    6.d    7.c    8.b    9.b