

Real Talk #001 – In a cab

Episode description

Welcome to Culips's first Real Talk episode, where we explain practical expressions and vocabulary to help you get around in English-speaking places! In this episode, Andrew and Morag teach you extremely useful phrases for taking a cab.

Fun fact

The words *taxi* and *cab* are both shortened forms of the word *taxicab*. The world's first gasoline-powered taxicab was built by Gottlieb Daimler in 1897 in Germany. Daimler is considered a pioneer of internal-combustion engine and automobile development.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- Anywhere on the right/left is fine
- Drop me off somewhere
- Keep the change
- Could you slow down a bit?
- Do you have room for something?



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript.

Andrew: Hi, I'm Andrew.

Suzanne: Hi, it's Suzanne.

Andrew: And you are listening to Culips.

Suzanne: Yay.

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Andrew: Today, we are very excited to introduce a brand new type of episode—a Real Talk episode. And Suzanne, could you explain what a Real Talk episode is?

Suzanne: Sure. It's really fun. In Real Talk episodes, we're going to focus on expressions, practical expressions, that you use every day. And in today's episode, we're going to look at how to take a cab. Things you'll say when you would take a cab and speak to the driver.

Andrew: Exactly. So this is something a lot of people do very often is take a cab or take a taxi. So first, you will hear a dialogue where a character named Lisa is taking a taxi home from work, and she needs to give directions to the cab driver to bring her to her apartments. So take a listen to this dialogue. And afterwards, we will discuss it and dissect it, and talk about the key expressions that Lisa uses to make sure she gets home OK.

Lisa: Hey there.

Cab driver: Hey, where are you going today?

Lisa: Uh, 5th and Franklin, please.

Cab driver: No problem. So here we are—5th and Franklin.

Lisa: Oh, great. My apartment is just down there. Can you keep going a little bit?

Cab driver: Sure.

Lisa: OK. Make a right on this side street coming up.

Cab driver: OK. No problem.

Lisa: And it's just up here on the left. I'm in this brick building.

Cab driver: Uh, OK.

Lisa: You can pull over right here.

Cab driver: Sure thing. OK. So \$16, please.

Lisa: Here's a 20. **Keep the change.**

Cab driver: Right, thanks. Have a nice day.

Lisa: You too. Bye.

Andrew: OK. So we just heard a conversation between Lisa and the taxi driver, and now, we are going to talk about some of the key expressions that were used in this conversation. So the first key expression is *5th and Franklin, please*. Lisa gets into the cab, and she tells the driver, "5th and Franklin, please." Suzanne, what does this mean?

Suzanne: So Lisa is telling the cab driver the two streets that come to an intersection where her house or her apartment building is located.

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Suzanne: So we don't know for sure if her apartment is on Franklin or on 5th, but it's in the general area. It's right near one of those streets, so she's giving him the best cross section to then get to her more specific apartment number and street.

Andrew: Exactly. So you can give a cab driver an exact address. You could say, "Take me to 1234 Franklin Street, please." But it's more common to give an intersection, the place where two streets cross. And in the dialogue we heard, it was 5th Avenue and Franklin Street, and this is a very common way to direct your cab driver.

Suzanne: Yes. This is a very common and good way to give directions to a cab driver or anyone that's giving you a ride home.

Andrew: OK. Let's look at the second key expression today: *it's just down there. Can you keep going a bit?* When the cab arrives at the intersection, 5th and

Franklin, Lisa gives the additional instructions, "It's just down there. Can you keep going a bit?" And what does this mean, Suzanne?

Suzanne: This means that we haven't quite approached where her apartment is. They're not far away, but they're far away enough that they have more directions coming. So *just down there* is a polite way to let the cab driver know that we haven't quite reached it. There's still a bit more to go. *Can you keep going a little bit?* is also another polite way to make sure that the cab driver keeps going in that direction because there's more directions to come.

Andrew: Mmhmm. So the cab is in the vicinity of where Lisa wants to go, but there's still a little bit more to go. And this is a way to communicate that she wants the driver to keep going so that she's not let off on the corner of 5th and Franklin.

Suzanne: Exactly. She wants to get her money's worth.

Andrew: Yes. OK, very good. What is the next key expression, Suzanne?

Suzanne: So the next key expression is when Lisa tells the cab driver *to make a right*. How would you explain what this one means, Andrew?

Andrew: Well, this one is fairly straightforward. If you make a right on a street, you are making a right-hand turn. You are turning right onto that street. So when we're taking a taxi, this is a super useful expression. We can tell the taxi driver to "make a right" or "make a left." Alternatively, we can say, "take a right" or "take a left." They're two expressions that have the same meaning and they rhyme, so that's cool.

Suzanne: That's true. And it's in place of really saying, "turn right up here" or "turn left down there."

Andrew: Mmhmm. And that's another expression you can say too. They're all polite. They all mean the same thing.

Suzanne: Yup.

Andrew: So our next one is *it's just up here on the left*. Interestingly, in our second key expression, we heard Lisa say, "It's just down there." And now, she's saying, "It's just up here." So what is the difference between these two, *down there* and *up here*? It can be confusing.

Suzanne: It can be confusing, but what she means is, when she's referring to *up here*, it means that she's closer to the actual destination. And *just up here* is narrowing the vicinity even more, and they're kind of closing in on, or getting closer to, the location. And *up here* is a direction where you're going. So it's

meaning to keep going up in this direction that we're travelling, and *here* means that it's close to her. So she's pointing to here on the left, as opposed to there, where it would be further from her.

Andrew: Exactly. So that's a very nice explanation. I think we would use the expression *it's down there* when something is farther away from us, and we would say *it's up here* when something is closer to us.

Suzanne: Yes.

Andrew: I think that's a nice distinction between the two. And in both of those examples, we heard Lisa say "just." "It's just down there," and "it's just up here." And there's many reasons why we use this word *just*. One of them is to sound more polite. It's not being as direct. You're not ordering the taxi driver, so to speak, when you say "just." It makes you sound very polite. And can you think of any other reasons why we'd say "just," Suzanne?

Suzanne: Yeah. I think we would say "just" as well to get more specific. Saying "it's down there" could kind of mean a bunch of different places. It could mean on the corner. It could mean go down there, and turn around to the left. It's a little bit more general. Saying "it's just down there" kind of points you in a tighter vicinity. It brings you to a point.

Andrew: You're telling the driver that it's not too far away.

Suzanne: Yeah

Andrew: It's close.

Suzanne: Don't worry. You don't have to go too far. It's just a little bit more. Just down there.

Andrew: Right. So you're telling the driver that we're almost there. Don't drive too fast; we might pass it.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: OK. Very good. And what is our last key expression for this episode?

Suzanne: The last key expression is when Lisa says, "You can pull over here"—*pull over*. And I also think about *pull up*. Sometimes you can pull up over here as well.

Andrew: Yup. Pull over. Pull up. They have the same meaning.

Suzanne: Mmhmm.

Andrew: And this is a nice, polite way to tell your taxi driver to stop, and let you out of the taxicab. So *to pull over* really means for the car to move to the side of the street and to stop. When you ask a taxi to pull over, he's not going to let you out in the middle of the street. He's going to move over to the side of the street, and let you off near the sidewalk.

Suzanne: That's the safer place.

Andrew: And this is, again, a very useful expression when you are taking a cab: *you can pull over here*.

Suzanne: And it's also useful in case you get a ride from a friend or an acquaintance from a party or something like that. You can tell them to "pull over here."

Andrew: Totally. Good. So I think we should play this dialogue one more time for all of our listeners. But before we do that, we're going to ask you some comprehension questions, some listening questions, that you can answer on your own after you've listened to this dialogue for a second time. Here they are, the comprehension questions.

Number one—when Lisa points out that she lives in this brick building, is she close to the building or far away from it?

Suzanne: The second comprehension question is why does Lisa say "just" in the dialogue? Why does she use the word *just*, as in "just down there," or "it's just up here on the left"?

Andrew: And question number three is why does Lisa say "**keep the change**" as she gets out of the taxi? OK. So here's the dialogue one more time. Listen and try to answer these questions as you are listening to the dialogue.

Lisa: Hey, there.

Cab driver: Hey, where are you going today?

Lisa: Uh, 5th and Franklin, please.

Cab driver: No problem. So here we are—5th and Franklin.

Lisa: Oh, great. My apartment is just down there. Can you keep going a little bit?

Cab driver: Sure.

Lisa: OK. Make a right on this side street coming up.

Cab driver: OK. No problem.

Lisa: And it's just up here on the left. I'm in this brick building.

Cab driver: Uh, OK.

Lisa: You can pull over right here.

Cab driver: Sure thing. OK. So \$16, please.

Lisa: Here's a 20. **Keep the change.**

Cab driver: Right, thanks. Have a nice day.

Lisa: You too. Bye.

Suzanne: If you want to find out the answers for the comprehension questions, visit Culips.com, and check out our blog post with the answers to the questions.

Andrew: Exactly. And we would be happy if you answered these questions for us. You can send us your answers. We will take a look for you, and tell you if you are correct or if there's something you should change to make your answers better.

Well, thank you for listening everyone. We really hope that you enjoyed this first Real Talk episode. If you find this kind of episode useful, please let us know. You can reach us through our Facebook page or our website, Culips.com. And again, make sure to check out the website because it's the place where you can learn more about becoming a Culips member. All right, Suzanne, we'll talk to you next time.

Suzanne: All right, Andrew. Thanks everyone.

Andrew: Bye.

Suzanne: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Anywhere on the right/ left is fine

Anywhere on the right is fine or ***anywhere on the left is fine*** is a useful phrase when someone is driving you somewhere. It is a common way to let a cab driver know that you would like to get out of the cab right away, and on which side of the street. This phrase is similar to the expression *it's up here on the right/left*, which was discussed in this episode. Both ***anywhere on the right/left is fine*** and *it's up here on the right/ left* are a good way to tell a driver you've arrived at your destination.

You can also use ***anywhere on the right/left is fine*** if you want the taxicab to stop before you've reached your destination. For example, saying "excuse me, ***anywhere on the right is fine***" would be an appropriate and polite way of communicating to a cab driver that you would like them to pull over and let you out.

Here are a few more examples with ***anywhere on the right/left is fine***:

Cab driver: Is it on this block or the next one?

Annie: It's on this block. ***Anywhere on the right is fine.***

Marc sees a friend on the street and decides that he wants to get out and say hello.

Marc: Actually, can you let me out around here? ***Anywhere on the left is fine.***

Jeannie is feeling car sick and decides to walk the rest of the way home.

Jeannie: Excuse me, could you pull over? ***Anywhere on the left is fine.***

Drop me off somewhere

The phrase **drop me off somewhere** is used to tell a cab driver where you want to go. **Drop me off** should be followed by an address (eg, 1234 Fake St), an intersection (eg, Park and Bernard), or a location (eg, bus terminal). Although **drop me off somewhere** can be used as is to indicate your destination, it is more polite to add *please* or *could you* to the beginning of this phrase. For instance, saying “please **drop me off at the pool**” is more courteous than saying “**drop me off at the pool.**”

Like the expression **anywhere on the right/left is fine**, **drop me off somewhere** can also be used to give directions to the cab driver when you are close to your destination or to give the precise location you would like to be let out of the cab. For instance, you could say, “**Drop me off at the big blue house on the right.**”

Here are a few more examples with **drop me off somewhere**:

Cab driver: Good morning. Where to?

Joe: Please **drop me off at the train station downtown.**

Sarah is almost at her apartment.

Sarah: Could you **drop me off at the big red apartment building?**

Cab driver: Where are we going today?

Joanne: **Drop me off at the airport.**

Keep the change

In this episode's dialogue example, as Lisa is paying for the ride, she tells the cab driver, "**Keep the change.**" She does this because it is customary to tip your cab driver in Canada and other parts of the world. The phrase **keep the change** is commonly used in English when you are tipping someone.

The amount that you should tip a cab driver varies according to the city or country, but a safe amount in Canada is around 10% to 15%. The most common practice is to add 10% to 15% to your total, and then, round up to the nearest dollar. So if your ride comes to \$17, you can hand your cab driver \$20, and say, "**Keep the change.**" When you use the phrase **keep the change**, you are telling the cab driver to keep the full amount of money that you handed them, not to give you any change back.

Here are a few more examples with **keep the change**:

In this example, Emma tips the driver her change (ie, \$5).

Cab driver: That will be \$35.

Emma: Here's \$40. **Keep the change!**

Cab driver: Thanks a lot! Have a nice day.

In this example, Kurt tips the driver his change (ie, \$1.30).

Cab driver: So that comes to \$18.70.

Kurt: Here's \$20. **Keep the change.**

Pauline is in labour, and the cab driver gets her to the hospital very quickly while still obeying all the traffic laws. Pauline tips the driver a large amount because of her situation.

Pauline: Thank you for tonight. Here's an extra \$20. **Keep the change.**

Cab driver: That's double the fare! Wow, thank you so much. I hope everything goes well tonight. Good luck!

Could you slow down a bit?

Most cab drivers obey and respect the traffic laws. However, I'm sure you've had at least one experience where you thought the driver was going too fast. If you feel uncomfortable because the cab is speeding and being unsafe, say the phrase, "**Could you slow down a bit?**" It is a polite way of asking the cab driver to drive at a slower speed.

The phrase **could you slow down a bit?** is not just for when a cab driver is speeding. It can also be used whenever you would like the cab to go a little slower, such as if you want to see a building or landmark better.

Here are a few more examples with **could you slow down a bit?**:

Driving through New York, Deirdre's cab is passing the famous Flatiron Building.

Deirdre: Oh wow! What a beautiful building. **Could you slow down a bit?**

The cab driver is driving 20 km over the speed limit.

Allan: Excuse me, **could you slow down a bit?**

Cab driver: Oh sorry. No problem.

Driving through the countryside, Samuel notices some deer on the side of the road.

Samuel: Deer! **Could you slow down a bit, please?**

Cab driver: Sure thing, son.

Do you have room for something?

Taxicabs come in all different shapes and sizes. So if you need special accommodations, it's important to ask how much space a cab has. You can do this by using the phrase **do you have room for something?** Just substitute the word *something* for what is that you need space for in the cab. For instance, if you have two oversized suitcases that you need to bring to your destination, you would say, "**Do you have room for two oversized suitcases?**"

Imagine you are travelling with five people—some cabs in North America have enough room for five people, some do not. In this situation, you can ask the driver, "**Do you have room for five people?**" before you get into the cab.

Do you have room for something? can be used for anything that takes up physical space, such as people or objects.

Here are a couple more examples with **do you have room for something?**:

Ed and his two friends need to get from the airport to their homes. Ed is on the phone with the cab company.

Ed: I need a cab from the airport. **Do the cabs have room for three people and 4 large suitcases?**

Dispatcher: Not our normal taxis, we'll have to send a van.

Ed: That works. Thank you very much.

Amelia is walking home and pushing her toddler in a large stroller when it starts to rain. She hails a cab that is passing by.

Amelia: Hi. Could you drive us home? **Do you have room for a large stroller?**

Cab driver: I do. Hop in.

Quiz

1. What is the normal percentage to tip a cab driver?
 - a) 1% to 5%
 - b) 10% to 15%
 - c) 25% to 35%
 - d) 40% to 55%

2. When taking a taxicab, which of the following cannot be used to complete the phrase *drop me off*?
 - a) at 4034 Newcomb Ave
 - b) at my bathroom
 - c) at the Empire State Building
 - d) at the corner of Sloan and Bancroft

3. What are you asking a cab driver to do if you say, "Could you slow down a bit?"
 - a) to keep going for a bit
 - b) to reduce their speed for a bit
 - c) to drop you off in a bit
 - d) to go more quickly for a bit

4. Which of the following are courteous and polite?
 - a) Excuse me, could you slow down?
 - b) Please make a right at the light.
 - c) Could you drop me off at the airport?
 - d) all of the above

5. If you tell a cab driver to keep the change, you are telling the driver to do which of the following?
 - a) to give your change back
 - b) to calculate their tip
 - c) to give you a discount
 - d) to not give your change back

Quiz Answers

1. b 2. b 3. b 4. d 5. d

Episode credits

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