

Simplified Speech #012 – Canadian wildlife

Episode description

Have you ever wondered what kinds of animals live in Canadian cities? How about the wild animals that live in the vast wilderness of Canada? Join Andrew and Morag as they talk about Canadian wildlife in this special listener-requested Simplified Speech episode.

Fun fact

Orcas, also called killer whales, are found in all Canadian oceans. They don't have any natural predators, live in family groups called *pods*, and can grow to weigh up to 5 tonnes and measure up to 9 metres!

Expressions included in the learning materials

- To pop up
- Loud and clear
- To be bad news
- Down south/up north/out west/back east
- Leave it at that



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: Hey, everybody, I'm Andrew.

Morag: And I'm Morag.

Andrew: And you are listening to another episode of Culips.

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Andrew: Hey, Morag, how are you?

Morag: I'm doing pretty darn well, Andrew; I've had an awesome summer. How have you been doing?

Andrew: I'm doing really well also, and I have also been having a great summer.

Morag: It's just a good time.

Andrew: Yeah, it's my favourite season. It's hard for me to be sad in the summer. So, yeah, I've enjoyed it. And, you know, I'm also excited because today we are recording a listener-requested episode about Canadian wildlife.

Morag: That's a really cool topic, because we have a lot of varied wildlife in Canada. Some of it is super adorable and harmless, and some of it's kind of terrifying, so I think we've got a lot to talk about today.

Andrew: Yeah, I agree. So we're going to do a Simplified Speech episode where we have a natural conversation and we use normal, everyday vocabulary, but we speak at a slower pace than we would in our regular lives. Let's kick it off, let's start the episode. And I'm curious, Morag, what is your favourite Canadian animal?

Morag: Mmm, that's a bit of a tough one. I think it would have to be the seal.

Andrew: The seal. I wasn't expecting that answer. OK, why a seal?

- Morag: Well, I love the ocean; I'm definitely a coastal girl. And they're so cute. Oh, my God, little baby seal eyes, like they just have these giant, brown eyes and they come, and they're fat and adorable and really friendly, so if you are out on a wharf, say, on either coast, west coast or east coast—pretty sure on the east coast, definitely west—you will get these seals that come up and say hello, and just sort of **pop up**. They are the cutest things in the world, Andrew.
- Andrew: They are cute. I know, when I lived in Victoria, occasionally I would go to the harbour downtown, and there's a couple of seals that just hang out there all the time. And yeah, they come up and say hello. And they're very cute, you're right.
- Morag: They're adorable. They're also—I did a lot of kayaking when I was a kid in Victoria—and they're some of the sea creatures, when you are doing sea kayaking, that aren't scary when they come say hi. Because if you come too close to a whale, that can be kind of dangerous, but if a seal comes up and says hello, it's just nice.
- Andrew: Now, you just touched upon my favourite Canadian sea creature.
- Morag: The whale?
- Andrew: The orca whale. The killer whale.
- Morag: Oh, the orca. OK, because it has two names, yeah, the orca whale or the killer whale, and it's a sort of image of the west coast. It's used a lot in First Nations art, and is all over west coast-ey things, you know.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's a very iconic animal.
- Morag: That's a much better way of putting that. Thank you, Andrew.
- Andrew: Yeah, and it's my favourite just because it is an awesome animal. It's powerful, it's fast, it's beautiful, and very intelligent. And, yeah, when you see some orcas in the wild—which I have on a couple of occasions—it's a really amazing thing to see them up close and personal. It's just an amazing animal.
- Morag: Now, I don't know how I feel about this entirely, though, because your favourite animal eats my favourite animal.
- Andrew: Yes, it's true. It's true. If you are a seal you really, really don't like orcas, they are your enemy.
- Morag: Uh huh. No, they're **bad news**.

- Andrew: I also have a favourite land animal.
- Morag: Oh, what's that?
- Andrew: Yeah, I'm a little bit biased again, because I'm picking an iconic west coast animal, but I'm really fascinated by the spirit bear.
- Morag: OK, now, what do you mean by the spirit bear?
- Andrew: So, the spirit bear is a bear that is only found in certain areas of British Columbia. And it is just a brown bear, but it has a genetic variation that has turned it to look like a polar bear. It's white, essentially.
- Morag: Wow. I'm so surprised, I've never heard of that, and I grew up in B.C.
- Andrew: Really?
- Morag: No, I've never heard of a spirit bear. I thought you were making a joke.
- Andrew: Yeah, they're really amazing. If you go onto YouTube and you YouTube "spirit bear," you'll be able to see these pure white bears walking through the British Columbian rainforest. And it's, again, it's a really beautiful, interesting part of nature to check out.
- Morag: I can definitely imagine that would be super cool. But I think my favourite land creature probably wouldn't be a land creature, it would probably be an air—you know, bird.
- Andrew: Oh, yeah. Do you have a favourite bird?
- Morag: I also—this isn't a very iconic animal, but I love ravens. They are gorgeous, and they're so smart, the way they can imitate other sounds, other birds, other anything. They're pretty fascinating.
- Andrew: You can hear our west coast bias coming through **loud and clear** in this episode.
- Morag: Definitely. Although ravens are in the north, in the Yukon as well. There's actually more of them up there.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- So one thing that I would like to talk about quickly is that I'm living abroad right now and people often ask me about Canada, and a question that I have got several times, actually, is have I seen any penguins in Canada?
- Morag: Ha! No.

- Andrew: And, yeah, actually although Canada has Arctic—a large, large Arctic—penguins only live **down south**, they don't live in the north. So maybe this is surprising to some listeners, but we don't have any penguins in Canada.
- Morag: No, there are no penguins at the North Pole.
- Andrew: But we do have polar bears, another white bear that I'm very fond of.
- Morag: Oh, and there's also—I am obviously biased to cute things—but there is also Arctic foxes and Arctic hares, other pure white animals that are adapted to live in the snow. They're pretty cool too, and they're up in the Arctic.
- Andrew: Quickly, just before we end this, I wanted to talk about some of the Canadian wildlife that you might see in a city, because if our listeners come to visit Canada, they're more likely to visit a city. So what can we expect to see in a city?
- Morag: I was hoping we might talk about this, because there's a lot of really interesting wildlife just right outside my door. In Montreal, we get a lot of really fat squirrels, which is awesome. Then there ...
- Andrew: Big, big squirrels.
- Morag: Big squirrels. There's pigeons. And the one that I'm not used to, from the west coast, is in the city we have skunks.
- Andrew: Yeah, skunks. I've seen a couple of really big skunks in Montreal.
- Morag: They're everywhere. It's very strange to me. In the west coast, we more have racoons, so there were families of racoons living near almost every place that I lived in Victoria. But I haven't seen so many in Montreal, but we've traded them for skunks.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's true. I haven't seen any racoons in Montreal, but on the west coast, they're all over the place. And I know they're in Ontario, too.
- Morag: Racoons?
- Andrew: Yes.
- Morag: Yeah, and both of them aren't particularly nice creatures.
- Andrew: Yeah, the racoons, especially, look very cute, but they're nasty. You don't want to get too close to a racoon. Let's just leave it at that.

Morag: Oh, yeah, I definitely have been walking home late at night once or twice and met with a surprised racoon, and that is not a fun time. You just want to go in the opposite direction.

Andrew: The same thing happened to me with a skunk one time.

Morag: Ooo.

Andrew: I thought it was a cat.

Morag: Oh no.

Andrew: And then I realized, oh, this is a massive skunk.

We could talk about this topic for a long time, but I think we should cut it off here for now. I want to thank everybody for listening. And if you have any questions or comments for us, please visit our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and you can contact us there. It's also the place you can hear all of our back episodes and learn more about becoming a Culips member.

That's it for us. Talk to you next time.

Morag: See you later.

Andrew: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To pop up

To pop up is a phrasal verb that means *to appear suddenly*. This phrasal verb is used to describe when things appear quickly or expectedly, or to describe a surprising meeting or discovery.

In this episode, Morag talks about seals that **pop up** from the water. In other words, because the seal rose from deep in the water, it seemed to appear suddenly at the surface.

You can use **to pop up** to describe anything that surprises you with its appearance, even if it wasn't actually quick in its arrival. For example, if you noticed new coffee shop, you might tell your friend that you found a new coffee shop that just **popped up**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to pop up**:

Adam:	Hey, Sandy, did you have a good weekend?
Sandy:	Yeah, it was great! I got to spend almost all of it with my old friend Bill.
Adam:	Oh cool! Is he visiting for a while?
Sandy:	He was just in town for the weekend. I actually had no idea he was coming—he just popped up at my apartment on Friday night. It was a total surprise, but a really nice one!

Pat:	Hi Tina! I haven't seen you in forever—how have you been?
Tina:	I've been doing really well! Sorry I haven't been around for the last couple months. I've been really busy.
Pat:	Oh, yeah? What's been going on?
Tina:	Well, you know how I had been looking to leave my old job for a while?
Pat:	Yeah, I remember. Did you find a new one?
Tina:	Yeah, I got really lucky! I got a tip from a friend that a receptionist position popped up at her company, so I applied. I started the job a couple months ago and I love it!
Pat:	Awesome!

Loud and clear

The phrase ***loud and clear*** is used to describe something that is very clear and easy to understand. ***Loud and clear*** is mostly used to describe messages, information, facts, or other communications.

One of the common ways to use ***loud and clear*** is as way to affirm that you've understood something. For example, if your boss explains a new procedure to you, you could respond with, "**Loud and clear**" as a way of telling her that you fully understood the information.

This phrase comes from radio communication, where saying, "I read you **loud and clear**" or "Coming through **loud and clear**" are ways of letting the other person know that there is good, clear reception. While you can use ***loud and clear*** by itself, the phrase is often paired with either, "I read you" or the phrasal verb *to come through*. For example, in this episode Andrew mentions that his and Morag's bias towards west coast wildlife is "coming through **loud and clear**." In other words, it is obvious and both he and Morag prefer animals from the west coast of Canada.

Here are a couple more examples with ***loud and clear***:

Luke:	Rory, we have to remember to take out the recycling every week. We both forgot to take it out last week and now I feel like all the recycling is overtaking our kitchen!
Rory:	When is recycling day again?
Luke:	It's on Wednesday, and we have to put it out before 5:00 p.m.
Rory:	OK, I read you loud and clear . Recycling, Wednesday, before 5:00 p.m.
Luke:	Cool, thanks.

Dale:	Do you want to go out for dinner tonight?
Audrey:	Yeah, that would be lovely:
Dale:	What do you feel like having?
Audrey:	I don't know. I could go for whatever as long as it's not pizza—anything but pizza. I can't stand pizza.
Dale:	Loud and clear —no pizza!

To be bad news

When someone or something is **bad news**, it means that person or thing is dangerous, unpleasant, or likely to cause problems.

In this episode, Morag remarks that orca whales, which are also called killer whales, are **bad news**. In other words, because they are strong predators that are capable of harming humans and other animals, they are dangerous creatures.

In addition to things that are physically threatening, you can also use **to be bad news** to describe people or things that are likely to cause trouble. When people are referred to as being **bad news**, this means they have a habit of causing trouble for themselves and others.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be bad news**:

Meredith:	Did I tell you that I started dating someone new?
Nick:	No, you didn't tell me. That's exciting! Tell me about him—what's his name?
Meredith:	His name is John Smith. Do you know him?
Nick:	Well, that's a pretty common name. Is he the John Smith who works at Logan's?
Meredith:	Yeah, that's him! Isn't he a great guy? I've been having so much fun hanging out with him lately.
Nick:	I don't know, Meredith. You should be careful—that guy is bad news .
Meredith:	Why do you say that?
Nick:	He dated another friend of mine a couple of years ago. After they'd been dating for a few months, she found out he was also dating two other girls at the same time!
Meredith:	Oh wow, I guess he's not as nice as he seems!

Gillian:	Hey, Matt, do you want to come camping with us this weekend? We're heading out to Strathcona Park.
Matt:	Aren't there bears out there? I don't want to camp around those things, they're bad news !

Down south/up north/out west/back east

In both Canadian and American English, the terms **down south**, **up north**, **out west**, and **back east** are used to refer to the general geographic borders of each country. North Americans use these terms to shorten their sentences when talking about an area of either country.

Because these are very colloquial terms, their rules of use are complicated and change depending on the speaker. So, while we don't suggest you use these terms yourself, here is an explanation of how they are used by native speakers:

If someone were visiting the eastern part of Canada, instead of saying, "I'm going to the eastern part of Canada," they could say, "I'm going **back east**." Or, if you had just visited the Arctic region of Canada, you could say, "I just got back from **up north**."

The tricky thing about these terms is that they don't refer to exact locations. They are general terms that can mean slightly different things to different people. For example, one Canadian might consider Ontario to be **back east**, while another Canadian might consider **back east** to be anything east of Quebec.

Similarly, if you are in America and say you are going **out west**, that will not mean the same area as if you are in Canada and say you are going **out west**. For both countries, these terms refer to the regions of their own country. So, **out west** in Canada refers to Alberta or British Columbia, while **out west** in the United States refers to the states around the American west coast.

Here are a couple more examples with **down south**, **up north**, **out west**, and **back east**:

Amelia: Hi, Harry, nice to meet you. Are you new to Montreal?

Harry: Yes, I just moved here a month ago.

Amelia: Where are you from?

Harry: I'm from **out west**, Vancouver to be exact.

Amelia: Oh cool! Vancouver is such a pretty city.

Pam: I thought I would see more wildlife, like bears and cougars, when I came to Canada.

Curt: Oh, they don't come near the cities! You have to go **up north** to find animals like that.

Leave it at that

In this episode, Andrew uses the idiom **leave it at that** after advising everyone not to get too close to racoons. By ending his advice with, “Let’s **leave it at that**,” Andrew means that he doesn’t need to say anything else about how mean racoons are—you should just stay away from them!

Leave it at that means that there has been enough discussion on a topic or work done on something, and now it’s time to move on to another topic or activity. So when there’s nothing more to add or nothing more to do, you can use **leave it at that**.

Here are a couple more examples with **leave it at that**.

Steve:	Hey, Muriel, are you doing OK?
Muriel:	I’m fine.
Steve:	Are you sure? You don’t look so good. Are you sick?
Muriel:	Look, I’m totally fine. I’m just kinda tired—let’s just leave it at that. I don’t want to talk about it.
Steve:	OK, sorry! I didn’t mean to offend you.

Marc:	So, my mom is coming for a visit this weekend.
Helen:	Oh no! The apartment is a total mess!
Marc:	I know. We’re going to have to do some serious cleaning.
Helen:	When is she arriving?
Marc:	Tomorrow at 6:00 p.m.
Helen:	That only gives us an hour after work to get everything done!
Marc:	I know! Let’s not waste time deep cleaning the kitchen or anything. As long as we tidy and vacuum the whole apartment, I think we can leave it at that.
Helen:	Sounds like a plan!

Quiz

1. When something is bad news, it is:

- a) dangerous
- b) friendly
- c) worried
- d) cold

2. If you say something popped up, you mean that:

- a) it appears often
- b) it appeared right behind you
- c) it appeared suddenly or by surprise
- d) it made a loud sound when it appeared

3. True or false: The terms down south, up north, out west, and back east refer to general, not specific, geographical regions.

- a) true
- b) false

4. When a message is loud and clear, it is:

- a) difficult to understand
- b) easy to understand
- c) spoken loudly
- d) spoken softly

5. If you are at work and your boss says you can leave it at that, they mean you should:

- a) continue working
- b) stop working
- c) do your work faster
- d) do your work more carefully

Quiz Answers

1.a 2.c 3.a 4.b 5.b

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