

## Chatterbox #25 – Weather

### Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone, this is Harp.

Maura: And your friend Maura.

Harp: And we're here at Culips, bringing you a Chatterbox podcast

Maura: And that's on our website, culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com

Harp: Yeah, and at the website you can find the Lipservice, which gives you access to the transcript, the detailed explanations and even a quiz.

Maura: Yeah, so don't forget to go to our website and check out that and all the other fun stuff we have.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: So, what is today's chatterbox episode about?

Harp: Today's Chatterbox is about weather. We're going to start with talking about our obsession with weather, we really like to talk about it a lot here a lot.

Maura: Yeah, we love it and I'm kind of excited about this episode.

Harp: Then we're going to talk about weather-related expressions or terminology. And we're going to finish with talking about memories related to weather.

Maura: Yeah, I have a bunch of them.

Harp: Yeah, me too.

Maura: Yes, and we all like to talk about the weather, don't we?

Harp: Yes, I think everyone likes to talk about the weather.

Maura: Yeah, usually people have a comment on what the weather is doing. Either it's a beautiful day or maybe it's a grey horrible day.

Harp: Yeah, I think people like to talk about the weather because it's an easy, simple topic. So it's easy **to make small talk** about it.

- Maura: You're right. So when people are **making small talk**, when they are talking with someone whom they don't know very well or even a complete stranger, they know that they can talk about the weather and that people will have something to say about it.
- Harp: Exactly. When I'm in the elevator sometimes and someone gets on and I don't know them, but I feel awkward if we're just in silence, I'll bring up the weather. I'll say something like, "Oh, it's a beautiful day out there" or "When is the rain going to stop?" or "Oh, it's so cold."
- Maura: Yeah, yeah. That's funny 'cause I thought of an elevator as well. I think the other day someone said something to me about the weather the other day.
- Harp: Yeah.
- Maura: But it's also good if you meet someone for the first time, you might say "Hi, how are you? It's really hot out there," right, so you can say it when you're meeting someone for the first time too.
- Harp: Yeah, everyone likes to talk about the weather.
- Maura: Yeah, everyone has an opinion, especially us, right Harp?
- Harp: We love to talk about weather. Maura I think we have an obsession with talking about the weather.
- Maura: It's just so interesting, really for me, you know you never know what the weather is going to be like. Tomorrow could be a really sunny beautiful day or it could be a cold rainy day, so I like to go on to the internet and check what the weather forecast is going to be.
- Harp: Yeah, I have an iPhone and it has an **app** with the weather so I check the weather all the time.
- Maura: Oh yeah. We set up something on our computer where as soon as you sign in and there's a little icon and it tells you what's going on in the weather right now in Montreal. I love it.
- Harp: I love it. Now we typically like the summer, we like when it's warm, when it's sunny out. So that's what we get excited about.
- Maura: Yeah, for sure. When the spring starts that's a very exciting time for **you and I**. I think because the weather starts to get warmer but like I said you're never sure what the weathers going to be like. So it's fun to check because you can

be like, "Oh, in 2 days it's going to be 30 degrees," and you can start to get excited about it.

Harp: Exactly. I find we are always emailing each other when it's going to be nice out after a long winter. We get so excited.

Maura: I think that's especially true about Canada as well because our weather is so diverse. Right? Especially in Montreal, in the winter we can have minus 20 degrees easily, and in the summer we can have plus 20 degrees easily. So there is a big range of weather, especially in Canada.

Harp: Yup, we get all four seasons here. Now our obsession is about when it's warm outside, but a lot of people like it when it's cold.

Maura: I think those people are a little bit crazy.

Harp: Me too. But I know someone who loves the winter so much that he leaves Canada during the summer to go to New Zealand.

Maura: That is very strange. That is the first time I have heard something like that.

Harp: Yeah, he goes to New Zealand and goes skiing all during the Canadian summer but because of the opposite seasons it's the winter in New Zealand so when it's the summer in Canada it's the winter in New Zealand and when it's the winter here it's the summer there, so he gets winter almost all year

Maura: Yeah, it's really strange how the seasons are opposite. I always think about Christmas in Australia on the beach and it seems so strange for me and probably for most Canadians because we think of Christmas as a cold holiday.

Harp: Exactly. For sure.

Maura: Something else that I think is true is that in order to enjoy winter you have to do winter sports. Because even though I really don't enjoy winter that much, I started to like it a little bit more when I started to do some outdoor activities.

Harp: You're right, I agree. I really like snowshoeing actually.

Maura: Me too, actually. Snowshoeing or even ice skating. Yeah, just doing an outdoor activity in the winter, walking you get warm so you can enjoy being outside again and you're not sure **bundled up**, freezing going from one place to another.

Harp: No, exactly. I agree. You have **to make the best of the winter**.

- Maura: Yeah, especially in Canada it's long.
- Harp: Yeah, it's long.
- Maura: I would say that I could maybe even like winter if it were only for 2 months.
- Harp: Yeah, I think I would really like the winter then. Well, maybe not really like but like it more.
- Maura: But it just gets to be too long, after December with Christmas and New Year's and January is OK, then February is long and then March can be even worse.
- Harp: Exactly, then April starts and that's usually when spring starts happening in Canada.
- Maura: Usually. But you never know, right? Sometimes April can be cold and sometimes in April we can get a **snowstorm**. But yeah, most of the time we **cross our fingers**.
- Harp: Exactly, for sure. We hope for the best.
- Maura: You know that expression about April and May.
- Harp: What's the expression Maura?
- Maura: April showers bring May flowers.
- Harp: I like it. Yes, I have heard that before.
- Maura: Yeah, because April is supposed to be **rainy** and then hopefully in May you'll have lots of flowers blooming.
- Harp: Yup, that's the hope.
- Maura: That's the hope. I also remember a **snowstorm** in May but we won't talk about that.
- Harp: No, not this time. We're only talking about positive things. OK, so the next thing we're going to talk about in the Chatterbox today is weather-related expressions. OK, so now, like we talked about before in Canada there are 4 distinct seasons that we experience, so you use different expressions based on the season. Let's start with our **least favourite**.

- Maura: Yeah, let's **get it out of the way**. So winter...
- Harp: OK, so winter in Canada, we have a lot of snow and sometimes we have **blizzards**.
- Maura: Yeah, so a **blizzard** is basically one word that means **snow storm**. So lots and lots of snow coming down.
- Harp: In a very short amount of time.
- Maura: Yeah.
- Harp: Like maybe even 30 centimetres of snow in one day.
- Maura: Yeah and if you're inside, when you look out the window, if it's a really bad blizzard, sometimes you can't even see very far because there is so much snow coming down.
- Harp: Exactly, so **blizzard** is a word we use often in Canadian weather in winter.
- Maura: I remember a few years ago in winter there was a **blizzard** and actually I was coming with some friends to record a Culips episode and we decided that it would be fun to **dress up** so we put on snow pants, like snow suits and a hat and mitts so we really got ready to go out in the **blizzard** and we walked to record a Culips episode.
- Harp: I remember that. That was a really big **blizzard**.
- Maura: Yeah, actually it was kind of fun because it was just so exciting so much snow was coming down, barely any cars on the street. I think you had to walk on the street because the sidewalks were too covered in snow. Yeah.
- Harp: That's the one thing I do like after a **blizzard**, walking outside when there is so much snow, because it's so quiet. The snow muffles the sounds.
- Maura: Yeah and it's so white.
- Harp: OK, so the season that comes after winter is spring.
- Maura: Yeah!
- Harp: Beautiful, beautiful spring.
- Maura: So spring, yeah, let's talk about spring. Sometimes in spring we might use the word **overcast** to describe the sky.

- Harp: Yeah, when it's grey and there are a lot of clouds and it's not blue, you don't see blue skies, you could call that day **overcast**. Yeah, because traditionally in Canada, spring has a lot of rain, in some places like Vancouver, it's raining all year but in most places there's a lot of rain in the spring.
- Maura: Yeah, there's supposed to be.
- Harp: Yeah. You can use overcast at anytime in year but it often rains a lot in spring so you get more overcast days in Canada
- Maura: Yea right. That's a good point. It can really be used at any point but because in spring there is more rain than other seasons it can be **overcast**.
- Harp: OK, so let's move on to summer.
- Maura: Good.
- Harp: And in summer in Montreal, often we have **muggy** days.
- Maura: You know we were saying that we love warm weather but when it's **muggy**, I have to say I don't really enjoy it.
- Harp: Yeah, so, a **muggy** day is when it's very hot and it's very humid. So you just feel sticky and a bit uncomfortable when it's a **muggy** day.
- Maura: Right. You go outside and about 3 minutes later you start to sweat. Yeah, I remember when I was in Tokyo for the summer and that totally changed my perspective on humid, **muggy** weather. It get so humid there, I can't even describe it.
- Harp: Really?
- Maura: If you're in an air conditioned building and then you open the door, it's like being hit with a wall of warmth.
- Harp: Wow.
- Maura: But now that I'm back here, sometimes it feels **muggy** here too. And next of course is the fall.
- Harp: Yeah in the fall, we start to have **chilly** days.

- Maura: Yeah, in the fall it's the end of the summer, it's starting to get colder but it's not cold like winter. Maybe there is just some wind that gives you a bit of a shiver, you feel a little bit cold. So we describe that as **chilly**.
- Harp: Yeah, it's the time when you want to bring a sweater with you if you go outside. It's a little bit **chilly**, it's not cold yet. So those are a couple of expressions we use with different seasons in Canada. There are so many more but we thought we would give you some fun ones.
- Maura: Yeah, it's easy enough, if you go on to a weather site in English and check the weather, you'll get a lot of vocabulary describing the current weather.
- Harp: Exactly. So the next topic is going to be about our memories with weather. Maura what's one of your favourite memories with weather?
- Maura: Well, the first one that **comes to mind** is a thunderstorm because I remember when I was a little my mother would always take us out on the porch when there was a thunderstorm and we'd watch for the lightening and rain coming down. We would listen for thunder. It's kind of funny because my sisters and I all love thunderstorms. Yeah. Do you have a good memory from when you were younger?
- Harp: One of my favourite memories when I think about winter when I was young is, I was maybe 8 years old and my parents had gone to India but I was in school so I was staying with my uncle and aunt and same with my sisters we were all staying there. So there were 6 of us altogether that went to school and it was in the middle of winter and there was a huge blizzard going on outside, like you couldn't see the house across the street. There was so much snow, and we all decided that we had to go to school and I remember my uncle and aunt saying you don't have to go to school, it looks cold outside, you can stay at home it's a **snow day**.
- Maura: Wow, that's something that we should mention because you mentioned a **snow day**. And if you're not from a country that has a lot of snow, you might not be aware that in countries like Canada where there's a really strong harsh winter, sometimes it's so cold or there is so much snow coming down that school is cancelled.
- Harp: Exactly. So that was a **snow day** and we got to stay at home and watch TV and play, it was fun.
- Maura: Yeah, kids love **snow days**.
- Harp: OK, so that's about it for us today. Should we recap about what we talked about?

- Maura: Yes, so we started with talking about our interest and obsession with weather.
- Harp: Exactly and then we talked about some weather related expressions or weather terminology.
- Maura: Yeah, so you can talk about the weather in English a little bit more.
- Harp: Exactly and then we ended with some of our memories to do with weather.
- Maura: And don't forget to go to our website.
- Harp: That C-U-L-I-P-S.com
- Maura: ...where you can become a member and you can see the transcripts and the detailed explanations and even a quiz for this episode.
- Harp: Yeah, and we hope that it's a nice beautiful day wherever you are listening to us today.
- Maura: Yeah, I hope the sun is shining and it's not too **muggy** but it's a nice day.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Maura: This has been Maura.
- Harp: And Harp.
- Maura: See you next time.
- Harp: Bye everyone.



## Detailed Explanation

### To make small talk

We say that talking about the weather is good when you are **making small talk**. **To make small talk** is a conversation you have when you speak about very general topics, like the weather. People usually **make small talk** with a person or people that they don't know. When people are in an uncomfortable situation, they often try to talk to make it more comfortable, and this is small talk. Sometimes some people might think that it is rude if people do not talk.

Other **small talk** conversation topics include talking about current events, like new movies or things in the news. In certain situations, where you have been introduced to a person you might talk about anything you have in common. You can also ask where the person lives or what they do for a living.

People make small talk in public places, like elevators, like Harp says. People also **make small talk** at parties and other social events, or at work.

### Apps

Harp's phone has an **app**. An **app** is a short form of the word *application* or *application program* and it is usually used when talking about applications for cell phones or other technology. This is a very new word, but is used very often as more and more people use **apps**. Harp says that she has an **app** for checking the weather on her phone. There are **apps** for different games, Facebook, and much, much more.

### you and I v.s. you and me

When to use **I** and when to use **me** is something that confuses many Native English speakers. For this reason, it is often not a big error to mistakenly use **I** in place of **me** in some cases.

In this episode, SOMEONE says, "When the weather gets nice, it's an exciting time for **you and I**." This is incorrect. It should be, "When the weather gets nice, it's an exciting time for **you and me**. **I** is a subject and **me** is a object.

### Winter sports

Do you live in a country that experiences winter? If you do, then you probably know all the winter sport possibilities. In Canada the most popular winter sports are hockey or ice skating, skiing, downhill and cross country, and snowshoeing. There are also other less popular sports, like ice climbing. People, especially children, also like to go sledding or tobogganing.

### Bundled up

**To be bundled up** means that you are wearing a lot of warm clothing. In the cold Canadian winters people **bundle up** before they go outside. This means that they are probably wearing a winter coat, a winter hat, mittens or gloves, and a scarf. They might also be wearing snow pants and winter boots, and even long johns.

If someone's apartment is not very warm they could even **bundle up** inside. In this case, they are probably wearing warm indoor clothes and maybe covered in a blanket.

**To bundle up** is also used to wrap items together tightly. For example, you could **bundle up** sticks together with a string to hold them together.

Here is another example with **to bundle up** meaning to dress warmly.

Nancy: Hey – it's cold out there. You'd better **bundle up**.

Lori: I know. I'm just about to put on my scarf and hat.

### To make the best of (it) winter

Harp talks about **making the best of winter** in this episode. **To make the best of something** means that a situation is not good, but that you should try to find something good about it and be optimistic. For example, Joe is working at a job that he does not like. He **makes the best of it** by looking at the positive aspects of his job: he doesn't start until 10 a.m. and he gets lots of holidays.

Harp says that it is important to try **to make the best of winter** if you don't like it. **Making the best of winter** means finding all the positive points about winter. You could try out many winter sports. Winter is also a good time to drink hot chocolate and watch movies inside.

Here is another example with **to make the best of it**.

Vicky: I can't believe it's raining so much! I hate camping when it's raining.

Pete: I know. It's not fun. But let's try **to make the best of it**.

Vicky: Alright. Let's get in the tent and tell ghost stories!

### Canadian winter

Most people know that Canada is a cold country. In the southern parts of Canada we also have a warm summer. Like we say, we experience spring, summer, fall, and winter in Canada. The winter generally begins at the end of November or beginning of December and usually lasts



until March, sometimes longer. It can get very cold compared to many other countries. Remember to **bundle up!**

### To cross your fingers

There are a few different reasons why someone might **cross their fingers**. *To cross your fingers* in this episode was used in the sense that we hope something comes true. Maura and Harp speak about having a short winter and seeing good weather early in the year. And then Maura says, “We **cross our fingers**,” which means that every year we hope it will be a short winter.

A person can say ‘**cross your fingers**’ to mean that they hope for something to happen or they can actually **cross their fingers**. Check out the example below.

Henry: I hope I get that new job I applied for. **Cross your fingers**.

OR

Henry: I hope I get that new job I applied for. (Henry **crosses his fingers** at the same time he says this.)

### Weather-related expressions

There are so many expressions and terminology related to weather! Here are the ones that we mentioned and a few others.

blizzard or snow storm

snowy

snow fall

overcast or cloudy (and this can happen in any season)

rain or rainy

mild

muggy or hot and humid

chilly

cool

cold

### Least favourite

Harp and Maura both say that winter is their **least favourite** season. To say that something is your **least favourite** means that you like it the least and it is not your favourite. When something is your **least favourite** it can also mean that you do not like it at all. Saying that something is your **least favourite** is more polite than saying “I don’t like it.”

Here are some examples with **least favourite**.

Karly: I like all the dresses, but I think the purple one is my **least favourite**.

Lisa: Yeah, I don't like the purple one either.

Jon: Which of my designs do you like best?

Pia: My **least favourite** is the first one you showed me.

Jon: My **least favourite** is the second one.

### To get it out of the way

**To get something out of the way** means that you want something to be finished. For example, if Sheila has a test and wants it to be finished, we can say that Sheila **wants the test out of the way**. Maura and Harp say that they do not like winter and so they want to **get it** (the subject of winter-related terms) **out of the way**. So you want to do something because then it will be finished.

Here are a couple examples.

Pete: Are you finished writing your essay yet?

Elisha: Yeah, I just wanted to **get it out of the way** so I did it last night.

Michelle: Let's **get** the cleaning **out of the way** so we can enjoy the day.

George: Great idea!

### To dress up

**To dress up** can mean to dress fancy and formal for a special event. But **to dress up** can also mean to dress in warm clothing, like *to bundle up*. In this case, you can probably guess that Harp and Maura are talking about dressing warmly.

Here are some examples using **to dress up**. Can you tell which is about dressing warm and which is about dressing fancy?

Bob: You probably want to **dress up**.

Yamine: For sure. It doesn't look very warm out there.

Marcus: You probably want to **dress up**. It's a really nice restaurant.

Joanna: OK! I'll wear my best clothes.

### To come to mind

**To come to mind** is an expression that means to think of something. When something **comes to mind**, it is something that is thought in the moment. When something **comes to mind**, we are often trying to remember something and in the moment what **comes to**

**mind** is what we remember. Or we may be trying to think of new ideas, and an idea **comes to mind** in that moment.

In this episode, SOMEONE says, “The first one that **comes to mind**...” In the moment, it was the first one she thought of. Here are some more examples.

Jeb: What else do we need for the party?

Dave: Garbage bags and cloths for cleaning **come to mind**.

Sophia: Was there something that Valerie told us to do?

Andre: The first thing that **comes to mind** is filing.

So when you think of winter, what’s the first thing **comes to mind** for you?

### The power goes out

In Maura’s childhood story about the rainstorm she says that **the power went out**. It is common to use the word **power** to talk about **electricity**. **To go out** or **to be out** can describe something that is not working as it should. In Maura’s story the lights **went out** and that is how they knew there was no **power**. If we say that **the power is out** it means that there is an electrical failure and no electricity in the building.

### Snow day

Like we say in this episode, a **snow day** is a day when, because of a snow storm, most schools close and sometimes people are not expected to go to work. Many students wish for a **snow day** because they know that they will have the day off of school.

**Quiz** (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)

1. When do people often talk about weather?
  - a) when they just meet someone
  - b) when they are talking to a stranger
  - c) when making small talk
  - d) all of the above
  
2. What is small talk?
  - a) informal, general conversation
  - b) talking in short sentences
  - c) not talking
  - d) dancing
  
3. In what season are you most likely to see a blizzard in Canada?
  - a) spring
  - b) summer
  - c) fall
  - d) winter

4. What does **muggy** mean?

- a) cool and mild
- b) hot, humid, and sticky
- c) very cold
- d) rainy

5. Adele: I have so much work to do. I just want to \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) get it on
- b) get off track
- c) get it out of the way
- d) get in the way

6. What does **to dress up** mean?

- a) to wear something fancy
- b) to wear something warm
- c) either
- d) neither

7. Dorothy: I just thought of it. It was the first thing that \_\_\_\_\_.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) went to mind
- b) came to mind
- c) reminded
- d) came to my hand

8. Holly: There is a big snowstorm forecast for tomorrow. I think it might be a \_\_\_\_\_, so we can stay home and watch movies.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) snow school
- b) snowy day
- c) school day
- d) snow day



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