

Chatterbox #4 – Birthday Parties

Transcript

- Harp: Hello everyone, this is Harp...
- Maura: And Maura...
- Harp: With the **Chatterbox** podcast.
- Maura: If you would like to know more about this Chatterbox podcast please go to our website, Culips.com.
- Harp: C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Maura: And click on Lipservice where you'll find our transcript and explanations and quizzes.
- Harp: Exactly! So this is the Chatterbox podcast where we like to chat.
- Maura: We like to chat, yeah, about anything cultural, anything that's going on right now and something pretty special is happening right now, wouldn't you say, Harp?
- Harp: I would say very special. I think you all should put it in your calendars.
- Maura: So it was very recently Harp's birthday!
- Harp: Yup, it's my **big 2-1**, twenty-one. I am just joking. I am just joking.
- Maura: And it's also my birthday around this time.
- Harp: Exactly, we share a birth month.
- Maura: Yeah. So Harp's birthday is ... tell us your birthday Harp!
- Harp: My birthday is **October thirteen (13)**.
- Maura: Yup! And mine is October thirtieth (30th). They probably sound really similar, but Harp's is 1-3 and mine is 3-0. So we both have birthdays in this special month.

- Harp: OK, so let's talk about birthdays when we were young.
- Maura: Let's talk about birthdays, yeah. Birthday parties when you are young are so much fun. You love having them, you love going to them. It is just a good time.
- Harp: Exactly, my favourite part, I think, well there were two favourite parts: I liked the games, like the **piñata** and the **pin the tail on the donkey**...
- Maura: That's a pretty classic one. They are fun and another fun part is what comes at the end of the party.
- Harp: Yes!
- Maura: The **grab bag**.
- Harp: Yeah, so can you tell me a little bit about these?
- Maura: Well, they can really be full of anything, but they are always fun, so when you are young and you leave a party, you get a little bag of goodies or treats, usually there's candies, a lot of candy, and also some other cute little activity or game.
- Harp: Sometimes we used to get pencils or erasers or little toys.
- Maura: I can barely remember what we used to be in it. But I do remember the candy.
- Harp: Yeah, yeah, and so you can call those "**grab bags**" or "**loot bags**." I think it just is the same word, synonyms. So now when you get older, things change a little bit.
- Maura: Especially for girls we should say. Girls like to have **slumber parties**.
- Harp: Yeah, loved loved **slumber parties**.
- Maura: I don't really think guys have **slumber parties**. Robin, do guys have **slumber parties**?
- Robin: Yeah!
- Maura: Oh, OK. Maybe less often though than girls?

- Robin: Um, for birthdays, yeah we do them. Yeah, for sure, we definitely have **slumber parties**, you know, play video games, watch animation, stuff like that.
- Maura: Little bit different than girls' **slumber parties**. Yeah, so a **slumber**, "**slumber**" means... it's another word for, like, "sleep." So a **slumber party** is when you have a party and everyone stays overnight, so it could be like ten people all talking all night, usually. I guess in Robin's case, playing video games. But they stay up, usually pretty late.
- Harp: The funniest is because it's called a **slumber party**, but I think that sleeping is the only thing you don't do.
- Maura: Yeah, yeah, for sure. So for us girls it was what? There's the kind of **pillow fight** maybe.
- Harp: Yeah and you have to play, like, **truth or dare**.
- Maura: And there's little tricks that I never really saw this happen but there's stories of someone... the first person to fall asleep you put their bra in the freezer.
- Harp: Yeah, or you, like, put **whipping cream** on their face or write something on their face.
- Maura: So those are some good memories, but now we are a bit older, a bit more mature.
- Harp: After our **Sweet Sixteen** I think we all started feeling like adults. So, **Sweet Sixteen** is basically, I think it's girls-only. This is, I think, a definite girls-only party. I have never in my life heard of a **Sweet Sixteen** for a boy.
- Maura: I didn't really think 16 was a big deal around where I was from; I mean, of course you are happy because you are really a teenager, but...
- Harp: I don't know maybe it's because it sounds good: **Sweet Sixteen**. I don't know. No it wasn't a big party for me either.
- Maura: Another interesting one is when we turn "**of age**," which means you can legally drink.

- Harp: Which varies across Canada. So in Alberta where I am from, it was 18.
- Maura: And I think in, yeah, Quebec, where we are in Montreal, it is 18 and I am not sure about everywhere else, but I think it's mostly 19 or 18. In Ontario, where Robin and I are from, it's 19.
- Harp: Definitely, so now we are heading up to **the big 3-0**. That is where both of us are going. We are not there yet, but we are still very young.
- Maura: So, right, the **big 3-0** means "thirty" and it's **a pretty big deal**.
- Harp: I think so, I think so.
- Maura: A lot of people feel, I feel as well, like it is kind of the end of youth and you are a real adult. You know in your twenties you are an adult, but thirties is more serious.
- Harp: Yeah, because in your twenties you can be in school still, you can be at university, but when you are thirty you are kind of expected to buy a house, to have a kid, you know.
- Maura: Yeah, all of the classic stuff.
- Harp: A real job!
- Maura: So we can do that with 30s, **3-0**, we can do it with the forties 'cause that is another big one, **4-0**. And **5-0**, 50 is a big one.
- Maura: So, do you know what you are doing this year for your birthday yet?
- Harp: I think we are having a big party. Everyone from Culips had better be there. All of you out there, I'll let you know. What about you?
- Maura: Yeah, I don't know, the older I get the more it is kind of low key and just something quiet.
- Maura: Happy Birthday to us!
- Harp: Yes, Happy Birthday!

Maura: And we hope you like this Chatterbox about birthdays and learn some new vocabulary about birthdays in North America.

Harp: Yeah, so that is about it for us.

Maura: Yeah. Don't forget to check out our website: Culips.com.

Harp: C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Maura: And we will see you later.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Maura: Bye.

Detailed Explanation

The Big 2-1 / Big 3-0 / Big 4-0 / Big 5-0

When we say “**the big**” before the age, it means that it is an important birthday. In North America, when people turn twenty-one (21), it is important because they are considered an adult and they can legally drink alcohol everywhere, even in the USA (the drinking age in the USA is 21). As we discuss in the podcast, in Canada the legal drinking age varies between 18 or 19, depending on the province.

For the other ages, **the Big 3-0, Big 4-0, Big 5-0**, these are “**big**” or important because they are the start of a new decade and a time for thinking about your life. A decade is ten years long: for example, from the year 1990-2000 or from age 20-30 is one decade.

In this expression we say “the big three oh” and not “the big thirty” or “the big three zero.”

October 13 and October 30

We mentioned these dates in this episode because they are our birthdays. My birthday is **October 13th** and Maura’s is **October 30th**. The pronunciation of these numbers sound alike: **thirteenth (13th)** and **thirtieth (30th)**.

It is important for everyone to enunciate (pronounce clearly) when talking about numbers and dates. If you don’t understand a date, ask the speaker to repeat it. Even native speakers can get confused when a number is not pronounced clearly! This also happens with fifteen (15) and fifty (50).

Dates

Dates can be written, for example, like October 13 or October 13th. But we always pronounce them like October thirteenth.

Here is another example date: June 19. We say June nineteenth (19th).

And here is one more example: December 1. We say December first (1st).

Piñata

Piñata is a classic game that is played at children’s birthday parties in Canada. It is originally a Mexican game.

The **piñata** is usually an animal shape made out of paper that hangs in the air. The inside is hollow and filled with candy. You are blindfolded (something is placed over your eyes so you can't see) and then someone spins you around in circles. Then you are given a bat or stick to try to hit and break the **piñata** open. All the children take turns and try to hit it. It is fun to watch the confused people try to break the **piñata**!



The point of the game is to break the **piñata** because then all the candy will come out. When it is opened, everyone cheers and runs to get the candy.

Pin the tail on the donkey

“**Pin the tail on the donkey**” is another very popular game for children's birthday parties. In this game, we put a picture of a donkey on the wall, but in the picture the donkey doesn't have a tail.

All the children are given paper tails with tape on them to stick (or “pin”) to the donkey's bottom on the picture. Everyone is blindfolded (like with the **piñata**, no player can see) and someone spins them in a circle (also like **piñata**). Each child tries, one by one, to pin the tail at the right place.

It is very funny because sometimes people get confused and pin the tail on the donkey's head or somewhere not even close to the donkey's bottom.

Grab Bag/Loot bag

Often at the end of a birthday party, all the children are given small bags with some candy, toys or trinkets inside. This small bag is called a “**grab bag**” or “**loot bag**.”

This is a way of giving all the guests a small gift to thank them for coming and for the gift they gave to the birthday boy or girl. It was always exciting to make **grab bags** for my friends and even more exciting to get a **grab bag** at the end of a party.

Slumber parties/Sleepovers

A **slumber party** or a **sleepover** is a type of birthday party. At this party, the children all spend the night and sleep at the birthday person's house.

I remember dancing, singing, playing games, gossiping, and even **pillow fighting** at **slumber parties**. I didn't actually sleep very much at these parties because everyone was so excited and that we usually stayed awake very late.

Pillow fights

Pillow fights happen at **slumber parties** because everyone sleeps in a room together with many pillows.

During a **pillow fight**, people hit each other with pillows. A **pillow fight** isn't a real fight; it's just a play fight. Pillows are very soft and they don't really hurt when you hit someone with them.

Truth or Dare

Truth or Dare is a game played in many different ways, but I will describe the simplest version. This is a game played by teenagers, not young children.

All the teens take turns asking each other questions. This is the "**truth**" part because you are supposed to answer the questions truthfully. Sometimes people don't want to answer the question because it is too personal or embarrassing.

For example, someone asks you if you like Paul. You like Paul but you don't want to tell anyone, so you don't want to tell the **truth**. In this case, you would have to choose a **dare**.

A **dare** is a challenge that is a bit risky or strange. Some examples of **dares** are running around the house outside or having to drink some hot sauce. If you don't want to tell the **truth**, then you can ask someone to give you a **dare**.

Whipping cream

Whipping cream is delicious! It is really thick milk that is fluffy and sweet. People add it to different things to make them taste a bit more delicious or to make food look nicer.

Whipping cream is usually only eaten with sweet foods, desserts or drinks. You can have whipping cream on waffles in the morning, on hot chocolate or with a piece of pie.

At birthday parties, some teenagers put **whipping cream** on the hand of someone who is sleeping. Then they tickle the person's



face. The sleeping person then moves her hand to her face and puts **whipping cream** on her face. Everyone laughs when this happens!

Sweet Sixteen

“**Sweet Sixteen**” is the celebration of a girl’s sixteenth (16th) birthday. Generally people say this about the birthday of any girl turning 16. Some girls have really big parties for their 16th birthday.

Miley Cyrus, an American celebrity, recently had a big **Sweet Sixteen** party. For her party, Disneyland in California was closed down and a ticket to enter cost \$250. This was quite an extravagant party, only for the rich and famous. Neither I nor Maura experienced anything like that, but had a smaller party with good friends.

Of age

When we say “**of age**” we talk about someone who is now legally allowed to do something. It can be used to describe the age when you are legally allowed to drive, vote or drink alcohol.

For example when you are “**of age**” for driving that means that you are now legally able to get a driver’s license. In Canada, the legal age for driving is 16.

Pretty big deal

This expression “**a pretty big deal**” is used to say something is important. We can say something is “**a big deal**” or “**a pretty big deal**” and it is a casual way to say that something is important.

In this case, Maura was saying **the big 3-0** is important.

Some grammar mistakes

When English speakers talk casually, we make mistakes too. We often don’t speak in perfect sentences. Here are some mistakes that we made. Oops!

Maura says, “I can barely remember what we used to be in it.” She should have said, “I can barely remember what used to be in it” or “I barely remember what we used to have in it.”

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

1. When we say “the big 3-0,” what does that mean?

- a) you are born on the 30th
- b) you are turning 30
- c) you gained 30 pounds
- d) you will eat a big cake

2. Pin the tail on the donkey and piñata are both examples of _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) farm animals
- b) loot bags
- c) games
- d) presents

3. At the end of a birthday party for a child, the other children receive _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) piñatas
- b) loot bags
- c) whipping cream
- d) a birthday card

4. When a girl turns 16 years old, what is it called?

- a) Sweet Sixteen
- b) Sour Sixteen
- c) Sixteen Candles
- d) Sixteen Sixty

5. Teenagers often have special kinds of parties, called “slumber parties.” What happens at this kind of party?
- a) it is an outdoor party
 - b) the guests sleep at the birthday person’s house
 - c) everyone sings songs all night
 - d) the party starts at noon
6. There is a special game played at parties for teenagers. In this game you have to tell the truth when asked a question. If you don’t want to answer the question, you have to do a _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) door
- b) bare
- c) bore
- d) dare

***Bonus Questions ☺**

When is Harp’s birthday? _____

When is Maura’s birthday? _____

Answers: 1.b 2.c 3.b 4.a 5.b 6.d

Harp’s birthday: October 13

Maura’s birthday: October 30