

Close Up #6 – New Job

Transcript

Hello, everyone. This is Maura with the Close Up podcast at Culips, C-U-L-I-P-S.com. In this podcast we listen to real conversations and look at them closely. In this episode we're going to listen to a conversation where Alice and Linda meet for the first time.

Today's episode is good for everyone because meeting people is not always easy and it's even more difficult in another language. I've had the same problems being natural when meeting people in another language, and I know some of my students too have had the same problem. So, let's have a listen to the conversation.

Alice: Hi, I'm Alice. **Nice to meet you.**

Linda: **Nice to meet you** too.

Alice: So, how do you like everything **around here**? Do you like the job **so far**?

Linda: Yeah, but **there sure is** a lot to learn.

Alice: Yeah, don't get discouraged, **though**. When I first started working here, I found it tough too. It just gets easier, and, after **a while**, you'd say **a monkey could do it**.

Linda: That's good to know. What exactly do you do here?

Alice: I am in charge of accounts receivable. I have been doing it now for a few years. It's **all right**.

Linda: So, **you like working here**?

Alice: Yep, it's pretty good. Well, **I better** get back to work now. Talk to you later.

Linda: OK, see you later.

So, the first greetings are standard. You have probably learned them in any beginner English course.

Alice: Hi, I'm Alice. **Nice to meet you.**

Linda: **Nice to meet you** too.

Nice to meet you. The long version is, "It is **nice to meet you.**" Both ways are fine. One is just shorter. We take away the subject "it" and the verb "is" to make the sentence shorter. We do this with other expressions too.

You can respond by repeating the phrase like Linda does, or you can simply say, "you too."

And then Alice starts a conversation:

Alice: So, how do you like everything **around here**?

Alice says, "So, how do you like everything **around here**?" "**Around here**" is not very specific. When Alice says "**around here**" she is talking about the workplace and the general area. We can also use just "**here**" without really changing the meaning.

Alice also asks:

Alice: Do you like the job **so far**?

"**So far**" means "until this point in time" or "until now." I will give you an example. Imagine that you are watching a movie and your friend enters the room and sees you watching a movie. The friend could ask, "How is the movie **so far**?"

Because the movie is not finished you cannot say how it is, but you can say how good it is **so far**, or until this point in the movie that you have seen.

Another example: I am working on a project but I am not finished. My friend asks, "How is the project **so far**?" This means that the project is not done, but that you are currently working on it.

So then Linda responds to the question, "Do you like the job so far?"

Linda: Yeah, but **there sure is** a lot to learn.

Linda says, “**There sure is...**” We often hear “**sure**” being used similar to “yes.” But in this example it is used like “really.” So “**there sure is**” is like “there really is.” Linda is emphasizing how much she has to learn.

Alice continues:

Alice: Yeah, don’t get discouraged, **though**. When I first started working here, I found it tough too. It just gets easier and, after **a while**, you’d say **a monkey could do it**.

So the first thing Alice says is:

Alice: Yeah, don’t get discouraged, **though**.

“**Though**.” This is an important and not-so-important word at the same time. It’s important because native English speakers tend to say it all the time. And it is not so important because it really doesn’t change the meaning of the sentence.

This is a difficult word, so listen closely.

We use “**though**” when we contradict or say the opposite of something we have just said. Sometimes we use it to contradict something that we have not said, but that is just assumed. You should really check out Lipservice for this explanation because, like I said, it is not easy. The key here is contradicting.

I will give an example: I say, “I am sick. I am going to the party, **though**.” Because I am sick, you assume that I am staying home and not going to the party. So when I say that I am going to the party, I use “**though**.”

I could also say the same thing, “I am going to the party **though** I am sick.”

Alice says, “Don’t get discouraged, **though**.” She says this to respond to what Linda says before. Linda says that there is a lot to learn. So Alice assumes that Linda may feel sad or stressed about all the work. It is like Alice says, “**Though** you may feel stressed about all the work, don’t get discouraged.”

So, that big explanation is why knowing the word “**though**” is important. It is also not important because it doesn’t really change the meaning of the sentence. If Alice just says, “Don’t get discouraged,” it doesn’t change the meaning of the sentence.

That was difficult. I hope it wasn't too confusing.

"A while" is a general term for time passing. "After **a while**" means "after some time passed." **"A while"** is very relative to the situation. It could be five minutes or five months.

Here are two examples that show how **"a while"** can be used differently:

Where is he? He's been gone for **a while**. (This example is probably only minutes.)

I don't know how he's doing. I haven't seen him in **a while**. (This example could be days, or maybe longer.)

So Alice says after some time passes you will find that the job is easy.

Alice actually says **"a monkey could do it"** and that means that something is easy. It makes sense. If **a monkey can do it**, it should be easy for people to do.

Then the conversation continues:

Linda: That's good to know. What exactly do you do here?

Alice: I am in charge of accounts receivable. I have been doing it now for a few years. It's **all right**.

When you look up the word **"all right"** in the dictionary, it says it can mean anything from "yes" and "OK" to "good" or "very well." It can also change the meaning depending on the tone. When the tone is low, or goes down, it is more negative or more like "OK" than "very well." In this case, because of Alice's tone, she probably means that her job is just OK.

Linda then asks:

Linda: So, **you like working here?**

Linda asks a question but it doesn't take the real question form. It sounds more like a sentence: **"You like working here."** But with the tone in her voice, she makes it a question: **"You like working here?"** Linda also probably asks because Alice said the job was **all right**, and that it is not very specific or clear if Alice likes her job.

And Alice responds to the question:

Alice: Yep, it's pretty good.

And then says:

Alice: Well, I **better** get back to work now. Talk to you later.

Alice says "I **better**." It is slang from the full expression "I **had better**." We use this when bad consequences are implied or, more simply, bad things could happen if you don't do the action.

It is best explained with some examples:

It is raining so I **better** get an umbrella. (The bad consequences are that I will get wet if I do not have an umbrella.)

Or a child might say, "I **better** clean my room." The bad things that could happen would be getting in trouble with your parents if you don't clean your room.

Alice **had better** get back to work or she might get in trouble from her boss.

Linda says:

Linda: OK, see you later.

So now Linda and Alice know each other. Let's listen again to the conversation and pay attention to all the expressions that are used when you meet someone new.

Alice: Hi, I'm Alice. **Nice to meet you**.

Linda: **Nice to meet you** too.

Alice: So, how do you like everything **around here**? Do you like the job **so far**?

Linda: Yeah, but **there sure is** a lot to learn.

Alice: Yeah, don't get discouraged, **though**. When I first started working here, I found it tough too. It just gets easier, and, after **a while**, you'd say **a monkey could do it**.

Linda: That's good to know. What exactly do you do here?

Alice: I am in charge of accounts receivable. I have been doing it now for a few years. It's **all right**.

Linda: So, **you like working here?**

Alice: Yep, it's pretty good. Well, **I better** get back to work now. Talk to you later.

Linda: OK, see you later.

I hope you learned something today. Don't forget to visit our website, Culips.com, for any further explanations or transcripts, and to quiz yourself to see how much you learned. If you have any questions you can always e-mail us at questions@culips.com.

This is Maura at Culips and I'll talk to you again soon.

Detailed Explanation

Nice to meet you

This is a pleasant expression to use when you meet someone for the first time. Some people say it and some people don't. This is said after two people have said their names to each other or after a third person has introduced them.

You can say "**Nice to meet you**" or "**It's nice to meet you.**" If you are saying goodbye to the new person, you can again say "**It was nice to meet you.**"

How do you like everything around here?

First, I want to look at the first part of the question "**How do you like...**?" This can be a bit confusing because we use the word "**how**." Usually when we use the word "**how**" we are asking for a description, and in the answer there is usually an adjective.

If someone asks, "**How do you like** (something)?" it is a less direct way of asking if you like something. It is like "How much do you like it?"

Example:

Speaker 1: **How did you like** the movie?

Speaker 2: I liked it. It was pretty funny.

Around here

"**Around here**" means "in this general area." In slang this is sometimes said like, "**round here.**"

Check out the Culips blog for a video by The Counting Crows of one of their songs called **Round Here**. The song is about a place but we don't know where exactly.

Around

This word can be used in a variety of different ways, but it is generally associated with a round shape or surrounding something. I will give you a few examples here.

Examples:

The kite was flying **around** and **around**. (flying in circles)

I have a fence **around** my yard. (on all sides of my yard)

People gathered **around** the street performer. (on all sides of the street performer)

“**Around**” is also used with a lot of other words to give it a different sense, like in this episode with “**around here**.” We can use “**around here**” to mean “in this general area.” The area can be as small as a building or room, or as big as a city.

Examples:

There is a lot of dust **around here**. (in this room)

I find that people are pretty friendly **around here**. (in this city)

So far

Like we explained in this episode, “**so far**” is “until this point.” Do you understand the Lipservice **so far**? We hope so. And because you are not finished reading the *Detailed Explanation*, I ask you how it is until this point or **so far**.

“**Far**” is the opposite of “close” or “near.” My pen is **far** from me because I cannot reach it. I can see it but I cannot pick it up. My sister is **far** from me because she lives in Australia. Australia is really **far** from Canada.

So I could say that my sister lives **so far** away from me. This doesn’t mean “until this point,” it means that it is very **far**. “**So**” is an intensifier and can mean “really” or “very,” like “She is **so** pretty.”

Look at the differences between the ways “**so far**” is used:

So far, things at work are going **all right**. (until this point in time)

I can’t believe you live **so far** from work. (really far)

How has the work been going **so far**? (until this point in time)

I am still **so far** from you. (really far)

Generally, the “**so far**” (until this point in time) can come at the beginning or end of a sentence. If you remove the “**so far**” you still have a complete sentence. Like from the first example above, “Things at work are going **all right**.” It is still a complete sentence without “**so far**.” When we use “**far**” as an adjective, the sentence is not complete if we remove it.

Example:

I live **far** from school.

"Far" in this sentence is an adjective describing the distance you live from the school. If you take the "far" out of this sentence it doesn't make sense anymore.

There sure is

The expression "**there sure is**" is a bit stronger than simply "**there is**." In this case, "**sure**" is an intensifier like "really" or "very" or "so" like in "**so far**."

We can also use this expression as a way to completely agree with someone.

Example:

Speaker 1: There is a lot of work to do around here.

Speaker 2: **There sure is**.

In this example, Speaker 2 completely agrees with Speaker 1.

It also makes a sentence stronger.

"**There is** a lot work to do." Or stronger, "**There sure is** a lot of work to do."

Though

This word is ALWAYS a problem when I am teaching. There are always questions about it.

When we use "**though**," it doesn't change the meaning of the sentence. We use it to show that we are contradicting or going against what was just said or assumed.

Here is an example:

He hates his job; it's got good benefits, **though**.

This means he hates his job, but not completely. One good thing about his job is his benefits (his employer pays for most of his medical bills) and this goes against the statement that he hates it.

A while ago, my friend Kiley said to me, "I do lots of work, but it doesn't feel like I ever accomplish anything." I said, "You do, **though**."

I meant that Kiley feels like she doesn't do work; but, in fact, she works a lot. It's like saying, "Even **though** you don't feel like you accomplish things, you actually do!"

“Even **though**” and “although” are used in almost exactly the same way as “**though**.” The real difference is that “although” is the most formal. “**Though**” is definitely the most common and casual in speaking.

Now look back over all the examples I have just given you above and remove all the times “**though**” appears from the sentences. See? They are all still complete sentences and the meaning of the sentence is the same. The only difference is that without “**though**” it doesn’t show the connection with another sentence or thought, and it doesn’t show the contradiction.

That’s the end. It’s been fun, **though**.

(I said it was the end, so you may think that I am happy to go, but I did enjoy writing this!)

A while

“**A while**” means that some time has passed. We don’t know exactly how much time has passed, just some time. We use “**a while**” in this type of structure:

I haven’t (done something, seen something/someone, heard something, etc.) in **a while**.

Examples:

She hasn’t seen him in **a while**.

We haven’t eaten at this restaurant in **a while**.

And like in this episode, “**a while**” is often used with “for.”

I have been living here for **a while**.

They have been dating for **a while**.

“In **a while**” is used in negative sentences and “for **a while**” is used in positive sentences. If we want to make “**a while**” sound smaller, we can say “a little while.”

I have been writing this *Detailed Explanation* for a little **while**.

We can use it in expressions like the following:

Stay **awhile**.* (This means “Please stay longer.”)

It’s been **a while**.* (This means “I haven’t seen you in a long time.”)

*Advanced grammar: Did you notice the change in spelling? In the above example “a while” is written “awhile”. This is because it is no longer an article and a noun, it is an adverb.

A monkey could do it

This idiom means that something is easy. The full expression is something like, “**It is so easy a monkey could do it.**” Like many expressions, we often cut them and make them shorter after part of it is universally understood.

Example:

Speaker 1: Hey, can you help me with this?

Speaker 2: You can fix it yourself! It’s **so easy a monkey could do it.**

All right

This can also be spelled as “**alright.**” Some sources say that spelling it as “**all right**” is really the correct way. You will see both ways and they are pronounced the same. “**All right**” and “**alright**” sometimes have small differences between them. If you are really curious, send us your question and we can tell you more!

Like I said in the episode, “**all right**” can mean “OK,” like an agreement, and it can also mean “very well.” It is difficult to give you written examples because the meaning comes from the tone of the speaker’s voice.

Here are a couple of general rules:

When something is described as “**all right**” it usually means that it is “OK.”

Example:

Speaker 1: How was the movie?

Speaker 2: It was **all right.** (the movie was OK)

When “**all right**” is used on its own, the speaker is often agreeing with enthusiasm.

Example:

Speaker 1: I passed my driver’s test!

Speaker 2: **All right!**

When “**all right**” is used to answer a direct question, it depends on the context and the speaker’s tone.

Example:

Speaker 1: Do you want to go shopping?

Speaker 2: **All right.**

This speaker's tone could be happy or bored. If the speaker's tone is happy, he or she wants to go shopping. If the speaker sounds bored, he or she agrees to go shopping but isn't very excited about it.

You like working here?

You can casually change a declarative sentence to a question by changing your voice to sound like a question. Your voice goes up at the end of a question.

Better

Good, **better**, best. This is the way we usually see "**better**." In this case, we are using it in the expression "**had better**." This expression always uses the past participle "had" and never "have". This is because it is an idiomatic expression.

"To **had better** do something" implies that if you don't do something, some other bad thing will happen.

You **had better** practice English. (If you don't practice English, you will never learn!)

And when we are speaking we often cut out "**had**." "You **better** practice English." Or with a contraction, "You'd **better** practice!"

I'd better get out of here!

This is a good expression to use when you have to leave a person. It can be hard not to be rude when you interrupt a conversation to leave.

You can simply say, "Well, I **had better** get going" or "I **had better** go." This means that you must leave but is not as direct as saying, "I must leave." The other person does not need to know why you must leave, but they understand that you have to leave.

Now, I **had better** end this Lipservice!

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this Lipservice)**1. What does “*there sure is*” mean?**

- a) there isn't
- b) there really is
- c) is there?
- d) there very is

2. What is the meaning of “*so far*” in “How do you like working here so far”?

- a) up to this point in time
- b) time goes fast
- c) work is far
- d) you are far away

3. What is the meaning of “*all right*”?

- a) OK
- b) very well
- c) good
- d) all of the above are possible

4. Fill in the blank: It's so easy a _____ could do it.

- a) rabbit
- b) horse
- c) monkey
- d) duck

5. “*You better*” is slang for which expression?

- a) you are better
- b) you good
- c) you have
- d) you had better

6. Fill in the blank: When we use “*though*” we are _____.

- a) contradicting
- b) agreeing
- c) angry
- d) laughing

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

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