

Catch Word #32 – Rain Check

Transcript

- Maura: Hello everyone out there, this is Culips with your **Catch Word** podcast and this Maura ...
- Jessie: And this is Jessie ...
- Maura: Hey Jessie, how's it going today?
- Jessie: It's going pretty well. How are you?
- Maura: Yeah, I'm good, except we found a really great karaoke place last night in Montreal. Yeah, but today my throat is a little bit sore, so it hurts to speak a little bit, you know what I mean?
- Jessie: But was it **worth it**?
- Maura: For sure, karaoke is always **worth it**.
- Jessie: I like it too.
- Maura: So, today we're going to do the Catch Word podcast, and what do we do in the Catch Word podcast?
- Jessie: Well, in the Catch Word podcast we take a word or an expression and we talk about how it's used in everyday conversation. We try to break it down to tell you the meaning. We give some synonyms and some similar expressions.
- Maura: Exactly! And if you want to learn more about this episode, or any of our other episodes, you can always go to our website and check out our Lipservice where we have transcripts and Detailed Explanations and quizzes too.
- Jessie: Right! And that's at Culips.com: C-U-L-I-P-S.com.
- Maura: Good. So, what is our expression for today?
- Jessie: Today's expression is: "**rain check**."
- Maura: Yes, a **rain check**.

- Jessie: **Rain check.** “**Rain check**” is kind of neat because it actually has a few different definitions.
- Maura: OK.
- Jessie: So let’s start off with the very literal definition. The first—and still a—meaning of “**rain check**” was a kind of ticket given to fans when they went to see an outdoor sports event if it rained and the event was cancelled. So if they had that ticket they could either get their money back, because they didn’t get to watch the event, or they could get into the next event for free the next time.
- Maura: Right! That makes sense. So, if it rains and an event is cancelled, you get a **rain check** for the future when hopefully it’s a sunny day.
- Jessie: Right.
- Maura: OK, what else do you have?
- Jessie: Well, another meaning for **rain check** is sometimes used at a store. If a store has a really great sale—so they’re selling something for less money than usual—a lot of the time it’s very popular, so they might sell out of that item.
- Maura: Right, exactly. When I was a teenager, I worked in a grocery store, so this happened often with the week’s specials.
- Jessie: Right! So, everybody comes and they buy the special and then there’s **none left**. But the store doesn’t want to disappoint the rest of their customers so they’ll give their customers a **rain check**—just a ticket or a piece of paper—so that when they get more of that item the customer can use that ticket to buy the item at the sale price even though the sale is **over**.
- Maura: Right, exactly. That’s what I used to do if a customer asked about a product that was on sale and was already sold out. I would write down a little a **rain check** for them about what the product was and what the special price was. So, yeah, they could come back and still get the sale.
- Jessie: And that’s how you keep your customers happy!
- Maura: Yes. OK, is there any other kind of definition of “**rain check**”?
- Jessie: Yeah, well, the last definition of **rain check** is really an idiom, because it’s not the literal meaning, but it’s an expression that we use a lot and in that sense we usually say, “**take a rain check.**” So **to take a rain check** is to promise that you’ll accept an invitation at a later time.

- Maura: Right! So, for some reason you're invited to go somewhere, but you can't make it, you're already busy, you already have plans, but you want to see that person, so you **take a rain check** to see them at a later date.
- Jessie: Right. It's not actually raining, although it could be, but it doesn't mean that. It just means that you for some reason can't do it then, you want to do it at another time.
- Maura: Exactly! So, it's the same principle. For some reason you can't do this one event so you're going to do it later.
- Jessie: Right. So, I could say "Oh, Maura, I'd love to go out with you tonight, but I'll have to **take a rain check** because I have to study for my big test tomorrow."
- Maura: Exactly, right. Or, one of my friends invited me to go to a movie, but I had to **take a rain check** because I was already having dinner with one of my friends.
- Jessie: Right. Now, when we say that we're going to **take a rain check**, usually it's a little bit **vague**, we don't say when we're going to do it. So, it's different if you say, "Oh, I can't do it tonight let's do it next week." You know, that is a bit more specific, but if you say "I can't do it tonight can I **take a rain check**," then you're just saying, "Let's do it sometime in the future."
- Maura: Right. So probably later, in the next few days or something, then you would make **solid plans** for when you would do the meeting again.
- Jessie: Right, and it's a pretty informal expression; you wouldn't say it in your office to your boss or to a client.
- Maura: Right, it's very casual, like you said, you don't **reschedule** the event, so it's not really a formal way to **postpone** something.
- Jessie: Right, what are some other ways we could say we want to **take a rain check**, some synonyms for that expression?
- Maura: Well, I actually just used one, I said, "**postpone**."
- Jessie: That's right, you did just say that.
- Maura: So "**to postpone**" an event or a meeting is exactly like **taking a rain check**, you do it at a later date.

- Jessie: Right. You could also say “**reschedule.**”
- Maura: Exactly. “To **reschedule** a meeting next week or next month,” and that probably would actually be better in a work situation, if you want to be professional.
- Jessie: Yes, definitely, because “schedule” is quite a formal way of saying it.
- Maura: Exactly! Good!
- Jessie: So, another thing about “**to take a rain check**” as an idiom is there’s no actual ticket or piece of paper involved; it’s just an expression.
- Maura: Hey Jessie, do you want to go dancing tonight with me?
- Jessie: Oh Maura, I would love to but I’ll have to **take a rain check**, I actually just made plans to go to karaoke. Yeah, I heard it’s really fun.
- Maura: Yeah, it is. Well, let’s **reschedule** for next week then.
- Jessie: OK, we’ll **postpone until** then.
- Maura: Yeah, we’ll go dancing then. All right, great. So the expression today was ...
- Jessie: “**Rain check**” and “**to take a rain check.**”
- Maura: Exactly. We can also say “**postpone**” or “**reschedule.**”
- Jessie: That’s right.
- Maura: OK, great. So, if you want to learn more about this episode, like we said, go to the website, there is tons of information there for you.
- Jessie: And we’ll see you next time.
- Maura: This has been Maura ...
- Jessie: And Jessie ...
- Maura: Bye!
- Jessie: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Rain check

A real “**rain check**” was a ticket, or other piece of paper that was given to someone when an event was cancelled due to rain. The ticket promised that the event would happen again at a later date when it was not raining. An actual **rain check** ticket is not usually given anymore, but the idea of a **rain check** is still often used.



Sometimes event organizers plan in advance for the weather. People use the expression “rain or shine.” This means that even if it rains the event will still happen, and if the sun shines, the event will also happen. You might also hear the expression “rain date.” This is a second date that is already planned to be used, in case of rain.

The origin of this expression likely comes from baseball. When it rained a lot the game was often cancelled and the spectators were given **rain checks**. At professional games, there are often roofs or domes to cover the baseball field when it rains so the game can continue.

The second definition is used in stores when a product on sale is sold out. A customer can receive a **rain check** ticket that allows them to return when the sale is done and still get the sale price. In this case, there is not actual rain!

Here is an example of this:

Josie: I went to the store right away, but they were already sold out.
Carrie: Did you get a **rain check**?
Josie: No, I didn't know they gave **rain checks**.
Carrie: Yeah, they do. You should go back and get one.

Take a rain check

This is the expression with “**rain check**” that people use when something must be done at a later date than originally planned. A person can simply say “I will **take a rain check**” and it means “let's plan another day to do that”. Again, this one has nothing to do with rain.

It is a very casual way of cancelling and planning to do something later because there is often no fixed time. For that reason “**to take a rain check**” is not a good expression to use at work – it is too casual.

Here are some more examples:

Armen: Do you want to go see the play tonight?
Phil: Can I **take a rain check**? I already have plans.

Meredith: I think I am going to have to **take a rain check** for dinner tonight. I am just too busy at work.
Max: No problem. Let me know when you think you have time.

*Remember “**check**” can also be spelled “cheque.” “Cheque” is the usual Canadian spelling, but many people also use the American spelling, “**check**.” The word “**rain check**” is never spelled with “que,” but sometimes you will see it as one word: “raincheck.”

(It's) worth it

The word “**worth**” speaks to the value of something. To give you a simple example, gold is **worth** money. Here is another example when we talk about **worth**:

George: I bought this old lamp at a market on the weekend. I am not sure how much it is **worth**.
Dean: It's probably **worth** at least \$100.

We use “**worth**” often to talk about money. How much money has the same value as an object? Or, how much is that object **worth**?

“**Worth**” is not only for money, it can be used to talk about the value of other things. For example, is looking through a really big library for one book **worth** the time it will take? It usually looks like this: Is one negative thing **worth** the positive result?

These kinds of questions are not simple to answer. Each person has a different opinion about how much something is **worth**.

In this episode, Jessie asks Maura if her sore throat was **worth** singing karaoke all night. Jessie asks if the negative (sore throat) was worth the positive (singing karaoke). She simply asks “**Was it worth it?**” and Maura says “Karaoke is always **worth it**.”

Here are some other examples with “**worth**”:

Is driving all the way to Toronto from Montreal for the weekend **worth it**? (The time it will take to get there.)

I think it is definitely **worth** telling him the truth. Even if he hates you, he needs to know.

Zack: Are you going to study for the test tonight?
Nick: I don't know if it is **worth it**. I am going to fail anyway.

None left

Most people know the word "**left**" is the opposite of "right." This is just one meaning for this word. In this case, "**left**" talks about what is there after something happens. For example, we have five apples and eat three of them, so now there are two apples **left**. After three apples were eaten, we have two **left**.

Or another example: I bought a new book shelf and put all my books on the shelf so the shelf is full. There is no room **left** on the shelf and I still have 10 books **left** to put away somewhere.

In this case, Jessie says "...there is **none left**," so this means that there is **none**. It means that there was some, but it was taken and the result is that there is **none**.

Here are some more examples:

Lori: Do you want some cookies?
Ivan: OK, sure.
Lori: Oh sorry, I just realized there are **none left**.

Travis: Do you have any copies of their new CD **left**?
Karen: You are lucky. We have one **left**.

Over

"**Over**" is a preposition, but in this case it is not being used in that way. Jessie says, "The sale is **over**." In this case, "**over**" means "**finished**," they are exact synonyms.

Here are some examples to prove it:

Jennifer: School is **over**! (Used with a thing, not person)
Brad: Yeah, I can't believe we are **finished**. (Can be used with a thing or person)

Shayne: Here we are! Our trip is **over** now.
Lynne: Are you sad that it's **finished**?

Vague

"**Vague**" is used to describe something that is unspecific or not clear. Jessie says that the expression "**take a rain check**" is **vague**. It is **vague** because no future plan is made and

it is casual. The plans are **vague** because we often don't know exactly when the people will meet again.

Here are some other examples with “**vague**”:

- Joseph: So, when are they coming to visit?
Lauren: I am not sure because they were really **vague**. Maybe this summer.
- Bernice: Do you understand what you need to do now?
Terry: No, not really. I found the directions a bit **vague**. I am still confused.

Solid plans

Solid plans are really the opposite of **vague** plans. **Solid plans** are confirmed plans, with an exact date and time. When something is “**solid**” it is firm and you cannot change it.

In a work or professional environment it is always better to make **solid plans** if you need to cancel an important meeting.

Postpone

“**To postpone**” is like **taking a rain check**. **Postponing** is usually more professional and can involve making **solid plans**. One can say, “Let's **postpone** the event to next Friday.” In this case, we know exactly when the cancelled event will happen.



Here are some examples with **postpone**:

- Juan: I am so busy this week. Can we **postpone** the meeting this Friday?
- Kevin: I can't meet on Wednesday. Are you available on Thursday?
Oscar: Yes, I am. So, let's **postpone** the meeting until then.

“To put off” is a phrasal verb with the same meaning as “**postpone**.”

Reschedule

This is another verb that has a similar meaning to “**postpone**” and “**take a rain check**.” We schedule the event the first time and when we change the date or time, we **reschedule** the event.

One big difference is that it is also possible to **reschedule** for an earlier time. When we reschedule we can **postpone** the day or we can schedule it earlier.

'Til/Till

Written as “’**til**” or “**till**” this is slang for “until.” “Until” means “to that time” so we use it when we change plans or **take a rain check**.

Here are some examples with rescheduling and “’**til/till**”:

Jane: Let’s postpone the meeting ’**til** sometime next week.

Bob: We will have to put off the meeting ’**til** we are less busy.

Jessie says, “We will postpone **till** then.”



Quiz (see the answers at the end of this Lipservice)**1. Which of the following definitions is not a definition for rain check?**

- a) A ticket given to people to replace an event where it rained.
- b) A ticket given to customers when a sale item is sold out, so that they may return and buy the item at the sale price.
- c) A postponing of a meeting or another kind of plan.
- d) A check that is created when the sun shines.

2. Does Maura think that singing karaoke is worth having a sore throat?

- a) yes
- b) no
- c) maybe

3. Hannah: I can't make it to the dinner tonight. Can I _____?

Please fill in the blank.

- a) Rain check
- b) make a rain check
- c) take a rain check
- d) check the rain

4. "Yesterday I made a cake. There is none _____ today."

- a) out
- b) right
- c) rest
- d) left

5. What is the opposite of vague plans?

- a) uncertain plans
- b) soiled plans
- c) solid plans
- d) fun plans

6. What two words are similar to “to take a rain check”?

- a) till, over
- b) worth, reschedule
- c) postpone, worth
- d) postpone, reschedule

7. What is the slang for “until”?

- a) 'til
- b) till
- c) a and b
- d) tilly

Answers: 1.d 2.a 3.c 4.d 5.c 6.d 7.c