Catch Word # 49– to Bug someone

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone! This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura!

Harp: And we're bringing you a Catch Word podcast.

Maura: Yes, it's the Catch Word podcast at Culips and our website is CULIPS.com, and what can you get at our website Harp?

Harp: At the website you can find the Lipservice for each and every episode. In the Lipservice you can find a complete transcript, the detailed explanation, and a quiz.

Maura: Great. So, this is our Catch Word episode.

Harp: Exactly, the Catch Word podcast is where we take a word or an expression and we break it down. We explain it, we give you examples of how to use it, and we also give you some synonyms.

Maura: Yeah, good. So, what is the word for this episode, Harp?

Harp: Today's Catch Word is *bug*.

Maura: Mmhmm. *Bug*. It's a really little word, *b-u-g*, *bug*.

Harp: Exactly, *bug*.

Maura: So let's start off with the literal, or kind of "most regular" definition.

Harp: Yeah, a **bug** is an insect.

Maura: Yeah it's a small little insect. Sometimes it has legs and wings and sometimes they fly around like *zzzz*.

Harp: Exactly. Some examples of **bugs** are **mosquitoes** ...

Maura: Yup.

| Harp: | **Beetles** ... or **cockroaches** ... |
| Maura: | Yup, it could also be a **fly** or a **ladybug**. |

Harp: A ladybug.

Maura: That one even has the word *bug* in it.

Harp: Yeah, so a ladybug is red with little black dots on it.

Maura: Yeah most people ... they don't mind ladybugs.

Harp: A ladybug is the only **bug** I like.

Maura: Yeah, sometimes **bugs** can be annoying.

Harp: Exactly, which brings us to the slang definition of *bug*.

Maura: Right. So *to bug* is a verb in this case. So *to bug* is to annoy or bother.

Harp: Exactly. So, something or someone can **bug** you.

Maura: Yeah, good. So let's give some examples when we're using *bug* as a verb and it means to bother or irritate.

Harp: OK, or to annoy someone.

Maura: Yeah, let's give some examples.

Harp: Let's start with a dialogue example.

Maura: Good.

Harp: How are you Maura?

Maura: Oh, I'm all right.

Harp: What's wrong?

Maura: It's just at work, I'm so busy, and my boss ... my boss always comes around and asks me to do more work and **checks up** and sees how I'm doing. He's really **bugging** me.

Harp: Oh no, he's really annoying you.

Maura: Yeah, every day, "Maura did you finish this? Maura, did you finish that?" He's really **bugging** me.

Harp: That **sucks**!

Maura: OK great, so in that example I talked about how my boss was bothering me or **bugging** me.

Harp: Exactly. Should we give an example when something is **bugging** you?

Maura: Yeah, OK good.

Harp: Maura, do you have any tea?

Maura: Yeah, sure. Are you OK, Harp?

Harp: No, my stomach's really **bugging** me.

Maura: Oh! Did you eat something strange?

Harp: I don't know what I did but it's really **bugging** me; it's bothering me.

Maura: OK, I'll get you some tea.

Harp: Thanks!

Maura: OK, so in that example, it was not a person.

Harp: No, it was my stomach that was **bugging** me.

Maura: Right, so your stomach felt strange and it was bothering you.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: OK great. So, what are some other things that **bug** you Harp?

Harp: It **bugs** me when people cough and they don't cover their mouth.

Maura: Yeah, that can spread the **germs** around a little bit.

Harp: Yeah I find it very annoying.

Maura: It **bugs** me when people talk really loudly in public places, like on the bus, and it can be **kind of** annoying.

Harp: Yeah, that **bugs** me as well.

Maura: Yeah. So, we also have some other expressions that are similar to the word *bug*.

Harp: Yeah a similar expression is *to get on one's nerves*.

Maura: Right. So *to get on someone's nerves* means *to bug* someone or to irritate someone.

Harp: Exactly. Should we do an example?

Maura: OK, great!

Harp: How's the new roommate?

Maura: Well she's OK, but she **kind of gets on my nerves**.

Harp: Really, what's wrong?

Maura: Well she's just not very clean. I mean, I come home after a hard day at work and it **bugs** me when there are a lot of dirty dishes.

Harp: Yeah, that would **get on my nerves** as well. Maybe you should talk to her about it.

Maura: OK, so that was an example of us using *to get on someone's nerves* but we also used *bug*.

Harp: Exactly, they're, they're interchangeable.

Maura: Yeah. So another similar expression is *to drive someone crazy*.

Harp: Yes, *drive someone crazy*.

Maura: What's something that **drives you crazy**?

Harp: It **drives me crazy** when I have computer problems. I'm not really good with my computer, so when I have problems I have to ask someone for help. So it really **drives me crazy** when my computer doesn't work right.

Maura: Yeah. The worst is when you're working on a really important project for school or work and then suddenly you lose all of the information. That **drives me crazy**.

Harp: Yeah, I agree.

Maura: Yeah. So we could also say that it **gets on my nerves** or we could say it **bugs me**.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: They're all really the same.

Harp: So, let's **recap** with the expressions we did today.

Maura: So we started with *bug* and then we used it in a slang way to mean *to bug*.

Harp: Yeah *that really **bugs** me*, *my stomach is **bugging** me*.

Maura: Yup good, and then another similar expression …

Harp: ... is *to get on someone's nerves*.

Maura: Right and the last expression was?

Harp: *To drive someone crazy*.

Maura: Sounds good.

Harp: That's about it for us today.

Maura: So we hope that you have a day without being **bugged** at all.

Harp: Yeah, we hope that no one **gets on your nerves**.

Maura: And no one **drives you crazy**.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Maura: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Bug – an insect

Maura and Harp start off this episode talking about the word *bug* as a general term for *insect*. In science, the word *bug* actually has a very specific meaning—it's a certain kind of insect that belongs to the group *heteroptera*.

But in everyday English, people use the word *bug* to talk about any kind of insect and even other things that aren't technically insects, like spiders.

Maura and Harp give some great examples of **bugs** that you might see here in Canada and all around the world. The **bugs** they mentioned are:

- mosquitoes (singular: mosquito)
- beetles (singular: beetle)
- cockroaches (singular: cockroach)
- flies (singular: fly)
- ladybugs (singular: ladybug)

Do you recognize all these **bug** names? If not, do an Internet search and see what we're talking about!

Bug – to annoy

***To bug** someone* doesn't mean to throw bugs at them! As Maura explained, it's a verb that means *to annoy*; *to bother*. If you want an easy way to remember this, imagine a little bug flying around your head making an annoying buzzing sound. That's pretty irritating, right?

There are a lot of synonyms in the English language for the verb *to annoy*. Maura and Harp mention quite a few in this podcast. For a lot of these verbs, there are also related adjectives that describe the person or thing that is doing the annoying. Below are some examples. Each sentence is a little different, but any pair of words below could be used in any of these sentences, whether you're talking about a person, a place, or a thing.

- Someone who **annoys** you is **annoying**.
- Something that **bothers** you is **bothersome**.
- People who **irritate** others are **irritating**.
- If your little brother always **pesters** you, he's **pesky**.
- If a situation **aggravates** you, it's **aggravating**.

Unfortunately, not every synonym for the verb *to annoy* has a matching adjective. There are no matching adjectives for the terms ***to bug***, *to get on one's nerves*, or *to drive one crazy*. If something **bugs** you, gets on your nerves, or drives you crazy, you just have to call it annoying, or one of the other adjectives listed above.

To check up; a checkup

In one of the dialogues in this episode, Maura tells a story about her boss bugging her. She says that he always **checks up** and sees how she's doing.

To check up is to look to see if everything is going well; to make sure that everything's OK. Maura's boss keeps going over to talk to her to see how her work is going. We could also say he's **checking up <u>on</u>** her.

As a noun, the word *checkup* has a similar meaning, but it's a little bit different. For people, a **checkup** refers to an appointment with a doctor to make sure that your health is OK. A **checkup** is a routine appointment, maybe every year or every few years, just to be sure that everything is fine. If you make a doctor's appointment because you think there's something wrong with you, you wouldn't call it a **checkup**, just an appointment.

There are a few other things besides people that can have **checkups** too. Most commonly, cars and trucks can have **checkups**, also called tune-ups. Some people make an appointment for a car **checkup** every year, or take their vehicle in for a **checkup** before going on a long driving trip.

Here are some examples of *to check up*, *to check up on,* and *checkup* in sentences:

Ted: Hey Paula, do you want to come to the movies with us tomorrow afternoon?
Paula: I'd like to, but I'm going to see my eye doctor for a **checkup**. She wants to **check up on** my glasses and make sure that they're still right for me.

Sid: Oh, hi Nancy! I didn't expect you to stop by today.
Nancy: I wasn't going to, but I was in your neighbourhood, so I thought I'd come over to **check up** and see how your studying is going.

To suck

After Maura tells Harp all about her boss who is always checking up on her and bugging her, Harps exclaims, "That **sucks**!" This is a fairly common expression among younger people in North America today. Usually it's not meant to be rude or offensive, but just another way to say *that's too bad* or *that's awful*.

If you're listening to a casual conversation, there's a good chance that you'll hear this phrase, but be careful, because some people might consider the word *suck* to be rude in this context. It's definitely not a phrase you should ever use in business conversation or correspondence.

And no matter who you're talking to, it's always a little bit rude to say "You suck!" But that might be OK if you're talking to a friend who knows that you're only joking!

Germs
Do you remember what Harp says annoys her in this episode? She says it bugs her when people cough and they don't cover their mouths. Maura agrees that this is annoying, because it can spread **germs**.

The word *germ*, like the word *bug*, is a general term that applies to a few different things. People use the word *germs* to talk about all kinds of tiny microorganisms (organisms that are too small to see without a microscope) that can cause sicknesses or diseases, like bacteria and viruses.

If a person who has a cold or flu coughs on you, they might spread their **germs** to you and you might get sick too.

Etiquette for coughing and sneezing
In Canada, and a lot of other countries, it's very impolite to cough or sneeze without covering your mouth, and a lot of people (like Harp!) find it very irritating.

It used to be considered proper etiquette to cover your mouth with your hand when you coughed or sneezed, but now people are told to cough or sneeze into their elbows. That way, the germs don't get on your hands and spread to the things or the people you touch later.

A popular Canadian comedy TV show called *This Hour Has 22 Minutes* did a skit making fun of people who take coughing etiquette too seriously. If you'd like to watch it, search for "This Hour Has 22 Minutes Cough Etiquette" on YouTube or check out the link on the page for this podcast episode.

Kind of; sort of
In one of the dialogue examples in this episode, Maura complains to Harp about her (fictional) roommate, who never washes the dishes. Maura says that her roommate **kind of** gets on her nerves.

Using the expression *kind of* in this way is an informal way of saying *rather* or *somewhat*. When Maura says "she **kind of** gets on my nerves," it means that the roommate only bothers Maura a little bit, not a lot. We can also use the expression *sort of* in the exact same way.

Here are some examples:

Terry: What do you think of the new flavour of Coke they invented?
Jason: It's **kind of** good, but I prefer the old one.

Abby: Do you want to come camping with me this weekend?
Taylor: I don't know. I'm **sort of** scared of all the bugs that live in the forest.

Kinda; sorta
In this episode, Maura pronounces the words *kind of* pretty clearly, but you've probably noticed that people who speak English fluently don't always do this! A lot of people, when they're speaking quickly and casually, say *kinda* or *sorta* instead of *kind of* or *sort of*.

Sometimes people even write the words *kinda* or *sorta* if they're writing casually, such as in an email to a friend or a note to a family member, but you should never do this in formal or business writing.

Impression
Do you like Maura's **impression** of a bug in this episode?

An **impression**, or an imitation, is when you talk or act like another person (or thing) and try to mimic the way that they sound or behave. Maura mimics a bug by making the sound "*zzzz*," to represent the buzzing noise that a mosquito makes as it flies around.

Some comedians make people laugh by doing **impressions** of famous people. A comedian or singer who does **impressions** can also be called an impersonator.

To recap; recap
As a verb, the word *recap* is an abbreviation of *recapitulate*. The abbreviated form is pretty common, but the full word is hardly ever used except in very formal English.

To recap is to repeat; to go over something again. At the end of every Culips Catch Word podcast, the hosts **recap** the main phrases and words discussed in the episode.

Recap can also be used as a noun to mean the repetition itself. In this case, the word *recap* is an abbreviation of *recapitulation*. Once again, people rarely use the full form of the word unless they really want to sound fancy.

Here are some examples with *recap* as a noun and as a verb:

Victor: Did you see the new episode of *Lost* last night? It was so good!
Brian: No! I missed it. Give me a quick **recap** so I know what's going on when I watch the next episode.

Mrs. Demarco: OK class, before we leave, let's **recap** what you need to study for next week's exam.

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

1. **If someone always says and does things that annoy you, which of the following words could you use to describe them?**

   a) annoying
   b) annoysome
   c) botherful
   d) buggy

2. **Which of the following things are considered germs?**

   a) bacteria
   b) insects
   c) ladybugs
   d) spiders

3. **Peter: How's work going?**
   Yvonne: It's OK, but my boss bugs me. She comes into my office to _____ me about a hundred times a day.

   Fill in the blank.

   a) check
   b) check up on
   c) checkmate
   d) checkup

4. **In Canada, what is the proper etiquette when you cough?**

   a) cover your mouth with your hand
   b) cough into your elbow
   c) never cough in public
   d) it doesn't matter; nobody cares

5. **What part of Harp's body was bothering her?**

    a) her feet
    b) her hair
    c) her head
    d) her stomach

6. **Andy: My roommate always plays his drums when I'm trying to sleep!**
   William: Wow, that must really _____.

   Please fill in the blank.

    a) bug on your nerves
    b) drive you nervy
    c) get on your nerves
    d) get your last nerve

7. **When it's used as a verb, what is the word *recap* short for?**

   Please fill in the blank.

    a) recapitalize
    b) recapitulate
    c) recapitulation
    d) recapture

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