

Catch Word #64 – Having a ball

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone, this is Harp.

Robin: And Robin.

Harp: And we're here at Culips, bringing you the Catch Word podcast.

Robin: Absolutely, and this is where we take an expression and break it down. If you want more information check out our Lipservice, where you can get the transcript, detailed explanation, and all that other good stuff

Harp: Yeah, and you can find the Lipservice on our website, that's Culips.com, CULIPS.com. Today we're going to look at expressions that are related to having a great time, to having the best time ever.

Robin: Mmhmm. Having a lot of fun. And the first one is **to have a ball**.

Harp: Yeah, **to have a ball**.

Robin: **To have a ball**.

Harp: This expression means to have a great time, to have a lot of fun.

Robin: And if you want to know what a ball is...well, a ball can be something that you throw but in this case that's not what we're talking about. **A ball** can also be a big party or a social event where you go and you eat and you talk to people. And usually at these events you have fun. Because of this, we use the expression **to have a ball**, to say to have fun.

Harp: Yeah, to have a great time. It doesn't have to be at a party, but that's where the expression comes from.

Robin: Absolutely. Shall we do a dialogue?

Harp: Yeah, let's do one. Robin, how was the concert yesterday?

Robin: Incredible. **The music is still in my head**. I **had** such **a ball**. I had a real good time.

Harp: That's awesome. So the band was great?

- Robin: It was amazing. You would've had a good time.
- Harp: It's too bad I missed it.
- Robin: It is.
- Harp: Next time. So in that example, Robin went to a concert and had a really fun time. He had a great time, so he used the expression **to have a ball**.
- Robin: Absolutely, and as we said before, it doesn't necessarily have to be a party. In this case it was a concert. It **coulda** been anything.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Robin: Are there any other expressions that we can use?
- Harp: For sure, you could say **to have a blast**.
- Robin: **To have a blast**.
- Harp: Yeah, **to have a blast**.
- Robin: OK, and this means the same thing?
- Harp: Yeah, to have a really good time, to have a lot of fun, to really enjoy yourself.
- Robin: Let's get into another example.
- Harp: Sounds good.
- Robin: Ah, this music...it's great.
- Harp: Yeah, you're **having a blast** with the music.
- Robin: It's great. Are you enjoying the party?
- Harp: It's not really my type of music, but I'm having fun.
- Robin: Oh man.
- Harp: You're **having a blast**!

- Robin: I'm really really **having a blast**. Are you going to stick around for the rest of the night?
- Harp: Yeah, I think so. It's a fun time.
- Robin: OK 'cause **it wouldn't be the same without you**. So in that example, we were at a party, there's this loud music, and we're both having fun... maybe Harp a little less, but...
- Harp: Still having fun.
- Robin: You were having fun anyway.
- Harp: Yeah, it was a great time. **It was a blast**.
- Robin: So far we've looked at two expressions: **to have a ball** and **to have a blast**. They're both more slang expressions, aren't they?
- Harp: Yeah, exactly. So with both of the expressions, **to have a ball** and **to have a blast**, you can use them in many different ways: I **had a ball** at the party; I **had a ball** at the concert; I **had a blast** at the concert. Or you could say, yesterday **was a blast**, the party **was a blast**, or last weekend we **had a ball**. There are many different ways to use this expression and we'll explain more of the ways in Lipservice.
- Robin: And another expression that we can use could be...what?
- Harp: **It was a riot**.
- Robin: **It was a riot**.
- Harp: Yeah, **it was a riot** is a fun way of saying **it was a blast**, **it was a fun time**, **I had a great time**. **It was a riot**.
- Robin: I'm sure a lot of you know what a **riot** is. It's when there are people outside... they're break things and there's a lot of crazy things happening outside, there's a lot of disorder. Well, in this case we're not really connected to that. We're not talking about that. It just means it was fun.
- Harp: Exactly. **It was a riot** is a slang expression to say to have a good time.
- Robin: Let's do our third example.
- Harp: Sounds good.

- Robin: Haha. Oh man. Did you go to the comedy show?
- Harp: Yeah, it was amazing.
- Robin: Yeah, **it was a riot**, wasn't it?
- Harp: Yeah, I was laughing so much.
- Robin: Especially that last **comedian**.
- Harp: Yeah, the **Just for Laughs Festival** is great. There's so many funny comedy shows.
- Robin: It is. You know I have to come back to Montreal next year for it.
- Harp: Yeah, **it was a riot**. OK, so in that example we used the expression **it was a riot** and we mean that the comedy show was a lot of fun, we had a great time, we laughed a lot...
- Robin: We use it to say we had a good time, we had a great time, or we **had a ball**. It could be used like all the other expressions we've looked at.
- Harp: Exactly and in that expression, I mentioned the **Just for Laughs Festival**. This is a fun festival that happens in the summer in Montreal and there are a lot of different shows that go on with different **comedians** from all around the world. **It's really a blast**.
- Robin: It is and it's also one of the biggest festivals of comedy in North America.
- Harp: Yeah, I think maybe even in the world.
- Robin: **Perhaps**.
- Harp: **It's a riot**. You should come visit Montreal and visit for the festival.
- Robin: We have one more expression before we wrap it up.
- Harp: Robin, what is that expression?
- Robin: That expression is **to have the time of your life**.
- Harp: Yeah, **to have the time of your life**.

- Robin: ***To have the time of your life*** and this expression, like the others... it just means you had a great time, you had a really really fun time.
- Harp: Yeah, you **had a blast**, you had so much fun.
- Robin: And when you say ***to have the time of your life*** it really emphasizes the fact that it was more fun than usual.
- Harp: Yeah, it was exceptionally fun.
- Robin: Indeed. Shall we recap?
- Harp: Sure. So we started off with the expression ***to have a ball***.
- Robin: ***To have a ball***, then we moved on to ***to have a blast***.
- Harp: Exactly, and the third expression was ***it was a riot***.
- Robin: ***It was a riot***. And then the last, ***to have the time of your life***.
- Harp: Yeah, ***to have the time of your life***. One last thing that I want mention about the first three expressions: ***to have a ball***, ***to have a blast***, and ***it was a riot***, is that these are slang expressions, so use them with a little bit of caution.
- Robin: But ***to have the time of your life***—That's an expression that is quite common, you can use it in any context.
- Harp: Exactly.
- Robin: So we hope you **had a blast** listening to our podcast and for now this is Robin signing off.
- Harp: And Harp. Bye everyone!
- Robin: Goodbye!

Detailed Explanation

To have a ball

To have a ball is used to describe any time that you enjoyed yourself and really had fun. The explanation for all the focus expressions in this episode is really that simple. You can have a ball at a party or a concert, or even just spending time with one other person.

Having a ball usually involves some kind of laughing, energy, or action.

With this expression, there is some variation. We can use a person as the subject, like, "Fred **had a ball**." In this case it means that Fred had fun.

We can also talk about the time or event, for example, "The party **was a ball**." In this case we say **to be a ball**. This means that the party was fun, so we can assume that everyone there, and most definitely the speaker, had fun at the party.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have a ball** and **to be a ball**:

Vince: What did you do last night?

Lindsay: I went out with Megan and we **had a ball**.

Nancy: I'm really looking forward to having dinner at your place tomorrow night.

Kevin: Yeah, it should be fun. A lot of fun people are coming. It should **be a ball**.

A ball

As Robin mentions in this episode, **a ball** is also a big, formal party. **A ball** does not happen at a person's home but a special place for large parties. At **a ball** all the people wear fancy clothes, and there is a lot of fancy dancing. In fact, there is even a style of dance called ballroom dancing.

To describe a kind of party as **a ball** is rare nowadays. **Balls** are traditional and do not happen often anymore.

Here is a list of some of the more common words for a formal, fancy party:

A gala

A prom

A dance

A formal

The music is still in my head

In one of the examples that Robin and Harp give, Robin says, “**The music is still in my head.**” When something is **in someone’s head** it means that the person is thinking about it or remembers it. Here is an example with that:

Doug: Did you write down her phone number?

Bill: No, I didn’t have a pen.

Doug: Are you going to forget it?

Bill: No, it’s **in my head**.

This is commonly said about songs or music. Sometimes when you hear a song you continue to sing it aloud or in your head for hours after you hear it. Other times you might suddenly begin singing a song to yourself and you have no idea why!

So when someone says that they have **a song or music in their head** or stuck in their head, it means that they’re singing the music in their mind, usually in a repetitive way. Some people might find this frustrating, especially if they can’t stop singing a song that they don’t even like very much, or if the same song remains in their mind for hours.

Here is another example with **music in someone’s head**:

Wendy: What are you singing?

Diana: Just this song I used to love when I was a kid. **It’s been in my head** all day!

Coulda been anything

In this episode, when Robin says, “Could’ve been anything,” it sounds more like **coulda** than **could’ve**. It’s very common for English speakers to pronounce **could have** or **could’ve** like **coulda**. In text messaging and emails, sometimes people write it like that too, but it is NEVER appropriate in any professional writing.

This is also true for **should** and **would**: we can say **shoulda** and **woulda**.

Here are a couple of examples:

Fiona: Oh no, it’s raining.

Dave: I **shoulda** packed an umbrella.

Bonnie: What are you doing here?

Ted: I’m not working today.

Bonnie: Oh, wow. I **woulda** called you, if I’d known you weren’t working.

To have a blast

This is a synonym for the expression **to have a ball**. **To have a blast** is also used to talk about a time when you enjoyed yourself and had fun. We can say that **someone had a blast** or that **the event was a blast**.

Here are a couple of examples with the variations of this expression:

Neil: How was your graduation?

Sarah: **It was a blast!** I got to see all my old friends again!

Alison: I **had** such **a blast** at your party last weekend.

Peter: Oh, thanks. It was fun, wasn't it?

Blast

There is also a literal definition for the word **blast**. **A blast** is a sudden loud noise or movement of air, like in an explosion. In a sudden explosion, there is a lot of excitement and energy just like in the expression **to have a blast**.

It wouldn't be the same without you

In one example in this episode, Robin says, "**It wouldn't be the same without you.**" This is an expression that is used to tell someone that their attendance at a certain event is very important. Their being at the event is so important that if they are not there, it will not be the same or as fun as it should be. This might be true, but it could also be an exaggeration to make the person feel important.

In this episode, Robin tells Harp that the party would not be as fun if Harp left.

There are many small variations on this expression, depending on the time you want to speak about. When we use the conditional **wouldn't**, the person might attend, but might not attend. When we use other verb tenses the person is definitely not attending the event.

Here is a short list of those variations in verb tense:

It won't be the same without you.

It wasn't the same without you.

It isn't the same without you.

It hasn't been the same without you.

Here are some examples:

Andy: I'm coming to your house for dinner this Friday.

Cecile: Good! **It wouldn't have been the same without you.**

(Andy is coming for dinner.)

Christina: **It hasn't been the same without you** at work.

Claire: Oh thanks. It's good to be back.

(Claire has not been at work.)

It was a riot

Here is another, less common, synonym for **to have a ball** and **to have a blast**. **To have a riot** is used to express that someone had a great time. **To be a riot** means that some event was a great time. This expression also means that it was really funny and that people laughed a lot.

It is also possible to describe a person as a **riot**. If we say that Dean **is a riot**, it means that he's really funny and everyone around him has a lot of fun.

Here are a couple more examples with **riot**:

Kyla: **Last night was a riot.**

Lindsay: Yeah, it was a lot of fun. We should do it again sometime.

George: She told me **she had a riot.**

Penny: Good! I'm glad she had fun.

Riot

An actual **riot** is, like Robin explains in this episode, a lot of disorder and chaos. A **riot** can be a protest against something and it can be violent. A **riot** always has a lot of action and energy, just like in the expression.

Comedians

A **comedian** is a professional funny person. A **comedian** could be a funny actor who plays in many comedy films. A **comedian** could also be a **stand-up comedian** who stands in front of a live audiences and tells jokes.

Just for Laughs Festival

Robin was right! The Just for Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal is the biggest comedy festival in the world. It began in 1983 in Montreal in French only, and a couple of years later English shows began happening too. Every year the festival takes places at the beginning of July in downtown Montreal. Many streets are closed for free shows and you can also pay to see more famous comedians in theatres around the city.

Perhaps

In this episode, Robin says, “**perhaps.**” **Perhaps** is a little word that can be used on its own or as part of a sentence. It means possibly or maybe.

Here are some examples with **perhaps**:

Greg: Will I see you at Jean’s tomorrow night?

Paula: **Perhaps.**

Carmen: Why isn’t she coming to work tomorrow?

Vicky: **Perhaps** she’s sick.

To have the time of your life

The expression **to have the time of your life** also means that you had a great time, just like **to have a ball**, **to have a blast**, and **to have a riot**. The only small difference is that **to have the time of your life** means that the time was especially fun and even more fun than usual. It means that it was the best time you ever had in your life, but this is often an exaggeration and not understood so literally.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Luke: How was your trip to Greece?

Amanda: **I had the time of my life.** The weather was perfect and it was so relaxing!

Burt: How did Sheila like camp?

June: **She had the time of her life.** She can’t wait to go back next year.

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

1. What is the first expression we look at in this episode?

- a) to have the ball
- b) to have a ball
- c) to have balls
- d) to have a kind of ball

2. Which is NOT a synonym for a ball?

- a) a gala
- b) a formal party
- c) a prom
- d) a street party

3. How is could have often pronounced when spoken in everyday speech?

- a) coulda
- b) could to have
- c) couldy
- d) could

4. Like to *have a ball*, we can also say to *have a* _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) bunny
- b) baster
- c) blast
- d) bounce

5. It wouldn't be _____ without you.

Please fill in the blank to complete the expression.

- a) different
- b) the same
- c) very similar
- d) funner

6. What is the meaning of the word *riot*?

- a) disorder caused by a large group of people
- b) a loud explosion
- c) a new dance
- d) a kind of party

7. What does *it was a riot* mean?

- a) It wasn't fun.
- b) It was enjoyable and funny.
- c) It was loud.
- d) There was dancing.

8. Which expression means that Sheena had a really great time; a time that was even better than usual?

- a) Sheena was bored stiff.
- b) Sheena had the time of her life.
- c) It wouldn't have been the same without Sheena.
- d) Sheena was the life of the party.

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