

Catch Word #7 – Clear

Transcript

- Robin: Hello everyone, this is Robin...
- Harp: And Harp...
- Robin: With the **Catch Word** podcast that we do each and every week, it's the podcast where we take one word and explore its different meanings. And what is today's word?
- Harp: Let me **clear** my **throat**. So today's word is **clear**.
- Robin: So if you didn't catch that, **clear** your **throat** means to remove anything that might be obstructing, or preventing you, from speaking.
- Harp: Exactly. If you feel like coughing you would **clear** your **throat** before talking.
- Robin: Indeed, indeed, and this goes back to our basic meaning of **clear**.
- Harp: Exactly, so **clear** a **table**.
- Robin: **Clear** a **table**.
- Harp: To move things that are on the table physically.
- Robin: So you want to do your work.
- Harp: Exactly, for me I don't have a desk so I use my kitchen table but if I want to eat I have to **clear** my **table**. To pick up the pencils and the paper and I make a big mess.
- Robin: OK.
- Harp: So it takes me a while to **clear** my **table**.
- Robin: So you remove those things that would prevent you from using it otherwise.
- Harp: Exactly.

- Robin: OK, and we have another special meaning of **clear**, in the sense that hey, I was playing this video game, Super Mario Brothers, and I **cleared** the last level.
- Harp: This never happens for me. I'm very bad at video games but yes some people, like you, can **clear** a level. So it means to accomplish a task, to finish a level. What's a different example?
- Robin: Another example, we're standing on top of a building and there is another building across the way, and I ask you "Hey do you think you can **clear** the distance between here and there?" So in that sense, you're jumping over from one building to another and trying to **clear** the distance. Trying to overcome that space separating the two.
- Harp: Again something I couldn't do, but yes, a good example!
- Robin: You never know unless you try. You can try after class, after the podcast.
- Harp: Yeah, I could try. OK the next one, so to **clear** something with somebody. Can you explain what this is?
- Robin: For example, I was thinking about buying a new camera for Culips but I had to **clear** that with Yoshi before doing that.
- Harp: Yes, he is the boss.
- Robin: So I had to ask him if it was OK.
- Harp: Exactly. Sometimes people mean this when they're doing renovations on their house because if you need to do an extension, if you want to make your house bigger, you have to **clear** it with the city.
- Robin: With the city for example. Yes, yes. And another one would be **clear cut**. This process of **clearing**, **clearing** this thing, your extension of the house with the city, is probably not a **clear-cut** process.
- Harp: Never! I think any process with the government is always **clear as mud**.

- Robin: **Clear as mud**, so we have two here, we have **clear cut** and **clear as mud**. Now **clear as mud**, what does that mean?
- Harp: When something is really difficult, when, mud is difficult to see through. You can see through water but mud is ...
- Robin: It's pretty tough to see through.
- Harp: Yeah, it's dirty, it's brown-coloured, and so when I want to clear an extension with the city it is not **clear cut**.
- Robin: It's not **clear cut**. So when something is as **clear as mud**, it's not very easy to understand, in a sense.
- Harp: Exactly!
- Robin: It's not a very easy process and if something is a very easy process or very easy to do, very understandable, it would be **clear cut**. Or **clear as crystal**.
- Harp: Yes. **Clear as crystal**. That is a good one. Crystals you can see through them or the light can go through them at least. Maybe a big shiny diamond you can see through. So it's when something is as **clear as crystal** it's very easy to understand, very easy to see, very easy to do.
- Robin: Very easy to understand. So **clear cut** and **clear as crystal**, we can use those at the same time.
- Harp: Yeah, interchangeably.
- Robin: Interchangeably, and I heard that you and Maura got into a little fight.
- Harp: Well, we took some time to **clear the air**.
- Robin: OK, so you guys took some time, so you guys stayed away from each other for a while to change the vibe, the atmosphere between you two.
- Harp: We wanted to get rid of doubts, to get rid of hard feelings, you know, we wanted to **clear the air**.
- Robin: Were you *that* angry at her.

- Harp: Not angry, frustrated maybe.
- Robin: Did it take you a long time to **clear** your **head**?
- Harp: No, I realized very quickly that we were saying the same thing but in different ways.
- Robin: OK, so **clear** your **head**.
- Harp: Exactly!
- Robin: What would that mean? **Clear** my **head**, **clear** my **mind**.
- Harp: To **clear** my **mind** of angry thoughts, of the negative things, you know, so that I can think positively and logically about something.
- Robin: So if you're feeling angry, to **clear** your **head**, or to **clear** your **mind**, would be to put yourself in a position where you're not so angry anymore.
- Harp: Relax, do some yoga maybe.
- Robin: Do some yoga, and I think we **cleared** all the things that we needed to cover for today.
- Harp: Wait, there is one more!
- Robin: Which one is that?
- Harp: I don't think it's **clear as a bell**, but...
- Robin: Indeed, **clear as a bell**.
- Harp: This one has two meanings, the literal meaning is when the sound is very clear, if you can hear this podcast **clear as a bell** that means there is no background noise, there is no...
- Robin: There is no hissing.
- Harp: There are no annoying sounds; you can hear our voices **clearly**. What is the figurative way to describe that?
- Robin: The figurative, I would say that the figurative expression is very similar to **clear cut** and **clear as crystal**. It means that something can be understood clearly.

- Harp: Yes, yes!
- Robin: So it can be understood well, very easily.
- Harp: We hope that this podcast is as **clear as a bell** for the sound and that you can understand what we're explaining about **clear**.
- Robin: Yeah and if you did find our expressions **clear as mud** please write us at Culips.com. But as we've **cleared** all the expressions I think that's about it for our podcast and I would like to thank you once again for joining us at Culips.com. If you have any questions or any concerns check out our notes, where we cover things more in detail. That's the Lipservice at Culips.com but for now this has been Robin ...
- Harp: and Harp...
- Robin: With your Catch Word podcast.
- Harp: See you later!
- Robin: Bye everyone.

Detailed Explanation

There are a few literal definitions of **clear**. I will explain them and then give you some examples.

The first definition means **transparent**. **Transparent** means that you can see through it. Glass is usually **clear** because you can see from one side to the other. Water can also be **clear** when you can see through it. To **see through** means you can see from one side to the other.

Clear can also mean **easy to see**. If you look at a picture and you can see exactly what is in the picture, and all the detail, then we can say it is a **clear** picture.

Were these definitions **clear**? When something is **clear** it is usually free from any problems. So when I asked if the definitions were **clear** it is like asking if they are free from problems. Saying “Is that **clear**?” is exactly like saying “Do you understand?”

There are lots of meanings for **clear** but these are the basics. And **clear** generally means free from problems, it is something you can see and understand well. You will see that even the further uses below follow this general definition.

To clear my throat

What is a **throat**? A **throat** is a part of a body that is necessary to eat and breathe. It is inside the neck and just connected to the mouth. When we are sick and have a cold, we feel pain here.

Also sometimes we have something in our **throats** that makes it difficult to talk. We cough, or make a sound like in this episode that **clears** the **throat**. Once the **throat** is **clear** we can talk **clearly**.

Getting someone's attention by clearing your throat

This is also a technique that people use to get another person's attention. The sound one makes when a person **clears** their **throat** is small enough to get the other's attention. If you want someone's attention, you can make a small sound with your **throat** and it sounds natural.

This has been used so often that it can also be a bit rude. If you make a loud cough by **clearing your throat** it can sound rude.

It is usually better to simply say, “Excuse me”.

To clear a table

To clear a table is to take everything off of it. After dinner most people **clear the table**. You remove everything that needs to be washed and make the table **clear**, or free of many items.

Often it is the children's job to **clear the table**. The child helps the parents by gathering the dishes to be cleaned and putting away any food.

Harp also **clears** the **table** before she eats. She has books from school on the table, so she must remove them or **clear the table** before she can eat there. Then after she eats she has to **clear the table** again.

To clear (to pass)

In this case, to **clear** means to pass. In this episode we talked about **clearing** a level in a video game. Robin **clears** or completes or passes one level and moves on to the next.

When I jump over something and I do not touch it, I can say, "I **cleared** it." I passed over it and I also did not touch it. I passed over it successfully, without any trouble. Just like in the video game example, Robin was successful.

To **clear** the space between the two buildings follows the same explanation. To pass from one building to another, without falling, is to **clear** the building.

Super Mario Brothers

This is Nintendo a video game that first started in 1985. There are a variety of video games with the characters of Mario and Luigi (the Mario brothers) in them. Some Internet sources say that Super Mario Bros. is the best-selling video game of all time.

To clear with (to get approval)

To **clear** something **with** another person is to **get their approval**. You must ask the other person and the person will say ok, then it has been **cleared**.

Here's another example. I want to give an assignment to my teacher late. First I must **clear** it **with** him. Second, the teacher must approve it. The teacher needs to say OK.

If you want to use this expression, but the person is not mentioned, we can simply say, "I need to get this **cleared** first" or "She must **clear** it."

Clear as mud

Do you know what **mud** is? **Mud** is a brown substance from the ground. It is wet. You make **mud** by putting dirt and water together. **Mud** is often near rivers or streams or ponds. Beside natural water we often have dirt, which makes **mud**.

Now that we understand **mud**, we understand that it is thick and dark and impossible to see through. Not that people ever try! So I ask you the question, is **mud clear**? No, it isn't. Not at all.

To say **clear as mud** then means not **clear** at all. When we say this, we mean something is not clear.

Robin gave the example of working on your home and getting it **cleared** with the city. This is not easy to do and many problems usually occur. So to get work **cleared** with the city is **as clear as mud**, or not clear or easy at all.

Clear cut/Clear as crystal

As was mentioned in this episode, **clear cut** is the opposite of **clear as mud**. So if **clear as mud** is hard to understand, then **clear cut** is easy to understand. We can also say **crystal clear** or **clear as crystal**.

We can even use it in a question.

Example: "Is that **clear**?"
"Crystal clear."

So the person who answers means that it is really **clear** and that they understand all the details.

We can also hear it in a question like this one.

"Is that **crystal clear**?"

This exact question can be a bit harsh or rude or serious. It is like saying, "Do you really understand everything I am saying, because if you do not I will be angry with you."

A **clearer** example is a child getting in trouble from his mother. The mother explains what the child did is very wrong and wants the child to understand why it was wrong. The mother may say, "Is that **clear**?" because she finds it very important that he understand her explanation well.

Clear cutting

This term is very different from the definitions for **clear** in this episode. **Clear cutting** is a forestry word which means **cutting** down all the trees in a certain area. If you **cut** down all the trees then the area is **clear** because there is nothing in it anymore.

As environmental concerns grow, this is a forestry practice that most people believe is bad and unhealthy for the planet. When these trees are **clear cut** they are often no plans for replanting or regenerating new trees in the area.

Fight

In this episode Robin and Harp said that Harp and Maura had recently gotten into an argument. Robin said it was a **fight**. **Fight** means a physical altercation, when people hit each other. But we also use **fight** to say that someone had a verbal argument.

If she says, "I had a **fight** with my Mom yesterday." It doesn't mean that it was a physical **fight**. In most cases, it was probably just a verbal argument. And of course, in the case of Maura and Harp, it was a verbal argument or disagreement.

Clear the air

After the **fight**, Harp and Maura decided to **clear the air**. This means that after the disagreement they did something to resolve the situation or to make the situation better. In this case, in order to **clear the air** Harp and Maura separated and relaxed until they were calm again. Then when they were together again, everything was fine, the **air** had been **cleared**.

People can also **clear the air** by discussing the situation. Maybe one person is angry at her brother, so to **clear the air** they talk about the problem and then things are better.

*There was no **fight** between Maura and Harp. Robin creates funny stories to make examples for our episodes.

Clear your head/Clear your mind

This is similar to **clear the air**. When we **clear the air** we make the situation between two people good again. **Clear your head** or **clear your mind** means to relax your mind and not think about any bad thoughts.

In the example from this episode, Harp **cleared her mind** because of the argument that she had had earlier. She relaxed and thought about positive things.

Clear as a bell

Harp described this one pretty **clearly** in this episode. She said there are two meanings. The first one is literal, that it is as **clear as a bell** when you can hear something very clearly, like music or a voice on a telephone or even this podcast.

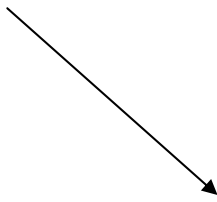
And the other definition is like **clear cut** or **crystal clear**, something that is easily understood, so very **clear** in the person's mind.

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

1. Which expression means that the situation is *not* clear, or is confusing?

- a) Clear as mud
- b) Crystal clear
- c) To clear the air
- d) Clear as a bell

2. Match the expression with the meaning:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| a) To clear your throat | i) Stop thinking |
| b) To clear the air | ii) Remove all things from a flat surface where you eat or work |
| c) To clear a table | iii) Cough |
| d) To clear your mind | iv) Resolve an argument |
| e) To clear cut | v) To cut down all the trees in a certain area |
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3. What is another way of saying “I have to clear this with my boss”?

- a) I have to ask for my boss’s permission or approval.
- b) I have to make this understandable for my boss.
- c) I have to confuse my boss.
- d) I have to make my boss stop thinking.

4. Why might someone have to *clear the air*?

- a) They had a fight and they want to be friends again.
- b) They had a misunderstanding with someone and now they want that person to understand something.
- c) There was something that someone didn’t say, but now they are taking the opportunity to say it.
- d) All of the above.

5. What is *not* a good way to clear your mind?

- a) Meditation
- b) Yoga
- c) Making a presentation
- d) Resting

Write down any other ways you like to clear your mind:

Examples: Sleeping, spending time with friends, watching TV...

Answers:

1. a 2. a-iii, b-iv, c-ii, d-i, e-v

3. a

4. d

5. c