

AD-FREE

## Real Talk #60 – How to ask for a recommendation at a bookstore

### Episode description

Are you a bookworm? Do you enjoy reading books? In this episode, Andrew and Kassy discuss how to ask for a book recommendation at a library or a bookstore. They teach you many useful expressions that you can use in this situation and in various other everyday conversations. Make sure to listen to this lesson to improve your vocabulary and boost your speaking confidence!

### Fun fact

Did you know that silent reading, which is a common thing today, wasn't always normal in the history of reading? Back in ancient times, people typically read aloud, and silent reading was considered quite unusual. Traditionally, one reader would read texts out loud to an audience, because not many people could read, and books were rare as well. It's fascinating how our reading habits have evolved over time!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Can you recommend something?
- I'm open to anything
- To check something out
- It wouldn't be my first choice
- To catch [one's] interest
- To be up for [something]
- One of my top [number] reads
- You won't regret it



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Real Talk episode number 60. How to ask for a recommendation at a bookstore. Featuring, Andrew and Kassy. Hello, everyone. Welcome to another episode of Real Talk. I'm your host Andrew. And in this episode, we're going to teach you about how to ask for a recommendation at a bookstore or at a library. And whether you're a person who loves to read or someone who's just looking for something new to read, I think this is a useful skill to have. And joining me today to help me with this lesson is my cohost, Kassy. Kassy, you are a real bookworm. So, you're the perfect person to have here cohost the show with me. How's it going?

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew. Hey, listeners. I'm doing well. I'm super excited for today's conversation. As everyone knows, I am an avid reader.

**Andrew:** Yeah, this is right down your alley, Kassy, so this is perfect.

**Kassy:** OK, let's get to today's topic, which is how to ask for recommendations specifically at a bookstore or a library. Imagine you're at a bookstore, but you're not quite sure what you want to read next. Well, today, we're gonna learn how you can ask a bookstore employee or a librarian for recommendations on what to read, we'll first listen to an example conversation where we'll hear some useful phrases used when asking or giving recommendations and some interesting book related vocabulary words. And once we're done listening to that example, conversation, we'll pull out key phrases and vocabulary and talk about them together. Sounds good?

**Andrew:** Yeah. Sounds good to me. So, why don't we get started by listening to that example conversation right now?

**Customer:** Excuse me, do you have a moment?

**Staff:** Yeah, of course. What can I assist you with today?

**Customer:** Well, I'm looking for a good book to read. **Can you recommend something?**

**Staff:** Yeah, no problem. Do you have a specific genre or author in mind? Or are you open to trying something new?

**Customer:** **I'm pretty open to anything.** But I really enjoy mystery and fantasy novels.

**Staff:** Mystery and fantasy. OK. Well, how about this book called *The Maid*? It's by a Canadian author. Her name is Nita Prose. And it's a really funny murder mystery. It was a number one New York Times bestseller as well.

**Customer:** That sounds really interesting. I was wondering, I really liked *Fourth Wing*. Could you recommend any books similar to it?

**Staff:** *Fourth wing*? Sure. So, if you want to read something by a lesser-known author, then I recommend *Fireborne*. It's by Rosaria Munda. And this book is about dragon riders. But it's a part of this finished trilogy that includes political intrigue, and dragon fighting. There's a little bit of romance thrown in as well and truly fantastic character and world building.

**Customer:** That sounds amazing. **I'll definitely check those out.**

**Staff:** By the way, do you like nonfiction as well?

**Customer:** **It wouldn't be my first choice.** But if a topic **catches my interest**, I might read one.

**Staff:** OK. Well, **if you're up for it**, then I have to recommend *Entangled Life*. Now, this is a book, the writers name is Merlin Sheldrake. And it's a book about fungi, believe it or not, but it reads like a fiction novel. And his writing style is just so, so good. It was **one of my top five reads** this year.

**Customer:** Wow, that good, really? I'm intrigued. I'll have to pick that one up as well.

**Staff:** OK. Yeah, if you do, **you won't regret it**.

**Andrew:** OK, amazing. So, we just heard a conversation that happened at a bookstore, where a customer who was played by Kassy. Nice job, by the way, Kassy. The customer was asking the bookstore employee about a recommendation. And we heard their conversation there, while the employee of the bookstore recommended some books. And during the conversation, there were a lot of expressions that were used specifically that you would use to talk about books, and maybe even to a certain extent, movies or TV shows as well. And to me, Kassy, this seems like a really normal kind of conversation that you would hear in this kind of situation, you know, where there's a customer that's looking for something new to read at the bookstore, but they're not really sure what they want. And so, they're just having a conversation with one of the employees at the bookstore to find a book that sounds interesting to them.

**Kassy:** I also think that this kind of conversation could be used with friends or coworkers or general acquaintances too, if you are looking for recommendations from people around you.

**Andrew:** Kassy, as someone who reads a lot, do you get a lot of friends asking you for recommendations about what to read next?

**Kassy:** I do, but I just love to share my love of books with the world. So, I wish more people would ask me for recommendations, I would have so many to give.

**Andrew:** OK, you heard it here, listeners. If you're looking for a book recommendation, then you know who to ask. And Kassy, I think especially you know a lot about like, fantasy novels, right? That's your genre?

**Kassy:** Yeah, I love fantasy. But I've been getting into a bunch of different genres this year. So, lots to recommend.

**Andrew:** Cool. OK, so now I think what we will do is we're going to go back through that example conversation that we listened to, and we're going to pick it apart, and point out and explain some of the key expressions that we heard, what those expressions mean, why they were used in the conversation, and how you can use them in your own English to make your English speaking sound really natural. So, Kassy, let's start at the beginning of the conversation. And what did your character say when she was looking for a book recommendation? How did she start the conversation with the bookstore employee?

**Kassy:** The first thing she asked was, "Excuse me, do you have a moment?" And this phrase is really useful when you want to ask anyone for a moment of their time. Do you have a moment means, "Hi, do you have some time to help me?"

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly because, you know, it can be a little bit awkward to get somebody's attention, right? Like maybe at the bookstore, one of the employees is just putting some books on the shelf and really doesn't notice you, but you want to get a recommendation from them. So, you have to get their attention. And sometimes people will just come up to you. Usually that's the employees' jobs, right, is to come up and say, "Can I help you?" But sometimes you have to be the go getter. You have to be the one that gets the attention of the employees and an expression like this is perfect, "Excuse me, do you have a moment?" And then the conversation continues where the bookstore employee says, "Yeah, of course, I can help you, no problem. What can I assist you with today?" And that just means "What can I help you with today?" And then the customer asks for a book recommendation. And how does she do that, Kassy?

**Kassy:** Her first sentence was, "I'm looking for a good book to read." And then the second sentence, the important one is, "Can you recommend something?" And I think this phrase is great, because it doesn't have to be just about books, you could make your first sentence, "I really want to try a new ice cream flavor. Can you recommend something?" "I want to try to drive a new car? Can you recommend something?" Like, I don't know, you can use this phrase for a variety of different things.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think especially I use this a lot at restaurants. When I travel often too. You know, like if you're visiting a foreign country. And this is one of the great things about English, right? It's the international language. So, if you're at a restaurant, sometimes the menu will be in a different language. But often you can get by with speaking a little bit of English to the staff as well. And you can order that way. And so, if I'm in a place where I'm not too familiar with the items on the menu, I say, "Can you recommend something?" I remember recently, I was back in my hometown in Kelowna, and I visited a winery. And I don't know too much about wine. You know, I know red and white and that's about it. And so, there's this huge wine list of all these different fancy kinds of wines, and I'm not really too knowledgeable about them. So, I just said to the waiter, "Can you recommend something?" And yeah, I think I use it in a restaurant setting this expression a lot. Like you said, it's very versatile, you can use it all over the place.

**Kassy:** Yes. And then after she asked, can you recommend something, then the clerk's reply was, "Certainly, of course. Do you have a specific genre or author in mind?" Andrew, what does that mean to have a specific genre?

**Andrew:** So, this expression really is "to have something in mind." And to have something in mind means to go into the bookstore already with a kind of genre or an author that you want to buy a book for or that you're thinking about. So, like maybe you really love *Harry Potter* and JK Rowling so you want to read a book that's similar to *Harry Potter* or another book by that author, then you could say, "Yeah, I'm thinking of, you know, a book similar to *Harry Potter*" or "A writer similar to JK Rowling", that kind of thing. That would be to have it

in mind, you already have that idea already have that basis that you're bringing into the bookstore. And so, I think often, when you ask a bookstore employee for help, they're going to ask you some questions to try and get to know your personality, your reading style, the kind of content that you'd like to read, because otherwise, it's going to be difficult for them to give a recommendation.

**Kassy:** Do you like this? No. Do you like this? No.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Or they're just throwing, like, "Oh, how about this biography of Abraham Lincoln?" And you're like, "I hate politics. I hate history." You know, it's really hard for them to give you a recommendation. So, they're going to ask you some questions, for sure. And yeah, you know, about what genres you like which authors you like, what kind of book you're looking for fiction or nonfiction.

**Kassy:** If you'd like more action, or more history or some romance.

**Andrew:** Exactly, exactly. So yeah, be prepared to answer some kind of basic questions like that, if the bookstore employee is a good employee, at least. And the employee also asked the customer this question, "Are you open to trying something new?" Open to trying something new? And that just means reading kind of genre or reading an author that is new to you, that you haven't tried before, right? It's like kind of being open minded, willing to read something new. And of course, the opposite would be closed. I'm closed to reading something new, or close minded. You're like, "Ah, not today. I don't want to really try something new today. Maybe next time?"

**Kassy:** I want my comfort.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah.

**Kassy:** And if someone asks you, "Are you open to trying something new?" Then in the next phrase of this conversation if you are open to it, you could reply with, "Yeah, I'm open to anything."

**Andrew:** I'm open to anything. But what happens if you weren't open to anything? You didn't want to try something new? What would you say in that situation, Kassy?

**Kassy:** In that case, I don't have a specific phrase that comes to mind. But I think I'd say like, "No, thanks. I'm not really open to that."

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think so too. You could just say, "Not today", or "No thanks", or "I don't think so." Something like that. But it would be a little unnatural to say, "I'm closed, or I'm closed minded." That doesn't work. So, don't say it like that, just say, "Oh, no, thank you, not today." So, at this point in the conversation, then the employee starts actually making some recommendations. Kassy, the first book that was recommended was *The Maid* by Nita Prose. And have you read that book before?

**Kassy:** I did. I just read it a few weeks ago. The reason I picked this one specifically for this conversation is because it was a really funny book, but also a murder mystery. And another reason I picked it is because I wanted to use this phrase, which is number one New York Times Bestseller.

**Andrew:** Yeah, we should talk about that. So, I think most listeners will know the New York Times newspaper, right? Probably one of the most well-known newspapers in the world. And they have a book list, how does it work exactly, Kassy? They produce like a list each Sunday, I think, of the most popular books that have sold in the past week. Is that how it works?

**Kassy:** Yeah, that's right. So, they'll have the top selling books, sometimes they'll have an overall category. And you might even have different genres like the number one in that



genre, specifically. But the New York Times bestseller list is one of, if not the, most famous lists for rating books.

**Andrew:** Right. So, if you see a book, and it says the number one New York Times bestseller, or sometimes it's even just on the bestsellers list, right? Because even if it's not number one, if it's still like number five or something, it means it's very popular. That's what it's saying. It's just like, acknowledgement that this book is very, very popular and has sold many copies. So, if it is number one on the New York Times Best Seller list, then you can feel pretty confident that the book is going to be entertaining because so many other people have enjoyed it as well. So, the customer hears about this recommendation, and then she says, "Oh, that sounds interesting." But maybe it's not really her style, because she kind of changes the subject and says, "I really liked *Fourth Wing*, could you recommend any books similar to it?" And yeah, this is a great kind of expression or a great thing you could say, right? Is to give the bookstore employee some help in trying to make a recommendation. Let them know what kind of books you've enjoyed in the past, and then they can base their recommendation off of that.

**Kassy:** Exactly. And once again, you could use this for lots of different conversations talking about movies or foods in a restaurant. Yeah. Could you recommend any blah, blah, similar to it for any type of topic?

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. And, OK, in the next part of the conversation, we hear a lot of really interesting expressions that you can use to talk about different kinds of stories. The bookstore employee made a recommendation by recommending a lesser-known author named Rosaria Munda, and the book *Fireborne*. And Kassy, that is a cool way to describe an author, I guess, "lesser-known author", I'm sure most authors would rather not be lesser known, they'd rather be well known. But what is it mean if you're a lesser-known author?

**Kassy:** Yeah, I think this phrase and another phrase, "up-and-coming author" are pretty similar. If you're a lesser-known author, or, an up-and-coming author, it means that you're not quite everyday famous. You're not JK Rowling level, then everybody hears your name they go, "Ah, Harry Potter!" But you're getting a fan base. You're making a name for yourself slowly.

**Andrew:** Yeah, there are some of those writers out there that everybody knows, right? Shakespeare, Stephen King, John Grisham, right? There's like these giants. But there are some writers that like, not everybody knows about, right? So, you could describe them as lesser known. Another expression that we have in English is household name. So, if you are a household name, that means that everybody knows who you are.

**Kassy:** Andrew, do you think you'll ever be a household name?

**Andrew:** Nah, I don't think so. I highly doubt it. But yeah, if you're a household name, that it means everybody knows who you are. But yeah, a lesser-known author, it's probably not a household name. Not very many people would know who they are, except the fans of that author.

**Kassy:** The next useful phrase in this part of the conversation was, "It's part of a finished trilogy." When they were talking about *Fireborne*, they were saying that *Fireborne* is part of a finished trilogy. To break that down, a trilogy is a series of books that are connected, and there are three of them tri for three trilogy. And a finished trilogy means that all three books have been released. And I don't know if this matters for some people, but for people who like to read a lot, when you start an unfinished trilogy, and then you know that you have to wait several months or years for the next book, it is torturous. So, knowing if a trilogy is finished or not, is highly crucial before beginning that trilogy.

**Andrew:** Yeah, yeah, for sure. Kassy, are you the type of person that will wait for all of the books to be released before you decide to read the series?

**Kassy:** Most of the time, yes, I hate waiting. And I read so many books that if I do have to wait, I forget everything from the previous books, and I have to reread, so annoying. So, I'd rather wait.

**Andrew:** Yeah, me too. OK. And in that finished trilogy, *Fireborne* as part of that trilogy, we hear some interesting expressions that are used to talk about the story, such as truly fantastic character and world building. So, Kassy, you're probably more of an expert at this than I am. How could we break those down and explain them character building and world building? Those I think are especially used often to talk about fantasy and sci fi and similar genres to that.

**Kassy:** Yeah, exactly. Fantasy and sci fi novels usually are not set in earth, or they're not set in the earth as we know it. Therefore, you have to world build, you're building this new world with maybe a new species or a new country with its own language and history and political structure. So, some books are really good at world building where they can describe this new world. You can imagine it in your head, but it doesn't take a million pages to explain, which would be boring. So yeah, good world building is when you can build a world that readers can imagine, quickly and efficiently.

**Andrew:** Exactly. And same goes for character, right? Where you're not using, you know, pages and pages and pages to describe the character and bring them to life, you can do that rather quickly and efficiently. And I guess it's like personal preference. Some people really get into the world building and character development. Personally, I just like to get to the action. So, I kind of like to get right to the point. And if the author can do the character and world building quickly and efficiently, then that's better for me.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I think most people would agree.

**Andrew:** All right. So, after the bookstore employee makes those recommendations, the customer responds by saying, "I'll definitely check those out." I'll definitely check those out.

And that's just a great expression that you can use whenever someone recommends something to you, right, Kassy? It's just like a polite way to say, "Oh, thanks for the recommendation. Yeah, I'll definitely check that out." Like I was hanging out with one of my friends recently. And he told me about many different comedy podcasts that he has been listening to recently. And I don't know if I'll go and listen to all of them. I might check out some of them. I'm not sure. I might check out none of them. I might check out all of them. I'm not sure. But in that moment, what I said was, "I'll definitely check those out." Right? It's just like a nice way to say thanks for the recommendation.

**Kassy:** Yes, acknowledging, yes, I heard you. Thank you.

**Andrew:** Yes.

**Kassy:** Next in the conversation, we switch topics a little bit, the salesclerk asked if the customer enjoyed nonfiction, which is not everybody's cup of tea. And the customer also said that the customer said, "It wouldn't be my first choice." It wouldn't be my first choice. I really liked this phrase, Andrew.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it wouldn't be my first choice. So, if you have, you know, an option to read a novel and a fictional story, or an option to read, you know, a nonfiction book, like maybe a history book or a biography, or, in this case, it was a book about fungi, you know, the organism like mushrooms are fungi, right? So, yeah, it wouldn't be my first choice means that I would prefer to read fiction, I would prefer to read a novel. But if the topic is really interesting, and the character in the conversation said, "If the topic catches my interest." Right? So, this is just like one of those expressions that English speakers use that if you can also use it in your English will make your speech sound more natural, more like an English native speaker's, right? You could just say, if the topic is interesting, but here's like that little nuance, that little bit of extra something special that really makes it pop and makes your English sound natural. If it catches my interest, then I might read one.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I use this phrase a lot, especially when starting a new hobby. This is real life. I have been watching a lot of gardening videos, these videos have really caught my interest. And yeah, now I really want to have a garden. I can't in my current apartment, like there's just no room. But some day, I'm going to do it.

**Andrew:** Awesome. Yeah, I love watching gardening videos, too. So, maybe we can talk about that later. We can share some recommendations. So, Kassy moving on with this conversation. The bookstore employee recommends this book, OK? *Entangled Life*. And it's written by Merlin Sheldrake and the way that he recommends the book. He says, "Well, if you're up for it, I recommend *Entangled Life*." If you're up for it. And to be up for something is like ready for a challenge. If you want to challenge if you want to do something new, if you're up for it. OK, so you could even like use this expression, when you're asking your friends to do something, you know? I could be like, "Hey, Kassy, are you up for a hike on the weekend?" You know, like, "Do you want to go for a hike?" Are you like, willing to do that with me? It's maybe not easy. I think you'd usually use this expression when you're talking about doing something that's a little bit difficult, right? OK. And the bookstore employee said that the book *Entangled Life* reads like a fiction novel. It means it's easy to get through. And it's not boring. It's probably a page turner.

**Kassy:** That's a good phrase, a page turner.

**Andrew:** A page turner, which means that you keep wanting to read, right? You don't get bored of the content. You just want to go to the next page and the next page and the next page. And the employee finished up his recommendation by saying it's one of his top five reads of the year. So, it's on the bookstore employees personal top five list of one of the best books of the year.

**Kassy:** Yeah, exactly. You don't have to follow just the New York Times Bestseller list, you can use your own personal list.

**Andrew:** Yeah, one of my top five reads. And that's interesting, right? Like, we don't say books. But I mean, you could say it's one of my top five books of the year. And that's OK. But you'll also hear people say like, it's one of my top five reads, when talking about reading books, and top five listens, you could say listens as well for listening to music. But interestingly enough, we don't use it when we are talking about movies, right? You wouldn't say it's one of my top five watches, I wouldn't say that. But you could say top five reads, and you can say top five listens, if you're talking about reading something, or listening to something.

**Kassy:** And then the customer replied with a similar phrase to one we heard above the one we heard earlier was, "I'll check this out." A similar phrase you could use is, "I'll have to pick that one up." I'll have to pick it up.

**Andrew:** I'll have to pick that one up as well. And "to pick something up" just means to buy it, right? Of course, you can pick something up physically off the ground. Like if you drop, I don't know your wallet on the ground, you can bend over and grab it with your hands and pick it up. And I think we also use this expression often when we're talking about collecting a person from a place, you could pick up your children from school after school, for example. But we also use this again, often all the time daily to talk about buying some things. So, you could pick up a book at the bookstore means to buy a book at the bookstore. Or to pick up some milk at the supermarket means to buy some milk from the supermarket. We're on the same page, Kassy to use another book expression.

**Kassy:** All right, guys, we're almost at the end of today's episode. But before we go, let's quickly summarize what we covered today.

**Andrew:** Yeah, so in this lesson, we learned about how to ask for recommendations at a bookstore or a library.

**Kassy:** We learn expressions such as, "Can you recommend something? Or I'll check these out. Or it wouldn't be my first choice. Or I'm open to anything."

**Andrew:** And we also learned about the expressions, to catch one's interest. To be up for something. And it's one of my top five reads, or one of my top five listens. So, everyone that will bring us to the end of today's episode. As always, thank you for listening and for studying English with us today. We hope you learned a lot and we hope you'll be able to use what you learned in this episode in your future English speaking. We'll be back soon with another brand-new English lesson, and we'll talk to you all then. Take care and goodbye.

**Kassy:** See ya!

**Andrew:** That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye!

## Detailed Explanations

### Can you recommend something?

#### Expression

In the example conversation, the customer is looking for a book to read. She asks the bookstore employee, "Can you recommend something?" This is a common way to seek help when you're unsure about what you want. As Andrew and Kassy mention, you can ask this question in other situations when seeking advice, such as when choosing food in a restaurant.

Later in the conversation, the customer says, "I really liked *Fourth Wing*. Could you recommend any books similar to it?" This is a great way to request a more specific recommendation. You can use this expression to let the person know your preferences, so they can suggest similar alternatives that you're likely to enjoy. Here's an example with **can you recommend something**:

**Dan:** I just finished that TV-show you told me about, *Stranger Things*. I loved it! **Could you recommend something similar to it?**

**Julie:** I think you might like *The Umbrella Academy*, it's another sci-fi show I really like.

### I'm open to anything

#### Expression

In the example conversation, when the employee asks if the customer has anything specific in mind, she says, "I'm open to pretty much anything." This means she has an open mind and doesn't have a strong preference.

You can use this expression in various situations when you need to make a choice or a decision. For example, if a friend asks you where you'd like to eat, you can say, "I'm open to anything", which means you're flexible and happy to eat anywhere.

Here's an example with **I'm open to anything**:

**Amy:** What should we eat for dinner tonight?

**George:** **I'm open to anything.** Do you have any suggestions?

**Amy:** How about Chinese food?

**George:** Sounds great! We haven't had that in a while, let's do it!



## To check [something] out

Phrasal verb, informal

In the example conversation, when the employee mentions the trilogy about dragon riders, the customer responds with, “I’ll definitely check those out.”

**To check [something] out** means to try it, and in this example, it refers to the books that were mentioned. You can use this expression to say thank you to a person for their recommendation. It’s a great way to show that you acknowledge it, even if you’re not really that interested. To check [something] out is a versatile expression that can be used in various situations, such as trying new food, exploring different places, or listening to songs.

Another common way to use this phrasal verb is to share recommendations with others, for example, to invite them to watch a movie, or to listen to a song. You could say, “This is a great movie. You should check it out.” You might have noticed that Andrew uses this expression when talking about new Culips episodes.

Check [something] out is also used when you want to get someone’s attention and ask them to take a look at something you find interesting. For instance, if you see a funny poster, you can say to a friend, “Hey, check out this poster!” This will let them know that you’re pointing at something you want them to see.

Here are a couple examples with **to check [something] out**:

**Mark:** What are you listening to?

**Emma:** I found this amazing podcast a couple of days ago, it’s called “The Rest Is History.”

**Mark:** Sounds interesting!

**Emma:** It is! You **should definitely check it out!**

**Adam:** I like this song!

**Holly:** Me too! They just released a new album, it’s pretty good. I’ll send you the link.

**Adam:** I’ll **check it out**, thanks!

## It wouldn't be my first choice

### Expression

When the employee asks the customer if she likes non-fiction, she replies with, "it wouldn't be my first choice." This means that there are other genres she likes more than non-fiction. When you say, "it wouldn't be my first choice", it means that you're willing to consider the option, even though it's not your top preference.

This expression is a good way to express indirectly that you don't really like something, without being too negative or critical. You can use this phrase in various situations, such as when discussing activities, entertainment, food, etc.

Here's an example with **it wouldn't be my first choice**:

**Darryl:** Why don't you try this red dress on? It'll look great on you!

**Lisa:** Red **wouldn't be my first choice**, but I'll give it a try.

## To catch one's interest

### Idiom

When discussing non-fiction, the customer mentions that she might read a book if a topic **catches her interest**. When something catches your interest, it means that it makes you curious and you want to learn more about it. It's a great way to express enthusiasm for a subject or topic, show that it has your full attention and is engaging to you.

You can also use this expression in the negative way, as in "it didn't catch my interest", when you want to express a lack of interest in something, whether it's a book, a movie, or any other subject.

Here's an example with **to catch one's interest**:

**Olivia:** How are you doing, Marty? I heard you've retired.

**Marty:** Yes, two months ago. I must say, I miss work. I feel quite bored at home.

**Olivia:** You just need a good hobby to keep you busy!

**Marty:** I tried a couple things, but **nothing really caught my interest**. I'll keep looking, though. Thanks!

## To be up for [something]

Phrase, informal

After the customer shares her feelings about non-fiction books, the employee says, “If you’re up for it, I recommend *Entangled life*.”

**To be up for [something]** means to be interested in it. It’s an informal expression that means to be willing to participate in something. When someone asks you if you’re up for something, they want to know if you’re willing to do it. This phrase is commonly used in everyday conversations, especially among friends.

For example, if you’re looking for a job, and a friend can help you get it, they might say, “I can arrange an interview if you’re up for it.” By saying this, they’re offering you help, providing that you’re interested.

This expression is often used to express interest and enthusiasm about something. For example, if a person wants to help their friend organize a party, they might say, “I’m up for it!” Some common variations are “to be totally up for [something]” or “to be definitely up for [something]”, which express a strong desire to do something.

It’s interesting to note that the expression “to be down for something” has the same meaning, even though “up” and “down” are opposites. Both are informal expressions, so it’s best to avoid them in professional settings and academic writing.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be up for [something]**:

**Monica:** I know we’re on holiday, but I just saw this ad about free yoga on the beach tomorrow, and I’d like to join. What do you think?

**Chris:** I’m definitely up for morning yoga! I’ll be there.

**Monica:** Awesome!

**Wendy:** What’s the plan for today’s workout, coach?

**Rob:** I was thinking of trying something new. **Are you up for a challenge?**

**Wendy:** Absolutely!

## One of my top [number] reads

### Expression

When recommending *Entangled Life* by Merlin Sheldrake to the customer, the employee says, “It’s one of my top five reads of this year.” This means that this book is among the best five books he’s read this year. The word “reads” means books.

Using this expression is a great way to share recommendations and talk about things you really like. You can modify it by changing the number, as in “one of my top ten” or “one of my top three.” It can also be used when talking about movies, TV-shows, music, places to visit, etc.

Here’s an example with **one of my top [number]**:

**Leo:** Where did you guys go on your honeymoon?

**Sarah:** We went to Japan. It’s such a beautiful country!

**Leo:** Oh, I’ve been there too! It’s **one of my top three travel destinations**.

## You won’t regret it

### Expression

At the end of the dialog, when the customer says that she’ll follow the employee’s recommendations, he says, “If you do, you won’t regret it!”

This expression is often used when giving recommendations. It means that you’re confident that the person will like something you’re suggesting to them. You can use it in various conversations to encourage the person to give something a try and reassure them that they’ll definitely enjoy it.

Here’s one more example with **you won’t regret it**:

**Tony:** I’m not sure about this personal growth workshop. Have you heard of it?

**Jess:** I did it last year, and it was a life-changing experience! You should definitely go, **you won’t regret it**.

## Quiz

1. **If a friend asks you what music you want to listen to, and you don't have any specific preferences, you can say "\_\_\_\_\_."**
  - a) I'm up for it
  - b) It wouldn't be my choice
  - c) I'm open for anything
  - d) I'm open to anything
  
2. **In what situation would it NOT be best to use the expression "check [something] out"?**
  - a) When giving a recommendation
  - b) When receiving a recommendation
  - c) When asking for help
  - d) When pointing out something interesting
  
3. **If you suggest a Chinese restaurant for dinner to a friend, and they say, "It wouldn't be my first choice", it means that \_\_\_\_\_.**
  - a) Chinese cuisine isn't their favourite
  - b) They really like Chinese food
  - c) They wanted to choose a restaurant themselves
  - d) They don't care where to eat
  
4. **What does "to catch [one's] interest" mean?**
  - a) To meet someone you like
  - b) To ask for help
  - c) To bore
  - d) To intrigue
  
5. **True or false? "To be up for something" and "to be down for something" are synonyms (mean the same thing).**
  - a) True
  - b) False

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Who do you usually ask for book recommendations? Do you like giving recommendations?
2. When you go to a bookstore or a library, do you usually have a specific genre or author in mind, or are you open to anything?
3. What book or movie genre wouldn't be your first choice?
4. What was the last book or movie that caught your interest?
5. Can you share one of your top three favorite books and why they're special to you?

## Quiz Answers

1.d    2.c    3.a    4.d    5.a

### Episode credits

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