

Simplified Speech #018 – New Year's resolutions

Episode description

For many people, New Year's Day is a time for self-improvement, new beginnings, and resolutions. Come join Andrew, Suzanne, and Morag for this special episode, and learn all about their New Year's resolutions!

Fun fact

The tradition of making New Year's resolutions started around 4,000 years ago with the ancient Babylonians. Every New Year, they would make promises to their gods to pay any debts and return borrowed items in the hopes of gaining luck and favour.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- Sounds good
- Chicken and egg
- And then some
- To put [something] away
- A resolution



Transcript

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.

Andrew: Hey everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: Hi guys. It's Suzanne.

Morag: And hello, everybody. This is Morag.

Andrew: And we're back with another Culips episode.

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Andrew: I'm super excited to have both Suzanne and Morag joining me today. It's not very often we get to record an episode with all three hosts. So this is great. And today, we're going to do a Simplified Speech episode about New Year's **resolutions**.

It's that time of the year to start thinking about New Year's **resolutions**, so that's what we'll do here today. We'll talk all about New Year's **resolutions**. Does that sound good to you guys?

Morag: Yeah. It **sounds good** to me.

Suzanne: Me too.

Andrew: Let's start today by defining a *New Year's **resolution***. What do you guys think? Suzanne, what does a *New Year's **resolution*** mean to you?

Suzanne: A New Year's **resolution** is a kind of a promise that you make with yourself, or a goal you have that you want to accomplish throughout the year or within that year. I sometimes like to call it making a New Year's habit. So something that's maybe smaller. Because New Year's **resolutions** are usually really big goals that people want to accomplish.

Sometimes they can be really, really big and hard to accomplish within just 1 year, like, you know, losing a lot of weight or something like that.

Andrew: That's right. I like your definition, Suzanne, of starting a new habit. Because I think this gets to the essence of what a New Year's **resolution** is. You're starting a new habit, doing something new.

And Morag, maybe you could share with us some of the very common New Year's **resolutions** that people in North America make.

Morag: Sure, Andrew. So some of the most common New Year's **resolutions** have to do with health. So they are things like joining a gym, making exercise a habit. As Suzanne said, losing weight, quitting smoking, or things like learning a new language, reading a certain number of books in a year. Often, health or personal improvements are the focus of New Year's **resolutions**.

Andrew: Yeah. Morag, if I had to guess I would say your New Year's **resolution** is reading a certain amount of books per year. Is that right?

Morag: No, actually. Um, I just ... That just happens.

Suzanne: Do you like to read a lot of books, Morag?

Morag: I do. I do. It's a consequence of my studying literature, I think, or the other way around. **Chicken and egg**—I don't know.

Andrew: Well, what about last year? Suzanne, did you make a New Year's **resolution** last year?

Suzanne: Mmhmm. Actually, last year, I did make a New Year's **resolution**, where I would save more money in my savings account.

Andrew: Hmm.

Suzanne: That worked for about maybe 6 months. And then I had to go to four weddings in the last 6 months, and wound up using that savings **and then some**.

But um, at least I had it when I needed it. So that was a new habit I acquired by **putting a little bit of money away** each week, starting in January of this last year.

Andrew: Hey, well, 6 months is pretty good. Most people break their New Year's **resolutions** after 2 or 3 weeks so ...

Suzanne: Yeah, that's true.

Andrew: Nice work.

Morag: I'm also quite impressed.

- Suzanne: Yeah. I need to actually reinstate that **resolution** this year for sure. Even more so, I would say.
- Andrew: I like that one. You might have to tell me some details of your savings plan later.
- Suzanne: Yeah. It's actually pretty cool. I have a whole system. It's ... I mean it's not mine. I found it online. But yeah, it's pretty easy.
- Andrew: Maybe this will be my New Year's **resolution** for 2017.
- Suzanne: And what about you, Morag? Did you make **a resolution** this year?
- Morag: You know, I can't remember. I'm being honest here. I have no recollection of making **a resolution**. So I'm going to go with no. Or I was really, really bad at keeping it.
- Suzanne: I hear you.
- Morag: Hmm.
- Suzanne: Sometimes it's a thought in our head, but to take action it can be difficult.
- Morag: Yes. I find though, I'm the sort of person that has trouble with rules.
- Suzanne: Mmhmm.
- Morag: So even when I set myself a rule, I often ...
- Suzanne: Like rebel against ...
- Morag: Rebel, yeah.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Morag: I rebel against my own rule. So maybe New Year's **resolutions** just aren't for me.
- Suzanne: Instead of making **a resolution** that puts rules on you, maybe it's about adding something that is more fun for you. Like, "I'm going to go to more movies this year," or ...
- Morag: Ooh!
- Suzanne: I don't know, something. Doing something extra that's fun instead of constricting you in some way.
- Morag: That's a great idea. Thanks, Sue.

Suzanne: This is also a therapy session. Who knew? Andrew, did you make a **resolution**, or will you make a **resolution** this year?

Andrew: My **resolution** for 2016 is a little bit embarrassing, but I resolved to treat my skin better. I decided that I wanted to have nicer skin for 2016. So I didn't really do anything different, except buy a better face-wash.

Morag: Did it work?

Andrew: Yeah, I think it's worked.

Suzanne: That's great!

Andrew: It's a funny **resolution**, but I stuck with it, and it was very easy to keep. And I saw results, so yay!

Suzanne: Neat.

Andrew: It worked.

Morag: Good for you.

Andrew: Well, guys, we're almost at the end of today's episode. Quickly, I want to ask you just a yes or no question. Are you making a New Year's **resolution** for 2017?

Morag: Hmm, no.

Andrew: OK. Well, that's a no from Morag. How about you, Sue?

Suzanne: I don't know. Um, hmm, maybe. I'm gonna go with a maybe. I'm gonna keep it open.

Andrew: I will say I am definitely making a **resolution**. So we have one no, one yes, and one maybe.

All right. Well, we are out of time for today. But if your New Year's **resolution** is to improve your English, then we would love to help you out. And the best way to study with us is to become a Culips member. Membership gets you access to all of our learning materials, which include transcripts, detailed vocabulary explanations, and quizzes for all of our episodes.

You can visit our website, Culips.com, to learn how to become a member. If you have any questions or comments for us, send us a message. A great way to do that is through our Facebook page, which is facebook.com/culipspodcast, or you can email me directly; andrew@culips.com is my address.

Andrew: All right, we're out of here. Thanks for listening, everyone. We'll be back soon with another Culips episode. Bye.

Suzanne: Bye.

Morag: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Sounds good

You've probably heard the Culips hosts say "**sounds good**" many times. **Sounds good** is an abbreviated form of the phrase *that sounds good*, and is most often used to communicate agreement or approval. So if you agree with someone's idea or suggestion, you can say, "**Sounds good.**"

You can also use **sounds good** as a question, when you want to know if someone is in agreement with a suggestion, idea, or thought. When used as a question, **sounds good** is a way of asking, "Do you agree with what I just proposed?" or "Does that work for you?"

Here are a couple more examples with **sounds good**:

Joanne:	What do you want to do for dinner tonight?
Rex:	I don't know. Do you have any ideas?
Joanne:	To be honest, I'm feeling pretty uninspired. Should we just eat leftovers?
Rex:	Sounds good.

Andrea:	Are you ready to leave for the movie? We're gonna have to leave in less than half an hour if we want to make it on time.
Dan:	Actually, I have a bit of work that I need to finish first.
Andrea:	How long will it take you to finish?
Dan:	I probably need about an hour or two. Let's go to the later showing of the movie. Sounds good?
Andrea:	Sure, that works for me.

Chicken and egg

Chicken and egg comes from the saying *which came first, the chicken or the egg?* This saying is an old philosophical dilemma describing how it is impossible to know whether chickens or the eggs they hatch from were the first to appear in the world. So **chicken and egg** is a shorter version of this saying.

We use **chicken and egg** to describe situations where it's difficult to tell which of two things caused the other. For example, in this episode, Morag mentions that she isn't sure if she reads a lot of books because she studied literature, or if she studied literature because she likes to read a lot of books. This is an example of a **chicken and egg** situation.

The use of **chicken and egg** is not appropriate in formal, written English, but is fine for casual conversation.

Here are a couple more examples with **chicken and egg**:

Sam:	How was your blind date last night?
Julie:	Not great. It was kinda awkward!
Sam:	Oh yeah? How come?
Julie:	I'm not sure. It's always weird meeting someone for the first time. We just didn't have a lot to say to each other. I'm not sure if it was so awkward because we didn't have much to talk about, or if we both just felt so awkward that we didn't feel comfortable talking. I guess it's a chicken and egg kinda situation.

Harold:	Oh man, I'm so tired today.
Lola:	Did you get enough sleep?
Harold:	I slept a ton! Maybe I'm tired because I overslept, or maybe I overslept because I was really tired. I dunno— chicken and egg .
Lola:	Yeah, I guess there's no way of knowing for sure.

And then some

The informal expression **and then some** means “and a lot more than that.” It is often placed at the end of a sentence to indicate that there is a large amount more of whatever has just been talked about.

In this episode, Suzanne talks about saving money as her New Year’s **resolution** for 2016. She says that she saved a bunch of money, but then wound up using her savings **and then some**. In other words, Suzanne used all of the money she had saved and plenty more in addition to that.

And then some can be used to emphasize and indicate that the quantity being talked about appears to be a lot. For example, if someone were describing a large concert that they attended, they might say, “There must have been 2,000 people there **and then some**.” In this case, the person who attended the concert is emphasizing that there were a lot of people at the concert.

Here are a couple more examples with **and then some**:

Hannah:	Hey, you look a little stressed.
Dave:	Yeah, I have a ton of work to do. I have this big paper due for my history class.
Hannah:	What counts as a big paper for you? Ten pages?
Dave:	Ten pages and then some ! It’s a minimum of 20 pages.
Hannah:	Whoa that is big! Good luck.

Jessie:	Hey, do you want to join me and a couple of friends this weekend? We’re going to rent a cottage in the country. We’re all going to split the cost of the rental, so it shouldn’t be too expensive.
Stephen:	That really sounds like fun, but I don’t know if I can afford to come. How much do you figure it would cost? Fifty dollars each?
Jessie:	And then some , I think.
Stephen:	That’s too much for me. Have fun!

To put [something] away

To put [something] away is a phrasal verb construction that means to store for later use. There are two main ways to use **to put [something] away**: to describe storing an object where it belongs or to save money.

So **to put [something] away** means to place an item or object where it belongs for later use. For example, after you finish washing your clothes, you store them away in a dresser or closet to wear at a later date. In other words, because you don't need to use all your clothes right away, you store them away to use later.

The second main use of **to put [something] away** relates to money. If someone talks about **putting money away**, they are talking about saving money to spend later. For instance, in this episode, Suzanne mentions that she kept her New Year's **resolution** to save money by **putting a little bit of money away** each week. In other words, she placed a small amount of money into her savings account each week.

So if you are storing something to use later, whether an item or money, you are **putting that something away**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to put [something] away**:

Ian:	Hey, I was planning on cooking a bunch of food for the work week this evening. Are you almost done in the kitchen?
Deidre:	I just need to finish putting all the dishes away , and then the kitchen is all yours. Can you wait about 15 minutes?
Ian:	Sounds good.

Justin:	I can't believe winter is finally here. I'm so excited!
Erin:	I hate winter!
Justin:	Why? Snow is so pretty.
Erin:	I hate the cold! I put money away all year so that I can go on a long vacation to somewhere warm. This year, I'm going to Costa Rica.
Justin:	I have to admit that does sound pretty nice. Maybe I'll start putting some cash away so that I can do the same thing.
Erin:	You should!

A resolution

A resolution means a promise, or a firm decision, to do or not to do something. If you make **a resolution**, you set a goal and decide with purpose to achieve that goal. A New Year's **resolution** is just **a resolution** that starts on New Year's Day, as opposed to another day of the year.

A resolution is a serious promise that you make to yourself, and often involves self-improvement, like changing bad habits or behaviours (eg, smoking). You shouldn't say that you've made **a resolution** if you're still considering whether or not to do something. You can only call a promise **a resolution** when you have decided for sure to do or not to do something.

Although the most common time to talk about **resolutions** is around the holidays, especially New Year's Day, you can make **resolutions** at any time. For example, if someone decides to change something about their life, like go on a diet or save more money, they are making **a resolution**.

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

Katie:	Wow Neil, you look fantastic! Did you lose weight?
Neil:	Yeah, thanks for noticing. I made a resolution a couple of months ago to eat better and go to the gym.
Katie:	Good for you! I should really do the same, but I find it hard to keep promises like that to myself.

Leo:	Why aren't you drinking any wine? It's a party. You're supposed to let loose and have some fun.
Piper:	My New Year's resolution this year is to cut out alcohol.
Leo:	But New Year's Day isn't for another 2 weeks.
Piper:	I know. I just decided that there was no time like the present to start keeping my promise to myself.

Quiz

1. Which of the following phrases means in addition to something?

- a) and how
- b) and again
- c) and then some
- d) and even so

2. When you store money or an object for later use, you are _____.

- a) putting it back
- b) putting it away
- c) propping it up
- d) placing it at home

3. Which of the following is the closest in meaning to *a resolution*?

- a) a promise
- b) an idea
- c) a story
- d) a consideration

4. A situation where it's impossible to tell which of two things caused the other one is a _____ situation.

- a) surf and turf
- b) lock and load
- c) dog and cat
- d) chicken and egg

5. Beth asks Ginny to go see a movie. Ginny responds by saying, "Sounds good." What does Ginny want to do?

- a) Ginny wants to go see the movie.
- b) Ginny wants to see the movie another time.
- c) Ginny does not want to go see the movie.
- d) Ginny is unsure if she wants to see the movie.

Quiz Answers

1.c 2.b 3.a 4.d 5.a

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates, Suzanne Cerreta, and
Morag St. Clair

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Transcription: Transcript Heroes Transcription Services

Learning materials writer: Morag St. Clair

English editor: Stephanie Minelga

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox