

## Simplified Speech #019 – Procrastination

### Episode description

Do you sometimes put off working on your English skills? It's normal to avoid difficult tasks, but don't procrastinate any longer! Come join Andrew and Suzanne for this Simplified Speech episode about the troubles everyone faces when trying to get work done.

### Fun fact

Procrastination affects some groups of people more than others. While most people avoid doing important tasks occasionally, people who procrastinate habitually make up about 20% of the population. However, among college students, that number is as high as 85% to 90 %!

### Expressions included in the learning materials

- Straight up
- To go down a rabbit hole
- Procrastination
- A go-getter
- An idle mind is the devil's playground



## Transcript

Andrew: Hey everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And we are back with another Culips episode.

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Andrew: Hey Suzanne. How are you?

Suzanne: I'm good. How are you?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty well. I had a bit of a difficult time getting myself motivated to start work this morning.

Suzanne: Oh, why? What happened?

Andrew: Well, I just didn't feel like working, **straight up**. Does that ever happen to you?

Suzanne: All the time. It takes me a long time to get moving and motivated sometimes, depending on the task.

Andrew: Exactly. Me too. And so because of this, I thought it would make for an interesting episode if we talked today about **procrastination**.

Suzanne: Oh!

Andrew: A big word, **procrastination**.

Suzanne: **Procrastination**.

Andrew: Yeah, **procrastination**. What is **procrastination**, Suzanne? Can you give our listeners a definition?

Suzanne: Yeah. So **procrastination** is when you have something that you should be doing, like an assignment or going to work, but you delay it because you don't want to do it. So maybe the thing you have to do is overwhelming. Or maybe it's really boring or difficult, and you just don't want to get started.

- Suzanne: You kind of are repulsed by it, and so you do other things, like watch TV or listen to a podcast, instead of doing those tasks.
- Andrew: Yeah, **procrastination** is the act of not doing something you're supposed to do because that thing is difficult or boring. Today, we're going to do a Simplified Speech episode, where we have a totally natural conversation, but we speak slower than we usually do in our everyday lives.
- Suzanne: That's right. And if you guys want to take full advantage of this episode, we recommend that you visit Culips.com, and become a member. Because Culips members get access to our learning materials, and that includes full transcripts of the podcasts, detailed vocabulary explanations, and quizzes for every episode. So using the learning materials, we think is the best way to study with us. So if you're not a member, sign up today.
- Andrew: Yeah. And a shout-out to all of you who are members out there, thanks a bunch. We really appreciate your support.
- Suzanne: Yes, absolutely. OK, Andrew, enough procrastinating. Let's get to our topic: **procrastination**.
- Andrew: OK. So, Suzanne, would you describe yourself, overall, as someone who procrastinates often, or are you more of a **go-getter**?
- Suzanne: Hmm, this is a very good question, Andrew.
- Andrew: Ooh.
- Suzanne: Because I think ... I'm gonna answer your question with another question. Maybe that's procrastinating the answer. Do you ever have the feeling that you have a different impression of yourself than other people do?
- Andrew: I think that is often the case with me, yeah.
- Suzanne: So maybe inside, I am someone who procrastinates. I think I procrastinate a lot.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Suzanne: But other people might see me as a **go-getter**, or maybe other people also see me as a procrastinator. But I definitely do procrastinate.
- Andrew: Yeah, well if I could answer this question for you, Suzanne, my perspective is that you are more of a **go-getter**.
- Suzanne: Really?

- Andrew: Yeah, it seems like you get stuff done. But maybe in order to get stuff done, you still procrastinate a little in secret.
- Suzanne: How about you, Andrew? Are you a procrastinator often? Do you procrastinate sometimes, or are you pretty much a **go-getter**, in your opinion?
- Andrew: Well, I think I definitely procrastinate in various ways. But when it comes down to it, I get things accomplished. If I have a deadline, I always meet the deadline. I'm not going to put things off until the very last minute, so they don't get finished, no.
- Suzanne: OK. And so if you have a deadline ... So a deadline is kind of like a hard date, right, a set date and time when something is due. And when you have a deadline, do you find that you actually procrastinate up until the last moment and then stay up all night, and do the work then? Or do you plan out your work in small spurts so that you can get it done in a relaxed fashion?
- Andrew: Always the second way.
- Suzanne: Oh, that's awesome! That's not me.
- Andrew: I'm not perfect, but I hate rush jobs at the last minute.
- Suzanne: Yeah.
- Andrew: I like to plan ahead so that I can finish with enough time to think about it for a day, or review it at least a day before I submit it, especially for important things.
- Suzanne: That's really good. That's ... I wish I could be like you, Andrew.
- Andrew: So you're the opposite then? You leave things until the last moment and then rush, rush, rush to get them done?
- Suzanne: Yeah, kind of. I think I've gotten better. After doing the master's program that we both did, I think it taught me to be a better planner, or have better time management. But I still sometimes procrastinate, and then rush, rush, rush.
- For example, for Halloween, I had a Halloween party, and I tried to do some things the days before the party. But then, of course, the day of the party, I was running around grabbing cocktail items and making lasagna, and buying chips and guacamole and all of these things, you know? And decorating the house and getting my costume together.

- Suzanne: And those were things I could've done the week before. Well, maybe not cook the lasagna, but I could've decorated the house. You know, these kinds of things. So I definitely procrastinated and left it till the last day.
- Andrew: I left my Halloween costume to the last minute too. I procrastinated on that.
- Suzanne: But that's not a boring task. But maybe it was difficult.
- Andrew: Sometimes there are other things in life that take a higher priority than preparing a Halloween costume.
- Suzanne: Exactly. That's not **procrastination**. That's just prioritizing.
- Andrew: That's just being busy.
- Suzanne: I also wanted to know what you do when you procrastinate, what activities you might do instead of doing the task you should be doing.
- Andrew: Can I give the example of this morning? How I procrastinated this morning?
- Suzanne: Yeah!
- Andrew: OK. So my other job, when I'm not doing Culips, is I work and teach at a university. And my students recently wrote an exam, so it is my job right now to mark their exams.
- Suzanne: OK.
- Andrew: But this is really boring, checking every paper. It's the same task repeated time and again, over and over. So it's hard to get motivated to do this because it's frankly a little boring.
- So how I procrastinated this morning was playing online chess. I'm sitting at my computer, and I played chess for about 30 minutes before I got into marking. Finally, I had to be like OK, Andrew, just get it done. Get it over with. Come on!
- Suzanne: So video games, kind of, right?
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Suzanne: That's a good procrastinator.
- Andrew: Video games or sometimes I will watch TV. I will just do anything, or I will waste time on my phone. You know ...
- Suzanne: Totally.

- Andrew: Anything's that's more interesting than the task at hand. This is how I procrastinate. What about you?
- Suzanne: I totally relate to wasting time on my phone, yes. Like, I will go to Twitter and read articles, and I will go on Instagram and look at pictures.
- Andrew: Yeah, Instagram is really bad.
- Suzanne: Yeah, it's a time waster, and Facebook too. At least on Facebook, you're connecting to friends. But there's a phrase in English, "**An idle mind is the Devil's playground.**"
- Andrew: Hmm, yes.
- Suzanne: So sometimes when you're procrastinating, your mind wants to just hang out, and not really be engaged. So sometimes when I'm on Facebook, I get into trouble. I'll start maybe looking at political things, or get upset about the election. Or you know, just silly, stupid things that I don't need to be doing. And I should be doing the tasks I'm supposed to do.
- But I also enjoy knitting.
- Andrew: Hmm, OK.
- Suzanne: I really love to knit.
- Andrew: OK.
- Suzanne: I think it's similar to playing video game chess because you feel like you're accomplishing something. You're winning a game or you're making a scarf, and you feel like you have made some progress or accomplished a task, even though that task is not the one you should be accomplishing.
- Andrew: Have you ever found yourself going down a YouTube rabbit hole? And what I mean by this, everyone, a rabbit hole is an expression we use when we're talking about the internet, and we originally search for one thing, but then just keep clicking link after link after link, looking at more information, more pages.
- And eventually, you look at the clock and realize that a lot of time has passed, and you are looking at something that's completely different than what you originally started looking for. This is to go down an internet rabbit hole.
- So, Sue, I'm curious. Have you been down a YouTube rabbit hole?
- Suzanne: I have gone **down a rabbit hole** of YouTube, yes.

Andrew: Mmhmm, that happens to me.

Suzanne: What kind of videos do you watch?

Andrew: Well, I'll start by just watching something that seems very normal. And then 5 hours later, at 3 o'clock in the morning, I'm up watching a review of a 2006 Blackberry phone or something, you know?

Suzanne: Oh dear. Oh wow.

Andrew: How did I get here? What am I doing with my life?

Suzanne: It's so true.

Andrew: Yeah.

Suzanne: I will look at ... Because you know, I teach accents and dialects to actors. So sometimes I have to research the accents, and so I will look up videos of people who are speaking English in a specific accent. Maybe with an Irish dialect or a specific British accent.

Andrew: Right, you're doing your research.

Suzanne: Right, you think you're being really productive, doing your task. And then you get distracted by, you know, a comedian who's doing the accent also. And then a friend of the comedian who shows up and ... Oh look, someone's showing you tap dancing. And then you start ... Yeah, down the rabbit hole. And you are definitely not watching any accent research or video that you need to.

Andrew: Yeah, I know this all too well. This happens to me too often, more than I'd like to admit.

Suzanne, we are out of time for today. I want to thank all of our listeners. We really appreciate your support. One more time, if you're interested in learning about a Culips membership, check out our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com). Or if you have a question, or some feedback or a comment for us, you can send it to us through our website or our Facebook page, [facebook.com/culipspodcast](https://facebook.com/culipspodcast).

That's it. We're out of here. Bye everybody.

Suzanne: Bye everyone.

## Detailed Explanations

### Straight up

Straight up is a slang term that means to be correct or truthful. You can use straight up in two ways.

The first way to use straight up is to emphasize the truth of a statement. For example, in this episode, Andrew mentions that he had a difficult time starting his work. When Suzanne asks why, Andrew says, "I just didn't feel like working, straight up." By adding straight up to his statement, Andrew stresses that he is being honest. He simply didn't want to work!

The second way to use straight up is as a question. When used as a question, straight up is a way of asking, "Is that true?" or "Are you being honest with me?" So if you doubt the truth of a statement, you can say to someone, "Straight up?"

Here are a couple more examples with straight up:

Alex:	Can we go get lunch soon?
Penny:	Yeah, just give me a minute.
Alex:	But that's what you said half an hour ago! I'm starving, <b>straight up</b> .
Penny:	OK, OK. I'll just be another 10 minutes. I promise.

Tim:	I had the craziest weekend!
Jean:	Oh yeah, what happened?
Tim:	OK, so it started out as a normal Friday night, right? I went out with some buddies after work for a drink. We met this rad group of people out at the bar. They ended up inviting us out to a chalet to spend the rest of the weekend. I was a little suspicious at first, but it ended up being amazing. The chalet was enormous and beautiful. It had a swimming pool under the living room floor!
Jean:	Whoa, <b>straight up</b> ?
Tim:	I'm telling the truth! It was so much fun.



## To go down a rabbit hole

To go down a rabbit hole is an expression that comes from *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a popular children's novel by Lewis Carroll written in the 1860s. In the first chapter of the book, the main character, Alice, falls down a rabbit hole and finds herself in a strange and mysterious place called Wonderland.

So to go down a rabbit hole is a metaphor for to enter an unknown, strange, or disorienting situation. The idea is that you have no idea what you will find on the other side of a metaphorical rabbit hole. You are entering into the unknown. So if you are about to try something completely new, some activity you know nothing about, you can say you are going down a rabbit hole.

As Andrew mentions in this episode, to go down a rabbit hole is most commonly used to describe getting lost in the internet. Have you ever started out researching one topic, only to find yourself reading about something completely different an hour later? This is called going down an internet rabbit hole.

Here's one more example with to go down a rabbit hole:

Hannah:	How's your research coming?
Clay:	I didn't get anything done at all! I went down a Wikipedia rabbit hole. I started out reading about my microbiology homework, and 2 hours later, I found myself reading about female fighter pilots in the Second World War!

## Procrastination

Procrastination is the act of delaying a task or activity that needs to be done, and instead, doing another less important activity.

Procrastination is a common problem. Have you ever told yourself that you'd start a project another day, or watched just one more episode of a TV show before beginning a task? If so, you've indulged in procrastination.

Here's one more example with procrastination:

Terri:	I'm having so much trouble writing my paper. I just can't seem to get into it!
Kevin:	It sounds like you're having trouble with procrastination. Do you know the secret to beating procrastination? Just get to work!
Terri:	Harsh, but true.

## A go-getter

Someone who is ambitious and determined to succeed is called a go-getter. Go-getters are people who are energetic, industrious, and proactive. They are often on the lookout for new work or business opportunities for themselves.

In this episode, Andrew uses go-getter as antonym, or the opposite, of procrastinator. This is because people who are determined to succeed, go-getters, are not likely to put off their work until later.

Are you someone who is focused on achieving your goals? Do you dream big and work hard to achieve your dreams? If so, you can call yourself a go-getter!

Here are a couple more examples with a go-getter:

Phil:	I just had lunch with my little brother. Holy cow, that kid is so driven!
Carla:	What's he up to these days?
Phil:	He wants to be a professional artist. He's already doing commissions for murals and public artwork around our hometown. He's also working really hard to get his paintings into galleries.
Carla:	Wow. How old is he again?
Phil:	He's only 19!
Carla:	What a <b>go-getter</b> !

Dan:	I'm so tired. Work is killing me. I don't have any energy by the time I get home to do anything else.
Violet:	What are you talking about, Dan? Don't you only work 20 hours per week?
Dan:	Yeah, but it's really exhausting work!
Violet:	If it's so bad, you should find a new job. You have to be more of a <b>go-getter</b> ! Don't stay in a job that doesn't work for you. Be ambitious!

## An idle mind is the devil's playground

An idle mind is the devil's playground is a saying that comes from Christianity. The idea is that people who do not work, who are idle, are more likely to do bad things and get into trouble. In other words, if someone has nothing constructive to do, they will end up amusing themselves with harmful or mischievous activities.

In this episode, Suzanne says, "An idle mind is the devil's playground." However, there are many variations of this saying:

- Idle hands are the devil's workshop.
- Idle brains are the devil's workhouses.
- The devil finds work for idle hands to do.

If someone is being lazy or procrastinating, it would be appropriate to say, "An idle mind is the devil's playground." By using this expression, you are telling them that they should be doing their work and keeping busy, rather than amusing themselves with other things.

Here are a couple more examples an idle mind is the devil's playground:

Vera:	I'm really worried about my little cousin. He's starting to get into a lot of trouble at school. I don't know what to do to help him.
Chris:	Maybe he needs to learn some responsibility. Have you thought about advising him to get a part-time job? After all, <b>an idle mind is the devil's playground</b> .
Vera:	That's a great idea! Thanks!

Lana:	Have you heard of the saying <b>an idle mind is the devil's playground</b> ?
Sean:	Sure, yeah.
Lana:	I recently realized how true the saying is. I made an effort to stop going on YouTube, and I have been getting all my work done and have more energy. I never realized how much time I was wasting online, and how it was making me lazy and unproductive.

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following expressions is slang for to be correct or truthful?**

- a) word up
- b) lock in
- c) straight up
- d) shout-out

**2. The phrase to go down a rabbit hole means to enter an experience or state that is \_\_\_\_\_.**

- a) honest
- b) unknown
- c) normal
- d) loving

**3. If you want to tell someone that they should work more or do something constructive, which of the following phrases is appropriate to use?**

- a) "Lazy fingers are the demon's shoemakers."
- b) "The early bird gets the worm."
- c) "An idle mind is the devil's playground."
- d) "You have half a mind."

**4. True or false: Procrastination is the act of putting off something you need to do in order to accomplish something more important.**

- a) true
- b) false

**5. A go-getter is someone who is \_\_\_\_\_.**

- a) energetic and ambitious
- b) kind and gentle
- c) busy and unhappy
- d) slow and steady

## Quiz Answers

1.c    2.b    3.c    4.b    5.a

### Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Suzanne Cerreta  
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