

Simplified Speech #021 – Winter activities

Episode description

Canada in the winter can be a blast! In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Morag discuss their favourite winter activities. Join them and learn about how much fun you can have in the snow!

Fun fact

Ice hockey, usually called just hockey, is undoubtedly the most popular sport in Canada, and one of Canada's national sports. Although it can be played year-round, hockey is officially called Canada's winter sport.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- To agree to disagree
- Eerie
- On the other hand
- To get around



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.

Morag: And my name is Morag.

Andrew: And we are back with another Culips episode. Morag, how are you?

Morag: I'm doing pretty well.

Andrew: That's awesome. I'm happy to hear that.

Morag: It's really, really pretty in Montreal right now. When we were recording this, there was just a gorgeous dump of snow. So it's bright and white and wintry beautiful out there.

Andrew: I like how you describe a dump of snow as gorgeous.

Morag: Mmhmm!

Andrew: Because even though snow can be pretty, in my mind, I always kind of dislike it. So I don't know if I would say snow is gorgeous.

Morag: Oh, we have **to agree to disagree** because I think it's beautiful, especially when the whole city looks like a Christmas card!

Andrew: Yeah. You're right. You're right.

Morag, today we're doing a Simplified Speech episode, where we have a totally natural conversation, but we speak slower than we usually do in our everyday lives. And today, if you haven't already guessed it, everyone, we're talking about winter activities.

Morag: Oh man, I really do love certain winter activities.

Andrew: Me too, even though it's cold and snowy, winter activities ... And what I mean by winter activities is sports or outdoor activities that you do in the winter, right? They can be a lot of fun.

Morag: Hey Andrew, what was your favourite winter activity when you were a kid?

Andrew: Good question. By far, my favourite winter activity when I was a kid was tobogganing or sledding.

- Morag: Hmm.
- Andrew: I use both words interchangeably. They mean the same thing, tobogganing or sledding. And tobogganing or sledding means to ride down a hill in a sled or a toboggan.
- Morag: I only got to do that once when I was a kid.
- Andrew: Once?
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: What?
- Morag: Well, I grew up in Victoria in British Columbia, and there was only one time when I was a kid that there was enough snow to go tobogganing down the street.
- Andrew: That is a shame. You'll have to go now that you're an adult.
- Morag: I know.
- Andrew: It's so much fun.
- Morag: I know. It seems like a lot of fun, especially compared to my favourite winter activity as a kid, which was jumping in puddles.
- Andrew: Jumping in puddles. Well ...
- Morag: Different type of winter.
- Andrew: Yeah, a different type of winter.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: We have the nickname for the West Coast of Canada where you grew up, and that nickname is the Wet Coast, right? The Wet Coast because, instead of snow in the winter, you get rain.
- Morag: Yeah, it's not bad, but there's so many fun things that you can do outside in real winter that you can't do there. Now, I think my favourite winter activity is ice skating outside. There's a bunch of awesome outdoor public skating rinks right around where I live.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Morag: And so, ah, it's so much fun.

- Andrew: I completely agree. My parents' house is actually very close to a really tiny lake. It's actually more like a pond, but it's technically called a lake. And every winter, this lake freezes over. And I love to go out there, and ice skate and play hockey. It's super fun.
- Morag: That's really cool. I never have actually skated on a real lake, just on the little ones in town. I'd be scared that I'd fall in.
- Andrew: Oh. Well, this is something that can happen. And actually one time I was on the lake with my friend and he fell in ...
- Morag: Oh no!
- Andrew: The lake. It was a very scary experience. But we got him out, so it was good in the end.
- Morag: That's good, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, but definitely be careful when you're out skating on a lake.
- Morag: The ice is not always the same thickness everywhere.
- Andrew: Morag, there are many, many activities that Canadians like to do in the winter. For example, cross-country skiing, snowshoeing, skidooing, ice fishing, and curling. These are just several of the things I can think of off the top of my head. Are there any of these winter activities that you've never tried but would like to?
- Morag: Most of them.
- Andrew: Most of them.
- Morag: I've ...
- Andrew: Me too, actually.
- Morag: The one that I really want to try is cross-country skiing.
- Andrew: Me too.
- Morag: Ah, yeah!
- Andrew: We should go.
- Morag: I know! But I really like hiking ...
- Andrew: Mmhmm.

Morag: In ... Well, in every season other than winter.

Andrew: OK.

Morag: And I've heard that cross-country skiing is a similar feeling because it's like going on a long walk really.

Andrew: Mmhmm. I've never been cross-country skiing, but I have been snowshoeing. The place that I went snowshoeing was actually right beside a cross-country ski trail, and it was amazing. I loved snowshoeing because after a while, you get deep into the forest in winter, and it's so calm and peaceful.

And if you just stop and listen, it's really quiet, almost **eerie**. You hear the occasional bird, but everything is pure and white. And, ah, you gotta try it. I imagine if you went cross-country skiing you'd experience the same stillness of nature. It's really beautiful.

Morag: **On the totally other hand**, there's skidooing.

Andrew: Skidooing looks really fun to be honest.

Morag: It does look like a lot of fun, but you definitely will not enjoy the stillness of nature while you're doing it. Because, now correct me if I'm wrong, Andrew ...

Andrew: Mmhmm.

Morag: But ski-doing is like ATV-ing, all-terrain vehicle. So it's driving off-road in a winterized vehicle.

Andrew: Yeah. It's almost like riding a dirt bike in the snow, except ...

Morag: Yeah!

Andrew: Instead of wheels, it has a tread. And many people do this as a recreational activity. But I also know that in many areas of Canada, especially in the north, it is one of the main ways **to get around** because there aren't many roads and it can be really dangerous to drive a car.

So in some of the northern communities of Canada, skidoos are the way people **get around**.

Morag: That's really interesting.

Andrew: My final question for you, Morag. Speaking of northern communities ...

Morag: Mmhmm?

- Andrew: Have you even been dogsledding?
- Morag: No, I've never had the opportunity. But if it ever came up, I would definitely try it. I'm assuming that you're saying that because you've been dogsledding?
- Andrew: No.
- Morag: Aw!
- Andrew: I've never been, but as maybe our listeners recall, I visited the very northern city in Canada of Iqaluit this past summer. And I actually had an opportunity to meet many husky dogs that were actually ex-dogsled dogs.
- Morag: Oh!
- Andrew: And I took them for a walk, and let me tell you, they really know how to pull.
- Morag: I can imagine it would be quite difficult to control ex-dogsled dogs. Well, at least their enthusiasm at the end of a leash.
- Andrew: They're very enthusiastic, but beautiful dogs, very cute. And I have some pictures of them, so maybe I'll post some on the Facebook page. So everybody can take a look at some real-life dogsled dogs. And I'm going to add it to my bucket list, I think. Dogsledding—I need to do it.
- Morag: Do it, Andrew.
- Andrew: That brings us to the end of today's show.
- Morag: Remember everybody. If your goal is improve your English, we'd love to help you. The best way to study with us is to become a Culips member. Membership gets you access to our learning materials, which include transcripts, detailed vocabulary explanations, and quizzes for all of our episodes.
- So visit our website, Culips.com, to learn how to become a member.
- Andrew: If you have any questions or comments for us, please send us a message. A great way to do that is through our Facebook page, facebook.com/culipspodcast, or you can email me directly at andrew@culips.com.
- Morag: Thanks for listening, everyone. We'll be back soon with another Culips episode.
- Andrew: Bye.

Morag: Bye.

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Detailed Explanations

To agree to disagree

When two people have opposite opinions about something, but they decide not to argue about it, this is called **agreeing to disagree**. You can use **to agree to disagree** to describe any situation where a difference of opinion does not result in a fight or become an ongoing problem. You might also hear someone say **to agree to differ**, which is the UK English version of this expression.

To agree to disagree can also be used to suggest that a topic shouldn't be talked about anymore. For example, in this episode, Morag and Andrew disagree over whether snow is pretty. Morag says that they'll have **to agree to disagree**. In other words, she isn't going to change her mind, and doesn't want to try and convince Andrew to change his. So in situations like this, **to agree to disagree** is a polite way of saying, "I don't want to talk about this subject with you anymore."

So **to agree to disagree** can either be used to describe a situation where two people decide not to argue about something, or as a way of suggesting that a topic be dropped.

Here are a couple more examples with **to agree to disagree**:

Katrina:	I'm really tired. Do you wanna watch TV?
Dan:	Yeah, sure. What do you feel like watching?
Katrina:	I feel like laughing. Let's watch a comedy.
Dan:	Most comedies are so cheesy, and not funny at all. We should watch something that's intentionally cheesy, like a bad horror movie.
Katrina:	I hate horror movies! I think we should to agree to disagree on this one.

Nicole:	OK, brunch on Saturday it is! Do you want to invite your girlfriend?
Harold:	No, she hates brunch.
Nicole:	She hates brunch! How does that work? Aren't you a big brunch guy?
Harold:	It's OK. We've agreed to disagree . I just don't bother her with brunch invitations anymore.

Eerie

Eerie is an adjective that means strange and mysterious. While these could be positive qualities, **eerie** usually describes things that are strange and mysterious in a frightening way.

Eerie things aren't always scary, but they always make you feel a bit uncomfortable and uneasy. For example, have you ever had the hairs on your arms stand up when you encountered something strange? If so, you've had an **eerie** feeling. In other words, when you encounter something **eerie**, you feel that something isn't quite right.

In this episode, Andrew mentions that being deep in the woods in winter is almost **eerie** because the woods are very quiet. This quietness is strange, as it's rare to experience complete silence in nature, and makes Andrew feel uncomfortable. So because the experience was strange and made him feel uneasy, Andrew describes the experience as **eerie**.

So you can refer to any object, person, or situation that is strange in a mysterious and somewhat frightening way as **eerie**.

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

Vicky:	Hey, did you want to hang out this weekend?
Nick:	Sure! Was there anything in particular that you wanted to do?
Vicky:	I was thinking it would be cool to try some urban exploring, like climbing into abandoned buildings and checking them out.
Nick:	We're going to have to find something else to do. I think abandoned buildings are eerie . Count me out for any urban exploring.
Vicky:	OK, I guess we can do something normal, like watching a movie.

Lauren:	Happy birthday! Are you enjoying your birthday party?
Kevin:	Thanks! And yes, I am. It's really nice to have a birthday party just for me. I have the same birthday as three of my siblings and my mom.
Lauren:	Whoa, that's kinda eerie .
Kevin:	Yeah, it's a little weird.

On the other hand

You can use **on the other hand** to introduce an idea or a viewpoint that is different or opposing. This expression should only be used after an alternative or contrasting idea or viewpoint is presented. For instance, it would be appropriate to say, “I like cats. My husband, on the other hand, likes dogs.” So when two different or opposing views, ideas, likes, or dislikes are mentioned, you can use **on the other hand** to introduce the alternative point of view.

On the other hand is actually the second part of a two-part idiom used to present two opposite ideas. The first part is on the one hand. Here’s an example of a sentence that uses both parts:

- On the one hand, I would like to go to Terry’s party, but **on the other hand**, it would be nice to stay at home and have a quiet evening.

In this episode, Morag says, “**On the totally other hand**, there’s skidooing.” Morag says this because skidoos are very loud machines, and she and Andrew just discussed the quietness of cross-country skiing. By introducing the topic of skidooing with **on the other hand**, Morag is saying that skidooing is very different from cross-country skiing, because it is a loud winter activity and cross-country skiing is a quiet winter activity.

So if you want to introduce a topic or an idea that is different from the one you’ve just been talking about, you can use **on the other hand**.

Here are a couple more examples with **on the other hand**:

Kyle:	Do you think I should wear a tie on my date tonight?
Devon:	Wearing a tie is a pretty formal look, so it might be a bit strange. On the other hand , you should wear whatever makes you feel comfortable and confident!
Kyle:	You’re right. I should just wear what feels right. I’m going for the tie!

Neil:	Why do you play so many video games? It’s a waste of time. You could use all that time to do something productive instead.
Alisha:	You could look at playing games as a waste of time. On the other hand , playing video games is supposed to be good for developing your reflexes and ability to multitask, which sounds like a productive activity to me!

To get around

To get around is a phrasal verb that has 3 primary meanings: to move between locations, to avoid dealing with something, and to become known.

First, **to get around** can mean to go from place to place. In this episode, Andrew says that people in the extreme north of Canada use skidoos **to get around**. In other words, skidoos are what people use to go themselves from place to place.

Second, **to get around** can mean to avoid dealing with something. This meaning of **to get around** is mostly used to talk about avoiding or circumventing potential problems. This meaning is easy to understand if you picture it. Imagine that a problem is a physical obstacle that is blocking you from going somewhere. If you **get around** the problem, you avoid going through the obstacle and instead move around it. So when you **get around** a problem, you don't allow it to stop you!

Third, **to get around** can mean to become known or current. In other words, if something or someone **gets around**, then that something or someone is known by a lot of people. For example, if the president of your company resigns, and everyone finds out quickly, you could say, "It **got around** that the president was resigning."

Be careful: **to get around** can have a negative connotation. It can mean that someone is promiscuous or a weasel.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get around**:

Audrey:	Hey Sam. Do you know a lot about bikes?
Sam:	Sure do! I was a bike mechanic for a few years.
Audrey:	Awesome. Do you think you could help me find a used bike? I really want to start riding, but I don't know what I'm looking for.
Sam:	I would be happy to help. Biking is the best way to get around in this city.

Shannon:	Do you think Julie would want to come camping with us next weekend?
Liam:	Hmm, maybe. We don't have enough room in the car for her though.
Shannon:	That's an easy problem to get around . Julie has her own car, and we can just take two cars.
Liam:	You should totally invite her.

Quiz

- 1. What phrase can you use to introduce a topic that is different than the one you just talked about?**
 - a) on one foot
 - b) on one hand
 - c) on the other foot
 - d) on the other hand

- 2. One meaning of to get around is to move from _____.**
 - a) fact to fiction
 - b) place to place
 - c) light to dark
 - d) idea to idea

- 3. True or false: If two people agree to disagree, they accept that they have different opinions on a topic and stop arguing about it.**
 - a) true
 - b) false

- 4. When something is strange in a mysterious and somewhat frightening way, you can describe it as _____.**
 - a) lame
 - b) easy
 - c) eerie
 - d) woods

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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