

Simplified Speech #034 – 2017 in review

Episode description

What a year 2017 was! Some people loved every moment of 2017, and some people wished it never happened. Find out what Andrew and Morag have to say about this year as we say goodbye to 2017 in this special Simplified Speech episode!

Fun fact

Many people think fake news is a new expression, but it's been around for a very long time! Thousands of years ago, kings and emperors would often exaggerate their powers or their successes in battles.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- A good tip
- A turning point
- To be critical
- On everybody's mind
- First of all/second of all





Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed

Andrew: You're listening to the Culips English podcast. To download the study guide for this episode, which includes the transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, real-world examples, and a quiz, visit our website Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Hey everybody. My name is Andrew.

Morag: And my name is Morag.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips. Hey, Morag.

Morag: Hey, Andrew. How's it going?

Andrew: I'm doing pretty good, Morag. How was your year? How was 2017?

Morag: Oh right, yeah. The whole year.

Andrew: It's a big question, right?

Morag: It's a big question. It's been a pretty interesting year for me.

Andrew: Morag, this is the episode where we will do our annual year in review. We'll kick back and look back on 2017, and sort of discuss the highs and lows of the year. So today's episode will be a Simplified Speech episode. Simplified Speech is the series where we have 100% natural conversations in English, but we speak at a slower, more relaxed pace than we usually do in our everyday lives. OK, Morag, I think we have a lot to talk about today.

Morag: I know. We do.

Andrew: Yeah, let's get into it. And let's talk about 2017. So where should we start? I guess, what pops out at you when you think of this year?

Morag: To be honest, I think for me, this is the year of checking the American news all the time.

Andrew: Absolutely, checking the American news all the time.

Morag: And Twitter.

Andrew: I mean, I think one of the big events that happened early on this year was Donald Trump actually becoming the President, right?



- Morag: Yes.
- Andrew: He won the election in 2016, but he assumed office in 2017. And this means that I think everybody around the world checked Twitter more than usual to see if he tweeted anything new. Because whether you love him or hate him, his tweets have entertainment value.
- Morag: And a lot of power. So it's something to watch for sure.
- Andrew: Yeah, I would agree with you that this has been a year of news and fake news. We saw the emergence of this new expression, fake news, which is **on everybody's mind**. I think whether we read our news online or whether we get it through traditional ways, like the TV, everybody is a little more **critical** about news sources now. And, honestly, I don't think this is a bad thing, to think **critically** about the information we consume.
- Morag: Not at all. I think it's a great thing to be, honestly, **critical** about an article or a news source. However, I think one of the ways to do that is to actually look and see if you can find sources cited in an article you are reading.
- Andrew: That's **a good tip**—look for the sources. A good reporter will always cite their sources, right?
- Morag: Yup, and you can see where they're getting their information from and follow a trail along. So if you're not sure about a particular outlet, you can just keep on going to see where the information started. And that's ... You know, doing your own investigation about the news you're getting is always the best way to go if you're unsure. So that's not so bad.
- Andrew: Not at all. I think if we're thinking big trends from 2017, big news stories, also the sexual abuse and sexual harassment stories that are coming out of Hollywood caused a huge shake-up in the entertainment industry, in the comedy industry. I think this will be something that 2017 is remembered for in future years.
- Morag: Absolutely. I think that the two largest ones, at this point, are Harvey Weinstein and Kevin Spacey, both of them being completely discredited.
- Andrew: Last year was a really sad year because we lost a lot of celebrities and singers who just passed away, and this year, we've also lost a lot of entertainers but due to them destroying their careers because of, well, terrible behaviour. So it's another year of loss, but in a very different way.
- Morag: I just hope that this means that there's going to be a culture change. 'Cause the people may have done terrible things in the past, but if we learn from them and stop making those similar sorts of mistakes, then, hey, that would be awesome. 2017 is **the turning point**.



- Andrew: Exactly, that's a very positive way to think of it. And let's be hopeful that is it **a turning point** and that things improve for the better going forward into next year.
- Morag: So maybe we should talk a little bit about our own years, though. It's a scary world out there.
- Andrew: Yeah so, one of my highlights was crossing an item off my bucket list. And this was finally travelling to Japan after many, many, many years of wanting to visit Japan. I finally got to visit. And this, I think, was the highlight of my year. What about you, Morag? What was the standout moment of 2017 for you?
- Morag: I think the standout moment for me for 2017 was getting and starting my first full-time job as a writer. So that's pretty cool.
- Andrew: That is definitely cool. Now, you're officially a professional writer, so this is awesome.
- Morag: It's interesting, but yeah, it's being part of a corporate structure and an office. And it means that there's a lot of time that I used to have that I don't anymore. But it's also a whole different pace of life to get used to. So forgive me if I maybe sound a little boring about 2017, but it was mostly a more quiet, personal journey of learning how to work in that sort of environment and be in an office 8 hours a day.
- Andrew: Morag, I'm always curious. I always ask my friends this question at the end of the year. That is, "What was your best discovery of the year?" Like, maybe a movie you watched or an artist you learned about or a record, something like this that you were really impressed by. It doesn't even have to be from this year, but just something you learned about this year that you thought, "Ah, that's awesome."
- Morag: Actually, it's not a thing, but an activity.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: I think the best discovery would be rock climbing, indoor.
- Andrew: Nice.
- Morag: It's so much fun. That's the best activity.
- Andrew: It's a good discovery.
- Morag: I didn't really realize that is was right in town, that you could just go a couple of blocks. It was amazing. So, you know.



- Andrew: That's awesome. That's awesome. I think if I had to answer this question, my best discovery would be ... This is going to sound like, "Duh, Andrew, of course, you can do this. How did you not know about this?" But I got into listening to music through YouTube in a big way this year. I think now YouTube is my go-to source for listening to music. And I found some really, really great music through YouTube that I never would have been exposed to otherwise. So even though YouTube is not brand-new technology or anything, it really opened my eyes to a lot of music. And I think, going back to talk about Japan again, one of the biggest, best musical discoveries was a Japanese singer named Tatsuro Yamashita. So if you guys don't know him, check him out on YouTube. Super awesome! He's my musical pick for 2017, even though the music he made is from the 80s and from the 90s. But it was really cool. So that's my vote for best discovery of 2017—the YouTube Jukebox.
- Morag: Well, maybe before the end this episode, Andrew, I'm gonna put you on the spot. What is your New Year's resolution?
- Andrew: I feel like I always make the same resolutions. I wanna work harder, study Korean harder.
- Morag: Be more tired.
- Andrew: Be more tired, yeah. If I do all these things, I'll have to drink lots and lots of energy drinks. But I think 2017, especially the last half of 2017, has been the first time that I've really got a solid control on my diet. I feel like I've cut pretty much like 90–95 percent of the garbage food out of my life. And I'm feeling healthier and better than ever. So my resolution for 2018 is to keep this up—to keep junk food and sugar and just processed food, to keep that out of my life and to stick to eating healthy foods. So if I can keep that up, I will be very happy.
- Morag: Nice, I actually have a similar one, which is, in the second half of 2017, I slid back and started doing junk food again, so I wanna go back to the way that I was eating before, which is, you know, very clean, healthy food.
- Andrew: Nice.
- Morag: It just feels so much better.
- Andrew: It feels good to feel good, right? So, "Here's to feeling good all the time," to quote Kramer from Seinfeld. Well, Morag, let's wrap it up there. Everyone, this will be our very final episode of 2017. So for all of you out there that stuck with us all year, we, **first of all**, want to say thank you. And **second of all**, I hope that we helped you improve your English this year. And we will continue to try our best to teach you natural English and to help you on your journey to English fluency in 2018. We've got lots of big plans for the future,



and we're gonna get right to work as soon as the holidays are over. So look forward to what we have coming in 2018! I think you will enjoy it. So, Morag, happy New Year and happy New Year to all our listeners! We'll catch ya in 2018. Bye everyone.

Morag: Happy New Year.

Announcer: Do you like listening to Culips? If so, please show your support by leaving Culips a five-star rating and a review on iTunes or Stitcher. This helps new listeners find the show. So don't delay. Rate and review today.



Detailed Explanations

A good tip

A **tip** is a piece of useful advice. You can either give **a tip** or receive **a tip**. In this episode, Morag suggests that it is a good idea to look at the sources when reading a news article. Andrew acknowledges her point, and says that it's **a good tip**. In other words, Andrew is saying that Morag's recommendation to look at the sources is a useful piece of advice.

The expression a hot tip is very similar to **a good tip**. The only difference is that a hot tip is **a good tip** that is not known by many people. For example, a stockbroker could say, "I got a hot tip for you. Buy stock in Acme Corp before Monday."

So **a good tip** is a great recommendation or a useful piece of advice. **Good tips** can come from people or from books, movies, articles, or posters.

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

Gina:	I'm not sure what I should do about my car situation.
Fred:	Here, take my dad's phone number. He knows cars, and he always gives me good tips on what I should be doing.
Gina:	Are you sure he wouldn't mind?
Fred:	Not at all! He loves talking about cars. Just don't let him talk for too long. He can go on all day.

Mark:	Here's that book on gardening that I promised to lend you.
Trish:	Oh, thanks so much!
Mark:	Take a look. The pictures are really nice, and it's full of good tips for large and small gardens.
Trish:	It looks great. Thanks again for letting me borrow it.
Mark:	Sure thing!



A turning point

A turning point means a moment when a big or significant change happens. **A turning point** can be an exact moment or a short period of time. For example, imagine that you are driving a car. You are driving north, and at some point, you turn, and you drive south. The moment that you turned and started going in another direction would be **the turning point**.

In this episode, Morag mentions how 2017 was **the turning point** in Hollywood. Because of all the scandals and reports of molestation/sexual abuse, Hollywood will never be the same again.

Here are a couple more examples with **a turning point**:

Marge:	Well, she finally kicked Rick out of the house.
George:	Good for her. It was a long time coming. He's had so many issues, especially with his drinking.
Marge:	I know. Here's hoping that this is finally the turning point in his life, and he gets his act together.
George:	I hope so too. He's a nice guy. He just needs to get help.

Announcer 1: And the results are in. Johnson wins the election by 12 points.

Announcer 2: That's right. Looking back at the campaign, I'd have to say that **the turning point** was when the story broke about her opponent taking bribes. His polling numbers simply couldn't recover.

Announcer 1: I agree that the bribing scandal hurt her opponent.

Announcer 2: In any event, I think Johnson will make a great mayor!



To be critical

In this episode, both Andrew and Morag talk about how important it is **to be critical** when you hear or read the news. **To be critical** means to carefully evaluate. So **to be critical** of the news means to analyze the news itself and ask questions about it. It is the opposite of accepting everything you are told.

To be critical can also mean to be negative or to express disapproval. For example, if your friend says, "My teacher was very **critical** of my report," this means the teacher didn't really like her report.

Critical thinking is often noted as something that separates humans from other species, as well as adults from young children. When it comes to the news, **critical** thinking involves reflecting on the source of the news or the reason for the article.

There is a difference between to critique and **to criticize**. To critique means to offer a thoughtful analysis of something. **To criticize** is to point out what you think is wrong or not good.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be critical**:

Teacher:	Now remember, when reading Patrick's account of the robbery, it is important to be critical .
Student:	What do you mean?
Teacher:	Think about Patrick's motivations. Maybe he is lying when he's telling his story to the police. Maybe he's trying to protect someone.
Student:	Oh, I see.

Felix:	I've had enough! I can't stand my dad!
Phil:	What's the problem?
Felix:	Nothing is ever good enough. He's so critical of everything I do.
Phil:	I'm sorry to hear that. I'm always here to listen if you need me.
Felix:	Thanks dude.



On everybody's mind

If many people are thinking about something, then it's **on everybody's mind**! You can use the expression **on everybody's mind** when many people seem to be concerned with the same thing, like fake news.

You can also use **on everybody's mind** in a question. Interviewers frequently set up a query by saying, "The question **on everybody's mind** is..."

There are many variations of **on everybody's mind**, including:

- On everyone's mind
- On everyone's lips
- On everyone's radar

Similar to **on everybody's mind**, **on everyone's lips** means that everyone is talking about something, and **on everyone's radar** means that everyone is aware of something and concerned about it to some degree.

Here are a couple more examples with **on everybody's mind**:

Announcer 1: And now, the former gold medalist is hoping to qualify for the upcoming Olympic Games.

Announcer 2: That's right. And with her history of injuries, the question **on everybody's mind**, especially her coach's, will she be able to remain injury-free and make her comeback?

Announcer 1: I'm sure her coach would like to answer that question with a firm yes, but time will tell.

Interviewer: Tell us about the third film in the series.

Director: It's a great movie, and we believe the best one yet.

Interviewer: Now, you've said in the past that this would be your final film for this series. But with the massive success of this latest one, the question **on everybody's mind** is will you return for one more?

Director: I don't know. We'll see. It depends on the script and the production team.

Interviewer: OK, OK, no definite answer. Well, thank you for your time.



First of all/second of all

First of all and **second of all** are related expressions. You use **first of all** at the start of a sentence to introduce the first idea or explanation in a list of ideas or explanations. You then use **second of all** to introduce the remaining ideas or explanations.

Andrew uses **first of all** and **second of all** at the end of the podcast to thank you, our wonderful listeners, for supporting Culips, and to express his hope that Culips helped to improve your English.

You don't always have to follow **first of all** with **second of all**. You can also use **first of all** as an opening line in a speech when you want to say something before continuing with other matters. For example, "**First of all**, I want to welcome all of you here today." In this sense, you are beginning by saying something nice and not necessarily related to the topic of your speech.

Here are a couple more examples with **first of all/second of all**:

Steven:	First of all , you have no business looking in my personal drawers. And second of all , Jane gave me that lighter as a gift last month.
Darryl:	That's not how she tells it. She says you stole it from her, and she wants it back. You and she are over.
Steven:	What? You can't be serious. You have some nerve coming in here, and searching through my drawers and telling me my girlfriend is breaking up with me.
Darryl:	I'm just doing what Jane asked me to do.

Interviewer:	Welcome, please have a seat.
Applicant:	Thank you.
Interviewer:	First of all , thank you for your interest in our company. What made you decide to apply for a job here?
Applicant:	Well, who wouldn't want to work here!
Interviewer:	Good answer!



Quiz

1. Which of the following is the best example of someone giving a good tip?

- a) John offers to buy stock in your company.
- b) Mary gives Tracey advice on her relationship.
- c) Brian pokes Bob with a pointy stick.
- d) Kevin invites Monica to dinner.

2. True or false: On everyone's lips means that everyone is talking about something.

- a) true
- b) false

3. Which of the following is the best example of someone thinking critically?

- a) Jody tells Zoe about her day at work.
- b) Rosita gives Sarah a compliment because Sarah is having a bad day.
- c) Michael tells Carly he likes her dress when he secretly doesn't like it.
- d) Oliver reads an article and decides he doesn't agree after considering all the facts.

4. True or false: If you use first of all, you should always use second of all.

- a) true
- b) false

5. What is a turning point?

- a) a flexible job
- b) a small business
- c) a great politician
- d) a big change



Quiz Answers

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

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