

Simplified Speech #051 – The Holiday Season

Episode description

Happy holidays, everyone! The holiday season is in full swing in Canada; therefore, Andrew and Morag are here to talk to you about the holiday season in this Simplified Speech episode. Sit back, drink a cup a cup of cocoa, and enjoy!

Fun fact

In Canada, the day after Christmas is known as Boxing Day. On Boxing Day, stores provide many after-Christmas sales, and families come out to look for great bargains. Many important sports events are also televised on Boxing Day.

Expressions included in the study guide

- To be a fan of [something]
- To be bumped
- Friendsmas
- To be frank
- Retail
- Bargain
- At the stroke of midnight
- Smooch



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: 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.

Hi, Morag.

Morag: Hey, Andrew, how's it going?

Andrew: I'm doing all right, Morag. You know, Christmas is not too far away, it's just around the corner, and some people say it's the most wonderful time of the year. I don't know if that's true or not true. I guess it's a great time, the holiday season.

But I was thinking, because the holidays are right around the corner, that in today's Simplified Speech episode we could talk about our holiday plans and how we're gonna celebrate the holidays this year. What do you think about that?

Morag: That sounds great.

Andrew: So that's what we'll do today, we'll talk all about the holiday season. But just before we get into it, I would like to remind all of you listeners out there about the study guide for this episode. It includes a transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, and examples of all of the most essential vocabulary from this episode. There's also a quiz and some questions that you can use for discussion or for journaling. It's really a great product and it's available for you to download from our website, which is www.Culips.com. So if you'd like to study with Morag and I today and use the study guide, just download it from our website.

All right. Ho, ho, ho, merry Christmas. It's the holiday season. How will you be spending the holidays this year, Morag?

- Morag: I will be just at home in Montreal. I don't know who **is a fan of travelling** during the holiday season, but **I'm not a fan**.
- Andrew: Yeah, the holidays are not a great time to travel. The last time that I was in Canada for Christmas was actually about 3 years ago now, and I remember that I was flying to my parent's home on Christmas Eve. And the airliner overbooked our flight and I got **bumped**. I got **bumped** and I had to wait for like 7 hours at the airport and I showed up really late and everybody was disappointed. So not a good time to travel, absolutely.
- Morag: No, so I'm quite happy to be staying in Montreal. It's a **Friendsmas**.
- Andrew: A **Friendsmas**? What is that?
- Morag: You may have heard of Friendsgiving, which is Thanksgiving but with your friends instead of your family. And you can also have **Friendsmas**, so you're spending Christmas with friends instead of family.
- Andrew: Interesting, **Friendsmas**. Well, I won't be with my family, either. So it will also be a **Friendsmas**—I can't say that, **Friendsmas**—for me, as well.
- Morag: It's a very silly word. But it's fun.
- Andrew: Yeah, I will be in Seoul for Christmas, that's my plan. And, you know, I have to say that I do love being away from Canada at Christmas, because every year it seems like the holiday season is just promoted more and more and more. It starts earlier and people are playing Christmas carols, you know, as soon as Halloween finishes, really.
- Morag: Oh, oh, Andrew, before.
- Andrew: Before Halloween?
- Morag: Yeah. So this year, I saw Halloween decorations and Christmas decorations at the same time.
- Andrew: It's ridiculous.
- Morag: It's too much, it's too early. It's also been a winter wonderland in Montreal since about mid-November.
- Andrew: Yikes.
- Morag: Oh, yeah.

Andrew: So you've got a large serving of the holiday spirit this year. I think, because of this, actually turned me off of Christmas. Like when I was a kid, I used to love Christmas and now, **to be perfectly frank** with you, I find it a little bit annoying.

Andrew: I like Christmas music, but I don't need to hear it for 6 weeks before Christmas, maybe a week before or something. This would be OK with me.

And Christmas movies, too. You know watching the same movie every year. I don't do that with any other movies, even the movies that I really, really love, but why do I have to do it with Christmas movies. It's strange, I don't know. I'm sorry to rant here, but.

Morag: That is perfectly fine. There are many people who have strong feelings about Christmas and the holidays in general. It seems like people either love the holidays or are rather annoyed by them, or just hate them entirely. But I like Christmas a lot, but I don't entertain it until somewhere in December.

Andrew: Yeah, I think that is reasonable. That's a good attitude. I would say mid-December.

Morag: Exactly.

Andrew: That's good for me, let's start the Christmas season mid-December.

Morag: I like to go about December 10th.

Andrew: Perfect.

Morag: It's when I want to put up a Christmas tree, get a little over 2 weeks. Start to do some baking, start to get some decorations, it's all nice. But then, you know, it's not that long.

I think the worst is friends of mine that used to work in **retail** in malls. In Canada, in malls we play Christmas music constantly for all of November and all of December, and often it is the same couple hours of songs over and over and over. So a lot of people who used to work in **retail** hate Christmas music or just hate the holiday season in general because it's traumatic.

Andrew: It would be traumatic because you're also working longer. The stores are open in the mall longer and there's more customers and people are stressed.

Morag: Yes.

- Andrew: And then right after Christmas is Boxing Day, which is also a holiday in Canada, but it's kind of a special shopping day for many people where stores will try to get rid of their extra inventory, the extra products in the store that didn't sell during the Christmas season. So right after Christmas there's big sales. The stores are trying to get rid of this product and this is a really stressful day for **retail** employees, as well, I think.
- Morag: I think it's Canadian Black Friday, if any of our listeners have heard of that.
- Andrew: I think so.
- Morag: Yeah, I do not understand leaving your house the day after Christmas to go stand in lines for hours. I do not understand.
- Andrew: I don't get it either. Especially, like, I just received a bunch of new things for Christmas. Why do I need to go buy more new things? I don't get it.
- Morag: Ah, because you may have received gifts cards and/or money instead of gifts.
- Andrew: That's a good point, yeah. And everybody does love a **bargain**, but I don't love **bargains** that much.
- Morag: Neither do I.
- Andrew: Another part of the holiday season that we haven't mentioned is New Year's: New Year's Day and New Year's Eve. I love these 2 days, actually.
- Morag: Me too. I really, really like them. New Year's Day and New Year's Eve are reasonably important Scottish holidays.
- Andrew: Sure, it's one of the only times that most people get to hear a Scottish song.
- Morag: Auld Lang Syne.
- Andrew: So that's the song by the famous Scottish poet Robbie Burns that many people sing **at the stroke of midnight**, really. It's like New Year's flips over and then people sing this song together. It's kind of a tradition.
- Morag: And it was an important family time for my small family, as well.
- Andrew: OK, very nice.
- Morag: I love New Year's. I love the feeling of a new beginning. I think many people do.
- Andrew: Yeah. And to be honest with you, I might even like New Year's more than Christmas. It's possible.

- Morag: Yeah, although a lot of people are really anti–New Year’s.
- Andrew: Really?
- Morag: Oh, yeah.
- Andrew: I’ve never encountered an anti–New Year’s person.
- Morag: I have some friends that refuse to go to New Year’s parties, or are very unhappy about it. I think it’s something about the pressure of starting something new. Do you know when you get a new notebook, this might be familiar, it’s the first page.
- Andrew: Yes.
- Morag: And you’re worried about writing something in it because you might mess it up. It’s pristine and perfect and then you ... Right? It’s the same thing, I think, with the New Year.
- There’s also the whole kissing someone on New Year’s.
- Andrew: Yeah, I just thought of that, too. That’s another tradition in the West, is that when the clock strikes 12, you should kiss somebody. And if you’re single, then this can put a lot of pressure on you or you could feel excluded when all of the other couples around you go in for a **smooch**.
- Morag: It can be a bit awkward. So I think there’s some reasons why people don’t like it, but I think they are wrong.
- Andrew: Me too. Me too. I think it’s good. A fresh start and fresh new year.
- Morag, before the new year, we will get together again and record an episode looking back on 2018, and so we’ll share our predictions and our resolutions for 2019.
- Morag: That seems like fun.
- Andrew: Yeah, so, listeners, look forward to that coming out soon. But for right now, we’ll leave it here for today.
- Once again, there is a study guide for this episode available on our website, Culips.com. So don’t miss out on that. As well, we’re on social media, all over the place. Just search for the Culips English Podcast on your favourite social media site and you’ll be sure to find us. And, finally, we’re curious how will you be spending the holiday season. Feel free to send us an email. Our address is contact@Culips.com, and let us know what’s up for you and your family this holiday season. We would really love to hear from you.



Andrew: We'll be back soon with another episode. We'll talk to you then. Goodbye, everyone.

Morag: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To be a fan of [something]

Phrase

A fan is someone who is really interested in something or someone, such as a certain celebrity, singer, sports player, etc. However, you can **be a fan of anything**. For example, if you really love French sweets, you could say that you are a **big fan of French bakeries**.

You can use this phrase in the opposite sense, as well, to express something you don't like very much. You do this by adding the word not to the phrase. For example, you could say that you love most types of dance, but that you **are not a fan of ballet**. In this example, the phrase **not a fan of** is used to show that the speaker likes all forms of dance except ballet.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be a fan of [something]**:

Dave:	Merry Christmas, sweetie!
Libby:	Oh, Dave! You shouldn't have! Season tickets to the theatre!
Dave:	I know you are a fan of the theatre . I thought it would be a great Christmas present.
Libby:	It's perfect! Thank you so much. I can't wait to go!

Fatima:	Have you heard of Clive Barker?
Adela:	Of course! I am a huge fan of his work . He writes amazing fantasy novels and does all of his own artwork. It's just amazing.
Fatima:	Well, he's doing a book signing this Saturday. You wanna go?
Adela:	Do you even have to ask? Of course I wanna go! What time?

To be bumped

Verb

To be bumped, also known as airline **bumping**, happens when passengers with confirmed airplane tickets are denied seats on the airplane they reserved due to overbooking. Airplanes often overbook flights by selling more tickets than available seats to prevent loss of income from passengers who fail to show up for their flight. When passengers **are bumped**, their flight time is literally **bumped** or pushed to the next available flight. **Bumped** passengers are usually given better seats, such as first-class seats, on their next flight or cash or travel rewards due to the inconvenience placed upon them.

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

Marty: Hey, man, I've got some bad news.

Chase: What happened? Did your flight get delayed?

Marty: Kind of. I actually got **bumped**. They overbooked, so I'm not leaving until the 7:00.

Chase: That sucks.

Marty: It's not so bad. They gave me \$400 in vouchers for future flights. I'm just sorry I'll be later than originally planned.

Chase: That's OK. We aren't leaving on our fishing trip till tomorrow morning anyways. Just get some sleep on the plane, all right?

Airline staff: Calling Mina Hoang, Mina Hoang. Please report to Gate A3 for important information regarding your flight.

Mina: Hello, I'm Mina Hoang.

Airline staff: Hello, Ms Hoang. I'm sorry to inform you that you've been **bumped** to the 3:00 flight due to an overbooking of passengers. However, we will move you to first class on the 3:00 flight due to the inconvenience.

Mina: Why me? Will I still be able to make my connecting flight in Boston?

Airline staff: We chose you because of your long layover in Boston. We will make sure you have enough time to get on your connecting flight even with this delay.

Friendsmas

Noun

Friendsmas is not a real word, but rather a made-up word that combines the words friends and Christmas. Usually people celebrate Christmas with their family, but that is not possible for everyone. Often people live far away from their family and they are not able to travel home for the holidays. In this case, friends may come together and celebrate Christmas like a family so that they are not alone over the holidays; this is known as **Friendsmas**.

There is a similar term for people who cannot go home to visit their families over Thanksgiving. Friends who get together for Thanksgiving can call their gathering Friendsgiving. Combining existing words to create new and fun made-up words is a common occurrence in any language, including English.

Here's one more example with **Friendsmas**:

Dalia:	Hey, Natasha, are you going home for Christmas?
Natasha:	No. I only get 2 days off work, and my home is just too far away to justify the travel time.
Dalia:	Well, in that case, would you like to come to my Friendsmas party? I'm inviting a few people over to have food and share gifts on Christmas!
Natasha:	Aw, Dalia, that sounds great. What should I bring?
Dalia:	Oh, not much. I love your gingerbread cookies. How about you bring those and a small present for the gift exchange?
Natasha:	OK, will do. I'll see you on Christmas!

To be frank Phrase

To be frank is a phrase used to introduce your honest opinion about something; it is often used when giving an opinion that might not be well-received by whomever you are talking with at the time. **Frank** means honest, so when you say something **frankly**, you are saying something honestly without worrying about the listener's reaction.

In this episode, Andrew says that, **to be frank**, he is a little bit annoyed with Christmas. Honestly, he knows that many people like Christmas, but he doesn't like the music, movies, or crazy shopping culture associated with the holidays.

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

Denijah:	What do you think of this dress?
Jasmine:	Well, to be frank , I don't think it's very flattering on you. You should wear something that accentuates your curves. How about something like this?
Denijah:	OK, I'll try it on. One second. OK, how is it?
Jasmine:	Oh my goodness, it's perfect! You look amazing in that. You should definitely buy it.
Denijah:	Thanks for your help, Jazzy! I appreciate your honest opinions on things.

Isaiah:	So how did your date go? Did you like her?
Emmett:	Man, thanks for setting us up but, to be frank , she was kind of boring. We didn't have a whole lot in common.
Isaiah:	That sucks. Lisa and I were sure you guys would like each other. So that's it, then?
Emmett:	I mean, I guess I could give it another shot.
Isaiah:	I think that's a great idea! Do it and tell me how it goes. Later, bro.
Emmett:	Bye.



Retail

Noun

Retail is the industry of selling goods to consumers. In this episode, Andrew and Morag talk about **retail** workers, people who work in the **retail** industry. When you go shopping in a store or mall, **retail** workers are the ones who stock the shelves with products, assist you in your shopping, and deal with the payment of your items. The holiday season is a very busy and stressful time for **retail** workers, because everyone is buying gifts and crowding the stores. **Retail** workers often have to work overtime during the holiday season, or even on the holidays themselves.

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

Franny:	What's up, Meg?
Meg:	I am so tired.
Franny:	Why?
Meg:	This retail job is killing me. I've had to work every day this week!
Franny:	How do you have time for homework and everything?
Meg:	I've been doing homework during my break and after work. I'm exhausted.
Franny:	Well, at least you'll have a big fat paycheck at the end of the month!

Tyler:	How long have you been working in retail ?
Damien:	Too long. I've been doing this for 14 years.
Tyler:	Fourteen years! That is a long time. In the same store?
Damien:	Nope. I've worked in a bunch of different stores at a bunch of different jobs. I started as a cashier, though, and now I'm a manager.
Tyler:	Cool. Maybe I'll be a manager someday, too.

Bargain

Noun

A **bargain** is a very good deal on an item that would normally cost more. Items that you can buy on sale are considered **bargains**, because they save you a lot of money. After the holiday season, stores are trying to get rid of their extra inventory so they provide big discounts on many items. Therefore, after Christmas and New Year's is a great time to go shopping for **bargains**.

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

Vince: Are you going Black Friday shopping?

Diego: Nah, I wasn't planning on it. It's gonna be crazy on Black Friday.

Vince: Yeah, but they're selling these giant flat-screen TVs for \$100!

Diego: Wow, what a **bargain**!

Vince: Yeah, right? I'm gonna brave the crowds of people just to get that.

TV advert: Hello, customers! Welcome to Foodmart. We have **bargains** galore during this year's holiday season. Just stop by your local Foodmart to save, save, save!

Maddy: Hmm, is there anything you want me to buy? I think I'll head over to Foodmart to check out the good deals.

Alegra: Well, how about you go and then send me a message with the sales they've got?

Maddy: Good idea! Look for my text, I'll message in 25 minutes or so.



At the stroke of midnight

Phrase

The phrases **at the stroke of midnight** and when the clock strikes 12 both refer to the exact time when a new day begins. These phrases are both really popular on New Year's Eve. Many cities around the world celebrate New Year's with cheering, fireworks, and celebrations **at the stroke of midnight**.

Here are a couple more examples with **at the stroke of midnight**:

Tyra:	Are you coming to the party tonight?
Kaylee:	Yeah, but I gotta be home before 12.
Tyra:	Why are you like Cinderella? Does your car turn back into a pumpkin at the stroke of midnight ?
Kaylee:	No, but I have a curfew. If I'm not home by then, my parents will ruin my life at the stroke of midnight .
Tyra:	I see. OK, we'll have you home in plenty of time!

Jimmy:	How are you gonna propose to Mary?
Lindon:	I've got it all planned out—it'll be really romantic. On New Year's Eve, I'm gonna take Mary to the place where we first met, you know the place with the fireworks? And, at the stroke of midnight , I'm gonna get down on one knee as the fireworks start to go off and ask her to marry me. Cool, right?
Jimmy:	Whoa, you really thought this through. I'm sure she'll love it. Good luck, man.
Lindon:	Thanks. She better say yes, that's all I'm gonna say!

Smooch

Noun

Smooch is another word for kiss. This is an informal way to talk about kissing or making out. Couples often give each other a **smooch** when they meet, when they leave for work, when they wake up, etc.

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

Cora: Hey, honey. I'm heading to work. See ya later tonight.

Milo: Wait! Give me a **smooch** before ya go.

Cora: Of course! Later, babe.

Matias: Have you heard? Jollie and Evan were caught **smooching** in the empty science classroom earlier.

Kim: Really? I thought Evan was going out with Meredith?

Matias: Yeah, that's what everyone thought, but apparently they broke up yesterday.

Kim: **Smooching** a new girl just one day later—he moved on really quickly!

Quiz

1. Which is NOT an example of a retail worker?

- a) a stocker
- b) an investigator
- c) a cashier
- d) a sales associate

2. What does it mean to be frank?

- a) to be tasty
- b) to be honest
- c) to be thankful
- d) to be helpful

3. Which is NOT a synonym for the word bargain?

- a) a good deal
- b) a steal
- c) a super sale
- d) a rip-off

4. What does it mean to be bumped by an airline?

- a) to be hit by an airplane
- b) to get pushed on an airplane
- c) to get placed on a later flight by the airline
- d) to get in a fight with the airline workers

5. If I fell asleep at the stroke of midnight, when did I fall asleep?

- a) just before midnight
- b) just after midnight
- c) at exactly midnight
- d) an hour before midnight



Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Do you celebrate Christmas or any other holiday in December? If so, what are your family traditions? If not, when and what is the biggest holiday in your country?
2. How does the holiday season in your country compare to the holiday season you see in Hollywood movies?
3. What is your favourite food to eat during the holidays?
4. Have you ever been unable to meet your family during the holiday season and instead celebrated with your friends? How was it? What did you do?
5. Have you ever been bumped by an airline? What did they give you in return?
6. What is something that you are a fan of, and why?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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