

Simplified Speech #052 – Motorcycles

Episode description

Have you ever thought about buying a motorcycle and cruising through the neighbourhood at breakneck speeds? Then this is the topic for you! In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Morag talk all about these two-wheeled vehicles.

Fun fact

The very first motorcycle was invented by Gottlieb Daimler and Wilhelm Maybach in Germany in 1885. The Dodge Tomahawk, the fastest motorcycle nowadays, can reach speeds over 550 kilometres per hour and accelerate from 0 to 96 kilometres per hour in less than 3 seconds!

Expressions included in the study guide

- General opinion
- Exposed
- Thinking seriously about [something]
- To push to the limit
- Flat out
- Chunky
- Wiped out



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 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 there, Morag.

Morag: Hey, Andrew. How are you doing?

Andrew: Morag, I did something today that I rarely, rarely, rarely do, and that is I took two naps today. I had a two-nap day.

Morag: Wow. I don't know if I've ever had a two-nap day. Congratulations.

Andrew: I didn't feel good about it, though. I just felt so exhausted today that I needed to take a little nap in the afternoon. And when I came home from work, as well, I was totally **wiped out**. So I took another nap.

Morag: Wow.

Andrew: But the good news is I feel good now. I feel awake and alert and ready to record this episode now. So I guess the naps worked? It was a good idea.

Morag: Yeah, I guess if you need a two-nap day, take a two-nap day.

Andrew: Wiser words have never been spoken, I think.

OK, Morag, so today we're going to do a Simplified Speech episode. And this is our series for beginner- and intermediate-level English learners where we have totally natural conversations, but we speak at a slower pace than we do in our everyday lives. And the topic for today's episode is motorcycles.



Andrew: But, just before we start talking about motorcycles, I would like to tell everybody that there is a study guide for this episode available for download on our website, Culips.com. So if you'd like to listen and study along with the study guide at the same time, just visit Culips.com to get the study guide.

OK, so we're gonna talk about motorcycles, Morag. And I'm curious, what is your **general opinion** on motorcycles? Do you love them, hate them? Don't care, what do you think?

Morag: I think they are super cool and really scary.

Andrew: I agree. I think exactly the same, actually.

Morag: Yeah, I have a couple friends who ride motorcycles and I've always wanted to, but you're so **exposed**. I just can't quite get over it. Have you actually ever ridden a motorcycle yourself, Andrew?

Andrew: I have ridden on the back of a motorcycle a couple of times. My uncle drove motorcycles back in the day, so I would sometimes ride with him. One of my old high school buddies is now actually a professional motocross racer.

Morag: Oh my god.

Andrew: Motocross?

Morag: Motocross.

Andrew: No.

Morag: Isn't it?

Andrew: Yeah, that's the dirt bike one, right? He is like the speed bike racer. The ones that go extremely fast, like 200 or 300 kilometres an hour.

Morag: No.

Andrew: Something insane like that.

Morag: No, no.

Andrew: Maybe I should try and get him to join us on the podcast sometime. It could be an interesting conversation.

Morag: Yeah, that would be fun.



- Andrew: So I've ridden with him and I've driven motor scooters. So I've rented those before, and that was really fun. But I've never actually driven a motorcycle myself.
- Morag: Yeah, motor scooters, those are super, super fun. I remember having a conversation with somebody who was really into motorcycles, right about when I was 21 and I was **thinking pretty seriously about** getting my motorcycle license and buying a motorcycle. And he advised me to get a scooter instead of a motorcycle because it's more fun in the city. He said that a motorcycle, you constantly have to slow down and you can't **push it to its limit**. You have to constantly moderate yourself because of speed limits and that sort of thing. But on a scooter, you can just **flat out** 'cause it doesn't go that fast. And I thought that was the best argument for not getting a motorcycle, so I think he was right.
- Andrew: Yeah, that's a convincing argument.
- Morag: It's more badass.
- Andrew: Now, what type of motorcycle would you have wanted to buy at that time? Were you thinking about buying a sport bike or more of, like, a Harley-Davidson style bike, or like a cruiser, what type?
- Morag: Café racer.
- Andrew: A café racer. Can you explain what that is to people who don't know, like me?
- Morag: They're much more elegant bikes. They're modelled after European ones, like Italian bikes in the mid-late 20th century. So, yeah, they're, like, if you google café racer, you'll see they don't have those giant anything, you know? You don't sit up, you're in a more similar to a sport bike kind of posture. But it doesn't have all of the **chunky** metal and plastic and stuff that sport bikes do. So it's more like a European-feeling version of the same thing.
- Andrew: I don't think you could choose a more European-style name for a bike than a café racer.
- Morag: Good point. Yeah.
- Andrew: I've always liked Yamaha motorcycles, especially the ones from, like, the 70s or 80s.
- Morag: Yeah.



- Andrew: They're really cool. And here in Korea, I see these small Yamaha motorcycles that are out right now, and they just look really cute, which is probably not one of the characteristics that most people would use to describe a motorcycle. But they look very cute, and every time I see somebody driving one of those motorcycles, I want one. I get a little jealous and I think what my life would be like if I was a motorcycle driver.
- Morag: You still could be, Andrew.
- Andrew: I know! I could be, I could be. And, you know, a couple months ago I was in Vietnam and there's so many, not necessarily motorcycles, there are so many motor scooters over there. It's just a way of life, which is totally different than in Canada. How often do you see motorcycles in Montreal? Is it a common mode of transportation?
- Morag: No, it's very uncommon to see a motorcycle. I would say much more uncommon than when I was living on Vancouver Island. I remember seeing a good amount of sport bikes on the highways in BC and Harleys and that kind of thing. Touring bikes parked at cafés, but here I don't tend to see them at all. I mean, maybe if you went further outside of Montreal. I know there used to be a lot of bikers here, but in the areas I go to, you never see them.
- So in Korea, you were saying you see quite a lot of those small little motorcycles?
- Andrew: Yeah, there are many, many, many more motorcycles and motor scooters in Korea than compared to Canada. For example, any food that you order will be delivered by a guy riding a motor scooter here. So there's no such thing as a pizza car. It's a pizza scooter, and even the fast food restaurants like McDonalds deliver, and their delivery fleet is all these little motor scooters. So there's tons of bikes on the road. Motorcycles and scooters, yeah.
- Morag: That's super cute.
- Andrew: It is. And I think one of the reasons why we don't have as many motorcycles in Canada is because of the winter.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: I couldn't imagine riding a motorcycle in February in Montreal, in tons of snow in minus 20 degrees Celsius temperature.
- Morag: You would have to be a really intense person, yeah. Wow.



Andrew: OK, Morag, well, let's leave it at that for today. It was fun talking to you about motorcycles.

And, everyone, just before we go, I wanna remind you that our study guide for this episode is available for download on Culips.com. It is designed especially for you, and we've included lots of awesome materials in there, like the transcript for the episode, as well as vocabulary explanations and examples for some of the interesting vocabulary that we heard today, and lots of other great things too. So if you're interested in the study guide, visit Culips.com for that. We're also all over the place on social media, Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, Instagram. You name it, we're there. So if you would like to follow us, and please do, on social media, just search for the Culips English podcast and you'll be sure to find us.

All right, we'll leave it at that for today. Stay tuned, because we'll be back with another new episode shortly. We'll talk to you then. Bye.

Morag: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

General opinion

Noun

An opinion is a view or judgment about a particular matter. A **general opinion** is what the majority of people think about a particular matter. For example, a **general opinion** is that sports stars are paid too much money. Many people believe sports stars earn too much money, so it is a **general opinion** that sports stars are overpaid. The opposite of a **general opinion** would be a personal opinion. For example, it may be your personal opinion that strawberries are the most delicious fruit. The term personal is used in this case to emphasize the fact that the opinion is solely a personal preference and has not been influenced by outside opinion.

Here are a couple more examples with **general opinion**:

Ted:	How did the consumers like the advertisement we released last week on the new soda flavour?
Jim:	The advertisement was a hit! People loved the cat; they thought the advertisement was hilarious. However, the general opinion on Twitter is that our new soda tastes disgusting. I believe one man said that it's worse than dirty dishwater.
Ted:	Well, that's good news for us, anyways. It's not our job to make it taste good, it's simply our job to make it look good.

Annie:	Do you know what I read in a news article today? The band BTS is quickly becoming the most popular boy band worldwide. They're from Korea like you, right?
MinGyeong:	Yeah, that's right. In my personal opinion, the band Highlight is much better, but I am very biased.
Annie:	I heard BTS even gave a speech at the United Nations!
MinGyeong:	Yeah, they did. They might not be my favourite band, but as far as the general opinion goes, they are the best.

Exposed Adjective

There are many possible definitions for the word **exposed**. One definition is to make something visible. For example, after ripping up a carpet, the hardwood floor beneath would be **exposed**. Another definition means to reveal the truth. For example, you could say, "I thought she was so nice, but my friend helped me **expose** her as a bully and a liar."

In this episode, the third definition of **exposed** is used: to be vulnerable or unprotected. In this episode, Morag says she is afraid to ride motorcycles because she feels too **exposed**. In other words, when you ride a motorcycle, there is nothing protecting you from danger aside from a helmet and the clothes you are wearing. In a car, it is very different, because there are seatbelts, airbags, and a very strong metal frame protecting you from getting hurt if an accident were to occur.

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

Vanessa:	I can't believe we are lost in the middle of the woods with no cell phone service. It's getting dark. We are gonna die!!!
Michael:	Calm down, we are not gonna die. We are, however, very exposed here. Animals could attack us in this open area. Let's look for some sort of shelter before it gets too dark to see.
Vanessa:	What kind of shelter? Do you think we're going to magically find a 5-star hotel in this forest?
Michael:	Of course not. But maybe we'll find a small cave or a tree we can climb. Come on, let's go.

Jane:	You look gorgeous in that outfit!
Melaney:	Really? You don't think it's too revealing? I feel so exposed .
Jane:	No, you look sexy! Vince is gonna love it!
Melaney:	You're right. I have to feel good to look good, too. Let's head to the dance!
Jane:	Wait, you need my heels. It will totally complete the look.
Melaney:	Thanks, Jane. You're a great friend for helping me like this.
Jane:	No problem, girl. Now let's go party!

To think seriously about [something]

Phrase

To think about something is to consider whether or not you are going to do something. For example, the sentence, “Frank is thinking about going to Hawaii for vacation” implies that Frank is considering going to Hawaii for vacation; Frank has not yet decided and he is still not sure what he will do. Alternately, **to think seriously about [something]** is to consider doing something with the knowledge that you will probably end up doing it. If Frank is **thinking seriously about going to Hawaii for vacation**, then he is probably already looking at plane tickets, hotel rooms, and activities that he can do Hawaii. When Frank is **thinking seriously about something**, he has yet to make a final decision, but he has the intention of doing whatever he is thinking about.

In this episode, Morag said that when she was 21, she was **thinking seriously about getting a motorcycle**. She ended up not buying a motorcycle but, at the time, she had the intention of buying a motorcycle or scooter.

Here are a couple more examples with **to think seriously about [something]**:

Than:	Have you gotten an acceptance letter from Harvard yet?
Cai:	No, but I’m not sure I wanna go there anyways. I’ve been thinking seriously about going to Yale instead.
Than:	Yale? But don’t your parents want you to go to Harvard? It’s where they went to college, right?
Cai:	Yeah, that’s right. I don’t know, man. We went on college visits to both Yale and Harvard this summer. I just felt a connection at Yale, you know? I didn’t get that feeling when I visited Harvard.
Than:	I mean, they are both great schools. It’s your choice in the end, I guess. I hope your parents don’t freak out. Have you told them yet?

Titi:	I’m thinking seriously about cancelling my gym membership . Do you think I should?
Breanna:	I mean, you never use it anyways. It’s kind of a waste of money.
Titi:	My thoughts exactly! I can always exercise at home with YouTube anyways.
Breanna:	You could do that. I don’t think you will, though.
Titi:	Hey! I am going to lose those 10 pounds ... Eventually!



To push to the limit

Phrase

To push to the limit means to make something work the hardest it possibly can, almost to the point of breaking. If someone **pushes himself to the limit**, he works or exercises as hard as he possibly can without injuring himself. In this episode, Morag talks about a motorcycle being **pushed to the limit**. A motorcycle that is **pushed to the limit** is going as fast as it can possibly go without breaking the vehicle or causing an accident.

Here are a couple more examples with **to push to the limit**:

Janine: How are you, Seth?

Seth: I feel like I'm being **pushed to my limit** with this project at work.

Janine: The design you're working on for the new City Hall building?

Seth: Yes, there is so much pressure to do a good job on this project, and the list of rules I have to follow is endless!

Janine: Well, you are one of the best architects in the city. I know you'll get it done.

Seth: Thank you for the vote of confidence.

Victor: How fast can this electric skateboard go?

Fredrick: It can reach about 40 kilometres per hour, but I wouldn't go over 25.

Victor: Why not?

Fredrick: If you **push it to the limit**, the board starts to wobble a bit and you could lose your balance. It's dangerous falling off a moving object at that speed!



Flat out

Verbal phrase

Flat out is similar to the phrase to push to the limit. To go **flat out** means to go as fast and as hard as possible. If a person gets on a motorcycle and goes **flat out**, she is driving the motorcycle without any hesitation or reservations; she simply drives it as fast and as hard as she possibly can.

Here are a couple more examples with **flat out**:

Rick: Is Molly OK? She's been working in the kitchen **flat out** since morning.

Jonathon: Not really. She found out that the book manuscript she submitted for publication was rejected. I think she's working so hard in the kitchen to avoid feeling the disappointment.

Rick: Ah, that sucks. We should try to do something to cheer her up!

Viv: Hey, Duke, did you make it on time?

Duke: Yeah, it was great! I told the taxi driver I was desperate and he drove **flat out** all the way to the train station. I got there right when the train pulled up.

Viv: That's great! Good luck on your trip. Call me when you get there.



Chunky Adjective

Chunky means to be thick and bulky. You can use the word **chunky** to describe clothing and accessories that are thick, are bulky, or contain large pieces, like a **chunky** sweater, **chunky** jewelry, or **chunky** shoes. In this episode, Morag says that if she bought a motorcycle, she would buy a café racer because they are sleek and slim, unlike sports bikes, which have a lot of **chunky** metal and plastic parts.

Another common usage for the word **chunky** is to describe a person or animal that is a bit overweight. A **chunky** dog is a chubby, pudgy, or heavy dog. Often babies with lots of fat rolls are described as chubby babies or **chunky** babies.

Here are a couple more examples of **chunky**:

Roberto: Whose baby is that over there? You know, the **chunky** one?

Katirina: That's Isabella's baby.

Roberto: Why does he look so familiar?

Katirina: Oh, he's the star of the famous diaper ad.

Roberto: Oh, I knew I've seen him somewhere! How interesting.

Elisabeth: Oh my god! I love your **chunky** necklace! Where did you get it?

Amanda: Thank you. I found it at a vintage place near the café you and I like so much.

Elisabeth: You will have to take me there sometime.

Amanda: Yes, it really is a cute little place. How about next Saturday?

Elisabeth: Sounds like a plan!



Wiped out

Adjective

To be **wiped out** is to be exhausted or extremely tired. If you do a lot of hard work for a day, at the end of the day you might feel **wiped out** and ready to take a nap.

Here are a couple more examples with **wiped out**:

Ana:	What's up?
Olga:	I am totally wiped out . My husband is on a business trip this week, so I've been alone with the kids for days now.
Ana:	You've been taking care of all four of them alone? How do you manage that with all of their activities?
Olga:	It hasn't been easy, especially when the baby keeps me up half the night. Yohan will be back tomorrow, though.
Ana:	Well, that's a relief. Just hold on one more day!

Gary:	I just finished putting the kids to bed. It was so easy. They were practically begging to go to sleep.
Johanna:	Well, they had an extremely busy day with the kids' race and the festival, and then playing with their grandparents.
Gary:	Yeah, they were completely wiped out . I bet they'll sleep in tomorrow, too.
Johanna:	Which means we'll be able to sleep in, as well!!

Quiz

1. Which of the following is not a synonym for chunky?

- a) chubby
- b) slim
- c) pudgy
- d) thick

2. Which scenario is an example of the phrase flat out?

- a) a tire that loses all of its air
- b) a person straightening her hair
- c) a car going at top speed
- d) a person pressing a leaf into a book

3. Which of the following is not a definition of the word exposed?

- a) to make something visible
- b) to be vulnerable or unprotected
- c) to reveal the truth about something
- d) to move something into a different position

4. True or false? To push something to the limit means to make something work as hard as it can, almost to the point of breaking.

- a) true
- b) false

5. Which of the following is a synonym for the word exhausted?

- a) unused
- b) invigorated
- c) wiped out
- d) extenuated



Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever ridden a motorcycle? How was it? If you've never ridden a motorcycle, do you want to?
2. If you could buy any new type of vehicle, what would you buy and why?
3. What are your typical driving habits? For example, are you usually a fast driver or do you usually follow the speed limit?
4. Have you ever challenged yourself in something that pushed you to your limits? What was it and did you succeed?
5. What is something you are thinking seriously about doing in the near future?



Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Morag St. Clair

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free, *Let It Go* by Scott Dugdale

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Kassy White

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: Justin Clark (Unsplash.com)