

Simplified Speech #063 – Birthdays

Episode description

What do birthdays mean to you? Getting one year older? Eating cake and ice cream? Making birthday wishes? In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Jeremy chat about birthday traditions.

Fun fact

There are some funny birthday traditions around the world. For example, in Germany, if you are still single at the time of your 30th birthday, your friends will force you to sweep dirty stairs in a public place while potential soul mates walk by. Meanwhile, in Jamaica, people throw flour on you to celebrate your day of birth.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Happy belated birthday
- To have a hunch
- Birthday boy/girl
- Make a wish
- Dream come true
- It's on me



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.

Hello, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Jeremy: And I'm Jeremy.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Hey, Jeremy, how are you?

Jeremy: I'm feeling all right today. How are you feeling?

Andrew: I feel good, Jeremy. I just finished doing the first Culips Instagram live broadcast.

Jeremy: Oh, wow.

Andrew: I did a live broadcast this evening on Instagram for the first time ever, and it was super cool. I got to connect with a lot of our listeners. And, you know, it always blows my mind whenever I get to interact with our listeners, because it's truly a worldwide community, the Culips community. Within 2 minutes of starting the broadcast, I asked everybody, "Oh, just leave a comment and let me know where you're from." And it was like every continent replied, you know, we had Italy, Brazil, the Philippines, Korea, the USA, everywhere. It was really inspiring to see that we have so many dedicated listeners from all over the world. So it was really fun to get to do that today.

Jeremy: It's so cool. I feel like the world is becoming like one village, sort of.

Andrew: Absolutely.

Jeremy: Like the internet is a country that we all are a part of, kind of. It's fun.

Andrew: It's fun and it still blows my mind. I mean, I was able to broadcast myself live around the world with one touch of a button on my phone, and within 5 seconds, I'm live. It's really unbelievable.

Jeremy: That is very new, a very new thing in human history.

- Andrew: So, listeners, we're going to try and do this more often, actually. It's really fun to connect with you all, and I want to do it more often. And maybe we can even convince Jeremy to come online sometime, too.
- Jeremy: Sure.
- Andrew: So keep your eyes on our social media pages on Facebook and on Instagram for announcements about future live sessions, because they will definitely be coming up again sometime soon.
- So, Jeremy, the topic of this Simplified Speech episode is kind of topical for me, because I had a birthday this week.
- Jeremy: Happy birthday. **Happy belated birthday.**
- Andrew: Thank you. Yeah, **happy belated birthday.** This is an expression we use to congratulate somebody on their birthday when it's a few days in the past, right? It's already past.
- Jeremy: Or even a week or two.
- Andrew: Yeah, yeah, whenever it's around the birthday, but after the birthday has already occurred. So we're gonna talk about how we celebrate birthdays in North America. I **have a hunch** that every culture has a slightly different way of celebrating this day.
- Jeremy: Probably, yeah. Birthdays probably carry a different meaning in different cultures. We would be curious to hear what birthdays mean in your culture. So if you feel like it, you can let us know on social media.
- Andrew: Yeah. Facebook is a great place, or email is good as well, contact@Culips.com is our address. So after you listen to our chat here, then just send us your experience about your birthday culture in your country. We'd be super interested to read that.
- Jeremy: So, Andrew, if your friend says, "Hey, come to my birthday on Friday, come to my birthday party on Friday," what do you expect to see there?
- Andrew: Oh, good question. What do I expect to see at a birthday party? Well, I expect to see a birthday cake, candles on the cake that the **birthday boy** or the **birthday girl** has to blow out.
- Jeremy: We do always say boy and girl there, even if they're adults. We never say birthday man, birthday woman, right?

- Andrew: Yeah, it's strange, right? **Birthday boy, birthday girl.** It's funny, my best friend, his birthday is 2 days after my birthday, and so he always sends me a message and says, "Oh, happy birthday." And I always send him a message on his birthday, "Happy birthday." And this year, I think I messaged him, I said, "Oh, how's my little **birthday boy**?" which is funny, because we both turned 35 years old. You know, we're not little boys. But for some reason we talk like that.
- Jeremy: Yeah, it's more kind of sweet, kind of endearing, would you say?
- Andrew: Yeah, endearing, or I'm not exactly sure why we do it. But that's a good point, we say **birthday boy, birthday girl.**
- Jeremy: I also think that if someone invites me to a birthday party, I expect there to be food there for me.
- Andrew: Yes, yes.
- Jeremy: So I don't have to—usually I will expect to eat there, either they do it at a restaurant for that reason, or they do it at their house or someone's house and they have food prepared for everyone.
- Andrew: Absolutely. I would expect that there would be some food involved and usually some decorations, too, around the house or the restaurant. Maybe people could wear birthday hats. These are kind of funny cone-shaped hats that are usually made out of cardboard and kind of silly looking.
- Jeremy: Usually for kids. Or if the **birthday boy** or **girl** is an adult, then usually only he or she will wear that hat, right?
- Andrew: I've been at parties where all of the guests will wear a hat while we sing the *Happy Birthday* song to the person having the birthday, and then everybody takes them off because they're silly and uncomfortable.
- Jeremy: And uncomfortable.
- Andrew: You know, they have that elastic strap that goes under your chin to hold them to your head, and it's very uncomfortable.
- Jeremy: They are not made for comfort, that's for sure. So, like you said, we always sing *Happy Birthday*, the song, "happy birthday to you," right? We always sing that, and then at the end of the song, there's a part where we put the person's name in there and everybody sings their name.
- Andrew: Exactly. And we usually put the word dear in front of it, right? So, "happy birthday, dear Jeremy" like this, yeah.
- Jeremy: Yeah, but sometimes if their name is very long, it's funny.

- Andrew: It can be hard to match all of the syllables in the name into that little piece of musical space.
- Jeremy: True, true.
- Andrew: Yeah, and then you have to blow out the candles on the cake.
- Jeremy: After you **make a wish**.
- Andrew: Exactly, it's tradition to **make a wish**, right? You have to **make a wish**.
- Jeremy: What would that mean, for people who are confused by that expression, **make a wish**. What are some examples?
- Andrew: **Make a wish**. So the classic example is to wish for world peace, right? Peace on Earth among all men. Yeah, or you might wish to become rich or maybe get a promotion at work or meet a significant other or something like this.
- Jeremy: So when the **birthday boy or girl makes this wish**, they always do it silently, in their head.
- Andrew: Yes, yes.
- Jeremy: Or maybe with their eyes closed, and in their head they say, "I wish to become a professional podcaster on Culips Podcast someday. I want to do that." They **make that wish**, maybe, like you did at your 17th birthday and now it has come true.
- Andrew: It came true. I'm here, I made it.
- Jeremy: Congratulations. **Dream come true**.
- Andrew: Thank you, thank you, birthday gods. Yeah, wishes, at least in Western culture, are always silent, right? You never wanna vocalize a wish, because we have the superstition that it won't come true if you talk about it.
- Jeremy: Yeah. So usually this is also common to see at a North American birthday party, but after the person **makes the wish**, they blow out the candles and then someone in the crowd will say, "What did you wish for?" And they'll say, "I'm not telling you."
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Jeremy: Somebody always tries to ruin it.

- Andrew: We don't do this as adults, but this is something that at least happened to me as a child. Let's say I was turning 8 years old, so I would have eight candles on my birthday cake representing my age. And when you're a child, sometimes it's difficult to blow out all the candles. So maybe I would blow out five of the eight candles and three would be remaining on fire. Well, the other birthday guests will tease you and say, "Oh, Andrew has three girlfriends" because there's three candles still left burning. So any candles that you don't blow out, those are how many girlfriends you have, apparently.
- Jeremy: Girlfriends you have? I've never heard that one before.
- Andrew: You've never heard that one?
- Jeremy: I actually heard that if you don't blow out all the candles, your wish won't come true.
- Andrew: Yeah, that makes sense to me, too.
- Jeremy: I've heard that.
- Andrew: Yeah, so lots of weird traditions surrounding the candle part of the birthday party.
- Jeremy: Yeah, I think fire is a very symbolic thing for people. Maybe that is true in, you know, our listeners' cultures as well, I'm sure.
- Andrew: Probably, yeah.
- Jeremy: Something surrounding fire. One thing that seems very North American, too, very Western to me—for those you don't know, I lived in South Korea for a while, and so I became very accustomed to Korean culture—and one big difference I noticed is at birthday parties, especially when we were children, one of the adults will always write your name on your cup. Like, you'll always have your cup with your name on it. And so to me something very easy to see at any birthday party, even today when I see, you know, a birthday party at the park or at a restaurant if it's for children, is little plastic or paper cups with names on them, sitting all over the table. Was that the same for you?
- Andrew: Yeah, it's true. And I have to say, I don't think this is limited to just birthday parties, I think I've even seen this at house parties where there's many guests, right? Because when you're using a disposable cup, it's crappy to the Earth if you just use a cup every time you have a new drink of something. So you wanna kind of use the cup all night, but they're all the same colour, right? So it's really easy to get your cup confused with another person's cup, so we just write our names on the cup and it's like, "This is mine, don't drink out of it."
- Jeremy: Yeah, yeah. Otherwise you end up using seven of them in one night.
- Andrew: Right.

- Jeremy: That's not very environmentally friendly.
- Andrew: Or you end up sharing your cup with seven other people, and that's not very good for your body.
- Jeremy: That's not very me-friendly. That's not good for my immune system.
- Andrew: Yeah, good way to catch a cold.
- Jeremy: That's true.
- Andrew: I think the final thing we should talk about when it comes to birthdays is gifts. It's tradition to give a gift to the person who is having a birthday, isn't it?
- Jeremy: Especially if you go to the birthday party, it's almost considered rude to not bring a gift of some kind. But with my friends, maybe because I'm a little older now, sometimes we just bring food for the party, like a dessert or something for people to eat.
- Andrew: Or a bottle of wine. Or something like that.
- Jeremy: Yeah, to help with the expense. Because to put on the party, to host the party, it can cost some money. And if it's your birthday and you paid all the money for everything, it's kind of, you know, I should just give you money to make it a wash, right?
- Andrew: Yeah, exactly. I have to be honest, I really only give birthday presents to my immediate family members and my girlfriend and my best friend. And outside of that, yeah, I'm happy to bring some food to a birthday party that I'm invited to or chip in to pay the bill if we go to a restaurant.
- Jeremy: Or buy them a drink, that's common.
- Andrew: That's very common. You buy the person who's having a birthday a drink or you would pay for the meal. So the **birthday boy** or **birthday girl** should never pay for their meal. That would be very inappropriate, very rude.
- Jeremy: Yeah, kind of, we say, "No, it's your birthday." "No, no, I got it, don't worry, don't worry."
- Andrew: "I got it, **it's on me**."
- Jeremy: Yeah, **it's on me**, yeah. Or we all split it. But the thing that usually ends up happening if you're older, over 21 at least, and you go to the bar or a restaurant, the **birthday boy** or **girl** gets very drunk because all of their friends buy them a drink. They have three drinks in front of them, and it's usually messy.

Andrew: You have to make sure that you don't invite too many people, or else if you have 20 guests at your party, you have to drink 20 drinks. It could be too difficult.

Jeremy: That's not good, not good for anybody.

Andrew: Well, Jeremy, I think we can leave things here for today. But I do want to remind all of our listeners before we leave that the study guide for this episode is available on our website, Culips.com. So check that out. It's packed with great stuff. And, also, I want to plug our social network platforms, like Facebook, and Instagram, YouTube, Twitter. Just search for the Culips English Podcast and you can find us that way.

Guys, we will be back soon with another new episode, and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Jeremy: Take care, everyone.

Detailed Explanations

Happy belated birthday Phrase

Happy belated birthday is a phrase that you can say if you want to wish someone a happy birthday after their birthday has already passed. Belated means late or overdue. Therefore, if John's birthday is on June 25th, friends who missed his birthday might wish him a belated birthday on June 26th or 27th.

Here are a couple more examples with **happy belated birthday**:

Carol:	Happy birthday, Scott!!
Scott:	Um, my birthday was yesterday. You totally forgot.
Carol:	Oh ... Oops. Well, then, happy belated birthday !
Scott:	Better late than never, I guess.

Grandpa:	Happy belated birthday , kiddo!! Sorry I couldn't get here on time. I have a great present to make up for it, though.
Georgie:	Oh, thanks, Grandpa! What is it?
Grandpa:	Why don't you open it and find out?
Georgie:	Oh my goodness! New skates! Thank you so much!
Grandpa:	Yeah, I heard you've been really getting into ice hockey these days. How about we go outside and try them out down by the lake?
Georgie:	Yes, let's go!

To have a hunch

Idiom

To have a hunch is to have an idea or feeling that something is true or that something is going to happen soon. A hunch is like a guess, a prediction, or a feeling. In this episode, Andrew says he **has a hunch** that every culture has its own unique birthday celebrations. In other words, Andrew doesn't know for sure that every culture has a unique birthday tradition, but he has a feeling that they do.

This expression is used a lot in mystery movies or books, because the characters are often making predictions about how to solve the mystery.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have a hunch**:

Rory: Raj, have you talked to Vince today? He hasn't been answering our calls or messages. We were supposed to meet 2 hours ago.

Raj: Have you checked Marty's?

Rory: The bar? No, let me give them a call.

(Rory calls Marty's bar.)

Raj: What'd they say?

Rory: You were right. Vince has been there all afternoon. He's already on his fifth pint. How'd you know he'd be there?

Raj: I **had a hunch**. He usually ends up there when he's heard some bad news. It must have been really bad this time. We should go and see if he's OK.

Gloria: Did you leave the flowers on my desk today?

Marco: Ha, yes, I did. How did you know it was me? There was no note.

Gloria: I **had a hunch**. You are the only one who knows how much I love violets.

Marco: Well, you were right! I hope you liked them.

Gloria: I loved them. Thank you.

Birthday boy/girl

Noun

Birthday boy or **birthday girl** is how others address someone as a term of endearment on his or her birthday. The interesting thing is that a person of any age can be addressed as **birthday boy** or **birthday girl**. A 5-year-old girl or and 45-year-old woman can both be called **birthday girl** on their birthdays. Age is but a number when it comes to celebrating the day of one's birth!

Here are a couple more examples with **birthday boy/girl**:

Marcella: Hey, **birthday girl**! Are you doing anything exciting for your special day?

Joanna: Not much. I'm having dinner with my family and we'll have cake.

Marcella: Sweet, very laid back.

Joanna: Yeah, everyone is a bit busy at this time of year, so I thought it would be best to just do something simple.

Marcella: Well, I hope you have a great time with your family. And here's a little gift from me.

Joanna: Aw, Marcella, you shouldn't have! Thank you.

Ming: Let's get another round of drinks for the **birthday boy**!

Tianji: Yes! Hip hip hooray! It's not every day that our friend turns 50! Here's to reaching a half-century!

Ming: Cheers to the **birthday boy**! Fifty and forever young!

Make a wish

Phrase

The phrase **make a wish** is used in a variety of occasions in Western culture. When one celebrates a birthday, they are told to blow out their birthday cake candles and **make a wish**. There are other common occasions for **making a wish**, such as when someone sees a shooting star or throws a penny into a fountain.

Whatever occasion it is, whether it be **making a wish** or dreaming a dream, it is best done silently. It is said that if you share your wish with someone else, it will never come true.

Here are a couple more examples with **make a wish**:

Mom:	OK, Bella. On the count of three, I want you to close your eyes, blow out the candles, and make a wish . OK? One, two, three!
Bella:	OK—I did it!
Mom:	Did you wish for something good? What was it?
Bella:	You know I can't tell you, silly, or else it won't come true!
Mom:	Oh, that's right. Well, I'm sure it will definitely come true.
Bella:	I hope so.

Therese:	Look! Do you see that shooting star? Make a wish! Quickly!
Henrietta:	OK, OK. Let me think.
Therese:	No time for thinking! You have to make the wish before it disappears.
Henrietta:	Ha, what are you, the wish police? I don't want to waste a perfectly good wish.
Therese:	Then hurry!
Henrietta:	I've got it! OK, I made my wish . It's done.
Therese:	Ah, finally! Just in time, too. I can't see the star anymore.

Dream come true

Phrase

If something comes true, then it becomes real, it actually happens. Things that are uncertain but expected can be used with the phrase come true, such as predictions, dreams, hopes, or wishes. The phrase **dream come true** or wish come true is used often in fairy tales to talk about happy endings and dreams becoming reality.

Here are a couple more examples with **dream come true**:

Sara:	I heard you're going to Italy in October.
Victoria:	Yeah! It's a dream come true , actually. I've wanted to go there since I was a little girl.
Sara:	I'm happy for you, and totally jealous! Take lots of pictures and flirt with lots of Italian men for me.
Victoria:	I can't do that, silly. I'm travelling with David, my fiancé, remember?
Sara:	Oh, yeah, him. He'll understand. When in Rome, as the saying goes.
Victoria:	Ha ha—you are absolutely ridiculous.

Hector:	Dude, did you hear? The Bears just made it to the semi-finals!
Fernando:	What? No way! Dreams really do come true!
Hector:	I know, right? When was the last time they made it this far, 1990?
Fernando:	At least! OK, we've gotta prepare for the next game. I'm thinking pizza, hot wings, and watching on the big screen at Marco's place.
Hector:	Definitely!

It's on me Phrase

If two people or a group of people hang out together and one person offers to pay the bill, then he or she can use the phrase **it's on me**. **It's on me** means I'll buy or I'll pay this time. There are other variations you can use, such as this one's one me, meal's on me, or I've got this.

Here are a couple more examples with **it's on me**:

Kelsey:	Oh my goodness, I love bubble tea. It's been forever since I've had some.
Minji:	Didn't we have some last week?
Kelsey:	Yes, exactly! Forever!
Minji:	Wow, OK. Well, what do you want? It's on me .
Kelsey:	Really? Thanks, girl! I'll have the taro milk tea, extra pearls.
Minji:	Taro milk tea, extra pearls. You got it.

Ty:	Man, this has been great, but I gotta go. How much do I owe you?
Drew:	It's on me . You go. I'll wait until the waiter comes.
Ty:	For real? Thanks, bro. I'll catch you later, OK?
Drew:	Yeah, for sure. See you.
Ty:	Bye.

Quiz

1. Which word below does not have a similar meaning to the word hunch?
 - a) guess
 - b) feeling
 - c) proof
 - d) idea

2. True or false? The expressions birthday boy and birthday girl are used to address people of all ages on their birthday.
 - a) true
 - b) false

3. Which word is not used naturally with the phrase come true?
 - a) dream
 - b) emotion
 - c) wish
 - d) prediction

4. Which phrase is a synonym for it's on me?
 - a) I'll buy
 - b) it's my problem
 - c) it's mine
 - d) don't worry about it

5. Which expression is used to wish someone a birthday 2 days late?
 - a) happy late birthday!
 - b) happy birthday late!
 - c) happy birthday belated!
 - d) happy belated birthday!

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are some common birthday traditions in your country or your family?
2. How did you celebrate your birthday last year?
3. Have you ever had or thrown a surprise party? How was it?
4. What kind of gifts do most people get on their birthdays in your country?
5. Do people have traditions about making wishes in your country, such as making a wish on their birthday or when seeing a shooting star?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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