

Simplified Speech #066 – Traffic accidents

Episode description

Have you ever been in a traffic accident? In this listener-suggested episode, Andrew and Morag talk about traffic accidents that commonly occur in Canada and around the globe.

Fun fact

The Canadian Transportation Safety Board estimates that Canada has an average of 160,000 traffic accidents per year. Annually, 20% of these accidents are due to driver misconduct, such as speeding, failure to stop, or failure to use a turn signal. Over 50% of traffic accident fatalities occur because drivers continue to drive even when under the influence of alcohol.

Expressions included in the study guide

- To be all ears
- Black ice
- -ish
- Rules of the road
- To freak [someone] out
- Drunk driving



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, everyone. I'm Andrew and you are listening to Culips.

Hello, friends, it's good to be back here with you again. I'm Andrew and, today, I'm joined by my lovely cohost Morag, and we have a very special episode for you. And that's because today's episode is a lost episode. I totally forgot that we recorded this one several months ago, way back in the spring. And it's just been sitting on my hard drive here for the last, well, several months now. So I'm glad we can finally release it today and, hey, better late than never, right?

Before we begin, I have some quick housekeeping and announcements for you. First up, if you like studying with Culips and if you're a fan of the podcast, could you please show us some love on our Apple Podcasts page? A 5-star rating and a quick positive review will really help English language learners just like you find the show. And if you could take just, you know, 2 minutes out of your day to do that for us, we'd very much appreciate it.

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The topic of this episode is traffic accidents. And it was suggested to us by one of our loyal listeners named Youngha, who is originally from Korea, but is now living in the USA. So, thank you very much for the episode suggestion, Youngha.

All right, so that wraps up all of the announcements that I have for you right now. So let's get started with today's topic.

OK, Morag, let's get into it a little bit here, traffic accidents. Now you were mentioning to me before we were recorded that you had something to say about this topic, but I said, Morag, don't tell me, I don't wanna hear it, don't spoil it. So **I'm all ears**, what do you have to say about traffic accidents, Morag?

Morag: Well, there's not usually much funny about traffic accidents.

- Andrew: It's true, it's not a very funny topic.
- Morag: It's not a very funny topic, except sometimes the reasons can be a little silly. I was just reminded because here in Montreal, the snow and ice has just melted. We're recording this in April and there's just no longer ice on the ground.
- Andrew: To clarify, the end of April.
- Morag: Yes. The snow's been gone for a week, maybe.
- Andrew: Oh my god, OK.
- Morag: Anyway, this is very, very different from my experience growing up in BC. And what I remember was that anytime it snowed and, it didn't snow very much, but even if you got a millimetre or, like, 2 millimetres of snow, the whole city would shut down in Victoria and there would be tons of traffic accidents, just for 2 millimetres of snow. It's kind of crazy.
- Andrew: We always joke about that in Canada, that there's kind of two stereotypes, I guess. That is, we make fun of people that come from Alberta and Saskatchewan where it's really a flat place, there's not very many mountains, if any mountains at all. And most of the roads in these two provinces are just straight and flat and there's no turns, even. So when my family, at least, when we see a driver from Saskatchewan driving in British Columbia, where there's lots of curvy mountain roads, we always say that this person is going to crash because they don't know how to drive in this terrain.
- And the second kind of stereotype is that a West Coast driver doesn't know how to drive even in very light winter conditions because it just doesn't snow very often in the West Coast, in the Southwest Coast of Canada, whereas in the rest of the country there's tons of snow all the time. So drivers are quite used to driving in those dangerous winter conditions.
- Morag: It's amazing in Montreal, because people safely drive in snow all the time, but they can't drive in the rain.
- Andrew: Well, definitely a lot of the traffic accidents that do happen in Canada are weather related. I mean, we were joking that people don't know how to drive in the winter weather on the West Coast, but there are lots of snow and ice related accidents all across Canada, because even the best drivers can sometimes get into an accident when it's snowing really hard or when there's **black ice** on the road—this is, the ice that you can't actually see, it's invisible, but quite slippery. This causes tons and tons of problems for drivers in Canada.



- Morag: It causes problems for pedestrians, too.
- Andrew: Yeah. It's true.
- Morag: But if you think about it, like this, I think most people I know expect to fall in the winter at least once.
- Andrew: Yeah.
- Morag: From things like snow and **black ice**. And these are people who can walk just fine, healthy, able-bodied adults. So if you sort of take that and then put yourself into a car and have a similar issue, it's just more dangerous in the winter here.
- Andrew: Morag, I don't drive, I have driven in the past, but for the last 5 or 6 years-**ish**, I haven't really driven very much. And for the last maybe 3 years, I haven't driven at all. And I'm not afraid of driving, and actually I'm quite a good driver, I've never gotten into an accident myself, never gotten a speeding ticket. I've had no problems driving before. But one thing that does scare me about driving is other drivers, 'cause although I know that my skill as a driver is pretty good and I pay attention to the road and the **rules of the road**, I don't trust other drivers at all. And especially these days, I see so many people on their phones and it really **freaks me out**. I've heard some statistics about texting and driving and, from what I've heard, it can be just as dangerous as **drunk driving**. People that are using their phone while they're driving are impaired, right? They can't make the same decisions, they don't have the same reaction time, and this **freaks me out**. How do you feel about this?
- Morag: I hadn't actually thought about it too much because, like you, I stopped driving a lot a few years ago. Living in Montreal, you don't really need a car, so I haven't been driving for a while. But I do know that texting and driving is an impairment and is really dangerous. It's scary, though, that it might be the same level of impairment as **drunk driving**, because I know that drunk drivers are a really big problem, not that that many people drive drunk. It's very illegal and very socially not OK. But it still happens and, when I've heard stories of people getting into accidents, more often than not, somebody involved has been drinking. So if it's true that texting and driving is a similar impairment to drinking and driving, oh, we need to all stop texting and driving.
- Andrew: Yeah, so I hope nobody is listening to us right now and reading the study guide, on their phone and driving at the same time. Although we would love it if you study along with our study guides, please don't study and drive at the same time. It could be quite dangerous.
- Morag: No. Language learning is not worth your life.



Andrew: Yes, you have to arrive safely.

Well, Morag, I think there's probably a lot that we could talk about about this topic but, luckily for me, I've actually never personally been in a traffic accident and I don't have too many things I can say out of my own personal experience. So I think we'll wrap this episode up here.

But I do wanna thank Youngha for the interesting episode suggestion and encourage any other listeners out there to send us your episode suggestions. If there's a topic that you would like to hear about, just send us an email to contact@Culips.com and we'd be happy to turn that suggestion into an actual episode.

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That is it for us, we'll be back soon with another brand new episode and we'll talk to you then. Bye, everyone.

Morag: Goodbye.

Detailed Explanations

To be all ears Idiom

To be all ears means to give someone your undivided attention by listening closely and with interest. Oftentimes, people get distracted and they only half listen to what others are saying. If you listen to something without distraction, giving your full attention to it, then you **are all ears**.

In this episode, Andrew was interested in hearing Morag's story, so he said he **was all ears**. In other words, he was focused, attentive, and ready to hear her story.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be all ears**:

Farah:	I don't think that's a very good idea.
Tyrone:	Well, if you have any better suggestions, I'm all ears . Well, do you?
Farah:	No, but I really think breaking the law is not a good solution. We could go to jail.
Tyrone:	We only got to jail if we get caught. That's a risk I'm willing to take.

Carmen:	So you know I went to that poetry open mic event last night?
Valencia:	Oh yeah—how did it go?
Carmen:	It was really cool, especially because of this one guy. He was probably the most handsome guy I've ever seen. He got up on stage and, let me tell you, every woman in the audience was all ears for that performance.
Valencia:	Was he any good?
Carmen:	Was he good? He was amazing! His voice was this deep baritone and the words that came out of his mouth were as sweet as honey.
Valencia:	Sounds like you have a bit of a crush.



Black ice

Noun

Black ice is a thin layer of frozen clear ice found on roads or pavement. Roads are commonly made of black tar, so the ice is called **black ice**—its clear colour makes it appear black, the colour of the road.

Black ice is very dangerous in wintertime, because people often cannot see it when driving. Therefore, if a driver is speeding in winter, he or she could easily veer off the road and cause a collision if they happen to speed over **black ice**.

Here are a couple more examples with **black ice**:

Georgie:	I'm going outside to play, Mommy!
Mom:	OK, sweetie. Have fun! Be careful of the black ice on the pavement.
Georgie:	Yes, Mom. I will. Remember when Dad fell on some last year? His butt hurt for a week!
Mom:	Ha, that's right. Be careful so you don't make the same mistake.

Karen:	Dad, I've been in an accident.
Dad:	Oh no! What happened? Are you all right?
Karen:	I'm all right, but the car is pretty bad. I'm so sorry. I went too quickly around a turn, and I didn't know there was black ice . I swerved off the road and hit a tree.
Dad:	I'm always telling you to watch out for black ice ! But as long as you're not hurt, everything will be all right.



-ish Suffix

-ish is a suffix used to make any word seem more vague. **-ish** is slang that has a similar meaning to the expression “kind of.” There are many actual words that use **-ish**, such as sluggish or peevish, but the **-ish** used in this podcast is used to make words that are not technically correct English. For example, **OK-ish** means “kind of OK,” but it’s not a real word found in the dictionary.

-ish is often used with time. For example, **5:30-ish** refers to a time close to 5:30, a range that is within 10 to 15 minutes before or after 5:30. Similarly, in this episode, Andrew says he hasn’t driven for 5 or 6 years**-ish**, meaning he hasn’t driven for about 5 or 6 years.

Here are a couple more examples with **-ish**:

Tito:	What time do you wanna meet for dinner tonight?
Bill:	I finish work at 6:00. So how about 7:30 -ish ? I need to go home and change first.
Tito:	Sounds good. If I get there before you, you can find me at the bar.
Bill:	OK, great. Catch you in a bit.

Raz:	How much do you owe you for yesterday?
Lilly:	Oh, not much. Like \$15 -ish .
Raz:	OK, here’s \$20. Don’t worry about the change, you can buy me a coffee later or something.
Lilly:	Thanks, girlye.

Rules of the road

Noun

The **rules of the road** are the laws and guidelines that drivers must follow when they get behind the wheel of a car. Common **rules of the road** include yielding to pedestrians, stopping at stop signs, using a turn signal when making a turn, and knowing how to properly merge into oncoming traffic.

Here's one more example with **rules of the road**:

Dad:	OK, Caroline. Do you think you're ready for your driving test tomorrow?
Caroline:	Yes! I've read the driver's manual backwards and forwards, I've finished my driving lessons, and I can parallel park like a pro. I'm all set!
Dad:	How about I give you a quick quiz on the rules of the road ?
Caroline:	Bring it on.
Dad:	OK, what must you do if an emergency vehicle is coming up behind you?
Caroline:	Pull over to the side of the road and let them pass.
Dad:	Good. What should you do if a police officer pulls you over?
Caroline:	Keep my hands on the wheel until the police officer arrives and asks me for my licence and registration.
Dad:	That's right! I think you're ready for the test. Good luck tomorrow.



To freak [someone] out

Phrasal verb

To freak [someone] out is to make someone feel upset, anxious, or scared. In this episode, Andrew says that drunk drivers and people who use their phones while driving really **freak him out**. In other words, drunk drivers and people who text and drive really make Andrew feel anxious and nervous, because they aren't properly focused on the road.

Here are a couple more examples with **to freak [someone] out**:

Roger: Stop making that face, man. You're really **freaking me out**.

Wes: C'mon. We're in a haunted house. You're supposed to be a little **freaked out**.

Roger: I said I don't like it. Cut it out.

Wes: You are no fun. I don't know why I thought it would be a good idea to bring you here.

Gina: Oh my goodness! Is that a spider?! Kill it! Kill it! Kill it!

Maria: Gina, calm down! It's just a teeny, bitty spider. It's not hurting anyone.

Gina: Spiders really **freak me out**. You know that!

Maria: OK, relax. I got it. I'm taking it outside now.

Gina: Thanks. Sorry I overreacted. I really hate those things.



Drunk driving

Noun

Drunk driving is literally driving while drunk, driving under the influence of alcohol. **Drunk driving** is an extremely dangerous thing to do, because alcohol impairs your reaction time and your ability to make coherent decisions. A common way that police officers test for **drunk driving** is to make a person walk in a straight line to test their mobility, or to have them take a Breathalyzer test, which measures the blood alcohol levels of the driver.

Here's one more example with **drunk driver**:

Frank:	Did you hear the news? A bunch of kids from Sammy's high school were in a car accident caused by a drunk driver .
Lisa:	What? Oh my word. Are they all right?
Frank:	None of them were seriously injured, thank goodness. One girl broke an arm and another boy has a mild concussion, but it could have been a lot worse.
Lisa:	How about the driver?
Frank:	He broke some ribs and punctured a lung. It's also not his first time driving while drunk, so it looks like he'll be spending some time in jail.

Quiz

1. What do you call ice that is transparent (colourless) and causes dangerous road conditions?

- a) invisible ice
- b) winter ice
- c) glass ice
- d) black ice

2. What does it mean to be all ears?

- a) to have very large ears
- b) to have really good hearing
- c) to listen attentively
- d) to ignore someone

3. Which phrase has a similar meaning to freaks me out?

- a) gives me the creeps
- b) cut me some slack
- c) no pain, no gain
- d) I feel under the weather

4. What is the number one cause of accidents in Canada?

- a) drunk driving
- b) falling asleep at the wheel
- c) not following the rules of the road
- d) texting and driving

5. True or false? The suffix -ish is used to indicate vagueness for the word it's attached to.

- a) true
- b) false



Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been in a traffic accident? How bad was it?
2. What is the number one cause of traffic accidents in your country?
3. What are some common rules of the road that everyone ignores in your country?
4. Do you like driving? What kind of vehicle do you like to drive the most?
5. How hard is it to pass the driver's test in your country?

Quiz Answers

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

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