

Simplified Speech #084 – Animals

Episode description

If you had to pick the cutest animal, which would you choose? Andrew and Suzanne talk about the animals they think are the cutest and the ones they find scary in this episode of Simplified Speech.

Fun fact

There are between 17 and 20 different types of penguins. Most of them live in the Southern Hemisphere; the Galapagos penguin is the only species that lives north of the equator. No penguin species live in the North Pole.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Long story short
- Tried and true
- Can't handle it
- Opposite side of the spectrum
- As [something] as you can get
- Kicker



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. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hey, everybody. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: And I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And you're listening to Culips.

Andrew: Hey, everyone. Welcome back to Simplified Speech by Culips. And if you don't know what Simplified Speech is, well, let me explain. It is the series where we have completely natural English conversations, but we speak just a little bit slower than we do in our everyday lives. And we have these conversations so you can listen in and improve your English listening skills.

Andrew: And today I'm joined by my cohost in Montreal, Suzanne. Hello.

Suzanne: Hello, Andrew. How are you? How's it going?

Andrew: I am doing pretty well, Suzanne. Today, I had a really funny thing happen to me. I was really shocked. And I don't know if it happened just because I was tired or what, but I thought it was a kind of a funny story, so I'll share it here quickly before we start this episode today. Suzanne, do you know what a moka pot is?

Suzanne: No, I've never heard of that before. Moka pot, it sounds like chocolate, maybe? It's mocha, no?

Andrew: Yeah, well, maybe it goes by a different name. I totally know that you know what this thing is. And, actually, you can help me figure out what English speakers call this, because in Korean they call it a moka pot. But I had a feeling that English speakers call it something different, but I couldn't think of what the name is. Anyways, what I'm talking about is, it's an Italian device that you use to make coffee. You can make espresso and put it on the stovetop.

Suzanne: That's what I use every day for my coffee.

Andrew: OK, so what do you call that thing? Do you call it a moka pot or coffeemaker?

Suzanne: I guess you could call it a moka pot because there is a brand Moka, M-O-K-A. I don't know. I honestly call it just a coffeepot, Italian coffeepot. So, when I go to the store and I buy espresso, they'll ask, like, how would you like it ground? And I will say it's for an Italian coffeepot.

Andrew: So maybe we don't actually have a good name for this thing in English. But anyways, I have an espresso machine in my house, but it's, it's breaking down and I wanna replace it. So I was looking into buying a new one, but they're really expensive. I was actually gifted this one from a friend. So, as an alternative, I thought, oh, I'll buy one of these moka pots. So I went on to a popular website, shopping website here in Korea that's kind of like Amazon.com, very similar to that. And I searched for moka pot and of course I typed it in Korean to find some of the results. And while I was looking at these results, I was thinking, like, oh, I've never actually used one of these before. I should figure out how to use one of these. And, you know, see the reviews and if the coffee is actually delicious. So I went over to YouTube to try and find a review.

Andrew: So I guess my brain was just thinking in Korean because I was on the Korean portal site. So I went to YouTube and, actually, this is a cool language-learning tip that I don't know if our users or our listeners know, but you can set up different user profiles on YouTube. So I have two, I have one for English and one for Korean. And when I keep them separate like that, I don't get any recommendations in English while I'm on the Korean profile, so I don't get tempted to watch English contents, you know? The tempting little links on the side of YouTube. I don't get tempted with those when I'm on my Korean profile on YouTube.

Andrew: So anyways, to make a **long story short** here, I went to YouTube, I typed in moka pot in YouTube, and the first link that came up was three Italian women reviewing a moka pot and explaining how to use it and telling everything about it. So I clicked on that. And I was watching this video, and it was about—I think it was about 15 minutes long—and about 5 minutes into it, I was, like, something's strange about this video. What's strange? Why, why does this feel weird? And then I clicked, and I realized, oh, these three Italian women are speaking Korean. They're explaining the moka pot in Korean. So here I am, like, an English-speaking Canadian, I'm watching YouTube with three Italian women explaining how to use a moka pot and speaking in Korean and I didn't even realize for, like, 5 minutes. It was really strange. I was like—

Suzanne: What is that accent? Yeah, like, what accent is that?

Andrew: It just sounded foreign, right? It was, like, if they were speaking English, it would have been the same, like a foreign accent. So I don't know, that was really funny. It just happened a little while ago.

Suzanne: I might actually make a little video for you and the Culips members, 'cause I do it every morning. So, and it's one of my favorite things to do, is to make my coffee in that little moka pot. So I will totally make a little clip, because I have a method that was taught to me by an Italian friend, **tried and true**.

Andrew: Well, I will stay tuned for the coffee tutorial from you. Sounds very good.

Andrew: But, Suzanne, we are not going to talk about coffee today. I think we've talked about that in a previous episode. So, actually, what I did for today's episode is I went onto Instagram and I asked our followers what they would like us to talk about. And we got lots of really interesting ideas, ranging from basic, like some of the ones that we're going to talk about today, all the way up to, like, really, really advanced things that I don't even know how to talk about, like Russian literature. I don't know if I can talk about Russian literature on the podcast.

Suzanne: We might need to find someone. Well, maybe we need to interview somebody else.

Andrew: Right, right. But we did get a very good suggestion from a user named Winter Sleep on Instagram who would like us to talk about animals, animals. And I know you're an animal lover, and I'm fascinated by animals, as well. So, Suzanne, how about we talk about animals today. Does that sound OK?

Suzanne: That sounds great, yeah.

Andrew: All right. But just before we get started, I do want to let everyone know that there is a study guide available for this episode. So, guys, if you wanna study along with the study guys, and we highly recommend that you do, just visit our websites, Culips.com, and you can give it a download.

Suzanne: Yeah.

Andrew: All right.

Andrew: So, Suzanne, there's so many things we could talk about related to animals.

Suzanne: I know. I know.

Andrew: Where should we start? Should we start by talking about your penguin puzzle?

Suzanne: Oh my gosh. So my favourite animal, well, besides my dog, is penguins. I love penguins so much. I just think they're so funny and cute. And I'm doing this 1000-piece puzzle with Olivier of a penguin mom and her little baby penguin because, I mean, come on, baby penguins, I **can't handle it**. But what is super interesting, I've been watching on Netflix Our Planet and they talk about the grasslands and the jungles and things like that in the rain forests. And they, they go to like different places and Antarctica and all over and they show the different wildlife, and kind of also how climate change is affecting them.

Andrew: Yeah, it's just a nature documentary, right? Focusing on different ecosystems around the world. Yeah, I watched a couple episodes of that too and I turned it off because I thought it was CG. I thought it was computer graphics. I was like, this is crazy. This can't be real. And then I learned that it was real, I was, like, oh, I got to go back and watch this show again, this is actually real footage. It's not computer graphics.

Andrew: Now getting back to penguins here for a moment. Have you ever seen a penguin in the wild before?

Suzanne: I've seen penguins in person, but not in the wild.

Andrew: Where did you meet them, at the shopping mall or something walking down the street?

Suzanne: At the at the Biodôme, at the Biodôme here in Montreal. There's a really great penguin area and exhibit. And they're really funny, like, they play with you and they swim and kind of stop and get up close to the glass and kind of play with you, and they're so funny. Also, when I was in Hawaii, I saw some penguins that were at this hotel.

Andrew: On vacation?

Suzanne: Just hanging out. Yeah, I was like, OK, cute.

Andrew: Wow.

Suzanne: But weird. And hot. Isn't it hot for you guys?

Andrew: True.

Suzanne: But one of my favourite things that penguins do, Andrew, I don't know if you noticed this, but have you ever seen, like, a penguin just kind of stand with one arm out or like flipper or wing or whatever it is? Apparently, they do that when they're sleeping.

Andrew: Oh, they put their, I want to say their arm, but it's not an arm. They put their wing out when they're sleeping?

Suzanne: Yeah, when they're sleeping. And what's funny is I asked the nature specialist or, whatever, penguin researcher near the penguin exhibit at the Biodôme. And he said, well, do you know when you're sleeping and you get hot and you put, like, one leg outside of the covers? And I'm, like, yeah, all the time. He's, like, that's what they're doing. They're just lifting their arm because they're—or their wing—because they're getting hot. They're cooling off. So it's their way of regulating their temperature while they sleep. I just thought it was so cute and funny. They do it just like us.

Andrew: What about at the **opposite side of the spectrum**? What are some animals that you find to be really scary? That you don't like? There's probably a long list.

Suzanne: I admire but, like, I'm terrified of bears. I really am.

Andrew: For good reason, I think that makes a lot of sense, because they're big and scary and dangerous and they eat people. So, you have every right to be afraid of bears. Bears are one of my favourite animals, to be honest with you. Yeah, I think they're so cool and ... But, yeah, I agree. I don't think I'd want to necessarily meet a bear.

Suzanne: Like what qualities are your favourite about them?

Andrew: I guess I kind of like all apex predators. Apex predators are the animals that are on the top of the food chain. And, yeah, bears are just so big and independent and they're cute. You can't disagree with me there. From a distance, when you watch them, they're cute. I was actually watching a kind of nature documentary myself, recently, and Suzanne and listeners, too, you would probably enjoy this. This was just a guy on YouTube who set up a kind of outdoor video camera that is motion triggered, so every time there's motion or movement in the area, the camera turns on. So he set up this camera in his backyard. He's got, like, a forest in his backyard and there's a little creek and a log fell down over the creek. So it's kind of like a natural bridge. And he put the camera just to see all the wildlife that would walk over the bridge. And it was hilarious to see this kind of time lapse over a year to see all the different animals that would cross the log. Like, there's a little raccoon and a rat and a bear and a deer. And anyways, this one bear kept going back and forth and he would cross over the log and then rub his back against this tree, like, scratching his back, and it's cute. Like, he's a killer, you know? He's like this big, dangerous animal, but he's still being cute at the same time. I don't know why, I've always just liked bears.

Suzanne: Olivier loves bears. Like, that's our big contention when we go hiking is, "Oh my gosh, I want to see a bear!" And I'm like, "No, I don't." And I'll just talk a lot or make noise so that we don't attract any animals. I like rabbits and things, you know, that's fine. But I just don't know if I want to. Yeah, I'm a city person, right? And I love nature, but I'm, if I really am honest with myself, I'm a city person. I take time when I'm hiking, it takes me like a good 20 minutes to, like, get into it and be, like, OK, I'm fine, I'm safe. I feel more safe in a city with lots of criminals and wow, wow, you know then I do with, like, in nature.

Andrew: That's another good thing to talk about. Let's talk briefly here, before we wrap it up, about city animals. Now I live in Seoul, which is, you know, a huge city, millions and millions of people. And to be honest, there are not many animals around at all, other than stray cats. You see, like, some cats that are semi-tame. I know they're kind of wild cats, but if you're really slow and kind, maybe they'll come up and let you pet them for, like, a second, but they'll never, like, be tame, you know? They're wild cats. So, you'll see some cats, but at one point they were pets. They're domesticated house cats that are just feral, you know? So you'll see them, and you'll see some pigeons, and one time I saw a deer when I was out hiking. And I think that was a pretty rare occurrence. It was one deer, one time.

Suzanne: I was worried that it was, like, on your way to the store. One deer, one time.

Andrew: But it was, like, within the boundary of Seoul still. It was, like, kind of in just, like, a park area. But that's about it. And there's pigeons. And that's about it. But what about in Montreal, where you live? Do you see any animals in the city?

Suzanne: Yeah, well, lots of dogs. Lots and lots of dogs. We have a dog park, like, 3 minutes away from our house. It's really right there, and we see so many dogs.

Andrew: And I should actually clarify, in Seoul, there's tons of pet dogs. I'm just talking more about, like, more wild animals.

Suzanne: Yes. So this is an interesting little story. And in lots of cities, you know how you, like, the backs of houses face each other. And they can create like a little alleyway, like a driveway that cars can go through. But, also, you know, your backyard faces each other, so, like, sometimes kids play in there and, like, we developed a community and we have, like, a Facebook page.

Andrew: OK, it's kind of like a little access road to get into the parking behind your apartment building, right?

Suzanne: Totally. And we created like a green street in a way. So we have like, herbs and things growing in the summertime that everyone can share. So it's like a community garden. We have, like, events and we also have, in one person's backyard, we have a chicken coop, and we have hens. So we have three hens. And we each take turns. We did it for 3 weeks, I think, like throughout the summer, or 4 weeks, like, from, you know, June to October. And in that week, you take care of the hens, and you get to keep the eggs and they lay about one egg each per day. So we had by the end, like, 21 eggs. So, yeah, and they're fresh. And they're, I mean, they're like, **as organic as you can get**, I guess. And we take care of them and they have names and we, they actually get to know you and like you from your voice. They recognize your voice.

Suzanne: So after a few weeks of taking care of them, they started to really come to us. It was so cute. We would pick them up. So of course, we treat them like domestic animals, and they are, sort of, but they're not. They're, like, chickens that roam around and in this area, and they're, you know, chillin' and ... But it's, like, in the middle of a city. It's so funny. So these are animals you wouldn't normally see in a city. They're just, like, hanging out. But the **kicker** is, Andrew, is that because of them, we started to see a raccoon coming around our neighbourhood and I even saw a skunk, too. So we started seeing, like, kind of animals that maybe would be more in the suburbs or more in, like, not necessarily completely in the forest, but more in, like, the outskirts of town, not necessarily in the city. So that was a little weird to see on my dog walk. Like, that's a skunk. And I'm going in the opposite direction because that is going to spray my dog and that smell will last for weeks, and I'm not having it. So Skoshi, he started to growl. He was like, brr, because it looked like a cat. He didn't know what it was.

Andrew: Right. And Skoshi is your dog, for anybody that doesn't know.

Suzanne: Yeah. So it's definitely fun for us to feel like we're not in the city for a few minutes a day and be with these chickens. So other than that, though, I, like, I've never seen a wolf or, you know, anything that wild.

Andrew: Suzanne, I think we should probably wrap it up here for now. It was fun to talk about animals, and I think we could revisit this topic again in the future because I know there's so much we could talk about. But we'll cut it off here for now and, listeners, thank you for tuning in. Guys, if you want to get the study guide for this episode, one more time, it is on our website, Culips.com. And, Suzanne, if our listeners want to get in contact with us and maybe tell us a story about their favorite animal, how could they do that?

Suzanne: Yes. So you guys can find us on Twitter, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. And all you have to do is search for Culips, C-U-L-I-P-S, English Podcast, and you will find us. Please follow us there and please keep in touch with us and let us know in the comments your favourite animal and why. And if you have any questions or maybe ideas for future episodes or suggestions, you can always contact us at contact@Culips.com.

Andrew: Exactly. And thanks again to Winter Sleep for the animal suggestion. It was fun to talk about.

Andrew: All right, guys, that's it for us for now. We'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Suzanne: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Long story short

Idiom

Long story short is used to tell someone that you're skipping all the unnecessary details in the story you are telling to get right to the point. People will say this at the beginning of a story, so that the person they're talking to knows that there is more to the story than they're saying. People will also say this in the middle of a story or near the end, after they have already talked for a while, to indicate that they are jumping ahead to the main point of the story rather than continuing to tell all the details.

You can also say **to cut a long story short** or, as Andrew said in this episode, **to make a long story short**.

If you read a lot of blogs or online forum content, you might see this: TL;DR. It is the acronym for "too long; didn't read." This is the online way of saying **long story short**.

Here are a couple more examples with **long story short**:

Sid: Dude, where have you been? Everyone in class has been asking where you went.

Aayat: Oh, man. I got into a bit of trouble last week with the principal. He found me with spray paint in my locker.

Sid: What?

Aayat: Yeah. **Long story short**, I've been suspended for graffitiing the gym.

Clarissa: Oh, wow, Nikkita! It's been so long!

Nikkita: Hi Clarissa! It's been ages, right? Since what, camping last summer?

Clarissa: Yeah, that sounds about right. Who is that handsome man that was just with you?

Nikkita: Oh, that's Aden. A friend of ours introduced us a couple months ago and, well, **long story short**, we're moving in together next week. That's why we're shopping for furniture.

Clarissa: Oh, nice! Congratulations!

Tried and true

Adjective

Tried and true is used to describe something that has been tested or used a lot in the past and works well. This can apply to objects—like the moka pot Suzanne and Andrew spoke about in this episode—or rules, methods, and processes. For example, the scientific method is a **tried and true** way to test scientific theories.

Here are a couple more examples with **tried and true**:

Jillian: Do you see this stain? Do you?

Ellesse: Uh ... Yeah, Jillian. I do. It's a bit obvious.

Jillian: Argh! I'm so frustrated. I spilled coffee on this shirt last time I wore it and it didn't come out in the wash. I'm never buying a white shirt ever again.

Ellesse: I mean, it's plain white. You could use bleach.

Jillian: But I thought bleach ruined your clothes.

Ellesse: Too much, sure. Soak your shirt in cold water, then use a quarter cup of bleach for every gallon of water. That's my **tried and true** method. Works every time.

Jillian: OK, thanks. I'll try that.

Sana: I am so tired lately.

Karam: You should go to bed earlier.

Sana: I do! I just can't sleep. Like, at all.

Karam: Insomnia?

Sana: Maybe? Could just be stress.

Karam: Try drinking some chamomile tea before bed. That's my **tried and true** remedy for sleepless nights.

Sana: Normally, I'd say I don't like tea. I'm more of a coffee girl. But, yeah ... I'll try that tonight. I'll try anything if it will help me get some sleep!

Can't handle it

Slang

Can't handle it is an expression used to describe a situation where you are experiencing too much of a single emotion. This is often used as an exaggeration. You can use this expression for any emotion, such as anger, frustration, or happiness, for example.

In this episode, Suzanne mentions that the penguin puzzle she is doing is so cute, she **can't handle it**. This means that she finds the puzzle to be extremely cute.

You could also use **I can't deal with how [something] this is** or **my heart can't handle this level of [something]**.

Here are a couple more examples with **can't handle it**:

Zaki: I saw the pictures you posted online last night, the ones of Benji!

Fahima: Isn't he just the most adorable dog you've ever seen?

Zaki: Oh, definitely. He's so cute I **can't handle it**. I squealed when I saw the one with his bow tie. My girlfriend was very confused about the sound I made.

Fahima: Ha, well, I'll make sure to post more. I'm picking up some new doggie outfits on my way home tonight.

Zaki: I can't wait!

Winifred: I've been trying to get this darn computer to work for the last hour. I'm so frustrated, I **can't handle it**!

Aldo: Did you try turning it off and turning it back on again?

Winifred: Seriously? That's the best advice you have?

Aldo: Did you?

Winifred: No. I'll try that now.

Opposite side of the spectrum

Expression

Opposite side of the spectrum, also said as **opposite end of the spectrum**, is used to show that you're talking about something that is opposite to the original topic. It can be used during a discussion to argue a different point or during a presentation to show another side or approach to an issue.

A spectrum is a range from one extreme to another, like a thermometer or your TV's volume. A volume of 0 is at the **opposite end of the spectrum** from full volume, but you can set the volume to any level in that range.

In this episode, Andrew and Suzanne speak about cute animals, and then Andrew asked about animals on **the opposite side of the spectrum**: scary animals. There are many different types of animals from cute to scary, so this is a spectrum.

You could also say **on the other end of the spectrum** or **on the other side of the spectrum**.

Here are a couple more examples with **opposite side of the spectrum**:

Elias: Out of all the drinks out there, hot chocolate is my favourite. It's sweet and comforting and has all those yummy marshmallows floating in it.

Ishika: I don't know. I prefer tea. The sugar in hot chocolate keeps me up all night.

Elias: Then, on the **opposite side of the spectrum**, there's plain old water.

Ishika: Refreshing, cold. Flavourless. It does get a bit boring, doesn't it?

Elias: Yeah, that's probably why I don't drink enough of it.

Joanne: You know, I really want a house with a nice studio. I want big windows so I can paint all day or read in a patch of sunlight.

Raul: I want a yard. And a dog. We could host a few barbecues, have our friends over.

Joanne: That sounds lovely. Too bad we're stuck here in our tiny apartment.

Raul: It's really on the **opposite side of the spectrum**, isn't it?

As [something] as you can get Phrase

When you describe something by saying that it's **as [something] as you can get**, you're saying it is the extreme example of that thing. In this episode, Suzanne says that the eggs she got from the chickens her neighbourhood kept were **as organic as you can get**. This means that the eggs are fully, 100% organic—the eggs couldn't be any more organic.

The word used for “something” can be any adjective, good or bad. This phrase is used as emphasis in a conversation. You can also say something is **as [something] as they come** or **as [something] as it gets**—these have the same meaning.

Here are a couple more examples with **as [something] as you can get**:

Charles: Isn't this concert amazing? The band has the best lyrics, right?

Eoin: Yeah, I'm having a great time!

Charles: Me too! This is **as good as it gets**, am I right?

Eoin: It really is.

Mehreen: You'll never believe what happened to me today.

Brogan: What?

Mehreen: A lady bumped into me really hard at the grocery store, hard enough that I dropped my shopping on the ground. Then she had the nerve to turn around and accuse me of running into her. She was the one on her phone!

Brogan: Seriously? That's, like, **as rude as you can get**.

Mehreen: I know, right? I wanted to yell at her, but she turned and walked away before I could get up the courage.

Brogan: Probably for the best. You'd feel bad if you made a scene.

Mehreen: That's true.

Kicker Slang

In the United States and Canada, a **kicker** is a hidden or unexpected complication, surprising twist, or unknown factor that usually means something has to change. For example, in this episode, Suzanne mentioned that her neighbourhood kept chickens and, because of that, raccoons and skunks would show up. This was an unexpected result of having chickens.

You can use this slang term in the following ways: the **kicker** is, here's the **kicker**, that's the **kicker**, and this is the **kicker**.

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

Teacher: OK, class, settle down. Today we've got a pop quiz.

Ophelia: What? You didn't tell us we'd have a quiz today!

Teacher: Well, no, of course not. That's the **kicker** with a pop quiz ... It's a surprise.

Ophelia: Ugh, I am so going to fail.

Carlos: As you can see, our information projects improvements across the board for our prototype, providing we maintain and continue with our current marketing strategy.

Kaylan: That's great, then. Let's keep moving forward with the current plan.

Carlos: Well, so, here's the **kicker** ... The cost is just high enough that our existing clients can't seem to afford to stay with us. We didn't take this into account when we set our prices a few years ago. I suggest offering a membership package or deal.

Kaylan: Do you have a proposal drafted for that?

Carlos: Not yet. I can have one ready for Monday, though.

Kaylan: Do that, and I'll bring it to the board for review.

Quiz

1. In this episode, what was it that Suzanne said she can't handle?

- a) new moka pots
- b) cute penguins
- c) scary bears
- d) smelly skunks

2. The kicker is something that is:

- a) unexpected, hidden, surprising, or unknown
- b) violent, aggressive, or dangerous
- c) attached to your leg
- d) moved with your foot

3. When something has been tested and is known to work, it is:

- a) tested and honest
- b) trial and error
- c) true to form
- d) tried and true

4. Which expression means to leave out the details and get right to the point?

- a) less lengthy tale
- b) short story long
- c) long story short
- d) listen closely

5. What does it mean when you say that a room is as cold as you can get?

- a) the room is kind of cold
- b) the room is very cold
- c) the room is not cold
- d) the room is getting cold

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is your favourite animal, and why? What animal scares you the most?
2. Think of something that has happened to you recently. Share a shortened version of it starting with the phrase “long story short.”
3. What is one tried and true item or method that you use, and why?
4. When was the last time you saw an animal so cute you couldn’t handle it?
5. Have you ever had a kicker happen in your life? If so, what happened?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Suzanne Cerreta

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: Lisa Hoekstra

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: Sergio Martínez (Unsplash.com)