

## Simplified Speech #092 – Garbage and recycling

### Episode description

Taking care of the environment through recycling and proper garbage disposal is such an important aspect of our lives. However, everyone goes about it differently. In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Kassy talk about the differences between how Canada and the United States deal with waste management.

### Fun fact

Recycling isn't easy for every country to do. It's often very expensive and citizens need the discipline to do it. So here's a big congratulations to Germany for being the world's leading recycling country. They recycle 56.1% of all the waste they produce!

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Waste management
- Bright and early
- To subsidize
- A [something] drive
- To devise [something]
- Win-win



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## Transcript

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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.

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**Andrew:** Hello, everyone. My name is Andrew.

**Kassy:** And I'm Kassy.

**Andrew:** And this is the Culips English Podcast.

**Andrew:** Hello, everyone. Welcome back to Culips. You are listening to Simplified Speech. If you don't know what that is, it is the Culips series where we have completely natural English conversations, but we slow down our speaking speed just a touch. Just a touch means just a little bit. And we hope that by listening to this series you can power up your English listening skills and become a fluent listener of English. Today, I'm joined by my cohost, Kassy. Kassy, hello.

**Kassy:** Hello.

**Andrew:** Kassy, we have a rather dirty and stinky topic to talk about today. Could you let all of our listeners know what our topic is?

**Kassy:** Yes, today's topic is garbage and recycling.

**Andrew:** Garbage and recycling. But I think this could actually make for an interesting conversation. I'm excited to see what kinds of things we talked about here today, Kassy.

**Andrew:** But before we get started, I should let all of our listeners know that there is a study guide available for this episode for all Culips members. And, guys, we highly recommend that you follow along with the study guide while you listen to us today. Many of our members have said that our study guides have really helped them to take their English to the next level and have been really helpful, and so we would recommend that you check out that service. So to become a Culips member and get the study guide, simply visit [Culips.com](http://Culips.com) and you can sign up to become a member.

**Andrew:** OK. So, Kassy, what I would like for us to do here is just to share with our listeners about how trash collection and how recycling works in our countries, in the USA and in Canada, because I think every country has a slightly different system. A different goal with what they want to do with their garbage and recycling and **waste management**. So I thought this could be, you know, cool for our listeners to compare with their own personal situation and where they live.

**Andrew:** So why don't we start with America? America the Beautiful. If it's so beautiful, you must not have too much garbage lying around. What do you do for trash collection back home?

**Kassy:** Well, America is a big place, but I'm from Pennsylvania. And in my county, we have two types of trash collection. One day is for garbage and the other day is for recycling. So garbage day, I think in my neighbourhood, was Monday. We would roll out our trash and then the garbage truck would come by **bright and early** in the morning and take it away. And the same thing would happen on Tuesday for the recycling.

**Andrew:** Right, right. Well, OK. It sounds very similar to the system that we have in Canada. Kassy, I'm just going to rewind and go through what you just said there. You said in your county, in your county. What is a county? It's not a country, it's a county. What's this mean?

**Kassy:** OK, so in America—here's some America facts—we have 50 states, maybe you know that. And in each state, we have districts, counties, and a county has, you know, several towns or cities. Each county kind of has their own rules.

**Andrew:** Some bylaws. OK. So it's just another subdivision of the land, right? You start with the country and states and then counties and then cities or towns.

**Kassy:** Yeah.

**Andrew:** OK. And, actually, in Canada we don't have counties. So that's a different thing. We don't have counties, maybe our population is too small. We just have provinces. We have, you know, the country and then provinces and then each city or each town has their local government and their local laws. But there's no bigger county law for a larger area. Yeah.

**Andrew:** And, yeah, we call this curbside pickup. What you were talking about before, a curbside pickup where a garbage truck will come right to the edge of your house and pick up the trash and take it away to the dump.

**Andrew:** I don't know, Kassy, if you had this experience, but when I was a teenager, one of my chores was to take the garbage out. Did you ever have to do this, take the garbage out, outside and leave it at the end of the driveway?

**Kassy:** Stereotypically, I find that as being a boy's chore. So luckily, I was a girl, so I wasn't forced to do that.

**Andrew:** And I remember my mom, too, would always yell at either me or my dad or my brother, like, take the garbage out, it's garbage day tomorrow, right? Because if you forget to do that, you're stuck with a bag of garbage for a whole week, until—

**Kassy:** Piles and piles of garbage.

**Andrew:** Until the truck comes again. So it's important to put it out on the curb.

**Andrew:** Kassy, in the States, or in your hometown, do you have to pay for this service? Like, how does it work? Obviously, somebody has to pay?

**Kassy:** Yeah, that's a good question. You do have to pay. And I never lived on my own in the States, so I don't know how much it costs. But I think it's not a small amount. I think my father might have paid even \$80 a week, which I think is a lot.

**Andrew:** That sounds really expensive, if that's true.

**Kassy:** Yeah. No, but I think so.

**Andrew:** That seems unbelievably expensive. But in Canada, we pay for this through our tax dollars. So it's **subsidized** through taxes. So individuals, you know, you don't have to pay per se, but we are paying in a more indirect way, through our taxes. I know a lot of countries have different systems. Some countries, you need to have special garbage bags that you need to buy that are more expensive. But in Canada, at least, we can use any kind of garbage bag that we want, because we're not paying for the service in that way. Some countries choose to, you know, you pay for the pickup with the added cost of a bag, but that's not the case in Canada.

**Kassy:** I have a question.

**Andrew:** Yup.

**Kassy:** Moving on a little bit to recycling. In Canada, are the laws about recycling strict? Because in America, at least small town America, there are almost no rules about recycling. It's pretty much do it if you want to, but you don't have to.

**Andrew:** Oh, OK, interesting. Yeah, I think the rules are really strict about recycling in Canada. And we also have curbside pickup for recycling. So once or twice a week, a truck will come and pick up all of the recyclable items that people buy.

**Andrew:** But, interestingly, we have this weird system in Canada, we have a kind of two-step system because aluminum cans are recyclable, but when you buy something that comes in an aluminum can, like soda or beer, you have to pay a deposit. So it's like a 5-cent deposit that you pay. And if you take that can back to a supermarket or a special recycling centre, you can get that money back. It's like a way to encourage recycling. So because of this, many people don't put their cans or bottles, glass bottles, too. You have to pay a deposit. So beer bottles, wine bottles, soda bottles. People don't put this out on the curb for pickup because they want to get that money back.

**Andrew:** So, of course because you only get 5 cents, which is a really small amount of money per can, people wait for a long time and then when they have bags and bags of cans, they will go to the recycling depot and get their money back. So maybe you could get \$20 back or something if you save your cans for a long time, depending on how heavy of a drinker you are.

**Kassy:** They do that in America, as well. My sister does that often.

**Andrew:** Yeah, we even have charity fundraisers, which are called **bottle drives** or **can drives**. And so, for example, maybe the local ice hockey team, they need to raise some money for their equipment or something. So what they'll do is they'll go from house to house and they will ask if you have any old cans or bottles that you can donate. And they will collect all of these cans from the neighbourhood and then go and bring them to the recycling depot and get money that way. And even homeless people, right, homeless people will go around in Canada collecting cans and bottles as a way to earn some money. And when I was, like, a teenager with no money and very broke, I would also do this. If I saw, you know, a soda can on the street, pick it up, take it to the store, get a little bit of money to buy some candy.

**Kassy:** Wow, that's nice. I don't think we can return them to the store in the US, but we can return them to the recycling facilities.

**Andrew:** OK, so a little bit different.

**Andrew:** Kassy, this might be ahead of your time. But did you ever watch the TV show Seinfeld?

**Kassy:** I have maybe watched half of one episode.

**Andrew:** Half of one episode, OK. It's one of my favourite TV shows of all time. And one of the episodes has a really funny story where the main characters made this plan to collect bottles in New York, where they're based, and drive all of the bottles to Michigan, where there was a different state law where you could get 10 cents back instead of 5 cents. So whenever I think of recycling, I think of this crazy plan that the Seinfeld characters **devised** to double their money on recycling. It's really funny.

**Andrew:** Kassy, the last thing I wanted to talk about was food waste and composting. So, in Canada, we do not have a composting program or a food waste program. So I know some countries, you can recycle your food waste or the government will pick it up and collect it from you. But in Canada, we don't have this system. What about in the States?

**Kassy:** In the States we don't have like a big collective system, but a lot of people do it individually, especially in the west, West Coast. I think they're more green, environmentally friendly.

**Kassy:** But I did want to mention that my aunt lives in Sweden, and I know that they have a really cool, country-wide program. The whole country collects their food waste in special containers or bags and the city collects it just like the way they collect regular trash or recycling in other countries. And then they combine it and they process it into this methane biogas, which they use to fuel buses and other vehicles in the city.

**Andrew:** Wow, that's awesome. So food waste is directly converted into fuel for public transportation. Wow, that's, that's pretty ingenious. That's a good way to recycle.

**Andrew:** I remember hearing about a guy who did something similar. He took his car and changed his car motor so that it could run off of diesel fuel. And I guess it could also run off of a kind of oil, so, like, cooking oil. He converted his diesel engine so that he could run it off of used oil from fast food restaurants. So, you know, the oil that French fries are cooked in? He would buy that from, or maybe just they would give it away, the fast food restaurants after it had been used. And he would put it in his car and fuel his car that way. And when I saw this story, some of his friends were interviewed and they were talking about the car. And they said the best thing about this car is that it smells like French fries. Like all the time, because it's burning this old French fry oil.

**Kassy:** It's a **win-win**. You get cheap gas and a delicious smell.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think I'd be hungry all the time if I was driving that car.

**Kassy:** Craving the munchies, yeah.

**Andrew:** But that's cool. I think those types of initiatives where the government is doing something like they are in Sweden are really interesting and really cool. I wish we had something like that in Canada but, like you said, it's more individual.

**Andrew:** And to be honest, a lot of my friends, they have what we call a compost pile. So because Canadian houses are relatively big, they usually have a backyard. And in one corner of the backyard, people will just dump their food waste and let nature do its thing, convert it into compost, which is kind of like a soil or fertilizer, and then use this in their garden. So that's good, too.

**Kassy:** We don't really have that on the East Coast. We have the opposite problem. We might even have neighbours trying to burn their trash, which is the worst thing you can do.

**Andrew:** That's not good, that's not good.

**Kassy:** America is a little bit behind the times when it comes to trash.

**Andrew:** Well, I'm sure there's lots of farmers out there in the States, too, composting, especially on the West Coast, like you said.

**Andrew:** All right, Kassy, well, I think we can wrap things up here today. It was kind of a dirty, gross topic, but interesting to get your perspective on the USA and especially that Swedish program. That was cool to learn about.

**Andrew:** Everyone, please remember that the study guide for this episode is available on Culips.com. And if you would like to stay up to date with all of the current news here at Culips, you can follow us on social media. We are on Instagram, YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter. Simply search for the Culips English Podcast and you'll be able to find us. If you'd like to send us a message, maybe share your opinion about how garbage and recycling pickup works in your country. And you can get in touch with us, our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com).

**Andrew:** We will be back soon with a brand-new Culips episode and we will talk to you all then. Goodbye.

**Kassy:** See ya.



## Detailed Explanations

### Waste management

Noun

The general topic of this episode is **waste management**. When Andrew and Kassy talk about garbage removal and recycling, these are forms of **waste management**. **Waste management** encompasses everything to do with dealing with refuse. This ranges from the collection to the transportation to the treatment of waste. The toilet in your home is as much a part of **waste management** as the way grocery stores throw away unused food.

Here are a couple more examples with **waste management**:

**Hanna:** I like your shirt. Where did you buy it?

**Grace:** Actually, I didn't buy it. My sister gave it to me and I altered it a bit.

**Hanna:** Cool. Like the three Rs: reduce, reuse, recycle.

**Grace:** Exactly. I watched a documentary on **waste management**. It really opened my eyes on how I was treating the environment.

**Hanna:** That's great. Where can I watch that doc?

**Finley:** Hey, do you and your husband have plans tonight?

**Ella:** We do, in fact. We're heading to the community centre for a workshop.

**Finley:** Really? A workshop on what?

**Ella:** It's on how to do proper **waste management** at home.

**Finley:** That's really interesting. We've been wanting to get into composting ourselves, but we don't know how.

**Ella:** I'm sure they'll cover that tonight. You should come.



## Bright and early

### Idiom

In this episode, Kassy mentions that the garbage truck in her neighbourhood would come by **bright and early** in the morning. **Bright and early** means very early. Think of stepping outside just after sunrise. You might say to yourself, "It's so bright. It's so early."

A similar expression to **bright and early** is **bright-eyed and bushy-tailed**. This expression is for when you are awake and you are clear minded, as opposed to sleepy. You are also dressed and ready to start your day. If someone asks you to be ready for 7 a.m., you can answer, "I'll be there **bright-eyed and bushy-tailed**."

Here are a couple more examples with **bright and early**:

**Diane:** Have you packed everything for our road trip?

**Victor:** Not yet. I might do that tomorrow morning.

**Diane:** That's not a good idea. We've leaving at 9 a.m.

**Victor:** Don't worry. I'll get up **bright and early**. I'll be ready way before 9:00.

**Diane:** I hope so.

**Blossom:** You're up early. That's not like you.

**Drew:** I know. I hate it.

**Blossom:** So why did you wake up at this hour?

**Drew:** They changed our schedules at the store. I'll be waking up **bright and early** for the next 2 weeks.

**Blossom:** Are you sure you can manage?

**Drew:** We'll see.

## To subsidize

Verb

In this episode, Andrew and Kassy talk about the differences between the Canadian and American systems of waste management. While Kassy says individuals personally pay for their services in the United States, Andrew says the Canadian system is **subsidized** through taxes. **Subsidizing** is when the government financially supports something or someone. In Canada, health care is **subsidized** by the government through taxpayers' funds. Many amateur athletes are **subsidized** by the government.

Here are a couple more examples with **to subsidize**:

**Steven:** Wow. You Canadians drink a lot of milk.

**Polly:** I guess so. More than some countries, for sure.

**Steven:** And it's pretty cheap, too.

**Polly:** That's because milk farmers are highly **subsidized** by the government. A lot of our economy depends on the dairy industry.

**Steven:** I see. But why do you sell milk in bags?

**Massimo:** How has your research at the university been going?

**Chantal:** Not good. We've run out of money.

**Massimo:** That's terrible. What are you going to do?

**Chantal:** We're applying for both the federal and provincial governments to **subsidize** us.

**Massimo:** When are you expecting an answer?

**Chantal:** We don't know. These things take time.

## A [something] drive

Noun

In this episode, Andrew and Kassy talk about collecting the deposit on cans and bottles as a way to raise money. These organized events are called **drives**. You can have **bottle drives**, **food drives**, **blood drives**, or **book drives**, for example. The purpose of these **drives** is to either raise money or redistribute goods. **A canned food drive** is when you ask people to give you canned foods. You then give that food to a food bank that helps feed underprivileged members of society.

Here are a couple more examples with **a [something] drive**:

**Linda:** Hey, Martin, do you think you can help out the school on the weekend?

**Martin:** Sure. What can I do?

**Linda:** We're having **a canned food drive** in the neighbourhood. Can you drive some of the students around? Those cans get really heavy.

**Martin:** No problem. What time do you need me?

**Mike:** I was wondering if I can use your expertise for something.

**Gillian:** My expertise? I hope I have some.

**Mike:** Sure you do. Our company is thinking of organizing **a blood drive**. I know you've done that before for your company. How would we go about it?

**Gillian:** The first thing you should do is contact the Red Cross. They have forms online you can fill out. They'll take care of most of the organizing.

## To devise [something]

Verb

In this episode, Andrew talks about a plan characters on a TV show **devised** in order to make money. **To devise [something]** is to create a plan to get something. In this sense, **to devise** is often used when planning something sneaky or even illegal. You can say the criminals **devised a plan** to steal a million dollars. However, you can use **to devise** innocently, such as if you **devised a plan** for a great weekend with your family.

Here are a couple more examples with **to devise [something]**:

**Chance:** Are you planning Patrick's birthday party?

**Roy:** Yeah. But remember, it's a surprise. Don't tell him.

**Chance:** I won't. I'm curious. How are you going to make it a surprise party at his house? You know he lives there, right?

**Roy:** I **devised a plan** to make sure he's away from home for 2 hours before the party. That will give us enough time to set everything up.

**Chance:** OK. Can I help with anything?

**Fabio:** Wow. You lost a lot of weight.

**Eddie:** Thanks. I lost 15 kilos. I feel a lot better.

**Fabio:** What did you do?

**Eddie:** I went to a health expert. Together, we **devised a nutrition and exercise plan**. I'm glad we did. It really paid off.

**Fabio:** That sounds great. I'm happy for you.

## Win-win Idiom

In this episode, Andrew tells the story of a man whose car runs on cooking oil. The car also smells like French fries because of the oil it burns. Kassy says that's a **win-win**. She means that there are two good things about the situation: It's better for the environment and it has a pleasing smell. That's a **win-win** situation.

You can also use **win-win** when a situation is beneficial for both parties involved. If your friend wants to get rid of her bicycle and you want to get a bicycle, it's a **win-win** situation if she gives her bicycle to you.

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

**Shay:** We just finished negotiations between the union and the ownership.

**Robin:** How did it go?

**Shay:** I'd say it went pretty well. The union's main objective was to have greater health coverage. Ownership wanted to reduce the payroll by 5% because of the recession.

**Robin:** What happened in the end?

**Shay:** Both sides agreed to the main points. I would say it's a **win-win**.

**Irene:** My daughter will be participating in a singing competition for the next few months. It's going to be televised.

**Alex:** Are you sure that's a good idea? Those shows are notoriously hard on the participants.

**Irene:** I know. But her father and I think she's mentally strong enough to go through it.

**Alex:** Is she a good singer?

**Irene:** She's very good. We think she has a chance of winning the whole thing. And if she doesn't, she's getting good experience. We see it as a **win-win** situation.

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following means win-win?**

- a) mutually beneficial
- b) happiness
- c) a devised plan
- d) a tied game in a sport

**2. True or false? Transportation plays a big role in waste management.**

- a) true
- b) false

**3. What does bright and early mean?**

- a) in the sunlight
- b) in the summer
- c) very early in the morning
- d) during the sunset

**4. Which of the following drives does Andrew describe?**

- a) a blood drive
- b) a bottle drive
- c) a food drive
- d) a book drive

**5. What does to subsidize mean?**

- a) to volunteer for the government
- b) to increase taxes
- c) to substitute teach in a public school
- d) for the government to give money to an organization

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What does the garbage and recycling system look like where you live?
2. What do you think of government subsidies to encourage recycling?
3. How big of a problem do you think waste is for the environment?
4. What do you think of composting? Is it something you do in your daily life?
5. Out of the various fundraising drives mentioned in this study guide, which appeals to you the most?



## Quiz Answers

1. a    2. a    3. c    4. b    5. d

### Episode credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Kassy White

Music: *Something Elated* by Broke For Free,  
*Sleepless Aloha* by Reed Mathis

Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates

Audio editor: Andrew Bates

Transcriptionist: Heather Bates

Study guide writer: Matty Warnock

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: Jasmin Sessler (Unsplash.com)