

Simplified Speech #094 – Swimming

Episode description

Swimming is an activity with worldwide appeal. Some people see it as a fun activity. For others, it's a competitive sport. Join hosts Andrew and Kassy in this Simplified Speech episode as they discuss their relationship with swimming. Dive right into it!

Fun fact

Swimming is one of the most popular Olympic sports. There were 34 swimming events at the 2016 Rio Olympics. Amazingly, the United States won gold medals in 16 of those events!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To dive into [something]
- Iconic
- That's wild
- Avid
- That's not too shabby
- Fashion statement



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: Hello, everyone. My name is Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Andrew: Hey there, everyone. This is a Simplified Speech episode, which is the Culips series that features totally natural English conversations that are slowed down just a little bit. Today I am joined by my cohost, Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

Kassy: Hey, Andrew.

Andrew: Today we are recording together in the same room at the same time.

Kassy: Yeah, it's a real treat.

Andrew: Usually we record separately, right? But we're in the same city today. So we thought we'd get together and record. And we have an interesting topic to talk about, which was suggested to us by one of our listeners. It is swimming, swimming. So today we're going to talk all about swimming.

Kassy: Which is great, 'cause swimming is one of my favourite sports.

Andrew: Yeah, so this is perfect. But before we get into our conversation, we should let all of our listeners know about the study guide for this episode. Everyone, there's a study guide for this episode and it is available on our website, Culips.com, for all Culips members. Inside the guide, you will find a transcript and detailed vocabulary explanations, as well as some examples that will help you understand the key vocabulary. There's a quiz. There's lots of great stuff in there that we designed to help you improve your English. So if you'd like to sign up, become a Culips member and study with our study guides, then just visit our website, Culips.com.

Andrew: And I also wanted to give a shout-out to one of our listeners named Hayandari who left us a really nice review on Apple podcasts. The review says that Culips is one of the best ESL podcasts ever. And that if you are looking for some good English-learning podcasts, then you should subscribe to us. So thank you again for that nice review and five-star rating.

Andrew: Everyone, it really does help us out when you leave reviews like this online, wherever you listen to us, really, whether it's Apple podcasts or any other service. So keep 'em coming, guys. We're gonna try and shout-out some of the people that leave us nice reviews here in the future. So if you want to hear your name on the podcast, just leave us a review and we'll give you a shout-out in an upcoming episode.

Andrew: All right, let's get into it, Kassy.

Kassy: OK.

Andrew: Swimming. Let's jump in, maybe that's a better way.

Kassy: We should **dive in**.

Andrew: **Dive into this topic.** Why don't we start by talking about how we learned how to swim? Because it's not something that comes to us naturally, right? So how did you learn how to swim? Did you take swimming lessons? Did your parents teach you?

Kassy: So my mom—I think a lot of parents in America, but my mom especially—thought swimming was an extremely necessary skill. So I actually started swimming before I could walk. My mom and I went to mommy and me swim classes when I was a baby.

Andrew: Oh, wow.

Kassy: Yeah, and then I started to really swim on my own. When I was five, I joined a swim team.

Andrew: So I guess you don't even remember learning how to swim, really?

Kassy: Nope. I was like a fish, you know, just very natural.

Andrew: I've seen that on TV before, when I guess it's usually mothers are with their infants in the swimming pool.

Kassy: Yup, that's right.

Andrew: There's that **iconic** Nirvana album cover shot, too, that comes to mind of the baby in this swimming pool. Wow, **that's wild**. So you have been a swimmer then pretty much all your life?

Kassy: Yup, that's right. I think it's because my mom really loves swimming, so she wanted to show me that love, have me like it, too.

Andrew: And it worked.

Kassy: Yeah. How about you, Andrew, how did you learn to swim?

Andrew: I took swimming lessons, as well. It's really common in Canada for almost every kid to learn how to swim by taking swimming lessons at the local YMCA pool. So I remember having to take swimming lessons in the evenings after school when I was 6, 7, 8 years old. I hated it. I remember asking my mom, ah, do I have to go, can I skip it this week? I never liked swimming and I have bad memories about it, but for no good reason. Like, swimming lessons were fine. I just didn't enjoy it. But they worked, I learned how to swim.

Kassy: Well, that's something.

Andrew: I'm glad I have that skill now.

Kassy: Yes. Did you learn every stroke? So in swimming, there's four main strokes, freestyle, backstroke, breaststroke, and butterfly.

Andrew: I learned the most important stroke, which was not sinking. That stroke. Yeah, I learned all of the strokes, I think. But now these days when I go swimming, I usually just use the freestyle stroke, which is the one where you kind of put your arms in front of your body and propel yourself forward, almost like your arms are in a windmill motion, right? I like that one and I also like the frog-style stroke.

Kassy: The breaststroke.

Andrew: Breaststroke, yes. I think breaststroke is my go-to stroke if I'm just swimming around. And then if I want to go faster, I go for the freestyle.

Kassy: Freestyle. How about the doggy paddle?

Andrew: Doggy paddle? Yeah, funnily enough, my girlfriend is—it's so weird. She knows how to swim because she took swimming lessons as an adult, and she can swim quite strongly doing the strokes that you just mentioned. But she can't just kick around in a swimming pool for fun. And so I was teaching her how to do the doggy paddle recently. And she couldn't pick it up. Yeah, that was the first time in a long time that I did the doggy paddle, so that I could demonstrate to her how to do it. Yeah, but she didn't get it, it's really weird. I don't know how she can swim well and still not master the most basic strokes. She also can't float on her back.

Kassy: Oh, that's like my favourite thing to do in the summer, just float on my back and look up at the blue sky.

Andrew: Yeah, she says it's amazing, like she's shocked that I can just float in the water without moving. But, yeah, that's also my favourite. I like doing it at night, I know night swimming is a little bit dangerous, be careful, everyone. But, yeah, looking up at the sky and looking at the stars, floating. It's pretty good.

Kassy: Where is your favourite place to swim?

Andrew: Favourite place to swim. I don't go swimming very often. I hardly ever go to a swimming pool, because I don't really swim for exercise. It's more of just something to do while I'm on vacation or if it's a really hot day out, I'll go swimming to cool down. So that usually means that I'm in the ocean or in a lake. I prefer swimming in nature, especially freshwater. Swimming in lakes, in Canada, to me is the best place to swim.

Kassy: Yeah, it's interesting. I think a lot of people have a very strong preference, like only swimming in a pool or only swimming in nature.

Andrew: Yeah, I actually do hate that chlorine feeling that's on your skin after swimming in a swimming pool. Even if you shower a couple times, it still feels kind of stuck to your skin or that your skin has been shocked a little bit.

Kassy: Have you ever heard that blonde-haired people, if they swim in a swimming pool too often, their hair will turn green?

Andrew: I have heard that.

Kassy: It is literally true.

Andrew: Really?

Kassy: Yeah. When I was younger, my hair was much blonder than it is now. It did have a slight green tint to it for a while. Oh, it was awful.

Andrew: What about you, Kassy, do you prefer to swim in a swimming pool or in a lake or the ocean?

Kassy: I prefer swimming pools for exercise and then oceans for fun. Lakes, I, they're kind of silty, like there's a lot of dirt in the water. So I don't like that.

Andrew: OK. And how often do you swim these days?

Kassy: I took a couple of years off from swimming, but just recently I joined a swimming pool again and I've been going three or four times a week.

Andrew: Three or four times a week. Wow. So you are a very **avid** swimmer.

Kassy: Yes. I feel like I'm flying when I swim, almost.

Andrew: Yeah, you must be really good, then, if you swim that often. Have you ever competed, like have you ever raced?

Kassy: Yeah, I was on a swim team from 5 years old until senior year of high school.

Andrew: Wow.

Kassy: So I did a lot of competitions. I was never like super good, but I have a lot of, you know, second place, third place, fourth place ribbons.

Andrew: That's pretty good. Second place, third place, **that's not too shabby**, that's really good. So when you go swimming, then, you must really look like a professional swimmer. Do you wear a swim cap and goggles and earplugs and nose plugs? Are nose plugs a thing? I don't know.

Kassy: I think some people wear them but, no, I do not wear the nose plugs or earplugs, but the cap, the goggles. And especially in high school, it was like a **fashion statement**, like girls would have a swimsuit for each day of the week with different colours and swim caps with, like, their favourite logos or cartoons on them. It was really fun.

Andrew: I've been hanging out with some friends from the UK recently, and both of my friends swim. And I recently heard them talking about swimming and I was laughing at them because do you know what British people call a swimming pool?

Kassy: What?

Andrew: They call it the swimming baths. They go to the swimming baths to exercise.

Kassy: Wanna go take a bath?

Andrew: Yeah. So I was actually a little confused because I thought they were talking about, like, a public bath, like a sauna-type thing. But, no, I guess that's just what people in the UK called a swimming pool. A public swimming pool is called the swimming baths. So I learned something new.

Kassy: Yeah, I didn't know that either.

Andrew: All right, Kassy, well, I think we can wrap things up here. Thanks for sharing your swimming stories with us.

Kassy: Anytime.

Andrew: And thank you to the listener who requested this topic. And any other listeners out there, if you guys have a topic that you would like us to discuss, then please get in touch with us and let us know. Our email address is contact@Culips.com or you could also send us a message through your favourite social media website. We are on all of them, on Instagram, on Twitter, on Facebook and on YouTube. So if you leave us a comment or send us a message through social media, then we'll be sure to see it.

Andrew: If you enjoy studying with Culips and if you learn a lot with us, then please help us out and support us. You can do that by leaving a nice review and a five-star rating wherever you get your podcasts. You could tell your friends about Culips or you could sign up and become a Culips member. And, again, to do that, just visit Culips.com.

Andrew: We will be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll catch you then. Goodbye.

Kassy: See you later.

Detailed Explanations

To dive into [something]

Phrasal verb

To begin this episode, Andrew and Kassy say they should **dive into their topic**. This is a pun, because the topic is swimming. You can literally **dive into the ocean** or **dive into a swimming pool**. The second meaning of **to dive into [something]** is to begin doing something enthusiastically. In this case, it means that our hosts begin talking enthusiastically about swimming.

To dive into [something] also means to explore a topic in great depth. This meaning applies to this episode as well, since our hosts thoroughly explore the topic of swimming.

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

Emil: Is your laptop open?

Dalia: Yes, it is.

Emil: Is the recording equipment synced up?

Dalia: One second. Yes, now it is.

Emil: So we're ready to record?

Dalia: We sure are. Let's **dive right into it**.

Jamie: I heard you were up working all night.

Malcolm: Yeah. I was on a videoconference call with coworkers in India.

Jamie: Doing business with people in different time zones is always tricky.

Malcolm: It is. Since we can't talk very often, we **dove into about 20 different topics** regarding the company. It was a long night.

Iconic Adjective

In this episode, Andrew mentions the **iconic** Nirvana album cover with a baby under water, swimming after a dollar bill. If something is **iconic**, it is extremely popular and often representative of a particular time. This album cover is **iconic** because everyone who was around in the early 1990s knew that image. It was on television, T-shirts, and posters everywhere throughout North American society. Seeing that image now reminds many people of that period.

However, **iconic** does not necessarily refer only to time periods. A city can have many **iconic** landmarks that are timeless. Also, something **iconic** does not necessarily have to be of high quality. Its quality doesn't matter, as long as it's well-known.

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

Abby: Do you have any summer plans?

Oscar: We're planning a trip around Australia.

Abby: Cool. Do you have any special reason for going there?

Oscar: As you know, I really like architecture. So we're going to check out famous buildings in Sydney and Melbourne.

Abby: What's the name of that **iconic** building in Sydney? I can't remember.

Oscar: The Sydney Opera House. That's first on my list.

Farah: I like this picture of you and your girlfriend.

Daniel: Oh, yes. We're doing the **iconic** pose from the movie Titanic, the one when Leo is lifting Kate at the front of the ship.

Farah: I love that movie.

Daniel: I've never seen it.

Farah: So why are you doing this pose?

Daniel: It's a famous moment. Everyone knows it even if they haven't seen the movie.

That's wild

Phrase, informal

When Kassy tells Andrew that she started swimming as an infant, Andrew says, "Wow, **that's wild**." **That's wild** is an expression you can use when you think something is amazing or unusual. Andrew is impressed that Kassy has been swimming her entire life.

Other variations of **that's wild** are **that's crazy** or **that's amazing**. When you use wild or crazy like this, you are exaggerating your reaction. That's why this is an informal expression.

Here are a couple more examples with **that's wild**:

Will: I'm going hiking with a friend. Do you want to come along?

Darcy: Sure. Who is your friend?

Will: He's my university buddy. His name is Greg Wilson.

Darcy: Greg Wilson? He wouldn't happen to be from Edmonton, would he?

Will: Yeah. This is his picture.

Darcy: **That's wild!** I went to high school with him.

Courtney: Nice car. When did you buy it?

Adriana: Actually, my uncle bought it for me.

Courtney: That's a really nice uncle.

Adriana: He recently won a lot of money. Listen to this. He won the second prize in the lottery. The next week, he spent \$1000 on tickets and won the jackpot!

Courtney: Wow, **that's wild!** I've never heard of anything like that.

Avid Adjective

When Kassy talks about swimming three or four times a week, Andrew calls her an **avid** swimmer. **Avid** means the person has a lot of enthusiasm for something. **Avid** is often paired with hobbies. You can be an **avid** reader, an **avid** cyclist, or an **avid** painter. However, you would not use **avid** when referring to your job. Also, **avid** refers to people, so you wouldn't use it to describe organizations or animals.

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

Suzy: Is it just me or has your brother lost a lot of weight lately?

Mandeep: He has.

Suzy: It's a pretty big transformation.

Mandeep: You should tell him. He'll be glad people notice.

Suzy: Sure. What has he done differently?

Mandeep: He's become an **avid** hiker. He's out every weekend, always looking for a new mountain to hike.

Suzy: Sweet. I love hiking, too. Does he like hiking alone or with other people?

Megan: Wow. Can you see that bird? It's beautiful.

Giorgio: The one with the patch of red?

Megan: Yeah. What is that? A cardinal, maybe?

Giorgio: Actually, that's a red-bellied woodpecker.

Megan: What? How do you know that?

Giorgio: My dad is an **avid** birdwatcher. I went out with him all the time when I was young. I guess some of it rubbed off on me.

That's not too shabby

Idiom

In this episode, Kassy mentions that she received a few second, third, and fourth place ribbons in swimming competitions. Andrew thinks that's pretty good, so he says, "**That's not too shabby**." If something is shabby, it is in poor condition. If you have holes in your shirt and pants, you have shabby clothing. So when Andrew says, "**That's not too shabby**," he is giving Kassy a compliment by putting a negative ("not") in front of a negative adjective ("shabby"). It's like he's saying, "That's not bad."

Here are a couple more examples with **that's not too shabby**:

Cecily: Is your son still playing baseball?

Dean: Yes, he is. He's getting pretty good, too.

Cecily: Does he have dreams of playing in the major leagues?

Dean: He does. In fact, the New York Yankees have shown interest in offering him a contract.

Cecily: The Yankees? **That's not too shabby**. I hope that works out for him.

Boris: How's your car?

Cally: My car is great. I've never had a problem with it.

Boris: How many years have you had it?

Cally: About 15 years, I think.

Boris: That long and you still haven't had any problems? **That's not too shabby** at all!

Fashion statement

Idiom

Near the end of this episode, Kassy says that girls at her high school would wear different colours of swimsuits and swim caps on different days. They did this as a **fashion statement**. A **fashion statement** is when you wear something to draw attention towards yourself. Celebrities at award ceremonies often make bold **fashion statements**. In Kassy's case, wearing different swimsuits was a **fashion statement** to express her individuality.

Here are a couple more examples with **fashion statement**:

Juan: Did you see what Norma wore to the party yesterday?

Clara: No, I didn't get to see her.

Juan: She wore the tightest miniskirt I have ever seen with a tiny top. Here's a picture.

Clara: Wow. That's quite the **fashion statement**. Did other people notice?

Juan: Of course. Everyone was talking about her outfit.

Nicholas: I really don't want to wear this shirt for my photo shoot. Can I wear something else?

Helena: Trust me. I'm your manager. It's my job to help you with these decisions.

Nicholas: It's not really my style.

Helena: Maybe your style needs to change.

Nicholas: I'm comfortable the way I am.

Helena: I know. But young actors like you need to make bold **fashion statements** to separate yourself from all the other young actors. If you look like everyone else, audiences might not remember you as much.

Quiz

1. Which of the following does NOT mean avid?

- a) enthusiastic
- b) keen
- c) passionate
- d) lazy

2. What does it mean when you say that's wild?

- a) you went hiking in the forest
- b) your dog spends a lot of time outdoors
- c) you enjoy fresh fruit
- d) you're impressed by something

3. Which of the following is synonymous with that's not too shabby?

- a) that's pretty good
- b) that's bad
- c) that's not interesting
- d) that's worn out

4. What is a good reason for making a fashion statement?

- a) you want to be unique
- b) you like the colour blue
- c) your mother told you to wear that shirt
- d) you wear the same uniform as everyone else

5. Which of the following is NOT a characteristic of something iconic?

- a) it's popular
- b) it's well-made
- c) it's famous
- d) it's culturally significant

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Many people believe that knowing how to swim is an essential life skill. What do you think about that?
2. Which of the four basic strokes do you think is the most fun? If you can't swim, which stroke would you most like to learn?
3. What comes to mind when you think of iconic symbols from your youth?
4. Fill in the blank: I'm an avid _____. Explain your love for this activity.
5. On what occasions do you like to make a fashion statement?

Quiz Answers

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

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