

Simplified Speech #095 – Arts and Crafts

Episode description

Arts and crafts are popular all over the world. Some people paint, knit, or sew as a hobby. Some do arts and crafts as a job. In this Simplified Speech episode, host Andrew and Kassy talk about their relationship with arts and crafts.

Fun fact

In this episode, Kassy talks about attending Paint and Sip parties. These are gatherings where people paint while drinking wine or other beverages. This concept really took off—there are an estimated 1000 Paint and Sip groups throughout North America!

Expressions included in the study guide

- On another level
- To sip
- To bitch
- To let off some steam
- To settle down
- Doing it for the Gram



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, this is Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And you are listening to the Culips English Podcast.

Andrew: This is a Simplified Speech episode, the Culips series where we have completely natural English conversations, but we speak at just a slightly slower pace than we do in our everyday lives. Today I'm joined by my cohost, Kassy. Kassy, hello there.

Kassy: Hello.

Andrew: And we are going to talk about arts and crafts, which is a topic that was suggested to us by one of our listeners, Bahar, via Instagram. So, Bahar, thank you very much for the great suggestion. I'm excited to talk about this topic here with you today, Kassy, arts and crafts.

Kassy: Yeah, arts and crafts. Just hearing the name or the phrase arts and crafts reminds me of camp or childhood.

Andrew: Before we get into it, though, we should let all of our listeners know about the study guide. Guys, there is a study guide that accompanies this episode. And it is available for all Culips members on our website, Culips.com. So if you'd like to sign up, become a Culips member, and follow along with the study guide while you listen to us today, then just go to Culips.com to get all the details and to sign up.

Andrew: All right, Kassy you said this brings up memories of camp and childhood. Why is that? Why do you think about when you were younger, camping?

Kassy: Every summer I went to summer camp and one of my favourite activities at camp was doing arts and crafts in the art centre.

Andrew: I did the same thing. I would also go to camp when I was a kid, I guess probably every summer between maybe the ages of 10 and 14, around then. And maybe our listeners don't know what camp is, actually. But the camp that I went to was a sleepover camp. So I would go to the campground and sleep in a cabin with other children my age, and I would stay there for a week. And we did lots of fun activities together, ate food together, and, yeah, did arts and crafts, as well. Is this the same thing that you experienced?

Kassy: Yeah, that's exactly right. I'm curious: what kind of crafts did you do? For example, one of my favourite crafts was making, like, friendship bracelets out of colourful strings.

Andrew: That's cool. Friendship bracelets are the bracelets that you make out of string and then trade with your friends, right?

Kassy: That's right.

Andrew: Actually, I remember that the camp that I attended had a ceramics studio and a pottery studio.

Kassy: Ah, cool.

Andrew: We got to make coffee mugs and shape them out of clay and then fire them in the kiln, which is the really hot oven. And then, later, once they cooled down and hardened, we would paint them and decorate them. I think that's about the only memory I have of doing arts and crafts at camp. But, actually, I remember that my mug came out almost perfectly. The shape was really good, but I must have been about 10 years old and I remember painting the mug. I made a mistake when I was painting it, and I was painting it a dark green colour, then I wanted to paint a light blue design overtop of the dark green. But I mixed the two colours accidentally, and I was really upset that I blew it completely.

Kassy: Did the mug end up looking like a vomit colour?

Andrew: Yeah, it wasn't pretty, but I still liked it. Like, I still drank out of that mug for a long time. But that's a funny memory that just came to mind, thinking about this story.

Kassy: Andrew, what are some other types of popular arts and crafts?

Andrew: That's a great question, Kassy. We should maybe explain what arts and crafts are, in general, for everyone. So arts and crafts are just activities that people do, usually for hobbies, right? It's usually a hobby. And it's just about making something, creating something. I think some of the most popular arts and crafts are related to knitting, or sewing, or embroidery, at least among my friends. These are the types of crafts that I see them make the most often. So, you know, knitting a scarf or a tuque, which is what we call a winter hat in Canada, a tuque, or a sweater, maybe making a crocheted pattern. I have one friend who makes rugs.

Kassy: Oh, cool.

Andrew: But she's actually really talented and an artist, as well. She paints and she does glasswork, making, like, lampshades out of stained glass. It's really incredible. I think her work is **another level**. A step above just the average hobbyist.

Kassy: Yeah, I think that's an interesting thing to note. Arts and crafts are kind of their own section of art, right? Like, when you think fine art or real art, you think paintings and—

Andrew: Sculpture.

Kassy: Yeah, intense things you have to train for. But arts and crafts are kind of things that anybody could get started on and dip their toes into.

Andrew: Exactly. Another thing that comes to mind is what I was just talking about, pottery and ceramics. This is another really popular arts and crafts genre, I guess we could say. I don't know, Kassy, do you know the actor Seth Rogen?

Kassy: I love him.

Andrew: He's a really funny guy. And he's actually from Vancouver, BC, where I grew up as a kid.

Kassy: No way?

Andrew: Yeah. And he's really into ceramics and pottery, which is hilarious because he's this big, kind of cuddly comedian and you wouldn't think that that kind of guy would be into ceramics and pottery. But if you check his Instagram, all of his posts are about the pottery that he makes.

Kassy: That is so cool.

Andrew: He mostly makes ashtrays, which is funny. He is an ashtray maker and a good one, too. He's very talented.

Kassy: Interesting.

Andrew: As an adult, have you ever got into any of these arts and crafts activities, Kassy?

Kassy: Yes, actually, in the town that I live in, occasionally we have a kind of club or gathering. It's called Paint and **Sip**. And that's where adults can come and paint a picture with an art teacher and drink wine while we paint.

Andrew: I like it, Paint and **Sip**. It's an opportunity to learn art and practice painting and also socialize at the same time.

Kassy: Yeah, it's really great. And the teacher, I don't know how she does it, or he, depending on who you have, but they pick a painting that looks complicated to do, but everyone ends up making a really, like, well-done piece by the end of it. And I am not a painter, so if I can do it, anybody can do it.

Andrew: It's funny, that Paint and **Sip** event is really popular in a lot of cities in North America. I'm sure actually a lot of our listeners, if they wanted to do something like that, they could just google Paint and **Sip** and they would be able to find an event wherever they're living.

Andrew: There are also meetup groups that are called Stitch 'n **Bitch**, and this reminds me of Paint and **Sip**. So, Stitch 'n **Bitch**, some people in my circle of friends do this. They are knitters. So what they do is they gather together in a coffee shop, usually, and they just hang out and knit together. And so one of the manoeuvres, the moves, in knitting is called a stitch, right? You stitch together yarn. I'm sorry if I'm not saying this exactly correct, because I'm not a knitter myself. But that is what a stitch is. It's also a word that relates to sewing and connecting fabric together through thread. This is a stitch. So that's what the stitch means. It's the knitting or the sewing side of things. And the **bitch**, **bitch** is kind of like a slang expression, a little bit rude. So be careful, listeners, but it just means to talk with each other and—

Kassy: Gossip.

Andrew: Gossip and **let off some steam**, maybe complain a little bit about your daily life. If your boss is being a jerk or your home life is a little bit stressful because of your boyfriend or girlfriend or something, then you can complain about this. And that's what it means **to bitch**. So Stitch 'n **Bitch** just means hang out, knit or sew, and socialize.

Kassy: I think that was one great phrase you brought up there, **let off some steam**. I think a lot of the reason that people start doing arts and crafts is to not only get a cool hobby, but also **to let off steam**, to find something that can help you de-stress and then also, like, have something you can hold that you created.

Andrew: Yeah, that is true. So, everyone, **let off steam** just means to relax, right? To relax and to de-stress. When we're really stressed out, it's kind of like we're hot and angry. We even say go red with anger sometimes. And so when you **let off steam**, it's like, **settle down**, cool down, relax. And, yeah, I would like to try a Paint and **Sip**. That sounds very intriguing to me.

Kassy: You should do it.

Andrew: There are also a lot of 1-day classes these days where you can go and learn how to do one of these things. In our exclusive Culips member series, which is called the Fluency Files, I talked about my experience doing a kind of 1-day class recently, where my girlfriend and I made some ceramics. And I learned that I'm still bad at this. When I was a kid, I couldn't paint ceramics and now that I'm an adult, I can't make them. But for all our Culips members, if you guys haven't heard that story yet, log in to our website, click the Fluency Files link, and you can check that story out.

Kassy: Yeah, likewise. I have not done it yet, but in my city, one activity I would really like to try is a cake decorating class.

Andrew: Oh, that's a cool idea.

Kassy: Yeah, learning how to make the little icing flowers and the, I don't know, fondant characters they put on top of the fancy birthday cakes.

Andrew: That's a great idea. And then it doesn't really matter how the cake looks at the end, as long as it's delicious, right?

Kassy: I guess. But Instagram, it's **for the Gram**.

Andrew: **For the Gram. Do it for the Gram.**

Andrew: All right, Kassy, well, I think we'll leave it at here for now, but I'm really curious about our listeners. I'm sure, I'm positive that among our listeners, there are some really great craftspeople and some talented artists, as well. So if any of you listening would like to share your stories with us, what kind of arts and crafts activities you do, or even if you could share some pictures of the final results, we would really love to see them. You can get in touch with us by sending an email to contact@Culips.com.

Andrew: And if you like Culips, if you learn a lot with us and like studying with us, please support us. You can do that by following us on social media, or leaving us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts or, of course, by signing up and becoming a Culips member.

Andrew: We will be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode. And, once again, thanks to Bahar for the great episode suggestion. Talk to you later, guys. Goodbye.

Kassy: See you soon.

Detailed Explanations

On another level

Idiom

In this episode, Andrew mentions how a friend of his is **on another level** when it comes to making stained glass. To be **on another level** is to have superior skills. You are a level above most people. This is similar to the idea of taking yourself to the next level or to level up. If you continue to improve yourself, you will be **on another level**. Another common variation is saying **on a whole other level**.

This expression does not only apply to people. For example, inanimate objects such as cellphones or video games can be **on another level**.

Here are a couple more examples with **on another level**:

Adrian: Do you want to check out the new Mexican restaurant on Main Street?

Hope: I don't know. I don't really like Mexican food.

Adrian: Are you crazy? It's the best.

Hope: Every time I've eaten Mexican, I thought it was only so-so.

Adrian: I see the problem. You haven't been to the right place. I know the chef. He's so good. He's **on another level**. Trust me, you won't regret it.

Anais: We're going to a virtual reality gaming room this afternoon. Have you ever done VR before?

Oliver: Yeah, once, about 5 years ago. It was pretty boring, actually.

Anais: The technology wasn't very good back then. It's **on another level** now. You should come along.

Oliver: All right, then. I'll give it another shot.

To sip

Verb, informal

Cohost Kassy says she attends a club in her city called Paint and **Sip**. Paint and **Sip** is an international movement where people gather to paint while having drinks. It is both a social gathering and a skill-building exercise. Normally, **to sip** is to drink a small amount of liquid. In an informal sense, **to sip** is to drink alcohol. You can also turn **sip** into a noun. For example, saying let's go for a **sip** means let's go for a drink.

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

Ian: What did you end up doing last night?

Rosie: I just hung out with Edith.

Ian: That's nice. Did you do anything special?

Rosie: Not really. She sat in front of the TV. We chatted. We **sipped** martinis.

Ian: That sounds like a perfect night to me.

Rajan: Are you busy on Saturday?

Cleo: I think I'm free. Why do you ask?

Rajan: We're going to have a wine tasting at my house. Do you like wine?

Cleo: I have been known to have a little **sip** now and then.

Rajan: Is that a yes? Will you be coming?

Cleo: Sure. Count me in. Thanks.

To bitch

Verb, slang

Later in this episode, Andrew discusses Stitch 'n **Bitch**, which is a type of gathering similar to Paint and Sip. The purpose of Stitch 'n **Bitch** groups is to knit and chat. **To bitch** is slang for complaining about something or someone. It is often viewed as an offensive word, so you should be careful how you use it. It's best to say the word with friends who have similar thinking to yours. When used informally, **to bitch** is a funny way of saying you're going to complain about something.

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

Orlando: Hey, are you going to invite George to your party?

Naseem: I was thinking about it. Why?

Orlando: I can't stand him. He's always **bitching** about this or that. He's so negative.

Naseem: You know, you're right. He does seem to bring the vibe down. Maybe I won't invite him this time.

Jane: Have you been reading the news lately?

Miles: Sure. I usually do.

Jane: This new government project is going to be a disaster. I'm so sick and tired of corrupt government spending.

Miles: Don't get me started. I can **bitch** about politics all night long.

Jane: OK. Good point. So ... We've been having crazy weather lately, right?

To let off some steam

Phrasal verb

In this episode, Andrew says that one of the purposes of groups like Stitch 'n Bitch is **to let off some steam**. As mentioned, to bitch is to gossip or complain about something. People often bitch **to let off steam**. **To let off some steam** is to do something to help you get rid of strong emotions. This can be by talking or by doing some physical activity. Think of boiling water in a pot with its lid on. Inside the pot, you will have a buildup of steam. Once you lift the lid, the steam escapes and you relieve the pressure inside the pot. That is similar to relieving the built-up stress or anger you have about something. Talking about it will help you **let off some steam**. You can also say **to blow off some steam**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to let off some steam**:

Coby: I heard you had a big argument at work.

Blair: I did. It was ugly.

Coby: That's never fun. Do you want to go to the pub for a quick drink to help you **let off some steam**?

Blair: Sure. I can go for a beer. But just one. Tomorrow is also a big day.

Layla: What's been going on with Patrick lately? He's been jogging every day for 2 weeks now. He never used to jog that much.

Emily: I think he's been stressed since his company was bought by another one.

Layla: OK. That would explain a lot.

Emily: Just be patient with him. I think he's jogging so much to **blow off some steam**.

To settle down

Phrasal verb

Settling down is another positive aspect of the social gatherings mentioned throughout this episode. **To settle down** is to calm down. When you are angry, it is often a good idea to talk about it. This might help you **settle down**. Again, think of that pot of boiling water. When the water is boiling, it is bubbling and splashing. When the water cools down, all those bubbles **settle down**.

You can also use **to settle down** in the imperative tense. Telling someone **to settle down** is the same as telling them to calm down.

To settle down is also commonly used in a different way. **To settle down** can mean you are getting married. If you have had a few romantic relationships and have finally chosen your perfect partner, you can tell all your friends that you are **settling down**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to settle down**:

Lilith: What happened? You look agitated.

Diego: I am. I had a bad day at the office.

Lilith: That's too bad. Do you want to sit down and watch a movie or something?

Diego: Actually, I think I'll just go out for a walk and listen to a podcast. That usually helps me **to settle down**.

Keenan: I think what you told Sheila yesterday is totally unacceptable. You should be ashamed of yourself!

Frank: Keenan, **settle down**! I haven't spoken to Sheila in months. You must have me mistaken for someone else.

Keenan: Really? Are you sure?

Frank: Of course. Tell me what the problem is. Let's talk about this.

Doing it for the Gram

Idiom

Near the end of this episode, Kassy talks about a cake decorating class she wants to take. She says it's not so much about baking a good cake as it is **doing it for the Gram**. In this case, Gram is short for Instagram. This is a common expression that people say when they are taking pictures or videos to post on Instagram. **Doing it for the Gram** is not just limited to influencers and professional Instagramers. Anyone can say it. In fact, it is common to joke about **doing it for the Gram** even if you are not on Instagram.

Here are a couple more examples with **doing it for Gram**:

Estelle: Let's go. What's taking you so long?

Zara: I'm trying to take the perfect picture.

Estelle: You've already taken 20 of them.

Zara: I'm **doing it for the Gram**. It's important. My followers need to know where I've been.

Roy: Did you see Darryl's new camera?

Abigail: No. But I heard he bought a new one.

Roy: Yeah. It was so expensive. All he does nowadays is take pictures. He says he's **doing it for the Gram**.

Abigail: What? He's not even on Instagram.

Roy: Maybe. But with this new camera, it looks like that's going to change.

Quiz

- 1. When you say you're doing it for the Gram, what does "it" refer to?**
 - a) taking pictures or videos
 - b) promoting a product
 - c) arguing with friends
 - d) going to a restaurant

- 2. Should you use the expression to bitch when talking to the president of your company?**
 - a) sure, since it's a completely acceptable term
 - b) you probably shouldn't, since it's not very professional

- 3. When Kassy goes to her Paint and Sip gathering, what does she do?**
 - a) she paints
 - b) she paints and drinks wine
 - c) she doesn't paint, but she socializes a lot
 - d) she only drinks wine because she cannot paint

- 4. What does it mean if your friend is on another level?**
 - a) she's a beginner
 - b) she has some talent
 - c) she's way better than anyone else
 - d) she has potential

- 5. Which of the following expressions is NOT similar to the others?**
 - a) to settle down
 - b) to drive for a long time
 - c) to calm down
 - d) to let off some steam

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been to an arts and crafts summer camp? What kind of camp would have interested you when you were younger?
2. What kind of arts and crafts can you do now?
3. What kind of activities do you do for the social aspect more than for the actual activity itself?
4. How do you let off some steam?
5. Are you on Instagram or other social media? How much time do you spend doing it for the Gram or for other platforms?

Quiz Answers

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

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: Margaritda Afonso (Unsplash.com)