

## Simplified Speech #096 – Do you collect anything?

### Episode description

People have been collecting things for eons. It doesn't matter what it is, whether it's seashells or rare coins, anything can be considered a collector's item. In this episode of Simplified Speech, Andrew and Kassy dive into the world of collecting.

### Fun fact

São Paulo is home to the largest collection in the world. A resident has more than 7,000,000 vinyl records, which he has been collecting since he was in high school.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Lost art
- Lame-o
- Dork
- Rings a bell
- Mom thing
- It's a thing



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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, my name is Andrew.

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

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

**Andrew:** Welcome back to Culips, everyone. This is a Simplified Speech episode, which is the Culips series that features 100% natural English conversations. However, they are slowed down just a little bit. We speak just a little bit slower in this series than we do in our regular, everyday lives and we do that so that you can hear everything. And we hope that by listening to this series, you will be able to upgrade your English listening skills and then move on and graduate to English movies and TV shows and conversations with native speakers. I'm not alone today, I'm joined by my cohost, Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew.

**Andrew:** How are you?

**Kassy:** I am excellent, as always. How are you?

**Andrew:** I'm good, as well. And I'm excited for our topic today, because I think we're going to have a funny conversation. As I was previewing this topic with you, Kassy, you mentioned some funny things. So I'm looking forward to it. Actually, we should let everyone know what we're talking about. What is it?

**Kassy:** Today's topic is collections.

**Andrew:** Collections, collections. OK. So talking about collecting things.

**Andrew:** However, before we start talking about collections, we should give a shout-out to one of our listeners named Linsanitygogo, who left us a five-star rating and a very nice review on Apple Podcasts. Linsanity said the host's voice is very nice. I really enjoy it. So, Linsanity, if you're talking about me, thank you very much. If you're talking about Kassy–

**Kassy:** Thank you, too.

**Andrew:** And if you're talking about one of our other hosts, well, then we will thank you for that, as well.

**Andrew:** So, everyone, we want to give shout-outs here going forward to some of our supporters who help us on social media and help spread Culips. If you would like to hear us mention your name at the start of an upcoming Culips episode, then all you have to do is support us on social media or on a podcast service where you listen to your podcasts. When we see your comment or review, we'll make sure to give you a mention on an upcoming show.

**Andrew:** We should also mention, Kassy, that there's a study guide for this episode, right? And if somebody wanted to download that, where could they find it?

**Kassy:** They could get it at Culips.com.

**Andrew:** And, Kassy, you write some of these study guides, don't you?

**Kassy:** I do. I've been a little slow recently, but I'm gonna get back into it.

**Andrew:** All right. We have a great team of study guide writers who help us to make high-quality materials that are designed to help our listeners get the most out of each episode. So in the guide, you'll find a transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations, and examples. There's a quiz, there are prompts that can be used for speaking practice or writing practice, lots of good stuff in the study guides. And they're available for all Culips members. So if you are interested in studying with one of the guides, and we highly suggest that you do, just visit Culips.com, sign up, and become a member.

**Andrew:** And, Kassy, I should mention, I don't know if you knew this or not, but when you're a Culips member, you can listen to our episodes ad-free.

**Kassy:** Wow.

**Andrew:** So you can skip all of the promotion and the non-topic content if you're a member.

**Kassy:** That's a nice perk.

**Andrew:** It's a good perk and, yeah, our members are not listening to me ramble right now. They're already listening to us talk about collections. Just another bonus feature of becoming a member.

**Andrew:** All right, so let's talk about collections. Maybe we should start with a definition to just be clear exactly what we're talking about today. How would you define collecting things and a collection?

**Kassy:** A collection is when you have a very strong interest in one object or thing, and it has, like, some significant value to you. So you want to collect as much of that thing in as many varieties as possible.

**Andrew:** That's right. And what are some common things that people collect? Like when I told you, oh, we're going to talk about collections today, what were some of the first items that popped into your mind?

**Kassy:** Instantly, stamps are like the stereotypical collection items.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it's totally true. I think when we talk about collections, we always immediately jump to stamps.

**Kassy:** I'm not sure why, because I personally don't know anyone who collects stamps.

**Andrew:** These days, I think it's a **lost art**, almost. And when we say stamps, everyone, we're talking about postage stamps. It's almost, like, the tax that you have to pay to send a letter in the mail, right? And when I was a kid, I had a stamp collection that I inherited from one of my aunts. She passed it on to me and I think, yeah, this is something that people did a long time ago, before the internet.

**Kassy:** And email.

**Andrew:** And email, before video games, before TV.

**Kassy:** FaceTime.

**Andrew:** Back in the day, there just weren't as many things to do, I guess. So people would get enjoyment out of collecting stamps. And to be honest with you, as someone who likes old things and also likes history, it was cool to look at my aunt's old stamp collection, because she had different stamps from around the world, from all over the UK, from Australia, from India, places where she got these letters. And it was cool to see the different cultures and art from different places worldwide kind of embedded in the stamps, but—

**Kassy:** I think also, one thing that collectors have to be cautious about when starting a collection is that it takes up a lot of space.

**Andrew:** Yeah.

**Kassy:** And luckily with stamps, you can keep it in a nice, beautiful leather-bound book or something like that.

**Andrew:** It's exactly the kind of book that I had. Yeah. I wonder where that collection went. It's possible my mom still has it somewhere.

**Andrew:** OK, stamps are kind of the stereotypical collectible item. But people collect all sorts of things. Coins. Coins is almost the same as a stamp collection, in my opinion. Or other types of currency, money. People collect Beanie Babies.

**Kassy:** Ah, yeah.

**Andrew:** People collect vinyl records, could have a vinyl collection or a VHS collection, DVD collection.

**Kassy:** Shot glasses.

**Andrew:** Shot glasses. My girlfriend actually collects magnets, fridge magnets from different places that she visits. So every time she travels to a new country, she'll get a little fridge magnet. Baseball cards, hockey cards. I had a big hockey card collection when I was a kid.

**Kassy:** Very Canadian.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think every Canadian kid has to have a hockey card collection. They're almost like currency, you know? We would collect the cards and then trade them amongst ourselves. And I had this book that was called a Beckett. Beckett was the name. So it was almost like a magazine that was produced every month. And maybe this is before your time, Kassy, but back in the day when people actually read newspapers. You could look at the stock prices on the back of the newspaper to see like, oh, Sony is up \$2 or, I don't know Procter & Gamble is down \$5. You could see the movement of each stock for the previous day. This Beckett was like the same thing. You could look up, oh, this is the Wayne Gretzky 1997 Upper Deck card. And you could see that it went up \$2 in value from last month.

**Kassy:** Wow.

**Andrew:** You can track the value of your playing cards with this Beckett. So in that way, it was almost like investing. We collected them because we are fans of the players and fans of the teams but, at the same time, they had this monetary value and we would trade cards with each other based on the value of the Beckett, what it said.

**Kassy:** So you know, like, I would never sell this amazing card for that **lame-o** card.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So weird, now that I'm thinking about it. It's like almost setting little kids up to be investors or something.

**Kassy:** It's a good life skill made fun.

**Andrew:** Yeah. And we always dreamed that we could sell the expensive cards but, really, I don't think anybody would have bought them.

**Andrew:** So I collected hockey cards when I was a kid. Kassy, did you have a collection at all?

**Kassy:** This is a little embarrassing, but when I was in fifth grade or so I started collecting smiley face memorabilia. So my room was just filled with smiley face things. I had a smiley face bedspread, pillow, and lights, and my walls were painted yellow, and I had stickers and T-shirts. I was such a **dork**.

**Andrew:** Smiley face. So are you talking about the classic smiley face image where it's, like, a yellow face with black eyes and a black smile?

**Kassy:** Yup, that's right.

**Andrew:** So why were you so into that?

**Kassy:** I'm not sure. I think it was my way of, like, starting my day and keeping it positive the whole day. Like, I just wanted to be cheery and optimistic all the time.

**Andrew:** You know, what's really funny about that smiley face is that it's ubiquitous. It's everywhere. But it's not associated with a brand. It's not like a Disney character or anything. I wonder if whoever originally created that smiley face made some money off of it or if it was just the artist's donation to the world.

**Kassy:** I saw a reference to it in the Forrest Gump movie, but I don't remember exactly.

**Andrew:** Yeah, that **rings a bell**, actually, that might be in Forrest Gump. We'll have to go back and watch.

**Andrew:** You also told me earlier that your mom had an interesting collection.

**Kassy:** Oh, yes. She is obsessed with Disney. So she had a Disney ornament collection.

**Andrew:** Disney ornament collection.

**Kassy:** There was actually one really terrible, terrible day. I'll never forget.

**Andrew:** OK. What happened?

**Kassy:** Maybe you can imagine. She had this beautiful glass case filled with really expensive, rare, blown glass Disney ornaments. And they were priceless. And then one day, freak accident, one of the shelves just collapsed, the top shelf.

**Andrew:** Oh no.

**Kassy:** And every single ornament in the cabinet smashed into a million pieces.

**Andrew:** Oh no.

**Kassy:** I've never remembered my mother crying so much.

**Andrew:** Wow, she must have been heartbroken. Her whole collection wiped out in, just in an instant.

**Kassy:** Exactly. So ever since then we've been trying to rebuild it. But, yeah, it's just not the same.

**Andrew:** Yeah. That sucks. It sucks when you lose something that you work so hard to put together and that you're attached to.

**Andrew:** When you say the word ornament, I think maybe our listeners might be a little confused or wondering what this word means, because I'm a little bit confused about ornament. Because when I think of this word, I think of, like, the things that we put on the Christmas tree, Christmas ornament. Is that what they are, or are they more like dolls or figures?

**Kassy:** They're Christmas ornaments, but they're not, like, really small. They're really quite large and detailed, though the fancier ones, you can put them on your tree and then you can also get, like, personal holders for them to display them throughout the year as well. They're not just Christmas themed.

**Andrew:** OK. And when the shelf broke, it was just a random accident? It wasn't, like, one of your sisters that bumped it or something?

**Kassy:** Thank god. We would have, I can't even imagine. It was a freak accident. Yeah.

**Andrew:** My mom had a very small collection of Royal Doulton. This was the brand, Royal Doulton glass figures. Maybe this is a **mom thing** to collect. And I remember one of them she received from a friend or it was passed down by a family member. And we are always warned to never run around the Royal Doulton. My mom said if we ever went belly up as a family, which means to go broke, like if something happens and we lose all our money, she said, I can sell this doll. I can get some money from this doll. So never break it. Don't run around the Royal Doulton. It's our insurance policy.

**Kassy:** These are worth more than your life.

**Andrew:** Yeah. I wonder if she still has those. She must, somewhere.

**Andrew:** All right, these days, do you collect anything, Kassy?

**Kassy:** These days? Nope. I moved too much to collect things. However, we did mention this a little bit before recording. I think these days something that people really love collecting are things inside video games.

**Andrew:** Yeah, items inside video games. Like Pokémon comes to mind.

**Kassy:** And Brawl Stars is really common these days.

**Andrew:** What's Brawl Stars?

**Kassy:** Brawl Stars is like a fighting game with elementary schoolers, globally right now. Every time you battle each other and each time you get enough points, you can unlock a new character and there's just unlimited characters.

**Andrew:** Yeah, well, this is something that people have expressed concern about, actually, is loot boxes in video games.

**Kassy:** Loot? Ah, like prize boxes.

**Andrew:** Yeah, like prize boxes where you can buy items or unlock items at random, I think is what a loot box is. You can open the chest in the game and get some sort of prize, something to level you up or something to power you up. But often you have to pay money for this, right? And this is where the concern comes from because, I know in the UK, they have made this kind of loot box online illegal because they said children are getting addicted. It's almost like gambling within the game. You're just paying some money and then it's like a slot machine, like, oh, what'll I get? What'll I get? Ah, it's just some new armor or something.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I know. I have cousins in middle school and elementary school and they'll, like, spend all of their birthday money on, like, building their virtual collections, I guess we could call them. Yeah, just getting more and more, quote, unquote, "useless things."

**Andrew:** It is true, though. That's a really good point about digital collections. I don't play video games very often. But over the winter vacation, I did go to the PC bang here in Korea, and played some video games, before corona happened. And one of the things that shocked me when I was playing these games is that my character was the only normal character. Because everybody else's character had custom clothes, custom design, custom everything, which they got from playing the game for a long time. So digital collections are definitely **a thing**, that's a great point.

**Kassy:** Yup.

**Andrew:** Kassy, we're sitting here in my apartment surrounded by my houseplant collection. I would be amiss if I didn't say that I have a houseplant collection.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I walk in here and it's, like, his own little greenhouse, almost.

**Andrew:** It's getting kind of out of control. I guess, how many do you think I have? Maybe 20, 30?

**Kassy:** I think 30, closer to 30.

**Andrew:** Closer to 30 plants. So if you ask me these days what I collect, I would answer houseplants. Yes.

**Kassy:** I think it's a cool talent and collection.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I don't know if I do anything. I try to keep the plants alive and not kill them. I'm successful some of the time. Only some of the time. But, yeah, it's nice to have around, bring a little life into my apartment. It's a nice collection, I think.

**Andrew:** All right, Kassy. Well, I think we should wrap it up here. I'm really interested about hearing what our listeners collect. So, guys, if you have a collection, maybe it's a unique collection, perhaps you gather and collect some rare or interesting thing as a hobby, then please let us know. You can get in touch with us through email. Our address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com). Or you could follow us on social media and get in touch with us that way. We're on Instagram, we're on Twitter, we're on Facebook, and we are on YouTube. So if you just search for the Culips English Podcast, you'll be able to find us.

**Kassy:** And also don't forget the study guides that you can download from [Culips.com](http://Culips.com).

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

**Kassy:** See you later.

## Detailed Explanations

### Lost art Expression

A **lost art** is something that people used to do but don't anymore, such as an activity or a pastime. The **lost art** could be an activity that was forgotten or replaced by something else. Writing letters, for example, is a **lost art** because people use email now. In this episode, Andrew says that stamp collecting is "a **lost art**, almost."

**Lost arts** are still done by some people, just not by most. **Lost arts** often need some sort of skill that isn't as popular or common anymore. If we consider writing a letter a **lost art**, then writing with a quill and ink would be even more of a **lost art**. Some people use this expression sarcastically, calling something that is still common practice a **lost art**, usually when the activity isn't done in the same way.

Here are a couple more examples with **lost art**:

**Jurou:** How did people cook every night? I can never find the time or energy.

**Ellinor:** Same here. I'm always so exhausted when I finish work, I just want to order something for delivery. Plus, I'm terrible at cooking.

**Jurou:** I'm a bit jealous of people who can cook. I always burn everything.

**Ellinor:** Cooking is a **lost art**.

**Jurou:** It really is—at least for people with full-time jobs.

**Merete:** I love taking pictures, and I'm really glad my phone has a camera and all. But I kind of miss the old cameras.

**Sung-Soo:** You mean the ones with film?

**Merete:** Yeah. Film photography really is a **lost art**. And it was the best way to take a photo.

**Sung-Soo:** Better than being able to see the photo right away to know how it turned out?

**Merete:** Well, yeah. Film photography forced you to take the best picture, every time. You couldn't really take a lot of photos all at once.

## Lame-o

### Slang

**Lame-o** means stupid, a waste of time, boring, pathetic, or of poor quality. When **lame-o** is used to insult a person, it means the person is lame, worthless, or a loser. When a thing or activity is **lame-o**, it means that thing or activity is boring, dull, or uninspiring.

**Lame-o** is based on the word lame with the ending -o added, just like other slang terms such as weirdo or sicko. It could also be spelled **lamo**. **Lame-o** was first used in a 1977 skit of Saturday Night Live (SNL).

Here are a couple more examples with **lame-o**:

**Ivona:** Did you see the project specifications the client sent in today?

**Theresa:** Yeah. They make no sense!

**Ivona:** Totally **lame-o**. Did they even read the requirements we sent through?

**Theresa:** I doubt it. How are we going to fulfill the project?

**Ivona:** Not sure. We'll have to find out what the boss thinks when he's in tomorrow.

**Takashi:** Oh man, my chemistry class was so **lame-o** today!

**Marino:** Isn't it always lame?

**Takashi:** Well, yeah. But today was extra lame. We didn't do any experiments at all! It was all about the scientific method and formulas. I just want to mix some chemicals, like they do in the movies.

**Marino:** Yeah, I don't think you'll be doing that anytime soon.

## **Dork** Noun

A **dork** is a silly, out of touch, socially awkward person who is often unstylish. **Dorks** are considered smart, and are sometimes fans of very specific and odd topics. They are also seen as silly and clumsy. **Dorks** can also be social misfits and out of touch with popular trends.

While the term can be an insult, it isn't always meant that way. **Dorks** can be funny, cute, and sweet. They are always themselves—which is often what makes them seem awkward to others.

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

**Joel:** I'm so excited for the new Star Wars movie. I heard Harrison Ford came back and will be a big part of the movie.

**Eugene:** Who does he play again?

**Joel:** You're kidding, right? Only the best role ever, Han Solo, the original space cowboy.

**Eugene:** Right.

**Joel:** Come on! How are you not excited?

**Eugene:** Ha! How are you this excited? You are such a **dork**.

**Sa'ida:** What about this dress? The blue kinda matches your eyes. They would really pop at the dance.

**Annabelle:** Hmm, too frilly.

**Sa'ida:** Fair enough, it's got a lot of frills.

**Annabelle:** Yeah, I'm looking for something a bit more mature.

**Sa'ida:** Oh, yes. This is it! This is the one.

**Annabelle:** Oh gosh! What is that, wool?

**Sa'ida:** Yes!

**Annabelle:** Nope, no way. If I wear that, I'll look like such a **dork**. Let's keep looking.

## Rings a bell

Expression

When something **rings a bell**, it sounds familiar. You can't quite remember exactly what that something is. **Rings a bell** could also mean that something reminds you of a memory, but you're not sure which memory.

Here are a few more examples with **rings a bell**:

**Aina:** We got this package in the mail. Were you expecting something?

**Marshall:** No. Who is it from?

**Aina:** A company called, uh, A&B Shippers?

**Marshall:** The name isn't **ringing a bell**.

**Aina:** Hmm, let's see what's inside.

**Floyd:** Excuse me! Sorry to bother you. Do you know if this store carries the latest slow cooker?

**Shirou:** Which brand?

**Floyd:** I can't remember, but I think it's the one with the red logo and maybe has the word kitchen in the name?

**Shirou:** That description **rings a bell**. Let's go to the kitchen appliance aisle and see if we can't find the one you're looking for.

**Marlen:** So the map says we're supposed to turn right up ahead.

**Louisa:** All right. Where are we going, again?

**Marlen:** Not sure, really. Maribel only gave me an address and said we should be prepared for steak.

**Louisa:** Oh, I knew this area **rang a bell**. There's a really famous steakhouse here!

## Mom thing Slang

A **mom thing** or **mommy thing** is anything associated with mothers. This phrase is rarely used in casual conversation. You will see it most often used in blogs and other content created for mothers.

A **mom thing** could include products or items, hobbies, activities, food, or drinks. A **mom thing** could be anything that mothers tend to enjoy. In this episode, Andrew says that Royal Doulton glass figurines may be a **mom thing** to collect. That means that the glass figurines are most often collected by mothers.

Here are a couple more examples with **mom thing**:

**Taro:** So sorry about my mom. She really likes feeding my friends whenever they come over. Just say yes and if you don't want to eat it, wrap it in a napkin or something. We'll toss it in the garbage after.

**Nathaniel:** Don't worry. My mom does the same thing.

**Taro:** It must be a **mom thing**.

**Nathaniel:** Sometimes I think she's being too pushy but, hey, we're never hungry when we hang out.

**Veronica:** I have all these great yoga pants, but ever since my yoga studio moved across the city, I don't wear them. Do you need any?

**Fifi:** Why don't you just wear them around the house?

**Veronica:** Wait, what? I can't do that, can I? Isn't that, like, a **mom thing**?

**Fifi:** Veronica. You are a mom. You can do **mom things**.

**Veronica:** Point taken. Ha, yes. Now I can wear my yoga pants again!

**Fifi:** I mean, if you really don't want to, I'll take them.

**Veronica:** Nope! I'm going to embrace my mom status and take full advantage of this.

## It's a thing Idiom

**It's a thing** means that something exists or is a fact. You can use this as an exclamation of disbelief or to emphasize that a concept, idea, or thing is a fact. **It's a thing** could also mean that something is a trend or is popular.

In this episode, Andrew says, "Digital collections **are definitely a thing**." This means that people do, in fact, collect digital files. Other ways to use this idiom are **so that's a thing** and **[something] is a thing**.

Here are a couple more examples with **it's a thing**:

**Fred:** Do ants breathe?

**Kaoru:** Their exoskeletons absorb oxygen, but they don't have lungs.

**Fred:** No way, that's not true!

**Kaoru:** Yes, it is. **It's a thing**.

**Melody:** I know fashion is supposed to be all amazing and whatever, but sometimes I just get really confused about what's good and what's not.

**Debra:** Same here. I mean, there's some really obvious not-good trends, like the see-through cutouts in jeans. Those were bad.

**Melody:** Wait, see-through cutouts in jeans? That can't be real.

**Debra:** They **were totally a thing** a couple years ago. Big plastic patches over the knees.

**Melody:** That sounds terrible!

**Debra:** It looked terrible, too.

## Quiz

**1. If something rings a bell, it is:**

- a) unfamiliar
- b) vaguely familiar
- c) sounds like a bell
- d) shaped like a bell

**2. What do you call someone who is a little socially awkward and a huge fan of something odd?**

- a) doorknob
- b) doofus
- c) dweeb
- d) dork

**3. When you call something a lost art, it is:**

- a) something that people used to do commonly but rarely do now
- b) artwork that went missing decades ago
- c) a hidden treasure
- d) something that people never used to do but do now

**4. Which of the following could be used to emphasize that something exists or is a fact?**

- a) it's a thought
- b) it's not a thing
- c) it's a thing
- d) it's not a thought

**5. Which of the following is slang for stupid, boring, or a waste of time?**

- a) lame-y
- b) blame-o
- c) lame-o
- d) clam-o

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever collected anything? If so, what was it and why did you collect it? If not, what is something you wish you could collect and why?
2. What is one lost art that you wish were around today and why?
3. Think of the people you've met in your life. Are any of them dorks? Why or why not?
4. Describe a situation when something rang a bell for you.
5. What is one fact or piece of information that made you exclaim, "It's a thing?"

## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.d    3.a    4.c    5.c

### 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: Lisa Hoekstra

English editor: Stephanie MacLean

Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

Project manager: Jessica Cox

Image: chuttersnap (Unsplash.com)