

## Simplified Speech #109 – Hiking, trekking, and climbing

### Episode description

What's the difference between a hike, a trek, and a climb? Andrew and Jeremy answer a listener's question and explain the nuances between the three words in this episode of Culips.

### Fun fact

Hiking, trekking, and climbing aren't the only words used to describe a walk in the woods. In the United Kingdom, it's called rambling. In Australia, it's called bushwhacking. In New Zealand, it's called tramping.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Hike [something] up
- Trek
- Hiked in/out
- Bonding
- Clue in
- Make the rounds



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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. I'm Andrew.

**Jeremy:** And I'm Jeremy.

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

Hello, friends. Welcome back to Culips. This is Simplified Speech. If you're unfamiliar with what that is, let me explain. Simplified Speech is our series featuring clear, natural, and easy to understand conversations. And today, we are going to talk about hiking, trekking, and climbing.

But before we get into that, I want to let everyone know that there is a study guide available for this episode. And, guys, we really recommend that you study along with the guide while you listen to us here today. Inside the guide, you'll find a transcript, along with detailed explanations, descriptions, and examples of the key vocabulary that you'll hear us use. There's also a quiz and some prompts that you can use for speaking or writing practice. There's a lot of good stuff in the guide. And to download it, you just need to sign up and become Culips member, which you can do on our website, Culips.com.

**Andrew:** I'm not alone today. This is not a solo podcast. I'm joined by Jeremy. Hey there, Jeremy.

**Jeremy:** Hey there, Andrew. So, what are we going to talk about today?

**Andrew:** Yeah, well, we're talking about hiking, trekking, and climbing. And the inspiration for this episode comes from one of our listeners from Japan, Mina. And Mina wrote to us, and said, "Hello, Andrew, Kassy, Suzanne, and Jeremy. I'm Mina and I've been listening to your podcasts for about 3 years. And I really enjoy your podcast and Instagram. Thank you for always giving such wonderful episodes. I have a question about the words hiking, trekking, climbing, and things like that. How can we differentiate between these words? I like to go to the mountains, and I think I should use hike a mountain for short trails. Can I use the word hike for multiple-day trips? Thanks." OK, so thank you, Mina, for that question and message. It's very nice to hear that you are a long-time listener.

**Andrew:** So, Jeremy, why don't we get into it first by talking about the differences in these three words, hiking, trekking, climbing, and then we'll talk a little bit about our own experience doing these things.

**Jeremy:** Sure.

**Andrew:** So let's start with the word hike. What does it mean to hike?

**Jeremy:** Well, I think that Mina is right in assuming that a hike is sort of a shorter trip, a shorter activity. Actually, I have also heard the word hike to mean, sort of, to pull up something. For example, if I'm wearing long pants and I want to walk in the water, I might **hike up my pants** so that I can walk through the water. This means that I pull my pants up, maybe pull the bottom of my pants up to my knees, so that my pants don't get wet in the water. So hiking also seems to have the meaning of going up.

**Andrew:** Exactly. Jeremy, I think of—when I hear you say **hike up your pants**—you know, when I was a high school student, it was really cool and fashionable for students to wear their pants really low and baggy. And so our teachers always told us to **hike up our pants**, to pull them up around our waist and not wear them down low. And so I think you're right that embedded in this word is this nuance of going up. So in my head, when I think of doing the activity, hiking, it means going to a mountain, walking up the mountain, and then walking back home, walking down the mountain. Going up and coming down. And usually a hike is a 1-day trip. It could be longer. But I think for most people a hike is just, you know, an activity that you can do in 1 day.

**Jeremy:** Well, if we contrast this with the word **trek** or trekking, I think this will help it make more sense. **Trek** is usually something that is a multi-day trip. So you will pack a big backpack with food and water and cooking supplies and sleeping supplies. And you will hike or walk to a destination that is far away and requires multiple days to get there. So it also seems to indicate that there is a destination that you are trying to get to.

**Andrew:** Right. So you could go trekking in northern Canada to the North Pole, **trek** to the North Pole. Or you could **trek** through the Himalayan mountains, maybe, to get to the top of Mount Everest. And, of course, that is a multiple day, very difficult trip to do.

**Jeremy:** But I have to be honest. In most of my life, I have only used the word hike. Even when I went on a 2-day hike, or a 3-day hike, I still said hike. And I really came into contact with the word **trek** or trekking when I lived in South Korea, and I met English speakers from other countries. Was that the same for you, Andrew?

**Andrew:** Yeah, maybe this is just where we grew up, Jeremy, because we both grew up on the West Coast of North America. And I think we all kind of speak similarly in this region. So I also only use the word hike until I started travelling and met people from other countries use this word. So, yeah, to me, I actually don't use the word **trek** very often, I just use the word hike. That doesn't mean that **trek** isn't an English word. It is a very fine word, but I personally don't use it.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, the only way that I use the word **trek** is to emphasize how long a certain journey is. So, for example, when I lived in Seoul, South Korea, if I wanted to go from my house to go visit Andrew, where he lives, even though it isn't a very far distance, I still had to take two buses and a subway. And it took a long time to do those things. So I would say, "Oh, I'm sorry, Andrew, I can't hang out today. I can't make the **trek** out to your place tonight." So I use that word to emphasize how long and difficult the trip is.

**Andrew:** Exactly. That is how I always use the word, too. Not to talk about the activity of walking a long distance somewhere through the forest and the mountains, but to journey from place A to place B inside the city, using a car or public transportation, and usually in a negative way, like, "Oh, I don't want to go there. It's a long **trek**." You know, it's, like, it takes too long to go to that place. So a **trek** in this sense is, like, just a difficult journey that we don't want to do because it takes too long.

Of course, there's also the popular TV show Star Trek. I personally haven't seen Star Trek before. How about you, Jeremy? Have you ever watched Star Trek?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, my dad watched it a lot when I was a kid. So it was always on TV in my house. But that, as well, relates to this meaning Star Trek means a long journey through the stars, usually to a designated place. But it emphasizes the long journey, whereas star hike would not make any sense, right?

**Andrew:** Exactly. So in Mina's situation here, where she says that she goes up into the mountains for a 1-day activity, then the best word to use is hike. And I would really only reserve **trek** for a multiple-day trip that's very difficult, very long. And perhaps you're also camping outside or you're staying overnight. This kind of very difficult activity.

**Andrew:** So the last activity that Mina asked about is climbing. So what is the difference between hiking and climbing, because they both involve going up. How are they different?

**Jeremy:** Well, you can go for a hike and, on that hike, you can climb up the mountain. And I think climbing can have two meanings, really. One is like rock climbing, where you are actually scaling the side of a mountain. And this can be very dangerous and very exciting. And you need special equipment for this kind of climbing.

**Andrew:** You are using your hands and feet to physically pull and push yourself up the mountain cliff, the side of a cliff on a mountain.

**Jeremy:** A vertical surface usually, right?

**Andrew:** Exactly.

**Jeremy:** But it can also mean that you are simply making your way up to a higher altitude by walking on a path. And so we hiked this mountain or we climbed this mountain, both of those mean pretty much the same thing to me. Do you agree, Andrew?

**Andrew:** They mean the same thing for me, as well. So usually we go for a hike, but we climb a mountain. So, for example, Jeremy, if you asked me like, “Oh, Andrew, what did you do last weekend?” I could say I hiked Mount Boucherie. Mount Boucherie is a mountain in my neighbourhood in my hometown. I hiked Mount Boucherie or I climbed Mount Boucherie. And I think, Jeremy, you will know that I’m not a rock climber so you would automatically assume that I hiked it, that I walked up and down it. However, if I was a mountain climber, then maybe you would have to ask for clarification: did you actually pull yourself up with your hands and feet or did you walk it?

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I think, also, if you look at a mountain, usually, they’re not a completely vertical surface. There is a slope, right, and maybe some vertical surfaces. But I recently met someone who is very into rock climbing, who is a rock climber. And he just referred to it as climbing. He said, “Do you climb? You should get into climbing.” And he referred to that whole sport of rock climbing as just climbing. So it depends on context. Of course, I know you and I know you don’t rock climb. So I would assume, ah, he hiked up and down the mountain.

**Andrew:** I think also, we would reserve the word climb for a taller mountain. Like when I visited Japan, I climbed Mount Fuji. We could say hike, but to me it was more arduous and more difficult than a regular hike. So this is why I would say climb. But I think both are interchangeable and you don’t really need to stress out about the details between them, because English speakers will use them interchangeably all the time.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, they usually sell shirts at the bottom of famous mountains that say I climbed Mount whatever, right?

**Andrew:** Yes, I climbed Mount McKinley or something like this. Although there’s probably not very many tourist shops at the bottom of Mount McKinley, a big mountain in Alaska, I think.

**Jeremy:** Yeah. It depends where you are. But still.

**Andrew:** Jeremy, you said that you did a 2-day hike before. Where did you do this hike?

**Jeremy:** It was near Lake Tahoe, which is a famous lake on the border of California, the state of California and the state of Nevada, in the United States. We had a backpack that had food and sleeping supplies and a tent and all that. And we **hiked 12 miles in** and we stayed there for a full day. After 2 nights, we **hiked out**.

**Andrew:** Wow. That’s awesome. And how was it? Was it fun? Was it too difficult? I’ve never done an overnight hiking trip like that before.

**Jeremy:** I actually really enjoyed it. Of course, it was difficult. You have to have the right shoes and gear and things like that. But I really enjoyed it. And at the time, I said, “Oh, I’m definitely going to do this again.” But I didn’t end up doing it again. And now I think I have to wait until my son is a little bit older before we can do a hike like that again.

**Andrew:** It could be a good **father-son bonding** experience, though. A couple days in the woods, a nice long hike like that. I am sure you will probably enjoy doing something like that when your son is a bit older.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I am looking forward to that already.

**Andrew:** Jeremy, you mentioned gear just a moment ago. And I have a funny story to share about hiking gear because just this week, one of my friends sent me an instant message. And she was laughing a lot and saying, oh my god, what is this? What is this? Because about 3 or 4 years ago, I was at the airport in Incheon in Korea, getting ready to go on a trip to Taiwan. I was gonna visit Taiwan for the weekend. And when I was there, I got interviewed by a local news station here in Korea.

And the question that they asked me is why do you think Korean people, especially middle-aged and older Korean people, like to wear so much bright hiking clothes when they go travelling? And I didn’t really **clue in**, but when I was asked that question, I looked around at the airport and I saw many groups of older Korean people that were travelling together in a, kind of, like, tour travel package situation. They were all wearing very bright hiking gear and hiking clothes. And so I thought for a moment, and I said, “Well, maybe it’s so they can find each other while they’re travelling, right?” They don’t want to get lost, like Mr. Kim is over here. Mrs. Park is over here. And they can find each other easily.

And that clip kind of went viral to an extent. I have got lots of messages from my friends over the years laughing at that clip, and people have sent it to me. And I guess it’s **making the rounds** again on social media. So, yeah, if you’re in Korea, and you search on social media, maybe you’ll be able to hear me talking about hiking gear on the Korean news.

**Jeremy:** You should send that to me. I want to see it.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I’ll send it to you. It’s kind of funny.

**Jeremy:** Jeremy, just before we wrap this up, there is one more thing we should talk about and that is backpacking, backpacking. Backpacking.

**Andrew:** So backpacking is when you travel—usually through Europe or Southeast Asia, but it could really be any place, you could travel through any place—when you don’t take much luggage with you. All of your belongings are packed into one big backpack. And you travel only with that backpack, no other suitcases or anything else.

**Jeremy:** In fact, they call them backpacking backpacks.



**Andrew:** Backpacking backpacks. I bought a backpacking backpack after I graduated high school with the plan to backpack through Europe with some of my best friends, but I never went, anyway. Jeremy, have you ever been backpacking?

**Jeremy:** Yes, I have. I backpacked through Europe, I guess you could say, when I was younger. But really, it just felt like I had my suitcase on my back.

**Andrew:** Well, you're a pretty minimal dude, Jeremy, I don't think you would necessarily have too many things with you when you go travelling. I couldn't see you with a bunch of luggage and suitcases, for example.

**Jeremy:** Yeah, I always tried to minimize, especially when I travel. But I also could say that I went backpacking on that trip that I just mentioned, a multiple-day hike. So, technically, backpacking is that, is hiking for multiple days and carrying all of your belongings on your back, so usually food, tent, water, things like that. But we do use this term a lot when we talk about travelling through other countries. People say, "I backpacked through Europe." "I backpacked through Thailand." And the word backpack is used as a verb in this sense.

**Andrew:** Yeah, exactly. So, to me, when I think of backpacking or backpacking through a country, that is the preposition that we use, backpack through South America, backpack through Europe, I think of a young person, maybe fresh out of high school or in their 20s. I think of them sleeping in a hostel. I think of budget travelling, trying to travel while saving as much money as possible. And I think of riding the train or riding a bus, as opposed to taxis or renting a car or something like this. I think, in my mind, at least, I associate backpacking with a budget travel that young people do.

**Jeremy:** And you can call those young people backpackers.

**Andrew:** Great, Jeremy. Well, I think we were able to shed light on the different nuances between these words: trekking, hiking, climbing, and backpacking. And thanks again to Mina for this great question. We're gonna leave it at here for now, everyone, but thanks for tuning in and thanks for studying English with us here today.

If you enjoyed this episode and if you like Culips, then please support us. You can do that in many different ways, such as following us on social media, telling your friends who are learning English about Culips, leaving us a nice review and rating on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts, or signing up to become a Culips member. And remember, to become a Culips member, you can visit our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com). And if you want to check out our study guides, there are some free samples on our website. I think there are six episodes that you can view for free and see if Culips membership is right for you.

**Andrew:** If you have a question or a comment or a suggestion for a future Culips episode, just like Mina did, then get in touch with us by sending us an email to [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com).

We'll be back soon with another brand-new episode and we will talk to you then. Bye, everyone.

**Jeremy:** Bye, everyone.



## Detailed Explanations

### Hike [something] up

Phrasal verb

**Hike [something] up**, or **hike up [something]**, means to lift, tug, or pull something up with a quick or rough movement. The something is usually clothing and is **hiked up** for comfort or to move better.

You could also say **hitch up**. In this episode, Jeremy says, “If I’m wearing long pants and I want to walk in the water, I might **hike up my pants** ... This means that I pull my pants up ... So that my pants don’t get wet in the water.” Jeremy could have also said, “I might hitch up my pants.”

**Hike [something] up** has a second meaning. When it’s used with regard to price, tax, or money—to refer to a number or amount—then it means to raise or increase something by a large amount, especially abruptly. For example, if your landlord suddenly raised the rent, you could say he **hiked the rent up**.

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

**Maisie:** I found a spider in my bedroom last night.

**Da:** Ah, so gross! I hate spiders.

**Maisie:** Me too. So much. I **hiked my nightgown right up** and I ran to get my husband.

**Da:** Did he kill the spider?

**Masie:** No, he doesn’t believe in killing spiders. He did relocate it to our garage, though.

**Da:** Oh, good.

**Misaki:** What do you think of my hair?

**Lee:** Looks good.

**Misaki:** It better. It cost more than it should have. My hairdresser is **hiking up her prices** again. She’s charging way more than I want to pay for a haircut.

## **Trek** Noun

A **trek**, when used informally, means a long walk, trip, or task that you do with little or no enthusiasm. In its informal form, **trek** is usually used to complain or grumble about the task or trip. **Treks** take a lot of effort, and the longer the **trek** takes, the worse it feels.

In this episode, Jeremy talks about how difficult it used to be for him to visit Andrew when they both lived in Seoul. Since the city's public transit system made the trip complicated, a visit would be a **trek**. "I still had to take two buses and a subway. And it took a long time to do those things," explains Jeremy. "So I would say, 'Oh, I'm sorry, Andrew, I can't hang out today. I can't make the **trek** out to your place tonight.'"

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

**Darcie:** How did your blind date go last night?

**Xia:** Ugh, it didn't go.

**Darcie:** What do you mean? Was it that bad?

**Xia:** Not even! I **trekked** all the way into town to meet him and he didn't even turn up!

**Darcie:** What a jerk!

**Atsushi:** By the way, the elevator in our building isn't working.

**Ismail:** What? You mean we have to **trek** up six flights of stairs with our groceries?

**Atsushi:** Yeah, sorry about that. I should have mentioned it earlier.

**Ismail:** You mean, before we bought all this food for the party?

**Atsushi:** Yeah.

## Hike in/out

Phrasal verb

**Hike in** means to walk into or climb up something—for example, a forest, mountain, or trail. When you're **hiking in**, you're always moving deeper into or further up something. You can add a measure of distance between "hike" and "in" to show how far into or further up you went. In this episode, Jeremy mentions that, at Lake Tahoe, he **hiked 12 miles in** before he made camp. That means that the 12 miles were all in the same direction, going deeper into the area. **Hike out** means to walk or climb out of that place. If Jeremy **hiked 12 miles in**, then he also had to **hike 12 miles out** of Lake Tahoe when he finished camping.

**Hike out** has a second meaning in nautical US and Canadian English: to lean backwards over the side of a sailing boat to make sure it doesn't tip over.

Here are a couple more examples with **hike in/out**:

**Jake:** I heard you went on an overnight camping trip.

**Hyeon-Jeong:** Yeah, a bunch of us went out for a guys' weekend.

**Jake:** Where did you go?

**Hyeon-Jeong:** That place just north of the city. I can't remember what it's called. But we **hiked a long way in** to get to our campsite. That alone was worth it!

**Momoka:** Ah! There's nothing like a brisk walk in the hills to lift your spirits!

**Patricia:** I'll say. Your cheeks are all rosy. You were gone a really long time, though. Did you stop somewhere?

**Momoka:** Nope! I just forgot that whatever amount of time I spend **hiking in**, I'll have to spend the same amount of time **hiking out**.

## Bonding

Noun

**Bonding** is when people do activities together to deepen their relationship. The activities are usually friendly.

In English, it is common to see specific patterns describing the noun. **Mother-daughter bonding**, for example, is when a mother and a daughter do something together. Likewise, **father-son bonding**, **father-daughter bonding**, **mother-son bonding**, **mother-infant bonding**, and **sibling bonding** can all be used. These are all common patterns used by native English speakers.

Outside the family, **bonding** describes developing friendships between adults through an activity. For example, you might hear someone speak about **male bonding** when men do an activity together.

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

**Noriko:** Where's Casey tonight? I thought he'd be joining us.

**Ellie-May:** His friends invited him out to the pub for some **male bonding**. He hasn't seen those guys in a really long time, so I let him skip our dinner.

**Noriko:** That was very nice of you.

**Ellie-May:** Well, I also wanted to have a little **girl bonding** time, too, so it's a win-win.

**Mitchell:** I need to bring my mom and sister to do something soon.

**Yamato:** That's out of the blue. Why?

**Mitchell:** We haven't seen each other in a while. I think it's time for some **mother-daughter-son bonding**.

**Yamato:** Ah, that's true. You have been really busy here at work. What were you thinking of doing?

**Mitchell:** I don't know. Maybe dinner somewhere nice, where my dad probably wouldn't take my mom or sister.

**Yamato:** Well, if you need me to cover for you when you go, let me know.

## Clue in Phrasal verb

**Clue in** means to get information (to **clue in**) or to give information to someone (to **clue someone in**). In this episode, Andrew says he didn't really **clue in** when he was asked a question in the airport. This means he didn't really have all the information at the time, but he figured it out in the end.

**Clue in** could also mean to correct misinformation or to give someone an update. This phrase uses the "inform" meaning of the verb "clue." In some cases, the information provided is important or exclusive. For example, if a journalist is **clued in** on a big scoop, it means they've received unshared information, which is a great advantage for a journalist.

Here are a couple more examples with **clue in**:

**Spencer:** So much has happened since I went on vacation!

**Haru:** Yeah, there were some big developments.

**Spencer:** What's all this about the file names?

**Haru:** Look, I don't want to be mean, but I'm busy with this project right now. If you go talk to Sarah in Human Resources, she'll **clue you in** on all the news.

**Spencer:** Oh, right. Sorry!

**Airi:** I'm such a dunce sometimes!

**Meaghan:** You're not! I don't wanna hear you talk about yourself like that.

**Airi:** No, I really am. I'm only just now **cluing in** that the cute guy last night was trying to get my phone number!

**Meaghan:** Wait. You didn't know that?

**Airi:** No! Do you think I would've left without giving it to him if I knew?

**Meaghan:** I thought you just weren't interested. Girl, you are a dunce!

## Make the rounds

### Idiom

**Make the rounds**, when it refers to a story, joke, or rumour, means to be passed from one person to another. When it is a person **making the rounds**, it means they are moving from place to place (such as a security guard walking their route) or person to person (such as a party attendee talking to different people). In this episode, Andrew mentions that a video of him is **making the rounds** again on social media. This means people are watching and sharing the video a lot.

Here are a few more examples with **make the rounds**:

**Hazel:** Whatever happened with that guy in that scandal?

**Chloe:** Hmm? The scandal with that video when he was being a huge jerk to his assistant?

**Hazel:** Yeah. That one.

**Chloe:** Oh, I dunno. That story **made the rounds** in the media for a while, but eventually people got tired of it.

**Damien:** I just heard the craziest thing about our teacher!

**Euan:** He's an escaped convict.

**Damien:** Yeah! How did you know?

**Euan:** That rumour has been **making the rounds** since September. It's not true, man.

**Damien:** How could you possibly know that?

**Euan:** Because he's my neighbour. Dude, don't believe everything you hear.

**Stanley:** I'm so glad Tasha came back with such great stories. I was worried about her backpacking across Europe alone.

**Caroline:** Did she tell you the joke that was **making the rounds** when she was there?

**Stanley:** Yeah! I had such a laughing fit, I needed to sit down!

## Quiz

**1. Which of the following could you say to describe how far you ventured into a forest?**

- a) I hiked 2 kilometres in
- b) I drifted 2 kilometres in
- c) I swam 2 kilometres up
- d) I flew 2 kilometres up

**2. What does it mean when a rumour makes the rounds?**

- a) it is spinning around
- b) it is following a set routine
- c) it is being shared from one person to another
- d) it is baking round cookies

**3. Which of the following means to get or give information?**

- a) clue in
- b) glue in
- c) clue out
- d) play clue

**4. Susie hiked up her pants before they fell off. What did Susie do?**

- a) walked on her pants
- b) raised the price of her pants
- c) took off her pants
- d) pulled up her pants

**5. Which of the following words could you use to complain about a task or trip?**

- a) journey
- b) trek
- c) hike
- d) adventure



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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is something you have to do that you would describe as a trek?
2. What are some things you can wear or do so that you don't have to hike your pants up?
3. Describe a time when you were clued in or when you clued someone in on something important.
4. When you're at a party, do you make the rounds or do you stay still and let other people come talk to you? Why?
5. What are some of your favourite things to do to bond with friends or family, and why?

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## Quiz Answers

1.a    2.c    3.a    4.d    5.b

### Episode credits

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