

Simplified Speech #110 - Childhood games

Episode description

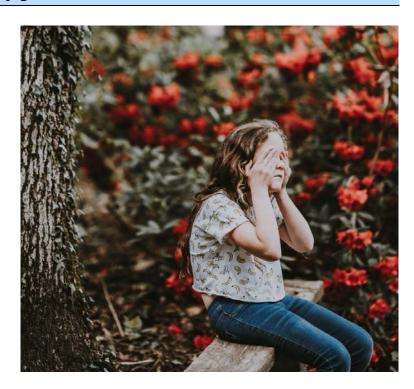
In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew and Kassy have a blast talking about their favourite childhood games. Tune in to hear about childhood classics like tag, hide-andseek, and much more.

Fun fact

It is widely agreed that school recess is an extremely important part of the day. Recess time gives kids a chance to unwind and burn off their energy so that they can better focus on their lessons. Recess is also a great time for kids to build spatial and social emotional skills while interacting with their classmates through play.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Right off the bat
- That's all there is to it
- To ditch
- Rebel
- Ingrained
- Safe assumption





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 there, everyone. My name's Andrew.

Kassy: And I'm Kassy.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Hey there, friends, welcome back to Culips. This is a Simplified Speech episode. If you're wondering what that is, well, Simplified Speech is the Culips series where we have totally natural English conversations but we slow down our speech just a little bit. And we hope that by listening to the series, you can improve your English listening skills and become a fluent English listener.

I want to let you know that there's a study guide available for this episode for all Culips members. And we recommend that you follow along with the study guide today while you listen to us. So to check that out, just visit our website, Culips.com.

Today, I am joined by my cohost, Kassy. Kassy, hello.

Kassy: Hello.

Andrew: Kassy, what's our topic for today?

Kassy: We have a fun one today. Our topic for today is childhood games.

Andrew: All right. Childhood games, yes, childhood games. So games that we played when we were kids. And this episode was actually suggested to us by one of our listeners. And I'm really sorry, but I couldn't find the name and the email of the person who suggested this episode. I read the email and then I lost it. So I really apologize for that. However, if you were the one that suggested this episode, please send me a quick note to let me know it was you and I promise that we will give you a shout-out in our next episode.

OK, so with that being said, Kassy, why don't we jump into this topic, I think is going to be a fun one. Let's start by recapping maybe some of the games that you played when you were a kid that are really memorable to you, that really stand out? What kind of games did you play?

Kassy: Yeah, I think the big three, like, **right off the bat**, I would think of would be number one, tag.



Andrew: Tag, OK, tag.

Kassy: Any kind of tag, freeze tag, ball tag, there's so many different varieties.

Andrew: OK, so first one is tag, number two?

Kassy: Number two, hide and seek.

Andrew: Ah, hide and seek. OK, another classic. And number three?

Kassy: Number three, I don't know if this was popular everywhere, but in my school four square, a kind of ball hitting game with four people.

Andrew: OK, those are some great selections. And I played two of those. I never played four square but I did play tag and hide and go seek. Why don't we break these games down a little bit and explain how they're played?

And tag is one of the simplest games there is. But I remember it always being really fun. It's almost funny, I'm laughing because it's such a simple game. Could you explain to our listeners how to play tag?

Kassy: Totally, yeah. So tag is when one person is "it," they are the person that is in charge of running after the other people. And then the others run away as fast as they can and try not to get tagged or caught by the "it" person.

Andrew: Exactly. It's really simple. So you have a group of kids that play together and one person is designated as what we call "it," right? You're "it." That is what we call this person who is supposed to catch the other people. So all the kids run around and the person who is "it" has to try and touch another child. And when "it" touches another child, then that person "it" is released from their responsibility of catching other kids and the person who is caught becomes "it." And **that's all there is to it**.

Kassy: And you can always tell when people are playing tag because there's a whole bunch of phrases going around like, who's "it?" I'm "it." He's "it." She's "it." I got you. Like those phrases.

Andrew: Yeah. Yeah, usually that's what you say when you tag the other person, right? You tag the person and you say, "You're 'it." And tag is just a verb that means to touch, right? It's kind of like touch or mark. So that's tag.

Now, you mentioned also freeze tag. That's a little bit different, right? How do you play freeze tag?

Kassy: Freeze tag is when, after you've been tagged by the "it" person, you have to freeze and you can't move until another member of your team who isn't "it" is able to come and unfreeze you from your location.



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Andrew: Right. So once you get tagged in freeze tag, then you are not "it." Instead, you are frozen. And the way that we used to play when I was a kid, Kassy, is that when you were tagged and frozen, you had to put your arms out to your side to make kind of a T shape with your body. And the only way that you could be saved and return to the game is if another player ran under your arms. And this would unfreeze you.

Kassy: Ah.

Andrew: Did you play it like that, too?

Kassy: No, we usually just played that another player had to touch you.

Andrew: Ah, OK.

Kassy: Yours sounds more fun.

Andrew: OK, let's move on to the next game that you mentioned, which is hide and seek. And I really loved playing hide and seek when I was a kid. It was a super fun game. Could you briefly describe how to play hide and seek?

Kassy: Yes. So hide and seek has kind of a similar principle. There's someone who is kind of like "it," they are the seeker, the person who's finding others. And then there are the others who are the hiders. And they're running away and hiding in locations and trying not to be found by the seeker. And the seeker counts to 10 or 20. And when they finish counting, they go looking for the others.

Andrew: Right. So usually, when you're "it," you have to turn around so that you are not facing the other players and cover your eyes. And there's usually a rule, like, you have to count to 20 or 30, like you said, and that gives the other players an opportunity to hide, and then the person who is "it" has to find them, right? And you win this game if you can hide and never be found, right? If the, if "it" can't find you, then you win.

Kassy: Which could get really boring, you could just be sitting in one spot for 10, 20 minutes.

Andrew: I used to live near a forest. So we would play this game in the forest. And we'd always find really awesome places to hide. It was a really fun place to play hide and seek. But, yeah, especially if you were playing with a kid who wasn't familiar with your neighbourhood. Like if you had a family friend visit from out of town or something and you played hide and seek together, then they would always have a really difficult time. They wouldn't know where the good hiding places are.

Kassy: Yeah, or they could feel really sad. Like, sometimes kids forget about one kid. So one kid hides really well and he stays there waiting and waiting and waiting. And all the other kids have stopped playing hide and seek by that point.



Andrew: Yeah, he's just out there for hours.

Kassy: Yeah, it's so sad.

Andrew: Now, the next game that you mentioned is one that wasn't really popular where I grew up. It's called four square. So maybe you could let our listeners, and me at the same, time know about this game?

Kassy: Yeah, sure. So four square, there are four squares, kind of like a box, divided into four. And there's a king, a queen, a jack, and somebody else. And we can just say number 1, 2, 3, 4. And then there's a line next to the four. So the king, the number one person, starts by hitting the ball into another person's square. And then they keep hitting into each square until the ball goes out of the squares. And whoever's square it was in last is out. So they go to the back of the line, and then the others move up.

Andrew: So you kind of rotate?

Kassy: Yeah, so if number two was the one that was out, number two would go to the back of the line. And then number three would move to the two spot, number four would move to the three spot. And so everybody's trying to become king, number one.

Andrew: I see. I see. So you're trying to work your way up to that top position.

Kassy: And the king is trying to stay in power as long as possible.

Andrew: That sounds fun. What about hopscotch, did you ever play hopscotch?

Kassy: Yeah, totally. We had little rhymes while we danced and played hopscotch or jump rope. Did you do jump rope?

Andrew: Yeah, I was never very good at jump rope. But I do remember doing it. And I think I really liked double Dutch, the variation, double Dutch, right? That's where you have two ropes happening at the same time and two people swinging the rope while one person jumps in the middle. So the way that I remember playing that in gym class when I was young is that all of the students would line up in a row and two students would be swinging the rope. And you'd have to go in and jump the rope as many times as you could until you messed up and then you were out. And you had to go to the back of the line. And every student had a chance to have a try and see how well they could do.

Kassy: Yeah, it was very similar in our school, as well.



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Andrew: Kassy, when I got a little bit older, and I was a little bit more of a **rebel** and a bad kid—I was never too bad of a kid, but from time to time I did get into a bit of trouble—and when I did, one game that I would play was called nicky nicky nine doors. Nicky nicky nine doors. I have no idea what this name means. It's just one of those weird things that gets passed down from generation to generation, I guess. But nicky nicky nine doors is a game where my friends and I, we would sneak up to somebody's house and knock on their door and ring their doorbell, and then hide and wait for them to answer the door. And then we'd laugh and run away.

Kassy: Ah, we called it ding dong **ditch**.

Andrew: Ding dong **ditch**.

Kassy: 'Cause the doorbell rings ding dong. And then you **ditch**, you run away as fast as possible.

Andrew: Ah, that name makes more sense to me than nicky nicky nine doors. But, yeah, that, that is a game that was fun to play, but probably really, really annoying for the neighbours in the neighbourhood.

Another game that I played when I was older was called anty anty eye over. I actually have no idea how we even spell that. I think it's just another name for a game that was passed down from generation to generation. But I really enjoyed playing it. So it's called anty anty eye over. Did you play this one at all?

Kassy: I've never heard of it.

Andrew: Never heard of it. OK, so maybe it's regional, maybe it's just special to my neck of the woods, the area where I grew up, the west coast of Canada. But to play anty anty eye over, you have two teams. And you know, most people in Canada, and I think in the US, too, especially in the suburbs, outside of the city, most people live in a house, right? The house has a front yard and a back yard. And for anty anty eye over, one team occupies the front yard and the other team occupies the back yard.

The goal of the game is to move from one yard to the other yard. So from the front yard to the backyard without being captured. And so the team who is "it"—here's that word "it" again, just means the, the team that is playing, it's their turn to play—they have to throw a ball over the roof of the house. So you have to throw a ball over the roof of a house. And when you do this, you yell "anty." And then the other team, when they catch the ball, they yell "anty over," I believe they have to yell "anty over." And once they yell "anty over," then your job is to try and make it into the opposing yard without getting hit by the ball. So the other team will catch the ball and then try and throw the ball at you. And if you get hit by the ball, then you failed in your attempt to get to the opposite yard. And you were out.



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This game was really fun because, first of all, you had to be strong to be able to throw the ball over the roof. We couldn't do this until we were, like, 12 or 13 years old, probably. And then there's, like, this race element to it, and also this danger. Like, I remember playing with some neighbourhood kids that were bigger and stronger and if they threw the ball at you, it hurt when you got hit. So there was like this danger element to it, too. It was really fun.

Kassy: I'm seeing a pattern with all of our games. I'm wondering if it's some psychological thing. All the games that we really love are about, you know, like, showing who's stronger or faster.

Andrew: Or escaping.

Kassy: Running away. Yeah, like, that fear makes you excited. I don't know.

Andrew: Yeah, that's definitely part of it, I think. Especially with boys. I remember in, like, elementary school, a lot of the games we played were related to throwing balls at each other, like tennis balls, hockey balls. We'd play street hockey all the time and then the losing team would have to line up against the wall of the school gym and everybody would have an opportunity to throw a ball at the losing players.

Kassy: Oh, that's awful.

Andrew: Like, that was part of the punishment of losing. Of course, it didn't hurt. It was just a tennis ball. But there was that element of, like, you have to do well or else you get punished. I don't know where that comes from. But you might be right that it's maybe some sort of deep, **ingrained** psychological human trait.

Kassy: Yeah, like war training for kids. I don't know.

Andrew: Yeah, I don't know. It's weird to look back and think about it.

Kassy, I think you must have spent a lot of time in the swimming pool growing up. Is this a safe assumption to make?

Kassy: Yes, that is very true.

Andrew: There's a lot of swimming games that kids play, too. Did you play any pool games or swimming games when you were younger?

Kassy: Yeah, I think my favourite one was sharks and minnows.

Andrew: Sharks and minnows. I think everybody knows what a shark is. Maybe not everyone knows what a minnow is. It's just a name for a really small, little fish, right? One that you'd usually see in a pond or a stream.



Kassy: Sometimes fishermen actually use minnows as bait instead of worms. But they're really tiny.

Andrew: Right, really tiny little fish. OK, so then how would you play sharks and minnows?

Kassy: Yeah, so at first, there would be just one shark. That's like the "it" person in tag. And they would swim in the middle of the pool. And then the others are the minnows, and they line up along the side of the pool. And their goal is to swim across to the other side of the pool without getting caught by the shark. But if the shark catches them and eats them, somehow they turn into a shark as well. So at the end of the game, you know, minnows are turning into sharks, sharks are catching more minnows. And at the end, there's one minnow left and, like, a whole bunch of sharks. It's super funny, yeah.

Andrew: Well, another variation on this theme of trying to escape from a bad thing.

Kassy: Yes.

Andrew: A game that I remember playing in the swimming pool as a kid was Marco Polo. Marco Polo. And I'm really curious, because I know we have Italian listeners. I'm really curious if our Italian listeners know this game, Marco Polo, because Marco Polo was originally Italian, right? So Marco Polo is a fun game. Again, you have one person who is "it," who is the player. It's really like hide and seek, right? It's essentially like hide and seek, but you can't hide in a swimming pool, there's nowhere to hide. So the person that is "it" must close their eyes. And once their eyes are closed, they can swim around in the pool, blindly trying to find and trying to capture the other players who are just swimming around freely at will. But of course, this is really hard because you have your eyes shut. So you are allowed to get information about the location of the other players by calling out "Marco." So as the person who is "it," with your eyes closed, you can swim around and go "Marco." And whenever you say "Marco," the other swimmers must reply by saying "Polo." So you go "Marco," and then the other swimmers will go "Polo." And when you hear them say "Polo," then you get the information, oh, he's over here. Oh, she's over there. And you can go and try and find them.

Kassy: I was always very bad at this game. How about you?

Andrew: Yeah, I don't remember being super good at it. And honestly, I don't remember it lasting very long. I think some of these games, like tag and Marco Polo, you'd play for like 10 minutes and then get bored and do a different game.

Wow. Kassy, it was fun to walk down memory lane here a bit with you. These are some games that I haven't thought about in a long time.

Kassy: Yeah, but they make up such a big part of our childhood.



Andrew: Yeah, it's true. And, listeners, I'm really curious about you. We have listeners from all corners of the world. And I'd be really, really interested to find out if you played the same games that Kassy and I did growing up, or if you played completely different games. So why don't you send us a message and let us know. Our email address is contact@Culips.com and we'd love to hear from you.

Kassy: Also, don't forget that you can download a study guide for this episode at Culips.com.

Andrew: If you use social media, like Instagram or Facebook, YouTube or Twitter, please follow us. You can find us by searching for the Culips English Podcast. And if you enjoy studying English with us, please support us. You can do that in many different ways, such as telling your friends about Culips or by leaving us a nice rating and review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts.

That is it for now, but we will be back soon with another brand-new episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye.

Kassy: See you later.

Detailed Explanations

Right off the bat

Phrase

Something that happens right off the bat means that it happens immediately or as soon as something has just begun. The phrase right off the bat first originated in baseball, where a hitter must quickly get to first base as soon as they hit the ball to avoid receiving an out.

In this episode, Kassy introduces the game tag **right off the bat**. She believes that tag is the most common and the most iconic game of childhood, so it should be mentioned right off the bat, at the very beginning of the episode.

Here are a couple more examples with **right off the bat**:

Boss: Good morning, Robin. Thank you for meeting with me so early today.

Robin: Of course, sir.

Boss: Well, right off the bat, I would like to congratulate you on your amazing

performance in last night's expo.

Robin: Wow. Thank you. It was such an honour to manage.

Boss: You did a truly amazing job. That's why today I'd like to offer you a position as lead manager of the upcoming gala we will be hosting in December.

Robin: Really? This is incredible, sir. I promise to make the night a success.

Leah: Oh my goodness, last night's game was so amazing!

Kadi: Really? How so?

Leah: Well, right off the bat, our team was killing it. We scored 2 goals in the first

5 minutes.

Kadi: No way! You guys were on fire!

Leah: Yeah, seriously. It only got better from there. We won 12 to 2. It was the best game

ever



That's all there is to it

Phrase

That's all there is to it means that there's nothing more to the story or there's nothing further to do. This phrase usually implies that it's as simple as it seems, that there is no hidden meaning or implied task that you have to do. If something seems unbelievably simple, one might ask, "Is that really all there is to it?" If the task really is as simple as it sounds, then the reply would be, "Yes, that's all there is to it."

Here are a couple more examples with **that's all there is to it**:

Rachel: What's that delicious-looking thing you have there?

Alice: It's called puppy chow.

Rachel: Where'd you get it?

Alice: Oh, I made it. It's super easy. You just mix cereal, melted chocolate, peanut butter

and powdered sugar in a bag.

Rachel: Wow, that's it?

Alice: Yup, **that's all there is to it**. It's simple, but super tasty.

Rachel: I'm gonna try making it tonight!

Steven: I heard that Maya agreed to be your lab partner. How did you manage that?

Anthony: I just asked her and she said yes.

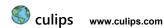
Steven: What? Just like that? She's the smartest person in the class. Why would she

agree to partner with you?

Anthony: She's a nice girl. Sometimes all you gotta do is smile and ask. That's all there

is to it. I figured there was no harm in asking right?

Steven: Wow. Just ask, huh? I'm totally doing that for the next group project.



To ditch Verb

To ditch is slang and has multiple meanings, depending on the context. **To ditch** could mean to get rid of something, to escape from something, or to leave somewhere without telling anyone or getting permission first. In this episode, Kassy mentions a game in America called ding dong **ditch**. In this game, kids ring a doorbell—hence the ding-dong sound—and then ditch; they escape as fast as they can before someone answers the door and asks who they are.

Ditch is also used a lot when talking about school or work. If someone says, "Let's **ditch** school," it means that he or she wants to skip school or leave school early, without receiving permission to do so.

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

Miko: Ugh, I really don't wanna go to soccer practice today.

Jason: Let's just ditch, then.

Miko: For real? You'll **ditch**, too?

Jason: Yeah, why not? I'm not even that good, anyways.

Miko: OK, let's do it. Just today. We'll say we're sick or something.

Jason: Sounds good to me. If we start fake coughing now, people will actually believe we're sick by the end of the school day.

Miko: Ha! You're ridiculous.

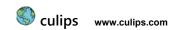
Mina: Is it OK if we reschedule our shopping trip today? Tim asked if I could hang out.

Gemma: C'mon, again? This is the second time this week you've **ditched** me to go hang out with Tim.

Mina: He's my boyfriend.

Gemma: Yeah, I know that, but you don't have to completely give up your social life to be with him. You're allowed to have friends, you know.

Mina: You're right. I'll tell him we can hang out tomorrow instead.



Rebel Noun

A **rebel** is someone who resists being controlled and usually goes against social norms. Teenagers are often called **rebels**, because they like to push boundaries and break rules set by adults or authority figures. In this episode, Andrew says he was a bit of a **rebel** when he was younger, because he liked to play pranks on his neighbours by playing nicky nicky nine doors.

Rebel can also be used as a verb or an adjective. If a kid **rebels** against his parents, it means that he refuses to listen to them. Likewise, if a teenager is labelled as **rebellious**, it means that he or she is a troublemaker and has a hard time going by the rules.

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

Frank: Hey, Jack! What are you doing here? I thought you weren't going to make it tonight. Didn't your wife want you to help her prepare for the rehearsal tomorrow?

Jack: Yeah ... I snuck away for a bit. I told her I was going to the store to pick up some more plates and things.

Frank: Ha, you **rebel**. What'll you do when you get home and don't have the plates?

Jack: I told my son I'd give him \$20 if he'd run the errand for me. Best \$20 I've ever spent.

Maria: That's Danny, right? The boy you're taking care of?

Vivienne: That's Danny, all right.

Maria: How's it going, by the way? It can't be easy raising a kid who isn't your own.

Vivienne: He's a bit of a **rebel**, but we're getting by. He absolutely refuses to eat vegetables or brush his teeth at night, though. It's a constant battle of wills.

Maria: Poor kid. Let me know if you ever need anything. I'll always be glad to help.



Ingrained Adjective

Something that is **ingrained** is already fixed and difficult to change. **Ingrained** is often used when talking about thoughts or beliefs that are so strong in a person's mind that it is hard or impossible to change one's opinions about them. For example, in the distant past many people believed the sun revolved around the Earth; this was **ingrained** into their minds. Therefore, when scientists began saying that the Earth actually revolved around the sun, many did not believe it because their belief was **ingrained**—it was so strong that they refused to admit to the contrary, even when given evidence to the fact.

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

Nathaniel: Hey, man, I'm doing a crossword puzzle. Can you help me with this clue?

Rick: Sure, what's the clue?

Nathaniel: What mathematical symbol is rounded to the value of 3.14?

Rick: That's pi, of course.

Nathaniel: How did you know that?

Rick: Didn't you pay attention in high school math? That number will be ingrained into

my brain until the day I die.

Jay: Wanna go for a bike ride with me this weekend?

Clara: I haven't ridden a bike in over 10 years. I'm not sure if I remember how.

Jay: Of course you do. It's ingrained in your muscle memory. Once you learn to ride a

bike, you never forget.

Clara: OK, I believe you. Saturday, then?

Jay: Sounds good. I'll pick you up at 9:00.



Safe assumption

Noun

An assumption is something you assume to be true; you have a strong feeling or guess that it is true. Therefore, a **safe assumption** is a guess or feeling that something is true based on past observations. For example, imagine you are trying to think of a gift for your friend's birthday. If your friend really loves the band BTS, then it is a **safe assumption** that your friend would like to receive a BTS t-shirt for their birthday. In other words, you already know the friend loves the band BTS, so even though you're not 100% sure, you can easily guess that they would enjoy a t-shirt of that band.

Here are a couple more examples with **safe assumption**:

Prisha: I think we should cancel the picnic this afternoon.

Ahura: What? Why?

Prisha: Ahura, it's pouring rain outside. I think it's a pretty **safe assumption** that the rain isn't gonna let up anytime soon.

Ahura: Ugh. This is so unfair. I've been looking forward to this picnic all week. The weather gods hate me.

Prisha: Ha, the weather gods? Don't be so dramatic. We could try to have the picnic inside, I guess.

Ahura: It's better than nothing. Let's do it at my place! Your apartment is way too messy.

Luca: How did your date go last night?

Marcello: Oh ... I don't think she liked me very much.

Luca: Oh, really? What makes you say that?

Marcello: I accidently spilled wine on her dress and I forgot my wallet in the Uber on the way to the restaurant, so she had to pay the bill and the taxi home.

Luca: Oh no! You screwed up big time, man.

Marcello: I know, and the worst part is that I really liked her. Do you think she'd give me another chance?

Luca: I think it's a **safe assumption** that, no, she won't give you another chance.

Quiz

1.	Fill in the blank: A rebel doesn't like to
b) c)	make conflicts follow the rules be quiet redo things
2.	True or false? A safe assumption is a guess or belief based on past observations.
,	true false
3.	Fill in the blank with the best choice: "You only met him 5 minutes ago and you've already managed to get in an argument with him off the bat."
b) c)	start glance right just
4.	Which of the choices below is the correct way to write the phrase that means "it's as simple as that"?
b) c)	that's all to it that's all there there's all that it is that's all there is to it
5.	Fill in the blank: "Yesterday I work and went to the beach instead."
b) c)	ditched rebelled attended accepted



Writing and Discussion Questions

- 1. What are some of your favourite childhood games?
- 2. Where did you usually play your childhood games? In a park? In the woods? In the street?
- 3. Were you a bit of a rebel when you were a teenager? Why or why not?
- 4. Have you ever ditched work or school? What did you do instead?
- 5. What belief did you have ingrained into your brain as a child that was difficult to change when you became an adult?



Quiz Answers

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

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