

## Simplified Speech #127 – Animal communicator

### Episode description

Can you talk to animals? In this Simplified Speech episode, Suzanne tells Andrew an interesting story about her dog and an animal communicator. She says this animal communicator communicated with her dog and found out the problems in his life. Even if you are skeptical, it's worth a listen!

In Simplified Speech episodes, two native English speakers have natural conversations using clear and easy to understand language. In this episode, you will learn expressions like sixth sense, to be skeptical, debriefing, and high maintenance.

### Fun fact

There is a long history of people who claim to talk to animals. In English, many people use the word whisperer to refer to people who can talk to animals. The American actor Robert Redford starred in a popular 1998 movie called *The Horse Whisperer*. After that movie came out, it became common for people to joke about being a dog whisperer or a cat whisperer because they say they understand their pets' thoughts and feelings very well.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- Sixth sense
- To be skeptical
- -phone
- To sprain
- Debriefing
- High maintenance



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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. My name is Andrew.

**Suzanne:** Hey, guys. I'm Suzanne.

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

Hello, friends. Welcome back to Culips. You are listening to Simplified Speech. Simplified Speech is the Culips series that features clear, natural, and easy to understand English conversations about interesting topics. And today I'm joined by my cohost, Suzanne. Hey there, Suzanne.

**Suzanne:** Hey, Andrew. Hey, guys. How are you?

**Andrew:** I'm good, Suzanne. And we have a very interesting topic today, actually. A kind of unique topic, maybe something that we haven't covered on Culips before. And, honestly, something that maybe some of our listeners haven't even really heard about before. I guess, depending on where you're from, this may or may not be something that exists in our listeners' countries. So without further ado, Suzanne, could you tell us our topic for today?

**Suzanne:** Yes, this is all about communicating with animals or, more specifically, a little story about my meeting with an animal communicator, someone who communicates with animals.

**Andrew:** All right, very good. So I'm sure this will be a fascinating conversation. But before we get into it, I do want to let all of our listeners know that there is a study guide for this episode. So everyone, if you want to follow along with our study guide, which we highly recommend that you do, you can visit our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com), sign up and become a member, and then you'll be able to access it. We have a PDF version, which you can download to your computer and print out if you'd like to. And we also have a mobile-friendly version that looks great on your smartphone or your tablet as well. And in the study guide, there's a transcript, detailed vocabulary explanations of some of the important expressions you'll hear Suzanne and I use, and so much more. There's tons of good stuff in the study guide. So to check it out, once again, just visit [Culips.com](http://Culips.com).

All right, Suzanne, let's get into it. I am dying to know this story about how you and an animal communicator communicated with your dog, Skoshi. This is going to be an interesting story, I think. So Suzanne, how about we start first with breaking down exactly what we mean when we talk about animal communicator, because, you know, I have a dog, Pinky, and I communicate with him, kind of. He's deaf. So he doesn't really hear me that way. But, you know, if I kind of wave my hand at him in his direction, he'll look at me and come over. So that's kind of communicating, I think. But what do you mean, exactly, when you say animal communicator?

**Suzanne:** Well, absolutely. And we communicate all the time with our animals, we hope so anyway, with food, right? With treats, with our words, our tone, with gestures. But in this case, the animal communicator, who is also my friend, Kelly, uses intuition and also extra-linguistic skills, meaning not using speech or gesture, but tuning in to the animal in a meditative way using intuition. So I don't really know the procedure or the process that one uses. But I do know that it helps you to get to know your animal and the needs and wants of your animal, which is so fascinating. And I can tell you kind of how I found this animal communicator and why I contacted her and the results. Was she right? Was what she said correct about my animal? So, yeah.

**Andrew:** OK, so then, just to recap, an animal communicator is a person who communicates with animals on a different level than a regular person would, on an intuitive level. So, Suzanne, this almost reminds me of, like, a psychic, who is somebody that has a kind of heightened spiritual power and can see into the future or can communicate with the dead, this kind of person.

**Suzanne:** Right, or angels or, yes, exactly. Someone who has a, like, a **sixth sense**, in a way.

**Andrew:** So Suzanne, I have to say that I am a little bit **skeptical** when it comes to this kind of thing. But I'm gonna have an open mind here and enjoy hearing this story. So let's start then about how you heard about the animal communicator, how you learned about this person? Could you tell us the start, the origin of this story?

**Suzanne:** Totally. So there's kind of two origins. I heard about her through people in my yoga community, because I teach yoga and, you know, I practice with this community online and, you know, go to lectures and things. And a friend of mine had mentioned that she rescued a new kitten or new cat, I should say, she's an adult cat from a shelter, because of COVID. I think some people who passed during COVID and had pets, their pets got displaced and they maybe were sent to shelters.

So a friend of mine adopted a cat from one of these shelters that was in this circumstance. And the cat was very afraid and not really friendly and not wanting to be touched and not really eating the food and things like that. And she told me that she turned to a friend of ours in the yoga community who communicates with animals and asked her what she can do for the cat. And the communicator told her many interesting things. And she started to do it. My friend started to change some of the patterns.

For example, one of the things she said to do, the communicator told my friend to do, was to put a bed, a cat bed, pet bed, in the room where she does her meditation, right next to her. And eventually the cat will come, but don't force her. And it worked after like 2 weeks, or about a week and a half, the cat started to come during her meditation and sit next to her. And eventually after meditation, she would allow her to pet her just a little bit. And she started to appreciate this pattern, this kind of structure in her, in the day, the cat. And it was really quite remarkable. Like, my friend had the cat for maybe a month and nothing, it was very difficult. And then just after doing this for a week, week and a half, suddenly the cat was more affectionate and trusting of my friend.

So I was really impressed. I was like, wow, that's interesting. That's cool. But I was also **skeptical** because I just never heard anything like this before. So anyway, I just filed it away in my kind of, you know, interesting stories file in my head. And then we went away for about 2 weeks to a chalet in the Eastern Townships here in Quebec. And it was really nice. We were by a lake, and we went on a hike, and it was a long hike, and it was muddy, it had just rained. And randomly, out of nowhere, we heard Skoshi make a, like a, like the kind of sound that a dog makes when you step on its foot or on its tail. Like a whelp, I would say, he whelped. And we kind of gave him this weird look because no one was around him. He was by himself. No one stepped on his foot. No one stepped on his tail. So it was weird that he made this noise.

**Andrew:** Yeah, just randomly out of nowhere.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, so we just kept walking. But at the end of the hike, he would pause and look at us. And we would say, "*Allez, allez!*" meaning, in French, let's go. Let's go. Come on, let's go. "*Allez! On y va.*"

**Andrew:** Right, because you speak to your dog in French, right? He's a French-speaking dog, **francophone** dog.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, he's bilingual, I would say. He speaks both. He's food-lingual, let's say, he speaks mostly food. Whatever language you're speaking, if you have food, he speaks that language.

**Andrew:** Gotcha.

**Suzanne:** So, anyway, we didn't know what was going on. It was very strange behaviour. So, finally, we just kind of got over with this, you know, we finished this hike, we let it go. We got in the car, whatever. The next day, we go on another hike, but smaller, and he's still doing it. He's pausing, two steps, pausing, two steps, pausing. We're like what's happening? You love to go on hikes. This is so weird. So we kind of finished that hike early, we went back to the car. OK, we figured he needs rest. A few days later, after a good rest, we go on another hike, same thing. We start the hike. We're not even, like, 500 metres into the hike. And it's a 16-kilometre hike. So we're, like, this is weird, this can't happen for 16 kilometres. And he was doing it again.

So I decided, well, when we get back, I'm definitely going to take him to the vet. But something feels like he's trying to tell me something. But I don't know what it is because he doesn't speak. So I decided to contact this animal communicator, this friend of a friend. And I set up a session where I got to ask her five questions. And one of the questions was what happened? On the hike when he made that weird sound? I'd actually didn't even tell her that he made a weird sound. I just said that he's stopping in his walk, what happened?

**Andrew:** So, Suzanne, let me just interrupt you here for a moment because I have a question. So you're out with Skoshi and suddenly you hear him whelp and you look back, and he just randomly made this noise and from that moment on wasn't walking as smoothly as he usually does, stopping and pausing every couple of steps. Now, were you sure that he didn't injure himself somehow, maybe twist an ankle while in the forest? Like, did he seem to be OK, other than that?

**Suzanne:** He seemed to be OK. But we thought it was his back legs, like his back hips, you know, because sometimes retriever dogs can have hip issues. So we really thought it was, it really was the hip. And we kept observing the back legs. And, actually, he was between us when he did the whelp and we were stopped. That's what was so strange. It was very strange. Actually, you're gonna be funnily surprised when I tell you what she said, because she said he did twist his front right paw, his front right wrist.

**Andrew:** So you were pretty sure that he didn't injure himself.

**Suzanne:** It was confusing to us what had exactly happened because he wasn't in movement when he whelped. He was just standing there.

**Andrew:** Gotcha. OK. So then you set up this appointment to talk with the animal communicator and to see what was going on with Skoshi and during the appointment, you're allowed to ask five questions. Is that correct?

**Suzanne:** Actually, no. So, actually, when you schedule the appointment, you ask the five questions, there's a space for you to ask the five questions. And the session is only a half hour because the other half hour is her time with your dog.

**Andrew:** OK.

**Suzanne:** Separate from you. So you send a picture of your dog and the name of your dog along with your questions. And she communicates with him before your session.

**Andrew:** OK. So when you're kind of making the appointment, this is when you ask the questions and you provide the information. She does her thing communicating with the pet and then after you have a kind of **debriefing** and she explains what happens?

**Suzanne:** Exactly.

**Andrew:** OK, got it.

**Suzanne:** She goes question by question and then you're able to ask follow-up questions. She's, like, absolutely if you, you know, want to ask follow-up questions after I tell you what he said, please do.

**Andrew:** So what were the five questions that you asked to Skoshi through the communicator?

**Suzanne:** So, the first thing was kind of, like, what happened?

**Andrew:** OK, what happened on that hike?

**Suzanne:** Two, is it your back legs? Where are you feeling pain? And what do you need us to do? Like, are you hurt in some way? I think we asked is it an emotional thing? Is it a physical thing? What is the physical issue? And what do you need us to do? Kind of. There was like a group of questions.

**Andrew:** OK.

**Suzanne:** I believe we also asked about, um, because we had just bought him a new harness and leash and so we wanted to know if that was something he liked or was that the issue? Was that part of the issue?

One of our questions was the separate from the injury. It was about how he feels around kids, because sometimes he seems nervous or afraid. So that was one of our questions. And I honestly don't remember the other ones, I would have to look it up. I'm so sorry. I totally, like, blanked, and I think they were mostly about that incident.

**Andrew:** OK.

**Suzanne:** So she asked him all of these questions and actually wound up asking him more than those questions. She also asked him if he likes his bed? If he likes his food?

So we found out that it wasn't his back legs, that it was a physical thing and it was that he twisted his right front leg or paw. She asked him if he **sprained** his, like, ankle, kind of?

**Andrew:** OK.

**Suzanne:** And he didn't know what **sprained** was. So she asked, like, did you twist it? And he's like, yes, that's what I did. I twisted it. And she asked him how, and apparently, because it was so muddy, he stepped somewhere that he thought was solid, but it wasn't and he sunk in and there was a rock and it, like, twisted underneath, it rolled underneath his paw and he twisted his arm or his, his paw in his ankle area. So that's what happened. He also said it would not show up on an X-Ray. But he does want to go to the vet to get it looked at, even though he didn't seem like he wanted to go to the vet when I took him there. But he also said that he would like some kind of medication or something to help with the pain while it heals.

**Andrew:** OK.

**Suzanne:** So she led me to a kind of natural pain reliever for pets. I think it's from a brand called Pet Wellbeing. Anyway, you can order it online. It's helpful for their, like, if they're having discomfort, if your pet has discomfort. It sort of is like taking an Advil, but for pets.

**Andrew:** Kind of like pet Tylenol?

**Suzanne:** Yeah, exactly. Exactly. He said he likes his food. She asked him, she said that he said that he likes his new food, but that we made the transition to the new food too fast. And we all giggled, because it's true. That was totally true. That's something she would not have known. So we did make the transition too fast for him and we knew that. So that was our mistake. And he asked why, why did you change the food? And we told him because of your teeth. It's for, to help your teeth get cleaner. So it's an anti-plaque food.

**Andrew:** Gotcha.

**Suzanne:** The dental health food, anyway. So she also said that he wants a new bed, that he doesn't like his current bed and he doesn't sleep in it very much. And we said, yeah, it's true, he doesn't. And she said that he wanted a round bed and a specific bed. And he led her to this bed online. And she sent me the links for this bed. And he even told her the colours that he wanted and why.

**Andrew:** Wow.

**Suzanne:** I know, it's crazy. This is a long story about the bed. I don't need to go into the whole thing. The important thing that you need to know is that he's obsessed now with his bed. He loves to go in it. It was a little expensive. But he now sleeps there all the time. It's his favourite place. So that's pretty interesting, you know?



And she also told us—last thing I'll say, or I have two more things, quick things. First, that Skoshi really needed his harness to be looser, apparently. Oh, and also his food to be raised. But the main thing that the communicator told us that really warmed our hearts was that he love, love, loves us. He said it three times, she said, that he love, love, loves us and really loves his life with us and that, yeah, he's really, really happy. So that's great.

**Andrew:** Well, that's good, Suzanne, because in the back of my mind, I was kind of thinking, oh, wow, Skoshi sure is a demanding, **high maintenance** dog. Like, he didn't like his food and he wanted a new bed. But then you got to hear that he loves you and loves living with you. So that's fantastic that you got to connect with Skoshi on a deeper level like that.

**Suzanne:** Yeah, yeah, absolutely. I think it's worth it. So, yeah.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So that was a fascinating story, Suzanne, and like we mentioned at the top of the episode, depending on where our listeners are living in the world, you know, this could be a part of their culture, or it could be something totally new. To be honest, it sounds to me, kind of like a North American cultural thing. And maybe, in some areas of the world, this kind of animal communicator job or this kind of person doesn't really exist. But I might be totally wrong about that. So, listeners, if you have a story to share or an experience that you could tell us about from your country of a person who can communicate with animals on this kind of deep, spiritual level, then we would love it if you could send us an email and share your story with us. Our email address is [contact@Culips.com](mailto:contact@Culips.com) and we would love to hear from you.

**Suzanne:** Oh, and I have some great pictures of Skoshi enjoying and loving his new bed. So I'll share those with you guys with this episode so you can see just how much he loves his new bed.

**Andrew:** Perfect. So, listeners, please check out the Culips Instagram so you can find those pictures.

So, everyone, that's gonna bring us to the end of this episode. Thank you so much for listening. We hope that you found this episode to be educational. Now, if you like listening to Culips and you find us very helpful for growing your English language skills, then we would really appreciate it if you could support us. And there are several ways that you can do that. The best way is to sign up and become a Culips member on our website, [Culips.com](http://Culips.com). But that's not the only way. You can also follow us on social media. Like we just said, we're on Instagram. We're also on YouTube, Facebook, and Twitter, as well. You could tell your friends who are learning English to check out Culips, or you could leave us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. So that's it for now, but we'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode and we'll talk to you then. Goodbye, everyone.

**Suzanne:** Bye, guys.



## Detailed Explanations

### Sixth sense

Noun

In this episode, Suzanne talks about an animal communicator. She says that the person has a kind of **sixth sense**. A **sixth sense** is a feeling or intuition that is apart from the five senses. Sight, hearing, taste, smell, and touch are the traditional senses in most cultures. Having a special feeling about something not connected to those five senses is considered a **sixth sense**.

In general, you can say you have a **sixth sense** about anything, such your gut feeling about someone you meet. It doesn't need to be a mystical or spiritual occurrence.

Although there are more than five senses in humans, such as sense of direction or sense of balance, those extra senses are not referred to as a **sixth sense**. Your **sixth sense** is a feeling that is difficult to explain.

Here are a couple more examples with **sixth sense**:

**Cathy:** Hey, did you go out on a date with that guy on Friday?

**Julia:** No, I cancelled.

**Cathy:** Why did you cancel?

**Julia:** My **sixth sense** was telling me that he wasn't good for me.

**Cathy:** You're right. I heard he got arrested the other day.

**Julia:** No way! It's a good thing I avoided him.

**Nathan:** Here, I bought you something to drink.

**Cynthia:** Wow. How did you know I was thirsty?

**Nathan:** Call it a **sixth sense**. I just had a feeling.

**Cynthia:** Cool. Thanks.

## To be skeptical

Verb

As Suzanne introduces the topic of this episode to Andrew, he says that he is a little bit **skeptical** when it comes to that kind of thing. **To be skeptical** is to not fully believe in something and to be very doubtful about it. In saying he's **skeptical**, Andrew shares with Suzanne that he doesn't really believe in psychics or people with heightened spiritual powers.

Apart from being doubtful about something, being **skeptical** is often associated with asking questions to see how true it is. You are not easily convinced and it requires a lot of proof for you to believe in something.

You can also turn **skeptical** into a noun. A skeptic is a person who **skeptical** of many things, if not everything. However, you can also be a skeptic of a single topic; for example, you can be a climate change skeptic if you don't believe that climate change is real.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be skeptical**:

**Peter:** Did you hear that Charles went on a date with a supermodel?

**Juan:** I heard that's what he's been telling people, but I'm pretty **skeptical** about it.

**Peter:** Why do you say that?

**Juan:** He usually posts everything he does on Instagram, but this time he hasn't. He's just a big talker.

**Peter:** Yeah, I'm not sure I fully believe him either.

**Luke:** Do you want to sign this letter to the government? It's about climate change.

**Benny:** I'll sign, but don't tell my wife.

**Luke:** Why not?

**Benny:** She's highly **skeptical** about climate change, so I avoid talking about it with her these days.

## **-phone** Suffix

In this episode, Suzanne uses a few French words when telling a story about her dog. To this, Andrew says that she has a **francophone** dog. If you attach the **-phone** ending to the name of a language, you will have a word describing a person who speaks that language. There are two very common ones. A **francophone** is a French-speaking person. An **anglophone** is an English-speaking person. Although less common, you can say a Portuguese speaker is a **lusophone** and a Chinese speaker is a **sinophone**.

In Canada, and especially in the province of Quebec, it is also common to use the word **allophone**. An **allophone** is someone whose first language is not English or French. It is an important category in the Canadian census when asking people about the languages they speak.

Here are a couple more examples with **-phone**:

**Olivia:** I'm thinking of visiting Montreal. I heard it's a **francophone** city. Do you think I need to speak to French if I go there?

**Jean:** It is a **francophone** city, but most people in the city can speak English. Don't worry.

**Olivia:** Are there a lot of English-speaking people?

**Jean:** Yeah. There are a lot of **anglophone** neighbourhoods. But many **francophones** speak English, as well as other languages.

**Manny:** Wow, both your English and your French are perfect. Are you an **anglophone** or a **francophone**?

**Ahmed:** Actually, I'm an **allophone**.

**Manny:** What's that?

**Ahmed:** My first language is neither English nor French. I grew up speaking Arabic.

**Manny:** That's cool. You must be pretty good with languages.

## To sprain [something]

Verb

The cause of Suzanne's dog's pain was a **sprained** ankle. When you **sprain** your ankle or wrist, you have hurt the ligaments that connect your small bones. This usually happens as the result of walking on uneven surfaces or landing awkwardly after a jump. It is common for athletes **to sprain** an ankle or wrist during competition.

In this episode, Suzanne and Andrew use the verbs **to sprain**, **to twist**, and **to roll** interchangeably. Most people do also. You can use **to sprain**, **to twist**, and **to roll** any time you have some pain in your ankles or wrists as the result of a bad movement.

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

**Ruslan:** Are you OK? You're walking funny.

**Felicia:** I'm all right. It's just that I **sprained** my ankle the other day.

**Ruslan:** How did you do that?

**Felicia:** I was hiking in the mountains and **twisted** my ankle stepping on a rock.

**Ruslan:** Do you want me to carry your bag?

**Felicia:** Actually, that would be really nice. Thanks.

**George:** Hey, James. I'm just calling to tell you that I can't play basketball this weekend.

**James:** Oh, no. How come?

**George:** I **sprained** my wrist playing baseball the other day. It's still pretty sore.

**James:** I understand. I hope you feel better and can join us next week.

**George:** I should be OK by then.

## Debriefing

Noun

In this episode, Suzanne talks about the steps she went through with the animal communicator. First, she sent pictures. Second, the animal communicator communicated with her dog. Third, there was a **debriefing**. A **debriefing** is a meeting where you ask questions after some event has been completed. In this situation, Suzanne asked the animal communicator about the results of the communication with her dog.

You will often hear the word **debriefing** in movies involving soldiers or spies. When the person on a mission comes back, their superiors have to conduct a **debriefing** with them. That means their superiors will ask many questions about how their mission went.

Although **debriefing** is often used in a military sense, you can use it informally with friends. It just means to know what happened.

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

**Gina:** I heard you're camping with your in-laws this weekend. Is that true?

**David:** Yes. It will be our first time all together. I'm a little nervous.

**Gina:** Don't be nervous. Your in-laws seem to like you.

**David:** I know. But it's still a big deal.

**Gina:** Well, give me a full **debriefing** on Monday. I'm curious to see how it turns out.

**Fiona:** How was your business trip?

**Ethan:** It went rather well.

**Fiona:** That's good to hear. We're having a group meeting tomorrow. Can you give everyone a **debriefing** then?

**Ethan:** Sure thing. I'll prepare a report.

## High maintenance

Noun

As Suzanne spoke about her dog's many demands, Andrew was thinking that her dog is pretty **high maintenance**. Something that is **high maintenance** requires a lot of effort and attention.

You can have a **high maintenance** relationship with someone. Newborn babies are often considered **high maintenance** because you need to do everything for them. However, it is equally common to talk about something that is **low maintenance**. For example, if you bought a car 10 years ago and you haven't needed to do any major repairs on it, you have a **low maintenance** car.

Here are a couple more examples with **high maintenance**:

**Jan:** I love your aquarium. It's so beautiful.

**Lois:** Thanks.

**Jan:** I've always wanted an aquarium.

**Lois:** Why don't you get one?

**Jan:** I have this impression that they are pretty **high maintenance**. I don't have the time or the energy to take care of a bunch of fish.

**Lois:** You can buy a small aquarium with only a couple of fish. That doesn't require a lot of maintenance.

**Mark:** Are you happy with your car?

**Gisele:** I am. It's amazing.

**Mark:** Cool. But I heard that model requires a lot of upkeep.

**Gisele:** Not at all. It's super **low maintenance**. I just need to change the oil every few months and that's it. I've had it for 5 years and haven't had any problems yet.

## Quiz

### 1. What happens during a debriefing?

- a) you ask questions about something that already happened
- b) you wear briefs or underwear
- c) you defrost food to eat soon
- d) you detail your future plans

### 2. Which of the following is NOT an injury?

- a) rubbing your ankle
- b) spraining your ankle
- c) twisting your ankle
- d) rolling your ankle

### 3. What does it mean if you are skeptical?

- a) you will believe anything
- b) you like ska music
- c) you are doubtful about something
- d) you like sketching images

### 4. What does it mean if something is high maintenance?

- a) you're happy to keep it
- b) you need to repair it often
- c) you don't need to repair it often
- d) you think it's expensive

### 5. What is NOT one of the traditional five senses?

- a) touch
- b) taste
- c) motion
- d) smell



## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Would you bring your dog to see an animal communicator? Why or why not?
2. How skeptical are you as a person?
3. Have you ever sprained your ankle at a really bad time? Have you ever seen anyone sprain their ankle in front of you? What did you do?
4. Using the suffix -phone, what kind of language speaker are you?
5. Do you consider yourself to be a high maintenance or low maintenance person? Why?

## Quiz Answers

1. a   2. a   3. c   4. b   5. c

### Episode credits

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