

Simplified Speech #151 – What's your most prized possession?

Episode description

Everyone owns special and precious things, things they think of as valuable and unique. In this episode, Kassy and Andrew get together to talk about the things that they value the most and, in fact, can't imagine their lives without. Listen in to learn about what things both Andrew and Kassy consider to be their most prized possessions.

Simplified Speech episodes feature two native English speakers having clear, natural, and easy to understand English conversations about interesting topics. By listening to Kassy and Andrew talk about their most prized possessions, you'll improve your English listening skills and increase your vocabulary.

Fun fact

How much would you pay to buy a feather? The most expensive feather in the world was found in New Zealand and belongs to an extinct bird called the huia. It was sold at an auction for almost \$10,000 US.

Expressions included in the study guide

- TMI
- Sentimental value
- Safety blanket
- Think back on
- Using time as countable/non-countable noun
- To be particular about (something)



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.

Welcome back to Culips, everyone. This is a Simplified Speech episode. And if you're new to Culips and you don't know what that is, well, let me explain. Simplified Speech is the Culips series which features clear, natural, and easy to understand English conversations about interesting topics. Today, I am joined by my cohost, Kassy. Hello, Kassy.

Kassy: Hey there, Andrew. And hi, listeners. I hope you're all doing well. And the topic for this episode today is special and important things that we own. So, Andrew and I are going to share some stories about some things that we own that are valuable, important, or sentimental to us.

Andrew: Exactly. Today, we're going to talk about our most prized possessions. And, guys, this is a topic that we recently featured on one of our Culips member livestreams. Kassy, you and I had **a great time** hanging out with the Culips community there, actually just this week, a few days ago. And I want to thank all of the members who joined us for the stream. It was awesome to interact with everyone and to hear their stories about some things that they own that are special to them, their most prized possessions.

Kassy: Yeah, exactly. It's always **a fun time**. And for listeners who don't know, Andrew and I host livestreams for Culips members every month. It's **a time** where we get to interact and hang out with members plus teach you all some expressions and tips that can improve your fluency.

Andrew: Yes. So, guys, if you'd like to join us for the next livestream, you do have to become a Culips member. So make sure to sign up on our website, which is Culips.com, so you can join us next **time**. And even if you can't join us live as a member, you can access all of the recordings of the streams, so you can always watch them at **a time** that works best for you. I know Kassy, unfortunately, we can't be at **the best, most optimal, premium time** for all of our listeners around the world, unfortunately, but they are recorded and archived for everyone.

Kassy: That's right. And we also want to give a shout-out to Yejin, a Culips listener from South Korea who left us a lovely review and a five-star rating on Apple Podcasts. Yejin wrote, "I've been listening to Culips since 2020. Every **time** I listen to Culips, I learn something new. All of the episodes you've made are super informative and helpful. And when I was preparing for the OPIC test, which is an English-speaking test, a lot of Culips episodes were really helpful to me. So I got a great score. Thank you so much! And, Kassy, congratulations! I believe you will do very well. Good luck with the new career in Thailand. **TMI**, I really suck at math, unlike you, ha-ha." Yejin, that's cute. Thank you for the review. And don't worry, not everybody loves math.

Andrew: Yejin, you and I, we are in the same boat, because I am also not very good at math. Kassy, I like that review, that was very cute, like you mentioned. And I wanted to focus just for a second before we get started here on that expression that Yejin used in her review, **TMI**, because this is a really hot, popular expression actually in the Korean language that's borrowed from English. But the way that Korean people use it and the way that we use it in English is slightly different. So maybe we could focus just on how we use it in English. Kassy, if you say **TMI** in English, which by the way, everyone is short for too much information, **TMI**, what kind of situation do we usually use it in when speaking in English?

Kassy: We use **TMI** if somebody shares info that you really didn't want to hear, or it's like really private and you're going, "Why did you share that with me? Too much info."

Andrew: I think in English a lot of **times** when we say **TMI**, it's when we hear something, in reaction to somebody else, especially something to do with maybe, you know, being sick, especially if you have, like, a stomach sickness, like, talking about going to the bathroom. Honestly, Kassy it's like this kind of situation. When somebody tells you about their digestive history, you're like, "I don't need to know that information. Why are you telling me that? That's **TMI**." That's how we use it in English. So there is a little bit of a nuance there. And I hope everyone is clear about that now.

Anyways, Yejin, thanks for the awesome review. And of course, we also want to say thanks to everyone who has been supporting us with reviews and ratings on their favourite podcast apps or even by following us on social media. We do really appreciate it and it does help us a lot. So keep up the great work.

And now Kassy, why don't we transition to talk about our main topic for today, which is our most prized possessions and our special and precious things that we own. Now, I asked this question to my wife the other day, Kassy. I asked her, "What is your most prized possession?" And she said Pinky, our dog, and Andrew, her husband. Which I liked. I thought that was a very sweet answer, right? Very nice. But is it OK to talk about your pet and a person as your most prized possession? What kind of situations can we use this expression in? Can we use it to talk about animals and people?

Kassy: No, a possession is something you own and usually when you're talking about living things, whether it be your pets or your partners, or your family members, you don't say that you own them. You love them, but they're not your possession. So prized possessions are things that you love, not people or animals.

Andrew: Yeah. So, when we're talking about this episode, guys, Kassy and I, of course, we love our families, we love our friends, but we don't own them, so they aren't possessions, so they're excluded from this episode.

Kassy, I'm gonna kick it off by asking you about your most prized possession. Could you introduce it to us and let us know about it?

Kassy: Yeah, sure. So, my most prized possession, some people might find a little funny, because it's probably worth, I don't know, like negative \$5 now, because it's so old, and it was probably only worth \$5 when I got it. But it is actually my pillow that I have. It's a smiley face pillow. And I've had it since I was in the fifth grade.

Andrew: OK, a smiley face pillow that you've had since you were in the fifth grade that's worth minus \$5. OK.

Kassy: Probably.

Andrew: Kassy, that's actually a great point. And that introduces us to the expression **sentimental value**, **sentimental value**. **Sentimental value** is when we own something that's really special and important to us and we would never want to sell it or throw it away or get rid of it. But it has no monetary value, has no financial value. So, Kassy, your pillow sounds like it is very sentimental. You love it. You cherish it. It's precious to you. But nobody would buy it off of you. It has no financial or monetary value.

Kassy: Exactly. Yeah. The reason it makes it special to me is because it's been with me through every move inside the US, abroad, backpacking trips, camp every summer in high school. It's been through it all.

Andrew: Did you use that pillow when you were younger as a kind of **safety blanket**?

Kassy: Honestly, no. I had stuffed animals when I was young and those I grew out of, but this pillow because it's, you know, useful, like a stuffed animal is comforting, but a pillow, like, I actually use it to lay my head on. So that's what sets it apart from being like a **safety blanket** or a safety item. It's not only sentimental, also useful. I love useful things.

Andrew: For listeners who don't know what I mean when I said **safety blanket** is, you know, babies, toddlers, little kids, sometimes they like to have some item that makes them feel comfortable even when they are away from their parents, like at nighttime, or if they go somewhere that's a little bit unfamiliar to them, they can bring that blanket or that item with them to feel comfortable. Usually really little kids have this and by **the time**, you know, you're around 8 or 9 or 10 years old, you've outgrown that stage in your life. So, Kassy, it wasn't a **safety blanket** per se for you, but still something that you've had for **a long time**.

It's a really interesting-looking pillow, and our listeners will have to visualize it in their heads. Could you describe what it looks like for us?

Kassy: Yeah, sure. So, it's literally a circular, fluffy, yellow pillow with a smiley face design on the front. And, you know, it's been a bunch of years, so it's a little bit faded, and not very soft anymore, but I still love it.

Andrew: And what's the backstory about the pillow? Why is it, you know, so precious to you?

Kassy: When I was young, my parents got a divorce, which was a good thing, don't worry, it's not traumatizing. And we moved to a new house, and I was feeling at that **time**, it was a bit of a **safety blanket**, I guess. I was feeling a little nervous about the new house. But I was allowed to decorate my new room however I wanted, and I decided I wanted it to be really bright and happy. So my whole room was yellow and covered in smiley faces, which sounds a little creepy. I grew out of the smiley face phase pretty quickly, but the pillow remained.

Andrew: The pillow stuck, I got it. That design, that yellow smiley face design is a really classic '90s image. So I'm sure that a lot of our listeners have seen it before. It's kind of iconic of that decade now, that kind of smiley face design.

That's awesome. Kassy, I'm glad that you still have the pillow with you. Any plans to throw it out? Are you going to hold on to it for as long as you can?

Kassy: I'm gonna keep it until it's threadbare. For listeners who don't know, threadbare means, like, falling apart at the seams. All the cotton inside is falling out.

Andrew: Yeah. When it's just so worn out that, you know, there's a hole that's developing, could be in clothing, could be in anything that's made with fabric. That kind of situation we say it's threadbare.

OK, Kassy. Very good. Thank you for telling us about your pillow.

Kassy: How about you, Andrew, do you have any prized possessions from your childhood?

Andrew: Yeah, of course, Kassy. I have some prized possessions from my childhood. And the one that I would like to talk about is my pocketknife, my Swiss Army knife. So when I was around 7 years old, 8 years old, 6 years old, somewhere in there, like a young child, for my birthday, I received a pocketknife, a Swiss Army knife, from my aunt and uncle as a birthday present. This little pocketknife is really small, it's maybe only about 7 to 10 centimetres long. It's pretty small, fits in your pocket. And it's very basic. It's got two small knife blades, a bottle opener, and a corkscrew. Don't ask me why a 7-year-old kid needs a corkscrew. I don't think I was opening any wine at **the time**, but it's got that function inside of it. And my aunt and uncle gave this to me as a birthday present. And I've just always had it, you know, like, I've never thrown it out. Every **time** that I've moved from city to city or apartment to apartment, country to country, even, I've always taken it with me. I guess it's so small and compact and easy to carry that, yeah, it's always been with me. And **thinking back on** it now, I must have had this pocketknife for around, well, over 30 years.

Kassy: Wow.

Andrew: So that is pretty wild to think about. And I still use it to this day. I keep it in my office. And when I have a lunch break on campus and I'm in my office, I usually use it to cut up some fruit or peel apples. It's kind of like my fruit knife now. I use it for cutting fruit and peeling apples. And so, I don't know if I would trust it. You know, if I were going into the woods on a hike, I wouldn't want to be in a survival situation where I only had that knife, because the blade is really short and really dull now. But, yeah, I'm glad that I have it. When I use it, I kind of think of my aunt and uncle who gave it to me, and I've got a lot of great memories with it. So, just like you mentioned Kassy, I don't think there is a lot of financial value with that knife. Although maybe the longer I hold onto it, maybe it will become valuable. I could see it in the future becoming valuable.

Kassy: Vintage collector's item.

Andrew: Yeah, I think so. You know, like, maybe when I'm an old man, like, really old man, when I'm 90 years old or something, then that knife will be a vintage item. And maybe at that **time**, it will have some monetary value. But right now, it's pretty much worthless. But it's still super sentimental. And, yeah, I'm really glad that I still have that little remnant from my childhood.

Kassy: So, we've covered prized possessions that have lasted through the ages. Are there any more modern prized possessions that you have now that maybe you haven't had since you were young, but are still just as important in your life today?

Andrew: Yeah, I have lots of things that I really value. And I'm lucky. I'm lucky that I have so many cool things in my life. I'm not really a big shopper, Kassy. I don't really like shopping. But when I was preparing for this episode, I did realize that I have a lot of things that I've purchased in the past that I do value, so maybe I'm a bigger shopper than I initially expected that I was.

My guitar. My guitar is something that I really value. I've had one electric guitar, practically my whole life that I bought when I was in my final year of high school, which was in 2002. So that was 20 years ago now. And that guitar has been with me through the highs and lows of my life. And I've brought it with me, again, from city to city, apartment to apartment, country to country. All of the places I've moved, it's always been with me. I have so many great memories of playing music with my friends and in different bands with that guitar.

And it's not really an expensive or valuable guitar, but it's got extreme **sentimental value** to me. So I would never throw it or sell it or get rid of it. I don't play it that much these days, but it's sitting just behind me in my storage section in my apartment. And I'm glad to know that it's there.

Kassy: Yeah, that's really cool. If you ever got a new guitar, I think it would be a really cool idea to maybe hang this original one on your wall somewhere or something. Have it like a display.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. Even if I do upgrade to a new guitar at some point in the future, which I would love to do, because, honestly, that guitar doesn't sound that great. It doesn't play that well, either. That is exactly what I would like to do, Kassy, is just like hanging it on the wall somewhere.

I'm also pretty sentimental about bikes. I get really sentimental about bikes, as someone who loves cycling. So **thinking back on** my old bikes that I don't have anymore makes me a little sentimental and makes me wish that I wish I still had that bike, like my mountain bike from when I was in high school that got stolen. My road bike that I had when I was a university student that I had to give away when I moved to Korea. Different bikes that I've had in the past. I get really sentimental about those.

I'm also very **particular about the bikes that I have now**. I have two bikes. One is a super cheap bike that I bought off the internet for, I think it was under \$100 when I first moved to Korea, a really low-quality bike, but I still ride it just around the neighbourhood when I have to do kind of local riding. And another bike that I have that I use for cycling and doing exercise on. It's a better, higher quality bike. I love those as well. I really value them. And if I, you know, think of them maybe in the future getting stolen, or if I were to get into a crash and they were damaged or something like that, I think I would be really sad. So, yeah, those are some other examples.

And of course, I have to give a shout-out to my wife because she was so lovely and said that she thinks of me as one of her most prized possessions. I have to say the wedding ring that we exchanged when we got married about a year ago is really important to me, as well.

Kassy: Yeah, I mean, you wear it every day. If you lost it, it would be a big deal.

Andrew: Oh my god, Kassy, I thought I lost it about a month ago. I couldn't find where I put it when I took it off to do the dishes. And I freaked out for like a day and then I finally found it again. So, yeah, very important and I do not want to lose it, that's for sure.

Kassy, how about you? What are some more modern-day possessions that you have that you really value?

Kassy: For me, since I have moved every year of my life since I graduated university, like, every 2 years, it's hard to keep a lot of things. But I think, besides my pillow, the one thing that I use almost daily that I cherish is my Kindle, which is my e-reader. It's an electronic book that I can use and download as many books as my heart desires. And I'm sure listeners know/remember, I am a huge bookworm. So my Kindle goes with me everywhere, every day.

Andrew: Everywhere, every day. And, Kassy, I have to say you have a really deluxe Kindle. When I saw your Kindle, I was shocked because I also have a Kindle e-reader and it's just basic. There's no case, no accessories, no decorations. It's just the basic Kindle model that you get when you open the box. But yours, I didn't even recognize it as a Kindle, because it's so customized and souped-up and special. Could you tell us just about the design and how you've decorated your Kindle?

Kassy: Yeah, sure. So, actually, this was the first Kindle that I ever purchased with my own money. My previous models were given to me by my mother. And they were great, too, but the case in my previous Kindle didn't have a lot of personality. And with this one being my first real adult purchase of an e-reader, I really wanted to make it special. So I bought the yellow version of the Kindle Fire 8, I think that's what it was. And then the case I also bought was black with, like, yellow light bulbs and a cityscape on the front. So, the colour was coordinated. And the case is like a simple design, but still kind of fancy. So it puts me in this really cool, jazzy mood whenever I go to open it. I really love it.

Andrew: I love that, a jazzy mood. What does that mean for our listeners, a jazzy mood?

Kassy: When I think of, like, jazz music playing in the background of a cool, relaxing café, that's what I think of as a jazzy mood. Kind of calm and smooth.

Andrew: Calm and smooth, jazzy. OK. I love it.

Well, Kassy, I think this is a good place to wrap up. So that will bring us to the end of today's episode, everyone. Of course, thank you so much for listening. And congratulations on doing some English listening practice today, great job. And you can feel proud of yourself for getting some listening practice accomplished.

Now, you've heard us talk about some of our most prized possessions, but we'd like to know about your story, make sure to leave a comment on our website or in our discussion forum and let us know. You can find both of those on our website at Culips.com, C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Kassy: If you like Culips and find us helpful for growing your English skills, we'd appreciate your support. The best way to support us is by signing up and becoming a Culips member on our website, Culips.com. But that's not the only way. You can also tell your friends who are learning English to check us out. Or you could follow us on social media or leave a five-star review and a positive comment on your favourite podcast app.

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

Kassy: See ya.

Detailed Explanations

TMI

Acronym

The expression **TMI** is an acronym for **too much information**. An acronym is a word that's made from the first letters of other words. There are many different English acronyms that English speakers use in their everyday lives. Some other examples include ASAP, which means as soon as possible, or AKA, which means also known as. Acronyms are very convenient and help us save a lot of time when speaking or texting.

TMI means that someone has told you something that you don't want to know or hear about. We use **TMI** when someone overshares and tells us something that is very personal or private (usually related to bodily functions). This expression is very common in online conversations, but it's also widely used in spoken language in casual contexts.

When people share some personal information, or any kind of information that makes you feel uncomfortable or even embarrassed, you could use this expression to ask them to stop or to show that you have no interest in knowing so much.

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

Tom: I don't think that the new diet my doctor told me to try is working well.

Ameer: Why is that?

Tom: Well, my entire face is covered in pimples. Once I'm done with one of them, there's a new one popping up. And the worst part of it is that every new zit seems to be twice as big as the previous one.

Ameer: Yuck! We're having lunch, Tom. **TMI!**

Nastasya: Are you OK? You seem a little bit upset, Harry. What is it? Tell me!

Harry: I just received a phone call from my doctor.

Nastasya: Oh my goodness! What did he tell you? Is it your blood tests?

Harry: No, I'm perfectly fine. It's my doctor. I think he has no one else to talk to because he told me that his wife wants a divorce. I felt like that was **TMI**, but I couldn't say anything to stop him. So he went on talking for half an hour!

Sentimental value

Noun

A great way to understand this expression is to break it down and look at it one word at a time. In this case, the word **value** means how useful or important something is, and the word **sentimental** indicates that there's an emotional aspect to it. So, if something is of **sentimental value** to you, it means that you have a strong emotional attachment to it and it's somehow connected to your feelings or memories.

You might have noticed that both Kassy and Andrew, when speaking about their most prized possessions, point out that those very special things (Kassy's pillow and Andrew's pocketknife) are of little worth, if any at all, but the things mean so much to them that they would never want to sell them or throw them away. Those things have no financial value, but they're loved and cherished and very precious to Andrew and Kassy.

So, whenever someone describes something as having **sentimental value**, it means that the person has an emotional connection to that object, even though it might not be worth very much money.

Here are a couple more examples with **sentimental value**:

Axl: I've been meaning to ask you something. Why don't you get rid of this old cassette player? It's been here forever. Would you mind if I threw it out?

Julian: Don't you even think of it, Axl! Do you know how special it is to me?

Axl: I mean, I know that you like listening to music, but don't you think it's a little too old?

Julian: I know that there are better ways to listen to music these days, but this was the first expensive thing I ever bought myself and so it has some **sentimental value** to me. I just can't do it, OK?

Dave: What do you think they'll do with this old building? Are they going to tear it down?

Othman: They thought about it at first, but as it turned out it is of great **sentimental value** to the local community and so they've decided to make it into a museum.

Dave: I didn't realize it was so special. But now I want to see it myself!

Safety blanket

Noun

A **safety blanket** is an item that makes kids feel safe and comfortable. Often, young children like to have something around them, an item that makes them feel good and takes their worries away. It doesn't necessarily have to be a blanket, of course. It can be any item that makes them feel safe (a stuffed animal, a storybook, a favourite toy, etc.) when in bed, feeling stressed out, or simply scared. In some cases, it is, indeed, a blanket, but it doesn't have to be.

When Kassy was talking about her beloved and cherished pillow, she mentioned that it was never her **safety blanket**. She did have a couple of stuffed animals, though, when she was younger and needed to have something around to comfort her.

This expression can also be used metaphorically to talk about something that you turn to when you feel pressured (music, food, your hobbies, etc.). Although Andrew and Kassy call it a **safety blanket** in this episode, it is also common for English speakers to refer to it as a **security blanket**.

Here are a couple more examples with **safety blanket**:

Usha: What's that book you're reading? Annie, are you thinking of having a baby?

Annie: Oh, drop it. No, of course not. It's related to my research. By the way, what was your **safety blanket** when you were a kid?

Usha: My **safety blanket**? You mean like a toy or a stuffed animal that I would take to bed?

Annie: For example, I wouldn't go to sleep unless I had my stuffed dinosaur around.

Usha: Me too! Except mine was a stuffed hippo, not a dinosaur.

Wife: I can't find Joel's teddy bear anywhere! I think we might have left it at my mom's.

Husband: What are we going to do? He can't sleep without it.

Wife: I think it'll be all right. I'll read him a story from his favourite pirate book. The teddy bear is his **safety blanket**, and he's had it ever since he was three, but he's a big boy now. He'll be fine.

Husband: I hope so. I'll go get the book for you.

Think back on Idiom

To **think back on** is an idiomatic expression that means to think about someone or something from the past. When you think back, you think about a time in the past or your past experience and remember what happened to you.

In this episode, Andrew uses this expression when talking about his pocketknife, which has been with him for many years. As he's trying to think of the exact number of years he's had it, he says he's **thinking back on** it now. In a way, by saying this, he lets Kassy know that he's thinking and trying to recall the exact amount of time he's owned the knife.

Here are a couple more examples with **think back on**:

Costas: How long have you been together with Paul? Has it been 7 years or so?

Leila: That's about right. This year marks our seventh anniversary.

Costas: **Thinking back on** the day you met, I never would have guessed you'd end up dating, not to mention having a baby a year later.

Leila: Sometimes, when you **think back on** your life, you suddenly realize how important some people actually are to you.

Coinneach: Do you know what my favourite memory of you is?

Paulina: I'm dying to know! Tell me, please.

Coinneach: I like **thinking back on** our childhood and especially the time when we were visiting Uncle Don's ranch. Do you remember that day?

Paulina: Are you kidding me? I will probably have this scar on my shin for the rest of my life. What a lovely reminder!

Coinneach: You saved my life that day!

Paulina: Oh, stop it, Coinneach. You're being dramatic. The river wasn't that deep anyways.

Using time as countable/non-countable noun

Grammar

As you might already know, the word **time** has both countable and uncountable forms.

This means that when using its countable form, you have to use an article (a/an/the) before it. So, how do you know whether it's countable or not?

Here are a few quick tips on how you can tell the difference. If you want to use **time** to refer to what is measured in seconds, minutes, or hours (that is, for what is represented on a clock), it's uncountable, as in these examples:

1) How much **time** do we have for this project? (How many hours, minutes, and seconds do we have to finish it up?)

2) I don't have too much **time** these days.

As you can see, there are no articles used here.

But if you want to use **time** to mean experience (what you've done, seen, or felt), it's countable and you have to use an article (a/an/the). Let's take a closer look at how Andrew uses it when speaking of the latest livestream with Kassy. He says, "You and I had **a great time**." You could easily rephrase it and say, "You and I had **a great experience**." Kassy and Andrew had a lot of fun hanging out with the Culips community. What **a great experience**! Speaking of fun, there's another sentence in which Kassy uses the word **time** in its countable form. She says, "It's always **a fun time**." Here again, the word **time** means **experience**.

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

Dejana: I wish I could spend more **time** with my family. I've been really busy with work lately.

Matt: Maybe you should take a little break from work and go on vacation.

Dejana: I think you're right. I'll go and talk to my boss right away.

Mikael: Thanks for joining us last night! We had **a fun time** watching wrestling with you guys. Maybe we should do it again sometime soon. What do you say?

Patrick: Sounds like a plan to me. I'm in. How about this Thursday?

To be particular about (something)

Adjective

To be particular about (something) means that you want things to be a certain way. If, for example, you're a coffee lover and have a habit of drinking coffee in the morning, you probably make it a specific way, the way you like it the most. In this case, you could say that you're very **particular about its recipe**: you want it to be freshly brewed, with a tablespoon of brown sugar and almond milk added. It's very specific, isn't it?

You are, in a way, difficult to please unless your coffee is made the right way. It's a habit for you, so nothing else will be just as good. You're a little bit picky or strict when it comes to drinking coffee, simply because that's the way you do it.

In this episode, Andrew says that he's very **particular about his bikes**. This means that he really likes the bikes that he owns. It's not that his bikes are super pricy or high tech and that no other bikes will ever be good enough to replace them, but rather that they're special to him and he's used to having these bikes.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be particular about (something)**:

Orpha: Have you heard what happened to Patricia? I think it's no surprise, given how difficult she can be sometimes.

Penny: What do you mean? What happened?

Orpha: She got fired today. And do you know why? She had an argument with our boss about the food in the cafeteria. Obviously, she's very **particular about certain things in her life**, especially her diet.

Penny: I know that she has a bad temper, but losing a job over a little thing like that? That's crazy!

Patricia: Asim, this is the worst day of my life! My car just died on me! I've had it for almost 20 years, but I think it's finally time for me to buy a new one.

Asim: What kind of car do you want to buy?

Patricia: I'm not too **particular about the brand**. I just want an affordable car that is dependable, fuel efficient, and not too big.

Asim: I know a lot about cars. If you ever need someone to go car shopping with you, just let me know.

Quiz

1. What is an acronym?

- a) a word that sounds the same or is spelled the same way as another word
- b) a word that means the same as another word or phrase
- c) a word that means the opposite of another word
- d) a word that's made from the first letters of other words

2. If something is TMI, you _____.

- a) want to know more about it
- b) don't want to know about it or hear about it
- c) don't want to share what you know
- d) want to share what you know with others

3. Your friend tells you that his guitar is of great sentimental value to him. What does it mean?

- a) it's an expensive guitar
- b) the guitar is one of a kind
- c) your friend has a strong emotional attachment to the guitar
- d) your friend is thinking of selling the guitar

4. Which of the following the best describes a safety blanket?

- a) it's a blanket that's used in cold weather
- b) it's another word for a picnic blanket
- c) it's an item that makes kids feel safe and comfortable
- d) it's a blanket that you can get on the plane in case you're afraid of flying

5. What does it mean if you're particular about your diet?

- a) you're a little bit picky about your food and want it to be made the right way
- b) your doctor told you to cut down on fast food
- c) you have some stomach problems
- d) you're indifferent to food

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What are your most prized possessions? What makes them so special to you?
2. Do you think your prized possessions have any monetary value? If given the opportunity, would you ever try to sell them? Why or why not?
3. How would you feel if you ever lost your prized possessions? Would it be upsetting or, to the contrary, liberating?
4. Do you think a person or another living thing could be someone's prized possession? Why or why not?
5. What are the downsides to having items of great value, either sentimental or financial?

Quiz Answers

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

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