

Simplified Speech #177 – Museums and galleries

AD-FREE

Episode description

How often do you go to museums and art galleries? In this episode, Andrew and Kassy chat about the different kinds of art exhibits they enjoy visiting. They also talk about some of the reasons they do not always enjoy spending time at art galleries, including anxiety and the behaviour of other gallery-goers.

Fun fact

Did you know that there is a special word in the United States to refer to museum tour guides? Individuals who lead guided tours through art or science museums are sometimes called docents (pronounced doe-sents).

Expressions included in the study guide

- Poser
- To be bogged down
- Can't help but [verb]
- To lose [one's] cool
- Over the top
- To touch base with



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: Simplified Speech episode 178, Museums and galleries, featuring Andrew and Kassy.

Today I'm going to kick this episode off by myself. But in just a moment, I'll be joined by my cohost, Kassy, and we're going to talk about going to museums and art exhibitions in this episode. Now this awesome topic was suggested to us by Gabriella, who is one of our listeners from Mar del Plata in Argentina. So, thanks so much for the episode suggestion, Gabriella.

And, guys, if you're like me and you've never been to Argentina before, then do yourself a favour and Google the name of the city where Gabriella lives, Mar del Plata, because it looks like just this beautiful beach-side city. And looking at some of the pictures online that I saw really gave me the travel bug quite hard. And these days, I would really love to get away and travel somewhere for a bit, and South America is on the top of my list. The problem is that it takes a lot of time and money to travel to South America from Asia, where I currently live. But if I only had unlimited time and unlimited money, then definitely I would be headed to South America.

Anyway, if you have a suggestion for an upcoming topic that you'd like to hear me and my cohost talk about in an upcoming episode, or if you have a suggestion for someone you'd like to hear me interview in an upcoming episode, then please join our Discord server and let us know.

OK, and now it's finally time for the main event, my discussion with Kassy about visiting museums and galleries and exhibits. So, here we go. I hope you enjoy it.

So, I just have a very broad general question here to kick things off, and I'm wondering, in general, do you like going to galleries or to see art exhibits?

Kassy: Honestly, I'm not a huge art exhibit goer. Is that a phrase? I think so. But I do enjoy going to special museum exhibits or things related to pop culture. For example, I love going to the Studio Ghibli exhibits. I think his animation style is just so beautiful. And the way that he makes wind move inside his movies is spectacular. So, I've been to his exhibit, or Studio Ghibli's exhibit, in Korea and Thailand already. And I've also been to a couple of, you know, Egyptian, King Tut exhibits. I feel like that shows up a lot in the US. How about you, Andrew?

Andrew: I think in my time I've seen a couple of Egyptian exhibits. Yeah, I believe when I was in Europe, maybe it was in Germany, I want to say, it's been a while, it was a long time ago. But I remember seeing some Egyptian artifacts when I was in one of the museums in Europe.

But, Kassy, in a more general sense, I like doing both of the things that I asked you about. I like going to art galleries, and I also like going to museums or to see exhibits. I think it's a fun way to have an experience that's a little bit different. And I always find them really inspiring. Even just the buildings, in my opinion, are kind of inspiring. Like galleries are always really minimal and sleek and very focused on the art. And often the building itself is a work of art, right? A lot of galleries are very amazing pieces of architecture. And the same goes for museums, as well. I love being in a museum. They kind of have that feeling of history. And you can't forget the gift store at the end. I always love the gift store, as well, checking it out.

Kassy: Yes, getting a cool postcard. I love those little postcards with little replicas of the art on them.

Andrew: Yeah, totally. You gotta buy a little piece of memorabilia, I suppose.

Kassy, you said you don't like going to art galleries or art exhibits as much. Is there any particular reason for that?

Kassy: I didn't take a lot of traditional art classes in high school or university. So I don't think I'm very knowledgeable. I have this anxiety where I look at a piece of art and I wonder, am I too ignorant to understand this? How long should I stare at the art piece that's considered polite, when can I move on? You know what I mean? I know I'm supposed to be feeling some sort of emotion, but I don't. So, I'm more of a, yeah, pop culture gallerist. I like to go to not as many classic art places but more pop art, animation, movies, that kind of thing.

Andrew: Yeah, fair enough. I think probably most people feel like that, like, I know, I feel like a **poser** when I go to galleries. I am a terrible artist myself. And I've only studied art very, very generally. I took an art history class, I think my first year or second year at university, and that's it. So I don't think that I'm really well educated about art, but I still like looking at it. And over the years, I've come to just sort of try to throw that opinion out the window and just try to be like, oh, these are some cool paintings. And like, yeah, maybe I can't analyze it or criticize it the way that somebody who's really educated in art could. But to me, it's not about that. It's just about, you know, enjoying a different creative experience.

So, yeah, I do like going to galleries. But, yeah, when you look at the painting and you try to analyze it, or overanalyze it, I try not to get into that kind of frame of mind and just enjoy the image for what it is without breaking it down too much.

Kassy: One thing I do love about going to galleries or exhibits is that it's so different from what I do for my job. You know, I love being a math teacher, but I'm usually **bogged down** by quizzes and tests. Math isn't a super creative subject, you can totally be creative, but on the day-to-day high school curriculum level, it's pretty, you know, learn this standard, this rule and apply it in this problem. But when you go to galleries or exhibits, you see pieces of work that are just so inspiring, and you go, wow, somebody with their two hands created this, or even their toes or body parts, you know? Like, there's just so many different styles and forms of expression for your feelings and your thoughts through art that I don't get to see on a day-to-day basis.

Andrew: That's really well put, Kassy. I think you should be an art critic. I completely agree with you. And like I mentioned just a moment ago, I'm really terrible at art, I can't draw or paint or do anything related to visual art very well. And so to see some individuals are so talented at that and it's almost just like they have these images pouring out of them, right, like they **can't help but create** the art. And especially if you go to an exhibit that is just focusing on one artist.

Like some of the ones that come to mind that I've been to within the last few years, I saw a Keith Haring exhibit, and a David Hockney exhibit. And, yeah, those were just focused only on the artist. So, it wasn't just like one or two of their works, but like a hundred that you could see. And you just go oh my gosh, like these guys just **couldn't help but create** art, it was just like something they did every day, and they just had these amazing, creative work just flow out of them. And I find that really inspiring. And it's just amazing how some artists can just be so prolific.

Now, Kassy, my wife often likes to take me to exhibits. It's something that we've done a lot together. And sometimes she takes me to hip exhibits. And what I mean by a hip exhibit is that it's gathering a lot of buzz and there are a lot of people who want to go there. And often they sell out, like, it's actually really amazing here in Korea, where we live, I think there is a huge culture of going to galleries and going to exhibits. But one of the reasons why I think they're so hip is that people go there to be seen, rather than to see the art itself.

So, I remember that we went to this one exhibit at this kind of smaller gallery. And I can't exactly remember the title of the exhibit. But it was something to do with folded paper art. And it wasn't origami, but it was made from paper and specifically folded paper. And it was really cool. But I was so angry at the gallery. And I'm not one **to lose my cool** very often, like I'm very chill, very level-headed most of the time. And don't get me wrong, at the gallery it's not like I was yelling and screaming and kicking over tables or anything like that. I was still calm and rational. But inside I was fuming. And that's because people were just

taking selfies with the art. They weren't even looking at the art. They were just taking pictures and taking selfies and Instagramming the whole time. And yeah, it drove me nuts.

I'm wondering, do you have an opinion about that? What do you think about that kind of situation?

Kassy: I actually completely agree with you, and luckily so does my husband. Neither of us are picture takers or social media users. So, for example, there's a really famous ice cream pop-up museum gallery kind of thing where it has nothing related to ice cream. It's literally just different rooms of, like, colourful pictures of melted ice cream or a pool of sprinkles. And it's not artistic. It's just a really cool backdrop for your Instagram pictures. But they asked you to pay 20 bucks a pop to get in, and it boggles my mind. And I see lines like out the door and around the corner to get into these places. And I go, why?

But there are some galleries or museums that are more picture centred that I do like. For example, on Jeju Island there was a really cool trick art museum that I went to, which is specifically for taking cool pictures. But that's not something I would go to often, just as a once and done thing, and not for Instagram for my actual enjoyment. Two, I think some digital art museums now are really cool. And they're pretty popular as well with Instagrammers, but less popular because it's harder to take videos of those kinds of things and make them look realistic. So, yeah, ones that are these digital art galleries are, I think, gaining in popularity a lot these days. But they're not as crowded as some of the other Instagram-famous galleries that you might see on social media.

Andrew: I should clarify my position a little bit, because I maybe came across as sounding too old-fashioned in my rant there a second ago. I have no problem with people taking pictures of art and putting it on Instagram or taking selfies in the gallery and putting it on Instagram. I think that's totally fine. I have no problem with that whatsoever. And I think, actually, if it gets people interested in art, then it's probably a good thing. But in that specific gallery, I couldn't even walk from one exhibit to the next because there were too many people taking pictures. And I felt bad stepping in front of people's pictures. And I was getting dirty looks for ruining people's photos and stuff. And it was just **over the top** at

that one specific gallery. But other than that, yeah, it's totally fine, but just not for me, I guess.

Kassy: Yeah, I think we actually talked about that in our livestream one time, Andrew. We talked about the Louvre and how people go there and you can't even see the art because everyone's phones are just up in front of your face. And it's impossible to look at the beautiful artwork that's been around for generations.

Andrew: You know, Kassy, it's funny that you just mentioned Jeju Island, because I went there a couple of months ago. And my wife told me that the hotel I was staying at in Jeju Island was close to this very famous gallery. And the funny thing was, she told me that I should go to the gallery and take a selfie outside of the gallery because it's popular on Instagram. So instead of recommending going into the gallery to see the art, she just said, "Oh, yeah, take a selfie with the exterior of that building because it's really hip and popular these days." I thought that was kind of ironic. But, yeah, I guess at the end of the day, if it brings people into the world of art and gets them interested in attending galleries and checking out different creative works, I think, yeah, that's gonna be a good thing.

Kassy: It also gives inspiration to people who maybe can't afford to go to those galleries. They can see it on social media and go, "Oh, maybe I can create something similar," or "Using that idea I can bounce it off my head and make something new and unique."

Andrew: Another kind of similar rant is at concerts. You know, when people film with their phone at concerts, instead of just enjoying the music, I think, yeah, many people in my generation and older, we all have this similar rant. It's like, "Oh, come on. Can't you guys just enjoy the concert without filming it?" But, yeah, I guess I'm sounding like a dinosaur in this episode, Kassy, maybe I should be the one in the museum.

Kassy: I'm sure our listeners would go and go see you in there.

Andrew: Kassy, here's a question for you. If you could be a curator, if you could curate your own art exhibit, what kind of theme or what kind of artists' works would you like to display?

Kassy: That's a good question. I know I said that I like galleries because they're not related to math. However, I think I would love to see a gallery that was inspired by math, like related to art or music, or maybe a gallery for lost women in history because, you know, in the past there were so many women that contributed to math and science that were kind of overlooked or shadowed by a male figure back in the day. That would be really cool to see a gallery of that and go through it.

Andrew: That is an awesome answer. Wow. Yeah, I think that would be fantastic. An exhibit about math or the women behind math and science who haven't been properly recognized in history. That is so cool. Yeah, I love that.

I guess for me, I'm going to kind of steal your idea, Kassy, because you inspired me. I would love to curate an exhibit that has something to do with my passions. So, I'm thinking about like music, maybe something to do with like instruments, maybe guitars, or drums, or stereos, or maybe bikes. I'm interested in bikes.

And I kind of saw an exhibit when I was in Scotland about the history of the bicycle. And it wasn't a huge exhibit. But I believe it was in Glasgow at maybe the Glasgow Museum, there was a pretty decent exhibit about bicycles. And it was so cool to see some of these like old bikes. And, actually, I took some pictures of the exhibit. So I broke my own rule.

But, yeah, something to do with my passions, like about music or maybe bikes. That could be cool. I think I would curate that. It could be maybe part museum exhibit with like real examples of vintage instruments and bikes, and then part art. So artwork that features bicycles or musical instruments, something like that. That is what I would curate, I think.

Kassy: That would be cool for an interactive part, too, where you could maybe try to make some music with bike parts or something. I don't know, it just kinda popped into my head.

Andrew: Yeah, you could like put a drumstick on the bike wheel. And then when you pedal, the wheel, thumps the drum, something like that.

Kassy, final question here for you before we wrap up the regular part of this episode, and we will keep it going for a little bit longer for our members. But for just everyone here before we go to the members-only content, one final question. And that is in movies, you often see these kinds of people who are very inspired and want to be artists in the future. And maybe they're like going to art school or something. And these kinds of people go to art galleries, and they sit with their sketchbook, and they try and copy the art. Have you ever seen someone do that in real life? I've seen it so often on TV and in the movies, but I don't think I've ever seen somebody do that in real life. Have you?

Kassy: Have you ever been to New York, Andrew?

Andrew: Yeah, I've been to New York.

Kassy: Ah, OK. Well, I've been to New York quite a few times. And every time I go, I see art students in the museums with their sketchbooks. I think it's part of an assignment for their classes. So, yes, I have, in fact, seen it in action.

Andrew: OK, that's cool. So it's not just something that people do in the movies, but they do it in real life as well. Maybe it's a New York thing. Maybe that's where it comes from?

Kassy: Yeah, maybe, or more in the States. I'm not sure. But, yeah, they're usually around early 20s. So, college-student age are the people I see the most doing their sketches.

Andrew: Huh. OK, well, next time I go to New York, I'm gonna have to pay attention. And I think when I was in New York, I believe I went to the MoMA. Is the MoMA in New York?

Kassy: Yup.

Andrew: Yeah. I went there, but I didn't see anybody do that. And I also went to, what is the famous, like, natural history museum in New York City?

Kassy: Yeah, I think that's what it's called, isn't it? The New York Natural History Museum.

Andrew: The one where you can see like all of the dioramas of animals and stuff. That one was awesome, as well. Yeah. Good memories from visiting New York and checking those out.

All right, we're keeping our conversation going here just a little bit longer for all of our Culips members, just to say thank you for your support.

So, Kassy, we have three quick, rapid-fire, fun questions here. And let's start with the first one. So, the first question is, do you prefer going to galleries or exhibits by yourself or with others? It's kind of an interesting question, because I know when I've gone with others before, sometimes you either feel too guilty for looking at the art for too long, or you feel like you're rushing through the gallery too quickly and maybe not giving your friends enough time to check out the art. So, I don't know, it's tough. Would you prefer to go by yourself or with other people?

Kassy: It's an excellent question. I think that's kind of a certain friend situation, like you know who you need to bring, who fits your style. But I do prefer looking through exhibits at first by myself so I can absorb it and think about it in my own head. But I love going with someone so that we could **touch base with** each other after and tell each other our favourite parts of the gallery we walked through or certain pieces that really stuck out to us and discuss those with each other.

Andrew: That's awesome. Yeah, I think you hit it right on the head there, you really need to make sure that you go with the right person because I know, in the past, I've been to some galleries with a friend who is really just a wet blanket and ruined my experience. But then, yeah, I've been to galleries and exhibits alone, like I just mentioned a little while ago, in the regular version of the episode, the Natural History Museum in New York, I remember going to that one alone. And it was perfect because I could go at my own pace.

So, I think either going by yourself or going with a friend who is like the perfect match for your kind of style, those are the best options. But going with somebody who's not

interested can be terrible, because they just sort of drag behind you and look at their watch. And they're like, "Can we go home yet?" And—

Kassy: Such a buzzkill.

Andrew: Total buzzkill. Yeah. All right. Our second rapid-fire question here is have you ever visited an exhibit just because it was popular on social media? We kind of talked about this already. But I'm wondering, what's your story for this question?

Kassy: I think I can honestly say I don't look up a lot of famous things on social media. So no, I don't think so.

Andrew: I went to the David Hockney exhibit that was here in Seoul a couple of years back. And I mean, he's a really cool artist, and I probably would have checked it out anyway. But I saw so many of my friends go and post about it on social media that I think that really planted the seed in my head to go and check it out.

So, I'm gonna say, yeah, and also, you know, the movie director, Wes Anderson, he's one of my favourite movie directors. And he had an exhibit here that was really promoted heavily on social media. And as pretty much as soon as I saw it, I wanted to go.

Unfortunately, the tickets all sold out so, I wasn't able to go. Probably because it was promoted so heavily on social media. So, yeah, you know, I'm a social media user so what I see does probably influence my decisions, as pathetic as that may be.

Kassy: No. Well, for me, it's similar. Like, usually when I find something, it's either on a blog, which is kind of a form of social media, just not as like in your face. Or I see posters around the city. I'm like, "Oh, that looks super cool. I want to go check that out." So, it's still advertising.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. OK, final question. If you could meet any artist, living or dead at their exhibit, so you could see the exhibit and meet the artist, who would you meet? Who would it be?

Kassy: Oh. That's a good question, Andrew. I'm not sure. Maybe, honestly, I think I'd want to meet someone from the distant past that's super famous in our schools and textbooks, like Michelangelo or something, just so that I could, like, meet them in the future and see how they would react to how much inspiration and how famous they still are hundreds of years later and, yeah, see their reactions to that. I think that would be super cool.

Could you imagine like one of those kind of drunken and depressed artists, like imagine Van Gogh having a conversation with him, because he was suicidal. If you come in the future, he had, like, \$20 to his name when he died, and you come into the future and he's like, you know, one of the most famous artists of high school art class, and he'd be like, dude.

Andrew: Yeah, I think a person who would be really fun to meet and just pick his brain would be da Vinci. You know, like such a great creative mind from back in the day. Who would I really choose to meet, though? Hmm. It's a tough question. Probably any artist would be really cool because artists in general are usually pretty eccentric and quirky, and just very creative. And I like those kinds of creative, eccentric, quirky people. I'm going to say maybe I will choose Frida Kahlo. I'll choose Frida Kahlo, for no reason other than I think she has kind of an interesting life story, and her art was cool. I think that's probably good enough, right? That's good enough reason.

Kassy: Yeah, totally. I worry about language barrier for a lot of the people I'd like to meet.

Andrew: Oh, yeah, let's throw the language barrier out the window because, yeah, I wouldn't be able to talk probably with da Vinci. Wonder what he would have spoken, Italian, I would imagine?

Kassy: Yeah, and Frida Kahlo, Spanish, I guess.

Andrew: Spanish. Yeah, I wonder if they could speak English. I wonder if English learning was a big thing at that time? Maybe for Frida, because she was alive not too long ago, but da Vinci probably not, unfortunately.

All right let's wrap up the bonus content here. Thanks for listening, everyone, and we'll catch you again soon. Take care. Bye!

Kassy: See ya!

Andrew: That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time. Bye!

Detailed Explanations

Poser

Noun

While Andrew enjoys visiting art galleries and Kassy agrees that they can be enjoyable, she also admits that she doesn't go very often. Kassy says she feels a bit of anxiety when she's walking through an art exhibit and she isn't knowledgeable about the history of the art. Andrew can relate to this experience; he says he sometimes feels like a **poser** when he's at an art gallery because he doesn't know much about art history either. However, he tries to ignore this self-conscious feeling and enjoy the artwork anyways.

A **poser** is a person who pretends to be something they are not in order to get approval or attention from others. For example, let's say Sarah wants to make friends with a group of people who are really interested in wine. She tries to get involved in their conversations about wine and pretends to be knowledgeable about different kinds of wines. However, Sarah has never been to a wine-tasting in her life and she can't tell the difference between a Riesling and a Chardonnay. If the others find out about her lies, they might think of her as a **poser**.

Poser is always used in a negative way, often as an insult. Some synonyms include **fake fan** and **wannabe**.

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

Teresa: Did you hear what happened with that famous health and wellness influencer?

Peter: No, what happened?

Teresa: She's been promoting veganism on her Instagram for years, claiming she lost 20 kilograms with her vegan diet. Then, the other day, someone posted a video of her at a restaurant eating a big, juicy steak.

Peter: What a **poser**! You can't trust influencers. They're just trying to make money.

Kevin: How did your Tinder date go?

Lucy: Uh, not so great. When we were messaging each other, he kept talking about how much he loved metal music, but then when we met and chatted in real life, it became clear that he didn't know a single thing about the genre. He was kind of a **poser**.

Kevin: Sounds like he was just trying to impress you, since you're clearly a big metal fan.

To be bogged down

Phrasal verb

Although Kassy doesn't go to art museums very often, she says that she enjoys the contrast of enjoying art compared to her day-to-day life as a math teacher. Being a math teacher involves being **bogged down** by a lot of quizzes, tests, and standardized curricula, so experiencing art and creativity can be a nice change of pace for her.

The phrasal verb **to be bogged down** means to be slowed down and burdened by a situation or tasks. A bog is a synonym for a swamp or marshland. It's squishy and muddy and you can't walk through without sinking into water. Imagine the feeling of trying to walk through this kind of environment—that's a good way to remember the meaning of being **bogged down**.

For example, let's say an office worker wants to finish writing a report by the end of the day. She starts working on it, but then her coworkers keep interrupting her for help, she receives a bunch of emails she must respond to, and her boss surprises her with an unexpected 2-hour meeting. By 4 pm, she's so **bogged down** by all her other tasks that there's no way she'll get the report finished in time.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be bogged down**:

Monica: That meeting was such a waste of time.

Eric: What happened?

Monica: We were supposed to create and delegate tasks for everyone so we could start working on the project this week. Unfortunately, the person running the meeting was so obsessed with the little details that we got **bogged down** talking about nothing for 3 hours. We didn't end up delegating a single task.

Eric: That's rough. It's better to have an efficient person running an important meeting like that.

Anna: Aren't they ever going to finish building that new apartment complex? It's been under construction for months and months.

Tony: I think all the bad weather and heavy rain this summer must be **bogging down** their progress.

Anna: It's frustrating. The lack of affordable housing in this area is a big problem!

Can't help but [verb]

Expression

One of the things Andrew finds awe-inspiring about art galleries is when there are hundreds of pieces of artwork by a single artist. When he sees this, Andrew gets the sense that the artist **couldn't help but produce** all this art and he feels impressed by the creativity.

Can't help but [verb] is a great expression you can use to spice up your everyday English. **Can't help but [verb]** means you can't avoid doing something. The action is almost involuntary, like you don't have a choice. It can be used positively or negatively. When you use this expression, the [verb] should be in its base form, like "go" or "be."

For example, you could say that when your girlfriend saw a gorgeous sunset, she **couldn't help but gasp**, or that when you heard the sad news on the TV, you **couldn't help but cry**, or that whenever there's chocolate in the house, your sister **can't help but eat** it.

As you can see from the examples above, the reason you **can't help but do** something is usually because of strong emotions, urges, or instincts. You wouldn't say, "I **couldn't help but complete** my boring math homework." If you can't avoid doing something because of an obligation, then you can just say, for example, "I had to complete my boring math homework."

Here are a couple more examples with **can't help but [verb]**:

Kristen: Hey, you didn't eat the cookies that were on the kitchen counter, did you?

Robert: Umm ... Actually, I did.

Kristen: Robert! Those were for Linda's slumber party. Now I have to make more!

Robert: I'm sorry, Kristen. They just smelled so delicious, **I couldn't help but eat** them.

Fred: I need to stop hanging out with Dave.

Isabella: Why? I thought he was a good friend of yours.

Fred: He is, but we disagree on so many things. Whenever politics come up, **I can't help but argue** with him. We spend more time arguing than anything else.

Isabella: Maybe you should just avoid talking about politics.

Fred: I try, but it's hard. Everything is political!

To lose [one's] cool

Idiom

Andrew mentions one thing about going to art museums that really irritates him. He can't stand it when he sees people going to museums just to take selfies with the art and post it on social media. Andrew tells Kassy that he **doesn't lose his cool** very often, but there was one time he saw this at an art exhibit and he felt extremely annoyed.

To lose [one's] cool means that you can't help but get angry or frustrated in a situation where you should be calm. For example, your friend might tell you, "I think of myself as a calm and rational person, but when someone accuses me of lying, I tend **to lose my cool**." Another example might be a teacher saying, "The students listened well and stayed quiet during the fire drill. Even though it was stressful, they **didn't lose their cool** at all."

The opposite of **to lose [one's] cool** would be **to keep [one's] cool**. For example, you might advise your friend, "Don't stress during the final exam. Just **keep your cool** and you'll definitely finish it in time."

In English, low levels of emotions are associated with cool or cold temperatures and high levels of emotions are associated with hot temperatures. Think of expressions like "cool your jets" and "take a chill pill." These mean "calm down." Similarly, if an argument heats up, the people arguing are getting angry and emotional. A hot-headed person is someone who has a bad temper. Remembering this pattern will help you intuitively understand a lot of common English idioms!

Here are a couple more examples with **to lose [one's] cool**:

Penny: How's your new job?

Zach: It's all right. The pay is pretty good, but it's customer service and I have to deal with a lot of angry customers.

Penny: I don't think I'd be very good at a customer-facing job. How do you manage to deal with an angry customer?

Zach: I just keep calm and don't take their anger personally. It's important **not to lose your cool**. Getting mad won't solve anything.

Rudy: I had a fight with my brother last week and I ended up getting so frustrated that I shouted at him. He hasn't spoken to me since and I don't know what to do.

Emily: Maybe you should apologize to him for **losing your cool**.

Over the top Adjective

Andrew clarifies his complaint about people taking selfies with artwork at museums. He doesn't want to sound anti-social media or judgmental, but his experience at the folded paper art exhibit was very unpleasant. He says there were so many people just taking photos and not even looking at the art that their behaviour felt **over the top**.

Over the top is an adjective that means excessive or exaggerated in a bad way. You can use it to describe quantity (for example, the number of balloons at the party was **over the top**) or quality (for example, the special effects in the movie were **over the top**). When we use **over the top** to describe people's behaviour, it usually means they are being overly emotional or dramatic. For instance, a man's reaction to the news about his wife quitting her job would be **over the top** if he started crying and screaming as if it were the end of the world. **Over the top** behaviour is behaviour that is beyond what seems normal or expected.

Here are a couple more examples with **over the top**:

Mary: Wasn't that a lovely wedding?

Christopher: It certainly was. The reception was a little **over the top** for my taste, though.

Mary: What do you mean?

Christopher: Well, did they really need to have three giant ice sculptures on the buffet table and a fireworks show?

Mary: I suppose that was a little excessive.

Paula: How about we go to that new restaurant downtown for dinner tonight?

Vince: I'd rather not. My brother told me the prices are way **over the top** and the serving sizes are small.

Paula: Oh, all right. Want to just order a pizza, then?

Vince: Great idea!

To touch base with Verb

At the end of the episode, Andrew asks Kassy if she prefers going to museums alone or with a friend. She says that she generally likes to go alone and enjoy the art at her own pace. However, it can be really nice to go with a friend and **touch base with** them afterwards about each other's thoughts and feelings.

To touch base with is a great idiomatic verb that's frequently used in both informal and business settings. It means to communicate with someone, especially after a period of no communication. When Kassy says she likes **touching base with** a friend after walking through an art exhibit, she means she and her friend are walking through the exhibit independently and enjoying it at their own pace. Then, after a lack of communication during that time, they reconnect and have a conversation about each other's impressions of the art. They **touch base with** each other.

Especially in a business context, **to touch base with** can also imply short or brief communication. For example, if your boss says she wants to have a meeting to **touch base with** you about the upcoming project, it's probably going to be a quick meeting. You probably won't go deep into detail, but just talk about the main ideas.

Here are a couple more examples with **to touch base with**:

Harry: I wonder how my cousin Anthony is doing these days. We haven't spoken in a long time.

Denise: You're right. I don't think we've seen him since last Thanksgiving. Why don't you call him up and **touch base with** him?

Harry: I think I will!

Olivia: Steven, can you email our client and ask if we can set up a time this week **to touch base** about the contract?

Steven: You got it. I'll write to them now.

Olivia: Thanks. Also, I wanted **to touch base with** you about your job promotion. I just wanted to let you know that management thinks very highly of you and they're impressed with your performance this quarter. You should be expecting an update from them soon.

Steven: That's great! Thanks so much for putting in a good word for me.

Quiz

1. What is a poser?

- a) someone who is good at posing for photographs
- b) someone who pretends to know a lot about something, but they don't
- c) someone who isn't trying to impress other people
- d) someone who knows everything there is to know about a subject

2. Your brother says, "I couldn't help but laugh when I watched that YouTube video." What does he mean?

- a) he didn't find it funny
- b) he wanted to laugh but couldn't
- c) he thought it was so funny he had to laugh
- d) he thought it was funny but didn't laugh

3. Which of the following best describes an over the top birthday party?

- a) a trip to the movie theater with friends
- b) a house party with pizza and beer
- c) a picnic in the park
- d) a banquet hall with a gourmet buffet and expensive champagne

4. What is the opposite of losing one's cool?

- a) staying calm
- b) getting angry and yelling
- c) blushing and feeling embarrassed
- d) getting frightened and screaming

5. Your coworker says she's feeling bogged down by her workload. What does she mean?

- a) she feels like she can't make progress because there's so much to do
- b) she feels like her tasks are really boring
- c) she feels like she hasn't been given enough work to do
- d) she feels like her job is unfulfilling

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Do you enjoy going to art galleries and museums? Why or why not? When was the last time you went to one?
2. Who is your favorite artist? What is it that you love about their artwork?
3. Have you ever lost your cool in an argument or a stressful situation? What happened?
4. Do you have good self-control? Is there anything you can't help but do, like eat chocolate when it's in the house?
5. After you watch a movie or walk through an art museum with a friend, do you like to touch base with them and discuss each other's opinions? Why? Do you have any friends you always agree with?

Quiz Answers

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

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