

Simplified Speech #178 – Interview with Indiana

AD-FREE

Episode description

In this episode, Andrew interviews one of Culips' study guide writers, Indiana! He asks her about how she got interested in languages, how she became an English teacher, and what her hobbies are. Plus, Andrew and Indiana share an exciting piece of news – a free Culips course that starts in October! Listen to this episode to find out more about this exciting English learning opportunity.

Sign up for the Simplified Speech course with Indiana:

<https://forms.gle/VmwLmExiJhEi3NNS9>

Fun fact

Indiana mentions that she lives in New York State, but not New York City. The State of New York has a total area of 54,555 square miles. Meanwhile, NYC only consists of 472 square miles!

Expressions included in the study guide

- The floor is yours
- Drip
- Beta
- To drop in
- To cap [something] at
- To pat oneself on the back



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, Interview with Indiana. Featuring, Andrew and special guest, Indiana.

Hello, Culips community. Welcome back to another brand-new Simplified Speech episode. It's great to be with you here today. And I hope you are doing well. Now today's episode is a doozy. We've got a doozy of an episode prepared for you. Now maybe you're wondering, what does the word doozy mean? Well, doozy just means fantastic or amazing. So, we have a really, really special, amazing, fantastic episode for you today. And that's because I have invited one of our study guide writers, her name is Indiana to the show, and she is going to be speaking with me about something very special that we are working on behind the scenes here at Culips and plan to launch. So, for today's episode, we're going to meet Indiana and together talk about this brand-new special announcement, this huge news that we have to share with everyone. And yeah, it's time to get started. So, here is my interview with Indiana. Enjoy!

Indiana, welcome to Culips. Hello.

Indiana: Hey, Andrew. I'm happy to be here.

Andrew: Yeah, it's great to have you here, Indiana. Finally, from behind the pen and paper. Or maybe I guess you're not writing the study guides with a pen and paper behind the keyboard and in front of the microphone now. So, I wanted to have you on Culips, Indiana because, you know, you have been working for us as a study guide writer for a

little while now. How long has it been? Probably close to a year. Is it getting close to the one-year anniversary, maybe?

Indiana: It could be. I think maybe since last October or November, yeah, could be, almost a year.

Andrew: Almost a year, almost there. And so, you've been working really hard for us behind the scenes. But I wanted to introduce you more formally to our audience. And we have a special announcement to make also about a brand new, upcoming feature that we're going to be launching here at Culips as well that I wanted to talk with you about, because you are going to be heavily involved with it. But we'll get to that big announcement and that big surprise in a moment. Maybe before we do, we could just get to know you a little bit. So, Indiana, I'm gonna throw it over to you, **the floor is yours**. Maybe you could start by telling us a little bit about where you're from?

Indiana: Yeah, so I was born in Massachusetts. But I have spent most of my life in New York State. Not in New York City, but upstate New York. Important distinction.

Andrew: Yeah, it is an important distinction. And maybe you could tell our listeners about why that's an important distinction because I think when many people including me for a long time when I heard New York, you know, your mind always goes to New York City. But it wasn't actually until I traveled to New York State and I realize there's a difference between New York and New York City. But you probably know more about that than I do. So, maybe you could tell everybody about that distinction.

Indiana: Yeah, I mean, it's a huge state. And oh, yeah, a lot of the people that I meet for the first time who might be from another country, or one of my English students, if I tell them that I'm from New York, they assume it's New York City. But that's actually just an incredibly small island in the south of the state. And if you were to drive from there to let's say, like, Buffalo, New York, which is near the famous Niagara Falls, that would probably

be like seven hours in the car. So, yeah, it's a vast state. And there's a lot of different cultures throughout the one state.

Andrew: Yeah, I've done that drive before from Canada to New York City. And I passed through Buffalo. And you're like, "Oh, I'm here, this is amazing." You're like, "No, you still have several more hours to go once you cross the border." So yeah, I know what you're talking about. But that's cool. So, you're from the States, you're an American. And you're also an English teacher and a language learner. And of course, that's a huge part of what we do at Culips. So, maybe I can have you talk a little bit about that, your experience as a teacher and as a language learner.

Indiana: Yeah. So, I'll start with my interest in language learning started in middle school when we got the chance to select foreign language to study. In most American middle schools, you could choose French or Spanish. Sometimes you get the opportunity to learn something like German. But I got to choose between French and Spanish. And I really, really loved Spanish. And went through, studied that through high school. And I also began to get interested in Japanese. Not really for any special reason, but I really thought that the language was beautiful. And I got really, really interested in it. So, I majored in Japanese studies when I went to university. And I've studied abroad in Japan, and lived with a host family for four months and studied really hard at the language.

So finally, I have another piece of my language learning interests, German, half of my family lives in Germany, and I've never met them. But I'm starting to learn German, a little bit, very slowly, very casually, because hopefully, I would like to meet them and be able to communicate in that language someday.

As far as teaching English, when I was in college, I had an opportunity to teach a couple of Japanese kids. Their father and mother, they moved to the United States for work. And they were like, ages five, and seven. So, I got an opportunity to like tutor them in English when they were done with school. And that was a lot of fun. It was challenging, because

they were very energetic, and not very enthusiastic about having to do extra school. But that was a cool, like starting point for teaching English.

So, you know, since then, I've had the chance to teach English with some different companies and independently and on platforms like iTalki. So, I've been doing that for a couple years and I really enjoy it. It's cool to talk about grammar and things like that.

Andrew: Wow, that's a unique teacher right there, somebody who enjoys teaching grammar.

Indiana: It's like a puzzle. It's putting together the puzzle pieces, it's cool.

Andrew: I also enjoy it, I think, yeah, it's cool to see how the language is structured, right? And it is definitely like a puzzle. That's a good way to put it. I like that. So, what about outside of teaching and language learning? What kind of things do you like to do in your free time? I think actually, Indiana, you and I have a lot in common in terms of our hobbies. So, that's really cool. I was surprised to learn about that when we first met, but our listeners don't know. So, let us know about some of the things that you enjoy doing when you have some free time.

Indiana: Yeah, I'm pretty introverted generally. And so a lot of my hobbies are like, I love playing video games and reading. I really enjoy sci-fi and like, all kinds of genres. I'm also really into, have been getting into fitness and like running, going to the gym and lifting weights and stuff. It's an eventual goal of mine to run a marathon but not anytime soon, definitely not anytime soon.

Andrew: Slowly, but surely.

Indiana: Definitely. And other than that, yeah, I really like to listen to music. And I like cooking vegetarian and vegan foods specifically, I follow that kind of diet. So, I love to cook healthy, healthy meals. And yeah, I mean, I think that's most of most of my interests.

Andrew: Nice. That's awesome. And you mentioned to me before that you were a radio DJ back in the day.

Indiana: Yes.

Andrew: You have a little bit of experience behind the microphone as well.

Indiana: I do. I used to have a late-night slot from 12 to 2am when I was in college, and I could play almost whatever I wanted, which was usually like alternative music. And sometimes I did a specialty show that was focused on a genre of Japanese pop music from the 80s called city pop which was really like funk and disco vibes. But yeah, so sometimes, I would be putting that on the airwaves late at night in college. It was a lot of fun. I really enjoyed that time.

Andrew: That sounds like a lot of fun. My wife and I are big city pop fans. So, I think we would have enjoyed your show. I'm wondering what was the name of your show? Usually, college radio shows have really interesting names most of the time. What was the name of your show?

Indiana: It was just something I came up with. My DJ name was, DJ Honey. And then the show was called, The Drip with DJ Honey.

Andrew: Nice! I actually like that, that's pretty good.

Indiana: Yeah, it just sounded cool. So, I went with it.

Andrew: That sounds cool. Yeah, and I think you know, I'm too old these days that I don't really follow the slang that all the young kids are using, but I think **drip**, what does **drip** mean in American slang? Doesn't it refer to your outfit or the style of clothes that you're wearing?

Indiana: Yeah, you're totally right about that. I think when I named the show it was not in reference to that. I think I did not know that term yet. But exactly, if you **have drip**, it's like, yeah, you are dressing really, really well and you look great.

Andrew: Cool. OK, so Indiana, why don't we talk about the big announcement that we have to make, which I think many of our Culips members especially are going to be really excited about because guys, we have been working behind the scenes on this project. Indiana, how long has it been now? At least like, three or four months that I've been trying to coordinate this with you.

Indiana: Yeah, just about.

Andrew: But we're finally able to tell everybody about it and launch it. So guys, we are very excited to announce that we are going to be opening a Culips course for the very first time. And it's going to be a place where you can join together with other listeners of Culips from around the world and study Culips content with teacher and the teacher is going to be Indiana. So, you have a very excellent, kind and qualified English teacher to guide you through our lessons. So, instead of just having to listen to Culips episodes on your own, now you'll be able to connect with other learners, and to be able to connect with a native, English-speaking teacher. And I think this will be the perfect environment that will give you the support and the encouragement, and also the knowledge that you need to really take your English to the next level if you're that kind of learner.

Of course, some people prefer to study independently and that's totally fine. But others prefer a kind of course environment so we wanted to give you that option as well. So,

Indiana, maybe we should give some of the details about the course to our listeners. And I guess maybe I should start by saying that this course is going to be a **beta**, it's going to be a **beta**. And what we mean by **beta** is it's our kind of trial run, we're going to offer this course once and then stop for a moment to evaluate how successful it was.

So, we want to gather the opinions from the participants in the course, and just our experience on our end to see how it went and then once we get that information, and we can find out what works well, what didn't work so well, then we can tweak the course to make it even better in the future for future times that we offer it. So, this is a **beta**, it's kind of an experiment. So, we are going to be doing the course for six weeks, right, Indiana?

Indiana: Exactly. Yeah, we will be doing it once a week for six weeks. It'll be at the same time every week and it will be on Zoom. And like you said, Andrew, it'll be a group class. So, it'll be a great opportunity to talk with me, but also among other fellow Culips members and enjoy talking about the episode that we go over each week. So, we'll be talking about older Simplified Speech episodes, and reviewing the study guide, the key terms that are in the study guide and encouraging people to use them, try to get those words in their active vocabulary and enjoy the- the topic for that episode.

Andrew: Exactly. That's a great point, we should introduce the curriculum, I suppose for the course as well. So, I think a lot of Culips listeners, you know, this is a great thing about Culips, I'm very happy and proud about this, is that a lot of Culips listeners only listen to us for maybe two or three years. You know, we do have long-time listeners as well. And I love our long-time listeners, don't get me wrong. But the reason that I'm proud that we have many listeners who only listened to us for two or three years, and then move on is because that means they've improved their English to the point where they don't need Culips anymore. So, I'm very happy, it's like a success story, right? But because of that, I think we have many people who are newer to the podcast, and maybe they haven't gone back all the way to the start of our Simplified Speech series and really started from the beginning. Of course, some people have but many people haven't.

So, we're gonna go way back to Simplified Speech episode number one, which I believe is about coffee, if I can recall correctly.

Indiana: I think you're right. Yeah, a good topic, hopefully exciting for a lot of people. A lot of listeners.

Andrew: Yes, I hope so. Something that a lot of people can relate to I think is coffee. So, we're gonna go all the way back to Simplified Speech episode number one, and each week in the course we're going to be walking you through the study guide. You can think of this course as being like a study guide companion.

So, when you're in the course with Indiana, well, maybe Indiana, I'll let you explain. How will the class be structured exactly? What's the way that people will spend their time for that one hour when they're studying with you in the course?

Indiana: Right. So, I think the general outline of how we're going to be conducting these courses is the Culips members, you listeners are going to review the study guide, look through the vocabulary, maybe complete a homework task. I think we're going to assign some homework tasks in order to ensure that you're well prepared for a discussion about the topic. And so, in the beginning of the lesson, we will review those key vocabulary, new expressions, I'll answer any questions that come up after we go through them, do a little teaching if there's grammar in those parts, and then break into some smaller group discussions about some discussion questions, and come together at the end for some final thoughts. So, it'll be part actively reviewing, asking questions about the vocabulary and part discussing trying to use those vocabulary words and have a conversation about the topic, together with me and together with the other listeners.

Andrew: I think that's a great point. And something that we should mention, Indiana is about the homework and the prerequisite for the class. So, we want people who

participate in this class to be prepared for the class so that we can take advantage of the limited class time because we do only have one hour a week to make that as effective as possible. And so, before each class, there's going to be a task that you have to do, which is probably going to be you know, something like listen to the episode several times so that you're comfortable with the content, and the general idea of what's happening. Maybe prepare some questions in advance if there's something that you didn't understand, or you'd like Indiana to clarify, maybe make some questions about that. And there might be even some other activities that you have to do before the class even starts. So, that is the pre class activity, the prerequisite. And then of course, you'll do the class.

And then once you finish, there will also be a follow up homework assignment. And that could vary from week to week to week. It might be something like making some sentences using some of the key vocabulary, perhaps it's writing a diary, perhaps it's recording a short video. And we're going to ask students to share that homework with the other members in the class as well, so that you guys can all learn and grow together and see each other's progress together and just motivate and encourage each other.

So, Indiana, that's a great point, that it's not going to be just a casual **drop-in** class, right? There is going to be some specific things that we'll ask you to do. And you know, we want to be strict and rigorous about this because really, that's the best way to achieve our goals, right, is to have somebody pushing you, and to have some deadlines and to have some tasks to do. So, maybe we should talk about what kind of person would be best for this course, in terms of like, what are the weekly time requirements going to be? You know, if you were to just estimate, how many hours per week would this course require from a student? What would be your guesstimate? I guess we don't really know, because we haven't done the class yet, but just a general guesstimate?

Indiana: So, I think it'll vary from person to person. But, you know, if you're thinking of listening time, maybe an hour, an hour of preparation time, reviewing vocabulary, doing some of the homework, and then of course, the hour of class time. So, not a small

commitment, but should be doable for somebody who's really interested in getting together with other language learners and practicing the language.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. And of course, that can be spread out through the week as well. It doesn't have to be all at once. Indiana, like you mentioned, you know, so many of our listeners are multitasking and listening to the podcast while they commute or while they're doing chores around the house. So, that is the beauty of podcasting, I guess is that you can do that two for one listening.

Indiana: I know that's how I podcast. That's how I listen to hours of podcasts all the time.

Andrew: Yeah, me as well. So, another thing that maybe listeners are wondering about this course, Indiana is, is it a **drop in** course? Can they just do it week by week by week or when they sign up are they required to attend all of the sessions? How strict are we going to be about attendance because I think this will help people determine if it's a good fit for their schedule or maybe not a good fit for their schedule?

Indiana: Yeah, so our expectation is that you sign up for all six of the classes. And of course, sometimes life happens, or you get sick, you can't make one. But our hope is that you are going to attend each and every one because we are actually going **to cap the number** of attendance of this **beta** course **at 30**. So, we don't want it to feel like a **drop-in** class, because then one week, it's possible that there could just be a handful of people that show up. So, our expectation, to sum it up, is that if you sign up for this course, you should do your best to attend all six of the classes.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. And we are doing this for several reasons. First of all, for you, Indiana, because if it's a **drop-in** class, you never know, you get two students or you have 200 students, right? It's really difficult for the instructor to prepare for a **drop-in** class. So, having pre-registration and having people expected to participate, that really helps with the course planning side of things. And also, we want you guys to be able to make friends and

make connections in this course. And by having the same people appear week after week after week, that's going to allow you to make you know, some new acquaintances and some new study buddies, maybe in the future. And so, if we just have a **drop in** and there's different people each week, then that really is difficult to do. So, we're going to ask that if you sign up for the course that you attend as many sessions as possible. And of course, if there's a life emergency or something gets in the way, yeah, that's fine. We're not going to be super strict about that.

But our request is that you try your best to attend all of the sessions. And I think you'll be able to get the most out of it that way, too. If it's just a casual thing, then it's hard to achieve the kind of fluency improvements that we want to see from you guys. So, that's the way we've structured it. And Indiana, you hinted as well about the **cap** for registration at 30 students. So, guys, we're going to open the registration to all Culips members, since this is a **beta** course, we're going to offer it to our member community first, and I have good news, the registration cost is free.

So, it costs nothing if you're already a Culips member, then you can sign up for the course for free, which is a nice perk, I think. And it's something that we wanted to offer to our members first. So, Culips members we're going to put the link in the description for this episode to a signup form. And by completing the form, then you will be able to sign up. If we have over 30 people who sign up for the course, then we're going to be doing a lottery, I will just randomly select from all of the people who sign up, we'll select 30 members, and they will be invited to attend the course. And I guess we should also talk about the schedule, Indiana, so listeners can see if this would be doable for them in terms of scheduling. So, we're going to be launching the course in October. And I think you have the dates in front of you, right?

Indiana: That's right. So, like we've said, it'll be six sessions. The first one is going to be on Tuesday, October 3rd. And that is going to be 8:30am my time, which is Eastern Standard Time.

Andrew: Eastern Standard Time.

Indiana: Yep. 8:30am on Tuesdays Eastern Standard Time, starting October 3rd going through November 7th.

Andrew: Right. So, starting on October 3rd, and going for six weeks in a row. And so of course everybody lives in different time zones around the world, we really struggle to try and find a time that would work for as much of the world as possible. And this is a huge challenge for doing Culips stuff because we do have a global audience, trying to find a time for our events is really difficult. So, if for some reason you're left out of this one, I apologize for that. But in the future, we're hoping to expand and do more courses in the future. And of course, we'll try and make it so that everybody can participate and join when they want to. But for this **beta**, it's going to happen Tuesdays at 8:30 in the morning, Eastern Standard Time, so you'll have to check guys for your local time zone. But in general, that would mean Tuesday afternoons for listeners in Europe and listeners in Asia, that would be Tuesday evenings. So, I think for me here in Korea that's around 9:30 in the evening-ish, I'd have to check for sure. And we'll give you guys a tool so that you can check the time zone and convert the time zone and make sure that works for you.

But if you're a Culips member, and you're interested in this course, and you'd like to sign up and study through our Simplified Speech curriculum with Indiana here throughout October, then the link is going to be in the description, so just sign up. And yeah, then you'll be able to study with Indiana in the near future coming up in just a little while. So, Indiana, thank you so much for telling us all about yourself and about the Culips course. I'm very excited. And you know, I might even try and join in on a few classes as well. If it fits with my schedule.

Indiana: A guest appearance, a cameo, you might say.

Andrew: A cameo, yeah, a cameo in the Culips class. So, maybe even I'll see some of the students of the course in the Zoom call in the upcoming future. So, thank you Indiana, so much for joining us today. And listeners can look forward to reading your study guides in the future and also perhaps having you as a teacher for their Culips class. So, thank you once again.

Indiana: Yeah, thanks for chatting with me, Andrew, and I'm looking forward to meeting the folks who sign up for the class in October.

Andrew: Thank you for listening all the way to the end of today's episode. That's amazing. You can feel good about getting some English study time in today. **Pat yourself on the back**, way to go. I hope you're excited about the upcoming Culips course. I know here at Culips, we are very excited about this new venture for us. And if you're a Culips member, then please go ahead and sign up because we would love to have you participate. Again, you can do that just by clicking the link that's in the description for this episode. So, that's it for me for now, everyone, but I'll be back soon with another brand-new episode. Take care, happy English studies. And I'll talk to you next time. Bye!

That brings us to the end of this lesson. Talk to you next time, bye!

Detailed Explanations

The floor is yours

Expression

When Andrew asks Indiana to share a little bit of information about herself, he tells her, **"The floor is yours."**

This expression is often used in interviews or meetings, to tell someone that it's their turn to speak. It's a friendly yet formal way to invite someone to speak, suitable for most professional contexts.

For instance, during a meeting, a businesswoman might encourage her colleague to present budget information by saying, "Now, let's move onto discussing the budget. David, the floor is yours."

The term "floor" in "the floor is yours" originates from the theater stage. When you're on stage alone, the entire audience focuses on you. So, having the floor means being the center of attention, and everyone listens to you.

Similar expressions include "take it away" and "I'll pass it over to you."

Here are a few more examples using **the floor is yours**:

Chris: We have a very special guest on the show today. We'll hear a few words from singer-songwriter Penelope Smith before she performs an in-studio set for us. Share with us, Penelope. **The floor is yours!**

Penelope: Thank you, Chris. I'm thrilled to be part of your radio program today.

Tiffany: As you can observe, sales dropped by 10% last quarter, and we need significant improvement this quarter. Any suggestions on how to achieve this?

Larry: Um, I have an idea.

Tiffany: Larry? Yes, what's your idea?

Larry: Uh, I think... well.

Tiffany: Don't hesitate, Larry. We're all eager to hear your suggestion. **The floor is yours.**

Drip

Noun (slang)

Indiana mentions that her radio show in college was called "The Drip with DJ Honey." This reminds Andrew about a relatively recent term in American slang – **drip**.

Drip is a slang expression that has its origins in AAVE (African American Vernacular English) and hip-hop culture. It conveys the idea of cool, fashionable, and possibly expensive clothing or style.

If you **have drip**, it means your outfit and accessories have a very stylish vibe. For example, someone might comment, "That dude's got some serious drip" or "your drip is fire." Both of these are compliments about appearance.

However, exercise caution – when watching older American movies! In the past, drip referred to someone who was uninteresting and lacked an engaging personality. For instance, saying "she is such a drip" meant "she is so boring." Fortunately, you can distinguish between the two because **having drip** (good style) is something you possess, while being **a drip** (a dull person) is a trait.

Here are a couple more examples involving **drip**:

Harry: Who's that guy over there?

Olivia: Him? That's Stacie's new boyfriend.

Harry: Really? Wow, that guy's got undeniable **drip**.

Olivia: I know, he's better dressed than anyone else at this party. Maybe you can get a few tips from him.

Harry: Hey! My clothes aren't THAT lame!

Mark: What do you think of these sneakers?

Kylie: Dude, your **drip** is on point with those shoes! You gotta buy them.

Mark: Yeah? They're kinda pricey, though.

Kylie: It's worth it, bro. You're gonna have better drip than everyone you know.

Mark: Alright, alright. I can't say no to that!

Beta

Noun

After a brief talk with Indiana, Andrew shares some exciting news with Culips Members – the upcoming course. He mentions that the initial six sessions of this program will be a **beta** course.

Andrew explains that **beta** means a trial or a test run. Beta is a word often used when discussing software or products. A "beta version" of software or a product is a limited release given to a specific group of people.

The purpose of a beta release is to find and fix any issues and gather feedback for improvement. For example, "My company is developing a new app, but we've only released the beta version." This sentence explains that the app isn't available to the general public yet, but it's being tested by a small group of users.

The term beta is commonly combined with other words, like "beta version," "beta testing," or "beta phase." You can describe something being tested by saying it's "in beta." For instance, "Our game is still in beta, so there might be a few problems."

Here are a couple more examples involving **beta**:

Yvonne: I got an invitation to try the **beta** version of a new online game. I've been playing it for a few days now.

Brad: Oh, really? How is it?

Yvonne: It's pretty good! There are a few issues that need fixing, but I'm enjoying it so far. The developers said they'd let me have the final version for free if I provide detailed feedback about the beta version.

Paul: Starting next month, we're going to attempt having a monthly meeting in our schedule for employees to give feedback to management about improving workplace conditions and office culture.

Juliet: That sounds like a great idea. How will it work?

Paul: We'll begin with a **beta-testing** phase to see if everyone thinks it's a good use of our time. The main idea is to ask employees to send in anonymous suggestions before the meeting. Then, we'll discuss them as a group.

Juliet: I like the sound of that. I'm excited about the first one!

To drop in

Phrasal verb

As Andrew and Indiana continue discussing the details of the upcoming course, they mention that people who join the course will be expected to attend all six sessions. This won't be a course where you can just **drop in** whenever it's convenient for you.

The phrasal verb **drop in** means to arrive without giving notice or having an appointment. When you drop in, you don't need to sign up or make a reservation. For instance, you can simply drop in to the art class at the library without needing to sign up. It's similar to saying, "You can just show up."

Like many phrasal verbs, drop in can also be used as a noun or adjective. Andrew and Indiana often use it this way when they talk about the upcoming class. For example, Andrew says, that the course "won't be an informal drop-in course." He means you can't just arrive for the course without registering.

Or another example, you might also notice signs outside of beauty salons or barbershops that say, "No drop-ins." This means you need to make an appointment if you want to get a haircut.

Here are a few more examples with drop in:

Carlos: Hi, I'm Carlos. I'm calling to ask about the open retail position.

Polly: That's great! We really need help in the store. When can you come for an interview?

Carlos: I'm available all weekend.

Polly: Wonderful! Why don't you **drop in** anytime on Saturday or Sunday afternoon? I'll be working the whole weekend, so just come whenever you're free.

Oliver: Excuse me, do you allow **drop-in** appointments?

Rachel: I'm sorry, but you need to schedule a haircut in advance.

Oliver: Alright. When's the earliest I can come in?

Rachel: Let me check... It seems our stylist, Becca, has an opening on Monday at 2:30pm. Would that be convenient for you?

Oliver: Yes, that works well for me.

To cap [something] at Verb

Another piece of information Andrew and Indiana share about the new Culips course is that there will be a limited number of available spots. They plan **to cap the number** of attendants **at** 30 people.

When you **cap something at** a specific amount, it means you are deciding on a maximum or a highest number. This expression is usually used to talk about numbers, like prices or how many people can be involved in something. For example, "The company decided to cap the most money they'll spend on the project at \$15,000." You could also say something like, "We're going to cap the ticket sales at 500 so that the music venue isn't overcrowded."

So, when Andrew and Indiana say they will cap the number of Culips members who can register for the course at 30 people, it means they won't let more than 30 members join. Only a maximum of 30 people will be able to attend.

Here's an easy way to remember this expression: imagine you're putting a cap on a bottle. You put the cap on to stop liquid from spilling out. Just like that, when you cap something at a certain number, you're stopping it from becoming too much or overflowing.

Here are a couple more examples of using **to cap [something] at**:

Tony: Have you heard about the new rules to help the environment the government is suggesting?

Jessica: I've heard a little. It sounds like it might be good.

Tony: Yes, it's made me a bit more hopeful for the future. The government seems committed to capping the amount of greenhouse gas emissions at a very strict number.

Jonathan: Did you hear? Your favorite band is doing a giveaway. You just have to follow their Facebook page and share their Instagram post to enter the contest. If you win, they'll send you a copy of their new album on vinyl and two free tickets to one of their shows.

Nicole: Really? How exciting! How many winners will there be?

Jonathan: I think they're capping it at ten winners.

Nicole: Only ten? Oh, man. Do you know how popular they are? I'll never win this contest.



To pat oneself on the back

Idiom

When Andrew concludes his conversation with Indiana, he encourages listeners **to pat themselves on the back** for listening to the entire podcast episode and doing some English practice.

To pat oneself on the back is an idiom that means to congratulate yourself for an accomplishment. We often use it as an imperative or suggestion. For example, "Pat yourself on the back!" or "Why don't you give yourself a pat on the back?".

To pat means to lightly hit or tap. This idiom comes from the common practice of physically touching someone as a form of encouragement or approval. These days, it's more common to see hugs or high-fives, but people used to lightly pat someone on the back with their hand to acknowledge that the person did a good job.

In this way, to pat yourself on the back is like high-fiving yourself. You don't actually touch your own back, but you recognize that you succeeded and feel proud.

To pat yourself on the back can be used in both casual and business contexts. For example, your boss might say "Your presentation went very well. You should pat yourself on the back." Meanwhile, your sister could also say, "You aced your final exam? Nice work! Give yourself a pat on the back!"

Although this expression is usually used as a way to encourage someone, if someone says, "Ronald is always patting himself on the back for the smallest achievements," it sounds like Ronald is a little bit too proud of himself. He might brag a lot or seem arrogant. So, it's good pat yourself on the back – but not too often!

Here are a few more examples with **to pat yourself on the back**:

Son: Mom, I just found out that I got straight A's this semester!

Mom: Oh my goodness! Well done, Reggie! **You should give yourself a pat on the back.** I know this was a tough semester for you.

Boss: Everyone, I'm proud to announce that we have sold more product this quarter than ever before. We're going to give everyone the day off on Friday to show our appreciation for all of your hard work. **Please give yourselves a big pat on the back.** You deserve it!

Assistant manager: Great job everyone, thanks for your hard work!

Boss: Enjoy your long weekend!

Quiz

- 1. You see a sign outside of a store that says, “No drop-ins.” What do they mean by that?**
 - a) You don’t need an appointment
 - b) You must have an appointment
 - c) Appointments are optional
 - d) Appointments are highly recommended

- 2. Which of the following best describes a “beta version” of an app?**
 - a) The app is close to being finished but may still have some bugs
 - b) The app is complete and has been released to the public
 - c) The app is still being planned and has not been created yet
 - d) The app is complete but costs money

- 3. What’s a good synonym for “to pat yourself on the back”**
 - a) To work harder
 - b) To take a long break
 - c) To criticize oneself
 - d) To congratulate oneself

- 4. During a meeting, your boss tells you, “The floor is yours.” What does she mean?**
 - a) You should clean up the floor
 - b) You should leave the room
 - c) You should speak
 - d) You should be quiet

- 5. You’re walking down the street when someone says, “Wow, this guy’s got drip.” What does he mean?**
 - a) Your outfit looks cheap
 - b) You look sweaty
 - c) Your outfit is very stylish and cool
 - d) You look out of place

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. The first thing people usually think of when they hear “New York” is New York City. What’s the first place that people usually think of when they hear the name of your country, region, or city? Why?
2. What’s your native language? Are you learning any other languages besides English? Describe an interesting fact about your native language or one of the languages you’re learning.
3. Indiana says that her hobbies are cooking, learning languages, running, and listening to music. What are your hobbies? Are there any hobbies you’d like to try but you don’t have time for? Please describe.
4. When is the last time you accomplished something and felt like **giving yourself a pat on the back**? What was the accomplishment?
5. When you go to a restaurant or get a haircut, do you prefer to make an appointment or reservation, or do you tend to just **drop in**? Why?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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