

AD-FREE

## Simplified Speech #179 – How Kassy spent her summer in Europe

### Episode description

In this episode, Kassy and Andrew talk about Kassy's trip to Europe. Kassy shares her adventures in Sweden, Italy, and Scotland. During this trip, she visited her family, went hiking, stayed in a 15th-century castle, and volunteered at an Eco Lodge. Listen to this Simplified Speech episode to hear all the exciting details!

### Fun fact

Did you know that around 80% of Scandinavians speak English fluently? English is prioritized in their education, starting from a young age. But there's something else: instead of dubbing movies and TV shows, as is common in many other countries, Scandinavians use subtitles. This means that even as children, they get to hear the original English dialogue. This practice improves their listening skills and helps them develop authentic English pronunciation and intonation from an early age.

### Expressions included in the study guide

- To buckle up
- A red-eye (flight)
- An acquired taste
- To fill [someone] in on [something]
- Hit-or-miss
- To hit [someone] up



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## Transcript

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Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

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**Andrew:** Simplified Speech episode 179, How Kassy spent her summer in Europe. Featuring, Andrew and Kassy.

I want you guys to **buckle up** because you are in store for a great episode today. I'm joined by my cohost, Kassy. Hey, Kassy.

**Kassy:** Hey, Andrew. Hey, listeners.

**Andrew:** And Kassy, what are we talking about today?

**Kassy:** We're gonna be talking about my trip to Europe during the summer.

**Andrew:** Yeah, so Kassy just returned from a very nice long trip. How long were you gone for in total, about two months or so?

**Kassy:** Yeah, almost two months to the day.

**Andrew:** OK, almost exactly two months. So, a nice, long time in Europe. And I'm sure you've got some wonderful stories to share with us, Kassy. Now regular listeners of Culips might remember that before you left for your trip, we had a conversation on Simplified Speech about how you were going to be volunteering. And let me test my knowledge and see if I can recall the content of that conversation, it's been a couple of months. You are going to be volunteering at an Eco Lodge in Scotland. So, that's a very unique experience. And I'm sure you've got lots of tales to tell us about. So, I'll turn things over to you. I'll give you the floor. And could you share some stories from your time abroad with us?

**Kassy:** Yeah, sure. So, I actually split my trip into two sections. The first month I traveled like a regular tourist, yeah. And then the second month, I did the Eco Lodge volunteering thing. My husband and I started our trip in Sweden actually to visit my aunt and uncle and cousins who live there.

**Andrew:** Nice. So, you flew from Thailand, all the way to Sweden. How long was that flight, it must have been a doozy?

**Kassy:** It was 12 hours. However, we flew a **red-eye** flight, so, we left around 12:00am midnight, and we got there around 7:30am. And I really liked it because I slept the entire flight. And then the jetlag really wasn't as bad as I thought it was going to be.

**Andrew:** That's a cool expression that you use just a second ago, a red-eye flight. And a red-eye flight is what we call a flight that flies in the middle of the night, right? So, just like you mentioned going at night. Do you have any idea why we call it a red-eye flight, Kassy? I have no idea myself.

**Kassy:** I think because most people don't sleep like me and they're awake all night. They come with bloodshot eyes to their destination because they're so tired.

**Andrew:** That makes a lot of sense. But I'm glad to hear that you were able to sleep, that's really cool. And so, you arrived, you're in Sweden, and I guess you flew into Stockholm? Would that be the destination?

**Kassy:** Yep. That's where we were for about two weeks, a little under two weeks. It was amazing. We had a great time. But Andrew, wow, it was so cold. So cold, because in Thailand, we've been living here for a year, the average temperature is you know, 38 degrees Celsius. And we go to Sweden and even though it was June, the high was maybe 18. And the low was 8 degrees Celsius. So cold.

**Andrew:** Well, to be honest with you, it sounds like heaven to me, because I've been just suffering in the sweltering South Korean summer. So, it sounds like perfect to me. But yeah, I guess it's a shock to your system to have to go from really hot temperature to rather cold temperature like that.

**Kassy:** Yeah, we didn't pack any of our winter or fall clothes from Korea when we moved here because we knew we wouldn't need it. So, my husband and I, you know, when we were packing for this trip, we're like, OK, let's pack our one pair of jeans and our one sweatshirt and our one long sleeve shirt and hope it lasts.

**Andrew:** So, did you have to go shopping and pick up some other clothes that were more appropriate for the weather?

**Kassy:** My husband did not, he wore the same pants and sweatshirt for, I kid you not, probably a month. I did buy one or two things to supplement.

**Andrew:** So, what did you do in Sweden? What are some of the activities? Obviously, you would have visited your family, but I imagine that maybe you did some other things as well. What do you get up to?

**Kassy:** Yeah, actually some listeners might find this crazy. I've been to Sweden I think seven times because my aunt and cousins have lived there for years. So, I've gone throughout my life, but this was my husband's first time. And he loved it. He said it was, there was so much nature, everything was green, green, green. And he loved the cooler weather much more than Thailand's super humid weather. And he loved the architecture. Also, Stockholm is full of little canals. Stockholm is kind of like an archipelago with little islands all around that are inhabited. So, what we did, maybe two days was like riding around in a boat to explore the different areas of the city and the little islands. And we went to one of the, I don't know, if it was a king or a queen of Sweden's palace and gardens. It was very beautiful.

**Andrew:** Sounds amazing. Sweden, and definitely Northern Europe that's on my bucket list for a place to visit in the near future. One of my favourite hockey teams, actually, indeed, my favourite hockey team is the Vancouver Canucks. And it's like almost 50% Swedish players. There are a lot of Swedish players on the team. And so, I follow those players on Instagram. And during the summer, they all go back to Sweden to hang out with their families and stuff during the summer break. So, I see a lot of Sweden on my Instagram feed, and it looks amazing. And I just really want to go and check it out one day. I'm curious about the food. Did you have any strange food? One of my friends just visited Sweden, or maybe it was Denmark, might have been Denmark, but he said he had to eat herring and he didn't enjoy it too much. I'm imagining that maybe the cuisine between Sweden and Denmark is similar. I apologize for the assumption, but I'm imagining maybe that it's similar. Did you have any herring and how was it? That's what I want to know.

**Kassy:** I did not have the herring. My aunt and cousins are not Swedish, even though they're very fluent in it after living there for so long. And they like to eat at home mostly. So, we didn't eat a lot of Swedish food. But we did have the traditional Swedish cinnamon rolls, which were amazing. And we had, I don't remember the name, but it's a famous candy in Sweden. Sweden is of course famous for Swedish Fish, which are these little fish gummies. But they're also famous for black licorice that is coated in salt.

**Andrew:** Oh, nice. Yeah, I love that.

**Kassy:** No, it's disgusting.

**Andrew:** It's kind of **an acquired taste**, right? But I like that kind of thing. So, I think I'd be right at home in Sweden.

**Kassy:** Listeners, if you ever have the chance to try this black licorice salt candy. Let me know what you thought of it because I hate it.

**Andrew:** OK, so you had about two weeks in Sweden. You know, you mentioned that you have visited there are six or seven times now, have you picked up any Swedish, Kassy? Can you say some like basic Swedish or does everybody just speak English really well there that you don't really need it?

**Kassy:** Yeah, the second one, I can say thank you, talk like that. Did you know that Swedish and English are one of the more common languages? So, it's actually, Swedish is supposed to be one of the easiest languages for English learners to learn.

**Andrew:** Yeah, well, when I look at the demographics for our podcast, where our listeners are, there are not many listeners in that area of the world in Denmark and in Sweden. And I think that's because the English level is just in general, very, very high fluency. I've heard that many Swedish kids just watch English TV and movies, and they just you know, are exposed to it from a very young age. And they have a great high level of English fluency in that part of the world. So yeah, it makes it easy when you travel and need to visit right?

**Kassy:** Yeah, it was definitely one of the easier countries we went to.

**Andrew:** Wait, I got a question for you before we move on.

**Kassy:** Yes.

**Andrew:** Was it easier to communicate with the Swedish speakers of English or the Scottish speakers of English?

**Kassy:** Honestly, we were so lucky in Scotland. Our hosts, you know, are technically Scottish, but I'm pretty sure they went to school in England. They had very much British sounding accents, not the Scottish one. However, we'll get to this but my husband, you know, he's Korean, so he's not a native English speaker. He, for our volunteering job, he worked with the handyman at the Eco Lodge and this handyman was like almost 200

centimeters tall, and he was very traditionally Scottish. I had no idea what he was saying. And I just giggled to myself every time I imagined my Korean husband trying to converse with this Scottish giant.

**Andrew:** Yeah, the reason listeners, just **to fill you in on the joke** here, why I asked that question is because typically Scotland has a very different accent than other parts of the English-speaking world. And it's a very unique accent and even English native speakers from North America like Kassy and I, sometimes you can have difficulty understanding it. And I think especially Kassy, some of the guys, I don't know if that's your experience as well but when I visited Scotland, I found all of the women were pretty easy to converse with. So, that's where the joke is, is that some English native speakers even have difficulty understanding Scottish speakers.

So, Kassy, let's jump into the Scottish experience then. So, you arrived at the Eco Lodge and what I asked you last time, I think was what kind of job you were going to be doing. And you weren't sure exactly what kind of volunteer work that you were going to be doing. So, what ended up happening, what kind of job did you do at the Eco Lodge?

**Kassy:** Yeah, well, before I talk about the job, just first want to talk about the place, it was magical. We took the night train, my very first night train from London to Glasgow, and we stayed there for two nights. And then we took a train from Glasgow to a nearby town and then we took a bus to get to the middle of nowhere, it felt like and we got picked up and taken to this Eco Lodge in the countryside of Eastern Scotland. And it was breathtaking. As far as you could see, there were just fields of long flowing grass, and sheep and cows. And if anyone's ever seen Howl's Moving Castle, there's these scenes where you see the grass blowing in the wind. The large meadows like that's what it looked like. It looked like the scenes from Howl's Moving Castle. Absolutely gorgeous.

**Andrew:** Wow, that sounds amazing.

**Kassy:** Yeah. And then when we got there, we found out we were staying in this old Scottish castle.

**Andrew:** Castle. Nice.

**Kassy:** Yeah, it's not, you know, like a giant castle, like you'd imagine. But it has, you know, an East Wing and a West Wing, and it has one tower, and it has a lot of floors. And it was, the kitchen, was refurbished in 1820 or something. It's crazy, crazy!

**Andrew:** Do you know when the castle was built originally?

**Kassy:** Yes, it was in the 15th century, I believe.

**Andrew:** OK, the 15th century, so yeah, several hundred years ago. That's amazing. That must have been quite the experience. Was it scary at night? Like did it feel like there might be a ghost roaming the halls of the castle.

**Kassy:** We did actually have a bat fly in our room one time.

**Andrew:** A bat in the belfry?

**Kassy:** That was terrifying. But so cold there too. We were there in July. And when we slept at night, we were in this four-poster bed with a mattress, a sheet, a duvet, a second cover on top of that and there was a heating pad under the mattress that we turned on full blast a couple of the nights. It was so cold, Andrew.

**Andrew:** I remember when I visited Scotland, I think it was 2019. And yeah, I visited in the summer as well. And I remember one of the guest houses that I stayed at, which was in an old building wasn't maybe as quite as old as your castle, but you know, probably over 150 years old at least. And those places are just like drafty, right? There's like a lot of air



that's always moving. And they're a little cold and damp. And I remember having to sleep with my hoodie on and my pants on because I was so cold even in the summer. And that is with like an extra blanket as well. So yeah, I totally get it. It's a chilly place. And that's unfortunate that you didn't have any warmer clothes with you.

**Kassy:** We adjusted after a few days. But the first few days we were thinking to ourselves, "Oh, can we survive?" But anyway, inside this home as well, it reminds me of something out of a Victorian novel because the owners their family had owned this castle for generations. So, there were pictures all along the stairwell and in the dining room of you know, their great, great, great grandfathers and grandmothers just like you'd imagine in you know, like a Pride and Prejudice movie or something. And even they had themselves painted. So, the owners were Paul and Louise, and they were in the dining room, and it was so cool to see their formal portrait.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it sounds like almost like you jumped right into a movie set or something like, that's so cool. OK, so you're at the Eco Lodge, you're in this amazing castle, this beautiful setting. But unfortunately, you couldn't just, you know, hang around and enjoy the scenery all day without doing some work. That was part of the deal, you had to exchange your labor for the lodging. So, what did you end up doing at the lodge?

**Kassy:** Yeah, actually, this part was really fun, too. It wasn't an unfortunate thing. I loved working there. It was almost bittersweet to leave, actually. So, my husband, like I said, he worked with the handyman, a steward, really cool guy. So, they would go off in the morning, and maybe they would build a fence or paint something or help move furniture or whatever they needed to do that day, that's what they did. And I helped prepare the lodging for guests. So, around the property, there were, I forget seven or eight different places that guests could rent and stay in for a few nights. So, there was anything from these little cottages where families could stay together to these kinds of backwoods little huts that didn't have running water, but they had a bed and a water jug that you could use and some dishes to make, you know, simple tea and coffee and stuff like that. So yeah,

the guest would stay anywhere from two nights to a week. And when they checked out, we would go in, strip the beds, and put it back together again for the new guests.

**Andrew:** OK. So, you're just doing housekeeping, then, essentially?

**Kassy:** Yeah, and I've made a bed before. But I didn't really know the day-to-day activities, and I'd never ironed in my life, which is crazy to admit for someone over 25 years old. But yeah, I got really good at ironing.

**Andrew:** OK, it's a good skill to have, you know, like, ironing is difficult. It's one of my least favorite chores of all time. So, that's cool that you're an expert ironer now, it's something that you can take with you for the rest of your life, Kassy. What about the rest of your time in Scotland? Did you ever leave the grounds of the lodge and explore the country, maybe do some sightseeing or anything like that? Or did you spend the majority of your time there on the property?

**Kassy:** We did spend a lot of our time on the property, there were some cool little local hikes that we could do. But on two or three of the weekends, we went out to the nearby towns. And then we also went, I'm probably going to pronounce it wrong, but I think it's called the Cairngorms National Park, which is this really big national park right in the middle of Scotland that is full of these giant mountains that they call Munros, which is a term you give to mountains that are a certain height, I forget, like 5000 feet, or 4000, something like that. They use feet there. It was so surreal to be in a country that uses feet when I've been using meters for so many years.

**Andrew:** Yeah, it's a mixture of everything. So, when you're talking about distance, they'll use miles, right? And they're talking about somebody's weight though, they use this really weird one called stone. They'll say you weigh like five stone or six stone or something. I don't even know how much a stone is because it's just kind of very unique to that country. But I think, do they use litres for some things as well, Kassy?

**Kassy:** They use litres for gas. But then they also use Celsius, not Fahrenheit for temperature. That's very weird.

**Andrew:** It's a mixed-up place. Yeah, that's funny.

**Kassy:** The mountain ranges were absolutely gorgeous though. Again, I felt like I was in a movie. We kept taking pictures and saying, you know, when you let your computer screen idle, and it goes to sleep, and then when you turn it back on, there's usually like some sort of screen saving picture of something beautiful somewhere in the world. Yeah, we were there.

**Andrew:** That was the place?

**Kassy:** Yes, we did get rained on quite a bit on our hikes, but we still had a great time.

**Andrew:** Still had a great time. The rain didn't spoil your mood. That's amazing. I have to ask you about the Scottish food. You know, British food in general doesn't have the greatest reputation. What about you, what did you think? What was your experience with local fare?

**Kassy:** Yeah. Luckily, when we stayed in Eco Lodge, we either cooked together or our hosts cooked for us while we were working, and they aren't super into traditional Scottish food. They really liked a lot of fresh vegetables and simple fare, which I love too, it was perfect for my style. However, the days we were not there when we were exploring the rest of the country, I gotta say, we didn't love food in the UK. I love teatime. So, like crumpets and tea and coffee and all of that stuff, great. Traditional lunches and dinners, it was a little **hit-or-miss**.

**Andrew:** Was there one dish in particular that you're like, yeah, not for me.

**Kassy:** I didn't get to try haggis, which I've heard some people like it, some people hate. I really wish I would have I'm guessing that would have been it. But no, even just a basic sandwich was just tasteless in the UK for some reason.

**Andrew:** OK that's really funny. When I visited there, I thought that maybe the reputation that the UK has for bad food is a little bit overdone, because I thought the food wasn't so bad. But also, I don't have an amazing palette. I just kind of like eat whatever's on the plate. And I don't really think about it too much. So yeah, it was all right for me. But yeah, that's good to get your confirmation, Kassy, that it might be a little **hit-or-miss** depending on where you are, perhaps.

**Kassy:** Yeah, I gotta say, though, that the foreign food in the UK was really good. We had Indian food one time, and we had middle eastern food one time. And we also had, I don't remember maybe some sort of fusion Asian restaurant, like Vietnamese or something. And all of those were very flavourful and delicious. Just when it came to the things that you would consider traditionally Scottish or British, you're like, I don't know.

**Andrew:** All right, fair enough. Now, Kassy, I think I remember you telling me off the air. And I might be wrong about this. But I think you said that on your way back home, from your time in Scotland that you were going to stop in Italy. Did that end up happening? Did you end up doing that?

**Kassy:** Yeah, that was actually right after Sweden. We went to Italy next.

**Andrew:** Ah, OK. So, you did a stopover in Italy, between Scotland and Sweden. We'd be remiss to not talk about that, at least for a moment. Do you want to give us like the two-minute summary of your time in Italy?

**Kassy:** Italy, two-minute summary. Delicious food. And I do want to say, I didn't really research Italy much. But we went to a city that I'd never even heard of before planning this

trip, which was Genoa, which is like an hour-ish north of Milan. And it was my favourite part of the Italy trip. It's not you know, your traditional route of like, Rome, or Florence or Verona or Milan. But it was absolutely gorgeous. There were a lot less people than the other places we went. And we went on some really cool hikes when we were there and had really delicious focaccia bread. So, any listeners who might want to go to Italy, go to a place that's not quite as popular as the main trail, I recommend Genoa.

**Andrew:** Nice. How much time did you spend in Italy total?

**Kassy:** Very short, like six days, and we visited, I think four or five places. So, one day traveled to the next, one day traveled to the next.

**Andrew:** I gotcha. OK, well, I've never been to Italy either. So maybe in the future, if I plan a trip there, Kassy, I'll **hit you up** and get some travel advice from you. It's another place that's on my bucket list. I really want to go there one day, you know, there's too many places to visit and not enough time, right? That's the problem that we all have.

So, wow, Kassy, thank you for sharing some of your stories with us. I am so happy that you had a good time. You know, before you left, you are a little bit apprehensive. Like, how is this experience going to pan out, right? Like, will it be an amazing experience? Will it be, you know, not so great. But it sounds like it turned out for the best.

**Kassy:** It was so fun. And I think one of the reasons that made it fun was this volunteer experience as well. I really recommend it to anybody who feels like ah, should I try it or not? You definitely should.

**Andrew:** Just do it. Well, I think everyone we will wrap things up here. So, thank you so much for listening all the way to the end of this episode. You put in the time, you put in the work, you got some English listening practice in. So that is amazing. Congratulations on

that. So, we're gonna sign off now but we'll be back soon with another brand-new episode. Take care and we'll talk to you soon. Goodbye!

**Kassy:** See ya!

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

## Detailed Explanations

### To buckle up

Phrasal Verb, informal

**To buckle up** is a phrasal verb that means to fasten your seatbelt to ensure your safety in a vehicle, such as a car or a plane. A buckle is a belt fastener, the part used to lock it together. However, when used metaphorically, this expression means to prepare or get ready for something exciting or challenging.

Andrew uses this expression at the very beginning of this episode when introducing the topic of his conversation with Kassy. He says, 'I want you guys to buckle up because you are in for a great episode today.' This means that he wants the listeners to prepare for the exciting episode they're about to listen to. This is a very common way to use this expression when introducing something about to happen. If someone says 'buckle up' to you, they are asking you to prepare for something they're about to tell you or something that's going to happen next.

In this episode, 'to buckle up' is used in a positive context. However, it can also be used in a negative way. For instance, if you are about to step into a work meeting with your colleague, and you know that there's a big agenda, you can say to them, 'Buckle up! It's going to be a long meeting.' By saying this, you're warning and mentally preparing them for the meeting ahead.

Here are a couple more examples with **to buckle up**:

**Nancy:** What did you say your economics professor's name was?

**Joel:** Professor Miller, why do you ask?

**Nancy:** I had him too! I remember spending nights preparing presentations for his seminars. **Buckle up** Joel, this course is going to be demanding!

**Billy:** Happy anniversary!

**Jen:** Happy anniversary, Billy! I've got a present for you. **Buckle up**, you're going to love it. Here you are, go ahead, open it.

**Billy:** Honey! Tickets to the championship game! You're the best!

## A red-eye (flight)

Noun, informal

When Kassy talks about traveling from Thailand to Sweden, she mentions that they took a **red-eye** flight. Andrew then explains that a red-eye flight is an overnight flight. As Kassy points out, this expression originates from the fact that when people are tired due to not getting enough sleep, their eyes can appear bloodshot.

The expression a **red-eye** can also be used when referring to someone who has red eyes after a sleepless night, staying up late working, or for any other reason causing eye redness. Another usage of this expression is in photography, where it describes the effect of people's eyes appearing red in photos due to the flash reflecting off the blood vessels in their eyes.

You can use this expression with or without the word 'flight.' For example, you can say either 'I took a red-eye' or 'I took a red-eye flight.' Another common verb to use with this expression is 'to catch.' For instance, you might hear someone say something like, 'I've got to catch a red-eye from Paris to Toronto' when referring to the overnight flight they have to take.

Here are a couple more examples with a **red-eye (flight)**:

**Leslie:** Mel, I'm booking the plane tickets here, and there're not many options left. There's a direct **red-eye flight** and a morning flight with a layover.

**Melanie:** Let's go with the **red-eye**. You know I'm not a fan of layovers, and this way we might at least catch some sleep.

**Leslie:** I'll book the **red-eye** then!

**Dan:** Hey Sadie! How was your holiday?

**Sadie:** It was great! We had an awesome time. Catching a **red-eye** back home was exhausting though. I'm still jet lagged.

**Dan:** I can imagine! Well, all you need is one good night sleep and you'll be back to your normal self.



## An acquired taste

### Phrase

**An acquired taste** is a phrase we use when talking about something, especially food or drink, that you don't like when you try it for the first time. If something is an acquired taste, it means you need to try it a few times to appreciate its flavor. The verb 'to acquire' means to learn or gradually develop something, such as a skill or a habit.

In this episode, Kassy talks about the food she tried in Sweden. She mentions black licorice, which she finds disgusting. In response to that, Andrew says that he likes it, but it's an acquired taste. In other words, it takes time to learn to appreciate unique foods like licorice. After trying it repeatedly, you might eventually develop a liking for it.

The expression 'an acquired taste' is often used to refer to foods with strong flavors, such as blue cheese, coffee, olives, etc. When we first try these things, we usually don't immediately like them. But over the years, some of us come to enjoy their taste.

'An acquired taste' can also apply to things and even people. For example, you can describe a TV show as an acquired taste, meaning that not everyone might find it enjoyable right away. Some people might think it's strange or hard to understand at first. Similarly, if a person is an acquired taste, it means that when you first meet them, you don't immediately like them or connect with them, but that might change over time as you get to know them better.

You can use this expression as a polite way to express that you don't like something without being too negative or critical. By describing something as an acquired taste, you acknowledge that we all have different preferences, and someone else might enjoy it even if you don't.

Here are a couple more examples with **an acquired taste**:

**Julian:** I've never had kimchi before. Would you recommend it?

**Ann:** It's **an acquired taste**, but I like it. You should definitely try it!

**Kevin:** What do you think about this perfume? It's quite strong, but I like it.

**Karen:** Yeah, it's a bit of **an acquired taste**. It's not something I'd usually go for, but I might come to like it after a while.

## To fill [someone] in (on [something])

Phrasal verb, informal

In this episode, Andrew asks Kassy whether it was easier to communicate with Swedish speakers of English or Scottish speakers of English. He goes on to explain why he asked this question, stating, “**To fill you in on the joke**, Scotland has a very different accent than other parts of the English-speaking world, and even English native speakers from North America can have difficulty understanding it.”

**'To fill [someone] in on [something]'** is an expression that means to inform or update someone about something. When you fill [someone] in, you provide them with the necessary information. You can use the shortened version of this expression, 'to fill [someone] in,' when it's clear what you're referring to from the context, or you can add 'on [something]' when you need to be specific. For instance, you might say to a friend, “Let me fill you in on the latest news.”

'To fill [someone] in on [something]' is a versatile expression that can be used in various contexts: personal, work-related, or regarding news and current events. However, it's important to keep in mind that this phrase is informal, so it's best to avoid it in academic and formal writing. More formal expressions include 'to bring [someone] up to speed,' 'to update [someone],' or simply 'to inform [someone].'

Here are a couple more examples with **to fill [someone] in (on [something])**:

**Rose:** I don't think I can make it to the parent-teacher conference tomorrow. I'm working late.

**Chris:** No problem, I'll be there. I'll **fill you in** afterwards.

**Rose:** Thanks so much! I appreciate it.

**Andy:** Hey Ava, did I miss anything while I was away on my business trip?

**Ava:** Well, we had a meeting with a new client yesterday, and he signed the contract!

**Andy:** That's great news! Could you please **fill me in on the details** of the agreement? Thanks!

## Hit-or-miss

Adjective

In this episode, Andrew asks for Kassy's opinion on Scottish food. She mentions that while she liked crumpets, tea, and coffee, traditional lunches and dinners were a bit **hit-or-miss**.

**'Hit-or-miss'** is an adjective that means unpredictable. If something is hit-or-miss, it can be either good or bad. The word 'hit' here implies success, and 'miss' implies failure. When something is hit-or-miss, it means the result isn't certain and depends on chance or luck. There's no guarantee of success or failure; it's entirely random and could go either way.

You can use this expression when talking about situations where you don't know what to expect for sure. For example, going to the post office can be hit-or-miss, meaning you could get lucky and find not many people there, and you'll be served quickly. On the other hand, it could be crowded, and it might take a long time.

'Hit-or-miss' is often used negatively to express the inconsistency or unreliability of something, usually due to a lack of organization and planning. For instance, you might use this expression when talking about public transportation, indicating that it's not well-organized, and sometimes buses come on schedule, but other times you have to wait for a long time.

Here are a couple more examples with **hit-or-miss**:

**Max:** I love your watch! Where did you get it?

**Lisa:** I got it from Amazon. You know, shopping there can be **hit-or-miss**, but this watch was a pleasant surprise. It's been working perfectly for months!

**Holly:** I'm so excited for our hike tomorrow! I hope it doesn't rain.

**Tim:** I checked the weather forecast; it says cloudy, but no rain.

**Holly:** You never really know with weather predictions, they can be **hit-or-miss**. But let's hope we get lucky this time!

## To hit [someone] up

Phrasal verb, informal

**'To hit [someone] up'** is an informal expression that means to contact someone to request something. When you hit [someone] up, you reach out to them, whether in person, via phone, or on social media.

In this episode, Kassy shares her experience traveling in Italy, and Andrew mentions that he hasn't been there yet. He adds that if he ever plans a trip there, he'll hit her up for some travel advice. In other words, he'll contact her to ask for help and travel tips.

This phrasal verb is often used when discussing the act of getting in touch with someone because you need something from them, such as help, advice, or a favor. However, it's also used when you simply want to communicate with someone, invite them somewhere, or inform them about something.

Another common way to use this expression is to ask someone to contact you. For instance, you might say something like, "Hit me up if you hear any news." In this case, "hit me up" means "contact me and let me know if you hear anything."

"To hit [someone] up" is a versatile expression mainly used in casual conversations. If the tone of the situation is more formal, you can use "to reach out to [someone]" or "to contact [someone]" instead.

Here are a couple more examples with **to hit [someone] up**:

**Erin:** I haven't seen you in ages! We should meet and catch up.

**Steven:** Absolutely! **Hit me up** when you're in town.

**Erin:** Sounds good, will do!

**Jeff:** Did you mention your brother loves dogs?

**Beth:** That's right. Why do you ask?

**Jeff:** Well, we need someone to look after our puppy while we're away for the weekend. Do you think he could help us out?

**Beth:** I'll **hit him up** and see if he's available!

## Quiz

- 1. If you want someone to get ready for an exciting story that you're about to tell them, which phrase or expression can you use?**
  - a) Back up!
  - b) Buckle up!
  - c) Buck up!
  - d) Fasten up!
  
- 2. True or false? If you describe something as an acquired taste, it means that you don't like it immediately.**
  - a) True
  - b) False
  
- 3. A friend says, "Fill me in" to you. What do they mean?**
  - a) They're asking you for some money
  - b) They're asking you for more coffee
  - c) They're asking you for an update
  - d) They're asking you to help them pack
  
- 4. If a brand's products are hit-or-miss, it means that:**
  - a) They're always very bad
  - b) They're always very good
  - c) They might not deliver them on time
  - d) They might be either good or bad
  
- 5. If a friend says, "Hit me up", what do they mean?**
  - a) They need your help
  - b) They want to fight you
  - c) They want you to contact them
  - d) They ask you to never call them again

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## Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Have you ever been to Sweden, Italy or Scotland? If so, what were your impressions of these places? If not, which one would you like to visit?
2. Have you ever taken a red-eye flight? If you have, how was your experience?
3. Can you make an example of something that can be an acquired taste?
4. Think of a time you had to fill someone in on something. Could you share what happened?
5. When you need help or advice, who is the person you usually hit up?

## Quiz Answers

1.b    2.a    3.c    4.d    5.c

### Episode credits

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