

Simplified Speech #189 – Company's coming

AD-FREE

Episode description

Kassy and Andrew are having company over! No, the companies they work for aren't coming to their houses—"having company" means having guests such as friends and family come and visit your home. In this episode, Kassy and Andrew talk about how they prepare their homes when they have company over. They discuss cooking, cleaning, sleeping accommodations, and an attempt of Kassy's to make a homemade air freshener that went horribly wrong. Listen and find out what happened!

Fun fact

Although the first thing that may pop into your head when you hear the word "company" is your workplace, there are many idioms that use the word "company" to mean "being with other people." For instance, have you ever heard the old saying "misery loves company"? This means that people who are unhappy get comfort in spending time and talking to other people who are unhappy.

Expressions included in the study guide

- To have company [over]
- To stroke [someone's] ego
- To overstay [one's] welcome
- To couch surf
- To impose
- Your mileage may vary (YMMV)



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 189. "Company's coming." Featuring Andrew and Kassy. Today, I'm joined by my co-host, Kassy. Hey there, Kassy.

Kassy: Hey, Andrew, and hey listeners. Hope you're all doing well. It's great to be here today, and I'm excited for this episode cause we're going to be talking about company, specifically **having company over** to your house, having guests over. And this is a fun topic for Andrew and I because I had my family come visit me recently, and Andrew is having a guest over this weekend.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. So, I think we both will have things to talk about, Kassy, you with your experience and me anticipating my experience. Just before we get further into this episode, maybe we should talk about this word "company" because I have a feeling, like if I were talking with my wife, who is also an English language learner, and I used this word company, she would immediately think about her office. She would think of that kind of business context for the word company. What do we mean in this context, though? Cause we're not talking about work or the office or business or anything like that. What does "company" mean in this kind of situation?

Kassy: "To have company" means to not be alone, to have like a companion, a friend. So, "To have company over" is to have people that are not usually living in your house come visit.

Andrew: Yeah, it just means to have guests over to visit your house. Exactly. So, that is what we're going to be talking about today, everyone. That is the topic of our show: company is coming. And wasn't that the name of a famous TV show, Kassy? "Company's Coming?" No, it's not a TV show! It's a cookbook series that we had in Canada.

Kassy: I wouldn't totally know about that! At all of my Canadian cookbook references up here.

Andrew: Well, maybe you had it in the States, I don't know, but it's like my mom used it, I think. So, it's kind of an older reference. But you know, traditionally, and I think this has changed a lot, is that when you would have company over to your house, you would have to cook something nice for them. When I have company over to my house now, we usually just like order pizza because I'm too lazy to cook for everybody. But back in the day, you would prepare dinner, you would cook something delicious and maybe bake a cake. And I'm sure some people still do that. But I think that was the focus of this "Company's Coming" cookbook series was like introducing you to recipes that you could cook to serve to your guests, so.

Kassy: Yeah, that reminds me of a fun fact, Andrew. I read a book once about American settlers in the 1500s. So, this is during the colonies when they're just starting out, way before the American Revolution. And they were going to throw a party and invite their reverend, like their church leader, to their house for company. And they wanted to make him a special dessert. So, they had to save their sugar for a whole week. They didn't eat any sugar in any of their foods so that they could save up enough of it to make this special pie for their reverend, their company coming over. I thought that was insane.

Andrew: Yeah, it's not like there were any supermarkets back in the day that you could just go to and pick up what you need for your baking, right?

Kassy: Exactly.

Andrew: Yeah. So, let's start with talking about your experience because you just had some family visiting you over there in Thailand. I believe it was your Swedish family, is that right?

Kassy: That's right. Yeah, they came all the way over from Sweden to Thailand for three weeks.

Andrew: How long of a flight is that? Seems like a long one.

Kassy: They had to do a layover in Munich. So, I think it was a short hop over to Munich and then maybe a 10- or 11-hour flight to Bangkok.

Andrew: All right. So, did they stay with you at your home?

Kassy: They didn't stay in my house cause we would never fit. There's my aunt, uncle, and four cousins, but they did come over.

Andrew: OK. So, they came over and what did they think of your place? Were they kind of shocked with how different it is? I'm sure like a Thai apartment is really different than a Swedish home.

Kassy: Yeah, they thought it was nice. They thought it was interesting that I live in an apartment on the ninth floor, and I have a swimming pool right above my apartment. They liked that. I actually have a funny story about them coming over. So, usually, if guests come over, I like to do two things. One, I like to prepare snacks that they can snack on when they're there. And two, I don't usually light candles or anything, but I would like my house to smell fresher. I don't have any candles here cause I don't usually burn them. So, I decided to make like a stovetop natural candle. I don't even remember what the name is called, but it's like when you boil water that's infused with fruits and spices. So, you could put like some orange peels in there and some cinnamon and ginger or something, and it will make the house smell orange-cinnamony. So, I tried to do that, and it worked at first, but I totally forgot about it. And I went to do something else for like an hour and I didn't add more water, and the whole thing just like burnt to a black crisp on the bottom of the pan, and the entire house smelled like smoke. And it was awful, Andrew.

Andrew: That's hilarious. You got exactly the opposite effect that you originally wanted. That's too bad.

Kassy: Exactly. So, I had to open all the windows and all the doors, and I had to throw away the pan. There was no saving it. It was so funny. But yeah, what not to do when company comes over. That's number one right there.

Andrew: I can sympathize with, you know, wanting your house to smell fresh and be an inviting place that people want to spend time in. But yeah, a burnt smell, smoky smell is not the effect that you want to go for I'm sure. You're lucky you didn't burn the place down. Oh my gosh!

Kassy: I know, right? I was so dumb, but the snacks went over well, and my family said they couldn't really smell the burnt smell that much. So, that was good. Maybe they were just being polite though.

Andrew: So, what kind of snacks do you serve? How do you decide what kind of snack that you are going to serve to your guests? Do you have a go-to, or do you try and find like something Thai to like introduce them to something local? What do you serve?

Kassy: Yeah, that's a good question. It depends on the guests. Like, if it was friends, I'd just bring like a bunch of chips and stuff. For my family, I knew they had a 10-hour flight, and they were going to be eating Thai food for three weeks. So, I did not prepare anything Thai, but I prepared like homemade hummus and fruits and vegetables because they'd been eating airport food for the last 12 to 15 hours.

Andrew: Yeah, nice. Good, good choice. I would like to be a guest at your house and eat that as well. Sounds delicious. But I was thinking it is interesting the way that we have to serve different things to different guests. Like if I have my Western friends over, I have friends from different English-speaking countries here in Korea, and if they come over,

then usually I'll serve them like, yeah, chips or crackers and cheese or something like that. But if my Korean friends come over or my wife's family comes over, then it's totally different. Then it's like tea and fruit. And yeah, fruit is like the big one to serve. So, it's interesting the different kinds of snacks that you serve depending on the guests that you're going to have.

Kassy: Yeah, that's right. I don't know about you, Andrew, but I love preparing foods for people. This trip was a little rushed, but usually if I have a bigger kitchen, like when I lived back in Korea, I would bake a whole bunch of things, like maybe homemade bread and then some cookies. This time I did make hummus, but maybe I would prepare some sort of cheese dip or, yeah, appetizer of some sort. That's one of my favorite parts about inviting company over is to be able to cook for them. Even if it's not big things, if it's just small things, that still brings me a lot of joy. How about you? You like cooking for your guests?

Andrew: I like cooking. I think I'm like OK at cooking. Not amazing, but not terrible. But yeah, I just think of like maybe last year my wife's parents and wife and my brother-in-law and his family came over. And my wife is like, "Oh, Andrew, you should make your banana bread for my family. They'll love it. You're such a good baker and good at making banana bread." So, she really **stroked my ego** and "to stroke somebody's ego" means to make them feel good about themselves, right? My confidence was at an all-time high. I was like, "Yeah, I'm going to do it!"

So, I made banana bread to serve to my wife's family and they all ate it, but they weren't like in love with it. You know? It's like one of those situations where they all take like a little piece and there's still, I don't know, two-thirds of the banana bread left over at the end of the dinner, you know, cause we had it for dessert. So, I was kind of like, "Ah, yeah, they don't love it." They said it was delicious, but if it was really delicious, I think it would have all been gone. So yeah, I don't know. That kind of thing stresses me out, to be honest, Kassy. I would rather just order some food, I think, to serve to my guests or go with a

store-bought snack, then I don't have to feel stressed out about, you know, satisfying everybody's particular tastes and making sure that my cooking is top-notch.

Kassy: Yeah, that's true. And especially if you have to deal with, you know, allergies or preferences from people that you're not super close with, then, you know, getting a generic or variety of things is probably a better option.

Andrew: Kassy, have you ever had a bad experience with company, like somebody that stayed at your house and broke something or maybe **overstayed their welcome**? We should explain that expression, "To overstay your welcome." What does that mean, "To overstay your welcome"?

Kassy: "To overstay your welcome" means that you stay way longer than your host wants you to be there. For example, maybe your host was thinking that everybody would leave by 9 p.m., but you're still there, hanging out on the couch at 10:30 or 11, and everybody wants you to go home.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly. And I don't know, Kassy, have you ever had that happen to you? Have you ever had a guest overstay their welcome?

Kassy: You know, I'm a little bit of a homebody and I don't invite people over very often, but I can say, growing up, my parents hosting parties or other family members, it wasn't necessarily people overstaying their welcome, but sometimes I just wasn't close to the people that were invited, and it was awkward. Like, you have to make small talk with people that you don't really want to make small talk with. I think that's the- the hardest part about inviting company over.

Andrew: Yeah, yeah for sure. That is difficult. I remember when I lived in Canada, when I was a university student, I lived in Victoria, and I also lived in Montreal, and I would have just friends that would like come out. And, you know, when you're a university student, you

have no money, right? So often, my friends would come to visit me or maybe come to visit my circle of friends, not just necessarily me, but they'd be in the city, and because they're broke and had no money, they'd just be like **couch surfing**. They'd go from one friend's house to the next friend's house.

And yeah, sometimes, you know, it would be awesome. You'd have a friend come in for the weekend, and they'd stay with you for a night, and then they'd move to somebody else's house. But then sometimes you'd have these friends who would like roll into town and then stay for the summer or something, and they'd end up staying at your house, not like for the whole time. Like they'd go from friend to friend to friend, but they'd be like, "Oh, can I chill with you for a bit?" And in your head, you're like, "Oh yeah, of course, you can stay at my house. Like you're my buddy, of course." And you're thinking maybe one night or two nights, and then four nights later, you're like, "OK, you know, when are you gonna go home? Where... yeah, you know, I'm kind of busy. I got some things to do." So, I've definitely experienced friends who have overstayed their welcome, not like in a malicious way, not in a rude way per se. Just maybe just a different alignment of values. But this was when I was in my 20s, and yeah, things were a lot more flexible back then.

Kassy: All right, Andrew, we've talked a little bit about my fiasco from a few weeks ago. How about for your upcoming visit? Who's your company and how are you preparing for their visit?

Andrew: Yeah, so I have just one guest, my friend Jimmy, who I've mentioned on the podcast before. He's the friend that I ran a marathon with back last year in the fall. And so, Jimmy is coming to my house on the weekend and he's staying, I don't know, Friday night or Saturday night. Can't remember. Gonna have to check the calendar, so I'm prepared. But he's coming sometime soon and he's just going to crash at my house. Originally, he was going to stay at a hotel, by the way, we're meeting up just so we can hang out and we're gonna do some running together. We're kind of running buddies, so that's our plan. But he lives out of town, so he's coming to town, we're gonna meet up, we're gonna go

running and he was going to stay at a hotel. I was like, "Save your money, man, you don't have to stay at a hotel." But he was like, "No, I'm gonna do that. It's more comfortable for you guys. I don't want to **impose**." And "to impose" means to burden your host, right? You make your host feel uncomfortable, like they have to take care of you. They have to clean for you. They have to give you a place to sleep. He said, "I don't want to impose, I'm just gonna stay at a hotel." I said, "OK, well, if you feel that way, that's fine. I don't care what you do. But just so you know, the offer is open. And if you'd rather just stay at my house, then that's totally cool."

And in fact, I've stayed at Jimmy's house a few times when I've visited where he lives. So of course, I want to repay that favor, right? Like he let me stay at his house. Of course, he's welcome to stay at my house as well. However, I live in a very tiny house, and we only have one bedroom, and we have no guest bedroom or no really good place to sleep other than the living-room floor. So, I did have to say, you know, "Of course, you're welcome to stay here. And I do have a little blow-up air mattress that you can sleep on. But if you are one of those sensitive sleepers who doesn't do well on a hard surface like the floor, then I wouldn't recommend it. I would recommend the hotel." And one of our other mutual friends has slept on my blow-up air mattress before. And he said it was the worst sleep of his life. So, I also gave Jimmy that warning. However, I sleep really well on the floor and really, really well on that little blow-up air mattress. So, I said, you know, **your mileage may vary**. And when we type that out on the internet, because we were just chatting back and forth or when you're texting with somebody, you would write "YMMV". Your mileage may vary. That's a slang expression. That just means everybody's experience is different. So, I had a great sleep on that mattress. My other friend had a terrible sleep. "Jimmy, I don't know, but I'm giving you this warning, you know, I don't want you to feel too tired the next day when we do our run." So, he said, "You know what, I thought about it. I looked..." I think actually he looked at the prices of hotels and he's like, "Yeah, it's expensive. I'll just stay with Andrew."

Kassy: Oh, so he's taking the risk. Let's see. He'll have to tell us. Did he appreciate the air mattress or was he in the terrible sleep camp?

Andrew: Yeah, I'm hoping he'll sleep all right. I think it's pretty common in Korea to sleep on the floor. I know a lot of people do sleep on the floor, and I've stayed at different guest houses and hotels before, actually, where you do sleep on the floor. And personally, I love it. I like sleeping on a hard surface. So, it's OK for me. But yeah, everybody's different. So, crossing my fingers that Jimmy has a pretty comfortable sleep. But yeah, in terms of what I'm doing to prepare for him, not too much. It really depends on who your company is, I think, for how much you prepare, right? Because he's like my guy friend, he's my buddy. And I don't really worry about how clean my house is in that kind of situation. You know, I don't care about serving him homemade food. We can just go to a restaurant. Of course, I don't want my place to look bad. But yeah, I'm not going to go over the top to make it feel clean because I know he'll be comfortable either way. Different than like if my in-laws were visiting, then I'd be like scrubbing the floors and making sure everything looks spick and span, you know.

Kassy: Exactly. It seems like the less close someone is, the more work you have to put into making your house look respectable and clean.

Andrew: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. When it's just like a close buddy, then it doesn't really matter. And I was talking about our other mutual friend there a moment ago, the guy who had a really poor sleep on the mattress on the floor. He actually visited me several months ago, maybe three or four months ago now, back last year in the fall, I think it was, or the late summer. And he was not staying with me, but he was staying in a different part of the city. But we were supposed to meet up at about, I don't know, dinner time, meet up for dinner. And I was going to show him the house. He was going to come over to my house. And since it's a new house and he's really interested in it, I wanted to give him a house tour and then we were going to go out for dinner. And that day I was really super busy. I had a lot of work and a lot of things to do all day. And in fact, Kassy, I think that day you

and I were recording in fact. And so, I was really busy, and my plan was I'm going to finish recording with Kassy. And then I'll have like an hour to clean up my house and make it look, you know, respectable and nice before my friend comes over to meet me around six o'clock or something.

So that was the plan. But earlier in the afternoon at like 3pm, about three hours before we were supposed to meet, I got shocked because my doorbell rang, and I went to go see who it was. And it was him! And he was just like waiting at my door. And I was like, "Hey, you're way, way early. What's going on?" And so, he's like, "I'm here!" And I guess he was texting me and calling me. But Kassy, because we were recording, I had turned my phone on do not disturb. So, I didn't see any of his calls or any of his texts. So, he just decided to pop by the house. And so, I said, "OK, you're going to see the absolute real me and the real house." Like this is no prep at all. This is what you get if you just come and randomly drop in on me any day of the week. So yeah, I don't know. I wasn't like embarrassed or anything. Cause again, he's a close buddy. But he was like, "Yeah, you didn't like do any special cleaning or anything for me. It's obvious." You know, there's still a few dishes in the sink and that kind of thing. It's not like a pigsty but wasn't totally spick and span.

Kassy: Yeah, it was enough for him to make a... like a little teasing comment to you like, "Wow, you really cleaned this place up for me, huh, Andrew?"

Andrew: Exactly. Exactly. So yeah, but that was his bad because I was like, "It's very rude to drop in early like this. Very, very rude!" OK, Culips members, we're continuing our conversation here for just a little while longer. And Kassy, you have a good idea for something to talk about in the bonus content, don't you?

Kassy: Yes. So, we talked a lot about us bringing guests over, bringing company over to the house. But I was wondering, Andrew, when you are the guest, you are the company being brought over to someone else's house. What impresses you when you are the

guest, or what are you like when you go to someone's house? You go, hmm, this is pretty cool. Or I feel really special right now. Or what makes you feel comfortable?

Andrew: OK, well, let me think. Usually these days now that, you know, I'm turning 40 this year, so I'm an old man. And usually these days, if I can, especially if I'm traveling with my wife, we'll always just stay in a hotel because it's really imposing to stay, even with family members sometimes, like a lot of work to house two extra guests and to give them food and all of those things. And we stayed with my parents recently when we went back to Canada for our last trip. And we're like, next time we go to Canada, I think probably we'll just stay at a hotel because it felt like even imposing to our parents to do that. So, these days, usually I try not to be a guest for overnight. Of course, if somebody invites me to dinner, I'm down. But overnight, not very often, unless it's like with a buddy. And I did mention in the episode that I had stayed with Jimmy a couple of times recently, we had run the marathon together. And then after finishing that marathon, I was just so pooped and tired that he was like, "Hey, man, stay at my house. I have an extra guest bedroom. You can crash there. No problem." So, I took him up on that offer. And I have to say Jimmy and Jimmy's wife also shout out to Jimmy's wife. She's a Culips listener. If she's listening right now, hello! They did an amazing job. She made me feel so comfortable. She set up the guest bedroom. She had some towels and like a little toiletry set set up for me. And she had like a phone charger set up with the different adapters. Like it was like hotel service at Jimmy's place. So yeah, that made me feel really amazing. Also made me feel a little bit bad to be honest, because I felt like she put in too much effort. And I'm such a... easygoing. I was going to say low-needs individual. Does that make sense? Like I... I can just sleep on the floor like I mentioned, but they pulled out all the stops and really did a great job. So, I felt very comfortable. How about you, Kassy? What's your answer to your question?

Kassy: Usually, when I think of company coming over, I think of just, you know, short like hangout times, you know, for a few hours in the evening. And some things that I really look forward to is, one, hearing my host's music tastes. They usually have a playlist playing in

the background. And sometimes, you know, I'm pretty generic in my music tastes, but I love hearing my friends' or coworkers' playlists and, you know, maybe getting some ideas to put on my Spotify later. Another thing I love is the different snacks that they put out. If I go to a girlfriend's house, they're usually way fancy. They'll have a fancy charcuterie board with fancy cheeses and meats. And it makes me so excited to go.

Andrew: Nice. Yeah, that sounds good. I like both of those things as well. I love, yeah, going to friends' houses when they play some good music. Although, as a music guy, it can be painful in the other direction of that situation when I go over to a friend, maybe if I visit your house, Kassy.

Kassy: Yeah, if you visit my house, you would be cringing inside.

Andrew: No. Of course, I don't judge anybody on their music tastes, but it is sometimes nice to experience something new, right? So yeah, that's good. And definitely the snacks. I go back to Jimmy's situation because his is the most recent time that I did stay with a friend as a guest at his house. And he had like so many great snacks that my wife doesn't let me buy. So, I was like, yes, I can pig out. I can go to town. So yeah, I agree with both of those things. Absolutely. Well, everyone, I think that will bring us to the end of this conversation about company and having guests over to your house and also being a guest at somebody else's house. And now we'd like to hear your story. We'd like to hear what you have to say. So please head to our Discord. You know, all of our conversations now are happening on our Discord. We'd love to hear what you have to say about this issue and your experiences as being a host or a guest. So please share them with Kassy and share them with me and also with our whole Culips community over there on our Discord. So, we're going to sign off now, but take care, and we'll talk to you next time. Goodbye.

Kassy: See ya.

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

Detailed Explanations

To have company [over]

Verb

This episode is all about **having company over**—Kassy has just had her relatives from Sweden visit and stay with her, and Andrew is about to have his friend Jimmy come and visit him!

Kassy explains that **to have company over** means that people who are not usually living in your house come and visit you. For instance, you might hear your friend say, “Sorry, but I’m **having company over** on Friday, so I won’t be able to come out with you.” This means they are busy having guests in their home. **Company** just means the people you are spending time with. You often hear this in expressions like “to keep bad **company**,” which means to spend time with a bad or harmful group of people.

Having company can be used to refer to a short, hour-long visit, or something as long as family sleeping at your house for a whole week.

There are lots of synonyms for **to have company over**, such as **to entertain**, **to have guests over**, and **to have people over**. The word “over” implies “to one’s house.” So if you said, “My brother is coming over tonight,” it means he is visiting your house. You would NOT say this if the place you are meeting your brother is outside your home, like at a restaurant or a park.

Here are a couple more examples with **to have company [over]**:

Noah: Wow, the house is spotless! Are we **having company over** or something?

Amanda: No, I just had nothing to do and felt inspired to deep clean the house.

Noah: It looks amazing in here!

Zoey: Would you like to come to the movies with David and me on Saturday evening? We’re going to see that new horror film.

Benjamin: Sorry, but I have plans. I’m **having company over**.

Zoey: Oh, really? Who’s coming over?

Benjamin: My cousin from New York is visiting with his fiancé for the weekend.

To stroke [someone's] ego Verb

Andrew explains to Kassy that he prefers to order food when he has company over. Although he likes cooking and baking, he gets a bit stressed out trying to accommodate everyone's tastes and preferences. Once, his wife tried **to stroke his ego** and praised his banana bread so that he would bake some for her family, but it became clear to Andrew that they didn't actually enjoy the bread that much.

To stroke one's ego means to praise and flatter someone. This is especially done to influence that person to do something you want. For instance, if your boss is more likely to agree to a request when he is in a good mood, you might **stroke his ego** by complimenting or flattering him to increase your chances of a "yes."

The word **stroke** means to pet, caress, or rub something. Your ego is your sense of pride, self-worth, or identity. To help remember this expression, you can imagine someone petting your mind like a cat and making you feel comfortable and confident!

You will sometimes find this verb being used reflexively. If someone **strokes their own ego**, it means they are excessively boasting about themselves or talking about their accomplishments. For instance, if your sister constantly brags about getting perfect grades in school, you might say she is constantly **stroking her own ego**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to stroke [someone's] ego**:

Carlos: Ugh, I'm so sick of looking at social media. I think I should just delete Instagram from my phone.

Stephanie: I'm with you. It's annoying to see people **stroking their own egos** all the time, posting about their accomplishments and making their lives seem so perfect. It's all fake!

Mikey: Sometimes I feel like the boss tries to manipulate me into working overtime.

Alice: How so?

Mikey: She often tries **to stroke my ego**, praising me on what an essential member of the team I am and how impressive my work output is. But she always follows these compliments up with requests like helping her with extra tasks or coming in on Saturday.

Alice: That definitely sounds like she's trying to coax you into doing more work. Be firm about your boundaries, Mikey! You don't have to say yes to overtime.

To overstay [one's] welcome

Verb

Andrew asks Kassy if she's ever had a bad experience having company over, such as someone **overstaying their welcome**. Fortunately, she hasn't ever had a bad experience like that, but Andrew says there were times in his 20s when friends from out of town stayed with him and **overstayed their welcome** by several days.

The prefix **over** means "too much" or "excessive." **To stay** means to spend time at someone's house. **To be welcome** means to be invited or encouraged to do something. All together, **to overstay one's welcome** means to spend more time at someone's house than the host is comfortable with. You were **welcome** to come over and have fun, but the host expected you to go back home sooner than you did!

It can be really awkward to tell a guest they're **overstaying their welcome**, so hosts might give indirect hints by saying things like, "It was so nice having you come over!" or "Wow, it's getting late, isn't it?" As a guest, you can be direct and encourage a host to let you know when it's time to go home. You can say, "I don't want **to overstay my welcome**—please, let me know when I should be heading home."

Here are a couple more examples with **to overstay [one's] welcome**:

Olivia: My mother-in-law finally went back home to Seattle yesterday.

Liam: She was still staying with you?! How long was her visit this time?

Olivia: Eleven days. Can you believe it? We planned on having her over for a week, but she ended up staying four extra days. I wish she wouldn't **overstay her welcome** every time she visits us.

Liam: Maybe you should be honest with her about this and tell her how you feel.

Nina: Oh, look at the time! It's almost 11:00. I had better get going.

Eli: There's no rush.

Nina: No, no, you've been a wonderful host and I would hate to **overstay my welcome**. Thank you for having me over! It's been a lovely evening.

Eli: Thank you for coming over! Drive safe!

Nina: Yes, I will. Bye-bye!

To couch surf

Verb

Andrew tells Kassy that he experienced friends overstaying their welcome at his house when he was in his 20s. His friends would come visit the city he lived in, **couch surf**, and stay for an indefinite amount of time.

To couch surf is an informal verb meaning temporarily staying at various people's homes, often on their couches or blow-up mattresses. People might **couch surf** to save money when travelling (they don't want to pay for hotels) or because they do not have stable housing (they don't have their own home at the moment). For example, someone who has several friends who live in Chicago may **couch surf** at their apartments while visiting the city. Or someone who was just evicted from their home may need **to couch surf** with friends and relatives until they find a new place to live.

When you invite a guest to stay over at your house for a weekend and you have a guest room for them, you would NOT say that your guest is **couch surfing**. **Couch surfing** means 1) staying at multiple people's homes and 2) the sleeping accommodations are very basic, like a blanket on a couch.

Here are a couple more examples with **to couch surf**:

Jack: I heard you're coming to town next week. Where are you staying?

Nora: I haven't figured that out yet.

Jack: Well, if you're open **to couch surfing**, I have a pretty comfortable sofa in my living room. You're welcome to stay with me.

Nora: That would actually be great, thank you!

Amelia: Did I hear correctly that you just got back from a cross-country road trip?

Jamie: That's right! I drove out West and back for about three weeks.

Amelia: Wow, how cool! I've never done anything like that before.

Jamie: I hadn't either. It was a great experience. I also realized that, besides gas and food, you can make a road trip pretty cheap if you stop in cities where friends live and **couch surf** at their places.

Amelia: That makes sense!

To impose Verb

Andrew tells Kassy that his friend Jimmy's original plan was to stay at a hotel when visiting Andrew in South Korea. This is because Jimmy didn't want **to impose** on Andrew and his wife in their small apartment. However, Andrew suspects Jimmy realized how expensive hotels were in Seoul and decided to stay at Andrew's house in the end.

When we talk about having company over, **to impose** means to burden or cause inconveniences for one's host. For example, overstaying one's welcome is one way of **imposing** on your host. You might also **impose** on your host by bringing uninvited guests, showing up late to a dinner party, or making a mess in their home.

If you're visiting a town and a friend who lives there offers to let you sleep at their house, it's common to politely refuse or double-check that it's OK by saying, "Oh, no, I wouldn't want **to impose**," or "I wouldn't be **imposing**, would I?" If they insist, you can feel comfortable that you are really welcome to spend the night in their home and that it's not an inconvenience.

Outside of the context of having company over, **impose** can mean forcing beliefs or rules on someone. For example, you could say, "The city government has decided **to impose** a tax on the sale of alcohol," or "I don't like it when people try **to impose** their religious beliefs on me."

The noun form of **impose** is **imposition**. For example, someone might say, "Is it really OK for me to spend the night? I don't want to be an **imposition**."

Here are a couple more examples with **to impose**:

Alexander: Hey, Layla, would I be **imposing** if I brought my sister along to your party on Saturday?

Layla: Not at all! The more the merrier!

Alexander: Great! She'll be delighted to come along.

Abby: Do you need a place to stay when you're in town? I have a spare bedroom you could use.

Ethan: Oh, that's so kind of you, but I wouldn't want **to impose**.

Abby: It wouldn't be an **imposition** at all! Chris and I would love to host you.

Your mileage may vary (YMMV)

Expression/abbreviation

Andrew explains that he offered to let his friend Jimmy stay at his apartment in Seoul while he visited. However, Andrew only has a blow-up mattress to offer him, and he warned Jimmy that **his mileage may vary** with quality of sleep.

Your mileage may vary, often shortened to **YMMV** online, is a common expression used to mean that everyone's experience is different. It comes from a standard disclaimer in car advertisements about gas mileage—since there are so many variables when it comes to driving, you won't always get the same gas mileage per tank of fuel. This disclaimer says **your mileage may vary**, and that evolved to be used for all sorts of situations.

This expression is often used in product reviews and personal recommendations. For example, if someone asks you for skincare recommendations, you might say, "I love this moisturizer, but **your mileage may vary**." Skincare is a very individual matter. A moisturizer that makes one person's skin glow might make another person break out in a rash.

Some similar expressions when it comes to subjective opinions include **to each his own** and **there's no accounting for taste**.

Here are a couple more examples with **your mileage may vary**:

Gabe: I started going to hot yoga a month ago and I absolutely love it. I feel so rejuvenated and energized when I get out of a session.

Sophie: Really? My sister tried it last year and she ended up vomiting halfway through the class because the heat made her feel sick.

Gabe: Well, **your mileage may vary**, but it has been life-changing for me.

Owen: Which beaches do you think I should visit when I go to Kona next month?

Chloe: There's one called Makolea Beach that has beautiful black sands. I would avoid the beaches close to town and the ones where snorkelling companies conduct their tours. They're lovely but way too overcrowded. However, since you're going in the off-season, **your mileage may vary**.

Owen: That's great advice. Thank you!

Chloe: Of course! I hope you have a lot of fun on your trip.

Quiz

- 1. What does it mean when someone says they've been couch surfing for the past month?**
 - a) they've been trying out different sofas at furniture stores
 - b) they've been hosting guests on their couch
 - c) they've been staying at the homes of different friends and relatives
 - d) they've been avoiding using their couch at home

- 2. In a product review, someone mentions "your mileage may vary" or "YMMV" regarding the item's performance. What does this mean?**
 - a) the product works the same for everyone
 - b) the product is suited for long-distance travel
 - c) the product's price is different depending on the store
 - d) the product may produce different results for different people

- 3. You invite a friend to have dinner with you on Friday, but she says, "Sorry, but I'm having company over." What does she mean?**
 - a) she is having guests come to her house
 - b) she is going to be a guest at someone else's house
 - c) she is having dinner with her boss from work
 - d) she has plans to make dinner at home for her family

- 4. You invite a friend to stay at your house instead of paying for a hotel. He tells you, "That's so kind of you, but I don't want to impose." What does he mean?**
 - a) he isn't comfortable staying at your house
 - b) he doesn't want to cause you any inconvenience by staying over
 - c) he is leaving town early
 - d) he doesn't know what his plans are yet

- 5. If you compliment someone to boost their self-esteem, what are you doing?**
 - a) petting their mind
 - b) caressing their self-worth
 - c) touching their heart
 - d) stroking their ego

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Do you enjoy having company over? Why or why not?
2. What advice would you give a guest who is visiting someone's home and doesn't want to overstay their welcome or impose?
3. Describe a memorable time when you hosted company in your home. What happened? Was it a lot of fun or did something go terribly wrong? Did any guests do anything rude or overstay their welcome?
4. Do you feel comfortable spending the night at other people's homes? Why or why not? Describe a time when you did this.
5. Do you prefer to prepare food for guests or order takeout? Why?

Quiz Answers

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

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