

Simplified Speech #204 – Exploring Germany (ad free)

Episode description

In this Simplified Speech episode, Andrew talks with Indiana about her recent trip to Germany. Indiana shares exciting stories about meeting her family in Germany for the first time, seeing amazing castles, and trying new foods. They also talk about the challenges of speaking another language and what it was like to see her family's culture up close. This episode gives interesting insights into German culture and tips for feeling more comfortable in a foreign country.

Fun fact

Indiana talked about the white asparagus she tried in Germany. Did you know that white asparagus is grown entirely underground to keep it from producing chlorophyll, which would turn it green? The seasonal "Spargelzeit" (asparagus season) is so beloved in Germany that white asparagus has earned the nickname "King of Vegetables," and there are entire festivals, dishes, and menus dedicated to it!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To work up the courage
- To go against the grain
- Opulent
- To be struck by
- To digress
- To give off vibes



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 number 204. "Exploring Germany." Featuring Andrew and special guest host, Indiana. So today, Indiana is here to talk with me about her recent trip to Germany. We'll hear all about her experiences from discovering charming little German towns to exploring the country's rich history and culture. So, let's welcome Indiana and we'll get started. Here we go. Hello, Indiana. Welcome back to Simplified Speech. How is it going?

Indiana: Hey, Andrew, I'm doing well. How are you?

Andrew: I'm great. And I'm excited for this episode. I guess in a way we could consider this a part two. Last time we got together to record Indiana, we talked about your trip to Iceland that you did last year and that crazy, huge, big adventure. And now you're going to tell us about another recent trip that you took earlier this year. I believe you said it was in the spring in May, maybe?

Indiana: That's right.

Andrew: And you visited Germany.

Indiana: Yes. And I just want to add a little disclaimer that these conversations make it sound like I'm traveling all the time, but that's really not true. I had a couple big trips these past few years, but it's probably going to be a while before the next one, so.

Andrew: Do you consider yourself somebody who gets the travel bug easily? Do you like doing these big international trips or was this sort of just a rare occurrence in your life?

Indiana: I would love to travel, and I don't know if I get the travel bug, but I would like to do some traveling in my life. But I think both of these times were more opportunities that I felt like, OK, I got to grab hold of this opportunity and take this trip.

Andrew: So, OK. So, trips of convenience, almost like you have this opportunity come up and you can jump on it and grab it while it's there. And so why don't you tell us about what brought on this trip to Germany? What was the opportunity that life gave you for this one?

Indiana: Yeah. So, this time I got to go on this trip because my husband had a business trip to Germany, which was a really cool opportunity for him. And seeing as though that airfare was taken care of, we thought it would be a great time to have me join him after the trip and spend some time in Germany with him not working. So, we added an extra week onto his week in Germany and just had a week there together.

Andrew: Nice. So, I guess at first, he was busy maybe doing some business with like meetings and stuff. And then after that you had a week to spend together with no work and no business meetings and just sort of free travel time.

Indiana: That's exactly right. Yes.

Andrew: OK. Nice. So yeah, that's awesome that you had that opportunity. Had you been to Germany before or was this your first time visiting?

Indiana: So, this was my first time in my life visiting, which is weird because I'm half German. My dad was from Germany. He moved to the US, I think in the seventies or something. And I have a lot of family in Germany who I had never met before, and I got to meet them on this trip. So, it was a really, really cool trip because it was my first time to Germany, and I got to meet family I had only heard about before.

Andrew: OK. Yeah. Very interesting. I had an experience like this recently as well. My mom is originally from Scotland, and I visited Scotland. Well, back in 2019, I think it was. I won't go into too many details because I've told these stories on Culips before. I think I know how you feel because I had that similar experience of visiting my mom's home country and seeing where she grew up, seeing my old family's home, seeing where my grandparents were born, meeting some cousins and stuff that I hadn't really met before, just heard stories of before. So yeah, I know exactly where you're coming from and it's a pretty unique experience. How did it feel to go back and have that experience?

Indiana: At first, it was a little nerve wracking, even to reach out to my family because over the course of my life, we really didn't talk so much. I think I only spoke with my grandmother who has passed away now, but on the phone. And I'm not even sure if I wrote letters to my cousins, my uncle or anything like that, but I had their information from my sister, their contact information. And so, when I had this opportunity to go, I was like, I really have to try to see them. Maybe they live near where the business trip is. Maybe we can link up. So, it was a little nerve wracking because are they interested in meeting me? We've hardly spoken my whole life, or I don't know. And how's everybody's English? Because I only know a tiny bit of German. So, it was very nerve wracking at first, but I **worked up the courage** and contacted them and almost all of them speak perfectly fluent English, which was very convenient for me. Although I tried as much as I could to practice my German while I was there. And they were so friendly and gracious, and they had us stay at their house. For the first night we were there, unfortunately, the timing was not good, and they were going on vacation the following day or a couple of days later. So, we had 36 hours to see each other, but it was a really great, a great experience to meet them. And yeah, they were incredibly warm and welcoming and yeah, never had that experience before meeting new family as an adult.

Andrew: Yeah. So, did they take you around, like show you, I guess this was what area of Germany are we talking about?

Indiana: So, my dad and his brother grew up in a small village in the state of Baden-Württemberg. So, I'm doing my best again to pronounce things as well as I can. See how it goes. But yeah. So yeah, my uncle, he picked me up from the airport and he took the long way back to his small town and drove me through the little village where he grew up with my dad and their sister. So yeah, that was a wild trip into the past, like seeing this part of my dad's life that I had never, you know, I had heard about, but yeah, seeing it before my eyes, that was really cool. And my uncle brought me back to his house. And of course, my husband was already in Germany for the business trip. So, he had rented a car. He drove to meet me at my uncle's house. Yeah. And they had us over for dinner and we stayed the night. And then the next day we went out to Heidelberg, which is like the nearby small, beautiful university town, I think. Yep. And did some sightseeing, met my cousins and their kids. It was, everybody was very, very welcoming. It was very cool. Cool time.

Andrew: Yeah. That's awesome that you had that experience. That's so good to hear. And I think when you do travel like that, the difference between just staying at a hotel and not really getting to have that deep local experience versus, you know, hanging out with some relatives in your case or some good friends and people that can invite you into their home, that can prepare a dinner or a meal for you, that can show you around. Like the difference between having that experience and not having that experience is just so night and day. And, you know, I've had some trips in my life where I haven't had that experience. And then some other countries I've visited, I have had that experience. And it's just so much of a richer experience when you can interact with people who live there, that know the culture, that can show you around, that can, you know, show you how actually people live in that country. So, it sounds like you had a really, really awesome experience in that way. And yeah, it's unfortunate that they were only there for 36 hours before they left on vacation, but you had that little window of overlap. So that's good that it worked out in that way. And who knows if it were like the opposite, right? Imagine if they didn't speak any English or they weren't so kind. Like, of course you would imagine that they would be

nice people, but just if it were the opposite situation, then it would be nice to have that 36 hours out, right?

Indiana: Right. That was my mindset going into it. Yeah. I was like, well, maybe it's good because what if we, you know, our personalities clash and this doesn't work out at all. But of course, thankfully, yeah, we actually, yeah, it was like, oh yeah, family. Yeah. Very good.

Andrew: Were there any cultural differences that you noticed? Anything that was like a little bit of culture shock or anything that was like, huh, that's how they do it over here. Interesting. That's different than back home. Any of those moments that you experienced?

Indiana: Not a ton, but I would say at the risk of reinforcing a stereotype about German people and punctuality and sticking to an itinerary, that was often a topic of conversation during those 36 hours. So, it did seem like making sure that we got places on time, or we knew when things would be closing, or I don't know, it seemed like there was 50% more of that kind of small talk than I would normally have with my family here. But no, otherwise, I mean, yeah, very similar, similar cultures. It didn't seem very different.

Andrew: I wonder if that is partially because you grew up with a parent from that country. Like I felt the same, I guess going to the UK, going to Scotland for me, you know, we speak the same language. A lot of the culture is similar between the countries just for that reason. And maybe, I don't know, maybe even subliminally, you absorbed some of that culture from your father growing up. And maybe that was perhaps why, I don't know, who knows. But did you feel like, this is a little bit off topic, but I'm curious about this. Did you feel that you did learn some German culture or language or anything from your father growing up? Did he ever watch German TV, or did you ever experience the German side of him as you grew up?

Indiana: Not a ton. I think he was really drawn to like American hippie culture and sort of **going against the grain** and being nonconformist. And I think that was very much in contrast to the German culture he grew up with. So, I think, yeah, he really embraced a different lifestyle and outlook on life. So, I don't think I got too much of that. Yeah. Any sort of specific German culture knowledge from him?

Andrew: OK. So, he just slipped right into the States, integrated right into American society. That's cool. That's not easy to do as an immigrant. So that's very interesting that he was able to do that so successfully. Anyways, back to the trip. Let's get back to the trip. So, you saw your family there for the first day and a half or so. And then after, what did you get up to?

Indiana: Following that first 36 hours, my husband and I, we had rented a car and we drove down to Stuttgart. Yeah. Yeah. Because we came from, yeah, I came from Frankfurt. Sorry. I'm just imagining this timeline in my head. And yeah, so we drove down and spent a night in Stuttgart, but we didn't spend that much time there. Early the next morning, we went on to further South to Bavaria, which is called Bayern in German. And so, one of the most, I think, famous sightseeing spots in Germany is Neuschwanstein Castle, which is the castle that I think the Disney Castle is based on or heavily inspired by. We didn't get to tour that castle because tickets sell out incredibly quickly. I think it was already booked a month before we went. But there is another castle right next to it called Hohenschwangau. And it was also a castle that King Ludwig II built. So, we got to tour the inside of that and see just the opulence and very interesting rooms, very, very, yes, royal rooms of that building, which was pretty cool.

Andrew: Opulence. That's a nice word that maybe some of our listeners don't know. And so, guys, you can add this one to your vocabulary. It's great when you're talking about these kinds of palaces or maybe a mansion, any kind of building where there is a lot of wealth on display, right? Like really over the top. I noticed some of these kind of **opulent**

rooms when I visited Europe as well in some castles and palaces and stuff. Maybe you look at the roof or the ceiling and it's plated with gold, right? You're like, oh my gosh, this palace is so **opulent**. There's gold and really fancy carpets and very expensive, priceless art all over the walls. What kind of **opulent** rooms did you see in this castle? Could you paint a picture for us how they looked on the inside?

Indiana: Yeah, that's exactly what I think of with the word **opulent**, like gold foil, marble. There were a lot of really extravagant bedrooms and themed bedrooms with murals, beautifully painted murals on the walls and secret doors and these gold foil covered reading desks, writing desks, just a lot of furniture and pieces and sculptures that really you could see the craftsmanship and all of the money and effort that went into designing and creating this space that, yeah, only a rich king could do.

Andrew: OK, awesome. Well, that must have been a pretty cool tour to do to check out that castle. And you said that you drove down there in a rented car. Did you guys drive on the Autobahn, the famous fabled Autobahn where there are no speed limits, and you can just sort of drive as fast as you want? Did you go on that highway?

Indiana: We sure did. And I said to my husband, you're going to drive. There's no way I'm doing this. But he was really excited too. We wanted to get, he wanted to get a manual transmission car instead of an automatic and yeah, like a nice car. But I don't think the car we got was manual. It was automatic and it wasn't that nice. But we went extremely fast, and it was very cool. It wasn't as scary as I thought. I think, yeah, once you're going that fast and everybody else is going that fast, it doesn't really feel like that big of a deal.

Andrew: Yeah. I mean, it must be safe, right? If it weren't safe, then they probably would abolish that system. But yeah, I think, I know when I was a teenager in high school, a lot of my friends, especially my friends who are into cars, they're always like, oh, I got to go to Germany and drive on the Autobahn, go as fast as you want, no speed limits. So that's

cool that you had that experience as well. Indiana, what are some other things that struck you from your trip? Maybe about culture or food or places you visited, anything that stands out to you?

Indiana: Well, bringing it back to opulence and Ludwig, the Bavarian King who had built that castle that we toured. Later on in the trip, we went to a small lake that has some islands. The islands are called Herreninsel and Fraueninsel. So, it's men's island and women's island. And on one of the islands is yet another palace that, I think it was Ludwig II. But so, this king was truly obsessed with creating the most beautiful spaces for him to live in. He designed countless buildings that he never ended up building. But one of the most iconic and frankly, strange buildings was this duplicate of Versailles that he built and almost finished. And then he died. Unfortunately, he couldn't see the culmination, which is the end, the final product of his several years work. Of course, it was the people he was paying to do the work for him. But we got to tour this duplicate of Versailles on this tiny island on a lake in Germany. And if you look at photos of Versailles in France and the inside of this palace, it's really weird how similar they are. And just he was really obsessed with this with this style. And it was just very, extremely **opulent**. It was, yeah, it was a very, very interesting experience to see this building as well.

Andrew: Huh. Yeah, I've never heard of that before. That seems pretty wild. I guess he was just very inspired by Versailles and wanted to make a German version of it. Interesting. I guess that guy had that king Ludwig, you said his name was Ludwig, had a lot of money, a lot of time, a lot of money to build these extravagant, **opulent** castles and palaces. That's pretty cool that you got to tour them. I'm wondering about the food. I always have to ask about food, German food. What comes to my mind is like pretty much standard meat and potatoes, kind of central European diet. I know you are a vegetarian, so you probably maybe stuck more to the potatoes than the meat. But what was the food like over there? Did you enjoy it? Did it fit with your system?

Indiana: It did, yeah. I'm a big foodie. And so, I'm always trying to eat like local cuisine as much as I can with a vegetarian diet on my travels. So, there's two things. No, three things. Three things I want to talk about. First of all, the beer. Really incredible. I really like beer. And, you know, I'm used to a lot of different kinds of beer in the United States, like IPAs and sour beer. And not a lot of that is as common in Germany. It's a lot of classic German beers, Weissbier or Hefeweizens, things like that. Pilsners, which are just called pils. And so, the beer was great, very refreshing, very flavorful.

Andrew: And very cheap too, right? I visited Berlin, well, it's about over a decade ago now, but I remember being shocked at the price of beer, how much cheaper it was in Germany than it was in Canada. Did you notice that as well, that the price was pretty affordable or have things changed since then?

Indiana: No, it was pretty affordable. I was more **struck by** the cheap prices at supermarkets. Yogurt was like \$1.50 for a giant container. But I **digress**. Yeah, the beer prices were pretty good. Yeah, definitely not too expensive. And so, for the actual foods though, sauerkraut. I've never wanted to eat sauerkraut just on its own as like a side dish. To me, it's usually like a topping on a sandwich or something. But I had some of the best sauerkraut I've ever had in my life in Heidelberg. So that was astonishing to me. That was great.

Andrew: And could you explain what sauerkraut is for some of our listeners who maybe have never tried it?

Indiana: Yes. So, it is a pickled cabbage that for me, like at home, I usually have cold, but yeah, I think it's generally heated up warm as a side dish in Germany. Yeah. And it's, like I said, it's great on sandwiches, but if you have some really good sauerkraut, this pickled cabbage, you could just have it as a side to your dinner.

Andrew: Yeah. Now living in Korea for so long, I eat kimchi every day. And I feel like it's almost like kimchi just without any of the spice. So, there's no spice, but it is like a very similar pickled cabbage kind of dish. So yeah, I love it as well. It's very, very good. You got it from the source, right? That's like the home of sauerkraut. So, what about the third one? I'm curious if it's related to baking or bread, because that's another thing that comes to my mind from Germany is like really great bread. But what was your third item?

Indiana: Yeah. I could talk about pretzels, but no, the third item is asparagus.

Andrew: Asparagus. OK.

Indiana: So, in the US you can get green and white asparagus, but I have never really seen white asparagus at the supermarket. Maybe it's a regional thing or I don't know, but white asparagus was, it was in season when we visited and there were asparagus dishes everywhere. And it was amazing, like really good. I didn't think I was such an asparagus head, but now I'm like definitely into asparagus.

Andrew: Asparagus is so good. I love it. Unfortunately, here in Korea, it's extremely expensive at the supermarket. So, I don't get to eat it very often, but I've never had white asparagus before. Is there a flavor difference between the two?

Indiana: I think there is. I don't think I could describe it very well, but the white asparagus is a lot thicker, and it seems like a little woodier than the green asparagus. I think you would maybe peel an outer layer off and boil it before preparing it. Whereas like the green asparagus can be very, very thin and you just chop the ends off and you could just break it in half really easily. It seems like the white asparagus is bigger, thicker, and woodier, I think is the right adjective for that.

Andrew: Sounds like it's like level two asparagus.

Indiana: Yeah.

Andrew: Once you go, once you're good with the green, then you can go on to the white as the next culinary challenge. Interesting. I'll have to try it someday. Sounds good. So, Indiana, eventually, I believe you told me earlier that you ended your trip in the Alps and that part of Germany. Is that correct?

Indiana: Yes. Well, it wasn't ended. We didn't end in the Alps, but we drove through the Alps, which was incredibly beautiful. Yes, that was the latter half of the trip. And we ended in Munich and spent a couple of days in Munich. And just a language tidbit, before I started learning German, I guess I didn't really realize how many city names we say in English are just vastly different in each European language. Munich is München. That's not even close. Cologne is Köln. I'm probably not doing that one quite right. But yeah, it's wildly different. So, it was reinforced that fact when I was visiting.

Andrew: Yeah, it is very interesting. I've noticed that as well with my Korean students, because often in the Korean language, they will say the city much, much more accurately to how Germans will say it or whatever country people will say it. But since I'm teaching them English, I have to be like, no, that's not how you say it in English. I'm sorry. You have to say it like this. But I'm correcting them to say a city in a way that's unnatural almost. So, I always feel a little bit bad when that comes up. But yeah, I mean, we have to do it. It's a necessary evil. But yeah, it is weird how different the city names are in some places in Europe when we say them in the native language and in English. I'm not exactly sure why that is, but it's just a fact of life, I suppose.

Indiana: A weird fact that I only just recently really realized.

Andrew: How is it speaking German? When you went to a restaurant, for example, would you try ordering in German?

Indiana: I'm a really nervous language learner. So yeah, I would **work up the courage** to order in German, and then the waitstaff or whoever it was would respond to me incredibly fast. And I would get flustered and say, sorry, sorry, you know, like, let's switch to English. And then they'd say, OK, yep, yep, got it.

Andrew: Yeah. And people generally spoke English pretty well, from your experience.

Indiana: Yeah, I would say most of the time, at the very least, people would be able to say the basic, the basic words needed for that interaction, like a service interaction. Definitely. Yeah. If not, if not being completely fluent. Yeah.

Andrew: So, you didn't feel like any real problems due to language while you were there?

Indiana: No, not too much. But yeah, it is a different experience, like traveling as a white American in Japan, for example, like, people will look at me and say, you know, assume that I don't, I don't speak the language. But if I'm traveling as a white American in Germany, it's maybe, you know, that's assumed that I might be a local, I don't know, maybe I **give off obvious tourist vibes**. But yeah, it depends on where you travel. Sometimes there's that interaction that is Yeah, I don't know. Sometimes you have to really make it clear that you're a learner of the language or yeah, right.

Andrew: Yeah, no, that is interesting, right? Depending on where you go, you can either stand out a ton, like, like going to Japan or like me here in Korea, right? People just look at me. And in one second, they know, oh, this guy is a foreigner. And they treat me a certain way. But when you visit other countries, yeah, sometimes you can blend in a little bit more. And it's less obvious that you are a tourist. And you might be treated like a local at first. And then there's a kind of awkward interaction. Like, I'm actually just visiting. I don't know what you're saying. So yeah, that can happen depending on where you go. Well, Indiana, I

think this is probably a good place to wrap things up. So, thanks so much for telling us about your trip to Germany. And earlier in the last episode that we released about your trip to Iceland. Are you gonna cool the travel down for a little bit now? Or do you have any plans to go anywhere else in the future?

Indiana: Nope, I'm definitely cooling down the travel. As you said, I'm going to be moving soon, I think moving houses. So, it's going to be taking up a lot of my focus and energy for a while. And money. So yeah.

Andrew: OK. So, focusing on the near instead of the far for the future. OK, good. Well, Indiana, thanks again. And we'll get you back on Culips here soon for another episode. But we won't talk about travel. Maybe we'll talk about your move or something in the next one. I'm not sure. But until then, thank you again.

Indiana: Sounds good. Thanks, Andrew.

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

Detailed Explanations

To work up the courage Expression

The phrase **to work up the courage** means to slowly gather the bravery or confidence needed to do something that feels challenging or scary. In the episode, Indiana talks about **working up the courage** to reach out to her family in Germany, as they hadn't been in contact before and she was unsure how they would react.

When you **work up the courage**, it means you are preparing yourself mentally to face something difficult. We use this expression in situations where someone feels nervous, intimidated, or unsure but still wants to attempt something challenging, such as speaking in public, asking for a promotion, sharing personal feelings, or trying a new experience that feels a bit scary.

For example, if someone is nervous about speaking in front of a large group, they might say, "I need to **work up the courage** to give this speech." This means they need some time to feel brave enough to go through with it.

This phrase can be remembered by picturing someone gathering courage bit by bit, almost like collecting small pieces of bravery. Similar phrases include "muster the courage" and "gather courage." For example, "She had to muster the courage to step on stage and perform", meaning she had to overcome her fear to speak up.

Here are a couple more examples with **to work up the courage**:

Ned: Have you told Mark about how you feel yet?

Laura: Not yet. I'm still trying to **work up the courage** to say it out loud. It's hard!

Ned: I understand. It's never easy to open up, but I know you'll feel better once you do.

Ava: I finally **worked up the courage** to sing at the open mic night last night.

Liam: That's amazing, Ava! How did it go?

Ava: It was nerve-wracking at first, but I'm so glad I did it. Everyone was really supportive.

To go against the grain

Idiom

The idiom "**to go against the grain**" means to do something that is different from what is typical, expected, or accepted. In the episode, Indiana explains how her father "**went against the grain**" by embracing American hippie culture, which was very different from the more traditional German culture he grew up with.

When someone **goes against the grain**, they choose to act in their own way, often facing resistance or surprise from others. For example, if everyone in a family is a doctor but one person decides to become an artist, you could say that person "**went against the grain.**" This idiom often suggests that doing things differently might be more challenging but reflects the individual's personality and values.

The phrase originates from woodworking. When you cut "with the grain" of the wood, the process is smoother, but going "against the grain" is much more difficult. This expression can be remembered by picturing the resistance of cutting wood in the opposite direction of its natural lines. Similar expressions include "breaking the mold" or "going against the flow."

Be careful not to confuse this expression with simply "disagreeing." **Going against the grain** is about a person's actions or personality being different from what is expected. For instance, if someone doesn't follow family traditions, they could be described as "**going against the grain.**"

Here are a couple more examples with **to go against the grain**:

Teacher: Lucy, tell me about your new piece. It looks quite different from what others are doing.

Lucy: Sure! I'm just trying something, using a different technique. I know the assignment was to make something simpler, so it kind of **goes against the grain**, but it feels more like me.

Teacher: I like that! Keep following your instincts—it makes your art stand out.

Tom: I know it might **go against the grain**, but I think we should try a new theme for our holiday party this year. Why not do something unique, like a tropical theme?

Tina: Why not! I like that. New theme might make the party even more fun!

Opulent Adjective

The word "**opulent**" describes something that is extremely luxurious, rich, or grand in a way that shows off wealth. In the episode, Indiana talks about the **opulent** castle she visited in Germany, which was full of beautiful and expensive decorations.

If something is **opulent**, it looks very grand and may have features like gold, marble, or detailed artwork that show it is high in quality and value. Often, people use this word to describe grand buildings, rooms, or objects with rich detailing, like gold accents, intricate woodwork, or finely crafted furniture. A palace, a luxurious hotel lobby, or a grand theater with velvet seats and crystal chandeliers could all be described as **opulent**. Beyond places, **opulent** can also describe events, such as a lavish party with gourmet food and elegant decor, or even a lifestyle marked by luxury and excess.

For example, you might hear someone say, "The hotel's **opulent** decor made me feel like royalty," which means that the hotel was decorated in an extremely luxurious way, with rich materials and elegant details that made the person feel very special and important. Another example, "The CEO's **opulent** lifestyle included private jets and a mansion by the beach", meaning that the CEO lives in a way that shows off immense wealth, with expensive possessions and a luxurious, extravagant lifestyle.

The word "**opulent**" comes from the Latin word "opulentus," which means "wealthy" or "rich." Similar words include "lavish" or "extravagant." For instance, "The wedding was so lavish, it was held in an **opulent** mansion with crystal chandeliers."

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

Nora: The hotel we stayed at in Dubai was so **opulent**! The lobby alone had marble floors and golden statues.

Harry: Wow, that sounds like a dream. Was it expensive?

Nora: Definitely, but it was worth it just to experience that level of luxury!

Guide: And here's our exhibit of 18th-century European art. You'll notice the **opulent** style of the furniture and decor in these pieces.

Visitor: Wow, the gold and rich fabrics really make everything look extravagant.

Guide: That's right. Wealthy families would use this **opulent** decor to show off their status.

To be struck by Idiom

The phrase "**to be struck by**" means to be suddenly and deeply affected by something, often in a surprising way. In the episode, Indiana mentions **being struck by** the hospitality of her family members in Germany, who welcomed her warmly even though they hadn't met before.

When someone says they **are struck by** something, it usually means they feel a strong emotion or reaction, like surprise, admiration, or sadness. You can **be struck by** many things that evoke strong emotions or reactions, often because they're unexpected or particularly impressive. For example, you might **be struck by** someone's intelligence or creativity during a conversation, making you pause and admire their unique qualities. Similarly, you could **be struck by** an inspiring speech, a powerful piece of art, or even the way someone handles a difficult situation. These moments catch your attention and leave a lasting impact because they stand out in a meaningful way.

Being struck by something can also describe more personal and reflective moments. You might be **struck by** a memory, a familiar smell, or a scene that brings back strong emotions from the past. It's often about experiencing something that feels intense and meaningful. This phrase can also describe negative reactions, like **being struck by** a sad story.

This expression can be remembered by picturing the feeling of something hitting you suddenly, like a lightning strike. Similar phrases include "taken aback by" or "amazed by."

Here are a couple more examples with **to be struck by**:

Sam: When I visited Japan, I **was really struck by** how polite everyone was.

Sharon: I've heard the culture there is very respectful. It must have been a wonderful experience.

Sam: It really was. I felt so welcomed wherever I went.

Linda: What did you think of the performance?

Ed: I **was** completely **struck by** the singer's voice! I've never heard someone sing with so much emotion live before.

To digress Verb

The verb "**to digress**" means to move away from the main topic and talk about something different, often by accident. In the episode, Indiana says she "**digressed**" when she started discussing something unrelated to the main topic of her conversation with Andrew.

When you **digress**, it means you start talking about something that isn't directly related to what you were originally discussing. For example, if you're explaining a science topic but suddenly start talking about your favorite movies, you might say, "Sorry, I **digress**", and then come back to the main topic. This word is often used when conversations or speeches go off track.

"**Digress**" comes from the Latin word "digredi," meaning "to go away." To remember it, imagine a conversation that "wanders" away from the main point. Similar words include "stray" or "go off-topic." For instance, "He strayed from the topic while explaining his research," meaning he started talking about something unrelated.

Using "**to digress**" can make it sound more formal or humorous. People often say "but I **digress**" to admit they got sidetracked.

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

Mother: So, I'm thinking we should plan a big family trip next summer. The last one we did was, what, five years ago? I can't believe how everyone has grown since then—remember when little Andy was just learning to swim? But I **digress**. Where should we go this time?

Jim: I'd love somewhere with both beaches and hiking spots!

Customer: Hi, do you have any historical fiction recommendations?

Salesperson: Yes, we have a great selection of historical fiction! You know, history is such a fascinating subject. My grandfather used to tell these stories about his time in the navy, but I'm starting to think he exaggerated half of them. Anyway, I **digress**. Our historical fiction section is right here. Let me know if you need anything else.

Customer: I will! Thanks for your help!

To give off vibes

Expression, informal

The phrase "**to give off vibes**" means to create a certain feeling or atmosphere that other people can sense. In the episode, Indiana says, "Maybe I **give off obvious tourist vibes**" when discussing how her appearance may have led people to assume she was a tourist in Germany.

This phrase is used when we feel a particular mood from a person, place, or even an object, without anyone needing to say anything. For example, if someone is friendly and smiling, they might **give off positive vibes**, making others feel comfortable around them. If a place feels quiet and calm, we might say it **gives off relaxing vibes**.

When something or someone **gives off vibes**, it means they are making a certain impression, or creating a mood, that others can feel. This feeling can be good or bad, depending on the situation. For example, "The café **gives off cozy vibes**," means that the café feels warm and comfortable. This phrase can describe both people and places, such as "She **gives off friendly vibes**" or "The old castle **gives off spooky vibes**."

The phrase comes from the word "vibrations" or "vibes," which refers to invisible "energy" that people or places can give off. These "vibes" are not physical, but people can often sense them through their mood or surroundings. To remember this phrase, think of it like a radio signal or energy that you can feel, even if you can't see it. Other ways to say "**give off vibes**" include "create an atmosphere" or "set a mood." For example, "The candles **give off romantic vibes**," meaning the candles make the place feel romantic.

People often use "**give off vibes**" in casual, everyday language when talking about first impressions or the general feel of a place. It's useful for describing how something feels beyond what's physically present.

Here are a couple more examples with **to give off vibes**:

Danny: I really liked your friend John. He **gives off such chill vibes**.

Kristy: I know, right? He's never stressed and always keeps things light.

Kim: Why did you leave the party so early?

Henry: I don't know. That club just **gave off strange vibes**. I didn't feel comfortable.

Expressions Quiz

- 1. When someone says they "worked up the courage," what did they do?**
 - a) They became very nervous.
 - b) They decided not to try.
 - c) They found the strength to do something challenging.
 - d) They felt relaxed and calm.

- 2. If a person likes to "go against the grain," what does it mean about their behavior?**
 - a) They follow everyone else.
 - b) They do things in an unusual or different way.
 - c) They don't like trying new things.
 - d) They follow strict rules.

- 3. What might be described as "opulent"?**
 - a) A small, cozy cabin.
 - b) A simple and plain restaurant.
 - c) A grand mansion with gold decorations.
 - d) A local grocery store.

- 4. If you are struck by a painting, how do you feel?**
 - a) Deeply moved and impressed by the painting.
 - b) Disappointed in the painting.
 - c) Uninterested in the painting.
 - d) Distracted by the painting.

- 5. True or false? "To digress" means to disagree with someone.**
 - a) True.
 - b) False.

Comprehension Quiz

6. What was Indiana's reason for traveling to Germany?
7. Why did Indiana feel nervous about reaching out to her family in Germany?
8. How did Indiana feel about driving on the Autobahn?
9. What are the three types of food Indiana specifically mentions from her trip to Germany?
10. What was Indiana's observation about place names in Germany versus English-speaking countries?

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Can you think of a time when you had to **work up the courage** to try something new, like public speaking, learning a skill, or approaching someone for help? What helped you gain that courage?
2. Some people naturally **go against the grain** by following a different path or doing things in unique ways. Do you know anyone like this, or do you consider yourself to be someone who goes against the grain?
3. Have you ever been in an **opulent** setting and felt out of place? How did you handle it, and do you think luxury settings affect the way people behave? What **vibes** would you say these places **give off**?
4. Think of a time when you were **struck by** something, whether it was a new idea, place, or even a piece of art. What made it stand out and leave an impression on you?
5. We often **digress** during conversations, especially when we're enthusiastic about a topic. Why do you think that happens? Does it happen to you a lot?

Quiz Answers

- 1.c 2.b 3.c 4.a 5.b
6. Her husband had a business trip, and she joined him.
7. She had never met them before and didn't know if they would be interested.
8. She let her husband drive and was surprised by how smooth it was.
9. Beer, white asparagus, and sauerkraut (pickled cabbage).
10. They often have very different names in each language.

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