

Simplified Speech #207 – Unforgettable concerts (ad free)

Episode description

What's the best concert you've ever been to? In this episode of Simplified Speech, Andrew and Indiana talk about some of the best live music shows they've ever seen. They share what made these concerts special, from the wild energy of mosh pits to the excitement of finding new bands. This episode is perfect for English learners who love music and want to improve their listening skills and learn about the cultural side of English. And who knows, you might even discover a new band you really like!

Fun fact

King Gizzard & the Lizard Wizard, one of the bands mentioned in the episode, is known for their prolific music output and genre-hopping creativity. They released five albums in a single year (2017)—each with a completely different sound!

Expressions included in the study guide

- To pump someone up
- To pin something down
- Bad blood
- To clock someone
- To weigh in on
- To land on



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 207, "Unforgettable concerts." Featuring Andrew and special guest host, Indiana.

Guys, I've got a question for you. What's the most unforgettable concert you've ever been to? I've been to so many concerts that, to be honest, it's hard for me to answer this question, but I'm gonna try to today. In just a moment, I'll be joined by Indiana, who many of you know as one of our study guide writers and the host of our Tuesday small-group speaking classes. And we're gonna talk all about this. We're gonna share some stories about the best concerts we've ever been to.

And you know, learning English isn't just about mastering vocabulary and grammar. It's also about understanding the cultural fabric, the shared experiences, pop-culture references, and stories that connect English speakers. And while my parents might not know about every band reference that we'll be making in this episode, millennials, especially millennials who grew up in North America, would absolutely recognize most of these musical groups that we'll talk about here today. And it kind of reminds me of my own language-learning journey with Korean, and probably you guys can relate to this as well. There's been moments where I could follow a conversation linguistically, but I felt completely lost because I missed an important cultural reference that was mentioned in a conversation. So, it really just goes to show that learning a language is about learning the pop culture and the cultural references of the people who speak that language as well.

So, today we're gonna be talking about our memorable concert experiences. And if you wanna go a little bit deeper after listening to this episode, well, I've created a YouTube playlist of the artists that Indiana and I talk about in this episode, and I'll put the link to that playlist in the description for this episode so you can easily find it there.

So, let's welcome Indiana to this episode and we'll get the conversation started. Here we go. Enjoy. Hello, Indiana, how's it going?

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

Andrew: I'm doing great, and I have to say, I'm excited to talk with you about concerts. And I was thinking we should start off by just learning about your musical taste. I know you're a big music fan, but could you tell me and tell our listeners about some of the music styles and genres that you enjoy?

Indiana: Yeah, definitely. I used to be a radio DJ when I was in university, so I got exposed to a lot of different genres there. And I don't think I'm the biggest concert goer, like I'm going every weekend. But I would definitely say that I go probably several times a year if I can, maybe six or eight or something like that. And I like all kinds of music. I know that we share an interest in city pop from Japan, which is a really cool, funky genre that was predominantly happening in the 70s. One of my favorite bands is Talking Heads. So, have kinda that weird, rocky vibe.

I most recently went to see King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard with my husband in Forest Hills in Queens, which is a borough of New York City. And they're kind of like psych rock, but they do a lot of different genres. So, I'm pretty open personally. I don't have one particular genre that I love. But yeah, if it's a little psychedelic or if it's a little funky, I'm going to gravitate towards it. But what about you? What do you like, Andrew, besides city pop, which I know we share an interest in?

Andrew: Yeah, I guess when I was a little bit younger, I was really into rock, indie rock, more arty rock. Like you mentioned the Talking Heads, UK bands, shoegaze. Any kind of rock was like my main focus. Bands like My Bloody Valentine and Smashing Pumpkins I really loved. As I'm older now, I don't find myself listening to as much rock. I listen to a lot more electronic and ambient music and quiet music, stuff that's not too abrasive. And my

wife and I both really love jazz as well. So, we listen to a lot of jazz in the home. But from time to time, especially when I'm running, I love to listen to like some heavy rock music. It just sort of **pumps me up** and gets me going. But yeah, I find that it's mostly when I'm exercising now that I listen to that kind of music that I enjoyed when I was younger. But just because I don't listen to it as much as I used to doesn't mean I don't like it. It's just not as much in the forefront of my picks, what I choose, my go-tos, I should say. Yeah.

Indiana, I want to rewind there just for a second because you mentioned a really funny band name that maybe some listeners are like, what? Who are they? What are they? So, the band name is King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard. And I haven't seen them play a concert, unfortunately. I know they're a band from Australia who are extremely prolific. And prolific means that they have a huge output. Like they release an album three or four times a year, maybe? Do you know how many they have released?

Indiana: Yeah. Sometimes it really is that that frequent. It's wild.

Andrew: Yeah. Maybe 30 records they've released over their career, which is probably like 10 years, 12 years that they've been around. But a really interesting band from Australia.

Indiana: Yeah. And not only are they so prolific, but their music spans so many different genres. Like if you want to listen to some heavy metal, there's an album for you. They just dropped, I think, a blues, bluesy album, which wasn't my favorite. But yeah, they just will cover all sorts of genres. Sometimes they rap. It's like, yeah, they've got it covered.

Andrew: Yeah, they have some synth stuff. They're very experimental in that they really change their sound from album to album to album. But a really cool band. And I definitely recommend checking out some of their... their popular albums. If you are a rock fan, you'll probably enjoy it. And Indiana, you also mentioned about psych rock and psychedelic music. What does this mean? Because this might also be some vocabulary that our

listeners are not too familiar with. Like we say, King Gizzard is kind of psychy. They're psychedelic.

Indiana: Yeah, I suppose like a good way to describe it would be, it's actually a really tough question.

Andrew: How would I describe it? Psychedelic music maybe has more space, more instrumental, more reverb, longer songs. So not just like a really short, compact pop song, but maybe it would go on for like, I know, King Gizzard and the Lizard Wizard, they have some songs that are over 10 minutes long. A lot of repetition, too. So, they'll have the same beat going for a long time. And I think it is inspired by like the drug culture of the 1960s. And sort of trying to emulate some of the effects of like, if you were to take a drug, you would feel like this. They're trying to replicate that with music, maybe. But yeah, it's very hard **to pin down**. But yeah, that's what the psych genre is, if I had to define it in my own words.

Indiana: I think most recently a great group to also look to to understand what the sound of psych rock would be, would be Tame Impala. Because you definitely hear a lot of that influence from 60s music or like even the vocalist Kevin something. He sounds like John Lennon, honestly.

Andrew: So yeah, the Beatles, too, towards the end of their career, got pretty psychedelic. Like their early stuff was really poppy and radio friendly. And then they got more experimental and more psychedelic towards the end of their career. Absolutely. So, Indiana, going to concerts, turning to concerts. I have to ask, you mentioned the Talking Heads at the top of the episode. And they have that really classic concert film, which is called Stop Making Sense, I think. Have you seen that?

Indiana: Oh, many times, many times.

Andrew: Many times. It's really iconic because the lead singer, what's his name, David Byrne, he's wearing this very big, oversized business suit. And he dances in this massive business suit that is probably like, I don't know, 20 times too large for him. Right? Like it's a really oversized suit and he's dancing on the stage and just a really great concert film. Guys, you could probably search for it on YouTube and find it if you wanted to see what we're talking about. And I'd recommend that because, really cool band and really great performance. But Indiana, have you ever seen the Talking Heads play live?

Indiana: I don't think that they have ever reunited in that way since they broke up for a live performance. The fans are always like pushing them towards it, but I don't think it's going to happen, unfortunately.

Andrew: I didn't realize that they're finished for good.

Indiana: I think there was a little bit of **bad blood** between them. I think David Byrne is sort of a stubborn creative type and maybe doesn't treat his friends or bandmates the way that they want to be treated. Those are the stories I've understood from like their biographies, like Tina Weymouth's biography and stuff like that. So, it may not happen, but they did recently, I think a year or two ago, remaster and re-release that film *Stop Making Sense*. So, they got together for these interviews, and it seems like everybody's kind of getting along well enough. So that's nice, but I don't think they'll ever play a show together again.

Andrew: So, we'll just have to enjoy the film instead, OK.

Indiana: But I did see *American Utopia*, which is David Byrne's Broadway production, which was also a movie. I think you can see it in a movie form as well. He does do some songs, some classic Talking Heads songs in that. So that was really cool. I did see him perform live, but not as the Talking Heads.

Andrew: So, what are some of the, maybe we could go through your top three concerts. That might be hard to choose, but what are some of the most memorable or best experiences you had attending a concert?

Indiana: So, the musician I've seen the most probably, which really isn't that many times, but I've seen Ty Segall three times. And he's a really cool musician, also very prolific. And he does kind of like garage rock stuff. He'll change genres a little bit as well. But there's a really cool venue in Connecticut. I think it's called Space Ballroom, which is just this tiny, tiny club. And so maybe it fits like a hundred people, really not a very large venue at all. And so, I saw him with my husband, we went and saw him do an acoustic set. And we were right in front of him, like, you know, five feet away. And he's one of our favorite musicians. So, it was just so cool to be in that intimate setting and hear him play all the hits. And everybody was singing along for some of the last songs. It was just a very, very wonderful experience to see him in that setting. Because he's popular enough that he could fill, you know, maybe not a stadium, but like a larger, maybe like, you know, 5,000, 6,000-person venue. So that was really, really cool. But I want to keep thinking about some other top concerts.

But what about you, Andrew? I'm going to kick it back to you. What is your maybe top one or two concerts you've been to?

Andrew: Well, I have to go back to when I was in my teens and my 20s to talk about this. Because since moving to Korea, I've seen a couple of shows here. But unfortunately, and I don't want to anger our Korean listeners. But in my opinion, it's a little bit harder to see the kind of music that I'm used to seeing here in Korea. There are lots of great Korean bands. And I have been to see live music in Korea. And you can see some local bands. But in terms of like international touring acts, for whatever reason, these musicians, they ignore Korea. And I'm very angry about this. Like sometimes I'll see some bands or DJs or artists that I like. And they'll go to Japan, and they'll go to Australia. But they won't come to Korea. Or occasionally they will. But it's often on like a Sunday. Like they'll go to Japan for

the Friday and the Saturday. And then we get the Sunday night show. And I'm like, man, I got to go to work on Monday morning. Like I don't want to go see a concert on Sunday night.

And also, ticket prices are extremely expensive. I understand it. Like, it costs a lot of money to travel with a band to a different continent. And bring all of your amps and your guitars and your gear and your crew. Right? Like it's a very expensive thing. So, for that reason, I haven't seen too many live shows since I've been here in Korea. In terms of like international touring acts.

So, I got to go back to when I was younger. I guess I was in grade 11 or grade 12. No, grade 12. This was grade 12, my final year of high school. And the reason I know this was because this was just after September 11th had happened. So, I think it was like maybe October 2001 or November 2001. I went to go see a concert in Seattle with some of my friends from my hometown. And we saw Weezer in Seattle. And that was a super fun road trip. But I really had to twist my parents' arm to let me go. Because after the September 11th attack, there was, you know, right after. It was kind of a confusing time in North America. And there was like a lot of people who were concerned that there might be another attack. And my parents didn't want me going into the USA. But I eventually managed to convince them that it would be OK. I wouldn't die. And that, you know, Seattle was safe enough. And I was lucky because my buddy who was driving. We had like a minivan that we filled up with all of our friends. The driver was a dually. A dual citizen. We call them duallys in Canada. So, he was American and Canadian. And so, my parents felt like a little bit better that he had the American passport maybe. And he would be able to guide us across the border OK.

So, yeah, that was a really fun experience seeing Weezer. And there's a band called Jimmy Eat World that opened. And I also liked them in high school. Maybe not so much now. But Weezer, I think, still holds up. I was a fan of theirs in high school. And I still like Weezer a lot now. And that concert was really crazy because it was just wild. Like we were

close to the front. And it was a big arena. So, it was an arena show with probably 20,000 people in attendance. But we were on the floor near the front of the stage. And it was just chaos. Like people pushing each other and crowd surfing. And jumping and dancing. And just hot. And I remember just being squeezed to death almost. You know, like just a really tight crowd. So that was maybe one of the first experiences I had had like that. And it was a little bit scary, to be honest, when you're in a big crowd like that. But, yeah, it was really fun and a great show. And one that stands out in my mind as being just a really, really fun experience. Except on the way back.

On the way back, the Canadian border guards, they thought that we were just kids who were up to no good in the States. And they detained my friend, my dually friend. They detained him at the border. They took him into the office for questioning. And they thought that he was trying to carry drugs into Canada. And they took the minivan and did a huge search. They brought dogs in. They like ripped it apart. And, of course, we were just like innocent high school kids. We didn't have any drugs, of course. So, they didn't find anything. And eventually they apologized. And they just thought we looked like rockers, I guess. We looked like we were up to no good. Even though we were all pretty goody-two-shoes kids. But that was a little bit scary on the way back. We're like, we got into the States with no problems at all. But going back into our own country, we had all these issues. That's the memory that stands out in my mind.

Indiana: You guys got a shirt that says Weezer from the merch table. And they **clocked you**. And they said, hey, you guys have drugs.

Andrew: Yeah, exactly.

Indiana: That's so weird. Yeah, that's very scary to go through as a, well, as anybody. But, yeah, just an 18-year-old, 17-year-old.

Andrew: Yeah, we were like, yeah, 16, 17, 18, around that age. But, yeah, it was fun.

Indiana: I have another question for you. I have a couple friends. I remember they were arguing about Weezer. And is it Blue Album and Pinkerton are, like, the biggest albums? One of them was like, it's "Blue Album. Blue Album is the best one!" And the other one's like, "No way. Pinkerton, even with the problematic lyrics, it's the best one. You can't deny it." So, I wonder where you land, if you have an opinion.

Andrew: Ah, that's a tough one. Yeah, for listeners who don't know, Weezer is an American rock band. And their lead singer, his name is Rivers. And that's a kind of interesting name. I don't know anybody else named Rivers, except one of my friends from back in my hometown, who's a huge Weezer fan and had a baby and named the baby Rivers. So now I know a baby named Rivers. But they have produced many albums now. They've been a band for probably 30 years, since the mid-'90s. And the first album was called the Blue Album. That was their debut album. And their second album was called Pinkerton. And most fans think those two albums are their best work. Then after, they had, I think it was the Green Album was next. And I listened to those three albums. And then I haven't listened to any of their other work after that. I think that's when I stopped listening to Weezer. But there's a lot of debate which one is the best one. And I have to say that I do think both of them are really, really good. I'd probably go back and forth.

But if I had to choose just one, I'd probably say Blue Album. It's a pretty remarkable debut. Like, I think there are 10 songs, and every song is just so good and so catchy and really, really well done. It blows my mind that just a group of young kids, like, in their early 20s made a debut record that is just perfect. It's pretty much a perfect rock record. So, I'm going to go with the Blue Album. Do you have a preference, Indiana?

Indiana: I don't think I've ever listened to either of the albums front to back, so I couldn't **weigh in on** this one. But that was an impressive debut, though. I know that they were really young when they started, so it's pretty cool how successful they were.

Andrew: So, did you think of another great concert experience?

Indiana: Well, what I thought of was often, and I assume this is the case for any international concert, that there is an opener, an opening act, maybe two, and then there's the main band. I assume that's pretty much universal. I don't know where you **land on** when it comes to going to see the opener, but I do remember that one time I went for the opener, and I was so glad that I did because that musician became one of my favorites, much more so than the main act, like, long after. I think it was 2013. I went to see Mac DeMarco in Buffalo, and the opener was a musician called Jerry Paper, and I love them so much. They're incredible. So, and of course, I still like Mac DeMarco, but my love for Jerry Paper endures to this day. So, it's so cool to be turned on to new music when you're not expecting it, especially like live music. Like, oh, this opener is actually incredible. So that was a very cool experience, to just be wowed like that.

Andrew: Yeah, that's a good point. I mean, I've never really understood people who don't watch the opening bands. Maybe it's just because I was always in the opening band. Like, my band was never good enough to be the headliner. We were always the openers. So yeah, maybe it's like my bias.

But, yeah, it's great. The artist that you're going to see usually curates who the opener is going to be. Not always. Sometimes they don't have a choice in who the opener is. But if it's like kind of larger touring band, usually they're the one putting on the show and they're curating the show. So, they want to choose some artists that they think are going to go well and be liked by their fans. And yeah, so they'll, you know, choose a band or artist or two and sort of curate that performance. So, I've found that as well, that I've learned about a lot of new music and fallen in love with some new bands just because of watching the openers. So yeah, I always try whenever I can to watch the opener. I mean, it's great when you have a stacked lineup, right? Or a stacked bill. And that's what we would call it when like all of the openers are good and the headliner is good. Like all of the bands that will be performing that concert, we call that a stacked lineup. So of course, a stacked lineup is great, but it's kind of exciting too when you're like, I don't know who these guys are. Like, I'm going to go check out this band and maybe I'll love them. Maybe I won't. But that's just me personally.

Indiana: Yeah, I agree. I like to go as much as I can, but I don't know about you, Andrew, but sometimes I just get so exhausted from the whole experience of like standing for hours and hours. And if it's packed and people are smoking and there's beer everywhere, like people are throwing beers and just like being in that environment for so long. I guess it depends on the genre and the crowd, but sometimes it's exhausting. So, I might skip the opener if I'm not feeling it for that long.

Andrew: Yeah. You got to understand that my point of view here is coming from when I was in my twenties. And I think I could probably handle standing up for a long time, but yeah, now I actually love going to theaters. Like I would much rather see a band perform at a theater where I can sit down than just a concert hall or a stadium where I have to stand. And like that Weezer show that I mentioned, that was super, super fun, but there's no chance that I would do that now. Like, it's just too intense.

Indiana: So maybe this could be one of our last questions, but that reminds me, you know, cause the environment you were talking about at the Weezer show, sounds like there was a mosh pit, right? So, people kind of flailing, dancing really hard, bumping into each other. And that's kind of a dangerous environment to be in, but I've certainly been in some mosh pits. And most recently I was at a Streetlight Manifesto show, which is like third-wave ska. And typically, you know, it should be "skanking" it's called, which is a more like dancing moshing. It's not as violent and crazy as a regular mosh pit, but it was really just a mosh pit at this show. So, I entered "the pit" as they say, and, you know, jumped around and got a little beat up in the process. I think this was a year or two ago, but I'm definitely not trying to mosh again at this age, but I wonder when the last time you were in a mosh pit was, if you can recall.

Andrew: OK. So first we should define what moshing is for our listeners, because this is a really, I guess it's part of like North American subculture. Maybe, maybe our European listeners or South American listeners will know about this, but I'm just thinking about my specific context here in Korea. And I don't think I've seen Koreans mosh before. So, I don't

know why we do it or, you know, to be honest, I never was much of a mosher. So, I can't say that I really did this, but what usually happens is during a heavy rock show. So, like maybe like heavy metal or classic rock or yeah, some kind of like heavier rock, punk music, something like that. It wouldn't be like at a folk concert. Right? It's got to be some heavy music and the audience will do this kind of dancing where they make a circle and that circle, we call "a pit." So, people will step aside, and they'll form like an empty space in the middle of the audience. And that's called "the pit" or "the mosh pit." And then they kind of run in and jump into each other and hit each other. Not like punching each other, but sort of just bumping their bodies together. And I guess it's just a way to let the music take control of you. Right? Like you're just sort of being totally captured by the feeling that the music invokes in you. And especially I think a lot of younger males do this, like younger guys. I think they have a lot of aggression and energy and it's an outlet for that energy and aggression.

So yeah, definitely growing up, I used to go to concerts at community halls and basements. We do house shows and these kinds of things, before I was old enough to get into nightclubs. And you would always see like people moshing there, but they were just high school kids that had a lot of energy and aggression. And I think parents thought like, hey, at least they're not fighting each other or they're not like stealing cars or doing drugs. Like they're just enjoying this music. And it's a way to get that energy out. So, to be honest, I, yeah, I was never much of a mosher.

Although from time to time when my band would play, I used to play in bands when I was younger. From time to time, you'd see some people moshing and that would always kind of like scare me like, "Oh, don't hurt yourself. Like, are you OK?" I don't know. It would kind of freak me out when I'd see them doing it from the stage. But I'm trying to think.... I think I crowdsurfed before that's, that's kind of similar to moshing, right? Crowdsurfing. That's when you sort of jump on top of the crowd and all of the audience puts their hands up and equally supports your weight. Like everybody will just push you along on top of the crowd and you could float to the back of the audience. And yeah, I think I did that a couple of

times when some of my friends played concerts. Just to sort of like support them and get really into the show. So being a musician, you'd have tons of other friends who are all musicians and yeah, we'd go to each other's shows and support each other. I didn't want to really mosh, but I did try crowdsurfing. And it's a fun experience. I would encourage everybody to try it. 100%.

Indiana: Yeah. It's funny. I've never crowdsurfed, but I have moshed, although that's clearly the more dangerous of the two.

Andrew: Yeah. You're very brave to try moshing. What was the impetus for trying to mosh?

Indiana: Probably just like you mentioned, there's a culture of basement shows in North America and in my city as well. So basically, you know, the people that rent or own the home, they will set up a small, small stage basically just on a carpet in their basement. And then maybe, you know, 20, 30 people come in. And sometimes the genres of music that were played at those shows would work for moshing. Like you mentioned, like something punky or something like that, punk, or rock. So, I don't know, just kind of going with the flow and shoving people around saying, "OK, let's try this.!" Yeah. Like you said, just feeling the music, feeling the energy, having that release. I mean, I think I've done it maybe just a couple of times in my life. Maybe never again. My, my bones are too achy at this point.

Andrew: So, Indiana, I think we should wrap up. We're getting a little long in the tooth here, but I'll ask you just one question before we finish. Just a quick rapid-fire question. And that's if you could see any band or singer, who's like the number one on your concert bucket list that you would like to see?

Indiana: So, it would have been David Byrne, but as we talked about, I have seen him. Thank goodness. So, then I suppose it would be definitely Tatsuro Yamashita or

Yamashita Tatsuro. Yeah. Amazing city pop! King of city pop! He has pipes like no other. I personally think he's like the Freddie Mercury of Japanese city-pop music. I mean, he's just such an incredible singer. And I don't know if I'll ever be able to see him. Cause it seems like he just tours in Japan. Maybe next time I'm there I'll get lucky and I'm sure it's incredibly expensive too, but he is just the best. So, I would love to see him at a sold-out stadium show. That would be so cool. But what about you?

Andrew: Well, I have to say about Tats, Tatsuro, he's the musician that made me sort of hang up my guitar. When I discovered him for the first time, I was like, I can never write songs that are this good. Like I just got to quit. Like he's just too good. He made me feel like it's just not even worth trying to do music anymore. So yeah, he would be awesome to see, but for me, I would love to see the singer Bjork. She's always been like number one on my bucket list. I had a couple of chances to in Canada and for whatever reason, I think, yeah, like I was younger and just having to go to Vancouver or Toronto, wherever she was playing, wasn't exactly where I was living at the time. So, I would have had to like buy an airplane ticket and a hotel and a concert ticket. And it was just too much money at the time. And you know, you're always like, ah, I'll see her later. I'll see her next time. And then next time has never come around. And now we're all getting older, right? So, she's getting older too. And it's like, ah, will I ever have a chance to see Bjork? I don't know. I hope she comes to Korea one day. I'm just a big fan of her and her voice. And I think, yeah, it'd be an amazing concert experience. So that's my number one, Bjork.

Indiana: I'm sure you've listened to the Sugar Cubes, but if you haven't, you should, cause that was her band before she was solo. She's cool. She's crazy in a good way.

Andrew: Yeah, she's definitely an interesting artist. I'm a big fan, so. Yeah.

Well, everyone, that brings us to the end of today's episode. Thanks to Indiana for being my co-host and sharing some of her concert stories with us. And a big thanks to you as

well for listening all the way to the end. Great job on completing an English study session with us today.

All right, everyone. That's it for me for now, but I'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode. Until then, please take care. Happy English learning as always, and goodbye.

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

Detailed Explanations

To pump someone up

Phrasal verb

In the episode, Andrew talks about how he listens to heavy rock music while running because it “**pumps him up** and gets him going.” This means that the music gives him energy, motivation, and excitement, helping him feel ready to exercise and stay active.

The phrase “**to pump someone up**” means to make someone feel enthusiastic, energized, or ready to take action. It’s like boosting their mood or filling them with energy, similar to how a pump fills a balloon with air. In this context, Andrew uses it to describe how rock music helps him feel more active and motivated during his runs.

This expression is often used in situations where someone needs encouragement or energy before doing something important. For example, a coach might “**pump up**” a team before a big game by giving a motivational speech, or a friend might “**pump you up**” before an exam by saying positive words.

The origin of this phrase comes from the literal act of pumping air into something, like a tire or a ball, to make it full and ready for use. In the same way, “**pumping someone up**” makes them feel full of energy and excitement and ready to go. You can use this imagery to remember this everyday phrasal verb.

Similar expressions include “to hype someone up” (to make someone excited or confident), “to energize someone,” or “to get someone fired up” (to make someone feel intense energy or motivation).

Here are a few more examples with **to pump someone up**:

Natalie: Ugh, I don’t feel like going to the gym today.

Marcus: What? Come on, you always feel better after a good gym session. Put on your workout playlist—it’ll **pump you up**.

Natalie: Yeah, maybe you’re right.

George: That show was so great. The drummer absolutely nailed it.

Annie: Wasn’t she fantastic? She has some serious skills.

George: Yeah! Seeing a good drummer perform always **pumps me up** and makes me want to get home and practice the drums myself.

To pin something down

Phrasal verb

In the episode, Andrew and Indiana are discussing a genre called “psych rock.” Andrew says that psychedelic music is “hard **to pin down**.” This means that it’s difficult to describe or explain clearly because it has many different elements, such as long songs, repetitive beats, and a connection to 1960s culture. Saying something is “hard **to pin down**” helps us talk about things that are complicated, vague, or not easily defined.

The phrase “**to pin something down**” means to figure something out or identify it clearly. It’s often used when something feels uncertain or hard to understand. For example, if you have a confusing feeling or thought, you might say, “I can’t **pin it down**,” meaning you can’t explain it clearly. Similarly, if you’re trying to make definite plans but nothing is set yet, you could say, “We’re still trying **to pin down** the details.”

The origin of the expression comes from the literal action of pinning something in place, like using a pin to hold a piece of paper on a board or secure a piece of fabric. Just as a pin keeps an object steady and in one place, “**pinning something down**” figuratively means fixing an idea, plan, or explanation so it’s clear and easy to understand.

Just like how Andrew used **pin down**, this phrase can also be paired with words like “hard” or “easy” to adjust its meaning. For instance:

- “The problem was **easy to pin down** once we looked at the data.”
- “Her reasons for leaving the position are **hard to pin down**; she’s been very quiet about it.”

Here are a few more examples with **to pin down**:

Michael: Have we decided on the location for the party?

Carmen: Not yet. We’re still trying **to pin down** a venue that’s big enough.

Michael: Let me know if you need help with that.

Jessica: Wait, why are you crying? That movie wasn’t even sad!

Howard: I don’t know... I can’t **pin it down**. Something about the music or the way they were looking at each other in the last scene just got to me.

Jessica: True, that was a moving scene.

Bad blood

Expression

In the episode, Indiana uses the phrase “**bad blood**” to describe the relationship between David Byrne and the other members of the Talking Heads. She explains that there was “a little bit of **bad blood**” between them, which likely contributed to the band’s inability to reunite for live performances. Here, “**bad blood**” refers to lingering resentment, hostility, or conflict between people.

The phrase “**bad blood**” means negative feelings or tension in a relationship, often caused by a disagreement or hurtful event. When there is “**bad blood**” between people, it implies that the relationship has been damaged and may be difficult to repair. For example, two former friends might have **bad blood** after a major argument, or business partners could develop bad blood over a disagreement about money.

To remember this phrase, think of blood as the life force of a relationship. When everything is good, the blood flows smoothly, like a healthy body. But when there’s conflict or resentment, it’s like the blood becomes infected or poisoned and becomes “**bad blood**,” making the relationship unhealthy and full of tension.

Similar expressions to **bad blood** include “hard feelings,” which refers to lingering resentment or bitterness, and “a falling-out,” which describes a disagreement that damages a relationship. For example, you might say, “There’s hard feelings between them because of an old fight,” or “They had a falling-out and haven’t spoken since.” Another related phrase is “to hold a grudge,” meaning to stay angry about something for a long time.

Here are a few more examples with **bad blood**:

Catherine: I was surprised Uncle Joe wasn’t at the reunion. Doesn’t he usually love those?

Richard: Yeah, but there’s **bad blood** between him and Dad. They had a big fight over the family business a while ago.

Catherine: Seriously? I thought they’d gotten over that.

Benjamin: Is it just me, or did the marketing and sales teams seem tense with each other at the meeting?

Hannah: It’s not just you. There’s **bad blood** between them after that budget argument last quarter.

To clock someone

Slang

In the episode, Indiana uses the slang expression “**to clock someone**” when joking about the border guards assuming Andrew and his friends were suspicious. She suggests that the guards “**clocked**” them as troublemakers because of the band t-shirts they got at the Weezer concert. In this context, “**to clock someone**” means to quickly notice or identify something about a person, often based on visible clues like clothing, actions, or behavior.

The slang verb “**to clock someone**” means to recognize or figure out something about them, often without being told directly. It’s used when someone observes a detail that gives away information like a person’s mood, intentions, or identity. For example, if you hear someone’s accent, you might “**clock**” where they’re from, or if someone is acting nervous, you might “**clock**” that they’re hiding something.

This verb is often used when identifying something that someone may be trying to hide. For instance, “I **clocked** the guy in the corner as a plainclothes police officer.” In this example, the police officer was trying to look like a civilian and remain unnoticed, but the speaker realized he was a cop. He **clocked** him as a cop. Another example could be, “I **clocked** the image as AI-generated.” This means the creator of the image was likely trying to make it look real, but the speaker was able to figure out that it was AI-generated.

The origin of the expression likely comes from British slang, where “**clock**” as a verb means “to notice” or “to see.” This may have been inspired by the quick glance you give to a clock to check the time. Over time, this meaning evolved to include identifying or realizing something about someone in an instant.

Be careful – **to clock someone** has a second definition. It can also mean to punch someone hard in the face! For instance, you might say “He clocked the other guy right in the jaw.” It should be clear based on context which definition is being used.

Here are a few more examples with **to clock someone**:

Beth: Did you hear that Jennifer cheated on Brian? They broke up last weekend.

Kyle: Oh my god, I knew that would happen! I **clocked** her as a cheater when I first met her. She seemed untrustworthy from day one.

Vince: You listen to Metallica, right?

Fiona: Yeah! How’d you **clock** me like that?

Vince: Oh, I could just tell from your outfit. It’s giving off metalhead vibes.

To weigh in (on)

Phrasal verb

In the episode, Indiana asks Andrew which of Weezer's first two albums he likes best. He says his favorite is Blue Album and asks her the same question. Indiana uses the phrase "**weigh in on**" when explaining why she doesn't have an opinion about the debate between Weezer's Blue Album and Pinkerton – she says, "I couldn't **weigh in on** this" because she hasn't listened to either album all the way through. Here, "**weigh in on**" means to share your opinion or contribute to a discussion, especially when others are debating or deciding something.

The verb "**to weigh in on**" means to give your thoughts, feedback, or opinion about a topic. It's commonly used when someone joins a conversation or offers input on an issue. For example, if people are discussing a movie, you might "**weigh in**" by saying what you thought of it. Similarly, if a group is deciding where to eat, you could "**weigh in**" with your suggestion. In this sense, it's about adding your voice or perspective to a discussion.

To remember this phrase, think of a group of people balancing different opinions on a scale. When you join in, you're adding your "weight" to the conversation, tipping the balance with your perspective. Similar expressions include "give your two cents," which is a casual way to say you're offering your opinion, and "chime in," which means to join a conversation with your input. For example, you could say, "Can I chime in here? I think we should order pizza."

A common mistake is to use "weigh" alone without the "in on" part. For example:

- Incorrect: "Can you weigh this topic?" ❌
- Correct: "Can you **weigh in on** this topic?" ✔️

Here are a couple more examples with **to weigh in (on)**:

Samantha: We can't decide what to watch. Care to **weigh in**?

Patrick: How about a comedy? I could use a good laugh.

Samantha: Great idea!

Nick: The manager asked us **to weigh in on** the new office layout.

Violet: Oh, I'd prefer more open spaces for collaboration.

Nick: That's a popular suggestion. I'll add it to the feedback.

To land on

Phrasal verb

Indiana wants to know if Andrew likes to see the opening act before the main act at a concert. She uses the phrase “land on” when she introduces her question – “I don’t know where **you land on** when it comes to going to see the opener,” meaning she doesn’t know Andrew’s opinion or preference on the topic. Here, “**to land on**” means to decide on or end up having a particular opinion, choice, or position about something.

The verb “**to land on**” means to arrive at a decision, preference, or conclusion after thinking or considering something. It’s often used when discussing where someone stands in a debate or what option they’ve chosen after weighing different possibilities. For example, if you’re deciding between two vacation spots, you might say, “We **finally landed on** Hawaii.” Similarly, in a debate, someone might ask, “Where do you **land on** this issue?” to understand your opinion.

The phrase likely comes from the idea of physically landing, like a bird or plane, which settles in a specific spot after moving. Figuratively, it means you’ve stopped considering other options and have decided or formed a clear position. To remember this phrase, think of a bird flying around and then choosing a branch to “land on”—it’s similar to how you think about different choices before making a decision and **land on** your conclusion.

Similar expressions include “settle on,” which means to choose or decide after some thought, and “come to a decision,” which is more formal.

Here are a few more examples with **to land on**:

Bianca: Where do you **land on** the pineapple-on-pizza debate?

Adam: Personally, I love pineapple on pizza. There’s nothing wrong with it.

Bianca: No way! You’re crazy!

Christina: You and Sarah must have some baby names in mind by now.

Fred: Oh, we’ve narrowed it down to a few, but it’s so hard to pick.

Christina: What are the top choices?

Fred: We might **land on** Emma if it’s a girl or Lucas if it’s a boy. They just feel right.

Christina: Those are lovely names!

Expressions Quiz

1. In which situation would you say there's "bad blood" between two people?

- a) They are best friends.
- b) They have unresolved conflict or resentment.
- c) They have just met each other.
- d) They are coworkers who rarely interact.

2. True or False: "to clock someone" means to tell them what time it is.

- a) True.
- b) False.

3. If a friend says, "Can you weigh in on this?" what are they asking for?

- a) Your body weight.
- b) Your financial support.
- c) Your help with a physical task.
- d) Your opinion or feedback.

4. What does it mean if someone "clocked you as a tourist"?

- a) They immediately noticed details about you that suggested you are a tourist.
- b) They thought you were a local.
- c) They were confused about whether you were a local or a tourist.
- d) They asked you directly if you are a tourist.

5. If a song "pumps you up," how does it make you feel?

- a) Angry and frustrated.
- b) Calm and sleepy.
- c) Energized and excited.
- d) Sad and emotional.

Listening Comprehension Quiz

6. Which Japanese music genre do Andrew and Indiana share an interest in?
7. What type of music does Andrew say he listens to most while running?
8. Why did Indiana enjoy a Ty Segall concert in Connecticut?
9. What significant event happened around the time Andrew went to see Weezer?
10. What was Andrew's ultimate concert bucket list artist?

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is the best or most memorable concert you've ever been to? Who was the musician, where was the concert, and why was it so memorable?
2. What kind of music do you listen to when you want to get **pumped up**? Why does this kind of music energize you?
3. Have you ever discovered a new favorite artist or band through an opening act at a concert? How do you usually discover new music?
4. Are there any genres of music that you hate or can't stand? Why?
5. If you could create your dream concert lineup with three artists or bands, who would you **land on**?

Quiz Answers

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

6. City pop.

7. Heavy rock music.

8. She got to hear him play acoustically in an intimate setting.

9. The September 11th attacks.

10. Björk.

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