

Simplified Speech #29 – Veganism

Episode description

Do you eat meat and dairy? Many people all over the world avoid eating or using animal products—vegans. In this episode, Andrew and Morag have a slow but natural conversation all about veganism. Join them to learn about this growing trend.

Fun fact

Vegan is a relatively new term. Until about 1994, vegans were simply known as non-dairy vegetarians. However, since the term was coined, the vegan lifestyle, neither eating nor using any animal products, has become more popular and mainstream.

Expressions included in the learning materials

- A vegetarian/vegetarian
- The more the merrier
- On a shoestring (budget)
- Junk food
- The odd man out



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.

Andrew: Hey everybody. My name is Andrew,

Morag: And my name is Morag.

Andrew: And you are listening to Culips.

Hey Morag. How are you?

Morag: I'm doing all right, Andrew. How are you?

Andrew: Morag, I have a really weird story to share with you about my rib.

Morag: Ooh.

Andrew: I can tell that I'm getting older because weird things start happening to my body. And actually, yesterday morning, the weirdest thing happened to me that I ... Interesting, I've just never experienced before. I woke up, and I did a little stretch in my bed, you know, as somebody does when they wake up.

Morag: Mmhmm.

Andrew: You kind of put your arms over your head and do a little stretch—totally completely normal action. I've done it every day since I've been born, I'm sure. Anyways, yesterday I did it, and when I did this, I heard this really loud pop sound emanate from my ribcage. And I suddenly felt this big surge of pain in my ribs, and I was like, "Oh my God! What did I do to myself?"

And actually, I don't have an answer to this question. My rib is still really sore. I think I may have dislocated something somehow, and I'm planning to go to the doctor tomorrow to get it checked out. I haven't had time to go yet, but I thought I'd share this weird story with everybody about how getting older is difficult.

Morag: Oh Andrew, that sucks.

Andrew: It sucks, right?

Morag: Yeah.

- Andrew: So the ... Yesterday, it was really sore, and today, it's not very sore so I think it's not a big deal. But yeah, guys, be careful when you stretch in the morning, OK? That's the moral of the story.
- Morag: Oh my God, yeah. Or for me, be careful when you type or sit in a desk. 'Cause I too have realized getting older ... Just you can be so sore from the simplest things. And you're not 30, right?
- Andrew: No, I actually just turned 33 like 2 weeks ago.
- Morag: Oh, whoa. OK.
- Andrew: I'm getting up there.
- Morag: Ah, well, I'm not even 30. And so I wonder what this conversation would be like if we were both in our 50s.
- Andrew: I'm sure it would be a lot longer. Thankfully, we can cut it off at a kind of sore rib and some sore wrists from typing.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And actually, Morag, we'll change the subject slightly to talk about the main content for this episode. What we're going to do is do a Simplified Speech episode today. And this is where we have a completely natural conversation using everyday English. It's one hundred percent unscripted, but we speak slower than we do in our everyday lives.
- And I say that we're going to change the topic slightly because we're still on the main theme of the body and of health. And actually, today, we're talking about a specific kind of diet that's called veganism.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And this isn't a diet like, "I wanna lose weight," that kind of diet. What we mean here by diet is an eating style, or a lifestyle, the type of food that you choose to consume. This kind of diet. So why don't we start with the question what is veganism? Morag, in your opinion and from what you know, what is veganism?
- Morag: Well, I feel like I know a good amount because I am, uh, like ninety-eight percent vegan.
- Andrew: Ninety-eight percent vegan. OK, so almost always vegan?

- Morag: Yeah, and vegan ... A vegan diet is a diet that does not consume any animal products or anything that is made with an animal product. So you don't just avoid meat like **vegetarians** do. You also avoid eggs and all dairy, so milk and cheese and any of that. And I try to, or do avoid, anything that has been processed with an animal product. So for example, a lot of wine uses a material from fish to be filtered, so you can't drink that wine.
- Andrew: Hmm, I didn't know that, OK.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: And I know some vegans are really strict about the products they use too.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Not just eat but also use. So maybe a leather jacket would be off limits.
- Morag: Oh no! Oh, a hundred percent no leather.
- Andrew: A hundred percent.
- Morag: A hundred percent no leather. Yeah, it'll be the same thing. You will see a lot of makeup products, for example, will say whether or not they're vegan-friendly.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Morag: There's all kinds of things that have that. Although I guess I say, "ninety-eight percent vegan," but I will buy second-hand leather things because they've already been used. Do you know what I mean?
- Andrew: Hmmm, I'm curious. What about a candle that's made from beeswax? Would they be off-limits to vegans or ... How do vegans feel about bee products, like honey, even?
- Morag: That is an interesting question because most vegans are against bee products.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: But it does depend on the ... Sometimes the reason for being vegan—a lot of vegans object to controlling any animal in really most ways. Taking any of the resources that they make for themselves, like a cow producing milk or a bee producing honey. I'm totally fine with honey though, because I think a lot of bees is a good thing for the world.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's true. Bees are super important, so ...

- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: Probably **the more, the merrier** with bees.
- Morag: That's what I think, but I'm coming from a, not entirely, but more environmental perspective.
- Andrew: OK, OK. Now Morag, it's great that you are vegan, I ...
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: You know, we didn't talk about this before recording the episode. I thought I remembered that you were vegan, but I wasn't a hundred percent sure. But this is great that it turns out that you are—my memory was correct—because this means you can really speak from a position of authority on the topic.
- And what is your sense of the Canadian population? What percentage of Canadians would you say are vegan? Is it a really popular diet, or is it not very popular?
- Morag: It's not very popular, although it's definitely gaining popularity and sort of trendier.
- Andrew: Mmhmm.
- Morag: So there's a reasonable amount of, say, vegan restaurants in certain areas. Like, the area where I live in Montreal, Mile End, has a good number of vegan restaurants. But you'll only find that in areas that are geared towards, well, yuppies.
- Andrew: What is a yuppy?
- Morag: A yuppy is a young, urban professional, in its plural form. So a yuppy is one young, urban professional, and yuppies are more.
- Andrew: Exactly, so a yuppy is kind of a nickname, a little bit derogatory, I would say.
- Morag: It is, yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, where we make fun of people, like Morag, who are young and live in a city and have a professional job, a little bit maybe extra money to spend compared to some people.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Who can afford maybe or choose to eat these alternative diets.

- Morag: Although I was eating vegan when ... Well, you can eat vegan **on a shoestring budget**. You just can't buy things like special vegan mayonnaise or fake cheese, you know? But it's actually ... It can be a very, very inexpensive way to eat because you're not buying ... You're basically just buying grains, legumes, and vegetables.
- Andrew: Right, right.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: Yeah, so it can be very cheap and very affordable. You're right.
- Morag: Or it can be very, very expensive.
- Andrew: There's all of these specialty products, right?
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: Like vegan equivalents of something.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: I remember seeing a bakery, a vegan bakery. They had vegan cupcakes and vegan bakery products.
- Morag: Oh now ... Now, this is an important side note.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: Everyone should just go out and try a good vegan bakery because, oh ... See, I can't eat at them because I also can't do gluten.
- Andrew: Ah.
- Morag: It's very sad. It's very sad.
- Andrew: Oh no!
- Morag: Yeah, so I have to bake all my own baked goods. But vegan baking is often, I swear, way more delicious than regular baking because you're using a lot of oil and things like that, and things that add extra moisture, like applesauce, in the baking. So if you have a vegan cupcake, it's probably going to be the most moist and amazing cupcake you've ever had.
- Andrew: Yeah. I have tried ... I think it was vegan zucchini bread, and ...
- Morag: Oh, see that ... No.

- Andrew: It was very good. It was very good.
- Morag: Oh, oh, OK, OK. And that's another important thing, though. Vegan does not always mean healthy. Some people do try and go vegan to lose weight or to be healthier, but it's a diet that ... You can be a very chubby, unhealthy vegan.
- Andrew: Hmm, yeah.
- Morag: It's quite ... Because you can eat things like some Doritos.
- Andrew: Right.
- Morag: And cakes and cookies and ... Yeah, it's ...
- Andrew: Technically vegan but still **junk food**, right?
- Morag: Oh yeah, there is actually, you'll hear a term for this. It's **junk food** vegan.
- Andrew: Ah, OK, **junk food** vegan.
- Morag: 'Cause you can ... Yeah, yeah, they'll just eat things like pasta and chips and popcorn and you know.
- Andrew: I think that's the type of vegan I'd be. Morag, we're almost out of time, but I wanted to ask you two more questions if you don't mind.
- Morag: No problem.
- Andrew: The first one is how do people view veganism in Canada? Do you get judged, or do people tell you their opinion about your diet a lot?
- Morag: No one tells me their opinion about my diet. But especially as a gluten-free vegan, I can feel the eye-rolls.
- Andrew: OK.
- Morag: You know? People are like, "Oh, geez, come on!" You know? Like, "Stop being so trendy, God!" You know?
- Andrew: Right, right.
- Morag: There's quite a lot of that because it's a diet that makes it more difficult to engage in communal meals.
- Andrew: Right. So if your friends invite you over to their house for dinner, you might have to decline, or really take a lot of steps to accommodate yourself.

- Morag: Exactly, or bring my own dinner.
- Andrew: Right, right, right.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: So this can be difficult, I'm sure.
- Morag: I think that's the thing. It's always difficult, or people will react in a not hugely positive way if you have a diet that is very different from the average diet in, say, well anywhere.
- Andrew: Yeah, it's always difficult to be different from most people, right?
- Morag: To be **the odd man out**.
- Andrew: Yeah, very good expression—to be **the odd man out**.
- Morag: Yes.
- Andrew: OK, my last question for you, Morag. And it's kind of maybe a mean question. I'm not sure.
- Morag: Hmmm.
- Andrew: There is a stereotype that exists about vegans.
- Morag: Mmhmm.
- Andrew: What is the stereotype? Do you know? Especially vegans on the internet.
- Morag: Yeah.
- Andrew: What is the stereotype?
- Morag: The stereotype is that they're sort of crazy and crazed, and ...
- Andrew: I think crazed is a better adjective.
- Morag: Yeah, crazed. They're so intense and focused on telling everyone that they're wrong for eating meat and any animal products that they're aggressive and awful. And this is semi-true. Which is that, as somebody who eats vegan and lives vegan almost entirely, I'm scared to say that to other vegans—that it's almost entirely. Or I'm scared to call myself vegan to certain people because I feel like I won't be vegan enough.
- Andrew: Oh, interesting.

Morag: You know?

Andrew: Well, some people liken veganism to a religion because the followers believe so deeply in the cause of veganism that they can almost sound religious when talking about it.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: But I think you did a great job here, Morag, because you broke the stereotype. You haven't really argued for veganism at all. You've just shared your diet and how you like to eat and live with us, and you haven't pushed that message so ...

Morag: Yeah. Give me one second!

Andrew: Yeah. Oh no, here it comes!

Morag: No, I think it's important to be able to show people that it's not a bizarre option, and that you can be a happy and reasonable and food-loving person without animal products. And that it's just a thing you can do sometimes if you want, you know? So I just try and make vegan food for others and share, and try and get people to recognize that it can be delicious.

Andrew: Yeah, that sounds like a very mature way to go about it.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: Morag, next time I'm in Montreal, you're going to hook me up with some vegan food, and we'll take some pictures for everybody and put them online.

Morag: That sounds like fun, yeah, yeah. A very Canadian vegan feast.

Andrew: Yeah, there we go.

Morag: Yeah.

Andrew: Well, Morag, I think that is all the time that we have for today. But just before we finish, I want to remind our audience that if your goal is to improve your English and become a more fluent and confident English speaker, we would love to help you. And we think that the best way to study with us is by becoming a Culips member.

Membership gets you access to our learning materials, which include transcripts, detailed vocabulary explanations, and quizzes for all of our episodes. Guys, we have over 400 episodes, so you'll have tons of material to study with. To sign up, just visit our website, Culips.com.

- Morag: And if you guys have any questions or comments, you can send us a message. A great way to do this is through our Facebook page, Facebook.com/CulipsPodcast, or you can email us directly at contact@culips.com.
- Andrew: Thanks for listening, everyone. We will be back soon with another Culips episode.
- Morag: Goodbye!
- Andrew: Bye.
- Announcer: Do you like listening to Culips? If so, please show your support by leaving Culips a five-star rating and a review on iTunes or Stitcher. This helps new listeners find the show. So don't delay. Rate and review today!

Detailed Explanations

A vegetarian/vegetarian

Vegetarian is a word that can be either a noun or an adjective. As a noun, **a vegetarian** is a person who does not eat meat or fish. Unlike vegans, who avoid eating all animal products, including dairy and eggs, **vegetarians** only avoid eating the animals.

As an adjective, **vegetarian** refers to something that contains no meat or fish. So if a dish in a restaurant is labelled **vegetarian**, the dish contains no meat or fish. However, the dish might still contain dairy or other animal products.

Vegetarian means containing no meat or fish, while **vegan** means containing no animal products at all. Now you know the difference between **vegetarian** and **vegan**!

Here are a couple more examples with **a vegetarian/vegetarian**:

Ursula:	Is it OK if my sister comes for dinner?
Frank:	I don't know. Isn't she a vegan? It's going to be hard to find a restaurant we're all happy with.
Ursula:	She's not a vegan. She's just a vegetarian ! Almost all restaurants have at least a couple of vegetarian options. It'll be fine.
Frank:	OK, bring her along!

Marianne:	Are those cupcakes? Can I have one?
James:	You can, but they're not vegan cupcakes.
Marianne:	Oh, I'm not vegan anymore. I tried cutting out all animal products for a while, but I found it difficult. I'm just a vegetarian now.
James:	In that case, the cupcakes are safe for you to eat. Here, have one.
Marianne:	Delicious, thanks!

The more the merrier

The more the merrier means the more people or things that are involved in something, the more it will be fun or enjoyable. In other words, the more people or things that take part in an event or situation, the better it will be.

For example, in this episode, Andrew says **the more the merrier** when talking about bees. By using this expression, Andrew is saying having more bees is better. Because bees are responsible for pollinating plants, having more bees in the world is a positive thing!

This expression is often used to refer to the number of people attending an event. For example, imagine your friend is having a party. You ask your friend if you can bring someone to the party, and they respond by saying, "**The more the merrier.**" By using this expression, they are communicating that having more people attend the party will make the party better, so you are welcome to bring your friend.

Here are a couple more examples with **the more the merrier**:

Leon:	Is anyone bringing dessert to the potluck on Friday?
Marie:	Yes, Annabelle said she was going to make a cake.
Leon:	Oh dear, I guess I'll have to think of something else to bring. I was going to make ice cream.
Marie:	Ice cream would be great! It's always the more the merrier with desserts.
Leon:	Great! In that case, I'll bring a couple of flavours.

Carl:	Do you want to come to my place for dinner?
Hannah:	I'd love to, but I have a couple of friends staying at my house from out of town. It would be rude to leave them alone.
Carl:	Bring them along— the more the merrier!
Hannah:	That's so nice of you. We'll all see you later this evening.
Carl:	Can't wait!

On a shoestring (budget)

By itself, a **shoestring** is another word for a shoelace, or the lace or string that is used to secure your shoe to your foot. **On a shoestring**, however, is an idiom that means for a very small amount of money. Although a common English idiom, the origin of **on a shoestring** is unknown.

If you want to say that something was done using very little money, you can say, “I did it **on a shoestring**” or “I did it **on a shoestring budget**.” Both sentences mean the same thing. Tacking on the word budget to the end of the sentence does not change the meaning of **on a shoestring**.

For example, in this episode, Morag discusses how it can be expensive to eat vegan because many of the meat and cheese substitutes are very expensive, but it’s also possible to eat a vegan diet **on a shoestring budget**. In other words, Morag is saying that it’s possible for people to eat a vegan diet and spend very little money.

Here are a couple more examples with **on a shoestring (budget)**:

Genie:	How come you didn’t tell me about your dad?
Brent:	What about my dad?
Genie:	I heard that he’s the owner of a very successful company. I had no idea that you grew up in a rich family.
Brent:	Actually, we weren’t rich at all. We were poor for a long time. My dad started that company when I was a teenager and did it on a shoestring .
Genie:	I’m impressed!

Zola:	I really wish I had a nicer desk.
George:	Why don’t you buy one?
Zola:	No money!
George:	Have you ever thought of making your own desk? If you learn a little bit about woodworking, you can make nice furniture on a shoestring budget .
Zola:	That sounds like a lot of work.
George:	Well, I guess you’ll just have to live with your old desk.

Junk food

Junk food means food that is tasty but isn't healthy for you. If something is premade, unhealthy, high in calories, or ready-to-eat, then it can be considered **junk food**.

Junk food can refer to many different food items, like candy, brownies, soda. **Junk food** can be either full meals or snacks. So pizza, hamburgers, potato chips, and chocolate bars are all **junk food**.

In this episode, Morag mentions that although most people think eating vegan means eating healthy, some **vegans** are **junk food vegans**. In other words, some vegans eat foods that are bad for them and unhealthy. Because they can still eat things like French fries and cookies, avoiding animal products doesn't automatically mean that vegans eat a healthy diet.

So food that is convenient and tasty, but not very good for you, is called **junk food**.

Here are a couple more examples with **junk food**:

Steve:	I'm super hungry.
Jackie:	Me too! Do you want to get lunch?
Steve:	How do you feel about getting burgers and milkshakes?
Jackie:	No way! I don't eat junk food . I was hoping for a salad.
Steve:	Oh, OK. Maybe we should go to different places then.

Alan:	What a long day!
Deidre:	I just want to kick back and play video games when I get home.
Alan:	I hear you. I just want to go home, and relax and cook dinner.
Deidre:	Cook dinner? That sounds like way too much work right now. I'm going to grab some junk food on my way home and have that for dinner.
Alan:	Seriously? You're just going to eat a bag of chips for dinner or something?
Deidre:	A bag of chips for dinner sounds great.

The odd man out

The odd man out means a person who is different from everyone else in a group. It can also mean someone who does not easily fit in with other people. You can either say **the odd man out** or **the odd one out**—they mean the same thing!

In this episode, Andrew asks Morag if it's difficult to be different from most people because of her diet. She responds by saying that it's often difficult to be **the odd man out**. In other words, Morag is saying that it's not fun to be different, or the only person in a group who has dietary restrictions.

You can use **the odd man out** to refer to anyone who stands out in a group because they are different. For example, imagine that you see a group of friends. If only one of those friends is male and all the rest are female, the man is quite literally **the odd man out**.

Here are a couple more examples with **the odd man out**:

Harold:	You're home earlier than I expected you to be. Did you enjoy having dinner with your colleagues?
Angela:	It was fine.
Harold:	Sounds like you didn't have a great time.
Angela:	Well, I felt like the odd one out the whole time. They are all really into sports. It's all they talked about. I felt awkward because I didn't have anything to add to the conversation.
Harold:	I'm sorry you didn't have fun.

David:	Hey Jill, do you want to go to the park?
Jill:	No, I'm OK. I don't want to be the odd man out .
David:	What do you mean?
Jill:	You and all your friends are all in relationships. I'm single! It's annoying to be around happy couples all the time.

Quiz

- 1. You ask to bring a friend to a party and the host responds with, “The more the merrier.” What does the host mean?**
 - a) Your friend is invited.
 - b) Your friend is not invited.

- 2. Which of the following is a term for someone who is different from the rest of the people in a group?**
 - a) the old guy around
 - b) the old one out
 - c) the odd man out
 - d) the odd one on

- 3. If someone says they accomplished something on a shoestring, how much money did they spend?**
 - a) a very small amount
 - b) a moderate amount
 - c) a large amount
 - d) a very large amount

- 4. Which of the following is the best example of junk food?**
 - a) Ham, potatoes, and broccoli
 - b) Chicken, rice, and asparagus
 - c) Tacos and diet soda
 - d) Grilled cheese with red peppers

- 5. Which of the following foods can a vegetarian eat?**
 - a) steak
 - b) salmon
 - c) chicken fingers
 - d) cheese

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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