

Round 2

Episode description

In this week's edition of the bonus episode, Andrew talks about teaching Korean for the first time, catching COVID for the second time, and how he spent his 5-day bedroom quarantine. Plus in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you about the expression: to chalk [something] up to [something].

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Well, hello everyone, my name's Andrew and this is bonus episode number 60 of the Culips English Podcast. It is wonderful to be here with you again after a little break. I wasn't intending to take a break last week, but sometimes life gets in the way and changes our plans and that happened to me last week. And in this episode, I am going to tell you the story of exactly why I couldn't record and upload a bonus episode for you last week. So that is the plan for today and we'll get started with that story in just a moment, but before I do, I should introduce Culips and what the bonus episode series is all about.

So yeah, in this series I just tell you some stories from the adventures that I get up to in my daily life as a Canadian living abroad in South Korea. And for every episode of our bonus series, there is a 100% free transcript that we upload for you so that you can follow along with the transcript as you study and learn with me today. There's an interactive version of the transcript that's best for if you're using your computer or your phone or your tablet to learn with us. It's a really cool feature. You can just click on any word in the transcript, and you'll hear the audio replayed from that point. So, if you need to listen to a sentence again or a word again, it's a really easy way to do that. But we also make a PDF version of the transcript that's great if you want to print out and have a physical paper version of it, you know, some people like to do that so they can take notes or something like that. So, the transcript is free, and you can find it just by following the link in the description for this episode.

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Alright, so with that being said, I think it's time to get started in earnest with this episode, and I'll tell you the story about why I was absent from the podcast last week. And then towards the end of the episode, I'm going to teach you about a useful English expression that I recommend adding to your vocabulary to make your English more natural and to also improve your English listening. So, we'll do the vocabulary lesson towards the end after I tell you the story. So, without any further ado, let's get started. Here we go. Enjoy.

So let me explain why I wasn't able to upload a bonus episode last week. The answer is fairly straightforward, really. I caught Covid and lost my voice, and I think you'll agree that it's pretty hard to record a podcast if you have no voice, right? So, I had to skip it. Now this was my second time catching the darn virus, but thankfully it was a much easier experience to go through than the first time that I caught Covid. So let me tell you what happened.

Well, recently I've been teaching a Korean language class to a group of international students who are mostly from the USA and the UK, but also some other countries in Europe as well. But all of these European students either study in America or the UK, so they're all very highly fluent in English and high-level English speakers. And they're here visiting Korea for a few weeks in a study-abroad program, and I was asked if I could teach them Korean 101. Korean 101. Believe it or not, yes, I became a Korean teacher for a little bit. And although I am still very, very, very far away from being fluent in Korean and I have no formal teaching as a Korean teacher, I was intrigued by the opportunity, and I thought it could be a cool chance to do something a little different. I am a passionate Korean learner

and I thought, well, maybe I could pass on my passion to a group of new students as well. So, I decided to give it a shot.

And this opinion might be a little controversial, so I'm curious to see what you think. If you agree with me or if you disagree with me, I think there's no real right answer to this, but it is something that some people tend to disagree about from time to time. And personally, I believe that native speakers don't always make the best teachers for newbie students who are learning a foreign language for the first time. I think that it can be more efficient to learn the basic grammar and the basic vocabulary of a language, you know, say maybe the top 500 or top 1000 words in that language through using your native language. And that's why I often don't recommend Culips to people who are learning English from the very start. I think it's better to build up a foundation in English, you know, getting the basic grammar and vocabulary, and then you can jump into Culips content, or then you can jump into studying with a native English-speaking teacher. But for brand new students, I actually don't recommend Culips because I think it's better to learn English through your native language at the very, very start. Especially when you're learning a language that's very, very different from your native language. So, I was going to be teaching students Korean who are English speakers, and those two languages are very, very different. They're very far apart. So, I think that having someone who can explain the grammar to you through your native language, this is a great hack to be able to understand the basics quickly. So then once you get the basics down, then you can move on to learning with native speakers, I think, but yeah, at the start, learning through your native language is OK.

So anyways, I started teaching the class and it was really fun. I had a great group of about 15 students who were all in their early 20s and they were all very eager to learn the language and passionate about learning. And I also tried my best to teach it to them in a fun and interesting and helpful way. And except for a few students, most were really true beginners. But these days Korean media is very influential worldwide. I think everybody has probably heard of K-pop and Korean TV shows here in Korea, we usually call them K-drama. I'm not sure what you call them in your country, but K-pop, K-drama, they are very

popular these days. And so, a lot of students were already a little bit familiar with some basic vocabulary. So that was cool to see, and they picked that up just by listening to K-pop, essentially.

Now, the first week of classes went really well, but during the second week of the class, some of the students started to miss class, they were absent, because they didn't feel well. And this didn't really strike me as unusual or anything. I've been a teacher now for over a decade and to be honest with you, it's very rare when you have a class where all of the students are in the class at the same time. There's almost always at least one student who is absent. So perfect attendance is really, really rare and it didn't strike me as unusual that we had a student or two missing from the class. And on top of that, these students were dealing with a lot. They had just had a long journey to Korea. So, they were dealing with, you know, jet lag and also a crazy, crazy hot and humid climate was new to them. Right now, we are in the middle of the rainy season here in Korea. It's extremely hot and humid. Plus, they had very long busy days to deal with. They weren't just studying Korean. They were also doing field trips and activities. So, it made perfect sense to me that a couple of students would be run down and need to take some time off to rest and relax until they acclimatized to Korea and "acclimatized" means to get used to a new environment.

So, maybe you can tell where this story is going. Some of the students in class were sick, right? Well, unfortunately, it was passed on to me as well. So, toward the end of the second week of classes, I woke up to go to the classroom and that morning I just felt extremely tired. Now, I had slept for around nine hours the night before, but I still felt like I hadn't slept a wink, like I hadn't slept at all. And I just figured that I had probably overslept. Have you ever had that happen to you where you sleep too long and as a result, you feel really tired? Even though you're like, "Oh, I just had this amazing long sleep, I should be awake and active and alert and bright," but you actually end up feeling really tired. That's how I felt and I thought that I had just overslept. So, I was a little groggy on my way to the classroom that day, but on top of that my body also felt really weak, like I had no energy at all. So, I felt mentally tired but also physically tired.

But again, I had an excuse for that because I had been doing some exercises in my yard that whole week. I was doing some kettlebell exercises and also an exercise called a burpee. Have you guys ever heard of a burpee? It's this terrible exercise where you have to jump and do a push-up and do a lunge and do a squat. It's like a compound movement where you're doing all of these movements together in one motion. So yeah, I've been ignoring exercising for the last little while my wife and I were preparing and renovating the home that we recently moved into. But finally, my schedule has freed up a bit and I had some free time that week, so I was doing some exercises in our yard, and I thought, that's probably why I feel so tired is from the exercise, from the kettlebells and the burpees. I just chalked out my low energy to the exercise that I'd been doing. Anyway, I assumed that it had just been a long week and that I needed to get some rest over the weekend, and I'd be fine. The day that I felt like that was a Friday, so I just needed to teach the one class in the morning and then I could go home and relax.

So, I went to class, and I felt tired at the start of class, but during the middle of the class, while I was teaching, I felt my condition change very drastically. Like it was almost like someone flicked a switch on my health. One moment I was just tired, but then the next moment suddenly my throat started to hurt. And by the end of class, my head was pounding as well. And so immediately after the class finished, I made my way home. And as I was walking home, my throat really started to hurt even more and more. And I immediately thought that I had caught COVID again. It was like an instant recognition. I just knew from the way that my throat felt that I had COVID.

Probably by now, I'm assuming that you've had COVID as well. I think most of us around the world have caught it. There might be still some people who haven't, some lucky people, but I think the majority of people have had COVID by now, right? And it's obviously one of these viruses that affects everyone differently. But when I caught COVID for the first-time last summer, I was pretty sick. I was quite sick, to be honest with you. But it was nothing that I couldn't deal with except for my throat. I had an extremely intense sore

throat last summer when I caught Covid for the first time and it was just on a totally different level than I had ever experienced before. I felt like my throat was like a blowtorch and I was like a dragon who was blowing out flames. It was just extremely painful, and it made everything difficult eating, drinking, talking, swallowing, breathing, all of those things just felt like torture for a few days last year. But when I was making my way home after that class, then I felt the same kind of sore throat pain. So, I just knew it must be COVID.

So, knowing that, I went directly to the nearest clinic, and I was really lucky because there were no other patients in the waiting room. So, I got to see a doctor right away and he tested me right away and the result also came back right away as positive. So, he wrote me a prescription and he gave me four days' worth of medicine and then I was on my way. In Korea here it's really convenient, almost every clinic is right beside a pharmacy. So, this was the same case with the clinic that I went to. I just popped out of the clinic and then right next door there's a pharmacy. So I went to the pharmacy, I got my prescription filled, and to be honest with you, it was so fast. I was in and out of the clinic in about 15 minutes from the moment that I walked into the clinic to the moment that I walked out of the pharmacy was like only 15 minutes. So, a very quick trip to the doctor. And on top of that, I only paid how much? About less than 10 American dollars to see the doctor and to get the medicine as well. So, I think, you know, this is something that every country struggles with is how to provide a good healthcare system to their citizens. And no country is perfect, but at least in this sense, when you need to go to a walk-in clinic here in South Korea, the system is super-efficient and affordable. And I really, really do appreciate that. And I wish my country, Canada, would learn some lessons about how it's done here in Korea and apply them back to the situation in Canada.

But anyways, that's a different topic for a different discussion. Let's get back to my story. So, the doctor told me that I needed to quarantine at my home for five days. So, I told my wife about that and what was up. And I asked her to put a mask on and I also was wearing a mask. And then from the pharmacy, I immediately went home and went right to our

bedroom, which would be my home for the next five days. Now, it was really important that I took the quarantine seriously because my wife had some very important business meetings that she absolutely couldn't miss. So, it was extremely important that she didn't get sick. So, I decided to just stay in the bedroom only and she would get free rein of the rest of the house. And "free rein" is just another way to say freedom. So, my wife could have the rest of the house and I would have the bedroom.

And as I mentioned earlier, my wife and I, we just moved into our new house last month and our bedroom is quite small. I think the expression "bedroom" is the perfect thing to call this room because other than the bed, there's nothing in it and it's just slightly bigger than the bed. It's really just a room with a bed inside of it. We're planning to install a TV on the wall in front of the bed, but we've had some problems getting the right-sized TV. And we're also planning to install an air conditioner in the room, but that hasn't happened yet either. If you've listened to some of the recent bonus episodes that we've uploaded here over the last month or so at Culips, then you'll know that my wife and I have been having some issues setting up the appliances in our house. Pretty much all of the appliances have had some kind of problem at first. So, we've tried to install the appliance, but then there's been some issue and we've had to wait so that the problem can be fixed, or the issue can be resolved. And then we've had to have another installation guy come out and install the appliance. And this has happened for almost all of our appliances. And I kid you not, this happened to us again, because we were trying to install the air conditioner in our bedroom and the installers came out and they took one look at the- the water drainage tube that will help take the water runoff from the air conditioner and port it outside of the house and they looked at that tube and they said, "No there's a problem with it" and so they weren't able to install the air conditioner. And we have now resolved that problem, but before I had to quarantine it wasn't fixed.

So, I'm just telling you all of this to set the stage about where I did my quarantine, OK? Because I was just in this very small bedroom, and it wasn't too fun. It was very hot

because there was no air conditioner and I had to keep the door closed so I wouldn't spread my COVID germs to my wife and there was no TV either, so it was just really a very hot room with a bed only inside of it. Now of course I have a smartphone, right? I have an iPad, I have books so it's not like it's the end of the world. It was totally fine, I was very comfortable, but it was a little hot and stuffy, I will say that. But it's not like I spent my whole time in the bedroom only when my wife would take Pinky, our dog, for a walk, then I would leave the bedroom and I would go to our front yard, and I could stretch out and get some fresh air that way. So, it was OK.

Now in terms of being sick, I'd say that I was really, really sick for three days. And I just had the typical COVID symptoms. I had a fever, a headache, cough, congestion, and of course the terrible sore throat. But I realized a way to combat that sore throat. And I noticed that if I kept my throat very moist by constantly drinking and eating, then it was just way better than if I let it dry out. Because if my throat became dry, then it was super painful. So, during the day, it wasn't actually that bad because I could keep eating and drinking. But the problem happened when I slept because when I slept, then my throat would dry out and I'd wake up and agony and feel like my throat was on fire. But thankfully, that really only lasted for three days, but during that process, I completely lost my voice. And for a podcaster like me, you know, having a voice is a very important thing to have. So, it was a little bit scary to lose my voice, but I think it's pretty much back to normal. And I guess I can ask you, how do you think I sound? To me, it feels like my voice is almost perfect again, almost back to regular, but it still lacks a little bit of power. So, we'll see if that returns in the next few days, and I'm hoping that it returns to full strength as soon as possible.

Anyway, during the first three days of the quarantine, I honestly didn't really do too much other than sleep. I'd wake up, I'd eat something, I'd drink some fluids, and then I'd lie down and listen to a podcast and eventually fall back asleep, and I didn't have too much energy to do anything else. But by the time day three rolled around, I started to feel much better,

and I wanted to use the forced downtime to catch up on some movies that I'd been wanting to watch for a while. I thought, "Oh, this is the perfect opportunity." Like, how often in life do you have a chance just to be stuck in a room with nothing to do other than watch movies? I wanted to check off some of the movies that were on my must-see list.

And there's a director whose films I've been wanting to watch for a really long time, but I just haven't got around to watching them in earnest. He is a Hong Kong director. Many of you are probably familiar with him, and I will probably butcher the pronunciation of his name, but in English we say, Wong Kar-wai. So, I've been wanting to watch his movies for a long time, and embarrassingly enough, I haven't really seen any of his movies except for one before. So, I wanted to take that time just to marathon through as many of his films as I could. So, I fired up Netflix, that's my go-to place for watching movies these days, and I watched a film of his called "Days of Being Wild" from 1990. And I really enjoyed it. I thought the film was great. It was fantastic. And I enjoyed the film. And then I tried to watch another one of his movies, which is called "Chungking Express" and that was from 1994, one of his famous films. But the movie on Netflix didn't have any English subtitles. I don't know why there were no English subtitles for that movie, even though it's a classic movie, there were only Korean subtitles. And I just wasn't up for the challenge of watching a Cantonese movie with Korean subtitles. I thought, "Wow, that will just be too much for me right now." So, I gave up on my Wong Kar-Wai movie marathon, but I'm looking forward to hopefully restarting that marathon sometime in the future if I can get my hands on some English subtitles.

So, then I had to move to the next thing that is on my list and that is to jump into the world of anime. Now anime is what we call Japanese animation in English. We just refer to it as anime, so you know TV shows or films that are animated and from Japan we call that anime. And my wife is a big anime fan and so are a lot of my Korean friends and students as well, but I actually have very little knowledge about anime and so sometimes I feel left out because I don't know the references to some of the very famous anime titles. And I

guess that would be similar to growing up in Canada or the states in the 90s like I did and not knowing what "the Simpsons" is, or not knowing what "Friends" is, or something like that. These just like massive pop culture icons, right? These shows. So, you need to know what they're about, but I feel left out when I'm talking with my Korean friends and colleagues often because I don't know these huge pop cultural references. That are these animated series and- and films. So, I decided to start working my way through some of the classics. And I did some research on the internet to find some of the most famous animes of all time. And one that piqued my interest was a series called NGE. A lot of English speakers just call it NGE. Or the full name is "Neon Genesis Evangelion". So, I started watching and I've made it about halfway through the series already. So, I'll hold out on my final comments until I make it to the end. But so far, I think, wow, it absolutely rules. I don't know why I haven't gotten into anime earlier. It's really, really cool. And I probably should have gotten into it sooner, but better later than never, I suppose. And I'm currently watching it just with the original Japanese audio and I have English subtitles. Of course, I don't speak Japanese at all. So, this is just for pleasure. I'm not really studying the language with it or anything. But I did hear that there's also a Korean-dubbed version out there. And maybe I can find it on the internet somewhere. I'm not sure. If any of you know where I can find the Korean dubbed version of NGE, then send me a message. Let me know. I would love to find it. And maybe in the future, I could watch it in Korean as well. I think that could be cool. But that series is a little bit heavy and kind of dark. So, when I needed some comedic relief during my quarantine, then I also watched some old episodes of "Seinfeld" as well, one of my favorite sitcoms of all time.

So that is pretty much how I spent the quarantine, those couple of days after I felt really sick. I just watched some Wong Kar-wai, and some NGE, and some Seinfeld. Now by the time quarantine was finished, I felt totally fine, actually. I felt like almost my body had been restarted. I had a body reboot. And now I feel much stronger. I feel very healthy. And aside from my voice being a little bit weaker than it was before, I think I'm as good as new.

And the really amazing thing and something that I'm very thankful for is that my wife never caught COVID this time. So, I guess either her body is stronger than mine, or had more resistance to the virus than mine, or our quarantining strategy worked perfectly. I'm not sure, but the good news is that she never caught COVID.

I should say, I don't wanna throw the international students under the bus and blame them for me catching COVID. To me, it seems like probably I did catch it from them, but I have absolutely no way of knowing that. And it could have just as easily come from someone who I passed in the supermarket or sat beside on the subway, who knows, it doesn't really matter. At the end of the day, I caught COVID. It is what it is, but I'm OK now.

Anyways, at the end of the day, I'm glad the whole ordeal is done with, and now that I've had COVID twice, I'm crossing my fingers that I won't have to catch it a third time, and the quarantine ended just in time too. It was like perfect timing because my wonderful, lovely, and thankfully very, very observant wife noticed a plumbing problem in our house with our new hot water boiler. And that meant that a construction company had to come to our home and dig up our floor to fix a leaking pipe in the floor, just this whole big ordeal. And maybe I'll save that story for you later. But if I were quarantined at that time, then we probably would have had to delay that construction, but thankfully, the timing for everything worked out. And guys, don't worry, everything's good with our house now. There's been a lot of drama regarding the house lately, but everything's OK. And yeah, if you're interested, maybe I can share that story with you another time.

So yeah, everyone, that's the reason why we didn't have a bonus episode last week was because of COVID. But as I said, I'm back now, I'm better than ever. And I do also have to give a shout out and say thank you to all of the people who sent me well wishes. By the way, I was really overwhelmed with all of the messages. And if I didn't reply to you personally, I apologize for that, but I do wanna say thanks to everyone who told me to

hang in there and to feel better soon, it really made me feel a lot better. So, thank you for those good vibes. And yeah, they worked because I feel much better now.

I thought I'd update you on what's new here at Culips over the last week. We uploaded a brand-new Catch Word episode on Friday last week and I'll put a link to that one in the description for this episode so you can check it out if you haven't already. In that lesson, Suzanne and I teach you two idiomatic English expressions that you can use to describe things that are old and worn out. Those two expressions are "seen better days" and "worse for wear". And I really recommend adding these expressions to your vocabulary. They'll definitely make your English sound more natural and also will help you improve your listening skills.

We've also been having some wonderful discussions on our Discord server. And in fact, I just wrapped up a great small group voice chat on our server. It was fun. I met with about six or seven other members of the Culips Discord community, and we chatted about what the highs and lows of our weeks were, and it was great to just chat with different members of the community. We had people from Japan and Mexico and Iran and Canada and India and probably some other places that I can't remember off the top of my head, but it was really fun just to chat about our weeks and our weekend plans. If you haven't joined us on the Discord server yet, please do. I'm hoping to hold more conversation club activities like this as well. Please make sure to check it out. We'll put the link in the description, and we'll see you over on the Discord.

And now it's time for this week's vocabulary lesson.

Before I let you go, I'd like to teach you about one of the expressions I used a little earlier when I was telling you my COVID story. This expression is technically a phrasal verb, and it has two prepositions, OK? So, make sure you pay attention to the structure. It's a little bit complicated. expression is: to chalk [something] up to [something], OK? To chalk

[something] up to [something]. And we'll talk about what this expression means in just a moment. But before we do that, I want to rewind the tape, go back, and listen to the part of the episode where I used this expression. So, we can hear it used in context a couple of more times. And then after we get the context down, then we'll break it apart and talk about the meaning. And I'll explain how you can use it in a natural way in your everyday life when you're speaking English as well. So, are you ready? Let's go back and take another listen. Here we go.

I just chalked up my low energy to the exercise that I'd been doing.

So, now that we've heard it in context, let's talk about what this expression means, to chalk [something] up to [something]. So, this phrase is used when we want to explain or attribute a cause or reason for something happening. It's just a way of giving an explanation or understanding the reason or the cause for something happening.

So, when I said that I chalked up my low energy to exercising, well then it just means that I thought I had low energy because I had exercised. The reason why I felt tired was because of the exercise essentially. So, it's almost like using this expression is a way of saying "because" OK? I was tired because of exercising. I had chalked up my tiredness to exercising, kind of expressing the same thought.

So now that we know what this expression means, let's learn how we can use it in some real-life situations, and I've got three example sentences for us to study with, and let's take a listen to the first one now. Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

The delay in the project was chalked up to a miscommunication between the departments.

Alright, let's break this example sentence down. In this sentence we hear that there was a project that had been delayed. And what is the reason for the delay? Well, it was because two different departments at this company miscommunicated with each other. So, the delay was attributed to the miscommunication. It was chalked up to the miscommunication. It was because of the miscommunication, K? All of these are explaining the reason why the delay happened.

Example sentence number two.

Jane's success in the competition can be chalked up to her natural talent and dedication.

Alright, let's break the second example sentence down. In this example sentence, we hear about a character named Jane, and she was successful in a competition that she participated in because she has natural talent, and she is also very dedicated. So, the reason why she is successful is because of these two factors. In other words, her success can be chalked up to her dedication and talent.

Example sentence number three.

I couldn't focus on my work yesterday. I chalk it up to the lack of sleep I had the previous night.

In this final example sentence, the speaker says that he couldn't focus on his work. Why? Because he slept very poorly the previous night. In other words, he chalks up his lack of focus to his poor night's sleep.

That brings us to the end of this week's bonus episode. Thank you for joining me and if you made it this far all the way to the end, then I think you deserve a pat on the back. So go ahead and pat yourself on the back and congratulate yourself for completing this English study session with me. You put in some time and effort today towards improving your English and as a result, improving your life and making yourself more fluent in English. And I have to say that I really admire and respect you for that. So awesome job, keep up the good work throughout the rest of the week as well. And remember, if you need help with that, if you need some resources to study English with this week, then we've got you covered.

Don't forget that we have hundreds of episodes on our website, Culips.com, and we also have an active community of like-minded English learners on our Discord, and we'd love to have you join us there. So have an awesome week, take care, and I'll talk to you next time, bye!

Episode credits

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