

Bonus episode #102 - Andrew gets interviewed

Episode description

In this episode, Andrew shares a story about going on a picnic with his wife to the Han River Park in Seoul, South Korea. He describes their preparation process, the convenient amenities available at the park, and the awesome time they shared together. As you listen to Andrew's story, you'll learn new vocabulary related to picnics, outdoor activities, and more. Plus, you'll also improve your listening skills and ability to follow a long-form story in English.



- 👉 Join the Culips Discord server: <https://discord.gg/Bpxa85CFuc>
- 👉 Become a Culips member: culips.co
- 👉 Bonus episode 54: <https://esl.culips.com/2023/05/pioneers-of-the-continuum/>
- 👉 Listen to the full interview on Alastair's Youtube channel: <https://youtu.be/VyiQlh0F5il>

Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: What's up, everyone? Welcome back to another edition of the Culips English Podcast bonus episode series. I'm your host and your English study buddy, Andrew. It's great to be here with you as always, and I hope you're doing well.

For those of you who are new here, welcome, first of all. Let me quickly explain what this series is all about. So, in each bonus episode, I tell you a little story from my life as a Canadian guy living abroad in South Korea. And I hope by listening to these stories, you'll be able to improve your English in a fun and stress-free way. I tell these stories in a way that I believe will help you to achieve the main goals of our bonus series, which is to B.I.G.B - build your fluency, grow your vocabulary, increase your cultural knowledge, and become a clearer English communicator.

There's a 100% free interactive transcript and vocabulary glossary for this episode that you can get by following the link in the description. They're helpful tools, and I recommend checking them out to get the most of studying with this episode. If you're a Culips member, then we'll also include a comprehension quiz that you can use to check and see how much of this episode you were able to understand.

Speaking of Culips members, I want to give a big shout out to them for their support. Without our members, we wouldn't be able to make English lessons each and every week for learners all around the world. So, thank you so, so much to all of the members out there. If you'd like to support Culips and become a Culips member yourself, you can sign up on our website, Culips.com. We give our members lots of helpful tools and bonus content to help them improve their English faster and better than ever. So, check out the website, learn all the details, and sign up today on Culips.com, or we'll put a link in the show notes for this episode. You can just follow the link and sign up and become a member.

So, for today's episode, I've got something completely different for you. Something that I've never done here on the bonus episode series before. Because today, instead of me sharing a story with you, instead what I'm going to do is share an interview with you. And it's not an interview that I did with a guest. Instead, it's me getting interviewed. I'm the guest. So let me explain. A couple of weeks ago, I did an interview with Alastair Budge. And you may recognize his name. He is the host of the English for Curious Minds podcast. And you might remember him because he was my guest right here in the bonus episode series, way back in episode number 54. So, I'll throw the link to that episode in the show notes in case you want to listen to it. And we also collaborated on a project that Alastair was the mastermind of called Pioneers of the Continuum. If you want to learn more about that project, I recommend listening to bonus episode 54 because we talked about it during that interview.

Anyways, Alastair reached out recently to me to ask if I could appear as a guest on his YouTube channel to talk a little bit about my experience of living abroad in South Korea. Now, when I got this interview request, to be completely honest, I felt a little bit anxious. When people ask me to do interviews, I usually say no. I've been asked to do a few in the past, and I almost always decline. I guess I'm really just an introverted, shy person. Maybe I don't come across that way here on the podcast because I do do a lot of talking, obviously, on Culips. But in real life, usually I am kind of introverted and shy and I feel a little bit uncomfortable talking about myself, which I know seems weird, but it is true. I guess for some reason, I feel more confident when I control the conversation and if I have to do an interview, it's OK. But being interviewed, that freaks me out a little bit. But as you may remember, my New Year's resolution for this year is to become a better interviewer. I want to have amazing, awesome guests on Culips, and I want to be a really, really awesome, amazing interviewer when I present them to you guys. When you hear those conversations, I want them to be really interesting, really engaging, and really helpful for building your English. So that's my goal for this year. So that's one of my professional goals for this year is to work on becoming a better interviewer. But as part of that process, shouldn't I know what it's like to be the interviewee also? I think I should. I really think I

should. So, when I had this opportunity to be interviewed by Alastair for his YouTube channel, I thought, I got to do it. I can't run away. I've got to face my fear, even though it's a little freaky to me. I need to do it. I need to become comfortable with being the interviewee as well. It's an important part of this process. Also, Alastair's a great guy. I've really enjoyed talking to him every time we've interacted in the past. So, because of these things, I was in. So, I said, yeah, Alastair, let's do it. And so, we did.

And in the interview, we talked a lot about South Korea. This is a really, this episode is really focused on South Korea, about why I moved there, why I love it here, some of the things I've noticed about Korean society through a foreigner's eyes. Because of course, I am not South Korean. I'm Canadian, but I do live here, and I have kind of a different perspective, perhaps, compared to Korean people. So, we talk a lot about that. If you're not interested in South Korea, then probably this is not the interview for you because most of the time that's what we talk about. But I did really enjoy the conversation. And I think this interview may be really interesting to a lot of you out there as well. Of course, some of the things that I'll say in the interview, you may be familiar with because I have talked in bits and pieces here and there on Culips over the years about why I moved to Korea and what I do here and my experience here. But I've never done so in so much detail in one place at the same time. And that's what I do in this interview. So, if you've been curious about that in the past, this is the interview for you. Now, the interview went on for a long time. It went on for over an hour, but I'm not going to present you with the whole interview today. I'm just going to play the first 25 minutes or so for you here. I guess you could consider this to be part one. And then if you'd like to listen to part two, then you can go on over to Alastair's YouTube channel, which of course will link in the show notes. And then you can listen to the rest of the interview if you are so inclined. After listening to this interview, I really want to know what you think. I'm very curious.

As I mentioned, I haven't done this a lot. It's a little uncomfortable to me. And even listening back to the interview was super, super cringy for me. And yeah, I don't know what it is. I listen to myself a lot when recording Culips and editing Culips, but it's not really

cringy for me to do that. But on somebody else's show, when I'm the guest, it was a little cringy. There was a cringe factor, but I guess it's all part of the experience, right? It's all part of the learning experience. And I think it was a good experience for me to do. I'd love to know your thoughts and feedback as well. And I really do hope that I'll get more opportunities to be interviewed in the future. So perhaps if you are a podcaster or YouTuber listening out there and you'd like me to appear as a guest on your show, hey, reach out and we'll see. Maybe it could happen. And also, a big thanks to Alastair for the invitation and for having me on his show and YouTube channel.

So, everyone, that's what this week's episode will be about. And without any further ado, let's get to the interview right now. Here it is. Enjoy. And I'm going to throw things over to Alastair. Alastair, take it away.

Alastair: OK, everyone, I am thrilled to have Andrew from Culips with me today. Hello, Andrew.

Andrew: Hey, Alastair. Thank you so much for inviting me onto this new, exciting podcast or YouTube show. I don't know. What do you refer to it as?

Alastair: I think we're going to be thinking of it as a YouTube first podcast, if that's something, if that's a thing.

Andrew: YouTube first podcast.

Alastair: Yeah.

Andrew: It's a thing now. Yeah, for sure. So, I'm happy to be here. Thank you.

Alastair: It's amazing to speak again. We collaborated last year on a project, and I'm super excited to do something completely different with you now. So, I've asked Andrew to

come on so I can quiz him about Korea, about South Korea, his experience living there, what it's like to be a Canadian in Korea, and if he can teach me a little bit about this amazing country that I've never actually been to. So, Andrew, can you just start by telling me a little bit about what brought you to Korea and how you moved from North America to Korea?

Andrew: Yeah, yeah, absolutely. So, it's a bit of a long story, and I guess I should start back when I was in university. So, I graduated from the University of Victoria on the west coast of Canada. I'm originally from Canada. That's where I was born and raised, and I grew up in British Columbia, which is the westernmost province of BC, and attended the University of Victoria on a little island close to Vancouver, which is coincidentally called Vancouver Island. So, I graduated from this university in 2008. I did a degree in history, and while I was doing that degree, I had a student job, a student position as a research assistant in the Chinese history department. And because of that, I was able to start taking some Chinese history classes and do some kind of two-for-one work. I was doing research for my boss, who was a Chinese history professor, and I was able to use that research for my assignments for his class.

So as a kind of naturally lazy person, I thought this was a great way to quickly graduate, was to get paid for the schoolwork I was doing. So, I'd do some research for this professor and then use that research for my essays for his class. It was awesome. And because of that, I sort of got naturally interested in Chinese history, and that was actually my specialization for my degree, was Chinese history and immigration of Chinese people to Canada in the 1800s, and that was my focus essentially.

And so, after I graduated, I thought if I wanted to pursue this further, if I wanted to get a master's in history, or if I wanted to do history as a living, and if I wanted to keep learning more about Chinese history, I really would have to learn the Chinese language. It seemed like that was very, very important to do. So, I was thinking about, should I go to China, and should I study Chinese? And should I do this seriously? So, I had this kind of vague notion

that that was going to be my plan. I wasn't 100% sure about it, but that's what I was thinking about doing. And then I looked into actually going to China and studying and attending university there. And of course, it's expensive. And as a poor student who had just graduated, I had no money and wasn't able to make that jump and start studying the Chinese language. So instead, I was looking around for a different job, something to do. And I had some friends who are teaching English in Korea. And this is something that never really **came across my radar** at all. But hearing about them going over there to Korea to teach English, I thought, huh, that's kind of interesting. Maybe that's something that I could do as well. And I also had a really close friend at the time who was a Canadian-Korean, and he told me about his experience in Korea and said it's a really exciting country that's very different than Canada.

So, I guess it was those two experiences of seeing my friends go over to Korea and talking with them and hearing about their good experience, and also my friends who had been to Korea several times and told me about it. It got me interested in perhaps moving there to teach myself. And so, my original plan was like, OK, Korea and China are pretty close, right? So, I can just go over to Korea, even though I don't know anything about this country. It could just be an adventure. I could go over there for a year. I could save some money, and then it would be really easy to move over to China. And then I could follow that dream that I had at the time of learning Chinese and going deeper into Chinese history, and perhaps maybe pursuing that as a career. Thinking back on it now, I don't think that would have been a good choice. I don't think I probably would have had too much of a future in learning about Chinese history and pursuing that full-time. But that was my thinking at the time. So anyways, yeah, one thing led to another, and eventually I ended up applying for a job in Korea, and I got the job. I was accepted to this program called EPIK, which was a program that was created by the Korean government, I think, in the early 2000s or maybe late 90s, which was to bring a lot of English teachers from, I guess, the seven English-speaking countries that have it as an official language of native speakers. So, I think Canada, America, Ireland, the UK, South Africa, Australia, New Zealand. Those countries, they invited teachers from those places to come to Korea to

teach English in the public school system. And so that's where I got a job, and I ended up working in a Korean primary school, elementary school, as my first gig in 2009.

Alastair: OK. And were you sort of **thrown in at the deep end**, or did they give you some training and stuff beforehand?

Andrew: Yeah, mostly just thrown in. I think they wanted us to bring our outside perspective and wanted us just to not necessarily teach the students. I think this is actually kind of a good idea that they had at the time, was just like, they wanted an outside influence at the school, right? They wanted somebody who thinks differently, that acts differently, that speaks a different language, and just for the students to be exposed to that kind of a foreigner, right? A foreign perspective. And so, there wasn't a lot of training. We had a one-week orientation. When I arrived, I didn't even know where I would be. I knew that I was hired to teach in a certain province, which was Gangwon province, one of the provinces in the eastern, northeastern part of South Korea. So, I knew I was going to be in that province, but I didn't know what city or anything like that. It was kind of like a lottery. And so, I arrived, I went to the orientation session with about 100 other teachers who were all **fresh off the boat**, like me, from those different countries that I mentioned before. And, yeah, it was almost like a lottery. And so, I was told that I was going to be teaching in a city called Taebaek, which is the highest city in Korea. It's way up in the mountains, and it's also the smallest city in Korea. It just officially has city status. So, it's not a town or a village, but it's a city, but the population is rather small by Korean standards. I think at the time it was around 50,000 people. Coming from Canada, I thought that's like a medium-sized city, but here in Korea, that's like a really small, small, small place. So yeah, I ended up teaching at a very small elementary school in the mountains. The total school population was around 50 students. So, from K-6, I worked with those students, and yeah, it was awesome. It was a great experience, and I think good for the students too. They got a lot of time to just play and hang out with me, and I did do teaching, but I didn't have any teaching experience, right? Just that one week of orientation, and I had no background in education. So, I just tried to **figure it out as I went along**, and mostly I think I was just

encouraged to play soccer with the students, hang out with them, and speak English to them. And so that's what I did. It was really fun.

Alastair: Were you the only non-Korean at the school?

Andrew: At that school, yeah. I was the only one.

Alastair: Wow. It must have been quite an experience.

Andrew: It was, yeah. It was really unique. One thing that's cool about, well, I don't know if this is cool for Koreans, but it worked out to my advantage in this situation is that Korean teachers that work, and to be honest, I don't even know if it's the same system anymore, and I don't know if this is different province by province, but I can only speak to this one specific time. But at the time in the province, Gangwon-do, that I was in, school teachers by law had to change their school every several years. So, you wouldn't be **a lifer** at one school. You'd get a job, and I think it was every five years, it was mandatory for you to switch schools. And so, at that time, the other teachers at that school, the Korean teachers, were all from different places in the province. None of them were from Taebaek, and none of them lived there. So, they all lived in a dormitory that was just a little way away from the school, just down the road, because they all came from different cities and different places. And it was kind of like, OK, your five-year shift is done. You have to go to this school for the next five years. So, they'd move from place to place to place. And so, because of that, I really had a good relationship with them, and we got along really well. Those teachers tended to be younger, and I was just out of university as well. Most of them were just out of university. So yeah, I felt like I made some good friends with the other teachers there. We were all around the similar age, and of course, my experience was way different going to a new culture. They were just in a new city, but we are all kind of new in that place. So, I think that really helped, and they helped me adjust to life in Korea. So, I really was thankful for them for helping me fit in.

Alastair: Yeah, nice. Were you in the dormitory as well?

Andrew: No. No, they gave me like this huge apartment by Korean standards. It was paid for, it was part of my compensation package. And it was like this big three-bedroom apartment, which is wild to think about now. It was rather old and kind of **dingy**, but I thought, yeah, it's pretty cool. That was my first apartment that I ever lived in by myself with no roommates or anything. So, it was pretty fun.

Alastair: Very nice. And that was, was that 12 years ago?

Andrew: Yeah, so that was even, that was even longer ago. That was first in 2009. So, Alastair, you and I were talking a little bit before we started recording here, and I've spent about 12 years in Korea total, but on and off. So, I came to Korea, this is actually my third turn here, I stayed in Korea for a little bit, went back home to Canada, came back to Korea, and then went back home to Canada for a long stretch, and then finally came back again. So, I've been on and off in Korea for a total of 12 years, but the time from when I first came to Korea until now is longer than that. I first arrived in 2009.

Alastair: So, what is the pull of Korea for you? What is it that kept on bringing you back and has meant that you have set up a life for yourself there?

Andrew: Yeah, it's hard to really pinpoint one thing. But it's interesting, you know, I was saying earlier how I had this dream of studying Chinese and going to China. After I finished that first year in Korea, that dream just **went out the window**. I just fell in love with Korea during that first year here, and it totally made me give up and forget about even going to China. I was like, I don't need to go there anymore, I don't know what I was thinking. So, in a good way, I kind of **found my groove** here in Korea. I think I was really attracted to just the wild, random nature of Korea, especially being thrown into this really immersive situation where I was the only foreigner in the village where I was teaching. I didn't know the language, I didn't know what was happening most of the time. And that

seemed really exciting. And also, Korean people were really exciting. It's like a busy, fast-moving country, it really develops quickly. And there was just something really attractive to that, that just pulled me back. I also fell in love with the food, fell in love with the language eventually. And yeah, it just seemed like a place where I never... When I'd wake up in the morning, I would never really know how the day would unfold and what would happen by the time I went to sleep. And I like that because I felt like in Canada, my life was very predictable, and I could know how my day would unfold. But in Korea, I would never know. And I'd always say to myself, I'd go on this wild adventure or something crazy would happen. I was like, wow, I never would have expected that my day would have ended up here in the morning. So, I loved that. It was just so exciting in that way.

Alastair: Yeah. I'm thinking at the moment back to a time I spent actually teaching English in China. And a lot of what you say in terms of things just being very surprising and unpredictable, I can completely relate to that because there were days where, you know, you just end up in a completely different place, something just bizarre has happened. And you have this strange kind of duality of both feeling like in control sort of what you're doing because, you know, no one's forcing you to do anything you don't want to do. But also, just this complete chaos of you could be anywhere, anything could happen. Something just completely mad might happen in a very unexpected time. And I think some people, some people, in my experience of being with other teachers and other people who are in that kind of environment, some people hate it because they just need to feel like they're completely in control and they liked having that routine and familiarity with what's going on. Other people like me, and it sounds also like you, just absolutely love that because it brings that sort of variety and kind of unexpected, not just the variety, but the fact that you have this, this sort of sense of like life just pulling you somewhere that is, that is really exciting.

Andrew: Yeah. Yeah. You got to **embrace the chaos**. I love it. I have one story I can share with you. That's really funny. That kind of illustrates this point. I remember one day I went to work at the school, and I was told, "Oh, we're going on a field trip today", which

was completely surprising to me. I had no idea that we were going to go on a field trip. **In retrospect**, probably, you know, all of the teachers and the staff were talking about it for weeks and weeks and weeks and planning it, but because I didn't know the language, I had no idea that we were going on a field trip that day. And so, it was just news to me. And that's one thing that people in Korea, foreigners in Korea sometimes complain about is like, they'll just be told like something is going to happen with no warning, no expectations. And I think that's really just a language gap. It's like when you don't know the language and you're outside of it, you don't understand what's happening. Then of course it seems surprising. And yeah, maybe in retrospect, it would have been nice to have **a heads up** like, "Oh, tomorrow we're going on a field trip", but that's not the way I was told. It was like, today we're going on a field trip. We're going to go visit. I can't remember. I think we went to a museum, a mining museum, in fact, if I recall correctly, but anyways, that was the plan. We're going to go on a field trip. So cool. You know, embrace the chaos. Let's do it. So, we all loaded onto a couple of buses and we're going to this museum or wherever we were going. And suddenly we are beside this little river driving beside this little stream and the school bus broke down.

So, we are all ordered off the bus and the location that we were going to wasn't too far from where the bus broke down. So, the other teacher said, oh, we can just walk there. It's OK. So, OK, let's walk. So, we're all walking along the side of the road. And in this bus, there were probably, you know, 25 or 30 little elementary school students in grade two and three. So, they're just little, little kids, right? We're walking along the side of this road, which was not so bad, but I was a little bit stressed out. Like, you know, I don't want anything to happen to these kids. We're on the side of the road. There's no sidewalk. We're just on the shoulder. It wasn't a busy road, but I was still a little bit stressed out and making sure that they were all walking in a line. And then, which was really surprising to me, the teacher told me, the head teacher told me that we need to cross over this stream. And so, if we keep walking a little bit, there were some stones in the stream that we could cross over. And so, I was expecting, you know, like a little bridge or something, but it was really just this creek with like rocks that were in the stream. And so, what we did was the

three teachers, we just stood on the rocks, and we picked up each kid and just passed them one by one, just sort of like a **bucket brigade**, you know, with firemen putting out a fire, carrying a bucket and passing it on to the next person.

And we did that with all 30 students, and I was in the middle. So, one of the Korean teachers would pick up the student, pass the student to me, and then I would pass it to the next teacher, and we got all the students across the little river stream thing that way. And so, I remember in that moment being like, wow, I didn't think I was going to be doing this today when I woke up. This was all a surprise to me, but those kinds of moments were really exciting at the same time. And yeah, thankfully we got all the students across the river. Nobody was hurt, nobody was injured, but that was hilarious to me.

Alastair: So, I'm imagining some kind of teacher training question that you would get in an exam in the United States or in the UK or Canada or something like, oh, you've got a group of children, you need to cross the river. Do you A, wait for help, B, try and pass the children across from one to one or C, you know, try, and find an alternative route. It's like, actually, we're just going to pass the children across.

Andrew: Yeah, yeah. No, it seems, you know, really, really different than in Canada where safety is such a concern. And I think Korea changes really, really quickly. And now I don't think that would happen now. I think there's no way that that would happen. But in 2009, things were a little bit different, and it was like, we've got a task, we've got to get it done. What's the easiest way to do it? Oh, we'll just pass the kids over the river, and it was fine. We got it done.

Alastair: They all made it across.

Andrew: They all made it. Yeah, we did it.

Alastair: Excellent. I imagine if one didn't make it across, you wouldn't be smiling telling this story now.

Andrew: Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

Alastair: Nice. And so how has Korea changed since you've been there, since you first started going there 15 years ago?

Andrew: It's changed in so many ways that it's really hard to, hard to say it almost in, in a lot of ways seems like a different place. Like it's almost unrecognizable. When you see old TV clips or something, I've been watching this sitcom, this Korean sitcom recently called "High Kick", and I think that was filmed in 2006. So that was only three years before I arrived. And watching that really brings back a lot of memories because it wasn't too much difference between 2006 and 2009, but it seems ancient, like it seems like similar to watching something that was filmed 30 years ago, like if I had to make a comparison in Canada, you know, something that I saw 30 years ago, maybe that would be more similar. So, it's changed in a lot of ways. It's a real techie country. So, the technology changes very quickly. And as I hinted at with that story about passing the kids over the river, it was a pretty wild place when I first arrived. And it seemed like safety wasn't a priority that was on anybody's radar. And I think that's changed a lot now. Like it seems like it's a more safer, organized place whereas when I first arrived, it was a little bit more chaotic in a way, which was really attractive to me at first. But yeah, it's just everything's changed, and everything will change. I think that's the interesting thing about Korea is that it seems like every five or 10 years, it's almost like it reinvents itself and it's not the same place. It's very dynamic in that way.

Alastair: I'm sure there's many reasons for this, but why do you think it changes so much faster than Canada that you're using as an example? Why do you think there is this kind of constant push for reinvention and change?

Andrew: I think partially it has to do with the personality traits that a lot of Koreans have, kind of this innate culture of, this is going to sound mean, but I don't mean it sound mean, of impatience. Koreans are really, and when I say Koreans, I have to give this preface in saying that I'm speaking in generalities here. Of course, I can't speak for every individual. Korea is a country of individuals, but I think most Koreans will even agree that they're pretty impatient and they like things fast and they like things quickly to happen. When I first arrived in Korea, one of the big **flexes** that Koreans would kind of **brag about**, they were really proud, is how fast their internet was compared to other countries around the world. They're like, we've got the fastest internet in the world. These days, Koreans will brag about how everything is so fast. If you order food on a delivery app, it arrives really quickly. If you order something online, it can be delivered the same day. Things are really, really quick here. I think that's just something that's innate to Koreans. They have this demand and this desire for things to move quickly. I think they're also pretty flexible. If something isn't working, they can give up on it quite quickly. This isn't working. Let's try this. This isn't working. Let's try this. I think for both of those two reasons, things do develop quickly. There's also, I mean, in terms of technology, you have huge companies like Samsung, like LG, right? They're always pushing the boundaries with new tech and stuff. Koreans adapt to that quite quickly as well. So, you do see a lot of technological change in the country. And yeah, as I mentioned, in a very dynamic in that way.

Andrew: So, thanks again to Alastair for interviewing me and thanks to all of you for listening to the very end. Now, remember if you're a Culips member, you can do the comprehension quiz for this episode. Now, the link to do that is in the ad-free transcript version of this episode, which you can get on the Culips website on the member dashboard, but I'll also put the link in the member area of our Discord server as well. And if for any reason you can't find it, just send me a message and I will send it your way. Now, at the end of the episode, I like to share a completion code with you. Making an example sentence with the completion code and leaving that sentence on our Discord or Instagram or YouTube will show me and show the rest of our amazing Culips community that you studied all the way to the end of the episode. You completed it and you got the code as a

result. OK. So, this week's completion code will be: "Interview." Interview. OK, that is what this week's completion code is: "Interview." So, you know what to do. Go and leave a comment with the word interview for this week's homework and I look forward to hearing what you have to say. Well guys, that brings us to the end. I hope you have a great week coming up here next week. To be honest with you, I'm a little bit afraid for next week. I've got a super busy schedule. I'm not really looking too forward to it. But what can you do? That's life. Let's all try to have an awesome week ahead and we can meet back here next time to talk about it in the next edition of our bonus episode series. So, guys, please take care as always, happy English studies, and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.

Glossary

1. **Came across my radar:** To become aware of something; to notice or consider something for the first time. Andrew mentions that teaching English in Korea had never come across his radar until friends suggested it. *Example sentence: The new restaurant came across my radar when I saw a review online.*
2. **Thrown in at the deep end:** To be put into a difficult or challenging situation without preparation or training. Andrew describes his initial teaching experience in Korea as being thrown in at the deep end since he had no prior teaching experience. *Example sentence: On his first day at work, he was thrown in at the deep end with a major project.*
3. **Fresh off the boat:** Recently arrived in a new place, often used to describe immigrants who are unfamiliar with their new surroundings. Andrew describes himself and other new teachers as fresh off the boat when they first arrived in Korea. *Example sentence: Being fresh off the boat, he found it challenging to navigate the city's public transportation system.*
4. **Figure it out as I went along:** To solve or understand something through thought or effort while doing it. Andrew had no teaching experience and had to figure it out as he went along in Korea. *Example sentence: Without any instructions, he had to figure it out as he went along.*
5. **A lifer:** A person who stays at a job or place for their entire career. Andrew mentions that Korean teachers are not lifers at one school but move around every few years. *Example sentence: He's a lifer at the company, having worked there for over 30 years.*
6. **Dingy:** Dark, dirty, or in poor condition. Andrew describes his first apartment in Korea as being rather old and dingy. *Example sentence: The apartment was dingy, with peeling paint and stained carpets.*

7. **Went out the window:** To be discarded, ignored, or abandoned. Andrew's plan to study in China went out the window after he experienced life in Korea. *Example sentence: Her diet plans went out the window during the holiday season.*
8. **Found my groove:** To become comfortable in what one is doing; to establish a routine or habit that works well. Andrew explains that he found his groove teaching and living in Korea. *Example sentence: After a few weeks in the new job, she finally found her groove.*
9. **Embrace the chaos:** To accept and adapt to a disorderly or unpredictable situation. Andrew advises embracing the chaos of living in a foreign country where things are unpredictable. *Example sentence: When moving to a new city, it's important to embrace the chaos and enjoy the new experiences.*
10. **In retrospect:** Looking back on or considering past events with the knowledge and understanding that one has now. Andrew uses in retrospect when reflecting on his decision-making process about moving to China or Korea. *Example sentence: In retrospect, moving to a new city without a job lined up was a risky decision.*
11. **A heads up:** A warning or notice about something that is going to happen. Andrew talks about how he was given no heads up about the school field trip. *Example sentence: She gave me a heads up about the meeting being rescheduled to tomorrow.*
12. **Bucket brigade:** A method of passing items from person to person in a line, often used in emergencies. Andrew compares passing children across a stream to a bucket brigade when the school bus broke down. *Example sentence: During the fire, neighbors formed a bucket brigade to help extinguish the flames.*
13. **Flex:** To show off or boast about something, often in an informal context. Andrew notes that Koreans like to flex their fast internet speeds and quick service delivery. *Example sentence: He likes to flex his knowledge of obscure trivia at parties.*
14. **Brag about:** To talk with excessive pride about one's achievements or possessions. Andrew notes that Koreans often brag about their fast internet and quick delivery services. *Example sentence: He likes to brag about his new sports car to his friends.*

Episode credits

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