

Bonus Episode #066 - Let's clear the air

Episode description

Andrew shares a story about a miscommunication, meeting up for lunch with his brother-in-law, a funny thing that happened at the Apple store, and more in this edition of the bonus episode. Plus in the vocabulary lesson, he teaches you about the idiom **to clear the air**.

Study with the interactive transcript: <https://esl.culips.com/2023/08/bonus-episode-06...ts-clear-the-air/>

Join the Culips Discord server: <https://discord.gg/Bpxa85CFuc>



Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: I've got a question for you. And I'd like to use this question as a springboard for a discussion on our Discord server. So, think about your answer, and then post your answer on our Discord and we'll have a discussion about this. But I'm curious, what's your favorite English word or phrase? You've been learning English for a while now, right? So, you must have come across some words, or some expressions, or some phrases that are your favorite. Maybe they're your favorite, because they have a special meaning or a cool meaning, or it's something that you can't directly translate in your native language. There are always words like that, right? When you're learning a foreign language, you come across some expressions, or some words that are just unique to that language. And I'm sure you've come across a couple of those during your time studying English. Or maybe it's your favorite just because it's fun to say. And I have several words in that category that are my favorites, because they're fun to pronounce. So, I thought I'd share those favorite words with you.

The first one is “dusk.” Dusk. I don't know, there's just something about that word, dusk, it just has a very nice flow to it, the air that comes out of your mouth when you pronounce it just sounds very, very pleasant, at least to my ears. And of course, dusk is the time in the very early evening before the sun has fully set when it's still a little bit light out. And it's also a great time of the day. I love dusk as a word and also as a time of the day. So that's one of my favorites. And another word that I really enjoy pronouncing is “eclipse.” Eclipse. And an eclipse is an astronomical word. And an eclipse occurs when an object in the sky can't be seen, because there's some other object that has come between you and it. So that usually occurs when we have a solar eclipse. And the moon travels in between the Earth and the Sun. Or a lunar eclipse, and that's when the Earth travels in between the moon and the sun and it blocks out some of the light and we can't see it in the sky. So, it's a cool word to say and to pronounce and also has a really interesting meaning as well. Eclipse, I love that one.

And a couple of other words that I really enjoy are "mahogany" and "epiphany" for no real reason other than that they are fun to say. Mahogany. Mahogany is fun to say, right? Mahogany is a kind of wood. And an epiphany is a time when you suddenly have a moment of clarity, and you realize or become conscious of something new or maybe something very important to you, you have a breakthrough or a discovery. That kind of moment is what we call an epiphany. So anyways, I really enjoy those four words: dusk, eclipse, mahogany, and epiphany.

And I'm curious about what your favorite English words are as well. So, let's have a discussion about that on our Discord. And of course, you can join our Discord server just by following the link that is in the description for this episode. But I'm also curious about one other thing as well. And that's the opposite. So, I'm sure there are some words or phrases you've come across in English that you hate, or you just try to avoid because they are very difficult to pronounce. And I know in my language-learning experience in Korean, there are definitely some words that whenever I have to use them, I have to brace myself for the pronunciation because it's very difficult. Or, often this is the case, I just tried to use a different word and avoid that word all together, just because the pronunciation is difficult. So yeah, let's talk about this on our Discord, everyone. What are your favorite English words? And what are the English words that you hate because they're difficult to pronounce? I'm really looking forward to seeing what you guys have to say.

So, this is bonus episode number 66 of the Culips English Podcast, and I am your host and your study buddy Andrew, and it's great to be here with you today. I hope you're doing well. And I hope you had a wonderful week last week. If you're new to our bonus episode series, well, let me explain briefly what it is. It's just the series where I talk about my daily life as a Canadian living abroad in South Korea. And by listening to this series, I hope you'll be able to improve your English listening skills and your fluency, and build your vocabulary, improve your pronunciation, all of these things that will help you to achieve your goals with the English language.

There's also a transcript for this episode. It's 100% completely free, just follow the link in the description and you'll be able to get it, it comes as a PDF download or an interactive version, I recommend the interactive version, it's really cool, you can just click on any word in the transcript and hear the audio played from that point. So, it's a fantastic way to study with this episode. And again, you can grab the transcript just by following the link in the description.

So, the story I want to tell you about today is about eating lunch. About a week ago, I got a message out of the blue from my brother-in-law, my wife's brother, and he asked me out for lunch, he said, "Andrew, do you have some time next week, do you want to go out and eat lunch together? Let's hang out." And I say it was out of the blue, because we've never really hung out like that before. Of course, we've spent time together at family gatherings and with the whole family together, but never just one on one like that. And actually, I learned after the fact that the message wasn't so quite out of the blue for him.

OK, this is kind of a funny story, and maybe one where something got lost in translation along the way. Because something that South Korean people say often, kind of like small talk, it's just one of those comments that you say, that doesn't really have any deep meaning to it is saying, "Hey, let's grab some food some time together." You know, maybe you're like walking down the street and you bump into an acquaintance of yours. And you just greet them and say hello for a second. Well, then when you end that conversation, you'd say something like, "Oh, yeah, let's get together and eat something someday." And then you'd go on your way. And that comment doesn't really mean anything, right? It's not like, yeah, we're seriously going to get together and have dinner together. It's just kind of small talk that you make. That's a very common thing to say, in the Korean language.

So, I guess what happened, and I don't remember this, too clearly. But maybe sometime last year, I was at a family gathering with my wife. And when my wife and I were going home, my brother-in-law said to me, like, "Oh, Andrew, let's get together and have lunch sometime." And I said, "Oh, yeah, sounds great." You know, and that's how we ended that

interaction. Well, then fast forward several months later, and I was talking to my wife, and I was joking with her that her brother never called me to see if I wanted to hang out with him and have lunch with him. I was just joking. I knew that this kind of comment was a small-talk comment and didn't really mean anything. But I was still just, you know, teasing my wife, like, "Hey, your brother said that he wanted to get together to eat with me. And he never followed up on that." So, I was teasing my wife about that. But I guess she didn't pick up that I was just teasing her and joking around. I'm not exactly sure. But she has a Kakao Talk, Kakao Talk is the messaging app that's really popular here in Korea, she has a Kakao Talk chat room with her immediate family members, with her parents and her brother. And they all just chat together in that Kakao Talk chat room.

So, she posted in the chat room, something like "Oh, Andrew is a little bit upset that my brother never called him to hang out and eat lunch with him." So, I think my brother-in-law felt guilty when he saw that message. And I don't know, even maybe my wife was joking around in the chat room. I didn't see the context of the chat. But anyways, it got back to my brother-in-law that I had been joking about this. And I think maybe he felt a little bit bad or a little bit guilty. So, he decided to remedy that by reaching out to me. And again, you know, this was all kind of a miscommunication. Like I said, I think something got lost in translation. I was just joking around. But he just decided to clear the air and make sure everything was right, and you know, everybody felt OK. And it's always good to hang out with family anyways, right?

So, he messaged me last week, like I said, a little bit out of the blue for me a little bit suddenly for me. But of course, I was happy to get his message. And he said, "Andrew, I have a couple of days off work next week. So, if you want to get together and have lunch, let's do it." So, I definitely accepted the offer. I thought, yeah, let's do it. Let's have lunch together. And it just so happened that my wife also had that day off of work. It was a nice coincidence that we all had the same weekday off and we could all get together for lunch on a weekday, doesn't happen very often.

So, we decided to meet up in an area called Shinsa-dong, which is kind of right in between where my wife and I live and where my brother-in-law lives. So, we decided to meet in the middle. And Shinsa-dong is a little bit It upscale, rather trendy and chic, and it's one of the more affluent areas of the whole country, in fact. And for those of you who don't know, Seoul is split into two parts, there is a northern part of the city and a southern part of the city. And flowing through the middle of the city is a river called the Han River. Now I live in the northern part of the city. And I almost do everything in the northern part of the city, it's very rare, I really don't go to the southern part of the city very often, but Shinsa-dong is in the southern part of the city, so when I got off the subway, and was walking to meet my brother-in-law, it felt like I was almost in a different city, it felt like I was traveling a little bit, because I'm really unfamiliar with that part of the city. The northern part of the city is OK, you know, I've lived in Seoul for a long time. And I've spent almost all of my time in the northern part. So, I'm very comfortable navigating in the north. But when I go across the river to the south, everything is new. And I have to take out my map app and follow the directions because I really don't know what's down there. But it's cool to explore new areas often and to find new places and see new things. So, I really appreciated that I got to have lunch down there with my brother-in-law in this neighborhood that's quite new to me, that I had only explored a little bit in the past.

So, my wife and I, we took the subway down to Shinsa. And my brother-in-law actually got there early, he arrived about 30 minutes before us. And the weather was just so hot that day that he said, "Oh, I'm gonna go wait in the Apple Store for you guys to arrive. So, when you get there, just walk to the Apple Store, and I'll meet you there." So, we said, "OK, that sounds good to us." So, we arrived in Shinsa, we exited the subway station, and we made our way to the Apple Store. And something kind of funny happened in the Apple Store. Remember, this is a weekday before lunch. So, it's not exactly the most busy shopping time, especially in the sweltering heat. But as my wife and I approached the Apple Store, we could see that there were many, many people inside the Apple Store. So, we walked into the store and the store was jam packed. But weirdly enough, there were no customers in the store. They were all Apple employees, the store was packed with Apple

employees. I don't know maybe they were having a special training event or something like that for employees, because it just seemed like everybody in the store was an Apple employee. So, when my wife and I walked in, suddenly, we had like, 10 people right away be like, "Oh, can I help you? Can I help you? Can I help you" because there were just not very many regular customers in there, but they were all Apple employees.

And all of the employees were wearing a kind of dark teal t-shirt. So, you know that dark-green color. So, they all were wearing the same thing. And the funny thing was that my brother-in-law was also wearing a t-shirt that was exactly the same dark-teal color. So, when my wife and I were looking around the store we're like, "Wow, there's a lot of employees here." And we also couldn't find my brother-in-law because he just blended in with all of the employees. But eventually we did find him and then we all laughed, like, "Oh, do you work here now?" because he looked exactly like one of the employees. And although we got asked if we needed help many times just immediately after walking in, he said that nobody asked him that question, because I guess they all thought he was an employee too. So anyways, that was a funny way to start our hangout.

And we left the Apple store and we walked to a restaurant that my wife had scoped out ahead of time. And that's a great phrasal verb right there "to scope out". Of course, a scope, think of a telescope, it's a tool that you can use to see something with, right? You can magnify something and make it bigger with a scope or with a telescope. So, to scope is all about looking for something. So, to scope out means to find something or look for something in advance. So, my wife had already scoped out a restaurant. She had already found a restaurant for us in advance, and it was an Indian restaurant. So, we went, and we ate Indian food. Now, when we arrived at the restaurant, and we were seated and handed our menus, our eyes immediately went to the tandoori chicken part of the menu. That's a favorite of mine and also my wife's. So, we were going to order some tandoori chicken, but unfortunately, they were sold out for whatever reason, it seemed a little bit strange to us that at the peak of the lunch rush, that they would be sold out of tandoori chicken, but for whatever reason, they didn't have any left. So, that was a little bit unfortunate. So, instead

we decided to order a thali. And I apologize to any Indian listeners who may be listening right now if I'm not pronouncing these foods correctly, but a thali is a kind of set, a set menu. So, I believe in this thali, we got some naan which is kind of Indian flatbread, we got some rice, we had a couple of kinds of curries, there was a lassi, which was a kind of yogurt drink. And also, there were some pickled vegetables, which I think is more of a Korean touch rather than an authentic Indian food. So, we each ordered a thali, one of those sat lunch menus.

And I couldn't help but remember my time in Montreal when I was ordering that thali, because when I lived in Montreal, I lived very close to the kind of Little India area of the city, where there was a sizable Indian community and many Indian restaurants. And I also lived very, very close to where my band practiced. For those of you who don't know, one of my hobbies is music, listening to music, and also playing music. I don't play music as much anymore. But about 10 years ago, when I lived in Montreal, I was very into the local music scene, and I played in a band, and my band had a practice space, we'd call it a jam space, a jam space that was also in that little India neighborhood. And one of the things that we would do after every jam is go to this Indian restaurant that was very close to the jam space, just like a block away.

So, we get out of the jam space, and we'd walk a block to this fantastic Indian restaurant. And the reason why it was fantastic is not only because the food was excellent was extremely delicious Indian food may be some of the best I've ever had in my life. But also, the prices were excellent, it was absolutely amazing value. So, you could buy a thali at that Indian restaurant in Montreal. Now, mind you, this was a decade ago, so, I'm sure prices have gone up. But at the time, you could get a vegetarian tally set for \$5. And you could get one with chicken or lamb for \$6. So, an incredible deal. And when I lived in Montreal, I was a student and a musician. So, I didn't have very much money at the time. So, I always really, really appreciated the cheap prices. And depending on how much money I had in my pocket at the time would determine if I ate the vegetarian thali, or the thali with meat.

But anyways, ordering the tally in Shinsa-dong made me think about that time that I spent in Montreal, and a lot of good times eating Indian food with my buddies back in Montreal. Anyways, to continue with the story, my wife, and my brother-in-law, we had a wonderful lunch, it was very delicious Indian food, I don't want to say it was quite as good as the kind that I had in Montreal. But it was still very good and very satisfying. And yeah, we had a nice lunch and just spent some time hanging out and chatting. And to be honest, really getting to know each other. Like I said, I have spent time with my brother-in-law in the past. But it's always been in a bigger group setting, not really in this smaller, more intimate setting. So, it was nice just to hang out and chat and get to know each other a little bit more on a more personal level. So, we ate lunch.

And then after lunch, we crossed the street and we went to a cafe to have a coffee, or at least my wife and I had coffee. But my brother-in-law has done something really amazing over the last six months or so, and that is that he has quit coffee. So, he had tea, I believe, I think is what he drank. But my wife and I had coffee. And I asked him, "Why did you quit coffee? Like is there a special reason wasn't making you feel sick? Or were you getting too jittery drinking coffee, like what's your reason for quitting coffee?" And he told me that he felt like he was getting addicted to coffee, he would drink one cup in the morning, but then he felt the urge to drink another cup and maybe another cup. And so, he thought, you know, one cup is OK, but two cups is not OK for him. And of course, everybody has their caffeine limit, right? So, he felt like he was getting addicted to caffeine. And because of that reason, he quit. And I kind of had a laugh about that because you know, I've cut back a lot on my coffee consumption as well. But I'm still at maybe four or five cups a day, which is still cutting back a lot because I used to be at much much more than that. I used to drink maybe eight or nine or 10 cups a day, which is kind of crazy, but now maybe four or five cups of coffee. So I was really impressed with my brother in law's willpower and his ability just to cut off coffee when he felt like it was becoming an addiction right from the start. And yeah, it's always nice to nip a problem in the bud before it blossoms into a bigger problem, right? So, I really respect him for that.

Anyways, I drank my coffee, my wife drank her coffee, my brother-in-law drank his tea, I suppose. And we chatted for a little bit longer. But after we finished our drinks, then it was time to hit the road again, and we just sort of wandered around the neighborhood, we did a little bit of furniture shopping, my wife and I are still trying to furnish our new home. And there were a couple of furniture stores in the neighborhood that we wanted to check out. So, we checked those adults. And before we split up, my wife said, "Oh, we got to take pictures together." So, we went to a photo booth together. And really, I shouldn't say it's a photo booth. It's more like a photo-booth store. There are these stores that are all the rage here in South Korea, that are dedicated just to photo booths. And there's different kinds of styles, different kinds of costumes you can wear, and props that you can use in your photos to make them more entertaining and funny. And so, we went to one of these photo booth stores. And we took some photos together and it was just a nice way to be a little silly to have some fun. We all wore some kind of stupid big, oversized glasses when we took the photos together. So, it was just a nice way to cap off the hangout.

And I'm sure that in the future, when I revisit those photos, I'll be transported back to that wonderful memory of enjoying Indian food with my brother-in-law and my wife. Just like how eating the thali that we had for lunch together reminded me of the good times I spent with my buddies back in Montreal eating Indian food together.

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

Before I wrap this episode up, I want to teach you about an idiomatic expression that I used when I was telling you the story about meeting my brother-in-law for lunch. The idiom is: "To clear the air." To clear the air. Now, before I explain what this idiom means, and how you can use it in your future English speaking, I do want to go back and listen to the part of the episode where it just sprung out of my mouth in a natural way, so that we can get some context. So, let's rewind, go back, and we'll listen to that part a couple of more times. And then I'll explain all the info that you need to know to master this idiom. So, let's take another listen now. Here we go.

But he just decided to clear the air and make sure everything was right, and you know, everybody felt OK.

So, in that part of the story, I was talking about how there was a little bit of miscommunication, maybe something was lost in translation between me and my wife and my brother-in-law. And because there was some miscommunication and some misunderstanding, my brother-in-law wanted to clear the air. Now to clear the air means to resolve a misunderstanding or to discuss something openly that perhaps has been causing some tension or some uncomfortable feelings. I think this idiom is pretty easy to visualize, just imagine that you're in a place, which is really foggy or filled with smoke, like my hometown is these days, unfortunately, or maybe there is a lot of air pollution. In these kinds of environments where the air quality is bad, then it's difficult to see something clearly, right?

And this is the imagery behind the expression because similarly, when there's misunderstanding or miscommunication or some kind of unresolved issues, then communication can be clouded or unclear. So, we use this expression to clear the air when we want to confront this miscommunication, or confront the misunderstanding, or confront the unresolved issues, and to make sure that everything is OK. All right, so now that we know exactly what this idiom means, I've prepared three example sentences, and I'm going to play them for you now so that you can hear how an English native speaker would use this idiom in a very natural way in their daily life. So, let's listen to the first example sentence now. Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

You know how Lucy and Phoebe haven't been talking to each other recently? Well, they finally met up and had a long conversation to clear the air, and now they're friends again.

Let's break this example sentence down. In this example sentence, we hear about two friends, Lucy and Phoebe. And I guess there was some bad blood between them. And what I mean by bad blood is that the relationship was quite toxic. There's some issue between them that's affecting their friendship in a negative way. So, in order to resolve this problem, they got together, they had a long conversation, they talked about their feelings honestly, they cleared the air, they solved the problem, and now they're friends again.

Example sentence number two.

After avoiding each other for a week, Hannah and Renee finally sat down to clear the air, and to talk about the issue they had with the dirty dishes.

In this example sentence, we hear about two roommates. And the roommates had a problem. The problem was some miscommunication about the cleanliness level of the kitchen. And in roommate situations, sometimes this can happen, right? Everybody has a different standard for what they think is clean, or dirty. And sometimes this can cause some issues in this kind of roommate situation. I've certainly been in a situation like this with some of my past roommates. So anyways, Hannah and Renee, these two roommates, they decided to solve this problem about the dirty kitchen that they were having. So, they sat down, they talked about it, they cleared the air, and now the issue has been taken care of.

Example sentence number three.

I got the feeling that Peter was avoiding me at the party. So, I went up to him to clear the air and see if there were any issues between us.

Let's break this final example sentence down. In this example sentence, the speaker says that he got the feeling that Peter was avoiding him. So, he could sense that there was something wrong with his relationship with this other guy, Peter. So, I don't know. Maybe he did something to offend Peter, or who knows what happened? But there was some

problem. So, he wanted to clear the air. He wanted to talk about this openly, you know, go up to Peter and say, "Hey, Peter, what's up? Why are you avoiding me?" Kind of confront the issue head on, this is clearing the air. So, he went up to Peter, he cleared the air, he had a discussion. And then the example sentence ended. So, we don't know if they were able to improve the relationship or not. But the important thing here is focusing on this expression to clear the air, which again just means to talk about an issue or to discuss something openly and honestly, head on.

So that brings us to the end of another bonus episode, everyone. Thank you so much for tuning in and studying English with me today. I hope you found this episode helpful for building your English fluency. And you can be proud of yourself for getting a study session in with me here today.

And if you do find Culips helpful for improving your English, then please support the work that we do here. Now there are many ways that you could do that, you can tell your friends who are learning English to check Culips out, you could follow us on Instagram or YouTube or even better become a part of our Discord community, which again, is 100% free. And you can do that by following the link in the description for this episode. You could also leave us a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple podcasts or whatever app you use to listen to Culips. But the best way to support us is actually by signing up and becoming a Culips member. For all of the details and to become a member just visit our website [Culips.com](https://www.culips.com).

So that's it for me for now, but I'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode. Until then, take care and I'll catch you later, bye!

Episode credits

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