Chatterbox #263 – Interview with Robin MacPherson: Part 1
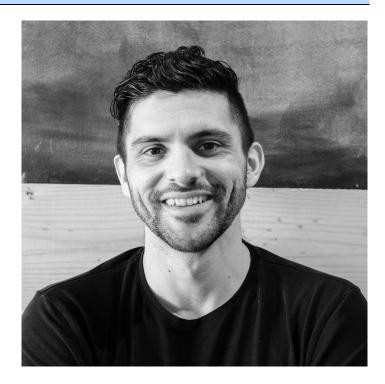
Episode description

How many languages can you speak? What are the best ways to improve your language skills? In this Chatterbox episode, Andrew talks with YouTuber, blogger, author, and polyglot Robin MacPherson. Our guest offers several tips to help you learn English with podcasts.

Fun fact

The given name of this episode's guest is Robin. There have been many Robins, both real and fictional, such as Robin Williams, Robin Hood, and Batman's sidekick Robin. Originally, the name was exclusively for males, but now it's given almost equally to males and females in the United States.

Expressions included in the study guide

➢ To exhibit traits

➢ Still in the game

➢ Over [one's] head

➢ To calibrate

➢ To eat [one's] words

➢ To internalize [something]

Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Hey, there everyone. This is Andrew and you are tuned in the Culips English Podcast.

How's it going, everyone? I hope you are doing well. Today we have a Chatterbox episode for you. And if you're not sure what Chatterbox is, well, let me explain. It is the Culips series that features completely natural English conversations. And sometimes, we chat about a cool topic, or sometimes we do an interview with a fascinating guest. And that is the kind of program that we have lined up for you here today.

In this episode, you'll get to hear a conversation that I had recently with a really interesting guy named Robin MacPherson. Now Robin is a guy who wears many hats, actually. He's an author, he's a YouTuber and, I guess most importantly, he is an expert language learner and language teacher and coach.

Now, I recently came across Robin's YouTube channel while I was YouTubing. And I was really impressed by what I saw, I thought that his content was really interesting and educational. And I thought that he would be great to have on Culips. So I invited him to come on and talk with me and to share his knowledge with all of you. And, specifically, I wanted to talk to him about a video that he uploaded within the last little while that was about how to study English, or any language, really, using podcasts. And I thought this would be really relevant to our listeners, because, well, you guys are learning English with the Culips English Podcast, right?

And Robin and I really got into the nitty-gritty of how you can use a podcast like Culips to improve your English. And Robin gives you some specific tips about how to improve all of your English skills in this interview. So you'll learn how you can improve your reading, writing, speaking, listening, and pronunciation. So there is a ton of valuable information in this interview, everyone. We'll get to my chat with Robin in just a moment.

But before we do, I want to let you know that there is a study guide available for this episode. And inside the guide, you'll find lots of awesome things, like a transcript, and detailed explanations, and real-world examples of the key vocabulary that you'll hear Robin and myself use. There's also a comprehension quiz and some prompts that you can use for speaking or writing practice. Studying along with our study guides is the best way to learn English with Culips. And we've made this study guide free and available for anyone to download. You can download a PDF version of it if you would prefer to print it off with your printer, or there is a digital copy as well that you can use for studying with a computer or a mobile device. So to get the guide for this episode, just visit our website, Culips.com.

If you like what you see in the study guide, and you want more, don't worry, we make study guides for all of our episodes here at Culips. And if you become a Culips member, then you can get unlimited access to each and every one of the study guides that we make. But that's not all, there are some more bonus perks that come along with becoming a Culips member, such as exclusive access to our Fluency Files series, and some other goodies. Like you get to come online for a livestream and hang out with the Culips members once a month. This is a new feature that we started doing and it's been really fun so far. So we hope that more people will sign up, become a member, and join us for our monthly livestreams, as well. So to get all the details about how you can sign up and become a Culips member, just visit our website, Culips.com.
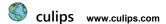
With that being said, I think it's time to get to my interview with Robin. Don't forget to check out his YouTube channel and his website, Journaly, both of those links can be found in the description for this episode. All right, so here it is: my interview with Robin MacPherson.

Hi Robin. Welcome to the Culips English Podcast. Thank you for joining us today. How's it going?

Robin: It's going really well. It's great to be here. Thanks for having me. How are you doing?

Andrew: I'm good, too. And I'm excited to talk to you. Robin, maybe we should start our interview by just telling our listeners a little bit about who you are. You are a language learner, a language teacher, and I guess we could say maybe coach? And also a YouTuber and an entrepreneur. So maybe you could just tell all of our listeners a bit about yourself?

Robin: Yeah. So I've been doing work with languages now for quite a long time. I began learning languages when I was 16. In terms of foreign languages, after having a terrible experience learning languages as a child, where I really struggled. So I started when I was 16 teaching myself Spanish and then in university, I was learning Japanese. And that's when I first began sort of tutoring people. I was tutoring, like, exchange students who are learning English, I was helping them. Then as my Japanese skills got better, I started tutoring Japanese learners and helping them.

And then, for the next 10 years, I've been doing a variety of things. I was an interpreter in Japan for a short time, and also worked as a barista in Japan. So that was a very intensive language experience that was not about education. But, yeah, after I graduated college, I started a language services company. I did translation for a while. And then a lot of teaching, a lot of coaching.

And I started my YouTube channel about 7 years ago now, and so that's been a big thing that has become a much larger part of what I do. And, yeah, I wrote a book about maintaining languages. And these last 3 years, I also built an app, which is about journaling in foreign languages. So just lots of stuff all around, just trying to help and encourage people to learn languages.

Andrew: That's awesome, then. So maybe our listeners will have picked up by now that our accents are a little bit different. I have a Canadian accent. And I know you're based in San Francisco right now. But where are you from, originally?

Robin: Yeah, so I'm from the UK, about an hour and a half or 2 hours north of London. So we call that region the Midlands. But my accent is actually a frequent topic of fascination in my YouTube comments, because I do **exhibit traits** of sort of different accents. I can certainly speak in a very, you know, full on British way with my sort of Midlands accent. But, yeah, after spending so many years living abroad and living in the US, at times I'll fall into this sort of middle accent, which confuses people a lot.

Andrew: I think it's a really nice accent, it's very clear and easy to understand. But I'm sure that our listeners would have been curious. So I had to ask about that.

Robin: I'm glad you did. Yeah, I hadn't thought of that, actually, maybe I should have spoken in a more traditional British accent the whole time, but.

Andrew: No, it's great. Keep it up, keep doing what you're doing.

So, Robin, what languages have you learned and which languages do you speak? What's your experience more as like a language learner?

Robin: Yeah, so the primary languages that I speak after English, of course, are Japanese, French, Spanish, Italian, German, Swedish, and Portuguese. I'm missing one, did I say French?

Andrew: Yes.

Robin: Let's see Japanese, oh yeah, that's all of them, including English. Yes. So eight there. But I've also been learning Mandarin Chinese for the last couple of years. And I've actually made a video having my very first conversation in Mandarin.

Andrew: Oh, cool.

Robin: But I don't, I don't feel comfortable saying I speak Mandarin Chinese just yet. I have actually learned some others. So I did a series once learning Korean for some, for a little bit. Life circumstances made it very difficult to continue, so I paused that. And I've also learned a few others. I spoke Dutch to some level of fluency once, when I was trying to get a job in the Netherlands. But I haven't spoken that for years now, so I don't include that on my list.

Andrew: OK. Wow, that's very interesting. I always have a lot of respect for polyglots like yourself, because I've been living in Korea for the last 7 years and studying Korean for about that long, and it's still a struggle for me to speak Korean. It's not an easy language. So to speak as many languages as you do, it's very, very impressive.

Robin: Thank you, I appreciate it. I spend a lot of time, that's for sure.

Andrew: So, Robin, the way that I learned about you and what you do is through the YouTube algorithm. The YouTube algorithm was nice enough to recommend one of your videos to me, and it was specifically about how to study languages with podcasts. And, of course, as an English teacher and podcaster, this was right down my alley. So I clicked right away, I watched it. And I was very impressed by the things that you had to say and the suggestions that you provided in that video. And so that's why I wanted to have you here on to Culips to talk about today how to study languages, more specifically for our audience, how to study English with podcasts. And you gave five specific tips about how to study with podcasts, how to break them down, how to kind of very efficiently study with them. And so I thought today we could go through all of those five tips and share them with our listeners.

Robin: Sounds great. Might even throw in a few bonus tips, as well.

Andrew: I love it, I love it. So the first tip here is really about how to select a podcast and how to know if a podcast is a good fit for you. Of course, our podcast is specifically for English language learners. But I never recommend to anybody just to study with one source. So, guys who are listening right now, you should be listening to many podcasts, I think that is a really good idea. So if our listeners wanted to try and branch out into content that's made for native speakers, how would they know if a podcast is a good fit for them?

Robin: Yeah, so the first tip I'll give is to pick something that is, you know, hopefully of real genuine interest to you. And the interesting thing, this is a bit counterintuitive, is that I recommend giving yourself a chance. So what I mean by that is don't quit after the first 30 seconds of it. If you're like, oh, you know, I'm missing a lot of words, give yourself like between 2 and 5 minutes. And if you're completely lost, you know, then I would say that might be too difficult for you at this particular stage.

But if you can, after those 2 to 5 minutes and, you know, if you're **still in the game**, maybe try 10 minutes, however long. If you can answer a few basic questions, you know, if you're able to say what happened. You know, what was the key thing that happened in whatever segment I listened to. You know, who are the main people being talked about, whether it's a conversation or whether it's a story and so there's a character. If you could answer a few of these basic contextual questions, then I would say it's perfect. You know, go for it. But what often happens is that if you focus on just that first 20 seconds and you think, oh, I missed five words already, then you can get this sort of illusion that it's way, way, way too hard. That might be true, but I've found that there's this very interesting level of listening comprehension that is a real sweet spot where you're missing a certain number of words, but you're able to follow the narrative.

Andrew: OK, so don't stress out about understanding every single detail. But you do want to understand some of the details, right? Kind of the main gist of the story, kind of the basic flow of what's going on. But if you can grasp that and understand that, then it could be a good fit for you.

Robin: Exactly, I think so.

Andrew: OK. And of course, something that's interesting is best, right? If the topic or the podcast in general it doesn't really align with one of your passions, then it's probably not a good fit.

Robin: Exactly. Yeah. Just this week, I made a video about how I had listened to a Spanish podcast episode about coffee. My viewers know I'm really into coffee. And so I chose that podcast episode because I was, like, oh my God, this is really interesting. It's about coffee production in Colombia. And I can, you know, learn about that while improving my Spanish. So it's always good and so that curiosity is gonna carry me over the difficult bits, right, and the gaps that I have.

Andrew: Awesome. OK. So now we can move on to step 2. We have the podcast, we found a good fit. It's about something that we're interested in. We can understand kinda the basics of what's happening in the episode. So what is step 2? What is the next step to do?

Robin: So, if possible, the next step is to use a transcript. Now there are two branches here. On one side there is, of course, maybe that resource has the transcript already, that's one thing. But that's often not the case, right? And so what I would say is that the other way is to transcribe it yourself. And these are both really interesting approaches. And I think that everybody should try both. So even if there is a transcript available, it's still an amazingly powerful method of study to actually try transcribing things yourself. Now, of course, there are challenges there. You might need someone to help you, so it's best if you have, let's say, a tutor or a friend. If you have the resources, there are websites online you can, you know, pay somebody to transcribe it afterwards for, like, $5 or something. But a transcript is incredibly helpful when studying podcasts.

Andrew: OK, yeah, I fully agree with you. That's one of the reasons that we make transcripts for all of our episodes here at Culips is because having that resource and being able to see exactly what is said is very powerful, like you said. But I also agree, and I've done this with my own Korean studies as well, is that transcribing yourself can be an awesome way to pick up on details and vocabulary and expressions that would have just sort of flown **over your head** if you weren't focusing in on trying to understand every single thing that is said in the podcast.

Robin: Yeah, I actually, I had some fascinating examples with that Spanish podcast, because there was one instance where, or two instances and the first 1 minute, where I thought I understood what was said, but once I got to transcribing it, I realized it was actually not what I thought. It was close, but there were like two different words that blended together. And what I found is that often, you do get this illusion that you're understanding more than you actually are. Like, once you're able to follow the narrative. I think in the beginning is the opposite, we think, oh, I'm not understanding enough, right? But once you can kind of follow along, we might get this impression that we're understanding 95% of what's happening. But transcription really shows you all the gaps. And I think of it like an engine–

Andrew: Yes. It's humbling.

Robin: Yeah, I think of it like **calibrating** an engine, you know, where your ears are the engine, and it's, like, they work, but they're not completely efficient. And so transcribing and listening to some sounds that you didn't originally detect, and suddenly showing your ears like, oh, no, this is what's actually being said. It's like **calibrating** that engine and making it more and more efficient, until eventually you're able to hear all those fine details and nuances of, you know, how sounds blend together, how native speakers mumble, how they **eat their words**. It's a great process, I think.

Andrew: And, yeah, I totally agree with you. And I think even if you have the transcript available, transcribing what you hear yourself is, yeah, a great technique. And then the nice thing about having a transcript is that you can check, right? You can check your own work. And you don't have to bother a native speaker to check your transcript for you to see if it's OK or pay somebody. So that is another advantage of having the transcripts. But definitely I would recommend to anybody who hasn't tried this technique yet to try transcribing what you're listening to. And I don't think you need to do the whole podcast too, right? You could just do a 5-minute chunk or a 2-minute chunk, and that would be great.

Robin: Yeah, I mean, you could take one episode of this podcast, for example, and then you could just say, right, I'm gonna listen to the first 10 minutes. And then I'm going to try and transcribe the second 10 minutes, and maybe I'll see what the experience is. Like, you know, am I surprised by how difficult or how easy it was to transcribe it? And like you say, then you have the transcript and you can check your work. It's perfect.

Andrew: Perfect. OK. So step 2, transcription. And step 3, then we're moving on to getting more into the nitty-gritty, right? Listening, more often picking apart the episode. What is step 3, exactly?

Robin: So this one is interesting. Some people love this and there are some people who don't. And my suggestion here would be, let's have an open mind with this step, which is basically listening multiple times. So what I like to do is I will actually, if I can, you know, I have these on my phone or some kind of mobile device so that when I'm walking, and when I'm, you know, going out and about doing things like ironing, washing the dishes, anything where it's kind of like dead time, then I like to re-listen to the podcast episode once I've already studied it, right?

So in step 2, we're studying that transcript, right? We're kind of going through, taking notes, highlighting things, pulling out any phrases and words where you say to yourself, oh, that's wonderful. I want that in my repertoire. But for me, the magic then is listening over and over again.

And the way I keep this interesting is two things. First of all, I build up a catalogue of these things, right? So once I have five or six, maybe ten episodes I've listened to, and they could be totally different subjects and different things, then it's nice that I can just shuffle. So I never know what's gonna come up and I can, you know, shuffle between different things.

The second thing is just knowing how unbelievably helpful this is. It really is, because once you listen the second time, it's amazing how many small things you notice that you didn't the first time. And then the third and fourth time, you know, it really starts to become like internal for you, you know, you start to find yourself almost repeating out loud things because you know what's coming and you can expect it.

So that's my third step is listening multiple times. Some people really have an aversion to listening to the same thing over and over. And I do get that. I would just suggest give it a try because it's so helpful.

Andrew: Yeah, I completely agree with you. I think this is one of the things that has kind of supercharged my Korean listening skills is repetitive listening and just listening again, and again, and again, until, like you said, I can almost say the content of the episode along with the speaker as I'm listening and it just kind of gets ingrained into your head.

And I also think is really powerful for learning idioms, expressions, vocabulary, especially with words that you don't encounter too often in other sources or maybe your regular everyday life. You know, we need to meet or encounter new vocabulary many times before we can fully **internalize it**. And this is a great way to meet that word many, many times, right? If there's a new expression in the podcast, and then you listen to that podcast 20 times, well, your brain has heard it and **is internalizing it** and learning it 20 times. So, yeah, I think it's a very powerful listening technique.
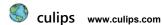
Robin: For sure. And I think it heightens your ability to notice repetition. Some people say, no, just listen to lots of content. And you'll naturally notice things popping up over and over again. I think that's true. But I think you actually get the best of both worlds when you do this idea of let me collect five or ten episodes that are different, so I get that breadth, but let me listen to them over and over again in random sequences. And then you're really going to notice, like, wow, this word came up over and over again, you know, or this expression came up over. Or you might notice differences, like, oh, in this episode, they said it this way, but they use the very similar thing, but differently. And it's amazing the analysis that you do, and you just can't do that if you only give yourself one chance every time.

Andrew: For sure, for sure. So do you have a recommendation about how many times somebody should listen to one single episode before they move on to a new one?

Robin: I would say, if you can, I think five is pretty great, three also great. It's kind of like the more, the better. Personally, I get so much satisfaction when I take something and I can say I understand 100% of this. You know, like that's it for me, like, the fact that the first time around, I got, like, 60% and now I know it inside and out, back to front, I can repeat things, that's a great thing for me. But I know that not everybody has, you know, that tolerance to listen. But I think if you can get the three or five, that's pretty good.

Andrew: OK, three or five. Awesome. Yeah, I think this is a very personal choice. And it's hard for us to give recommendations. I think if you're sick of something and you hate listening to it and it's boring and doesn't excite you anymore, then it's time to move on, right? But if you're still learning something and, for me and it sounds like for you as well, we sort of get motivation from the repetition and from having little parts and nuances unlocked through repetition. So for me, I find it, like, motivating to listen to something again and again. But eventually I hit that point where it's boring and I just can't stand it anymore. And then I just move on to something else. But maybe 6 months later, or three months later, I'll come back and listen again. And just like you said, if you have that playlist and you can cycle back to material that you've spent a lot of time with but then have moved on from, come back, coming back to it, I think is also good for your ears and encouraging because you're, like, oh, I understand all of this now, the hard work that I did is paying off.

Robin: Yeah, exactly. Because the thing is that usually when you listen one time, again, you'll get a lot of it, but you'll miss a lot, too. And it's, we don't realize how much we miss, just the little, tiny things, right? So the thing is that if you only listen once to everything, then you never give yourself the chance to actually pick up that last little 5%. It might be just 5% of little things. But you don't get that one time through. And, yeah, I'm sure you can get there in the end. But in my experience, and also teaching lots of students, like, it gets you there so much faster, because it is that last little 5%, understanding the mumbles and the things blending together that can be really critical if you want to develop really good speaking skills and listening skills.

Andrew: OK, everyone, we're going to wrap up Part 1 of my interview with Robin right here. But don't worry, we'll be back soon with Part 2. And in Part 2, you'll get to hear the conclusion to our discussion about how to learn English with podcasts. Don't forget to check out Robin's YouTube channel for more information about how to study English. The link's in the description for this episode.

And if you want to learn more about the Culips English Podcast or listen to any of our previous episodes, then just visit our website, Culips.com. Thanks for listening and take care. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

To exhibit traits
Idiom

In the beginning of this episode, Robin talks about his accent and where it comes from. Because he has lived abroad for so long, his accent has changed. He says he **exhibits traits** of different accents when he speaks. A trait is a characteristic unique to someone or something. **To exhibit traits** is to show those unique characteristics. When Robin speaks, he shows some characteristics that people think are from his Midlands accent and some from a more American way of speaking.

A similar expression is **to exhibit signs**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to exhibit traits**:

Paddy: We're having a get-together tomorrow. Can you invite your friend Luanne?

Martha: That's a great idea. She really could use some company.

Paddy: Why do you say that?

Martha: I feel like she's been **exhibiting traits** of depression lately. I'm trying to give her as much support as I can.

Paddy: You're a good friend.

Erik: How is your son doing?

Sheila: He's doing great. He has already started to run.

Erik: Oh boy. When they start running around the house, it's trouble.

Sheila: Yeah, he's got a lot of energy. He's starting **to exhibit a lot of the same athletic traits** as his older sister. I'm going to bring him to the pool with me this weekend to see if he likes swimming.

Still in the game
Phrase

In this episode, the first tip Robin offers is to pick learning material that genuinely interests you and to give it some time. He suggests not giving up on the material too early. If you are **still in the game** after a few minutes, try a little longer. **Still in the game** means you are still doing something and have not abandoned your goal of success. This expression comes from sports. For example, if you are losing 5 to 2 in hockey but there are two periods left, you still have plenty of time to score more points. The game isn't over yet, so you shouldn't give up your goal of winning. You are **still in the game**.

A similar expression is **still in the running**.

Here are a couple more examples with **still in the game**:

Seb: I heard you're **still in the running** for the vice president of marketing job.

Ariana: You did? That's good. I didn't think I was.

Seb: Why do you say that?

Ariana: I don't know. It's just a feeling I have.

Seb: Don't think like that. You're **still in the game**, my friend. Have a little optimism.

Sharon: How is our bid for the Johnson contract going?

Benji: We're waiting for a counteroffer. It should be coming later today.

Sharon: Are we the only company bidding for the contract?

Benji: No. Bennett's is also negotiating.

Sharon: Bennett's is **still in the game**? I don't like the sound of that. They're ruthless.

Over [one's] head
Phrase

In this episode, Andrew talks about how some expressions can fly **over your head** if you are not focusing. When something goes **over [one's] head**, that means it is not understood. It can be either because you don't have the ability to understand or because you are not paying enough attention.

You can put **over [one's] head** in a few different expressions. You can say something flies **over your head** or goes **over your head**. You can also simply say, "It's **over my head**." That means you don't understand.

Here are a couple more examples with **over [one's] head**:

Andrea: Are you nervous about your speech?

Nana: A little. Do you have any advice for me?

Andrea: You should be well prepared. That's the most important thing.

Nana: Good. That's my strong point.

Andrea: Also, you should keep it simple. You don't want your ideas to fly **over their heads**.

Nana: That makes sense. My speech is kind of technical. I think I need to change a few things. Thanks.

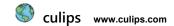**Monica:**   How was your double date?

Dean: It went well enough.

Monica: But?

Dean: But I didn't find the general conversation very interesting.

Monica: How come?

Dean: The three other people at the table were all engineers, so they talked a lot about that. Any kind of engineering talk goes right **over my head**.

To calibrate
Verb

In this episode, Robin likens transcribing the text of a podcast **to calibrating** an engine. **To calibrate** is to adjust or fine-tune something. The engine of your car needs the proper **calibration** to run smoothly. In archery, you need to properly **calibrate** your sights to guide your shot. If the scale in your kitchen isn't well **calibrated**, you won't get an accurate measure.

Although **to calibrate** is most often used with machines that have moving parts, you can use it for personal skills. For example, you can **calibrate** your ears to better listen to music.

Here are a couple more examples with **to calibrate**:

Heath: Why do I keep missing the target?

John: That's strange. You're usually pretty good at shooting.

Heath: Can you tell me where I'm hitting?

John: You're always hitting the lower left part of the target.

Heath: What do you think the problem is?

John: Hand me your rifle. Ah, I see. You didn't **calibrate** it properly. Here, try it again.

Orville: Do you like puzzles?

Becky: I love them.

Orville: That's cool. Are you any good at them?

Becky: Actually, I'm great at them. I have a table at my house where I do 2000-piece puzzles.

Orville: Wow. How did you get so good?

Becky: I used to do them constantly with my mom when I was a child. That totally **calibrated** my eyes to see the layout of the pieces clearly. Do you want to try one together?

To eat [one's] words
Idiom

Talking about the difficulties of listening to podcasts, Robin mentions that native speakers have a tendency to mumble or **to eat their words**. In this sense, **to eat [one's] words** is to not speak clearly. It's as if you were eating with your mouth full of food, but instead of chewing on food, you are chewing on your words.

Unrelated to the first definition, **to eat [one's] words** also means to admit you have said or done something wrong. Saying, "I have **to eat my own words**" is a humiliating way to admit that you have to apologize for something. Saying, "I'll make you **eat your own words**" to someone else is a strong threat. Be careful when saying it.

Here are a couple more examples with **to eat [one's] words**:

Beck: I think you should hit the highway first and then take the small roads before you hit the interchange.

Hillary: What?

Beck: I think you should hit the highway then take small road before the interchange.

Hillary: I'm not sure I understand. I feel like you're **eating your words**. Can you please speak more clearly?

Beck: OK. Sorry about that.

Fanny: So, what happened after your argument with your sister?

Olive: It turns out that she was right.

Fanny: Is everything all right now?

Olive: Kind of. I had to **eat my words**.

Fanny: Did she accept your apology?

Olive: We'll see.

| **To internalize [something]** |
| Verb |

The third pointer Robin offers is for learners to do repeated listening. Andrew agrees and says that after listening to something 20 times, he can really **internalize the expressions** he is learning. **To internalize [something]** is to incorporate something into yourself. If you **internalize new words**, they becomes part of the vocabulary you use. If you **internalize an idea**, that idea becomes part of you and your way of thinking.

Another common use of **to internalize [something]** is when you have an emotion within you but do not want to show it. You keep that emotion to yourself.

Here are a couple more examples with **to internalize [something]**:

Sandra: What is the subject of the debate tonight?

Kelly: Immigration.

Sandra: Wow, that's a big one. What do you think about that?

Kelly: The more, the better. I think we as a country should incorporate and **internalize the cultures and values of our immigrants**. It would only make us stronger.

Sandra: We'll see what the politicians have to say.

Sam: How have you and Gary been since the lockdown?

Julie: It's been difficult. Our apartment isn't very big, you know.

Sam: I know. Because of the pandemic, a lot of couples are arguing.

Julie: Same at my place. Gary tends to **internalize his emotions** and doesn't share that much. I never know how he's feeling or what he's thinking. That's a problem.

Quiz

1. What does still in the game mean?

a) it's not yet over
b) the game is almost over
c) you still have talent
d) it's no longer competitive

2. If something is over your head, it is _____.

a) a silly idea
b) too easy to misunderstand
c) not understood
d) a high-minded idea

3. Which of the following does NOT mean to eat [one's] words?

a) to apologize
b) to mumble
c) to speak unclearly
d) to speak slowly

4. True or false? One of the meanings of to internalize [something] is keep your emotions to yourself.

a) true
b) false

5. If you are calibrating something, you are _____.

a) adjusting it
b) cutting it
c) throwing it
d) celebrating it

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. Which of the tips offered by Robin MacPherson do you think will work the best for you?

2. What do you do when a native English speaker uses vocabulary that is over your head?

3. How much time do you spend calibrating your skills?

4. What kind of special traits did you exhibit at an early age?

5. Tell about an embarrassing moment when you had to eat your words.

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits	
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