

Chatterbox #264 – Interview with Robin MacPherson: Part 2

Episode description

We are back with Part 2 of Andrew's interview with Robin MacPherson! In this episode, Robin shares the last two steps of his five-step method to better learn a new language.

Fun fact

In this episode, Andrew and Robin talk about the importance of podcast listening for language learning. There is no shortage of choice. According to the website Podcast Industry Insights, there are more than 1.8 million podcasts to choose from!

Expressions included in the study guide

- Solid
- To roll up [one's] sleeves
- To do heavy lifting
- [Something] is getting old
- Granular
- To keep things fresh



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 to the Culips English Podcast.

In this Chatterbox episode, you'll get to listen to the second part of my interview with YouTuber and language education expert Robin MacPherson. So if you haven't heard Part 1 yet, make sure to check that episode out first. You can do that on our website, Culips.com. And then you can come back and listen to the second part of the interview here.

In Part 1 of the interview, Robin started to share the five-step method that he has for how to learn a language. And in our situation here, we focused on English by using a podcast. Quiz time: Do you remember what steps 1 to 3 were? Those are the steps we covered in Part 1 of the interview. Well, if you can't remember, that's all right. Let me refresh your memory in case you forgot. Step 1: listen for the gist and general meaning. Step 2: study with a transcript. And step 3: listen again, many times.

Guys, Robin's advice is really **solid** and I think if you apply what he says to how you study English with Culips, you'll be able to make a lot of progress. Don't forget to check out Robin's YouTube channel and website. The links for both are in the description for this episode. So we're gonna pick things up where we left off in Part 1 of the interview, with step 4 of Robin's podcast study method. So here we go. Enjoy the rest of the interview.

All right, so why don't we move on to step 4? Now I think this is where we need **to roll up our sleeves** and really **do the heavy lifting**, in step 4. And that is doing some practice exercises with the podcast episode. So could you break it down for us? What is step 4 all about?

Robin: Yeah, so this is actually where we start to really round out this method into not just our input, like our listening skills, but also output, right? And so I have a few different methods here. One, I call it the podcast interview method, where what I do then is I try to insert myself into the episode, right? So like, let's say we're talking about cars, just as a different example, because I'm sure that me **talking about coffee is getting a little bit old** for some people. So let's say it's about cars, well, maybe then I pause it in the middle and I pretend that I'm one of the guests on the podcast and someone's asking me, OK, what was your first car? Or what's your favourite car? Or anything, right? Any question that's related to the episode and it's something that I have a lot to say about, right?

But what I do then is I'll actually ask myself the same question every day for a week. So for me, I do it in the mornings, because that's my, that's when it works for me. And what I find is on the first day, you might stumble a bit and you might have to think about certain vocabulary words and things. Second day, it gets easier, but there's no script. So every day, there's still gonna be lots of differences. By the third and fourth day, you start to find that it's effortless, right? You've internalized the vocab. Let's say I had to learn some words like breakdown, a car breaking down, for example, a flat tire. Just examples, right? So the third or fourth day, these are easy words, though. And so by the end of the week, I start to say, can I give a completely different answer to the question. And this is fantastic, because it gives you a chance to actually pull out certain phrases and words from the transcript that you made. And then try to use those in your own speech. You get to learn new words, and it's just really great.

And then a second activity is sort of a 4-3-2-1 method, I think was introduced by Paul Nation. And that's basically where, I think it's primarily a partner activity but I do this by myself, as well. Basically, you just try to summarize the episode in 4 minutes. And then you take a break. And then see if you can do it again in 3 minutes. And then in 2 minutes. And I think Paul Nation might stop at 2 minutes. I have to check, but I even go for one. And the idea here is that, first, it's repetition, it's practice. But it's also extremely helpful because you have to be more and more concise, right? And so part of that might just be stumbling less, right? Or forgetting things less. But it's also about can you express yourself more concisely, right, in a more, shorter format. And that can be really helpful for, you know, this kind of cognitive process that we go through when forming our thoughts in a new language.

Andrew: Sure. So I guess the idea there is that the time constraint is forcing you to become more fluent with your speech, right? Cutting out those pauses, you don't have to think as hard to try and find the vocabulary that you want to use. And the end result is going to be more fluent speech, which is awesome.

Now, Robin, I did want to go back to the first technique that you mentioned, kind of inserting yourself in to the interview. And so when you mentioned that you are, you know, answering the question yourself, are you doing this just in your head? Are you speaking aloud? Are you recording yourself? What kind of response are you giving?

Robin: That's a great question. So I personally like to do this out loud. You certainly could do it in your head, especially if you're on a train or somewhere. But I think this is a great way to get real speaking practice. And I actually, I did this myself, I made a video, you know, demonstrating the results where I spoke German. And some people said, well, is that really gonna translate to a real conversation. So like, 2 weeks later, I was interviewed in German and that was like my second conversation in German. So, like, it showed that you can really get real speaking practice here, even if you're by yourself. And so I think that starts with speaking out loud.

And you make a great point there, where you can absolutely record yourself. I find that recording yourself speak is so great because, once you get over the uncomfortableness of listening to your own voice, it's amazing, because you very—I'm sure you've had that with editing these episodes. But it's amazing, because you can hear your own mistakes, you find sometimes that you actually can hear 50% of your own mistakes and it's very powerful.

Andrew: Yeah, I couldn't agree more with you. Whenever I record myself speaking Korean and then I listen to it, I'm always shocked. Like, the way that my brain listens and hears my own speech is much different than reality. And for whatever reasons, our brains deceive us this way. And we can think that we're speaking a lot more accurately and fluently than we really are. And if you listen to yourself, I can guarantee you it will be uncomfortable. Like I was laughing, because I hate listening to my voice, even when I'm speaking English. This is something that I've sort of gotten over from podcasting. But when you do it in a second language, it's equally as awkward. But it's great for honing in on some of the errors that you're making. And just to hear it with a fresh set of ears is wonderful. It's very helpful.

Robin: I agree.

Andrew: All right. So stage 4, then, just to summarize, is about getting into the nitty-gritty and speaking using the podcast as a launch board for speaking, either to insert yourself into the episodes and have a kind of imaginary conversation with the podcast hosts or by summarizing the episode and giving yourself time constraints that will push you towards speaking more fluently.

Robin: Exactly.

Andrew: And now it is time for the final step. Step 5. So, what's up with step 5?

Robin: So this step is—I call it optional, you know, but they're all optional, of course. But this is shadowing. And so I'm not sure if you've spoken about shadowing on your podcast before or not.

Andrew: Yeah, we have from time to time, for sure.

Robin: Yeah, I find this a really interesting topic because shadowing is often spoken about as a, like, a one-step process, where you listen to something and then you just try to repeat it afterwards. For me, it's much more **granular**. So I have a whole process where I start with sort of mumbling. So for those people who don't know, shadowing is basically where you're kind of in the shadow of the person speaking. And so as they speak, you try to say the exact same thing, you know, half a second after them. And so this is quite challenging.

So in the beginning, I mumble and I'll just kind of mumble along a couple times, then I will actually try to say it out loud. We have no emotion. I'm just trying to see if I can keep up and I can just make sure I say all the words. So having your transcript is very helpful here because you can read along, right? After that, I take away the transcript and I try to see can I actually just rely on my ears. And then finally I build up to where I'm also including emotion, right?

So the viewers, the listeners might be able to tell I'm quite an animated speaker, you know, I'm sure my voice is going up and down and very excited at times. So the final step is, really, can you truly mimic that? You know, if someone's sad, can you be sad, right? If someone's happy, can you be happy? I use emotions here, because it's easy for us to think about. But what's really happening is you are starting to, like, weave in the rhythmic sort of fabric of a language into your own speech. So happiness is easy to identify. But it's really about, well, how do people talk when they're happy? Is it oh, my gosh, that's so amazing. Like this amazing, right? And so that's basically it. It's, like, as you're walking around, as you're outside in the park, if there's no one around, just shadowing, choosing maybe a 30-second segment, you know, maybe you have your favourite point in the podcast, 1 or 2 minutes.

Andrew: And maybe picking a speaker that you want to sound like, too. I would think that would be a very good idea, right? So identifying somebody who you, you really like the way they talk, you want to sound like them when you speak English, or whatever language you're learning, and then shadowing with that person. Like, I would try personally to or I have shadowed with Korean men that are around my age. So those are the guys that I want to hone in on because I want to speak like them, I want to copy them. I wouldn't choose, like, an older grandma or someone like that because that's not the vibe that I'm going for with my own speaking.

Robin: I agree. Yeah. It's also good for accents and dialects. I mean, depending on what level you are. I think in English, I would imagine it's particularly prevalent. You know, learning Japanese, for example, in my case, I later did start learning a few different dialects, but it was mostly out of interest and it was when I was at a much higher level. There's not many beginners or intermediate learners debating should they learn a different accent or dialect. But in the case of English, it's certainly possible, you know, for a variety of reasons that somebody might want to focus on American English or British English or New Zealand or Australia, a whole different number. And so that can also be a great way to fine-tune the way that you speak the language you're learning. And, yeah, so it's really good.

And I will also say that this is one magical thing that happens when you engage in shadowing. And my experience is you truly do internalize what's being said to the point that when you are in a real conversation in real life and the exact scenario pops up, I have found that I'm able to perfectly, you know, repeat what was said in my podcast. And those are the moments when people are amazed. And they say, wow, that was really natural, like, you know, and you get that from this sort of intensive repetition. Like I said, if you can even mimic the emotion behind something, those are the best moments, I think.

Andrew: Awesome. Well, Robin, thank you for sharing these tips with us. I think this is an amazing way to study, with a podcast episode. I just have a couple questions for you before we wrap up. I guess the first one is, you know, this is a very intensive process, going from step 1 to 5, how long does it take you to really, you know, do all of these five steps with a podcast that you're listening to?

Robin: Well, the nice thing is that this method, it's the cyclical method, right? So you go through it, let's say you take five podcast episodes that you see, you've chosen the five, you don't have to do that. Well, you're gonna start step 1 with the first episode. But then when you get to step 3, where you're listening multiple times, then you're gonna start step 1 with the second episode. And so this can drag on for, you know, 2 or 3 months where like, where, after a week or two, you're done with the first one. And then after another week, you're done with the second one. And by the time you pass a month, or two, you know, that maybe you have three or four or five episodes.

But for me, it's kind of staggered, right? Because, again, I do want to keep it interesting. And so while I'm going through and I'm transcribing, **to keep things fresh**, I'll listen to the next one just one time, you know, just for fun, right? And so, the magic of this method is sticking with it for a few months to where you do get through, like, three or four episodes. That's been my experience. It's so rewarding.

Andrew: Right on. OK, this next question for you is just something that I thought of while we were chatting here. And that is now like when you watch a video on YouTube, or many podcasts, players as well have this feature, where you can adjust the speed. So you can speed something up that you're listening to, or you can slow it down. Of course, it's not perfect, especially when you slow the content down, you know, the audio stretches and distorts a little bit. But I've used this before, the speed up and speed down function, if we can call that. What do you think about maybe adjusting the speed of a podcast that you're listening to if you find it too fast at first?

Robin: Yeah, I would say my only precaution here would be to not rely on it too much. That's my personal thought. So where I would use this feature is, you know, I'm transcribing something, for example, and it's just, like, I just can't hear just one little part, let me slow it down and see if—because at that point, my only goal is, like, I just want to make sure I know what they're saying, you know?

Now, personally, I believe a major component of reaching these really high levels of listening comprehension, right? So these are the levels where you, you're going to go and engage in society, in everyday life, there's got to be an element of struggle, in my personal opinion, because you have to become comfortable with a certain amount of ambiguity.

And so that's my only caution when it comes to using it. As long as it doesn't become the only way that you listen to stuff, right? Because I do think we should embrace that struggle. Because when you're out in the real world, you're in a job interview, or you're at work at the lunch table, or whatever it might be, it's gonna be intense. And so there's a great amount of value in becoming comfortable not understanding everything and with things moving faster than you can kind of keep up with.

Andrew: Sure, yeah, so don't use it as a crutch. Actually, the way that I've used it, and this was just accidentally, I didn't mean to do this, but I was listening to a podcast that was on YouTube. And I was watching English content earlier. And whenever I watch videos on YouTube, I speed up the speed to one and a half times. It's just faster for me to get through English content when it's sped up. Then I moved on to Korean content, but I forgot to adjust the speed. And I was listening to it, it was like—I was following along, but I was, like, man, these guys are speaking faster than they usually do. And then at the end of the episode, I realized, oh, I had it still set to one and a half speed. But then when I went back to just regular speed, it was suddenly so much easier to understand. I was, like, wow, they're speaking slow now.

So I think maybe playing around with the speed, not going slower, but by speeding up and then going back to regular speed. I don't know. I think it's fun to play around and maybe our listeners can try this and see how it works for them, as well.

Robin: I might try this myself, actually, because I've had experiences going through programming tutorials. I work full-time currently as a software engineer. And I've gone on 2x speed and it's really funny when you come off of two times speed and everything sounds so incredibly slow, you know, for the first, like, few minutes. So it's not a bad idea as an interesting method.

Andrew: It's something to experiment with, I think.

Robin: Yeah. Good thought.

Andrew: OK, Robin, I have one final question for you here before I let you go. And I'm putting you on the spot a little bit. But since we're talking about podcasts, and since our listeners are probably, after they finish listening to this episode, they're going to look for interesting English podcasts to listen to. Do you have a favourite English podcasts that you could recommend to our listeners?

Robin: This might be a bit cliché as someone working as a software engineer in Silicon Valley, but I really enjoy How I Built This with Guy Raz

Andrew: That's a great one.

Robin: Yeah, there's just, at this point there is so many episodes. I have a bunch of favourites. I really liked the one about Stripe, which is fun because you get exposure to an Irish accent. But there's, there's so many really good episodes that—I also really enjoyed the one that was about, it's not Stripe, actually, it's their competitor. I actually forget the name now. I will—

Andrew: It's not Shopify, is it?

Robin: Yes, Shopify. Yes. Thank you. Yeah. So, but there are lots of good ones. I've really enjoyed that great episode by Sal Khan about Khan Academy.

Andrew: Yup.

Robin: So, yeah, I think it's nice because you get a really good variety of really interesting stories And, again, people come from all over the place. So you get exposure to different accents and dialects. So, yeah, that's a podcast I really like.

Andrew: Cool. Yeah. And that podcast is all about entrepreneurs and how they built up their businesses to very high, successful levels. And I like that podcast as well. So I would recommend it to any of our listeners.

Robin: Sorry, I didn't even say, I didn't even say what it was about.

Andrew: It's all good. It's all good.

Robin: So, yeah, it's really well produced. So they're a bit long, but well worth a listen, I'd say.

Andrew: Absolutely. OK, Robin, so I think we'll end it here. But before we do, I would like to get you to plug your internet presence. Could you let us know where we can find you on YouTube and the web?

Robin: Yeah, so my, currently my primary sort of presence is on YouTube. So if you could just google my name, Robin McPherson on YouTube, you'll find my channel. And I could also do an exclusive little invitation here for your listeners, if they would like to join the beta of my journaling platform, because by the time this comes out, I think will be more or less in public anyway. But that's Journaly.com if anybody wants to go and practice their journaling.

Andrew: Yeah, can you tell us about that a little bit before we finish up here? What exactly is Journaly? I just signed up for it myself. I haven't written anything on there yet. But I'm going to do it, I promise. Can you just let us know, what is Journaly, exactly?

Robin: Yeah, so Journaly is a platform for writing in foreign languages. And it's framed around this idea of journaling, basically. Now, you can write anything you want. But it's, the idea is helping people to build a good, healthful, positive habit around using their language skills. And I find that writing is actually incredibly powerful. And I think it's the most undervalued activity in language learning. I rarely hear people talking about how powerful writing is.

But, you know, we talked about how when you listen to yourself, it's amazing. Like, wow, did I really say that, and in the moment, when you're speaking, it's all happening so fast that it's often very difficult to be very thoughtful about creating elegant, natural speech. And so when you write, you have that opportunity. But the other component is feedback. You know, when you speak to people, it's pretty difficult to get good feedback, right? Unless they're gonna stop you every 6 seconds, at which point it's not a very good conversation.

Andrew: It doesn't happen in my experience, yeah.

Robin: Yeah. And so with writing, though, you have this amazing opportunity to get the most **granular** feedback on anything. And you can also access that feedback at any time. So Journaly, basically, it's a platform where you can write journal entries in, let's say, English. We have loads of native English speakers. We've had a really good success rate when it comes to people getting feedback. So I think for your listeners it's a good opportunity to get lots of good feedback. People can drag and they can select specific parts of your thing and they can give you feedback. You can open a thread and have a conversation. That's the basic gist. It's a place to practice writing and get feedback and connect with people that hopefully are interesting for you.

Andrew: Awesome. Well, that sounds great. And I would encourage all of our listeners to check it out. The website address for Journaly is?

Robin: It's Journaly.com. There's the word journal, J-O-U-R-N-A-L. We have a Y on the end. Journaly.com. And, yeah, I'm also on Instagram. I'm just getting my momentum there, still getting started. But, yeah, YouTube's definitely the best place people can find me.

Andrew: Awesome. All right, Robin. Well, we'll leave it at here. Thank you so much. This was really educational and enlightening. And I think our listeners will really enjoy it as much as I did. So thanks again.

Robin: Yeah, thanks so much for having me. It was a really nice conversation.

Andrew: I hope you all enjoyed that interview with Robin as much as I did. I think he's a really fascinating guy and I really liked talking with him. Don't forget to check out Robin's YouTube channel and website, Journaly. And once again, the links for both of those can be found in the description for this episode.

If you enjoy studying with Culips and you find us to be interesting or entertaining or maybe, perhaps most importantly, educational, then please support us. And there are many ways that you can do that. For example, you could tell your friends who are studying English to study with Culips, you could leave a five-star rating and a nice review on Apple Podcasts or wherever you get your podcasts. As well, you could sign up and become a Culips member. And for information about all of the details and all of the perks that you get when you become a member, just visit our website, Culips.com. Really, becoming a Culips member is the best way to learn English with us and also offer your support so that we can keep teaching English to English learners all around the world.

So we'll leave it at here for today, everyone, but thanks for tuning in. And we'll be back soon with another brand-new Culips episode. Take care and talk to you soon. Bye.

Detailed Explanations

Solid Adjective

In the beginning of this episode, Andrew reviews Robin's first three steps from the previous episode. Andrew says that Robin's advice is **solid**. In this sense, **solid** means good. If something is **solid** (as opposed to weak or soft), it is of good quality.

Solid can go with a variety of words. A **solid** friend is someone who is dependable. A **solid** person is someone with a good moral character. A **solid** excuse is a good and verifiable excuse. You can say someone has a **solid** work ethic if she is a diligent worker. A **solid** meal is a big and nutritious meal. A **solid** handshake is a firm handshake. **Solid** thinking is smart thinking. You can even say, "**Solid!**" when you think someone's suggestion is good.

Here are a couple more examples with **solid**:

Karen: Are you ready for your date on Friday night?

Sheila: I'm not sure. I'm a bit nervous.

Karen: Don't worry about it. Frank is a **solid** guy. If he wasn't, I wouldn't have set the two of you up on a date.

Sheila: I know. It's just that it's my first blind date. It feels a little strange.

Rob: I'm thinking of opening our business to the Danish Group. What do you think?

Franka: That's a pretty good idea. They have a **solid** reputation in the industry.

Rob: Can you set up some meetings?

Franka: I'll get on it right away. I look forward to doing business with them.

To roll up [one's] sleeves

Idiom

Andrew starts this episode off by saying that he and Robin need **to roll up their sleeves** for step 4. **To roll up [one's] sleeves** is to prepare oneself to do hard work. For physical work such as farming or manufacturing, it is common **to roll up your sleeves** so you won't have loose clothing getting in the way of your tasks. Over time, this expression has also come to mean you are preparing yourself for difficult mental work, such as studying a new language.

Here are a couple more examples with **to roll up [one's] sleeves**:

Art: Are you busy tonight?

Mary: Actually, I am. I have a book report to finish.

Art: Oh. Does that mean you can't come over for supper?

Mary: I'm sorry, I can't. I gotta get home, **roll up my sleeves**, and get ready for a long night of writing.

Art: OK. Good luck!

Vicky: Are you sure you're ready for this job?

Paul: Of course. No problem.

Vicky: Have you ever painted an entire house?

Paul: An entire house? No. But I've painted a fence before.

Vicky: I see. Well, painting a house inside and out is a long and difficult job. Get ready **to roll up your sleeves**.

To do heavy lifting

Idiom

Andrew mentions that he and Robin need to roll up their sleeves because they will be **doing some heavy lifting**. **To do heavy lifting** is to do hard work. Just like the previous expression, **to do heavy lifting** can refer to both physical and mental work. A labourer in a warehouse often lifts a lot of heavy objects, and that is a difficult task. Likewise, using your brain to figure things out is also **doing heavy lifting** because it is challenging.

Here are a couple more examples with **to do heavy lifting**:

Nancy: I really enjoyed your presentation on Monday. Good job.

Fred: Thank you, ma'am.

Nancy: Who was your team leader?

Fred: I was. But it was my staff that actually **did all the heavy lifting**. I was mostly supervising.

Nancy: I see. In any case, congratulate your team on my behalf.

Fred: I will. Thank you.

Aaron: What are we doing this week?

Dave: We'll be renovating a kitchen in the neighbourhood.

Aaron: Cool. What's the first step?

Dave: Step 1 is taking measurements. That's the easy part. After that, we have to carefully take apart the kitchen as it currently stands.

Aaron: Is that **doing the heavy lifting**?

Dave: Not quite yet. Taking it apart is fun. Putting it back together is the big job.

[Something] is getting old

Idiom

When describing his step 4, Robin chooses to talk about cars instead of coffee because he feels **talking about coffee is getting old** for some people. When **[something] is getting old**, it is losing its freshness or its impact. Just as fresh fruit gets old and eventually becomes inedible, **doing the same thing over and over again can get old** and therefore less interesting. You can use this expression to refer to someone's habits and personal behaviour. You can also use it to describe a television show that once was interesting but has since lost its spark.

[Something] is getting old can refer to someone's behaviour but not to the actual person. If you say someone is getting old, you are talking about their actual age.

Here are a couple more examples with **[something] is getting old**:

Harrison: Do you want to go to The Birdies concert this weekend?

Claudia: No, not really.

Harrison: What? I thought you loved that band.

Claudia: I used to, but **their music is getting a little old**. They stopped innovating a long time ago.

Harrison: I know, but they keep playing the same style because it's popular.

Claudia: I suppose so. But I've moved on.

Milla: I can't stand Hansel.

Will: Why do you say that?

Milla: **His constant complaining is getting old**. That's all he does.

Will: I know, but he's a hard worker.

Milla: Can you try to talk to him about it? That would be good for all of us.

Granular Adjective

Robin uses the word **granular** twice in this episode. The first time is when he talks about shadowing and how his process is very **granular**. The second time is when he mentions his website and the **granular** feedback members receive on their writing. In this sense, **granular** means in great detail. Think of a sandy beach. It might look like one big strip of yellow sand, but with a closer look you see that the beach is composed of millions of small grains of sand. The million grains of sand represent the **granular** detail of the beach. The same applies to the many small details in a newspaper report, in feedback, or in a process.

Here are a couple more examples with **granular**:

Betty: Have you finished reading that new study on heart disease?

Kayla: Not yet. I'm still working on it.

Betty: How come it's taking so long?

Kayla: The study is extremely **granular**. It goes into so many details.

Winnie: Did the publisher send you any feedback on your manuscript?

Bret: They did. I just read the email a few minutes ago.

Winnie: What did they say?

Bret: They provided a lot of **granular** analysis on my writing.

Winnie: Are you happy about that?

Bret: For sure. Overall, it was positive. But I also have to be aware of what I need to work on.

To keep things fresh

Idiom

In this episode, Robin emphasizes the importance of variety in order **to keep things fresh**. **To keep things fresh** is to keep things interesting and exciting. This is the opposite of letting something get old. You do this by introducing variety into the way you do things. People often talk about wanting **to keep things fresh** in a relationship by trying new things together. Teachers often change their lesson plans in order **to keep things fresh**. You can also say **to keep it fresh**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to keep things fresh**:

Sophia: When will you be leaving for New York?

Leslie: Actually, we're not going to New York this year.

Sophia: Is that so? Do you have other plans?

Leslie: We do. We're going to Mexico instead.

Sophia: That will be fun. It's a totally different country and atmosphere.

Leslie: I know. It's good **to keep things fresh**. We're excited.

Nathan: How come there are two guitars on the stage?

Dana: Oh, we recently hired another guitarist for the band.

Nathan: Really? Why did you do that? Is there a problem with the other guitarist?

Dana: No, not at all. I just figured we should **keep things fresh**. It's good to mix it up every now and then.

Nathan: You're right. I can't wait to see the show.

Quiz

1. What does to roll up your sleeves mean?

- a) to change your fashion style
- b) to get ready for hard work
- c) to get a better suntan
- d) to change your clothes

2. When something is getting old, it is ____.

- a) no longer interesting
- b) no longer warm
- c) becoming wiser
- d) difficult to prohibit

3. Which of the following is a good example of something that is granular?

- a) a quick discussion with an acquaintance
- b) a silly television ad
- c) a few pictures of someone's vacation
- d) the detailed charts from a medical study

4. True or false? Keeping things fresh is the opposite of something getting old.

- a) true
- b) false

5. Choose the best possible answer. If your friend Sara is solid, she is ____.

- a) weak
- b) slow
- c) dependable
- d) stubborn

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What do you think of Robin MacPherson's five steps? Which ones have you employed? How have they helped you?
2. Which English film, television show, or podcast have you repeatedly listened to? How has it helped your English skills?
3. There are many different accents among native English speakers. Which one suits you best and why?
4. How do you try to keep things fresh in your life?
5. Are you the type of person who likes to do the heavy lifting in a group? How do you go about working with others?

Quiz Answers

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

Episode credits

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