

## Culips Community Update - May 2025

### Episode description

In this episode, Andrew and Alina share the latest Culips community news for May 2025! They read a kind review from a Culips member, announce the winner of the March challenge, and introduce the new challenge for May. This month, the challenge will help you master one of the trickiest parts of English grammar: the difference between the present perfect and past simple tenses.

Everyone is welcome to join the free challenge on our Discord server. You will get a video lesson from Andrew, lots of practice activities, and a chance to win a Culips swag bag! Improve your grammar and become part of our fun and friendly community. Join us today!



---

Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

---

**Andrew:** Hello everybody and welcome back to another edition of the Culips community update. This is our episode for May 2025 and as always, I am joined by our Discord moderator, Alina. Hey Alina, how's it going?

**Alina:** Hey Andrew, it's going pretty good. How are you doing?

**Andrew:** I'm doing awesome. And Alina, I was quite shocked to realize that it's already May. Like I can't believe how fast time flies. You know, there's that saying, "Time flies when you have fun." And I guess we're having a lot of fun here with our monthly challenges, because the first four have flown by and it's time for us to introduce a new challenge to everyone. And Alina, you've whipped up a good one. You've created a good one for May, and we're going to share that with everyone in this episode. But before we do that, we have a little bit of business to attend to. We're going to share with you guys a really, really kind, and nice review. That's one of our Culips members, Tetsu, shared with the community on our Discord server. So, we'll read that message in just a moment. And then Alina, we have to do, probably the funnest part of this episode, we'll save the best for last. We are going to select the winner of the March challenge. What we do, guys, is we put all of the people who have completed one of our monthly challenges onto a spinning wheel and we're gonna spin the wheel and select somebody. And one lucky finisher, I guess is the best word I could use. One lucky finisher will win a Culips swag bag. We're gonna send you a Culips tote bag and a handwritten note from me. And maybe some Culips stickers and some other little goodies if I can think of some nice little things to send. So, we'll do that at the end of the episode. And Alina, do you remember how many people completed the March challenge?

**Alina:** I do. It's 34 people, which is an absolute record. We've never had so many. So, I was really proud. I was really happy to see how many of you guys made it all the way to the end.

**Andrew:** Yeah, that's awesome. Yeah, we had so many people finish the March challenge. And yeah, so 34 finishers. Amazing. All right, but Alina, first, I guess we should get to Tetsu's review, because it was really kind, really nice, and we wanted just to share it with all of the listeners out there. So let me just open it. OK, so Tetsu wrote, "Thank you very much, Andrew, Alina, and all the Culips team members. I first came across Culips in 2023 while studying for the IELTS exam and I immediately got into it. However, I hesitated to become a member at first because I tend to get bored of things easily, so I challenged myself. I would join if I could keep listening for months. It turned out to be a piece of cake thanks to the diverse topics, clear audio quality, and perfect episode length. Since then, I've been making full use of the transcripts, the Fluency Files, and the group speaking sessions for about a year. Honestly, I should have become a Culips member much earlier. Thank you again to the Culips team. I truly appreciate all your hard work. Culips is my lifelong friend now." It's very kind. I love that. It's a great way to end the review, right? Culips is my lifelong friend now. So Tetsu, thank you so much. That's really, really heartwarming to read that. And we appreciate that you are a member of our community. It's great to have you study and learn English with us and just hang out with us all the time on the Discord community as well.

**Alina:** Thank you, everybody, for leaving all your reviews. Like, we really do get so happy every time we see something like this, that somebody is benefiting so much. And, you know. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Yeah. Yeah, absolutely. So, guys, if you would like to get a shout out in an upcoming Culips episode as well, feel free to leave us a review. You could do it really anywhere, and we'll try our best to find it and feature it in an upcoming episode. You can do it on the Apple Music page for us, or Spotify, YouTube, Instagram, Culips Discord community, really anywhere is OK. And hopefully you can be featured in an upcoming Culips episode. But for today, we will just say thank you to Tetsu. All right, Alina, with that being said, let's get into the challenge for May, and I will let you do the honors. You're the mastermind behind the challenge. So over to you. Could you please introduce it to us and tell us what it's all about?

**Alina:** Absolutely. So, this one I feel like has been requested by so many people and I hope that it's gonna be very helpful for as many learners as possible because this one is kind of a grammar one. I know grammar is something that, you know, causes like mixed feelings. Some people don't like it, some people love it. But we're going to try and make it as fun as possible, as engaging as possible. And the topic is Present Perfect versus Past Simple. And hopefully that means something to you right now that I'm saying it. But if it doesn't, you should really join because... We are going to have Andrew here record a very, very good, you know, explanation video. And if you've ever seen Andrew's videos before, you know he's good at this. It's all going to be clear once you watch it. So yes, but if you do, you probably do. We learners always go and remember all these grammar names that native speakers don't even know, to be honest, because they don't need to. But these two tenses probably are the most, you know, confusing and complicated ones in my experience as an English teacher and as a learner as well. I do remember having quite a difficult time trying to wrap my head around like, "What's the difference? When do I use present perfect?" Because obviously, in our native languages, we don't have anything like this. So, the whole concept is completely foreign. So, I feel like in this challenge, we will definitely, you know, focus on first of all trying to grasp what it's all about. You know, why we need these two tenses and why it's so important to use one, you know, in some certain situations and the other one in other situations. Because it actually is important, it can change the meaning, you know, in some situations. So yeah, and of course we're gonna go over a bunch of examples, you know, context and stuff like that. We're gonna practice as much as possible. If you have any questions, we're gonna talk, you know, and discuss and hopefully clarify everything, all the doubts. And as a bonus, we will get to go over the irregular verbs, and I hope you know what it is. And yeah, it's something that we all struggle with a lot. And Andrew was just telling me there that even native speakers find it quite challenging sometimes, right? Irregular verbs.

**Andrew:** Yeah, there are some obscure verbs, maybe ones that we don't use every day that are irregular. And sometimes even native speakers, we get a little bit confused when we have to use them in the past tense or the present perfect. Like I was giving the

example of the verb "Swim." Sometimes you know, we'll be like, "Oh, is it I have swum, or I have swam?" And really at the end of the day, it's not super, super important just if you're having a conversation, because if I say to Alina, "I've swam in the river" or "I've swum in the river," she's going to know what I'm talking about in both situations. But of course, we want to be as accurate as possible. But I guess the moral of the story, guys, is that sometimes even native speakers make mistakes with these verbs. So, we'll cover as many of the irregulars as we can in this monthly challenge. And yeah, I love that, Alina, that we're going to focus for May on the two different past tenses in English, the simple past tense and the present perfect, which is a tense that we use that sort of connects the past and the present. But we won't break down all of the grammar rules and details in this video, but as Alina mentioned, now I have some homework. Alina has given me a challenge for this month.

**Alina:** Sorry.

**Andrew:** I'm going to make a hopefully short and simple explanation in a video that will break down and, yeah, explain to you guys what some of the differences are between these two verb forms and how to use them so that your English will sound natural and clear and understandable. So actually, Alina, I think that is the first day of the challenge is to watch the video. Is that correct?

**Alina:** Oh yes, yes, it makes the most sense to introduce it as a first task. And people say that's an easy one, but to be honest with you, you know, it's really not, because if some of this information is new to you, you should really sit down, maybe make some notes, make sure you're listening, no distractions. At least that's something I would recommend because for the rest of the month, you would really need to use, maybe come back to that video, possibly even every day. So yeah, do not neglect it, please. This one is important.

**Andrew:** It sets the stage for the whole rest of the month and the whole remaining part of the challenge. OK, good to know.

**Alina:** Exactly.

**Andrew:** So, we should mention just in case anybody is new and hasn't done one of our challenges before that it's completely free for anyone. So, whether you're a Culips member or not, you're welcome to participate in the challenge. And Alina, could you just remind everybody how they can participate in the challenge?

**Alina:** Sure, so all you need to do is just head on to Discord and there's this channel there, Monthly Challenge, that's the name of the channel. And if you have trouble finding it, just feel free to ask, you know, pretty much anyone but me, of course. On, you know, any channel really, you can just tag me or yeah, if you're lost, but usually, you know, it's not so hard to find it. Most people have been able to find it in the past. So yeah, all you have to do is just wait until the first day of, you know, 1st of May, basically when I post the challenge. I do always try to make sure, you know, I put it in the announcements as well, so that everybody is notified and informed, so you won't miss it. And yeah, and then you just go ahead and send in the message. And if you're not sure, again, you know exactly how to go about it, you could take a quick look, like if you just scroll, you know, a little bit and see what the others have been doing. Because it's pretty much all the same, right? The 4 marks doesn't change much from challenge to challenge. So, you can always see, even if you head over there right now, you know, it's possibly, you know, I'm not really sure when this will be released, but it's probably not there just yet. So, you could take a quick look at, you know, what's happening there right now, so that you have an idea basically, as to what to expect for the next challenge.

**Andrew:** Good. OK. So free for everyone to join on our Discord server. The link to join the Discord server will be in the description for this episode. So just click that link and join the server and you can participate. And the challenge isn't every day guys, that would be a pretty big commitment. So instead of doing it every day, it's every second day. We know that so many of you out there are busy with your professional lives and personal lives and so are we, so we get it. And so, you don't have to do the challenge every day, but there is

a task to do every second day. And if you want to work on your writing skills, you can write a message to complete the task. If you'd rather work on your speaking skills, feel free to record an audio message and upload that to the server. And either one is OK or fine by us. And yeah, if you complete the challenge, Alina is going to make you a wonderful completion certificate. Try to collect them all. I think I've got them so far, all of them. So, I'm trying to fill my...

**Alina:** But this year you do. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So far, so good. I don't know. I have to like fill a photo album with all of my certificates or something. And then, as we said, one lucky finisher will also get a Culips swag bag package. Alina, should we choose last month's winner now, or is there anything else that we need to add? Are we OK to spin the wheel?

**Alina:** I feel like we have covered pretty much everything here, all the important information.

**Andrew:** Yeah, I think so.

**Alina:** To the fun part now.

**Andrew:** Yeah, to the fun part, we're going to spin the wheel. We have, like Alina mentioned, we have a record-breaking number of finishers for... Guys, this is for the March challenge. We're always kind of one month behind schedule, just the way things work out here. We have to make the video before the challenge starts. So, it means we're one month behind, but let's select for March. So, let me get this set up here.

**Alina:** I'm so excited right now.

**Andrew:** Alina, can I put you on the spot? I'm going to ask you, what is an idiomatic



expression we could use for this kind of situation? Do you have any that come to mind? When you're really anticipating something?

**Alina:** Oh, that's a good question. I don't know. Nothing comes to mind.

**Andrew:** How about this one? "I'm waiting with bated breath." Have you heard that one before?

**Alina:** Wow. OK. Yeah.

**Andrew:** "Waiting with bated breath" means to be like really nervous and anticipating something. So yeah, me too. I'm waiting with bated breath. So, Alina, let's do it. I'm going to shuffle all of the participants here. We need to do a fair spin. We don't play favorites here at Culips. Everything is according to the rules. So, we got a big spin, and the winner of the March challenge looks like it's going to be...

**Alina:** Oh, oh! Oh, it's just so close!

**Andrew:** Ahmed! All right, Ahmed is the winner. Amazing. So yeah, Ahmed is a wonderful member of our community and Ahmed, I will be in touch with you through DM and if you can send me your address, then I'll prepare and send out the Culips swag bag. Congratulations. Amazing. And yeah, you are the next winner.

**Alina:** All right.

**Andrew:** Yeah. So, guys, I hope you can be next. I hope your name can be selected next.

**Alina:** Gotta just keep trying and completing.

**Andrew:** Doing the challenges and trying. And yeah. And maybe it could be you for the



---

next month. All right. Well, Alina, I'm excited for this challenge, and I hope everyone out there will be as well. Is there anything else that we need to cover before we sign off that I'm forgetting?

**Alina:** Not sure. I think we did pretty well. Yeah.

**Andrew:** Yeah.

**Alina:** Mentioned everything important.

**Andrew:** We nailed it. Yeah.

**Alina:** The challenge. Oh, yeah.

**Andrew:** All right. Well, we're going to sign off then. Thank you, everybody, for listening all the way to the end. And please participate in the May challenge. It really does make our community a better place with you when you are participating in it. So, yeah, head on over to our Discord and do it. Just do it. OK, Alina, thank you so much. We'll talk to you next month, OK?

**Alina:** Thank you, Andrew. Talk to you later. Bye.

**Andrew:** Bye bye. Bye, guys.

## Episode credits

Hosts and preparation: Andrew Bates and Alina Morozova

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima