

Chatterbox #66 – Learning languages

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone. This is Harp.

Maura: And Maura. And we're back with your Culips English podcast.

Harp: Make sure you go to our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, because there you can find all our older episodes and you can become a member, because when you become a member, we have Learning Materials with each episode And in the Learning Materials, you'll find a complete transcript, a detailed explanation, and even a quiz.

Maura: And when you're online, check us out on Facebook, too.

Harp: There's a lot of fun stuff happening on Facebook.

Maura: Today we're going to do a Chatterbox episode, and that's where Harp and I chat about all different kinds of topics. Sometimes we talk about cultural things, other times we interview people. It's really a place to chat.

Harp: About whatever's going on.

Maura: Exactly. Now today, the idea for this episode came from one of our listeners. One of our listeners actually emailed us and made a couple suggestions for Chatterbox episodes. And they were pretty good ideas.

Harp: Very good ideas.

Maura: His first suggestion was to make an episode about learning languages, which is, of course, what we do here, so it makes sense.

Harp: So today we're going to talk about our experiences with learning languages.

Maura: Right. And then we're going to give you some tips and advice on how to learn a language, through our own experiences.

Harp: Yup. And we're also gonna talk about teaching English and our experiences.

Maura: Right. What it's like to teach English.

Harp: Dun dun dun.

Maura: The other side. OK, so first let's start with our experiences learning other languages. So Harp, I'm going to ask you. What's the first other language that you **learned**?

- Harp: Well...English.
- Maura: Isn't that interesting. How did that work?
- Harp: Well, my parents are from India but I was born in Canada, so growing up, we spoke Punjabi at home, and I actually didn't learn English until I was four years old and my older sister went to **kindergarten**.
- Maura: Oh, really? So what happened when your sister went to **kindergarten**?
- Harp: Well, she started learning English, and when she came home, she would teach me the things that she **learned**, so I started **picking up** small little bits and when I started **kindergarten**, that's when I started learning English for real.
- Maura: Wow. Do you have many memories from that time?
- Harp: I don't really remember **kindergarten** that much, but I do remember maybe when I was eight or nine years old and trying to think in English but mixing it up with Punjabi. But I've been speaking English for so long that it's hard to remember.
- Maura: It's so amazing how easily children learn new languages.
- Harp: For sure. I don't remember it being a struggle.
- Maura: Yeah. Often, kids come from other countries, young children I mean, and within a relatively short amount of time, they're able to converse very easily in English.
- Harp: Mmhmm. It's true. One of my best friends, her niece and nephew live in Beijing, China, and they speak Mandarin, English, and French all fluently.
- Maura: Wow.
- Harp: Yeah. And they're five years old and eight years old.
- Maura: That's amazing, isn't it?
- Harp: Kids. They learn so easily.
- Maura: Well, unfortunately, when I was a kid, I didn't learn any languages. I grew up with English-speaking parents and I really only spoke English.
- Harp: When did you start learning French?
- Maura: Well, in case some of the listeners don't know, everywhere in the English-speaking parts of Canada, children learn French in school. Everywhere.

- Harp: Yes.
- Maura: Depending on the exact location, the exact province, you might start learning at a different age, but you always learn French. For me, I was in Grade four, which means, I think, that I was about nine or ten years old when I started learning French. What about you, Harp?
- Harp: I was 12 years old. I remember I was in grade six and I think I've mentioned before that I grew up in a really small town up in Northern BC. And so my teacher actually didn't speak French at all, so we **learned** it from books, but she had no idea of the pronunciation of words. It was not an ideal situation.
- Maura: Wow. You know, that's kind of sad.
- Harp: It is really sad, and I hope it's better now for kids who are trying to learn French.
- Maura: I think it's a bit better, but I also think there are some places in Canada, probably, where the French teacher doesn't really speak French.
- Harp: Yeah, because it's hard to get French speakers all across Canada. And in Quebec to get English teachers here.
- Maura: Yup, that's true. My French teacher actually did speak French very well, but she wasn't French and she wasn't from Quebec. She was actually Portuguese, but she had **learned** French and so she was able to teach it.
- Harp: Interesting.
- Maura: But **the thing is**, even though we start learning French at a relatively young age, most English-speaking Canadians aren't able to speak French.
- Harp: Definitely. I took French in school from grade six to grade 12, so from 12 years old to 17 or 18 years old. I could not speak French when I left school.
- Maura: Yeah. I studied French at school from, like I said, grade four until grade 10, which is not very long, actually. I had a good base, that's one thing that's true. You know how to conjugate verbs, like *to have* and *to be*, and you can usually talk in the present, past, future, maybe. But to have a real conversation and to actually use French in the real world? Forget it.

- Harp: You know, it's funny, because I thought I spoke French when I left school. I thought "OK, I have the basic understanding. I can do this." So when I was 22 and finished university, I went to France to be an au pair. So that's to work as a nanny with a family. And so I got to France and right away, I was **like a fish out of water**. I didn't understand a word anyone was saying to me, and it took me a good month to be able to understand. But really, it was amazing. I **learned** so quickly because I was listening to children and children speak much simpler sentences and they're willing to help you learn. So it was an awesome experience.
- Maura: Yeah. That, I think, is a good point, because often children will just come up to you and talk and they'll wait for you to respond. So they're probably a good place to learn.
- Harp: Yeah. And they'll actually correct you. In the family, there were three kids, and the oldest was a boy and he was nine years old, and I remember he corrected my French all the time and I felt no embarrassment because, really, he's just a kid.
- Maura: Yeah, that's a good point. Now, of course we've mentioned this in past episodes, but we'll mention it again. Harp and I actually met taking a French course in Montreal.
- Harp: Yup. We were both here in Montreal and wanted to improve our French. I had, of course, lived in France for a couple months as a nanny. So I had **picked up** a lot and I was pretty fluent, but I wanted to improve and be able to work completely in French, so I took the French class. And where did you learn French if you stopped in grade 10?
- Maura: Well, I lived in Quebec City, which is a city that's a couple hours from Montreal and much more French than Montreal. So I lived there for a year. I took a class there and so I had started to get a better understanding but I still had a lot to learn.
- Harp: You were pretty immersed too though, living in Quebec City. It's very French there.
- Maura: Yes, but I was teaching English, so during the day I spoke English to all my students and all my colleagues.
- Harp: OK, I see.
- Maura: Right. But you know, that French class was tough. I remember the teacher used **to work us to the bone**.
- Harp: For sure. I was working full-time and taking evening class four nights a week. It was exhausting.

- Maura: Yeah, it was a very intense class. I think it started around six o'clock and went till 10 o'clock at night four times a week.
- Harp: It was intense.
- Maura: It was. But I did learn a lot of grammar there, so I'm glad I took it.
- Harp: I **learned** so much grammar. I may have forgotten most of it, but...
- Maura: Now, we've also had a little bit of experience with other languages, right? How much Korean did you learn when you lived there?
- Harp: When I was there, I knew a lot. I could not have a basic conversation, but I was teaching English and I was working with kids so I was able to speak with them, give them commands, and I was able to read Korean because Korean is a very easy language to **pick up** in terms of the written part of it, but it's still a complicated language.
- Maura: Oh yeah. Well, when I lived in Japan, I **learned** a little bit. I **learned** some expressions and some words that were important. But to be honest, I had just been trying to learn French for a year and then I realized how difficult it was to learn a language. And so when I was Japan, I didn't really immerse myself in Japanese. I just **learned** a little bit **to get by**.
- Harp: Yeah. I **learned** enough to talk to taxi drivers, shopkeepers, and to the kids at school.
- Maura: But I do think that Japanese was much easier to understand orally than French, because the pronunciation was so much clearer, that in French I found it really difficult to understand at the beginning.
- Harp: Oh, that's very interesting.
- Maura: Yeah. A lot of people are surprised, because to people in Canada, Japanese seems so different that most people are surprised to hear that. OK, so those are some experiences we've had learning languages, mostly that it's hard and you have to work hard to make progress.
- Harp: Yeah, definitely. You cannot give up.
- Maura: That's it. So, let's give some more tips. And that's the first one: Don't give up.
- Harp: Don't give up at all. I know it seems hard and it seems like you'll never be good at it, but that's how I used to feel about French and now I'm very fluent.

- Maura: Yes. if it seems too hard, take a break, take a week off, relax. And you might even find you miss it, but it's important to persevere, to continue on studying, if you really want to learn.
- Harp: Yeah. And I think it's also important to make it fun.
- Maura: Definitely. And that's really one of the reasons why we make this podcast, because most people, including myself, find it really interesting to know about expressions and idioms. So this is a fun way to practice.
- Harp: Exactly. Because these are the expressions that you'll hear on TV or hear on the streets, so it'll make your understanding of English so much more interesting.
- Maura: Another way to make learning languages fun is to watch movies or TV shows and try to relax while you're doin' it.
- Harp: Definitely. I love watching TV in French. I think it's fun.
- Maura: Yeah. And you can really learn about the culture that way too, because watching movies from other countries is just such a great way to get to know that culture.
- Harp: Yup, definitely.
- Maura: Something else that I did, which I think helped a lot, was to do a language exchange. Now, it might not always be possible where you live to do it face to face, but you can also try doing it online. Luckily enough, because in Montreal there are a lot of French speakers, there are more French speakers than English speakers, so it was easy for me to meet somebody once a week and practice English for an hour and help them, and then practice French for an hour and practice for myself.
- Harp: No. This is really good advice. You actually told me the same thing back a couple years ago, and I did it. I loved it. I met a couple really interesting people and, like you said, we spoke for an hour in French and an hour in English and it was really, really good practice.
- Maura: Yeah. And you learn more than the language. The first language exchange I did was with a guy named Aziz and he was from Morocco, so we could talk about the cultural differences between Canada and Morocco and I could learn about his experience coming over here and I'm always curious about other places, so I got to ask a lot of questions about Morocco and what life is like over there, so it was really interesting.

- Harp: Yeah. My first language exchange partner was actually a model. She worked in the industry, she did a lot of catalogues, she did runways, so she was very interesting. She had some very cool stories to tell me.
- Maura: Yeah. That does sound like fun. OK, so we say don't give up, make it fun, meet people and do a language exchange. Anything else?
- Harp: If you have the opportunity, do a full immersion like I did, with going to France. Because when you have no options, you'll start **picking it up** and you'll start learning.
- Maura: That's a good point. You kind of have to force yourself to be in a situation where you really have to speak because so often we feel shy or we think we're going to look stupid so we **hold back**. But it's really, really the best advice to just go for it.
- Harp: Yeah. For me, in France, it was **sink or swim**. I had the opportunity. I had the choice. I was either going **to stick it out**, learn it, make a fool of myself or I was gonna go home and not know how to speak French.
- Maura: You know, I always feel so funny giving this advice and I always give this advice to any friends that are learning, or especially to my students. But, you know, as someone learning French, it's so hard to follow because when I meet new people I'm shy, and normally I'm not shy, so it's such a weird experience.
- Harp: I know. I agree with you. I'm not a shy person at all, but when I'm trying to speak French with someone new it's always "Are they laughing at the way I pronounce things? Oh no, are they noticing all my mistakes?" But in reality, most people are so encouraging.
- Maura: Yeah, I know. So that's something else that's a good thing to remember is you might look stupid, but that's it. And you kind of have to accept that. You really have to just say, maybe people are gonna think I don't know what I'm talking about, maybe I'm gonna make a fool of myself but I'm gonna do it anyways and it doesn't matter.
- Harp: Yeah. Because in the end, you'll **be better off**. You'll know another language.
- Maura: Right. And learning another language really is such a great experience. I think back to when I only knew English and I can't believe how much learning French has **opened my mind**. It's really made me understand how complicated a language is.
- Harp: For sure. And I think it **opens up your eyes** to new cultures and other people out there.

- Maura: Now, let's talk about teaching English because, like I just said, learning another language is so important, and I think that learning another language, French, and having the experience of learning that language made me a better teacher.
- Harp: Yeah, I agree with you 100%.
- Maura: Because then you're able to understand what your student feels like. If you only know English, then it's hard to imagine just how difficult it is to learn a new language.
- Harp: For sure. And that's why, for me, whenever I teach English, I always try to get the student to focus on just speaking. It doesn't matter if you make a mistake. Who cares if you're perfect or not. Just do it, just go for it, just say whatever you have in your head.
- Maura: Whenever I'm teaching English, I always ask people a lot of questions about themselves. Like I might say something simple like, "What did you do this weekend?" And often students will say, "Oh, nothing." And I say "Nope, you have to tell me. Tell me what you did." And so even if they tell me something simple like "I had lunch and then I watched TV," at least they're practicing. And that's really what I love about teaching, is talking with people and getting to know people, especially people who are from different cultures, because I really wanna know about different places. Different cultures are so interesting to me and I always wanna learn about them.
- Harp: Yeah, no. That's true. You know, I loved when I was teaching young kids and they would understand something or they would be able to speak one sentence and they would just be so excited and so happy. It was fun for me.
- Maura: Yeah. I like chatting a lot in classes and I also like using different kinds of media, too, because that's what people like. Watching a movie or listening to a song that people know, because English music is so popular. Sometimes people know the song but they don't really know what the person's singing about, so it's fun to look at that. Although sometimes people get disappointed when they find out that the song is not really about anything that interesting.
- Harp: That's true. Yeah, I'm definitely not the kind of teacher that teaches from a grammar book. I'm like you. I like to show movies or listen to a song, something interesting, something that's real.
- Maura: People learn in such different ways, as well. So when I'm working one on one with people, I always ask them how they want to learn. What they think they need to learn about, because I think that's really important to know yourself what you need to do. You have to really practice and you have to know what you need to work on.

- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: So it's important to take people's personal interests into consideration, too. Now, when I was teaching in Japan, there were some different techniques that we don't usually use in Canada.
- Harp: Really? Tell me more.
- Maura: Well, the one technique I remember is that we used to just say a phrase and the students would repeat the phrase.
- Harp: That's different.
- Maura: Yeah, it's very different from the style used in Canada, but that was the style at the time that I was there, that maybe for beginners, when they didn't really know how to make a sentence on their own and the teachers couldn't communicate very well because they didn't speak Japanese, it was a good option to just repeat and try to mimic the sounds.
- Harp: Yeah, I guess it's a good way to work on pronunciation.
- Maura: Yeah. And I remember with kids' classes, we used to play music and we used to throw a ball around, like every time you throw the ball you said a letter in the alphabet, like "A," throw the ball, "B," throw the ball. So it was kind of fun.
- Harp: Yup, that's true. I taught the kids that I was teaching, a lot of songs, a lot of **nursery rhythms**. They loved that.
- Maura: Yeah. You gotta have fun. You have to have fun, because if it's all painful and difficult, it's easy to get discouraged and you might not stick with it.
- Harp: Definitely.
- Maura: So, on that note, we hope that this podcast is fun for you and that when you listen to it, it doesn't feel like homework.
- Harp: Yeah. We hope that this is interesting for you and you're learning something.
- Maura: Right. And remember that even though it might seem difficult, keep at it and you'll just get better and better over time.
- Harp: Definitely. And just one little tip for getting the most use out of these episodes: If you don't understand everything we're saying, listen one time without the transcript, but then read the transcript and see how much you understood and then listen one more time. I think you'll really learn a lot.

- Maura: That's a good point. Listening to the same thing more than once also helps. And if you become a member, then you have the transcript, like Harp said. And if you don't understand some of the expressions that we use or you're not sure what it means exactly, those explanations are almost always in our Learning Materials, too.
- Harp: Yeah, exactly.
- Maura: So, if you haven't become a member yet, think about it.
- Harp: Do it.
- Maura: Thanks so much for listening and we'll all keep learning languages together.
- Harp: Bye everyone!
- Maura: Bye!

Detailed Explanation

Kindergarten

Kindergarten is the first 1 or 2 years of school for children in Canada and some other countries. In Canada, **kindergarten** begins when a child is about 5 years old and is the first year of elementary school. **Kindergarten** is a German word meaning *children's garden*, and is a place for children to learn and play.

To pick up

In this episode, **to pick up** knowledge and skill is to acquire this knowledge and skill from experience, not in a formal way like in a classroom. We use this phrase to talk about learning languages. Of course, it's possible to learn languages in a classroom, but people can also learn a language by being in situations where they have to listen to it and must speak it to be understood. Harp talks about **picking up** French in this way.

To pick up is especially used to talk about learning languages, but it can also be used to talk about any other skills or knowledge learned through experience. Here's an example of **picking up** skills other than languages:

Jane: I **picked up** a little tango when I was in Argentina last summer. I love dancing!

Michael: That's fun, and what a great place to learn!

To physically **pick up** something means to take an object that is below you. There are a variety of meanings and uses for **to pick up**.

The thing is...

Here's a short little expression for you with three simple words. **The thing is** is often said just before someone gives a reason to support a contrary idea to what was just being said. The speaker might be contradicting themselves or what was said by another person.

Let's look at how it's used in this episode. Harp and Maura talk about French classes in Canadian schools. Based on the amount of French in Canadian schools, one might think that most English-speaking Canadians can also speak French. Maura contradicts this idea by saying, "But **the thing is**...most English-speaking Canadians aren't able to speak French."

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Ted: I don't think we're going to be able to get the Jones Company to come back to us as a client again.

Boss: **The thing is**, we have to find a way to regain some clients that we've lost, in order to make enough money to stay in business.

The thing is can be used in casual situations or even professional environments.

Like a fish out of water

If you've ever travelled to a country very different from your own, there's a good chance that you've felt **like a fish out of water**. A fish in water is in its natural environment and feels comfortable there. A fish out of water flaps around, it's not comfortable, and it can't breathe properly. A fish is not in its natural environment when it's out of water.

When this expression is applied to humans, it means that someone does not feel comfortable because they're not in their usual environment. Someone especially feels **like a fish out of water**, like Harp did in France, when they're in a different culture, with different traditions and languages. You can feel **like a fish out of water** in a variety of situations.

Here are a couple more examples:

Rob: How was Luca's party last night?

Mandy: It was fun, but I felt **like a fish out of water**. Everyone there was a designer or artist, and I work in a bank!

Serena: I went to Japan last year and I really felt **like a fish out of water** when I went to a green tea ceremony. I didn't know what to do or how to act.

Becky: That sounds interesting. I have no idea what that would be like.

To work someone to the bone

To work someone to the bone means to make that person work a lot. The meaning comes from a person who works so hard that the skin is so worn down on their hands that you can see the bone!

Maura uses this expression when she's talking about her former French teacher. This teacher made the students work very hard in class, so Maura says that the teacher **worked the students to the bone**.

Here's another example with this expression:

Vickie: How's your new exercise class going?

Walter: Great! The teacher really **works us to the bone**. I'm so tired at the end of every class, but I'm losing so much weight!

A variation of this expression is **to work someone's fingers to the bone**.

Learned/learnt

For some English verbs, there are two possibilities in the past tense, like **learned** and **learnt**. You can spell it by adding an –ed or a –t. Generally, both are acceptable. Some are more common than others. The pronunciation is virtually the same for both **learned** and **learnt**.

Yes, it's a bit confusing and unclear, and many Native English speakers are still unclear! Canadians and Americans generally use –ed more often because it feels more modern to us.

Here's a short list of verbs that have two past tense forms:

dreamed – dreamt
spilled – spilt
spelled – spelt
leaped – leapt
kneeled – knelt

To get by

The expression **to get by** means to succeed, but just at the minimum. You could use this expression to mean that you will have just enough money to pay your rent. You could also use it to mean that you have just enough knowledge to pass a course. Harp uses **to get by** in this episode to mean to know just enough of a language to communicate on a basic level.

Here are a couple more examples with **to get by**:

Myriam: How's your anthropology class going?

Jack: I'm finding it really difficult. I'm just **getting by**.

Anne: Since I lost my job, I'm just struggling **to get by**.

Eva: I wish I could help you, but I'm broke too.

In this last example, Anne is talking about paying for life's necessities like food and a home.

To hold back

To hold back means to keep something from being shared with others. It can be something physical or an idea or feeling. There are all kinds of reasons that people **hold back**. Many times, people **hold back** because they feel shy or embarrassed, so they don't want to say what they feel or think.

In this episode about learning languages, Maura says that sometimes people **hold back** when speaking a new language because they don't want to look stupid. So true, don't you think?

Here are a couple more examples of people **holding back**:

Donna: Did you tell Stephan how you feel about him?

Savannah: I wasn't sure how he feels about me, so I **held back**. I'd be so embarrassed if he doesn't like me too.

Shannon: Justin gets mad so easily at our weekly meetings.

Ivan: Yeah. He looks mad, but at least he always **holds himself back** from yelling at anyone.

Sink or swim

This is an expression that explains a way that a person can learn something new. **To sink or swim** means to learn while you're doing something new and at this time you will either be successful or fail.

To sink means to not float in water, but go down to the bottom. *To swim* is to move in water by moving your arms and legs, which can also prevent you from sinking. The origin of **to sink or swim** is connected to swimming, of course. Some people believe that the best way someone can learn to swim is by simply going in the water, because then you will be forced to learn or you'll sink.

Harp uses this expression to talk about her experience in France. She was forced to speak French to be understood, so she had to! She had to speak French (swim) or she would be helpless and unable to communicate with anyone (sink).

Some people generally believe this is a good way for people to learn. Other people would rather prepare a lot beforehand and gradually learn to do something before actually trying it.

Here are a couple more examples with this expression:

Olivia: How do you feel about that math course you're starting next week?

Madison: I'm nervous, but it's **sink or swim** for me. If I don't pass the course, I won't be able to graduate.

Samuel: Congratulations on being a father for the first time. It's **sink or swim** now!

Germaine: I know. I think I won't be sleeping much anymore.

To stick it out

To stick it out is to continue to do something, especially when you're thinking of not continuing but decide to continue after all. Usually when someone **sticks something out**, it continues over a lengthy period of time.

Harp says that when she was learning French in France, she decided **to stick it out**. This means that even though it was hard to learn about French, she was determined to continue doing it until the end of her time in France.

Here are a couple more examples with **to stick it out**:

Jasmine: How are you enjoying staying at your brother's place?

Kevin: I'm supposed to stay there until the end of the week. He's driving me crazy, but I'm going **to stick it out**.

Derrick: I'm really not enjoying my job anymore. But I told myself I'd at least stick with it until after I take my vacation time.

Andrea: That's a good plan, but if you're not happy, you should make a change.

In this expression, the word *it* is often used and sounds more natural in most cases.

To be better off

To be better off is to be in an improved or better situation. The other situation can sometimes simply be the opposite. Harp says in this example that you **are better off** knowing a second language. The other possibility that she compares this to is knowing only one language. Of course, knowing more than one language is better than knowing only one.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be better off**:

Bernard: I don't know whether I should bring my umbrella with me today. I wonder if it's going to rain.

Janet: I think **you're better off** bringing the umbrella. It looks pretty cloudy out there.

Zack: Josh isn't sure if he's going to take an art or theatre class next semester.

Carla: He'd **be better off** taking the art class if he wants to study design after high school.

To open your mind/eyes

To open your mind and **to open your eyes** is to have an experience or learn something new that allows you to see some part of life in a different and more knowledgeable way. Someone who has had a mind-opening experience is also often more accepting of different ideas and people.

If your eyes are closed, you don't see anything, and when they're open, you can see. A closed-minded person is someone who does not like to learn to see things differently and is not open to meeting a variety of people.

Maura says that learning French **opened her mind** because she learned about how complicated languages are. Harp says that learning new languages **opens your eyes** because you can experience new cultures.

Here are a couple more examples with these expressions:

Jonathon: I babysat for my sister last weekend and it really **opened my eyes** to how difficult taking care of a newborn is!

Emanuel: For sure. It's lots of work.

Vanessa: Taking a Greek history course in school has really made me see society differently.

Reah: I find that learning about history always **opens my mind**.

Nursery rhymes

Nursery rhymes are traditional poems that tell a story for children. These are often shared by parents with children, played by children's toys, and included in children's television shows. Sometimes there's a moral in the story and other times the exact meaning is unclear. Some **nursery rhymes** are hundreds of years old and the origins are unclear.

A nursery is the bedroom of a baby. A rhyme is when two words end with the same sound.

Here's a short list of the titles of some widely known **nursery rhymes** in Canada and the US. You can do an Internet search for these titles if you'd like to read the whole things.

Baa, Baa, Black Sheep
Jack and Jill
Humpty Dumpty
London Bridge is Falling Down
Mary had a Little Lamb
Three Blind Mice

Quiz

1. Justina picked up some Greek last summer.

What does the above sentence likely mean?

- a) Justina gave her Greek friend a ride last summer.
- b) Justina held a Greek person over her head last summer.
- c) Justina learned Greek last summer by being around Greek people.
- d) Justina took an intensive Greek course last summer.

2. Ben: I'm so excited to go to the beach this weekend.

Stephanie: The thing is, _____.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) which beach are we going to
- b) I'm really excited to go too
- c) I think it might rain
- d) it's cool you're so excited to go

3. In which situation does Rich most likely feel like a fish out of water?

- a) meeting a bunch of colleagues for drinks
- b) going to the gym where he's a member
- c) buying a cat
- d) going on a trip to a foreign country

4. If Matthew is worked to the bone, what does this mean?

- a) He didn't work very hard.
- b) He worked very hard.
- c) He injured himself while he was working.
- d) He was not working.

5. Which of the following verbs CANNOT end in a t, like learned/learnt?

- a) dreamed/dreamt
- b) jumped/jumpt
- c) leaped/leapt
- d) spilled/spilt

6. Amanda is getting by in her algebra class.**What does this mean?**

- a) She is doing very well in algebra.
- b) She is attending her algebra class.
- c) She is not attending her algebra class.
- d) She is not doing very well in algebra class but she's passing.

7. Gus doesn't tell his boss that he is planning on quitting his job soon. He is _____.**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) holding back
- b) holding in
- c) holding up
- d) holding down

8. Which expression means to learn while doing, with the risk of failing?

- a) to swim or sink
- b) to sink or swim
- c) to dive or drown
- d) to safe or swim

9. Jennifer left her boyfriend, who cheated on her. She's _____ without him.**Please fill in the blank.**

- a) better off
- b) better on
- c) better not
- d) buttered up

Answers:

1.c 2.c 3.d 4.b 5.b 6.d 7.a 8.b 9.a