

## Catchword #166 – Don't front

### Episode Description

Have you ever pretended to be something you're not? If so, you'll relate to today's Catchword episode. Join Andrew and Maura as they introduce and explain three expressions that are used to describe people and things that are inauthentic or fake.

### Sample Dialogue

Andrew: How about we move on to our third and final expression for today's episode.

Maura: All right. What is it?

Andrew: Drum roll, please. It's **a sham**.

Maura: Right, **a sham** is a person who pretends to be something that they're not. So just like **to front**, or if you call someone **a poseur**, it's really the same explanation. You're talking about a person that is not being authentic, that is pretending to be something that is not really them.

### Expressions Included in the Learning Materials

- Same old, same old
- To be on it
- Laid-back
- Fishy
- To front
- well put
- A poseur
- To call someone out
- At the heart of something
- A total 180
- Bubblegum pop
- A sham



## Catchword #166 – Don't front

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.

### Transcript

Maura: Hello everyone, it's Maura.

Andrew: And I'm Andrew, and we're back with another Culips episode.

Maura: And here is your reminder to check out our website, which is Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com.

Andrew: And while you're on our website we strongly recommend that you sign up and become a member.

Maura: Because when you're a member you have access to the transcripts, the detailed explanations, and quizzes for every single one of our episodes. So you should definitely check that out.

Andrew: We're also on Facebook and on Twitter, so if you use these sites come over and pay us a visit.

Maura: So, Andrew, how's it going?

Andrew: It's going pretty good. How about you?

Maura: Good, good. It's been a while, eh, since we've recorded an episode together?

Andrew: It's been such a long time. Almost a year, I think.

Maura: Yeah, it feels like a long time.

Andrew: Yeah, so what have you been doing?

Maura: You know, it's funny that a year passes and sometimes it feels like not much has changed.

Andrew: **Same old, same old.**

Maura: That's right, still living in the same place, same job, still doing Culips. That's about it. What about you? Anything new with you?

Andrew: Well, I am getting ready for Labour Day.

Maura: Oh, yeah?

- Andrew: Yeah, I'm planning a camping trip so I'm pretty stoked about that.
- Maura: Yeah, for sure. I love camping. Did you already reserve a spot, though? Because camping on Labour Day is a pretty popular activity.
- Andrew: Oh, I'm **on it**, don't you worry.
- Maura: Well, this year we just decided to stay home and take it easy.
- Andrew: Well, that's good, you know. It's good to have a day to relax.
- Maura: But we are going to have a barbeque with friends, so it should be fun but a little bit more **laid-back**.
- Andrew: It sounds good to me.
- Maura: All right, so should we get started with our episode now?
- Andrew: That's a fantastic idea.
- Maura: And today's episode is a Catchword episode. That is where we look at different slang expressions. Of course, we tell you what they mean and we give you examples of when to use them.
- Andrew: That is right, and today we have three very interesting expressions for you and these expressions all relate to a situation where someone or something is pretending to be something or someone they are not.
- Maura: Yeah, so these expressions are used to talk about, often, a person who is not being true to themselves, is not telling the truth or acting in a very authentic way. There's something kind of fake about them.
- Andrew: Yeah, there's something **fishy** and you just know something is wrong. They're pretending to be someone they're not.
- Maura: OK, so let's look at the first expression we're going to talk about today.
- Andrew: Our first expression is a verb. It is **to front**.
- Maura: That's right, **to front**. I'm sure you've heard this word before, maybe when you were studying prepositions, but, of course, in this case it's used differently in a slang way: **to front**.
- Andrew: And when you **front**, you pretend to be someone you are not, or you pretend to act a certain way that isn't the real you.
- Maura: Yeah. So if someone is **fronting**, it means that they're acting a certain way that is not authentic. They're acting kind of fake.

Andrew: I think this expression is best explained through examples. So why don't we give a couple of examples now?

Maura: It seems like the perfect time.

Maura: So how's Tina?

Andrew: Um... Fine, I think. I don't know. Why?

Maura: Jake told me that he saw you and Tina out the other night and he was pretty sure it looked like a date.

Andrew: Jake doesn't know what he's talking about. I was out with Tina, yeah, but we just went for a walk. We're just friends, we were just hanging out.

Maura: Don't **front**, man. We all know you and Tina are more than friends. Come on, tell me.

Andrew: No, there's nothing happening. Sorry.

Maura: Man, I don't believe you. But I guess when it becomes serious maybe you'll admit to it.

Andrew: We're just friends. What can I say?

Maura: So in that example we heard from two friends who were talking about the possibility that he was dating Tina. Now, for some reason he didn't want to admit that he was dating Tina, so he was pretending like he wasn't. He was kind of being fake. And so his friend said to him **don't front** because she thought that he was pretending like nothing was happening. She thought that he wasn't really being authentic about what was going on between him and Tina.

Andrew: Exactly, very **well put**. And now, I think **don't front** is the most common way to use this expression. I know when I hear this expression on TV or in a movie, it's usually put like that: **Don't front**.

Maura: Right, so in that case you're telling someone to stop acting fake, or to stop lying about something.

Andrew: Exactly, you want them to get real. You want them to be honest with you, so you tell them **don't front**.

Maura: Now, really, in this exact example we can't really say for sure just by listening if Tina really is dating the friend. We don't know for sure, but because the friend thinks that he's lying, she says **don't front**.

Andrew: She is suspicious. She thinks that he's lying so she says **don't front** just to try and convince him to tell the truth.

Maura: All right, let's do another example now with **to front**.

Andrew: Did you see Tony today?

Maura: Yeah, what's up with him? He was all of a sudden hanging out with all the rich kids at school.

Andrew: I know, it's so weird. He's **fronting** for sure. Everyone knows that he doesn't have any money. What a fake.

Maura: I know, he always talks about how he has no money and he doesn't even have a job so I don't know why he's wearing these fancy clothes and why he's trying to hang out with all the rich kids.

Andrew: Yeah, does he think he's better than us all of a sudden?

Maura: Probably. Don't worry, they'll figure it out soon, that it's all **a front**.

Andrew: In this example, we hear from two schoolmates and they're hanging out at school and they're wondering where their friend Tony went, and they noticed that all of a sudden Tony is hanging out with all the rich kids at school. And they know Tony, and they know that he is not a rich kid and they're wondering why he is pretending to all of a sudden belong with this group of other students, with these rich kids. So they think he's **fronting**, they think he's pretending to be something that he's not.

Maura: Yeah, that sounds good. So, in this case, Tony is being fake. He's not being true to himself and he's... yeah, he's pretending to be rich when the truth is that he isn't. You also may have noticed that at the end of our example I said that it was **a front**, and that is a different way of really expressing the same thing, that the friend, Tony, was pretending to be rich but that he really wasn't. We'll explain that a little bit more in the Learning Materials.

Andrew: You know, I sympathize with Tony a little bit, everybody wants to be rich.

Maura: Yeah, that's true, but I don't think that I would pretend to have tons of money if it wasn't true.

Andrew: You wouldn't **front**?

Maura: I wouldn't.

Andrew: Good for you, it's always best to be honest. I think it's time for us to move on to this episode's second key expression.

Maura: OK, let's do it.

Andrew: So, our second expression—and I have to say, I like this one quite a bit—is a noun this time, as opposed to a verb, and it is **a poseur**.

Maura: Mmhmm. **A poseur**. It's funny how we have these little expressions that we like, just like you said, Andrew, that for some reason you like this one.

Andrew: It's just fun to say and I think it really describes **a poseur** well. It's the perfect way to talk about **a poseur**, is with this word.

Maura: So we should probably define it a little bit more. **A poseur** is a person who behaves in a certain way that is trying to impress other people and, again, it's not authentic, it's not who this person really is. They're pretending to be this way, to hopefully impress other people.

Andrew: So **a poseur** is just a person who pretends to be something that he or she is not in order to impress somebody else, in order to make themselves look cooler than they really are.

Maura: So, again, this is about someone acting fake. It could be by their behaviour, it could also be by the way they dress, or they could pretend to have certain qualities that they don't actually have. There are lots of ways to be **a poseur**.

Andrew: And when I think of this expression, **poseur**, it always brings me back to a high school situation. This is the situation I imagine: You have these different cliques of kids in high schools, right? And all of the students in the high school, they're not really sure who they are yet so sometimes they jump around between groups, and you'll get **called out** for this. Somebody will say, hey, you don't belong with us, you're **a poseur**.

Maura: Yeah, I think that's interesting to point out because most adults probably aren't going to be using this term, but it's definitely popular amongst teenagers. And yeah, Andrew, just like you, when I was in high school I definitely used this term. And yeah, you're talking about other people, saying that they're pretending to be a certain way, probably to impress their peers, because in high school when you're a teenager there's lots of pressure from each other.

Andrew: Exactly. So why don't we give some examples and show how to use this expression, **a poseur**?

Maura: OK.

Maura: Do you see Richard over there? Why is he wearing a leather jacket?

Andrew: Yeah, what a goof. What does he think he is? Some kind of punk or something?

Maura: Probably. What **a poseur**.

Andrew: Absolutely, that guy is a prep through and through.

Maura: Yeah, like yesterday, and for years before that, he would always wear, like, an Oxford shirt and, like, khaki pants, and now all of a sudden he's, like, wearing a leather jacket and thinks he's so cool?

Andrew: What a joke.

Maura: So in that example, we heard two people talking about Richard and, to be honest, they weren't being very nice to him. Because he was wearing a leather jacket, they thought that he was **a poseur**, that he wasn't acting like himself, that he was wearing some clothes because he wanted to impress other people. He wanted other people to think, "Wow, that guy Richard, he's got a leather jacket, he's a punk."

Andrew: Exactly, but he wasn't. They knew that he wasn't a punk, he was just pretending to be a punk. And in this situation maybe they felt threatened or insecure so they called Richard **a poseur**.

Maura: Yeah, teenagers can be so mean to each other, can't they?

Andrew: Yeah, I feel bad for Richard. He's just trying out something new but he got made fun of for trying this new identity on.

Maura: I think one of the reasons why a person might be called **a poseur** is if they change suddenly. So if you're into one particular style of clothing or music and then you very quickly change, it doesn't seem authentic, so that's a time when someone might be called **a poseur**.

Andrew: Mmhmm. Because, really, **at the heart of this definition** is the idea that you're not being genuine, you're not legitimately changing your personality or the group that you belong to. You're doing it just to look cool so it's fake, it's inauthentic, and that's why you're **a poseur**.

Maura: OK, let's give one more example with **poseur**.

Andrew: Hey, this is a great song. It's really rockin'.

Maura: You think this is a good song?

Andrew: Yeah, I love it.

Maura: These guys are just a bunch of **poseurs**. Their last album was a total pop record and now they just wrote a rock record to try and make more money. I hate when bands do that.



Andrew: Really? I didn't know that. But, I mean, come on, this song's still good.

Maura: Yeah sure, the song's OK, but I just can't stop thinking about what their last album was and how it's, like, **a total 180**.

Andrew: It doesn't bother me. A good song's a good song. If they're a fake band, who cares, man? Just enjoy the music.

Maura: All right, if that's what you think.

Andrew: OK, in this example, we heard two friends talking about a song that just came on the radio. And one friend, he really liked the song, but the other friend, she didn't like it because she thought that the band were a bunch of **poseurs**, that they were making music that wasn't representative of who they were, because they used to be a **bubblegum pop** band and now they're pretending to be a rock band, and it just didn't feel right.

Maura: Yeah, this is a really good example because it does happen. Sometimes you hear somebody's music on the radio and then a couple of years later they have a totally different sound. So yeah, they're kind of **poseurs** if they're not making music that really is who they are.

Andrew: Yeah, it happens a lot, you're right. How about we move on to our third and final expression for today's episode.

Maura: All right. What is it?

Andrew: Drum roll, please. It's **a sham**.

Maura: Right, **a sham** is a person who pretends to be something that they're not. So just like **to front**, or if you call someone **a poseur**, it's really the same explanation. You're talking about a person that is not being authentic, that is pretending to be something that is not really them.

Andrew: So **a sham** is just any person who pretends to be something they're not. And when I hear this expression, **a sham**, I immediately think of a business context, maybe a salesman or a businessperson who is pretending that they are maybe more successful than they actually are, that's what I think of when I hear **a sham**.

Maura: Yeah, it's true that often with these expressions, a person is pretending to be something bigger or more impressive than they actually are. I mean, why would you want to pretend you're less?



Andrew: Yeah, no, that's an interesting point. And I don't think there are any expressions—I can't think of any off the top of my head, at least—that describe the opposite, when you're downsizing yourself, but there are lots, like we're showing you here today, that describe when you're pretending to be something you're not, when you're trying to make yourself look better.

Maura: All right, should we jump right to the examples?

Andrew: Yeah, let's do it.

Maura: Did you hear about the big scandal that's been in all the newspapers?

Andrew: No, I haven't read the news today. What's up?

Maura: Well, the mayor just got arrested for taking bribes.

Andrew: What? Are you serious?

Maura: I know, he's such **a sham**. He campaigned by saying he was trustworthy and that he was going to spend taxpayers' money in a really honest and transparent way, but he's corrupt too.

Andrew: I feel ripped off. I voted for that guy.

Maura: No, you can't trust politicians, they're all the same.

Maura: So in that example we heard about a mayor who was **a sham**, and he was **a sham** because he had pretended to be something that he wasn't. He pretended to be an honest, trustworthy politician, and in the end he was not. He was arrested for taking bribes and that is not very honest or trustworthy.

Andrew: I think there's a lot of people out there who think politicians are all **shams**, they can't be trusted at all.

Maura: Well, you know, I like to stay optimistic, but there are a lot of scandals out there involving politicians and money.

Andrew: Yes, they know each other very well, don't they?

Maura: Unfortunately, it's true.

Andrew: OK, let's do one more example.

Maura: All right.

Andrew: Hey, great concert, eh?

Maura: Yeah, it's pretty good. Like a... a unique sound.

Andrew: You know, I don't think that that singer is actually singing though. Look at his lips and then listen to the voice. Something is funky.

Maura: OK, let me... Let me see. Oh yeah, you're right. It's, like, it's a bit off or something. I don't know, yeah, it's weird.

Andrew: I know. What **a sham**, eh? I think he's lip-syncing.

Maura: Wow, that's pretty crazy and pretty horrible. This band's going nowhere.

Andrew: In that example, we were listening in to the conversation of two friends who were talking about a concert they were watching, and, although they were enjoying the concert, they thought there was something weird with the lead singer. And when they paid close attention they noticed that he was **a sham**, that he was lip-syncing and wasn't actually singing.

Maura: In case it's the first time you've heard that before, lip-syncing is when someone moves their mouth like they're singing but there's no voice coming out, they're just pretending. You know, it's something that often regular people do when they're listening to their favourite song, and it's most often not acceptable when you're at a concert and people are watching a band or a singer perform.

Andrew: Yes, there have been some big scandals in the past with different pop singers who have been caught lip-syncing and it's never pretty.

Maura: That's true, no one ever likes it.

Andrew: But this is a perfect example of **a sham**: somebody who is pretending to be a talented singer but really is just faking it.

Maura: Mmhmm. That's right. So let's go over all of the expressions that we looked at in this episode.

Andrew: We started with **to front**.

Maura: Right, and then we looked at a couple of nouns or names of people who are pretending to be something else. Those were **a poseur** and **a sham**.

Andrew: That is right. And I think that about wraps it up for us today.

Maura: Yeah, that sounds good. So we're going to remind you again to visit our website, Culips.com, that's C-U-L-I-P-S.com, and there, you can see all of the cool stuff and the tons of episodes that we have to offer.

Andrew: That is right. Thank you for listening everyone. We will talk to you next time.

Maura: Bye for now.

## Detailed Explanations

### Same old, same old

When a situation or status is unchanged and remains the same as it was the last time you encountered it, you can use the expression **same old, same old**. In this episode, Andrew asks Maura how she is doing and she replies by saying that nothing much has changed even though she hasn't seen Andrew in almost a year. It's just the **same old, same old**. In other words, nothing new has happened to her since the last time she saw Andrew, everything is pretty much the same in her life.

So, the expression **same old, same old** is used when we want to communicate that a situation hasn't changed and is still the same as the last time we met it.

Often, we use **same old, same old** to describe boring or dull situations. If something stays the same day in and day out, then it can become boring, and **same old, same old** is a good expression to use in this context.

Here are a couple more examples with **same old, same old**:

Terry: Did you have a nice vacation?

Cheryl: Yeah, I did. I went back to my hometown to see some friends and family.

Terry: That's cool!

Cheryl: Yeah, it was nice, but it's pretty boring. It's just **same old, same old** back there. Nothing much ever changes.

Terry: Ah. You must come from a small town.

Cheryl: Yup! A small town in Saskatchewan, population 500.

Terry: Wow!

Jeremy: How you doing, man? I haven't seen you in a while. What's new?

Ryan: **Same old, same old**, man. What about you? You still going to university?

Jeremy: Not any more, no. I graduated last year. I'm working for a construction company now.

Ryan: Sounds great!

**To be on it**

In this episode, Andrew says that he wants to go camping for the upcoming long weekend. Maura warns Andrew that it is important to reserve a camping spot or he won't be able to go. Andrew replies by saying, "Don't worry, **I'm on it.**"

The expression **to be on it** means to be taking care of something. In other words, Andrew assures Maura that he knows that he needs to reserve a camping spot and is in the process of making the reservation now.

So, when someone is responsible for a task and is in the process of doing that chore, they are **on it**.

Be careful not to get this expression confused with a similar-sounding expression: *to be on something*. When you are on something, it means that you have taken a drug or medicine that is affecting your judgement and behaviour. However, **to be on it** is used when someone is in the middle of completing a task. Although these expressions sound very similar, their meanings are quite different, so it's important not to get them mixed up.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be on it**.

Angela: Are there any last-minute preparations needed before the conference next Tuesday?

Kevin: Well, we still need to get 2500 copies of our sales brochures printed.

Angela: OK, **I'm on it.**

Kevin: Use the print shop downtown on Smith Street. They offer a 20% discount on all print orders over 1000 copies.

Angela: OK, will do.

Timothy: You remembered to book tickets to see the Beyoncé concert next month, right?

Michael: Oh no! I totally forgot.

Timothy: Are you serious? We'll never get tickets now. It probably sold out long ago.

Michael: Don't worry, **I'm on it.** I've got a friend who works at a radio station. She always gets free tickets to events and I'm sure she'll be able to help us out.

Timothy: I hope so!

**Laid-back**

A person or situation that is relaxed, calm, and stress free is **laid-back**. In this episode, Maura says that the Labour Day long weekend will be **laid-back** for her and that she will spend time relaxing at home and have some friends over for a barbeque. In other words, the holiday is **laid-back** because Maura doesn't have many plans. Instead of rushing around doing many things, she will spend the day relaxing and taking it easy.

This expression is commonly used to describe personalities. If a person is very casual and relaxed, that person is **laid-back**. We also use it to describe certain things or situations, like meetings, interviews, and conversations.

So, stress-free things and people that are chill, relaxed, and casual can be described as **laid-back**.

Here are a couple more examples with **laid-back**:

Barb: You've been on a couple of dates with Darren now. What do you think of him?

Helen: I like him. He's kind and **laid-back**. My type of guy.

Barb: So are you guys officially going out?

Helen: Yeah!

Barb: I'm so happy for you. That's very exciting!

Mildred: So, last week I went to an English-speaking club.

Douglas: Oh really?

Mildred: Yeah. I really wanted to practise speaking English, so I found this club online. We met at a coffee shop downtown and it gave me a lot of chances to speak English.

Douglas: Sounds fun.

Mildred: Yeah. At first I was a little nervous because I didn't know anyone there but the atmosphere was very **laid-back** and casual so I ended up having a great time.

Douglas: Awesome!

## Fishy

A situation or person who appears to be suspicious, weird, untrustworthy, or dishonest is **fishy**. This episode introduces three expressions that can be used when something or someone is acting **fishy**. The three key expressions for this episode (*to front*, *a poseur*, and *a sham*) all describe people who are **fishy** because they are not genuine but instead pretend to be people who they really are not.

This expression has an interesting origin. Originally, we used the word **fishy** to describe seafood that smelled like the fish or the ocean. If seafood smells **fishy**, then it is not fresh and should not be eaten. Eventually, we started to describe people and things that were suspicious or untrustworthy as **fishy** too. So, when something or someone is **fishy**, you should be cautious because trusting them could have disastrous results.

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

Ralph: Come here and look out the window. Do you see those two guys across the street looking into Paul and Callie's house?

Lilian: Yeah. What do you think they're doing?

Ralph: I don't know, but something's **fishy**. They don't look like they're repair men.

Lilian: Do you think they're robbers?

Ralph: I don't know, but I'm going to give Paul a call and see what's up. If he doesn't know them, then I'll call the police.

Lilian: Good idea!

Dennis: Did you hear that James got an A+ on his chemistry exam?

Walter: Yeah. That's unbelievable.

Dennis: Yeah. I heard that he didn't study at all.

Walter: Do you think he cheated?

Dennis: I don't know. It's a possibility. How else could he get such a high grade?

Walter: Yeah. It's definitely a bit **fishy**.

**To call someone out**

When you **call someone out**, you challenge them about something controversial, inauthentic, or offensive that they have said or done. In this episode, Andrew says that high school students that are poseurs get **called out**. In other words, if you pretend to be someone you are not while in high school, another student will probably confront you and ask you why you are being a poseur; they will **call you out**.

So, if you **call someone out**, you criticize, confront, or challenge them about something they have done, written, or said. These days, this expression is used frequently on the Internet to talk about responses to controversial tweets and Facebook status updates.

Here are a couple more examples with **to call someone out**.

Michelle: Did you see what the reporter from XYZ Newspaper wrote on Twitter today?

Chris: Yeah, I did.

Michelle: It made me so angry. She has been posting some really offensive tweets lately.

Chris: Yeah, someone needs **to call her out**. I know she is a writer and should be allowed to voice her opinion, but she's gone too far.

Michelle: Yeah, I agree. I think I'm going to tweet her and tell her how I feel.

Chris: That's a great idea. You should definitely do that.

Peter: Since we're good friends, can I ask you to do me a favour?

Shirley: Sure. What's up?

Peter: I've decided I want to be a better person. I know I've held a lot of negative opinions before but I want to change. So, going forward, can you **call me out** on any racist, sexist, or misogynistic comments that I make?

Shirley: I'm happy to hear that, Peter. Sure, I can help you of course.

Peter: Thanks!



## At the heart of something

We use the expression **at the heart of something** when discussing the most essential or important element of that thing. In this episode, Andrew uses the expression when he defines a poseur. He says that **at the heart of the definition** is the idea that poseurs are not genuine.

So, when you want to talk about the core part of something—its most important and essential aspect—you can use **at the heart of something**.

This expression is easy to visualize. The heart is a vital organ that lies right in the middle of the body. So, when someone talks about getting **at the heart of something**, it means that they are discussing the central and most important aspect of that thing.

Here are a couple more examples with **at the heart of something**:

Beverly: It's only a week until we present our ideas for a new marketing campaign to the board. How will we ever finish on time? We have so much left to do.

Randy: **At the heart of the problem** is disorganization. We need to work together as a team and then we should be OK.

Beverly: You're right. We should have a meeting this afternoon to reorganize and prioritize. If we can make a solid plan of action, we should be able to finish by the deadline.

Randy: Absolutely. I'll notify the other team members that we're having an emergency meeting.

Beverly: Perfect. I'll see you later on in the meeting.

Craig: Homelessness seems to be getting worse and worse in this city.

Ashley: I agree.

Craig: When I was driving into work this morning, I must have seen at least 10 homeless people sleeping outside. It just isn't right.

Ashley: Yeah, it's a big problem and one that is difficult to fix.

Craig: If politicians really wanted to solve the problem, I'm sure they could.

Ashley: Like most things, money is **at the heart of the issue**. There just isn't enough funding for affordable housing and homeless shelters in this city.

Craig: Yeah, it's really a shame.

**A total 180**

When you reverse your opinion or stance on an issue, you do **a total 180**. For example, if you had been a strict vegetarian your whole life and then one day you suddenly started to eat meat, you would have done **a total 180**.

In this episode, the expression is used in the example about a band. The band's first album was a pop record but then they pulled **a total 180** and switched to a rock and roll sound for their second album.

This expression's origin is mathematical. The *180* stands for the 360 degrees in a circle. If you turn something half way around, you turn it 180 degrees. So, when someone takes an opposite position than they originally had, we can say they have done **a total 180**.

The verbs we use with this expression are *to pull* and *to do*. Someone can either pull **a total 180** or do **a total 180**. The word *total* is optional. You can just say **do/pull a 180**, but the word *total* strengthens it and gives it a more casual and everyday sound.

Here are a couple more examples with **a total 180**:

Shawn: Did you hear the good news? Casual Friday is back at work! We can wear casual clothes to the office once a week again!

Anne: Yeah. Management pulled **a total 180** on their plan to ban casual Friday.

Shawn: I guess they didn't expect all the employees to be so upset by the cancellation.

Anne: Yeah. They must have realized that it is more important to make their employees happy than to have everyone wear a suit five days a week.

Shawn: Yup, you're right! And it worked, I think. Everyone is in such a good mood today.

Amy: Did I ever tell you that I almost went to Harvard?

Carl: Wow. I didn't know that.

Amy: Yeah, I applied, got accepted, and was almost ready to go, but then I pulled **a total 180** and decided to just get a job instead. I couldn't stand the thought of studying for another 4 years.

Carl: Do you ever regret that decision?

Amy: I don't regret it, no. But I sometimes wonder what would have happened if I was a Harvard grad.

## Bubblegum pop

**Bubblegum pop** is a genre of pop music that is written specifically to appeal to kids and teenagers. It features songs that are short, catchy, and have simple, non-offensive lyrics that are kid-appropriate. The genre is called **bubblegum pop** because many of the songs of this genre reference candy and have lyrical content that is sweet and innocent.

The expression **bubblegum pop** was first used to describe music created in the '60s and '70s by groups such as the Jackson 5 and the Monkees. These days, we use the expression to describe pop music that is superficial or cheesy. Boy bands, girl groups, and manufactured pop music are often referred to as **bubblegum pop**.

In this episode, the expression is used in the example where a **bubblegum pop** group pulls a total 180 and switches to a rock and roll sound.

Here are a couple more examples with **bubblegum pop**:

Lois: Can you change the radio station please? I hate all this **bubblegum pop** they constantly play.

Juan: Yeah sure, no problem. Would you rather listen to the rock station or the talk station?

Lois: Actually, can you just turn the radio off for a bit? I have a headache.

Juan: Yeah, I can do that.

Lois: Thanks.

Wayne: I heard you play in a band.

Heather: Yeah, I do!

Wayne: What's your band called?

Heather: The Bugs.

Wayne: Cool name. What genre of music do you play?

Heather: We're a punk rock band.

Wayne: Ah. So no **bubblegum pop** for you then, hey?

Heather: Nope, pure rock and roll.

Wayne: Right on.

## To front

The first key expression from this episode is **to front**. When someone **fronts**, they act inauthentic and pretend to be something that they are not. A person who **fronts** is fake in some way and is not presenting himself or herself truthfully.

In the audio for this episode, Andrew and Maura gave an example using the noun form of this expression: **a front**. This has a similar meaning, because **a front** is an attempt to hide the truth. For example, we could make a sentence like, "I know Javier seems like a really nice guy, but don't be fooled, it's just **a front**."

In this example sentence, Javier is disguising his true personality with **a front**. Although he tries to persuade people that he is a good guy by acting nice, the reality is that he is a person who has suspicious motives and should not be trusted.

So, we can use the expressions **to front** and **a front** when we talk about people who cannot be trusted because they are representing themselves in a fake or inauthentic way.

Here's one more example with **to front**:

Harry:	It's my birthday next week!
Andrea:	Hey, happy birthday! How old will you be turning, if you don't mind me asking?
Harry:	25!
Andrea:	Oh come on now, stop <b>fronting</b> . I know you're older than that.
Harry:	I know, I'm just kidding. I'll actually be turning 39.
Andrea:	You're getting up there, old man!
Harry:	Sure am.

## Well put

When someone says something that cannot be said any better, we can compliment the person by saying **well put**. In this episode, Maura gives a summary of one of the examples we hear. After she summarizes it, Andrew compliments Maura by saying **well put**. In other words, Andrew is impressed that Maura was able to explain the example so well. In his opinion, there is no better way to summarize the example than the way Maura did so.

So, when something has been said using exactly the right words and phrasing, and there is really no better way to express that thought, we can say **well put**.

Here are a couple more examples with **well put**:

Professor: Does anyone have any questions?

Student: Just so I'm clear, I want to confirm the main idea of your lecture. So you're arguing that Shakespeare's influence on world literature is not as strong as we once believed?

Professor: Exactly, very **well put**. That is the main message of my lecture this afternoon.

Student: OK, thank you!

Professor: You're welcome. Any more questions?

Marie: I'm having a little problem with my report. Can you take a look at it?

Susan: Sure. What seems to be the matter?

Marie: The third paragraph is giving me difficulties. It's awkward.

Susan: Yeah, it doesn't flow very well. How about if we change this second sentence so that it reads, "We predict sales will rise next year due to an increase in tourism"?

Marie: Oh, **well put**! That's much better than the sentence I had. Thanks for your help!

Susan: Any time!

### A poseur

The second key expression that Maura and Andrew looked at in this episode is **a poseur**. Someone who pretends to be someone who they are not or who pretends to have something they don't really have is **a poseur**. For example, if you said that you have a college degree but in reality you don't, then you could be called **a poseur**. Or if you pretend to be a skateboarder but in reality don't know how to skateboard, then you also could be called **a poseur**.

This word entered the English language from French, and that's why it maintains its French spelling. However, these days, some people also spell it in a more English way: **poser**.

So, **a poseur** is an inauthentic person who misrepresents themselves to other people.

Here's one more example with **a poseur**.

Julia: Nice haircut!

Alan: Do you like it?

Julia: Yeah. I love it.

Alan: I don't know how I feel about it. I kind of feel like **a poseur**. It doesn't really fit my style.

Julia: Nah, it looks great. It's totally you.

Alan: That's good news. Thanks for the compliment.

Julia: You're welcome!

### A sham

The final key expression from this episode is **a sham**. When someone fakes who they really are and pretends to be something they are not, they are **a sham**.

We can use this expression to describe things that are fake, too. For example, a couple could enter into **a sham** marriage in order to profit financially. Or a con man might try to sell **a sham** product to unsuspecting customers.

So, things and people who are fake and represent themselves in a way that is dishonest can be called **shams**.

Here's one more example with **a sham**:

Karen: Who are you going to vote for in the upcoming election?

David: I was thinking about voting for Leo Smith.

Karen: Are you kidding? That guy is such **a sham**. You'd be better off voting for Eileen Jones. She's great.

David: I don't want to get into a big political argument with you, but if Eileen Jones wins the election, the economy is going to be terrible.

Karen: Well, I guess we have very different opinions when it comes to politics!

David: It seems so!

## Quiz

**1. Someone who acts suspiciously can be described as which of the following?**

- a) meaty
- b) fishy
- c) gamy
- d) sloppy

**2. An issue's most essential piece of information resides where?**

- a) at the brain of the issue
- b) at the heart of the issue
- c) at the lungs of the issue
- d) at the kidney of the issue

**3. What is kid-friendly pop music called?**

- a) chocolatebar pop
- b) icecream pop
- c) bubblegum pop
- d) candy pop

**4. What do you do when you call someone out?**

- a) whisper to them
- b) telephone them
- c) invite them to dinner
- d) confront them

**5. Which adjective describes a relaxed person?**

- a) laid-back
- b) uptight
- c) flaky
- d) careless

**6. Someone who is in the process of doing a task is what?**

- a) over it
- b) in it
- c) on it
- d) up it



**7. Which of the following nouns can be used to describe both people and things?**

- a) a sham
- b) a poseur
- c) a front
- d) a show-off

**8. When you reverse your stance on a position, you pull a what?**

- a) total 360
- b) total 270
- c) total 90
- d) total 180

## Quiz Answers

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

### Episode Credits

Hosts: Andrew Bates and Maura Smith  
Episode preparation/research: Andrew Bates  
Audio editor: Andrew Bates  
Transcription: [Transcript Divas](#) Transcription Services  
Learning Materials writer: Andrew Bates  
English editor: Jessica Cox  
Webmaster: Hussain Mohammed  
Business manager: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima  
Project managers: Jessica Cox and Maura Smith