

Curious Questions - **Sleep Tight**

Transcript

Robin: Hello everyone! This is Robin

Harp: And Harp

Robin: with the Curious Questions podcast where we answer your English language questions.

Harp: Little things come up all the time that confuse us when we are learning another language. Do you have a question that you have been dying to ask?

Robin: Is there a question burning inside of you?

Harp: Please ask us! You can email your questions to questions@culips.com or go to our website C-U-L-I-P-S.com for more information.

Robin: The next question is useful for everyone, because at different times in the day different expressions are used. For example, I will say “good morning” to you, because for me it is 9:30 in the morning right now.

Let’s hear the question from Antonio in Mexico City.

Harp: *I hear so many expressions, **Sweet Dreams, Sleep Tight, Good night**. How do you use these expressions and what do they mean?*

Robin: When someone is going to bed there are many expressions you could use to end the night. There are many variations, but there are also some very common expressions.

Harp: The standard expression is **Good night**.

Antonio asked about the expression **Sleep tight**, which is also a nice expression that ends the night well. In using this expression, you are simply wishing the person a good night’s sleep or that they sleep well. So, you could simply say, “Have a good sleep” and mean the same thing.

Robin: The full expression here is “Sleep tight. Don’t let the bed bugs bite.” We must look back in history to understand where this expression might have come from.

Tight actually means, to be fixed firmly in place, or to be stretched out fully. And since beds were made differently then, with tight ropes, this made sense. When ropes were tight, the bed was more firm so one could have a better sleep.

Harp: And the second part, 'Don't let the bed bugs bite.' Bed bugs were a more common problem historically as well. Now we are able to keep homes and furniture cleaner, therefore, preventing bed bugs. Although, I recently saw a report on television talking about the resurgence, or current problem, with bed bugs.

Robin: So when we say, 'Don't let the beg bugs bite' we are wishing that the bed bugs do not bit that person that night. I should also mention that this is an expression and said in fun.

I mean, when people wish for the bed bugs not to bite, they are not actually worried about bed bugs. They probably do not have any bed bugs in their beds. It is not a serious wish.

Harp: If you are really curious, check out lipservice, where we have more information about bed bugs and further theories on the history of **Sleep Tight**.

Robin: Another expression, similar to **Sleep tight**, and **Good night** and used at exactly the same time is **Sweet Dreams**. In this case, you are actually wishing someone nice dreams. If you have nice dreams, you are sleeping well.

Harp: We also want to make a distinction between '**Good night**' and 'Have a good night.' The two sound close yet are very different. Like I mentioned already, **Good night** is at the end of the night when people are going to sleep. 'Have a good night' is much different.

Robin: With 'Have a good night', we are wishing people a good night when they are awake. We would use this expression at the end of a work day. We could also use this expression if a friend is going out in the evening or at night, and we are saying goodbye. We can actually also wish someone a good morning, good afternoon, or good day, depending on what time of day we see them.

Harp: So I hope that the expression Sleep Tight is clearer for you now. Remember the simple, '**Good night**' always works.

Robin: To check your understanding of this podcast, you can quiz yourself or read the transcripts at lipservice at culips.com.

Harp: I hope this time we have answered a question that helps you improve your English. I also hope even if you didn't ask the question, you also found it useful.

Robin: Please keep your questions coming. We are always happy to answer them.

Once again, this is Robin

Harp: And Harp

Robin: for Culips.com. Have a good day everyone.

Harp: Good bye.

Detailed Explanations

There are tons of English greetings and goodbyes.

I am sure if you are listening to our podcasts you already know them well. I will give you a short list anyway.

Greetings

Hello

Hi

Hey

Good morning

Good afternoon

Good night

Some expressions that are used less often (remember this is my opinion and it often depends where in the world you are)

Good evening (more between strangers, more formal)

Good day (common popular Australian expression, said 'G'day')

Less standard greetings *be careful when/where/with whom you are using these

Yo

What's up?

What're you saying?

Goodbyes

Bye
Good night
See you later

Well-wishing goodbyes

Have a good morning
Have a good afternoon
Have a good evening
Have a good night

Less standard goodbyes (my own list) *be careful when/where/with whom you are using these

(See you) Later Skater/Alligator
Check you on the flipside
I'll catch you later
I'll see you when I see you

Depending where you are, some of these expressions are more common than others. Listen to the people around you, to pick up local greetings and goodbyes.

Sweet Dreams

When we talk about nice dreams, we don't have a special word for them. We can say simply, 'I had a good dream last night.'

For the opposite we can say, 'bad dream' or even stronger is 'nightmare.'

When someone is awake but thinking of some personal fantasies about life during the day, we say 'daydreaming.'

Sleep Tight. (And don't let the bed bugs bite.)

Here are some possibilities of where the full expression **Sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite** comes from.

Sleep Tight

This expression may have come from the time in history when people slept on beds made with ropes. The ropes needed to be tight to have a comfortable bed and a good night's sleep.

It might also come from sleeping tightly and warmly under your covers. When the covers are close to your body and all around you, this is a tight position.

Sleeping tight also makes me think of being 'tucked in'. Children like to be tucked in by their parents. 'To tuck' is to put or push into a small concealing place. Some people like to be tucked under the covers tightly. 'To be tucked in' when you are going to sleep is to go to your bed with someone, who tucks the covers in around you.

Tight

The word alone now has other usages that I wanted to mention. Nowadays younger people use **tight** to mean 'good' or 'great.'

Example:

"His music is **tight**."

"She looks tight."

Bed Bugs

Like I said in this episode, bed bugs are very small bugs found in beds. They feed on the blood of humans. They bite people while they are sleeping if they are living in your bed.

Most furniture does not have bed bugs. If you have this problem, you will know because you will wake up in the morning with small bites on your body. They are very small bugs and hide during the day so are often hard to see.

I have never had a problem with bed bugs. I have heard stories about people encountering bed bugs in cheap hotels. But don't worry. They are a lot less common then they were in the past.

Other sleeping vocabulary

Instead of saying "I am going to **sleep**", we can say **bed** in place of **sleep**, "I am going to **bed**."

It is generally believed that 8 hours of a sleep a night is a **good night's sleep** (another expression to mean sleeping well). A lot of people, especially adults have trouble sleeping continuously through the night. If someone get almost no sleep for many nights in a row this is called **insomnia**. Someone who cannot sleep is called an **insomniac**.

Teenagers generally sleep late or **sleep in** on the weekends or whenever they can. **To sleep in** means to sleep late in the morning.

Example:

"I didn't wake up until noon today. I **slept in**."

To sleep over means to spent the night at someone's house. This is usually used more by children and teenagers and seen as a fun event. A more adult way to express this is **to stay over** or **to spend the night**.

The morning after

What about when you see the person the next morning. What can you say then? You can simply ask 'How did you sleep?' or 'Did you sleep well?'

If someone asks you, you can simply answer, 'Yes, I slept well.' Of course, there are other options too and I also want to share a couple expressions with you.

Another way to say you slept well is to say, 'I slept like a baby.' Babies generally can fall asleep anywhere and sleep completely undisturbed. So to sleep like a baby means you slept very well.

And like that, we can also say, 'I slept like a log.' What's a log? A log is a piece of cut wood. It doesn't move and it is not alive. If you sleep like a log, you are so peaceful that you do not even move.

Quiz (see the answers at the bottom of this lipservice)

1. **Sleep Tight generally means the same as**
 - a) Good night
 - b) Be careful of the bugs
 - c) Tuck yourself in tight
 - d) Party time!
2. **What does tight actually mean?**
 - a) To be tied
 - b) To be fixed firmly in place
 - c) To be stretched out fully
 - d) b and c
3. **Where did this expression Sleep Tight come from?**
 - a) Tight beds
 - b) Tight sleeping
 - c) A bug problem
 - d) We don't know
4. **Are bed bugs still a problem today?**
 - a) No, not anymore
 - b) Yes, they are everywhere
 - c) In some places it is still a problem
 - d) Everyone has them, but they are not always a problem
5. **Good night and Have a good night are the same expression?**
 - a) Yes
 - b) No
 - c) It depends on the situation
 - d) It depends on the speaker
6. **When we say Sweet Dreams we are doing what?**
 - a) Wishing someone a good night out
 - b) Wishing someone a good sleep
 - c) Wishing someone nice dreams
 - d) b and c

Answers: 1-a 2-d 3-d 4-c 5-b 6-d