

Whistle while you work

Episode description

In this week's bonus episode, Andrew lets you know what he's been up to over the last week and how he's getting ready for spring. Along the way, he teaches you some interesting vocabulary and expressions, like **menial, in the pipeline, and to be on a [something] kick**.

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Note: The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: What's up, how's it going? This is bonus episode number 42 of the Culips English podcast. My name's Andrew and I'll be your host and your English study companion today. Thanks for clicking play and joining me here. I think you made a great choice to focus on improving your English skills and I'm gonna do my best to try and be of service in helping you reach that very important goal. So, in our bonus episode series, I tell you a few stories about what I've been up to over the last week. And then towards the end of the episode, I'm going to focus in on one of the interesting expressions that you'll hear me use while I'm telling my stories. And then I'll teach you some more details about that expression and how English speakers use it in our everyday lives. There is a 100% free transcript that we've made to accompany this episode and it's available on our website, Culips.com or you could just follow the link that's in the description. And the transcript comes in an interactive version that's best for using if you study on your phone or computer, or there's a PDF version that's great for printing out if you'd prefer to study in that analog kind of way. So, please feel free to follow along with the transcript as you listen to me today if you think you'd find that helpful. And with that being said, I think it's time we get started, so let's do it.

Spring is in the air, it's right around the corner. And that means that it's the start of a lot of new things. Soon, the flowers will be blooming, and the birds will be singing, and the cold temperatures of winter will say goodbye for another season. And for students and teachers in Korea, it also means that it's the start of a new school year. In my home country of Canada, the new school year starts in September, but here in Korea, where I work as a university instructor, the school semester begins in March. Now at first that was honestly a little bit strange for me, but now I've adapted to this different schedule, and it does make a lot of sense to have a fresh start, a new beginning, a new semester in the spring as opposed to the fall. So, to get ready for the upcoming new school year, I've been getting organized and ready for the last couple of weeks. A project that I started tackling last week actually was organizing my desk and my office. During the COVID pandemic, I mostly

worked from home, and I didn't go to my office very much at all. However, now that we're thankfully past the pandemic and life is essentially back to normal, it's time for me to get back into the working from the office mindset.

So, I spent this week getting my office into shape. It was a little strange to go through all the drawers in my desk and see that my old agenda and calendar and documents were all from like two years ago. It was almost like everything in my office had been frozen in time. So, I had to get rid of a lot of things. I cleaned out all of my desk drawers. I swept the floor and swept around my desk, and I did a lot of dusting. I was shocked at how much dust had accumulated over everything, but it felt really good and satisfying to brush it all off and wipe down my desk, and my bookshelf, and my chair as well. I also went through a lot of my old papers and documents and just threw out, well not threw out, recycled. I recycled anything that was outdated or unimportant or just generally not needed anymore. Any documents that I did need to keep, I organized into some folders and then I filed those away in my cabinet.

Do you know the song "Whistle While You Work"? "Whistle While You Work"? It's a really old tune. I think it's actually from the Disney movie Snow White, that animated movie, the classic one, which I believe came out in 1937. If you can believe that it's a really, really old, animated film, a classic, and actually I'm sure many of you have seen it. Anyways, in that song there's a lyric that goes: Just whistle while you work, and cheerfully together we can tidy up the place. So hum a merry tune, it won't take long when there's a song to help you set the pace. That's a little extract of the lyrics from the Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs animated movie. I would like to play you a clip, but I'm a little worried about breaking copyright rules if I play you the song. So, you'll just have to go with my quote there. But if you'd like to hear the song, you can easily go to YouTube and find it and I'll make sure to include a link to the song in the show notes for this episode so that you can give it a listen to in your own time if you'd like.

Anyways, the reason why I'm talking about this song is that the main idea in the lyrics is that if you whistle or you hum, whistling is when you know, you blow air through your mouth to make a melody like... Or if you hum... I'm a better whistler than I am a hummer as you can tell. OK, if you make this kind of music with your mouth while you clean and while you tidy, it makes that kind of menial task more enjoyable and less boring.

Menial task. That's the word I just used. Menial, menial. M-E-N-I-A-L. Have you heard that word before? Can you guess what it means? I think maybe some of you are familiar with it, but it's not too common a word, so it may be new for you. And if so, that's fine. Let me quickly explain it now. Menial is a word that we used to describe work that's boring, unimportant, and doesn't need any special training to do. So, think of the tasks I was doing when I was cleaning my office, dusting, sweeping, this kind of thing. These can be described as menial because they're not particularly stimulating or exciting and anyone can do them. You don't need any special education or training, right? Usually when we use this word, we say things like menial job or menial task or even we could describe a person as a menial laborer if they do a job that isn't really skilled.

Anyways, doing a deep cleaning of my office last week was a menial task, but I couldn't exactly whistle while I worked to make it more enjoyable because I think that would have annoyed my coworkers. It would have annoyed me if my co-workers were whistling while they worked anyways. So, I didn't do that, I didn't whistle while I worked, but I did do the next best thing, which was to throw on my headphones and listen to some music. A little earlier in the week, I was just randomly listening to some playlist that I came across on my music streaming app, and one of the songs that was on that playlist was by the British R&B singer Sade. Now Sade was at the height of her popularity when I was just a little kid in elementary school, and aside from a few of her huge hit songs, I'm not actually too familiar with her music. But the song that randomly came on that playlist really impressed me. I loved it, I realized her voice is just absolutely incredible, very unique, and well, she has a beautiful voice.

So, I've been binging her music ever since that song randomly came on and instead of whistling while I worked, I listened to Sade while I worked, and I think it had the same effect. It made the menial task more enjoyable, and I was able to complete all of my cleaning, the deep clean of my office in just over an hour.

Have you ever opened up your closet to look for something to wear and even though your closet is full of clothes, you feel like you just have nothing to wear? And you feel like all of your clothes are ugly or they don't fit you correctly? And even though that might not be entirely true, you can't help but feel like it is? Like you feel like all your clothes are ugly and you just have nothing to wear? Well, I had that feeling this week. When I opened up my closet to take a look at my clothes and sort of think forward to the new school semester and what I would be wearing to work this upcoming school year, I couldn't help but feel that all of my clothes were ugly, or old, or just unfashionable. And maybe because I had been on a cleaning kick, or maybe because in the back of my mind, I'm thinking about the move that I'll be making later in the spring to my new house after we finish completing the renovation on it, I'm not sure exactly why, but I decided that I needed to clean out my closet and assess which clothes I needed to get rid of, to donate to charity, and which clothes I needed to keep. I also wanted to just generally tidy up my closet and make it look clean and fresh. I'm assuming most people are pretty much like me. I don't think I'm too unique. Maybe every six months to a year or so, I do a deep clean and make sure something is really well organized and neat. Like my closet, for example. But then over time, things eventually get messier and messier and more disorganized. And then I just end up with chaos in the closet. Well, maybe that's going too far. Maybe I shouldn't say that my closet was chaotic. It wasn't exactly chaotic, but it was disorganized. And last week I decided to do something about that.

So again, I threw on my headphones. Actually, I guess in my home, I could have whistled while I worked, but I preferred to just listen to music. So, I put on some headphones, I played Sade again, actually, and I got to work. Now, I don't own too many clothes in general, so it didn't take very long, but I organized my closet, and now it's spic and span

and looking fresh and clean and well organized. But in the end, I decided to get rid of at least 50% of my clothes. I cut my wardrobe in half. And I did that by following a guideline, so I took a look at all of my clothes and each piece of clothing I considered like have I worn this in the last six months and if the answer was no, then I decided to donate it to charity because I thought if I haven't worn it in the last six months, then I probably won't ever wear it again. And yeah, so that's how I downsized. And now I have this big box of clothes that I organized so that I can donate it to charity and my closet is just looking much better.

And then my wife, she followed my lead and also went through her closet to do some downsizing as well. We actually share the same closet space. I have the upper rack of the closet and she uses the lower rack of our closet, and since she also organized her clothes, our closet just looks so much better, and it feels nice to open it and see that everything is organized and in its right place.

The problem now is that for me after getting rid of a lot of my clothes that were old, or that just didn't fit well, or that I never ever wore is that now it seems like I don't have very many clothes remaining. So, I think in the next week or two I'm going to have to do something that I'm not very good at and don't really enjoy very much at all, and that is, clothes shopping. I'm gonna have to go shopping for clothes. I think for the most part I hate clothes shopping because my body proportions always seem to be just a little bit different from the standard. So, most clothes that I try on are either just a little bit too big or a little bit too small and it's hard to find something that fits correctly. So as a result, I end up having to get clothes altered, which just adds time and expense to the process. And I'm also kind of a thrifty person. I don't like spending a lot of money on clothes. I don't really care about following trends or being fashionable, but I do want to make sure that I look well put together, especially in professional situations. But the clothes that usually catch my eye when I do go shopping are almost always outside of my price range, right? It's always like the most expensive clothes that are the ones that I'm attracted to, which is really annoying because like I said, I don't wanna spend all of my money on my wardrobe.

So, that means that I usually settle for clothes that are good enough, but not perfect. Anyway, I guess in the next couple of weeks, I'll be shopping for some new clothes, and I'll cross my fingers that I can find some nice things to add to my wardrobe without having to sacrifice too much time or too much money.

Now, the community of Culips listeners around the world is really diverse, and it's made up of people of different ages and backgrounds and interests, but the one thing that unites our community is that we're all here together to improve our English skills. You can take comfort in the fact that you are not alone listening to this episode. There are thousands of people just like you right now who are studying English alongside you right now. Isn't that cool to think about? Sometimes it could be easy to forget that fact, but it's absolutely true. But since our community is so varied and diverse, I'm sure that some of you listening right now are actually much different than me and enjoy clothes shopping and maybe you have a great sense of fashion and are stylish as well. So, if that sounds like you, then I'd like you to do me a favour. And if you have some tips for me about how to make clothes shopping a more enjoyable experience, then please, let me know. Leave a comment on Culips.com, and I would love to hear your advice.

Last week was a really busy time here at Culips. I think a lot of you will be very happy to hear that Suzanne and I got together to record some new episodes. Suzanne's been very busy over the last year and a half or so and unfortunately that has prevented her from joining us on Culips for a while. I won't go into the details about what Suzanne's been up to, maybe in the future she will talk about that on Culips. I'm not sure, I'll leave that up to her to decide. But anyway, the exciting and important thing is that she's back. So, we recorded a couple of new episodes last week and it was just so wonderful to have her be a part of the podcast again. I really missed working with Suzanne and I think a lot of you guys probably missed listening to Suzanne, but the good news is, the wait is over Suzanne's back. So, we're going to work on getting those episodes prepared as soon as possible and they should be available for you to study with in the next few weeks.

I also met up with Kassy on Friday and we recorded some new Catch Word episodes. It's been a little while since we've released a Catch Word lesson so if you're a fan of the series don't worry, we've got some new ones in the pipeline. That's a good expression. We've got some new ones in the pipeline. Have you ever heard someone say that a project or a plan is in the pipeline?

This expression is used to describe something that's currently being developed or worked on, but is not quite yet complete or ready for release. You can think of a pipeline like a long tube or a tunnel, and something has to travel through that tube or through that tunnel before it reaches its final destination. And when we say that something is in the pipeline, it means that it's still moving through the pipeline, and it hasn't quite yet reached its final destination. For example, let's say that a company is developing a new product. OK, think of like a tech company maybe making a new kind of smartphone, for example. They might say that the smartphone is in the pipeline. If it's still being designed, or tested, or manufactured, but it's not available for sale yet to customers. So, when you hear somebody say that something's in the pipeline, now you know that that means that they're referring to something that's still in progress and not yet complete. So, everyone, our new Catch Word episodes are in the pipeline, and you can expect to hear them on Culips here within the next few weeks.

And finally, I have an announcement to make to all of the Culips members who are listening. Guys, please don't forget that our February live stream is happening this week on Tuesday, February 28th at 8 p.m. Korean Standard Time. Kassy and I will be hosting the live stream and we love for as many members as possible to join us and hang out with us so that we can practice English together. To join the live stream, you just log into your Culips account and follow the link from the dashboard, and I'm looking forward to hanging out with all of our members on Tuesday.

And now it's time for this week's vocabulary lesson.

At the end of each bonus episode, I like to go into more detail and teach you about an interesting idiomatic expression. Today I'm going to teach you about the expression to be on a [something] kick. This is a really common expression and it's a great one to add to your vocabulary to help you improve both your listening comprehension and your speaking skills. I used this expression a little bit earlier in the episode when I was telling you the story about organizing my closet. Did you happen to notice when I used it then? If not, no worries, because I'm going to rewind and go back to that part of the episode, so we can take a listen a couple of more times. Let's do that now. Here we go.

And maybe because I had been on a cleaning kick, or maybe because in the back of my mind, I'm thinking about the move that I'll be making later in the spring to my new house after we finish completing the renovation on it, I'm not sure exactly why, but I decided that I needed to clean out my closet.

OK, now let's talk about what to be on a [something] kick means. It's a common expression in English that means someone is really into or interested in a particular thing or activity at the moment. And it's often used when someone is talking about a hobby or maybe even a type of food or drink that they're really enjoying. So, for example, if someone says I'm on a running kick, then it means that they're really interested in running right now these days and have been doing it a lot recently. Or if someone says I'm on a sushi kick, well then it means they're really into eating sushi these days and maybe they've been going to sushi restaurants a lot recently. So now that we know what it means, let's listen to some example sentences so we can get a deeper understanding of how to use this expression in a natural way. So, let's listen to the first example sentence now. Here we go.

Example sentence number one.

Rachel's been on a gardening kick lately. Her backyard looks amazing.

Let's break this example sentence down. We heard that Rachel has been on a gardening kick. OK, even though that word is gard-en-ing, when we say it quickly, it often sounds like garde-ning, garde-ning. We kind of smoosh all of the syllables together, and instead of saying, gard-en-ing we just say garden-ing. You can say either one, but just know that English speakers because we're often very impatient and we wanna speak quickly, we'll say gardening. So, Rachel's been on this gardening kick. That means that she's been really enjoying and really into gardening these days. And because of that, we heard that her backyard looks amazing.

Example sentence number two.

I'm on a reading kick this month. I've already finished three books.

Let's break this example sentence down. The speaker says that he's on a reading kick, and he's finished reading three books already this month. If you're on a reading kick, then it means that you are really, really into reading right now, these days, recently, lately, that kind of thing.

Example sentence number three.

Steve was on a rock-climbing kick, and he told me he was going to the gym five days a week to climb. But then since he started his new job, he said that he's had to stop completely.

Let's break this final example sentence down. In this example sentence, we hear about a guy named Steve and Steve was on a rock-climbing kick. We hear the expression used in the past tense. He was really enjoying rock climbing. He was really into it. He was doing it often, five times a week, but then he got a new job. And often when you get a new job, your schedule changes and sometimes that means that you have to quit doing things that you were doing before you got that job, right? So, it sounds like that's what happened to Steve. He had to stop, rock climbing his kick, ended, and now he's working a new job.

Well, everyone, that brings us to the end of this week's bonus episode. Thank you for being here with me to study English today and congrats on making it all the way to the end. That's amazing. If you're a Culips member, please don't forget about the live stream that's happening on Tuesday. And if you're not a member, but maybe you'd like to learn more about the benefits and bonuses you get when you are a Culips member. Well, then you can just visit our website Culips.com to see all of the details and to sign up and become a member too. I hope you have a great week. Take care and I will talk to you soon. Bye.

Episode credits

Host and preparation: Andrew Bates

Operations: Tsuyoshi Kaneshima

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