

Curious Question #22 – No matter what

Transcript

Harp: Hello everyone, this is Harp...

Maura: And Maura...

Harp: And we're bringing you the Culips Curious Question podcast.

Maura: Right! This is the episode where we answer your questions and we love getting your questions so keep sending them to us.

Harp: Yeah, for sure. And make sure you check out the website...

Maura: Culips.com: C-u-l-i-p-s.com.

Harp: Because at the website, you can access the Lipservice, and you can find the Detailed Explanations, the transcripts, and even a quiz.

Maura: Right! So, let's look at the question today. The question is from Ae Sun from Korea who asked me this question. She said, "What does the expression **no matter what** mean?"

Harp: This expression is a popular one. Have you already heard it?

Maura: We use the expression **no matter what** when we're talking about doing something, some kind of action. When we say we will do something **no matter what**, it means that we will do the action even if it's difficult. We will do it.

Harp: Yeah, it's like saying that it isn't important what happens. You will complete the action. So, it shows a strong feeling about the action. So even if something is difficult, or if you have to try really hard different ways, it's still the same result.

Maura: Let's give an example.

Harp: *Hey, are you going to the party? Did your parents say you could go, or are you **grounded**?*

Maura: *I'm going to the party **no matter what**.*

Harp: *All right! See you there!*

- Maura: So in this example, I said "...**no matter what**, I'm going to the party." This means that even if it's difficult, I will be at the party for sure.
- Harp: Right! You will be at the party even if it's difficult to go to.
- Maura: Exactly!
- Harp: OK, let's look at another example.
- Maura: *I really need that report finished tomorrow, Harp. It's very **urgent**. Will you have it done **no matter what**?*
- Harp: *Yes, **no matter what**.*
- Maura: So, in this case, you agreed to have the report done for sure. You will definitely finish the report, right Harp?
- Harp: Exactly! Even if I have to **work** all night without sleeping, I will finish the report.
- Maura: **No matter what.**
- Harp: **No matter what.**
- Maura: We can also say **no matter what happens**. **No matter what happens**, Culips will keep bringing you interesting podcasts.
- Harp: All right, let's give an example with **no matter what happens**.
- Harp: Hi, Maura, I have a favour to ask. I have a job interview at 9:00 a.m.; can you give me a ride?
- Maura: *Sure, I can drive you.*
- Harp: *It's for a job interview; will you be there for sure on time?*
- Maura: *Yeah, no problem. **No matter what happens**, I'll drive you.*
- Harp: Even if there's a snowstorm?
- Maura: *Even if there's a snowstorm. **No matter what happens**, I'll be there and I'll drive you, don't worry.*
- Harp: *OK, thanks so much.*

Harp: Now we can also use **no matter what** and be specific about the actions. Here's an example and then we will explain it.

Maura: *Harp, is your TV **working**?*

Harp: *No. **No matter what** I do, it doesn't **work**.*

Maura: *Oh, that's too bad. Maybe you should just buy a new one.*

Harp: *Yeah, I think that, too.*

So in this example, I said, "**No matter what I do...**" which means it's not important how I try to fix the TV, it stays broken.

Maura: Right. There is no way that you can fix it. The TV is broken.

Harp: Exactly.

Maura: OK, let's look at one more.

Maura: *Have you talked to Greg lately?*

Harp: *No, he won't return my calls, he won't listen to me. I'm trying so hard.*

Maura: ***Aw**, is he still mad at you?*

Harp: *Yeah, **no matter what** I say or what I do he just won't listen to me.*

Maura: *That's too bad.*

So this means that she cannot say anything, it is not important what she says, it will not change the fact that he will not listen.

Harp: So simply saying **no matter what** or being specific and saying something like **no matter what you try to do**, both mean that it is not important what happens or what is done, the action is true or will definitely happen.

Maura: So we concentrated on **no matter what**, but you can also use this expression with the other question words. Here are some quick examples.

Harp: ***No matter who** comes tonight, we are going to have fun.*

Maura: **No matter how** we get there, we will get there.

Harp: I will always remember this place, **no matter where** I go.

Maura: **No matter why** the choice was made, we need to follow the new plan.

Harp: OK, Ae Sun, I hope this answers your question. Let's just go over it one more time.

Maura: So, when we say **no matter what**, it means that even if it is difficult or if you have to try different things to accomplish something, the result is still the same.

Harp: Exactly! **No matter what** you do it's the same result.

Maura: Right! That's it for this episode where we answered Ae Sun's question about **no matter what**. You can always go to our website if you want more information.

Harp: The website is Culips.com: C-u-l-i-p-s. Remember, there you can find the Lipservice, which has the Detailed Explanations, the transcripts, and a quiz.

Maura: Thanks for listening.

Harp: Bye everyone.

Maura: Bye.

Detailed Explanations

No matter what

Let's look at the explanation we give in this episode one more time.

No matter what means the costs or consequences are not important to the result. Let's look at a couple more examples to clearly explain the definition.

Jean: No matter what I am going to graduate this year.

In this example, no costs or consequences will keep Jean from attaining her goal of graduating. If she has to pay extra money for school, she will pay it and she will graduate. If she has to do extra work for a class, she will do it she will graduate. It is like saying she will do anything to graduate. (Yes, *no matter what* is often used in exaggeration.)

Paula: I promise to always be there to help you no matter what.

Here, Paula says that she will always be there for the other person. Many things may happen. Paula may move away or get very busy, but she will always be there to help her friend.

We define *no matter what* in this episode using *even if*. *Even if* is very similar to *no matter what*, but when we use *even if* we need to give examples of possible scenarios. Here is the difference.

Jean: No matter what, I am going to graduate this year.

OR

Jean: Even if I have to pay my teacher to get a passing mark, I am going to graduate this year.

When we use *no matter what* it includes all possibilities, and when we use *even if* we have to say which specific possibilities.

We also said, "It isn't important..." to help explain *no matter what* in this episode. When we say it isn't important we also have to be specific, like *even if*. Here is the distinction of how we use *no matter what* and *it isn't important*.

Paula: I promise to always be there to help you no matter what.

OR

Paula: It isn't important if I move to another town, I promise to always be there to help you.

Saying *it isn't important* is not as natural as *no matter what* or *even if*. We used it to help us explain, but it is not commonly used like this.

Grounded

In the example that Harp and Maura use about going to a party they use the word *grounded*. In this case, *to be grounded* means that you are not able to leave your house because you are being punished for something you did by your parents. Only children and teenagers are usually grounded.

Here is an example of someone being grounded:

Mom: Hello?
 Jack: Oh, hi Mom.
 Mom: Jack, do you know what time it is?
 Jack: Um...no.
 Mom: It is 1:00 in the morning and you were supposed to be home at midnight.
 Jack: Sorry, Mom.
 Mom: Jack, this is the third time that you have come home late. You're grounded!
 Jack: But Mom...
 Mom: You are grounded for two weeks. Now go to bed.

Grounded can also have different meanings in other contexts, but it is not used very often. To say that someone is grounded can mean that they are logical and realistic.

Urgent

When something is urgent, it must be looked at immediately. In the example about a report, Maura says that the report is urgent. This means that the report must be completed as soon as possible.

Here are a couple other examples using urgent:

Maureen: Hi, is Nick there?
 Peter: Sorry, he is not here right now. Can I take a message?
 Maureen: Can you tell him to call me back right away. It is urgent.

Andy: My friend needs to go to the hospital. He is hurt.
 Kevin: Well, the closest hospital is one hour away.
 Andy: Well, is there a doctor or nurse closer? It is urgent.

No matter what happens

No matter what happens can sometimes be used like *no matter what*.

Here is an example of how they can be used the same way:

Brad: No matter what, I will always love you.

OR

Brad: No matter what happens, I will always love you.

Here is an example of when they are not the same.

Colin: No matter what you do, I will always love you.

In this case you cannot simply replace it with *no matter what happens*.

Colin: (Incorrect) ~~No matter what happens you do~~, I will always love you.

A ride

Harp asks Maura for a ride in the conversation about her job interview. When you ask someone for a ride, you are asking someone to drive you in their car to a destination. You can also say *a lift*. And here are some examples:

John: Mom, can you give me a ride to my friend's house?

Mom: Sure.

Dean: Could you give me a lift to the party?

Kiley: I can't give you a ride because my car is already full.



A ride can also mean a rollercoaster or other machines we go on for amusement. In this case you don't give someone a ride, so it is easy to see the difference.

It's for a job interview

Here is a pronunciation tip for you. Harp says that she needs a ride *for* a job interview. Listen again to this part to hear how Harp pronounces *for*.

For often sounds like *fir* or *fur* when spoken quickly by native English speakers. It has probably happened in other Culips episodes and will happen again!

Work

There are so many ways we can use the word *work*. In the example in this episode we use it to talk about the television (TV). *Work* is used to mean *function*. They are synonyms in this case, but *work* is used much more often and sounds more natural. Here are a couple simple examples:

Paulo: My phone doesn't work. I can't call anyone.

Hannah: I wanted to get something from the vending machine but it isn't working.

The TV example

The example with the broken TV is a bit different from the others. One reason it is different is because the result is negative. The result can be negative or positive. Another reason why it is different because the result is already true or has already happened, the TV is already broken. Our other examples involved promises about the future.



We can talk about the future, past or present with the expression *no matter what* and it doesn't change anything. No matter what verb tense you use, you can still use this expression.

Future: No matter what, you can always call me.

Present: No matter what I do, I cannot get a hold of him.

Past: No matter what I tried, I couldn't find the answer.

Aw

Maura and Harp speak about a friend Greg, who Harp hasn't been able to talk to. She tells Maura about the situation and then Maura says "Aw." *Aw* is a sound that we make that means we have sympathy or feel sorry about something. We make this sound in response to something, as Maura does it in response to what Harp says.

Aw can also be used in a situation to express tenderness for a child or baby animal, when something is cute.



Philip: Look! The baby is smiling. Aw!

It can also be used to express disappointment, but the tone is a bit different as it is negative.

Cristy: We will have to cancel the trip because of the bad weather.

Quinn: Aw! I really wanted to go.

No matter what I say

We first give you examples of how to use no matter what and then we also use no matter what happens. We can also use no matter with other question words.

No matter who should be used with a person, and means that it is not important who.

No matter how is used with a manner or way, and means that it is not important how something is done.

No matter where is used to talk about a place, and means that it is not important where something happens.

No matter why is used to talk about the reason, but the reason is not important to the result.

No matter which is used to talk about a choice between things, but which one you choose it not important.

No matter when is used to talk about the time, and, just like all the others, means the time is not important.

Quiz (see the answers at the end of this Lipservice)**1. When do we use the expression *no matter what*?**

- a) When the cost or consequences are important to the result.
- b) When the cost or consequences are not important to the result.
- c) When the result is not important to the consequences.
- d) When the result is not important to the cost.

- 2. Lindsay: Did you get a good mark on your test?
Joshua: Not really. _____ I do, I can't get a good mark.**

Please fill in the blank.

- a) No matter
- b) No matter what
- c) No matter what happens
- d) No matter when

3. My 17-year-old friend is grounded. What does that mean?

- a) She must do a lot of household chores.
- b) She must stay out late at night.
- c) She must go to parties.
- d) She must stay at home.

- 4. Bob: I really need this done immediately.
Cindy: OK. I understand that it's _____.**

Please fill in the blank.

- a) unique
- b) urgent
- c) underground
- d) ugly

5. When the word *for* is said by native English speakers, sometimes it sounds like which word?

- a) fir
- b) fuzz
- c) fig
- d) off

6. Joan: I just bought a new kitten. Her name is Cuddles.
Karen: _____, she is so cute!

Please fill in the blank.

- a) Uh
- b) Wa
- c) Aw
- d) Ew

7. Bruce: I am sad that you are moving away.
Sam: Don't worry. No matter _____ I go, we will always keep in touch.

Please fill in the blank.

- a) when
- b) how
- c) which
- d) where

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