



Episode 43: Opinions - The Best & The Worst

Hi! If this is your first time listening to our podcast, this is an opportunity for upper-level English learners to practice listening skills and learn new vocabulary by listening to authentic conversations.

In today's episode Donielle and Khrystyna discuss their personal opinions on the best and worst for various topics.

Throughout the episode, there were several brand names that were mentioned which might be confusing if you are not familiar with them, so here is a brief overview of those products:

Snickers	A popular chocolate candy bar made with <i>nougat</i> (soft, sweet paste), caramel, peanuts, and milk chocolate
Sam's (Club)	A membership-based warehouse store in the U.S. that sells items in bulk
Reese's Peanut Butter Cup	A very popular chocolate candy with a peanut butter filling, often associated with Halloween treats, and consistently ranked as the #1 favorite trick-or-treat candy
Kinder Bueno	A European chocolate candy bar with a light wafer shell and hazelnut cream filling
Kinder Surprise	A chocolate egg that contains a small toy inside. It is popular in many countries but not sold in the U.S. because placing a toy inside the candy is considered a choking hazard. In the U.S., a similar product called Kinder Joy is available; it is also egg-shaped but splits into two halves, with the toy packaged separately from the chocolate.
Almond Joy	A chocolate candy bar with coconut filling and whole almonds.
Milk Duds	A chewy candy made of caramel coated in chocolate
Whoppers	A malted milk ball candy with a crunchy center and chocolate coating
Swiffer	A branded household cleaning tool used for dry or wet floor cleaning. It is popular because the disposable cleaning cloths can be quickly attached and detached, requiring less time than traditional mopping. It is so popular that it is often used as a verb, as in: <i>I Swiffered the floor.</i>

You can also read the [transcript](#) for this episode.

See the following pages for vocabulary and language focus from this episode.



Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation

long gone	no longer recent or relevant; already in the past <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>By the time the episode airs, Halloween will be <u>long gone</u>.</i>
trick or treating	Halloween activity where children go door-to-door asking for candy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The kids were excited to go <u>trick or treating</u> around the neighborhood.</i>
trunk or treating	Halloween event where candy is given out from parked cars instead of houses. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The school hosted <u>trunk or treating</u> in the parking lot.</i>
wrangling	struggling to control or manage something energetic or difficult <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>He spent the evening <u>wrangling</u> the dog every time the doorbell rang.</i>
raspberry	a small red fruit with a sweet-tart flavor. The word is also used for a rude or mocking sound made with the lips to show disapproval, which inspired the name of the Razzie Awards for bad movies.
mess around [with]	multiple meanings, but in this case, it means to waste time, energy, etc. on something useless. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I'm not going to <u>mess around with</u> fun-sized candy bars.</i>
shove	push something in forcefully or quickly <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Halloween feels like the only time you can <u>shove</u> candy into your mouth without guilt.</i>
trend	something that becomes very popular for a period of time <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Giving kids potatoes has somehow become a Halloween <u>trend</u>.</i>
keep up [with]	stay informed or match the pace of change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>It's hard to <u>keep up with</u> kids' strange new trends.</i>
aisle (silent 'S' – pronounced like "I'll")	a passageway between shelves in a store <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>They stood in the candy <u>aisle</u> trying to decide what to buy.</i>
let's face it	used to introduce an honest or unavoidable truth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>Let's face it</u>, most candy is way too sweet.</i>
fun sized	a smaller, individually wrapped version of a product <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I ate 3 <u>fun-sized</u> Snickers bars, which is about the same as 1 regular bar.</i>
wafer	a thin, crisp baked layer used in candy or desserts <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The candy has a light <u>wafer</u> filled with hazelnut cream.</i>
wouldn't bother	to express that you don't think something is worth the effort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I <u>wouldn't bother</u> eating that candy unless I was really desperate for chocolate.</i>
dud	something that fails to work properly, or is otherwise unsatisfactory or worthless <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Milk Duds is an appropriate name because they are a <u>dud</u>.</i>
shipping	the process (and often the cost) of sending something by mail or delivery service. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>If you send me your Whoppers, I'll even pay for shipping.</i>
be down to [something]	having only a small amount left; reduced to something near the end. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I still had some bags left to fill, but I was down to the least-favorite candies.</i>
running out of [something]	using almost all of something so that very little remains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I was <u>running out of</u> candy, so I started adding Whoppers to the bags.</i>

Vocabulary: Words and Phrases Used in the Conversation - Cont'd

household chore	a regular task done to maintain a home, such as cleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vacuuming is her least hated <u>household chore</u>.</i>
get in a zone	become deeply focused and absorbed in an activity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Once she starts organizing, she really <u>gets in a zone</u>.</i>
hassle	something annoying or requiring extra effort <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Cleaning the mop machine felt like more of a <u>hassle</u> than it was worth.</i>
household chore	a regular task done to maintain a home, such as cleaning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Vacuuming is her least hated <u>household chore</u>.</i>
serene	calm, peaceful, and relaxing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Soft green walls create a <u>serene</u> bedroom atmosphere.</i>
go for	choose or prefer <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Black is not a wall color she would <u>go for</u>.</i>
creepy	uncomfortable or unsettling in a strange way <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>A completely black bedroom felt <u>creepy</u> to her.</i>
gives it away	reveals information or makes something obvious <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The podcast name <u>gives it away</u> — I'm sure coffee is involved.</i>
gross	unpleasant or disgusting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Butter in coffee sounds <u>gross</u> to her.</i>
churned	Stirred or processed until thickened (usually only used when referring to butter) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Butter is cream that has been <u>churned</u>.</i>
notes	subtle flavors or characteristics in taste (used similarly with scents) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Coffee can have citrus <u>notes</u> that pair well with lemon.</i>
I'll stick to	used to say you will continue choosing the same option <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>She'll <u>stick to</u> black coffee instead of experimenting.</i>
financially stable	having reliable financial security <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Getting older can mean becoming more <u>financially stable</u>.</i>
wrinkles	lines in the skin that appear with age <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i><u>Wrinkles</u> are one of the downsides of getting older.</i>
mess up	cause problems or damage, usually accidentally <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>I <u>messed up</u> my back just by making a simple movement.</i>

Grammar Note: Expressing Opinions Naturally in Conversation

In spoken English, people often avoid repeating “I think” when sharing opinions, especially during casual discussions about preferences or *best and worst* topics. Speakers also tend to avoid more formal phrases like “in my opinion,” which can sound stiff in everyday conversation. Instead, they use a variety of natural alternatives such as “I would say,” “for me,” “I feel like,” or “personally,” which help opinions sound more conversational and relaxed. These expressions also allow speakers to soften negative opinions, making them sound more polite or less strong. For example, rather than saying “I don’t really like coconuts,” a speaker might say “I’m not really a fan of coconuts.” This kind of language is common in everyday conversation and helps keep discussions friendly, flexible, and open to different viewpoints. Here are a few more examples:

- *I would say* mopping is the worst household chore.
- *For me*, pretzels are the worst thing to get on Halloween.
- *I feel like* trick or treating should be all about candy.
- *Personally*, I don’t want any red in my house.
- *I’d rather* drink my coffee black.
- *If you ask me*, it’s not a good vacation if the food is not enjoyable.

Join the Conversation

- Choose a few of the options below to discuss your opinions on the best and worst.
 - Household chores
 - Vacation experiences
 - Colors
 - Months
 - Vegetables
 - Fast food chains
 - Seasons
 - Decades for music
 - Movie genres (or music, books, etc.)
 - Fashion trends (current or past)
 - Things about being an adult
 - Things about having a long layover in an airport
- Unpopular opinion time: what is a food (or something else) that most people seem to like, but you do not? Discuss your opinion using one of the phrases below to soften your statement or make it sound more polite.
 - *I’m not really a fan of...*
 - *I don’t really care for...*
 - *It’s just not for me.*
 - (for no strong opinion either way) *I could take it or leave it.*
 - (for intense dislike, instead of “I hate”) *I can’t stand...*
- Have your opinions about food, travel, or daily routines changed as you’ve gotten older? In what way?
- Do you find it hard to **keep up with** new trends, technology, or habits? Which ones feel hardest to **keep up with**?

Thanks for checking out our podcast!

We are enjoying these discussions, and we hope that you are finding them helpful!



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