



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

GLOSSARY

to fall into the habit of – to begin doing something on a constant or consistent basis; to start doing something that one eventually does frequently

* Max fell into the habit of drinking coffee when he was 18, and now he drinks five cups a day.

edition – version; one issue or printing of a magazine, newspaper, or journal that has several issues within a day, week, month, or year

* The Sunday edition of the newspaper is usually thicker than the versions printed throughout the rest of the week.

picky – choosy; selective; waiting for the best option instead of choosing any available option

* Olivia is picky about the clothes she wears and only buys clothes from famous designers.

when it comes to – when it concerns; when discussing a specific topic

* Billy is good at working alone, but when it comes to working with a group, he does not do well.

to prefer – to like one thing more than another

* Alicia likes chocolate and vanilla ice cream, but she prefers chocolate and chooses it more often than vanilla.

over – more than; instead of

* Leonard enjoys classical music and will listen to it over any other type of music when given the choice.

don't get me wrong – don't misunderstand me; do not get the wrong impression about what I am saying

* I own a cat, but don't get me wrong. I like dogs just as much as I like cats.

junkie – addict; someone who is obsessed or overly interested in an something

* Janet is a video game junkie who spends too much time playing every day.

to browse – to look at something without wanting to find anything specific

* Even though there was nothing he wanted to read in the magazine, Benjamin browsed through it to pass the time.



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

classifieds – a section of the newspaper that lists jobs or items that people want or items that people want to give to someone else

* Gisele looked through the classifieds to find out if there were any local companies hiring new workers.

to skip – to pass by without stopping; to not pay attention to

* Aaron skipped the article on taking care of pets because he did not have any pets and had no reason to read it.

funnies – comic strips; a section of short comics or cartoons (pictures that tell a humorous story) in the newspaper

* Mary drew her own comics and hoped to publish a comic strip in the funnies one day.

to flip through – to move through the pages of reading material quickly; to quickly look at reading material without focusing on all the details

* William was unable to focus on the boring book, so he just started flipping through the pages without really reading it.

editorial page – a section of the newspaper that contains written opinions, usually written by people who work for the newspaper

* The editorial page had two columns written by two newspaper editors who always disagreed with each other.

to skim – to read something quickly, not focusing on many details

* Kanisha did not have enough time to read the document in detail, so she skimmed through it to get a general understanding of what it was about.

nothing beats – nothing is better than; nothing else is as good as

* The other seasons are fine, but nothing beats the beauty of autumn.

to recycle – to reuse; to collect materials so that those materials can be turned into another product and used again

* Instead of throwing away their plastic bottles, the family recycled them.



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

CULTURE NOTE

The Least Influential People in the News

Every year, the well-known news magazine *Time* “compiles” (puts together) a list of the Time 100, a list of the 100 most influential people in the world. “Influential” people are those whose actions, ideas, or products affect a lot of other people, changing the way people think and behave.

Joel Stein, a “columnist” (writer or journalist who writes regularly for a newspaper or magazine) at *Time*, writes a “humorous” (funny) column or article that appears on the last page of the magazine each week. In 2010, he decided to compile his own list: The 100 Least Influential People of 2010. This list was “divided into” (separated into) four categories: Losers, Flameouts, Morons, and Slimy Bastards. These are all informal terms and insults for people who are undesirable, or that are unpleasant or unwanted, or simply people you don’t want to know or to be friends with.

A “loser” is someone who is not successful in life and often fails at what he or she tries to do. “To flame out” is an informal phrase meaning to fail in a very “conspicuous” (easy to see; seen by many people) way. We usually describe someone as flaming out if that person has tried to do something difficult or very public and failed “miserably” (very badly).

“Moron” is a very insulting term for a very stupid person. It is similar to “idiot,” but is even stronger and describes someone who is very, very stupid. On Stein’s list are several famous people from “reality shows” (shows putting real people in real or unusual circumstances) that he thinks are morons.

The last category is “Slimy Bastard.” The dictionary meaning of “bastard” is a child who is born to an unmarried mother. This is an old-fashion usage of this term and it isn’t used this way very often anymore. Instead, we use “bastard” as a synonym for jerk, someone who does bad things to other people and who deserves to be hated. Bastard is stronger than jerk, so people usually use it when they are very angry. We use “bastard” for men and almost never for women.

We describe someone as “slimy” when that person does dishonest, “immoral” (wrong) things, especially if he is “obsequious,” acting like a servant to other people hoping to gain some benefit from that person. So, a slimy bastard is a person who does bad things in a dishonest way, but always hoping to gain something for himself or herself.



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 17 – Reading the Newspaper.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 17. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful, Los Angeles, California.

Today, we're going to talk about reading the newspaper – one of my favorite daily activities. Let's get started.

[start of story]

I fell into the habit of reading the newspaper every morning when I was a kid. Back then, there used to be two daily newspapers – a morning edition and an afternoon edition.

Nowadays, of course, most cities in the U.S. have just a morning paper. I'm not too picky about which newspaper I read, although when it comes to national newspapers, I prefer reading the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* over *USA Today*.

Don't get me wrong, I'm not a news junkie. I just like browsing the different sections, reading the headlines, and checking out the classifieds. I usually skip the sport section and the funnies, and only flip through the food and health sections, but I always read the front page and the editorial page. On the weekends, I'll skim the entertainment section for movie listings and reviews.

I'm sort of old fashioned in that I still like reading a real, paper newspaper. Sure, I also read some of my news online, but nothing beats lounging around on Sunday morning reading the big, thick paper. Don't worry, though: I always recycle my stack of newspapers.

[end of story]

I started our story by saying that “I fell into the habit of reading the newspaper when I was a kid.” “To fall into a habit” means to start a habit, or to get a habit. A “habit” is something that you do frequently on a regular schedule, or often. “To fall into a habit” means to start doing something and continue to do that something over and over again in the future. I say that “I fell into the habit of reading the newspaper when I was a kid,” when I was a child. That's quite true. I



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

actually did start reading the newspaper when I was a child. I always enjoyed reading some part of the paper.

I say that “Back then,” meaning when I was a child, many hundreds of years ago, “there used to be two daily newspapers.” “There used to be” means there once were two daily newspapers – newspapers that were published every day. Those newspapers were called the “morning edition” and “afternoon edition.” “Edition” (edition) is the version or the form of the newspaper. When newspapers had more than one edition every day, they would publish one newspaper in the morning and then a second newspaper in the afternoon. We would call the first, “the morning edition,” and the second, “the afternoon edition.” Some newspapers have national editions and local editions. They have one newspaper they publish for just the people in their city and then they have another newspaper they publish for people in other cities. It’s a similar but not exactly the same newspaper.

I continue the story by saying that “Nowadays,” meaning now, “many cities in the U.S. have just a morning paper.” They only have a morning paper. I say, “I’m not too picky about which newspaper I read.” “To be picky” (picky) means to be selective, to say, “Oh, I want that but not that.” That would be someone who’s picky, who has to have exactly the right thing. I say, “I’m not too picky.” I’m not very picky about which newspaper I read. “Although when it comes to” – when we’re talking about – “national newspapers, I prefer reading the *New York Times* or the *Wall Street Journal* over *USA Today*.” “To prefer one thing over another” means to want one thing more than the other, to like one thing more than the other. I prefer the *New York Times*, which is the most well-known newspaper in the United States, or the *Wall Street Journal*, which is the financial newspaper in the United States, over *USA Today*. *USA Today* is also a national newspaper but not considered to be a very high quality one – a very good one.

Then I say, “Don’t get me wrong.” That expression, “Don’t get me wrong,” means “Don’t misinterpret what I’m about to say or what I just said. Don’t misunderstand me. You might get the wrong idea by listening to what I say so be careful. I’m going to explain to you something you need to understand so that you don’t misunderstand me.”

I follow the expression “don’t get me wrong,” with the phrase or clause, “I’m not a news junkie.” A “news junkie” (junkie) would be someone who has to have news all the time, who wants as much news as possible. A “junkie” is usually someone who’s addicted to some sort of drug like heroin or cocaine, but we use the term now to refer to things that people might like a lot of over and over again.



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

I say, “I’m not a news junkie. I just like browsing,” or looking through, “the different sections” – the different parts – of the paper. “I like to read the headlines” – the titles of the stories – “and check out,” or look at, “the classifieds.” “The classifieds,” also called the “classified ads,” are small advertisements, small ads in the back of the newspaper, typically for people who are selling things, for people who lost their cat, that sort of announcement, that sort of ad would go in the classifieds.

I then say that “I usually skip the sports section.” “To skip” (skip) here means to ignore, not to look at. So, I don’t look at the sports section. I skip the sports section, “and the funnies.” “The funnies” is an informal name for the comics, the comic strips. In American newspapers, at least it used to be that you would have one page of nothing but comic strips, small little drawings with dialogues and people making jokes. You might’ve heard of the comic strip *Peanuts* by Charles Schultz, with Charlie Brown and Snoopy and the other members of the Peanuts gang. Well, I don’t look at the comic strips, the funnies. “I only flip through the food and health sections,” I say. “To flip (flip) through” means to turn the page quickly, just looking at things very quickly, not giving them a lot of your attention. I do that for the food and health sections, the sections of the newspaper where you would find news about health and recipes for food.

I say, “I always read the front page and the editorial page.” “The front page” of a newspaper is, well, the very first page that you read. It’s where you can have all the most important news. “The editorial page” is, in an American newspaper, usually in the back of the first section of the newspaper, the first part of the newspaper. It contains people’s opinions. Sometimes they’re the opinions of the editors of the newspaper; sometimes there are the opinions of other writers. These are usually opinions about political topics. I say that “I always read the front page and the editorial page.”

“On weekends” – on Saturdays and Sundays – “I’ll skim the entertainment section for movie listings and reviews.” “To skim” (skim) means to look at something quickly, not to read it very carefully. Often, you are just trying to get a general idea of what the text or story says. I say that “I skim the entertainment section.” That’s the part of the newspaper which would talk about television programs and movies and art museums and so forth. “I look at the entertainment section for movie listings.” “Movie listings” refers to a list of movies and the times that those movies will start and the names of the theaters where you can see those movies.

So, if you want to see a specific movie, you can look in the movie listings and find the name of the movie and the name of the theater and the time that that movie



ESL Podcast 17 – Reading the Newspaper

is “showing,” or will be able to be seen. “Reviews” are people’s opinions about things like movies. So, I look at the movie listings and the reviews – what people are saying about the movie. Is it a good movie? Is it a bad movie? And so forth.

I say, “I’m sort of” – I’m kind of, I’m a little bit – “old fashioned.” “To be old fashioned” means to like things that are no longer popular, to act the way people acted perhaps many years ago. “I’m sort of old fashioned in that I still like reading a real paper newspaper.” Many people now read their news only online, only on the Internet. I say “I like the old traditional paper newspapers.” I say, “Sure, I also read some of my news online but nothing beats lounging around on Sunday morning reading the big, thick paper”

The expression “nothing beats (beats)” means nothing is better than. In this case, “Nothing beats lounging around.” “To lounge (lounge) around” means to sit comfortably in a chair and not do very much work, to relax. On Sundays, in the United States, the daily newspapers publish a larger edition. They publish a newspaper that has several extra sections in it, as well as lots of additional advertising. So, when I talk about a big thick newspaper, I mean a newspaper that’s very large, that has a lot of sections. The Sunday paper is always larger than the other days of the week.

“Don’t worry,” I say, “I always recycle my stack of newspapers.” “To recycle” (recycle) means to use again. In this case, to put the paper in a place where someone will pick it up and reuse that same paper. A “stack” (stack) is the same as a pile. It’s one thing on top of another. If you had 10 paper newspapers all sitting one on top of the other, we would call that “a stack of newspapers.” We use the word “stack” in talking about newspapers and talking about magazines, or just plain old regular white paper. You can have a stack of paper on your desk.

Now let’s listen to the story this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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[end of story]

She's not lounging around. She's working hard. I refer, of course, to our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again right here on ESL Podcast.

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