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**ESL Podcast 43 – A Trip to the Library**

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**GLOSSARY**

**hours of operation** – the hours during which a business is open; the time of day that a business is open or available for customers

\* The restaurant's hours of operation were 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Monday through Saturday, but it was closed on Sunday.

**librarian** – someone who works at a library, organizing the books and providing library services; someone who is in charge or in control of a library

\* The librarian told Nichole where she could find books about volcanoes and suggested a few with the most information.

**library clerk** – someone who works at a library, helping customers check out books and replacing books on shelves

\* Darnell wanted to check out a book, but he could not find a library clerk to assist him.

**reference desk** – a desk at the library where one asks about where to find information or a specific book, or to find out other information about the library

\* Jolanda asked the employee at the reference desk where to find children's books.

**non-fiction** – books or articles that are informational and contain facts about a topic

\* Mr. Staub told his students to choose a non-fiction book and write a paper about what they learned from it.

**fiction** – books with stories created from one's imagination, not from real life

\* Kaylee preferred reading fiction, especially if the stories mention exciting events that are impossible in the real world.

**stacks** – bookshelves in a library; an area of a library with many shelves of books

\* Preston did not know which book he wanted to borrow, so he walked around, looking at the stacks until he saw a book that seemed interesting.

**collection** – a group made from one type of item; a group of books kept in the same location

\* The library had a large collection of books about politics, but it had very few books about nature or space.



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**catalogue** – a database of books; a list of items that one is able to buy or borrow from a business

\* After looking at the books listed in the library catalogue, Frida learned that the library did not have the book she wanted to get.

**copy** – a single printed version of a book; one physical book of a title that has been printed into book form multiple times

\* Over 2,000 copies of the new book were sold within the first week.

**to be checked out** – to be borrowed; for a book to be temporarily removed from a library by someone wishing to read it, with the intention of returning it later

\* How many books can we check out at one time?

**call number** – a series of letters and numbers given to a book in a library to indicate where in the library that book can be found

\* The book's call number indicated that it could be found in the biography section of the library.

**counter** – a high table or desk; a flat surface, like a table, where one talks to an employee on the other side

\* We placed our lunch order with the employee behind the counter at the fast food restaurant.

**loan period** – the number of days that something can be borrowed from a library before it must be returned

\* Books have a loan period of three weeks, but DVDs have to be returned within one week.

**due date** – the day by which a borrowed book must be returned to the library

\* The book's due date was last Friday, but Shaquana has not returned it yet, so it is now late.

**library card** – a small plastic card one uses to borrow books and materials from the library; a card that lets the library know who someone is so that he or she can borrow a book

\* Before Cliff could check out a book, he needed to get a library card.

**bar code** – a group of small straight lines on the back of a product that allows the storing of information about the product, including its name and price

\* The bar code was damaged, so the computer did not know which product was being scanned.



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**to stamp** – to put a mark on something using a stamp (a rubber block formed in the shape of numbers, letters, or designs, which one uses to make an impression over to a surface by dipping the block into ink)

\* The amusement park employee stamped the back of Alissa’s hand with a red heart design to show that she had already paid to enter the park.

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### CULTURE NOTE

#### George Washington and His Library book

Children growing up in the U.S. are told that George Washington was always a very honest person, even as a boy. According to one famous tale, young George was outside one day and his father walked up to him to ask a question. “George, I saw that someone chopped down that cherry tree in back of the house,” his father said. “To chop down” means to kill a tree or large plant using a sharp object, typically an “axe,” which is like a sharp metal knife but much stronger. You must “swing” (move quickly) the axe to hit the bottom of the tree and slowly cut into the tree until it falls. “Did you chop it down?” his father asked. George immediately replied, “I cannot “tell a lie” (say something untrue); I did it with my little ‘hatchet’ (small axe).” George could have lied, you see, but instead he was honest. The “moral” (ethical lesson) for young children, of course, is that they should be honest, too.

But what happened when George grew up? It seems that while he may have been honest, he was not very “conscientious” (careful about making a mistake or doing something wrong) or responsible. According to a 2010 news article, Washington had gone to the New York Public Library on October 5, 1789, to check out a book called *The Law of Nations* by Emer de Vattel. Well, now we learn that old George – by then, President Washington – never returned his book.

The library recently discovered that the book had not been returned and asked the “staff” (employees) at George Washington’s home, Mount Vernon, about it. The staff bought another copy of the book and presented it to the library to replace the missing copy.

But the story doesn’t end there. When you borrow a book from the library and you don’t return it, you normally have to pay a “fine” (money paid as punishment) for each day it is not returned. The New York Public Library “calculated” (determined; figured out) that Washington owed a fine of approximately \$300,000. Who is going to pay that fine?



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 43 – A Trip to the Library.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 43. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, we're going to discuss taking a trip to the library. Let's get started.

[start of story]

I read in the local paper that a new public library had just opened two weeks ago in my neighborhood. I wanted to check it out. But first, I called the library to check the **hours of operation**. The **librarian** told me that they were open Monday through Saturday from 10 to 6, so I decided to see the new library for myself.

I parked my car in the library parking lot and walked in. There were two **library clerks** behind the counter and a librarian at the **reference desk**. I walked around and spotted the **nonfiction** section and moved on to the **fiction stacks**. There was a pretty good **collection** in both of these areas. I wanted to see if they had a book I've been wanting to read. So, I went over to the computer to check the online **catalog**. As it turns out, they had one **copy** and it had not been **checked out**. I wrote down the **call number** and went to the stacks. I found it right away.

When I walked in, I also noticed that the library had music CDs, videos, and DVDs that could be checked out. I looked briefly at the collection but decided not to check out any right then.

I had my book and I was all set. I stood in line and waited to check my book out. The library clerk said, "Next please," and I stepped up to the counter. I asked her what the **loan period** was for the book. She told me that the **due date** was three weeks from today. I gave her my **library card**. She scanned the **bar code** on my book and **stamped** the due date on the back of it. It was quick and easy. I was so glad to have a nice new library so close to home.

[end of story]

I described a visit I took to my new public library in this podcast. I started by saying that I read about it in "the local paper." By "local (local)paper" I mean the local newspaper. We sometimes distinguish or try to define as different, the local



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paper from a national newspaper – The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, USA Today – these are all national, or in some cases, international newspapers. A “local paper” would be one that is read mostly in a single city or a single area. I said that I wanted to “check out” the new library. “To check something out” can have a couple of different meanings, especially when were talking about libraries. The first meaning is to investigate, to look into, to find out more about. You can say, for example, I'm going to check out his story. That means I'm going to investigate it. I'm going to see if it's true. We can also use the expression “check out” to mean, look at or pay attention to. You may see a beautiful car drive down the road and say to your friend, “Check out that nice car.” You may see a beautiful woman walked down the road and you may say to your friend, “Check out that beautiful woman.” However, when it's used talking about looking at a beautiful woman, it usually means to look at her in a way that indicates that you are romantically or sexually interested in her. In general, however, “to check out” in this second, more informal sense, means to look at or pay attention to. We'll later see this phrasal verb has a third meaning, especially regarding libraries.

I say that the library has certain “hours of operation.” The “hours of operation” are the hours that the library is open. I mentioned walking into the library and seeing a couple of library clerks and a librarian at the reference desk. The “library clerks” are the people in the library that help you check out and find books. Usually, “library clerks” don't have a lot of special training or education. You don't have to go to school to be a library clerk. There are two main areas in the library where you will find people to talk to, who work for the library. The first is the “circulation desk.” The “circulation desk” is where you check out and return books. In most libraries, the “circulation desk” is run by or operated by the library clerks. Another place where you'll find someone to talk to is the “reference desk.” “Reference” refers to books that you go to use in order to find specific information, such as a dictionary or encyclopedia. At the “reference desk,” typically, you will find a librarian. A “librarian,” in most places, is a person who's actually gone to school and studied something called “library sciences,” at least that's what they call it nowadays. A “librarian” is someone who has a lot of information about how to find a lot of information. That's a “librarian.” The “librarian” works at the reference desk and the “library clerks,” typically, work at the circulation desk.

A “library” usually has two main sections, just like in a bookstore – if you can still find a bookstore, nowadays. One section is called the “non- fiction section.” The other section is called the “fiction” section. “Fiction” refers to things that are invented, that are made up, that are imaginary. A novel, for example, is fiction. It's not real. Novels, poems, plays – all of these would be considered part of the “fiction” section. “Nonfiction” are things that are true, things that exist in the real



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world, we might say. A book of history, for example, would be in the non fiction section because it's about something that really happened, or at least, it's supposed to be. This library had a pretty good collection in both of these areas – fiction and nonfiction. A “collection,” usually refers to a group of objects, but here it refers to all of the books in a certain section of the library. You could have a good history collection, a good set of books about history. This library had a large collection in both areas – fiction and nonfiction – meaning they had a lot of books in both areas, or in both sections.

I say in the story that I walked around and spotted the nonfiction section. “To spot (spot) something” here means to find it, especially if you've been looking for it. I moved on, or I continued on, to the fiction “stacks.” The word “stacks,” in a library, just refers to the shelves where the books are kept, where you can actually find the books. Those are the “stacks.” In some libraries, the stacks are closed to the public. In certain specialty libraries, the librarian has to go back or send someone back to get the book off of the shelf. In most public libraries, however, the stacks are open, meaning anyone can go and check out a book. The opposite of “open stacks” would be “closed stacks.” So, I'm interested in a specific book, according to the story, and I decide to go over to look at the “online catalog.” A “catalog” (catalog) is basically a list of the books that a library owns. Nowadays, most libraries have online catalogs, essentially databases that you can search through. In the old days, library catalogs were little pieces of paper, little cards that would be inside a small drawer, and you would pull the drawer out and look for the book by going through all the different cards. Those of us who are old enough to remember that, know that although it wasn't the most efficient system, it did have some benefits over the current online systems that most libraries use, but we won't go into that now.

When you look up a book, you are looking up something called the “call number.” You are trying to find the call number of the book in order to find it in the stacks. The “call (call) number” is the number that every book is given uniquely, in order to put it on the shelf in a certain order. So, the books are lined up on the shelf, not in alphabetical order, but in “call number” order. There are two basic systems of call numbers in the United States. We won't talk about it too much year. One of them is called the Dewey Decimal system, which is the older system. A more recent one is called the Library of Congress system. Most public libraries, I think, still use the Dewey Decimal system. Most academic and research libraries use the Library of Congress system. But all libraries use one of those two systems of call numbers. So, you find the call number and then you walk over to the shelves and find the book. In the story, I say that “as it turns out, they had one copy.” The expression “as it turns out,” means the result was. Sometimes, it can mean “to my surprise.” I wasn't expecting it. As it turns out, the library had



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one copy. The word “copy” here just refers to the actual physical book. If a library owns five copies of a book, that means that five people can go in and each one of them can go home with a book. There are five physical books.

I say that the copy of the book I wanted had not yet been “checked out.” Now we’ve come to the third meaning of this phrasal verb “to check out” which means to take a book to the circulation desk and say, “I want to take this book home.” When you take something home with you from a library, that’s called “checking it out,” or “checking out the book.” You can check out a DVD. You can check out a CD. You can check out a book. I also mentioned that the library had music CDs – that is, compact disc with music on them – videos and DVDs. The word “video” nowadays is often used to refer to the old videocassettes – the VHS cassettes. Most people don’t watch those kinds of videotapes anymore. They watch DVDs. I say that I don’t want to check out any of these “right then,” meaning right at that time. Instead, I go to the circulation desk and I wait in line until the library clerk says, “Next, please.” That’s an expression, you’ll sometimes hear when you have a line of people waiting to talk to someone at a desk or a counter. When the person is ready to talk to you, they may say “Next, please,” meaning the next person in line should now come forward and talk to the person. The library clerk told me to step up or walk up to the counter. The word “counter” here just refers to a long, tall desk. On one side of the desk, is the person who works for the library or a business. On the other side of the desk is the customer, or in a library, we would call him a “patron” (patron). Someone who uses the library is called a “library patron.”

I asked the library clerk about the loan period for the book. The “loan period” is how long you can keep the book before you have to bring it back. She then told me that the due date was three weeks from today. The “due (due) date” is the date that you have to bring it back, the date that the loan period ends. I then gave her my library card. This is a small plastic card that you use in order to check out a book. Usually, the card has its own barcode on the back. These are a series of small little lines that can be read electronically by a machine. Library cards have barcodes. So do library books. So, when I gave the book to the library clerk, she scanned the barcode first on my card, one presumes, and then she scanned the barcode on the book. “To scan” (scan) means to take one of these machines and put it over the bar code so that the machine can read the information from the barcode.

I then say the library clerk “stamped the due date” on the back of the book. That’s something that a lot of libraries used to do. It’s not as common anymore. They would put a little piece of paper on the back of the book and then they would take a little rubberstamp with ink on it and put the date when you had to return the



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book. So that you could just look at the book and know when the due date was. Nowadays, they usually just give you a little sheet of paper printed out from the computer that tells you the due date. Of course, then you bring the book home and you lose the little piece of paper and then you have to go online and see when the due date is. So, I'm not sure the new technology has been a great improvement. In any case, I say the process was "quick and easy," meaning it was very simple and very fast

Now let's listen to our story, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

I read in the local paper that a new public library had just opened two weeks ago in my neighborhood. I wanted to check it out. But first, I called the library to check the **hours of operation**. The **librarian** told me that they were open Monday through Saturday from 10 to 6, so I decided to see the new library for myself.

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[end of story]

Thanks to our amazing scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse for all of her hard work, and thanks to you for listening.





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

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