Lusia begins the dialog by saying to Max: “Are you still here ?”. This is one of those questions you ask when you’re surprise about something, obviously Lusia can see that Max still, wherever they are. She says: “I thought you got off at 3 o’clock. To get off of work means to finish your work schedule, to be able to leave the place where you work. If someone says that “What time do you get off ?” they means what time do you get off of work, when you stop working, what time do you stop working. Max says: “I picked up a second shift”. A shift, s-h-i-f-t, refers to a period of time when people work, usually this term is used for jobs when people work that at particular location more than eight hours or that there’re people working at that location for more than eight hours. It might be, for example, a place where there is someone working 24 hours a day. Well, one person is not going to work 24 hours straight so they break up the day into shifts. So if you work the day shift, you’re working probably from eight from the morning to around 4,5 in the afternoon. If you’re working the night shift, you’re working perhaps from 4,5 in the afternoon to midnight. If you’re working what we call the graveyard shift, you’re working probably from 11 o’clock at night or midnight to 7 or 8, in the morning. Those are shifts then. The vision of the work day in the place that usually it’s open for more than 8 hours. Max says he picked up a second shift. To pick up here means to get, to obtain, he was working one shift, and now he picked up a second shift, which means of course he‘s working more than eight hours a day. Why has Max done it? Well, he says: “I could use the money”. When someone says I could use the money, he means that he would be able to benefit from getting more money. He has some need of extra money. Lusia says: “But I thought you had another part time job in the evenings”. A part time job is a job, usually that is less than 40 hours per week. In the United States, 40 hours per week can be considered full time. If it is less than 40 hours, we might call it part time. Lusia thought that Max had another part time job. Max says: “I normally do, but the restaurant where I work has been cutting back my hours. When we talk about someone cutting back on something, we mean that he is using less of it or he is reducing the number of something. The toward phrasal verb to cut back then means to reduce the number of something. In this case, we’re talking about the restaurant where Max works cutting back his hours. His hours refer to the number of hours that he can work. Max says he is trying to pick up as many extra shifts here as I can. Lusia then asks: “And don’t you work at the amusement park on the weekends”. An amusement, a-m-u-s-e-m-e-n-t, park is a large park, usually that has lots of what we would call rides in them. Places are people, especially children, can play games and get into the machines that go really fast, for example, Disneyland is an example of an amusement park here in Southern California. Lusia asks if Max is still working at the amusement park on the weekends. He says: “I do, half the year” meaning I do work there part of the year, but it’s winter and the park only keeps a skeleton crew on during these months. Max is saying that the amusement park where he normally works in the summer time only has a skeleton crew during the winter time. The phrase skeleton, s-k-e-l-e-t-o-n, crew, c-r-e-w, refers to a very small number of workers, the minimum number of workers you can have at a place. If a business doesn’t have very many customers, it might have very few employees, and we might call that a skeleton crew, if during busy times, the company have more employees. This is the case with the amusement park can have a skeleton crew. The word crew just refers to a group of people, the word skeleton is normally used to describe the bones of your body or the bone of an animal. Max says: “In the meantime, meaning during this winter season, I’m working for a temp agency which gives me short term assignments”. A temp, t-e-m-p agency is a company that finds people temporary jobs, the word temp is short for temporary meaning short term, not permanent, not for a long time. There are of course many companies that find workers, find people to work for companies that just need workers for a short period of time. Max says the temp agency gives him short term assignment. Short term refers to a short amount of time, perhaps a week, perhaps even a day. I used to work for temp agencies when I was at college. I would call up every morning and see if they have any work for me and they would send me jobs that would last may be one day, may be 2 or 3 days, sometimes as long as a month. Temp agencies are very popular now, especially when the economy is not doing so well. Companies don’t want to hire employees full time. Lusia says: “I don’t know how you juggle all these jobs”. The verb to juggle, j-u-g-g-l-e, usually refers to throwing objects up in the air and keeping them up in the air. We refer to someone who does it as juggler. But here the verb means to handle many different things at the same time, to be able to do many different things at the same time. Max says: “I have no choice. I have no other option. I have to piece together an income if I want to pay rent”. To piece, p-i-e-c-e together something means to put together, to assemble. An income, i-n-c-o-m-e, refers to the money you get for working. Max is saying that he has to work a little bit at this job and a little bit at that job in order to make enough money to pay for his rent. Lusia says: “Have you ever thought about going back to school to qualify for other work, something full time”. To qualify, q-u-a-l-i-f-y, for something means to have the skill and education in order to be able to do something. So for example, if you want to be a doctor, you have to study for many years in order to qualify for that kind of job, at least I hope you study many years if you’re a doctor, if not please don’t be mind a doctor. Lusia is asking if Max have thought about going back to school to qualify for some kind of jobs that would be full time, that would be 40 hours per week. Max says: “Sure. All the time” meaning I have thought of it a lot. He says: “I’d like a better job, one with benefits and a reliable salary”. Benefits, b-e-n-e-f-i-t-s refers to things such as health insurance & vacation time and sick pay, money you get when you can’t work because you’re sick. These are common benefits that you get when you have a full time job. Salary, s-a-l-a-r-y, refers to money that you get to work at a certain place, usually by the month or by the year. When we’re talking about salary, we’re talking about money you get regardless of how many hours you work. There are two kinds of ways of getting paid. One is by the hour, when you get paid a certain amount of money for every hour you work, another way of getting paid is by salary. When you’re getting paid on a salary we would say you’re getting a certain amount of money and are expected to do your job even if it takes more than 40 hours a week. Lusia says: “What’s stopping you ?”, what’s preventing you from going back to school. Max says: “I have to pay for something called food”. Max is making a joke here, he is saying that he can’t afford to go back to school, he doesn’t have enough money to go back to school because in addition to paying his rent, he also has to eat, and to eat he has to buy food. He finishes by saying: “I haven’t met my fairy godmother yet”. A fairy, f-a-i-r-y, godmother, g-o-d-m-o-t-h-e-r is a character from children’s stories, stories that we tell children, usually involving a woman who has some sort of magical powers. The fairy godmother is a common character in certain fairy tales that are told to children. These are made up stories about magical advance. Here Max is using the expression to mean that he hasn’t found someone who is just going to give him money to pay for his expenses and to go to school. Now let’s listen to the dialog this time at a normal speed.