



## ESL Podcast 359 – A Fist Fight

### GLOSSARY

**to deserve** – to have earned something; to have done or said something so that one now has the right to have or do something

\* Many dieters think that they deserve to eat junk food on the weekends as a reward for eating healthily the rest of the week.

**to insult (someone)** – to offend someone; to do or say something that another person thinks is rude or mean

\* Frank was very insulted when his wife told him that he was getting fat.

**to knock (one's) block off** – to hit someone so that his or her head falls off (not literally); to physically hurt someone

\* Tristan wanted to knock his brother's block off when he borrowed Tristan's car without asking.

**civilized** – part of a modern society; polite and rational

\* Let's sit down and have a civilized meal together instead of eating in front of the TV.

**free-for-all** – a fight without any rules, where people can do whatever they want to do

\* Sometimes when two high school boys start to fight, it turns into a free-for-all.

**to punch** – to hit someone hard with a closed fist; to hit someone hard with one's hand when the fingers are folded down against the inside of one's hand

\* Blake's nose started bleeding when he was punched in the face.

**offensive** – insulting; rude; making one angry

\* In the United States, it is often offensive to talk about another person's skin color.

**to clobber** – to hit someone many times

\* When the hockey player started to clobber the referee, his teammates had to stop him.

**to take another swing at (someone)** – to hit (or try to hit) someone again

\* Even though the little boy was lying on the ground and bleeding, the older boy decided to take another swing at him.

**assault** – a physical attack on someone

\* The assault occurred on a dark street at 3:00 a.m.



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**to get a hold of (oneself)** – to bring oneself under control; to calm down and be able to control one's actions and emotions

\* She needs to learn to get a hold of herself when she gets angry, before she starts yelling at other people.

**to defend (someone's) honor** – to do or say something to protect the reputation of someone who has been insulted or offended

\* In the past, men defended their wives' honor by challenging other men to duels.

**to cool off** – to calm down; to get control of one's actions and emotions

\* I think you should cool off for a few days before you decide how to react.

**to get what's coming to (someone)** – to get what one deserves, especially if it is a bad thing; to experience the consequences (usually negative) of one's earlier actions or words

\* My uncle told me: If you treat your parents badly, you'll get what's coming to you when you're a parent yourself.

**nerve** – lack of respect; willingness and ability to do or say something that is inappropriate

\* We couldn't believe the nerve of that man, asking us to sell him our house for only \$85,000.

**overprotective** – taking care of someone too much

\* Parents are often overprotective of their children, but eventually they have to let them learn to live their own lives.

**to mess with (someone)** – to get involved with someone, creating problems, trouble, or danger

\* If you want to stay out of trouble, don't mess with her. She brings bad luck to everybody.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Isabella, what could her brother do to “be civilized”?
  - a) Punch the other man.
  - b) Take another swing at the man.
  - c) Get a hold of himself.
2. Why does Isabella suggest cooling off?
  - a) Because it is hot in the bar.
  - b) Because her brother needs to calm down.
  - c) Because they need an icy drink.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **punch**

The verb “to punch,” in this podcast, means to hit someone hard with one’s hand when the fingers are folded down against the inside of one’s hand: “Trent punched his cousin in the stomach, but ended up hurting his hand more than anything else.” The verb “to punch” can also mean to use a metal tool to make small holes in paper, leather, or something else: “Please punch three holes into these papers so that I can put them in the binder.” Sometimes the verb “to punch” means to push a button: “She entered the elevator and punched the button for the third floor.” Finally, the phrase “to punch the clock” means to put a piece of paper in a special machine that shows what time one came to and/or left work: “Your timecard showed that you punched the clock at 8:57 a.m. yesterday.”

#### **to cool off**

In this podcast, the phrase “to cool off” means to calm down and get control of one’s actions and emotions: “Some people cool off by counting to 10 slowly.” The phrase “to cool off” also means to decrease in temperature: “Take the cookies out of the oven and let them cool off for 10 minutes before you put them in a container.” The phrase “to cool down” means to do light exercises and stretching after having done a lot of exercise, so that one’s heart rate can slow down: “After exercising for 30 minutes, you need to cool down for at least five minutes before resting.” Finally, the phrase “to keep cool” means to remain calm: “You need to learn to keep cool and not get so upset about what other people say.”



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### CULTURE NOTE

“Boxing” is a sport where two people fight against each other by using their “fists” (the shape of one’s closed hand when the fingers are folded against the inside part of one’s hand). The fighting “occurs” (happens) in a series of “rounds” (short periods of time). If one of the fighters is “knocked down,” meaning that he falls to the floor as a result of being hit, and cannot get up before the “referee” (the person who decides whether the rules are being followed) counts to 10, then the other person wins that round.

Boxers usually have approximately the same “weight” (heaviness). Boxing organizations have “established” (created) “weight classes” (categories) so that only people with similar weights can fight against each other. In general, the lightest weight class is “flyweight” (108-112 pounds) and the heaviest weight class is “heavyweight” (above 200 pounds). Sometimes the boxers try not to drink water before they are weighed, so that they can “compete” (fight to see who is best) in a lower weight class in which they will have an “advantage” (something that makes it easier for one to win).

Probably the most famous American boxer “of all time” (ever) is Muhammad Ali. He had a “unique” (unusual, unlike that of other people) fighting style that he called, “float like a butterfly, sting like a bee.” Many people thought that he looked like a dancer while fighting. He was named “Fighter of the Year” more often than any other boxer. In 1996, he was chosen to “light the flame” (start the ceremonial fire) at the Summer Olympics.

In 1984, Ali was “diagnosed” (told that one has a disease) with Parkinson’s Disease, which affects the brain and makes it difficult to move one’s body. Nobody knows whether the disease was caused by boxing.

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 359: A Fist Fight.

This is ESL Podcast episode 359. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) and download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster. You can also take look at our ESL Podcast Blog and our ESL Podcast Store, with some additional courses in business and daily English.

This episode is called "A Fist Fight." Your "fist" (fist) is your hand when you put the fingers and the thumb together against the palm of your hand. It's what you do if you are going to hit someone or punch someone. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Isabella: What are you doing?! Why are you trying to hit that guy?

Tony: He deserves it. He insulted you. I'm going to knock his block off!

Isabella: Stop it! Be civilized. This isn't some free-for-all. You can't punch a guy just because he said something offensive.

Tony: Oh, yes I can. Let me at him! I'm going to clobber him.

Isabella: If you take another swing at him, he's going to have you arrested for assault. Get a hold of yourself.

Tony: I'm just trying to defend my sister's honor. What's wrong with that?

Isabella: Nothing, but violence isn't the answer. Let's get out of here and cool off a little.

Tony: All right, but if I ever see that guy again, he'll get what's coming to him.

Isabella: Okay, okay, let's go. You said he insulted me. What did he say?

Tony: He said you had nice legs. The nerve of that guy!



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Isabella: That's it? He said I had nice legs and you tried to hit him?

Tony: Isn't that enough? He can't say those things about my little sister.

Isabella: I think we need to have another talk about you being overprotective. I'm an adult. I can take care of myself.

Tony: Yes, but I'm your big brother and I'm making sure that no one messes with you. That's what big brothers are for. You don't have to thank me.

Isabella: Thank you? Uh!

[end of dialogue]

Isabella begins our dialogue by asking Tony, "What are you doing?! Why are you trying to hit that guy?" "What are you doing" is usually something you say when you're angry at someone, you want to know why they are behaving the way they are. Tony says, "He deserves it." "To deserve something" means that you have done something good that would give you a reward, or you've done something bad that will give you a punishment. For example, many people who try to lose weight think that they deserve to eat fatty food if they exercise every day. They think they have earned the right; they have done something that will allow them to do something else.

Tony says this guy deserved being hit. "He insulted you," he says, "I'm going to knock his block off!" "To insult someone" means say or do something that another person thinks is rude or mean. "To knock your block off," or "to knock his block off," means to hit someone so that, literally, his or her head falls off. However, that's really not what it means; it means to physically hurt someone, to hit them in the face. There was a popular children's game back in the 70s and 80s. It was a toy that had two boxers, and you would hit these buttons to try to get the other boxer to have his head spring up from his body. That was "to knock his block off." Perhaps that's one of the origins of the expression, or at least why it's popular among some people – old people, like me!

Isabella says, "Stop it! Be civilized." "To be civilized" means to be polite, to be kind, to be rational. "This isn't some free-for-all," she says. A "free-for-all" is a fight without any rules, where people can do whatever they want to do when they are fighting the other person. Isabella says, "You can't punch a guy just because he said something offensive." To "punch" (punch) means to hit someone with your fist – to hit someone hard with your hand. This is something you cannot do,



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Isabella said, just because this man “said something offensive.” “Offensive” means, here, insulting, rude, something to make another person angry.

Tony says, “Oh, yes I can (meaning yes I can punch him). Let me at him (let me get to him)! I’m going to clobber him.” “To clobber” (clobber) means to hit someone many times. You sometimes see this verb used when talking about sports teams playing each other. For example, if the Dodgers were playing the Yankees and they beat the Yankees in baseball 10 to 1, we would say that the Dodgers clobbered the Yankees 10 to 1. Of course, I like the Dodgers as a baseball team, so that’s what I want to happen!

Isabella says, “If you take another swing at him, he’s going to have you arrested for assault.” “To take a swing at someone” is similar to punching someone. You actually move your arm back and you try to hit them. “To take another swing at someone” would be to try to hit them again. Isabella says this man will “have you arrested (the police will come and take you) for assault” (assault). “Assault” is when you physically attack or hit someone else. At least that’s the general meaning of the term; you could also hear someone using that verb to talk about an attack on, for example, civil rights: “This is an assault on our civil rights” – they are doing something to hurt our civil rights, legally.

Isabella says to Tony, “Get a hold of yourself.” “To get a hold of yourself” means to bring yourself under your own control, usually by calming down and controlling your actions and emotions. “Get a hold of yourself,” you’re wild, you’re not thinking correctly, you’re emotional.

Tony says, “I’m just trying to defend my sister’s honor.” “To defend someone’s honor” means to say or do something to protect their reputation, especially if someone has insulted or offended them.

Isabella says that violence is not the answer. Then she suggests to Tony, “Let’s get out of here (let’s leave) and cool off a little.” “To cool off” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to calm down, to allow someone to get control of their emotions. There are a couple of different meanings of this term, as well as the term “to punch” that we mentioned earlier on.

Tony agrees to leave and says, “if I ever see that guy again, he’ll get what’s coming to him.” “To get what’s coming to you” means to get what you deserve; usually it’s a bad thing, to experience the consequences of your earlier actions or words. So you do something wrong today, and tomorrow you are punished – you got what was coming to you. You did something wrong, and now you had something bad happen to you.



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Isabella says, “Okay, okay, let’s go.” Then she asks Tony what did the guy say. Tony says, “He said you had nice legs (attractive, pretty legs). The nerve of that guy!” Tony says. “Nerve,” here, means a lack of respect, disrespect, a willingness to do something that is inappropriate or improper. “The nerve of that guy” is a common expression. “The nerve of that woman over there!” meaning she’s doing something that she should not be doing that shows a lack of respect.

Isabella says, “That’s it?” meaning that’s the only thing he said, that I had nice legs. Tony says yes, “Isn’t that enough?” meaning that’s sufficient for me to hit him. Isabella says that Tony is “being overprotective.” “To be overprotective” means to take care of someone too much. If a mother is overprotective of her children, the children may not learn the things they need to about how to survive in the world. Any time you hear the word “over” in front of another word – or usually it is what we would call a “prefix,” it is actually part of the word – you should realize that this word means doing something too much. For example: “I overspent” – I spent too much money; “I overate” – I ate too much food; “I overexercised” – I exercised too much. Well, not exercise for me, it’s mostly eating!

Tony then says, “I’m your big brother and I’m making sure that no one messes with you.” “To mess with someone” means to create problems or trouble for somebody else. You may say to someone, “Don’t mess with me,” means don’t cause me any trouble, don’t get me involved in trouble. There’s an expression in Texas, “Don’t mess with Texas,” meaning don’t cause any problems for people in Texas. I guess people in Texas are afraid of the rest of us – I’m not sure! The State of Texas has a reputation for independence, for doing its own thing, for being different than other states.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Tony: Yes, but I'm your big brother and I'm making sure that no one messes with you. That's what big brothers are for. You don't have to thank me.

Isabella: Thank you? Uh!

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse – who deserves our thanks for her good work!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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