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## ESL Podcast 469 – Rearranging Living Room Furniture

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### GLOSSARY

**to rearrange** – to change the position of objects within a particular area; to move things within an area

\* Ismael rearranged his office, moving his desk so that people walking by couldn't see his computer screen.

**living room** – a large room in a house where people spend time together, often talking, reading, or watching television

\* Do you read in the living room at night, or do you prefer to read in bed?

**spacious** – with a lot of space; large, with space between objects

\* The home seemed very spacious when they bought it, but once they put all their furniture inside it, it started to feel much smaller.

**couch** – sofa; a large piece of soft furniture that three or more people can sit on comfortably, usually all facing the same way

\* Their children aren't allowed to eat while sitting on the couch because their parents don't want them to get it dirty.

**loveseat** – sofa; a medium-sized piece of soft furniture that one or two people can sit on comfortably, facing the same way

\* On weekends, she likes to sit on their loveseat, drink a cup of hot tea, and read a good book.

**recliner** – a piece of soft furniture that looks like a large chair, but that has a handle on the side that, when pulled, makes the top part of the chair lean backward and another piece come up under one's legs, so that one is partially lying down

\* When she was pregnant, she was more comfortable sleeping on the recliner than in her bed.

**end table** – a small table placed at either end of a couch or loveseat

\* Mom told us to set our drinks on the end table, instead of holding them in our hands where they might spill.

**coffee table** – a long, short table put in front of a couch or loveseat

\* Their coffee table is covered with interesting books and magazines for people to read.



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**ottoman** – a piece of furniture that looks like a small, short table, but is very soft and covered in fabric or leather, used to rest one's feet when one is sitting down on a couch, loveseat, or another chair

\* When I get home from work, I like to take my shoes off, sit in my favorite chair, and put my feet up on the ottoman.

**table lamp** – a small, short light that rests on a table, usually with a metal, plastic, or wooden base that holds up a light bulb, which is covered by a "lampshade" (a piece of cloth or glass that light shines through)

\* I turn on the table lamp when I read at night so I can better see the words on the page.

**floor lamp** – a tall light that rests on the floor, usually with a metal, plastic, or wooden base that reaches up almost to the ceiling and holds up a light bulb, which is covered by a "lampshade" (a piece of cloth or glass that light shines through)

\* This room has only one small window and no ceiling lights, so we're going to put a few floor lamps in the corners.

**rocking chair** – a special chair that doesn't have four legs, but instead has two curved pieces that rest against the floor so that the person sitting there can gently push his or her feet against the floor to make the chair move back and forth slowly

\* The only way that Brita can get her baby to stop crying is to spend hours in the rocking chair with him in her arms until he falls asleep.

**guestroom** – an extra bedroom in a house where visitors can sleep

\* Our guestroom is always ready, so please come visit us anytime!

**credenza** – a large, short piece of wooden furniture with no legs, but with doors and/or shelves, often used to store books, dishes, or other items

\* They keep all of their cards and games in the credenza.

**configuration** – the way that something is arranged or ordered; the way that things work together

\* Do you usually use your van with the 5-seat or 8-seat configuration?

**to be back to square one** – to return to the point or situation where one began, without having received any benefit from the work one has just done or the actions one has just taken

\* Over the past two weeks, she sent out 30 applications and had 4 interviews, but she didn't receive any job offers, so now she's back to square one.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these might you sit on comfortably with a friend?
    - a) A recliner.
    - b) A couch.
    - c) An ottoman.
  
  2. Where would an ottoman typically be placed?
    - a) In front of a recliner.
    - b) In front of a loveseat.
    - c) In front of a credenza.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **couch**

The word “couch,” in this podcast, means a sofa, or a large piece of soft furniture that three or more people can sit on comfortably, usually all facing the same way: “You’d have a better view of the TV if you sat on the couch.” A “couch potato” is a person who is very lazy and spends too much time sitting on a couch, watching TV and eating: “The doctor said that I have to stop being such a couch potato and start getting more exercise.” The phrase “to be couched in (something)” means to say something in a certain way, especially in a hidden way: “The true meaning of the author’s writing is couched in a lot of fancy, poetic expressions.”

#### **to be back to square one**

In this podcast, the phrase “to be back to square one” means to return to the point or situation where one began, without having received any benefit from the work one has just done or the actions one has just taken: “Krista wants to get married and have children, but she and her boyfriend of the past four years just ended their relationship, so now she’s back to square one.” The phrase “a square peg in a round hole” is used to talk about someone who feels out of place or as if one doesn’t belong in a particular environment or situation: “I don’t like going to those parties. I always feel like a square peg in a round hole.” Finally, the phrase “fair and square” means fairly, or without cheating or lying: “Freddy is usually a great chess player, but yesterday his cousin beat him fair and square.”



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### CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, almost all homes have a living room, or a large area where family members and their friends can spend time together. However, larger homes often have additional large rooms that seem “somewhat” (a little bit) similar.

When there are two large rooms in a house, one of them is usually a “formal living room” and the other is a “family room.” The “formal living room” has very nice furniture and usually isn’t used very much, unless people are visiting. The “family room” has very comfortable furniture, a television, toys, games, and other things that people like to have around them. The family room is used more by the people who live in the home.

Many “modern homes” (homes that were built recently) have an “open floor plan” (a design with few walls and larger rooms). These homes are built around a “great room” that combines the kitchen, dining room, living room, and family room into one large space with no walls separating them from each other.

Very large, new homes might also have a “bonus room,” which is often a big room upstairs or in the “basement” (room below the ground) that the owners can use for whatever they want. Some people “convert” (change) their bonus room into another bedroom or office. Other people use the bonus room as an “entertainment room,” where they might have a big-screen TV and a big “stereo system” (loud speakers for music). A few people use the bonus room as a “craft room” where they can create art and work on other creative projects.

Finally, many homes have a “study” or “den,” which the family members use to work and study. The study or den is usually a quiet space with many books and a desk where people can go when they need to concentrate on something.

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



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 469: Rearranging Living Room Furniture.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 469. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode. Our Learning Guides contain all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, comprehension questions, cultural notes, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Amy and Jacob about their living room furniture. The "living room" is the large room where people normally sit on a couch and watch television, talk to each other. They are going to talk about the furniture – the things that they have inside their living room that they use and sit on. They're going to talk about different types of living room furniture, so it will be a good vocabulary episode. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Amy: I think rearranging the furniture will make the living room look more spacious. Don't you?

Jacob: Uh, sure.

Amy: Can you help me move this couch against this wall?

Jacob: Okay, but are you sure you want it over there? Because it's really heavy and a pain to move.

Amy: I'm sure. Let's move the loveseat across from it. Now, can you move the recliner into the corner?

Jacob: Uh! Here?

Amy: Umm...a little to the left. Perfect!

Jacob: Are you sure?



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Amy: Absolutely! Okay, the end tables go on each side of the couch, and the coffee table goes between the couch and the loveseat.

Jacob: Where do you want the ottoman and where do the lamps go?

Amy: Put the ottoman next to the loveseat. The table lamps go on the end tables and the floor lamp should go next to the recliner.

Jacob: There's no room for the rocking chair.

Amy: Hmm...I guess the rocking chair can go into the guestroom.

Jacob: What about the credenza?

Amy: You're right. This new configuration won't work.

Jacob: You mean you want to put everything back to where it was?

Amy: Yup, we're back to square one!

[end of dialogue]

Amy begins our dialogue by saying, "I think rearranging the furniture will make the living room look more spacious." "To rearrange" means to change the position of objects in a particular area, to move things from one place to another. You can rearrange the things on your desk. You can put your computer on the left side, your pens on the right side; you can move them around – you can rearrange them.

Amy wants to rearrange the furniture in the living room. "Furniture" refers to things like chairs, couches, tables, and so forth. They are in the living room, the main or large room in the house; Amy wants it to look more spacious. "More spacious" means with a lot more space, or simply larger, in this case. So she thinks that by rearranging the furniture, you can make the living room look larger than it is.

Jacob says, "Oh, sure." He's not too excited, as most husbands probably wouldn't be! Amy says, "Can you help me move this couch against this wall?" The "couch" is another word for the sofa; it's a large piece of furniture that three or more people can sit on. Usually it's in a straight line – it's a long rectangle. It's very common in American living rooms to have a big couch where several people can sit together. Amy is asking Jacob to help move this couch "against



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the wall,” meaning close to that wall. Jacob says, “Okay, but are you sure you want it over there? Because it’s really heavy and a pain to move,” meaning it’s very difficult to move; it’s very heavy, it weighs a lot. Amy says, “I’m sure. Let’s move the loveseat across from it.” A “loveseat” (one word) is another word for a small sofa, usually with room for just two people. It’s called a loveseat because there are just two people, so if it’s a little small let’s hope that you like the person next you!

Amy wants to move the loveseat across from the couch – in front of, on the other side of the couch. Amy says, “Now, can you move the recliner into the corner?” A “recliner” (recliner) is a piece of furniture you sit on; it’s basically a large chair. But normally, it is possible to move the chair so that it lies flat, or closer to like a bed. So you can sit up like a regular chair, but then you can usually move it so that the back of the chair leans back even farther, so you are almost lying down.

Well, Jacob says, “Uh! Here?” and Amy says, “Umm...a little to the left,” meaning move it a little bit to the left. Jacob asks, “Are you sure?” Amy says, “Absolutely!” meaning yes, I’m definitely sure. Then she says, “Okay, the end tables go on each side of the couch.” An “end table” is a small table in a living room. Usually they are placed on both ends of a couch or a loveseat. They’re places where people can put their glasses or cups if they are drinking something, for example. Amy says that she wants the end tables to go on each side – on both sides of the couch, and the coffee table to go between the couch and the loveseat. A “coffee table” is a larger table. It’s short, meaning it’s low to the ground; it’s not a tall table, but it’s long, and you will often see a coffee table in front of a large couch in an American living room. It’s a place like an end table, where you can put your coffee cup or magazines. Some people like to buy big books with colorful photographs that they put on their coffee table. These are even called “coffee table books,” the kind of books that have beautiful pictures that people can look at. Actually, nobody ever looks at them; they’re just there to look nice!

Jacob then says, “Where do you want the ottoman and where do the lamps go?” An “ottoman” (ottoman) it is a piece of furniture that looks like a small table, but there is a cushion on top of it. It’s made of some sort of soft fabric or leather, and it’s used not as a table but to put your feet on. If you are sitting on the couch or the loveseat, it’s a place where you can put your feet up so that your legs are horizontal. Amy says, “Put the ottoman next to the loveseat. The table lamps go on the end tables and the floor lamp should go next to the recliner.” A “table lamp” is a lamp, something with a light bulb in it, that you put on, of course, a table, like an end table. A “floor lamp” is taller; it sits on the floor and can be put just about anywhere.





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Amy wants the floor lamp to go next to the recliner. Jacob says, “There’s no room for the rocking chair.” A “rocking chair” is a special chair that has curved pieces of wood or metal that allow you to go back and forth, back and forth. A young mother with her baby might use a rocking chair to go back and forth, to have that gentle movement to help the baby calm down or even to fall asleep. I don’t know! Rocking chairs have been associated also with older people – grandma and grandpa sitting in a rocking chair. So it’s a chair, but it doesn’t have four legs that sit on the ground. Instead, it has these semi-circular pieces of wood or metal – usually wood – that go back and forth, that allow you to move the chair back and forth as you sit on it.

Amy says that she guesses the rocking chair can go into the guestroom. A “guestroom” in a house is an extra bedroom where people who are visiting can stay – can sleep. Not every house is big enough to have a guestroom. If you have a big house, and you don’t have very many people living at your house, you may have more than one guestroom. I don’t have any guestrooms, just so you know!

Jacob says, “What about the credenza?” A “credenza” is a large, short piece of wooden furniture. It doesn’t have any legs, but there are doors and shelves in it. It’s used to put books or dishes or other items. So it’s like a short cabinet where you store things – where you can keep things. Amy then says, “You’re right. This new configuration won’t work.” “Configuration” describes the way that something is arranged or ordered, the way things work together. Amy is saying this new arrangement of the furniture – this rearrangement isn’t going to work. The configuration won’t work; it’s not good, it’s not a good way of arranging things.

Jacob then says, “You mean you want to put everything back to where it was?” He’s asking if Amy wants him to move all furniture where it was before they started rearranging, and Amy says, “Yup (meaning yes), we’re back to square one!” The expression “to be back to square one” means to return to a point or a situation where you began. You haven’t made any progress; you didn’t get any benefit from all the work you did. So if you are, for example, working on a project and everything is on your laptop computer, and then you lose your laptop computer, you don’t have any of those files saved anywhere else. You’re back to square one, you have to start at the beginning again, you have to start over.

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

[start of dialogue]





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[end of dialogue]



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Our wonderful scripts are written by Dr. Lucy Tse. I never need to rearrange anything that she has written!

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

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