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## ESL Podcast 528 – Negotiating Salary

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### GLOSSARY

**to interview** – to participate in a meeting where one has to answer many questions, usually to demonstrate one's qualifications for a job or opportunity  
\* Shane interviewed for three jobs last week, and he hopes to hear back from the companies this week.

**job offer** – an offer of employment; a written or oral request that one begin working for a company in a particular position  
\* Thank you for making me such a great job offer, but I've decided to accept a position at a different company.

**salary** – the amount of money that one is paid in one year, regardless of how many hours one actually works  
\* Do you earn an annual salary, or are you paid by the hour?

**salary requirements** – the amount of money that a person needs and expects to make in a particular position  
\* He's well qualified for the administrative assistant position, but his salary requirements are too high. He wants to make at least \$80,000 per year!

**salary range** – the amount of money, ranging from low to high, that can be paid to someone who works in a particular position  
\* The salary range for this position is \$42,000-\$53,500, depending on the new employee's experience and education.

**budget constraints** – limits on how much one can spend on something, because one doesn't have enough money for everything  
\* The business has a lot of budget constraints and can't afford to pay for an expensive marketing campaign.

**compensation package** – the combination of all the things a person will receive in exchange for working in a particular position, including a salary or hourly rate, vacation time, sick leave, holidays, health insurance, retirement benefits, and more  
\* It's important to consider the entire compensation package, and not just the salary, because sometimes a company that offers a lower salary actually has the best overall benefits.



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**negotiations** – discussions where people try to compromise or reach an agreement that both people can be satisfied with, even though the final agreement won't be what either one had originally hoped for

\* The two companies want to do business together, but right now they're in negotiations on the details of the contract.

**comparable** – similar; able to be compared; with the same characteristics

\* Do you think Coca-Cola is comparable to Pepsi, or can you really taste a difference?

**to consider** – to think about something, especially before making a final decision

\* She's considering moving in with her parents to save money until she can find a full-time job.

**annual** – once a year; yearly; happening once a year, or the amount of something that one has during one year

\* Is this conference going to be an annual event?

**to jump at** – to seize an opportunity; to decide to do or have something immediately, without thinking about it before making a decision, because it is very good or attractive

\* I'd jump at the opportunity to live in Hawaii and spend time on the beach every day.

**to walk away** – to decline; to not accept a job or opportunity

\* They wanted to buy the house, but when the inspection showed that there were some serious problems with the roof and flooring, they decided to walk away.

**to close the gap** – to find a compromise; to find a point where two people can agree, even though one person wants more of something and the other person wants less

\* Ahmed wants to sell the car for \$7,500, and Meghan offered to buy it for \$5,000, so now they're trying to close the gap and reach an agreement.

**to up** – to increase; to make something bigger, longer, or louder

\* This music would sound better if you upped the bass.

**ceiling** – the maximum limit; the highest or biggest something can be

\* New York City has a rent ceiling, which means that there are limits on how much landlords can charge the people who live in their apartments.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What are salary requirements?
  - a) The amount of money a company must pay an employee.
  - b) The amount of money an employee wants to earn.
  - c) The amount of money a job applicant earned in a previous job.
2. What does Renaldo mean when he says that many people would “jump at” the salary?
  - a) Many people would think about the job offer.
  - b) Many people would be very excited to get that offer.
  - c) Many people would be very angry to get that offer.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **to jump at**

The phrase “to jump at,” in this podcast, means to decide to do or have something immediately, without thinking about it before making a decision, because it is very good or attractive: “Most students would jump at the opportunity to study at Princeton if only they had enough money for tuition.” The phrase “to jump up and down” means to be very excited about something: “When we told the kids we would be going to Disneyland for our family vacation, they all started jumping up and down.” Finally, the phrase “to jump through the hoops” means to do all the bureaucratic things and paperwork that are required to get what one wants: “They’ve had to jump through the hoops to open their new restaurant, but they finally have all the required licenses.”

#### **ceiling**

In this podcast, the word “ceiling” means the maximum limit, or the highest or biggest something can be: “The city government has a spending ceiling of \$385,000 for improvements to city parks.” Normally a “ceiling” is the top, inside part of a room: “Are you going to paint the bathroom ceiling, too, or just the walls?” The phrase “glass ceiling” refers to the way that many women and racial minorities can’t get jobs in management, even though they work very hard and have good educations, but instead just have to look up at the white males who lead most organizations: “Why didn’t Lucille get the job? Was Peter really better qualified, or was it just another example of the company’s glass ceiling?”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Many American companies offer “complex” (not simple; with many different parts) compensation packages to their employees. Many job applicants focus on salary, but other “components” (parts) of the compensation package can be even more important.

Compensation packages include “leave” (time when one is paid but does not have to work), such as vacation time, “sick leave” (days when one is sick), holidays, and “personal leave” (days when one can take care of things in one’s personal life). Some compensation benefits also offer health insurance, dental insurance, vision insurance, “disability” (money one can receive if one is no longer able to work because of an injury), and long-term care (money to pay for help if one can no longer live alone). There are also many programs for “retirement benefits” (money one will receive after one has stopped working). These things usually cannot be negotiated, because they are part of a “corporate-wide” (affecting the entire company) “policy” (a written explanation of how things are done).

At large companies, job applicants often can negotiate a “starting bonus” (money paid when one accepts a job) or “stock options,” where employees receive the “right” (ability to do something) to buy “stock” (shares; partial ownership of a company) at a certain price in the future. If the company does well, the employee might “exercise” (use) those stock options and buy stocks for less than their “market value” (the normal price at which things are bought or sold).

Other job applicants try to negotiate a “flex” (flexible) schedule, maybe working four ten-hour days instead of five eight-hour days. Other applicants try to negotiate a schedule where they can “telecommute” (work from home, without coming into the office) at least a few days each week.

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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 528: Negotiating Salary.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 528. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com), you'll be glad you did. There you can download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster. Consider supporting this podcast by becoming a member or making a donation on our website.

This episode is called "Negotiating Salary." It's a dialogue between Renaldo and Simone. They're going to be talking about someone who may be interested in taking a job, but they first want to get a good salary ("salary" being the money that you're paid for your job). Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Renaldo: Hello, may I speak to Simone Otto?

Simone: This is Simone. May I ask who's calling?

Renaldo: This is Renaldo Garcia at Cinetect. You interviewed for a position with me last week.

Simone: Oh, yes, of course. How are you?

Renaldo: I'm doing well. The reason I'm calling is that I was very impressed with you last week, and I'd like to offer you the job.

Simone: Thank you very much. I'm delighted to hear it. I really appreciate the job offer.

Renaldo: I think we now need to talk about salary. What are your salary requirements?

Simone: Well, for this type of position, I would be looking for a salary range between \$60,000 and \$65,000.



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Renaldo: Hmm, that's a bit higher than I was thinking, given our budget constraints. Perhaps we can give you an attractive compensation package if the salary isn't quite what you're looking for.

Simone: I'm certainly open to negotiations, though I think that the salary range I named is comparable to that of similar positions in the field.

Renaldo: All right. Why don't you consider this: I can give you a salary of \$50,000 and I'll increase your annual vacation time from two weeks to three weeks.

Simone: Hmm, I'll need to think about that...

Renaldo: In this economy, it's a salary that many people would jump at.

Simone: I understand that, but I also know that I have a lot to offer your company.

Renaldo: That's certainly true, and I don't want you to walk away from this job if there's any way we can close the gap in salary.

Simone: If you're willing to up the offer to \$60,000, then I think it may be doable.

Renaldo: Well, \$60,000 is really the ceiling for that position. I'll have to give it some thought and call you back.

Simone: Please do, and again, thank you very much for the offer. It would be an honor to work with you and to work at Cinetect.

[end of dialogue]

Our phone conversation begins with Renaldo saying, "Hello, may I speak to Simone Otto?" Simone says, "This is Simone. May I ask who's calling?" That's a somewhat formal way when someone calls you but doesn't identify themselves first; you're asking them to tell you who they are. Renaldo says, "This is Renaldo Garcia at Cinetect," the name of his company or the company where he works. He says, "You interviewed for a position with me last week." So, Simone wants to get a job at Cinetect and Renaldo is calling her after the interview. "To interview" means to have a meeting with that person, where they ask questions and you give answers about your qualifications for the job.



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Simone says, “Oh, yes, of course. How are you?” Renaldo says, “I’m doing well. The reason I’m calling is that I was very impressed with you last week, and I’d like to offer you the job (I would like to say this job is yours if you want it).” Simone says, “Thank you very much. I’m delighted to hear it.” This is a somewhat formal way of saying I’m very happy hear that news; I’m very happy to find out that you are offering me, in this case, a job. Simone says, “I really appreciate the job offer.” The “job offer” is when they say either by telling you or by writing you that we are offering you a job; we are saying you can have this job if you want it.

Renaldo says, “I think we now need to talk about salary,” the amount of money that you’re paid. “Salary” is the amount of money that you’re paid in a year, regardless of how many hours you work. There are two ways of being paid. One is with a salary, where you get paid a certain amount of money even if you work 10 hours a day. The other way of getting paid is a wage (wage). A “wage” is when you are paid usually by the hour; so the more hours you work the more you’re paid. In the United States, most professional positions (administrative positions) are by salary, not by the hour. Hourly wages are usually for jobs that perhaps don’t require the same level of education as a professional job does, but that’s not always the case.

Renaldo asks Simone, “What are your salary requirements (what is the amount of money that you need and expect from this job)?” Simone says, “Well, for this type of position (for this kind of job), I would be looking for a salary range between \$60,000 and \$65,000.” “I would be looking” is just a slightly more formal way of saying I am looking for a salary range. A “range” is the highest and lowest amount of something. In this case, the salary range is the lowest amount that she would accept to the highest amount that you could expect. She, of course, would take a higher salary, we guess. But the salary range would be the average salary, the salary that would be typical for a job like this.

Renaldo says, “Hmm, that’s a bit higher than I was thinking,” meaning it’s more money than he thought the new employee, Simone, should be paid. He says, “given our budget constraints.” “Given” means taking into consideration “our budget (or financial) constraints. A “constraint” is something that limits what you can do. Renaldo is saying here, basically, we don’t have enough money in our budget (in the plan that we have for the money we’re going to spend) to pay the salary that you want. He says, “Perhaps we can give you an attractive compensation package if the salary isn’t quite what you’re looking for.” A “compensation package” would be a combination of all the things that you get in exchange for working at your job. So this would include health insurance, vacation days, retirement money (money for when you stop working); those





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would all be part of a compensation package. The word “compensation” is just another word for what you received by doing something; by working there, you receive money plus all these other things.

Simone says, “I’m certainly open to negotiations.” “To be open to (something)” means that you are willing to do something. “Negotiations” is when you sit down with someone and you talk about a difference that you have, and to try to come to some common agreement. Perhaps one person gives up something, you give up something; you compromise, you negotiate. “Negotiations” is the noun from the verb “to negotiate.” Simone says she’s open to negotiations, “though I think that the salary range I named is comparable to that of similar positions in the field.” “To be comparable” means to be similar, something that you can compare, with the same characteristics. She’s saying that the salary range she gave Renaldo, 60 to \$65,000, is similar to other jobs (similar jobs) in that field (in that type of work, whatever it is).

Renaldo says, “All right. Why don’t you consider (why don’t you think about) this: I can give you a salary of \$50,000 and I’ll increase your annual vacation time from two weeks to three weeks.” “To increase” means to give more vacation days. “Annual” is every year. Typically in the U.S., in jobs you get between maybe two to four weeks of vacation every year, it depends on the job. Typical is two weeks, not like in other countries where you may get four or five weeks. Typically it’s less here in the U.S. than in some other countries.

So, Simone says, “Hmm, I’ll need to think about that.” Renaldo says, “In this economy, it’s a salary that many people would jump at.” “To jump at,” here, means to decide to do something immediately, without thinking before making your decision because it’s so good, it’s so attractive. Renaldo is saying that with difficult economic times, this is a good salary and other people would take it immediately. This, of course, is a kind of psychological pressure that he’s trying to put on Simone, trying to force her, maybe make her feel even a little guilty that she’s asking for a higher salary. This is, of course, part of the negotiation process. The word “jump” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Simone says, “I understand that (meaning I understand it is a good salary), but I also know that I have a lot to offer your company.” Renaldo says, “That’s certainly true, and I don’t want you to walk away from this job if there’s any way we can close the gap in salary.” “To walk away,” here, means to say no to something. It doesn’t mean literally to walk in the opposite direction, although it could mean that. But in this context, it means to say no, to say, “No, thank you. I don’t want this position,” and that’s the end of it. Renaldo is trying to close the





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gap. “To close the gap” means to somehow compromise, negotiate so that we can find something we both agree on. Maybe not 50,000, maybe not 60,000, perhaps 55,000; where one person goes up and the other person goes down, and they can agree on something. A “gap” is a space in between two things. In this case it’s the distance, if you will, the difference in the amount of money that Simone wants and Renaldo is offering her.

Simone says, “If you’re willing to up the offer to \$60,000, then I think it may be doable.” “To up,” here, means to increase. “Up” is used as a verb, to make something bigger or louder; in this case, to increase the salary. “If you’re willing to up the offer (meaning what you are offering me) to \$60,000, then I think,” she says, “it may be doable,” meaning I can do it. Renaldo says, “Well, \$60,000 is really the ceiling for that position.” The “ceiling” is the maximum or highest amount that you, in this case, will pay somebody. “Ceiling” has other meanings in English; the Learning Guide will give you some more explanations about those.

Renaldo says, “I’ll have to give it some thought and call you back,” meaning I’ll have to think about it. “To give (something) some thought” means to think about it. Simone says, “Please do, and again, thank you very much for the offer. It would be an honor to work with you and to work at Cinetect.”

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

There's no one comparable to the wonderful scriptwriter of this episode, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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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