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## ESL Podcast 465 – Describing Boring and Exciting Things

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### GLOSSARY

**to split up** – to separate; to stop doing something together and instead do different things; to go different ways

\* Whenever they go to the grocery store, they split up so that she gets the fruits and vegetables and he gets the dry goods.

**biopic** – a movie about someone's life; a biographical movie

\* How many biopics have been made about President John F. Kennedy?

**mind-numbing** – extremely boring and uninteresting

\* This homework assignment is mind-numbing! Most of our assignments are much more interesting.

**bored to death** – extremely bored and uninterested in something

\* He would be bored to death if he weren't able to listen to music while waiting for the bus each morning.

**action-packed** – with a lot of excitement and movement that makes one very interested in something, especially when talking about a book, television show or movie

\* This is an action-packed movie with lots of car chases and explosions.

**fast-paced** – very rapid; moving quickly; not making one feel bored or uninterested

\* He's taking a fast-paced physics course that is fascinating, but also challenging.

**on the edge of (one's) seat** – very excited, wanting to know what will happen next; so excited that it is difficult for one to stay seated calmly

\* She has been on the edge of her seat all day, waiting for a phone call to let her know whether she got the job.

**snail's pace** – very slowly, making one feel bored or uninterested

\* The children always walk to school at a snail's pace in the morning, but they come home from school in the afternoon as quickly as possible.

**dramatic** – with a lot of excitement, interest, and emotion

\* Olivia is too dramatic! Did you see the way she started crying when her coffee spilled?



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**repetitive** – repeating many times; doing the same thing over and over again

\* Daniel was really repetitive during our phone conversation, repeating everything he said at least three times.

**to nod off** – to fall asleep or begin to sleep, especially when and where it is inappropriate to do so

\* Aguero often nods off during his classes because he doesn't get enough sleep at night.

**to abandon** – to leave something; to decide to no longer have or use something

\* The basketball team stopped their game and abandoned the basketball court because of bad weather.

**adrenaline rush** – a strong feeling of excitement that increases one's heart rate and breathing

\* Ralf gets an adrenaline rush from skiing down steep mountains.

**nap** – a short period of time when one sleeps during the day, not during one's regular time for sleeping at night

\* Her baby takes two naps in the morning and one nap in the afternoon.

**bang for the buck** – the benefit, advantage, or other good thing that one receives for an investment of money or time

\* As you get ready for your trip to Chicago, you'll get more bang for the buck if you read about the city before you arrive.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Ina and Paco split up to see different movies?
    - a) Because they were fighting with each other.
    - b) Because they wanted to see different movies.
    - c) Because they couldn't find each other in the theater.
  2. Why was Ina on the edge of her seat during the movie?
    - a) Because she really wanted to know what would happen next.
    - b) Because the seat was very uncomfortable.
    - c) Because there was too much action packed into the movie.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **to nod off**

The phrase “to nod off,” in this podcast, means to fall asleep or begin to sleep, especially when and where it is inappropriate to do so: “Harold was fired for nodding off during an important business meeting.” The verb “to nod” means to move one’s head up and down to show that one agrees with something or to answer “yes”: “Gillian asked Megan if she understood, and she nodded.” The phrase “to nod in agreement” means the same thing: “Most of the people in the audience nodded in agreement when they heard what the speaker was saying.” Finally, the phrase “to nod at (someone)” means to move one’s head up and down one time in order to greet someone without saying “hello”: “I don’t know him well, but we always nod at each other when we pass on the street.”

#### **to abandon**

In this podcast, the verb “to abandon” means to leave something or to decide to no longer have or use something: “They abandoned the old office and moved into a newer office building.” The verb “to abandon” also means to leave one’s husband, wife, or children: “Her father abandoned the family when she was just two years old.” The verb “to abandon” can also mean to stop doing something, especially if it would have been difficult or impossible to continue: “They had always wanted to open their own restaurant, but they abandoned the idea when they realized how much it would cost.” Finally, the verb “to abandon” can mean to stop thinking a certain way: “Why did you abandon the idea of looking for a new job?”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Sometimes the “behavior” (the way that one acts; the things that one does) of other people can “ruin” (destroy; make something not as good) the experience of going to see a movie in a movie theater. In the United States, most people expect certain “etiquette” (polite ways of behaving and interacting with other people) to be followed in a movie theater.

In general, it is “rude” (not polite) to talk loudly while a movie is playing, because this might “distract” other people or make it difficult for them to concentrate on the movie. It is also rude to “crinkle” (move something in one’s hands so that it makes a loud noise) food “wrappers” (the paper and plastic that food is packaged in) so that other people can’t hear the movie. Cell phones should be turned off for the same reason.

It is also rude to “block” (not let something be seen) other people’s view. For example, movie watchers generally avoid wearing tall hats. If the theater isn’t full and there are many empty seats, it would be rude to sit directly in front of another person. It is always better to sit slightly to the side in the next “row” (a group of seats in one straight line).

Movie theater etiquette requires that people do not stand up and move around the theater very much. If a “movie-goer” (someone in a theater to watch a movie) has to get up to go to the bathroom, they should stand up, “hunch over” (slightly bend one’s knees, back, and neck so that one is not as tall as usual) and quietly say “excuse me” while waiting for other people in the row to stand up. When that person returns to the row, they should wait for a “dull” (unexciting) moment in the movie before going back to his or her seat.

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



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 465: Describing Boring and Exciting Things.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 465. 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). You can download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Describing Boring and Exciting Things." It's a dialogue between Ina and Paco who go to see different movies and describe them as being exciting or boring. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Ina: It was a great idea to split up to go see different movies. I really liked The McQuillanator!

Paco: I'm glad to hear it. You made a better choice than I did. The biopic I saw was mind-numbing. I was bored to death!

Ina: Really? My movie was great. It was action-packed and fast-paced. I was on the edge of my seat from beginning to end.

Paco: I wish I had been. My movie moved at a snail's pace and what was supposed to be dramatic was just repetitive. I can't believe I sat through that entire thing. I'm sure I nodded off more than once.

Ina: That's too bad. You should have abandoned your theater and joined me in mine. I'm still feeling the adrenaline rush.

Paco: Yeah, but instead I got a good nap. What a waste of money!

Ina: Just consider it a good lesson learned.

Paco: What lesson?

Ina: Let me pick the movies. I know a good bang for the buck!



## ESL Podcast 465 – Describing Boring and Exciting Things

[end of dialogue]

Ina begins our dialogue by saying, “It was a great idea to split up to go see different movies.” To “split up” is a two-word phrasal verb that here means to separate, when two people stop doing something together. You can also use that expression if you are ending a romantic relationship: “I split up with my girlfriend when I saw her kissing my brother.” Just an example!

Ina and Paco decided to go see different movies. Ina saw a movie called The McQuillanator, which is kind of like The Terminator – only it involves a podcaster instead of someone from another planet! Paco says, “I’m glad to hear it. You made a better choice than I did. The biopic I saw was mind-numbing.” A “biopic,” or a biography picture, is a movie about someone’s life – a biographical movie. Paco says that his movie was mind-numbing. “Mind-numbing” means extremely boring, very uninteresting. Watching golf on TV can be mind-numbing – at least, for me! Paco says, “I was bored to death!” meaning I was extremely bored; I was very uninterested in this thing.

Ina says, “Really? My movie was great. It was action-packed and fast-paced.” These are two expressions you might use to describe a very exciting book or a movie. “Action-packed” means there are a lot of interesting things going on, a lot of excitement. A television show can be action-packed; there may be cars that are going at fast speeds, criminals that are shooting, all of this could be considered “action-packed.” The Mission Impossible movies are an example of action-packed movies. “Fast-paced” is similar; it means very rapid, moves very quickly so that you don’t get bored by it. Ina says, “I was on the edge of my seat,” which is another way of saying I was very excited, I wanted to know what happened, I was so excited I could not sit in my seat comfortably.

Paco says, “I wish I had been,” meaning I wish I had been on the edge of my seat with excitement. “My movie,” he says, “moved at a snail’s pace.” “Pace” is the rhythm or speed of something; a “snail” is a small animal that moves very slowly. So, “a snail’s pace” means very slowly, so slow that you get bored very easily. “What was supposed to be dramatic,” Paco says, “was just repetitive.” Something that is “dramatic” should have a lot of emotion, a lot of excitement, something you are interested watching. But it wasn’t dramatic; Paco says it was just repetitive. Something that is “repetitive” is something that repeats many times, doing the same thing over and over and over and over and over again – you see, that’s repetitive! Well, Paco says, “I’m sure I nodded off more than once.” The expression “to nod (nod) off” is a phrasal verb meaning to begin to fall asleep or, simply, to fall asleep, especially when you are supposed to stay awake. So for example, your brother-in-law is telling you a story about how he



## ESL Podcast 465 – Describing Boring and Exciting Things

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went skiing, and you're not very interested and you start to nod off – you start to fall asleep because it's so boring. That would be an example of "nodding off." Or, you're at a meeting with your boss and someone is giving a presentation and it's not very interesting, you get sleepy and you start to nod off.

Ina says, "That's too bad (that's unfortunate). You should have abandoned your theater and joined me in mine," she says. To "abandon" means to leave something, to decide that you no longer want to have this thing or be in this situation. When a boat or a ship is beginning to sink – it's beginning to go into the water and it could go under the water, the captain may say, "Abandon ship!" meaning everyone must leave; everyone must go somewhere else. In the water, probably! "To abandon" and "to nod off" both have different meanings in English besides the ones we've talked about here; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations of these expressions.

Ina says, "I'm still feeling the adrenaline rush." A "rush" is a sudden feeling of strong emotion. "Adrenaline" is a chemical in your body that is active when you are excited. So, an "adrenaline rush" is when someone feels very excited, a sudden excitement. In this case, Ina is excited because the movie is so interesting. Paco says, "Yeah, but instead (in my case) I got a good nap" (nap). A "nap" is a short period of time when you fall asleep, but it's in the middle of the day, not at night when you normally sleep for six, seven, eight hours; a nap is shorter. You could take a nap in the afternoon, for example, for 15 minutes, which is something that many people now recommend as actually being a good thing if you, of course, have a place where you can fall asleep. I, personally, like to sleep on my desk. It's a little uncomfortable, but I get in my 15-20 minutes every afternoon!

Well, Paco got to take a nap during the movie, and because he paid for the movie, maybe 9-10 dollars or more, he says it was a "waste of money," meaning he did not get his money's worth. Ina says, "Just consider it a good lesson learned." Paco says, "What lesson?" Ina says, "Let me pick the movies." The lesson is that Paco should have listened to Ina. Ina ends by saying, "I know a good bang (bang) for the buck!" A "bang" is a loud noise. For example, when you shoot a gun we might call that noise a bang: "The gun went off with a bang." It's a loud noise that some thing makes. The word "buck" is the same as the word "dollar," meaning American money. But the expression "a good bang for the buck" means that you get a lot for a smaller price, you get a lot of excitement, a lot for your money; you don't have to pay very much money, but you get a lot back from what you pay.

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



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[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

This action-packed, fast-paced dialogue was written by our very own Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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