



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 223

TOPICS

Social networking; government-run lotteries; the use of “on” with the days of the week; to travel in/by; individual versus personal

GLOSSARY

social networking – using the Internet to meet new people or to keep in contact with one’s family and friends

* This is a social networking website for old classmates to find each other.

application – a special computer program that is created to improve another computer program

* I’m using a new application that allows me to better organize my music on my computer.

post – information one puts on a website; a message that one writes and makes public on a website

* In our latest post on new technology, we wrote about a new cell phone that allows 10 callers to speak to each other at one time.

to keep in touch with (someone) – to continue communicating with someone for a long period of time, especially if one doesn’t see that person regularly

* It’s very difficult keeping in touch my family and friends while living abroad.

privacy – being able to keep things secret and control who has access to one’s personal information

* Get out of my room! Why can’t I get any privacy in this house?

discreet – being careful about what one says and does, so that one does not share personal or embarrassing information with others

* The biggest problem isn’t that Monica broke the rules, but that she wasn’t discreet enough to keep it to herself.

lottery – a type of gambling where people buy tickets with different numbers on them and at a certain future time, the lottery organizers pick numbers at random, and the person with the chosen numbers wins a lot of money

* For the state lottery, Bami buys a ticket with the same numbers each week, believing that they’ll be picked sooner or later.



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scratcher / scratch-it ticket / scratch card – a type of gambling where people buy a small piece of paper with hidden numbers, images, or text, and when those are revealed and show the correct combination, one wins money

* Leander bought three scratchers and won \$20.

chance – the probability that something will happen; the likelihood that something will happen

* Is there a good chance that it will rain this afternoon?

jackpot – the largest amount of money that can be won in a game; the main prize in the lottery

* Three people had the same lottery numbers and shared the jackpot of \$80 million.

lump sum – paying or receiving all of the money all at once; paying or receiving the entire amount in one payment

* Sales were better than expected, and the store's owner decided to pay back his bank loan in one lump sum.

annuity – paying or receiving a small amount of money each year for a set number of years, until the total amount of all the payments is equal to the amount owed

* Our retirement plan pays us a small annuity for 20 years.

to travel by/in – to go from one place to another using a certain type of transportation or vehicle

* I like traveling in a car far more than traveling by train.

individual – relating to one person at a time; designed or meant for one person only; a single person separate from the group

* At the store, you have to buy two bottles of lotion to get the sale price. They don't have individual bottles on sale.

personal – relating to something private; relating to one particular person

* I know that a lot of people like George Clooney as an actor, but my personal favorite is Denzel Washington.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

School Raffles and Raffle Prizes

Schools in the United States, whether they are public schools or private schools, often try to “raise” (collect) money to better the school or to give students special experiences and opportunities. These could include building new “facilities” (buildings), buying new “uniforms” (the same clothing worn by everyone in a group or organization) for the school’s sport teams, or paying for a school group to take a trip.

Many schools raise money by holding “raffles,” which is a type of lottery. Students sell “raffle tickets,” usually for a small sum, such as \$1 or \$5 for each ticket. People who want to support the school and/or who want to win the “prizes” (things won in a contest) will buy one or more tickets for a chance to win. At a later date, all of the “ticket stubs” (the short, leftover part after a ticket has been removed and given to a buyer) will be put into a container, and someone will select, without looking at the ticket stubs, the number of the winning ticket(s).

At the same time, the school asks for “donations” (something given to a charity; gifts) from the community that can be used as prizes. For example, the owner of a local electronics store might donate a television as a prize, while the owner of a nice hotel might donate a weekend stay at the hotel. In addition to supporting the school, the business owners will also be mentioned as “donors” (people who gave), and receive a “public relations” (the development of a good public image by a company) “boost” (improvement; increase). Since both the school and the business benefit, this type of arrangement is usually considered a “win-win” for everyone.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 223.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 223. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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On this Café, we're going to talk about social networking, or websites like MySpace, Facebook, and Twitter. We're also going to talk about government-run lotteries, which are ways that people try to win money here in the U.S. and in other countries. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion of social networking. You might hear businesspeople talk about professional networking. "Networking" means meeting other people who work in the same kind of business – the same type of business and exchanging contact information (your name; your telephone) in order to perhaps try to help each other in the future. So you're meeting other people who have similar interests or are in a similar business, or are people who might be customers of yours in the future perhaps.

Social networking is similar to traditional professional networking, but there are a couple of main differences. First, social networking is more often used to stay connected with friends, family members, perhaps classmates – people you went to school with. It can also be used, of course, for professional reasons. Second, social networking uses the Internet instead of face-to-face, personal relationships.

You're probably already familiar with some of these social networking websites. Two of the biggest and most popular ones here in the United States are MySpace and Facebook, although I think Twitter now is perhaps even more popular; at least, more people seem to be joining Twitter. These sites try to create online "communities," or groups of people who interact with each other: send each other messages, that sort of thing. These online communities are made up of people who have a "shared" interest, they enjoy doing or learning the



same things, or they simply happen to be your friends and your family members, and you want to communicate with them in some easy way.

Typically when you sign up for a social networking site, you create an account. You put in your “username,” the name that you are going use to log in, and a password. Usually they’ll ask you some basic information for your profile. Your “profile” is just a list of facts about you. After you have your account, you can add quote-unquote friends. I say “quote-unquote” when we are talking about something that isn’t necessarily true. Not everyone who becomes your friend on Facebook is really your friend. Many people, maybe most people you have never even met before, and you have no long-term communication with them, but they could also be your real friends. As you add friends, then you can see other people’s information and they can see your information: photographs, perhaps, that you put on your page, notes, messages, and so forth.

Social networking sites are also offering some additional features, including email and instant messaging. There are also many “apps,” which is short for applications. These are special computer programs that are created to make a program better; in this case to improve the kinds of things you can do or give you more things to do on Facebook. Cell phones now have apps, the most famous being the iPhone.

A similar social networking site, LinkedIn (all one word), is used mostly for professional contacts. “To be linked” means to be connected to something. “To be linked in” means to be connected to some circle of conversation or some source of information.

Twitter is another popular social networking site. The word “twitter” is an interesting one; as a verb it can be used to describe the noises that birds make, or the fact that they are making noises. “Twitter” can also mean a person is talking about things that are not very important, often talking very rapidly. You could say, “He was twittering on about the football game.” You weren’t very interested and it wasn’t very important. You can also say somebody “is in a twitter,” it’s a sort of old-fashioned expression that means that they’re upset. They might be talking to themselves or moving their hands, something that shows that they are upset or agitated about something. Someone who is “agitated” is someone who is bothered by something. So, an agitated person might twitter on – might talk rapidly about something that’s bothering them.

All these were the old, if you will, definitions of twitter. Nowadays when people talk about Twitter, they mean the social networking site called Twitter. The whole



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idea of Twitter was developed by a couple of people here in California who were podcasters actually. Back in 2005-2006 they were looking for some new way to connect people on the Internet. I actually got a Twitter account very early back in 2006, although I didn't use it very much.

Twitter is what we might call a “micro-blogging” site. “Micro” means very small, and in the case of Twitter, you are essentially blogging something up to 140 characters – that's 140 letters, numbers, symbols, and spaces. So people put short messages on Twitter, we would call these messages “posts” (posts). Although on Twitter, they're usually called “tweets” (tweets). Why tweets? Well, “tweet” is the sound that a bird makes. “The birds were tweeting” is very similar to saying “the birds were twittering.” So a tweet is a post – a short message that goes on your website. Twitter also has the option of having you be able to read your tweets on your cell phone; I think you can you can get a text message from Twitter.

You can, just like the other social networking sites, make friends by doing what Twitter calls “following” someone. So if you're following someone, you're receiving all of their tweets. So you go to your website, and if you are following five people, every time one of those people post a tweet, then you can read it on your site or wherever you read your tweets. My Twitter account is (eslpod) – eslpod. If you want to follow my tweets about ESL Podcast, you can certainly do that. I have to say I'm not always very active; sometimes there'll be several days that go by before I post something to Twitter.

Social networking sites in general can be a lot of fun. They are a helpful way to keep in touch with people who perhaps live far away from you. The phrase “to keep in touch with (someone)” means to continue to communicate with someone for a long period of time, especially someone that you may not see regularly; you may only see them every couple months, or even every couple of years. Some people use social networking sites to keep in touch with people for example that they went to high school with many years ago.

One of the potential problems with the social networking sites relates to the issue of privacy. “Privacy” (privacy) means the ability to keep things secret, to control who has access to your personal information. Once you create a profile, many sites allow you to limit who has access to your information. But if you don't limit that, then some of your personal information can become public. This is especially a problem for children and for teenagers. Unfortunately there are, of course, people in the world who you want to keep your children and teenagers away from.



In addition, some people, particularly I think younger users, are not very discreet on these social networking sites when they post information. “To be discreet” means to be careful about what you say and do. Someone who is discreet would probably not share potentially embarrassing information. If you went to a party and you had too much to drink, and you took a picture of yourself, and you put that on your Facebook page, that might be a bad idea. Someone could see that, perhaps someone who might want to hire you for a job – and many jobs now are looking at people’s Facebook sites – and decide that they are not going to hire you. So, one has to be rather careful about that sort of thing. By the way, I do not have a Facebook page. I did for a short period of time, but I was concerned about the privacy issues and decided it was probably best not to.

Our next topic is government-run lotteries. A “lottery” (lottery) is a type of gambling. Gambling, of course, is a way to try to win money by playing certain games. You can play poker or card games, you can bet on horses, these are all examples of gambling. Well, a lottery is a type of gambling where people buy tickets with numbers on them, and then the organization or the government that is running the lottery will pick one of these numbers and that person will win, potentially, a lot of money. You have to make sure you have the exact same numbers however, and typically there are five or six numbers. So you could have lottery numbers such as 7-10-15-18-25-39. You pick a certain number of numbers basically, and those numbers have to match the ones that are drawn. When we say they’re “drawn,” we mean they are selected. So they select at random certain numbers, and your numbers have to be the exact same numbers; we say they have to “match.” If nobody matches – if no one wins, then, especially for the government-run lotteries, the money continues on to the next game, and so there’ll be more money you could win during the next pick – the next time they select numbers.

The simplest kind of lottery ticket, however, is something called a “scratch-it” or a “scratcher” ticket; sometimes they’re called a “scratch card.” These games vary depending on the state you live in; many states have their own lottery. The name is different in different states, but the idea is all the same: you buy a piece of paper, usually at a grocery store or a liquor store or the gas station. They cost about a dollar, perhaps two dollars. Part of the card has a shiny metal covering that has been glued to the paper. So what you do is you take, say, your fingernail or a small coin and you remove that shiny metal covering that is over it, and it reveals – it shows you a number. It’s kind of like the lottery ticket idea; you have to have certain numbers. Sometimes they’re not numbers; sometimes they’re pictures or words, and if you have the right combination you might win



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some money. You might win 2 dollars, 10 dollars, perhaps even a couple of hundred dollars. I, myself, I haven't played with scratchers – I haven't bought a scratch card and played that particular game. I have bought, once or twice, lottery tickets.

There are two main lotteries in the United States that are in different states. What happens is each state can have its own lottery, or it can join with other states and have a joint lottery. They are two of these: one is called Powerball, which is played in about 30 states. The other one is called Mega Millions; "mega," in this case, means many or a lot. That's played, currently, in 12 states. We don't have time to talk about the differences here, they're really not important at all. We'll just take the example of Powerball; Mega Millions works very similarly to this.

In Powerball you buy a one-dollar ticket, and you pick five numbers between 1 and 59, then you pick one more number between 1 and 39. Now, you don't actually have to pick a number; you can just tell the person selling you the ticket that you want a "quick pick," and they'll randomly give you six numbers – five plus the one. You can pay another dollar to get additional tickets; you can, of course, buy as many tickets as you want. Unfortunately some people buy too many tickets, even when they don't have money for other things. What are your chances for winning the lottery? Well, to win the big prize, which is called the "jackpot" (jackpot), in Powerball you have about a 1-in-195,249,054 chance of winning the jackpot.

Now, you can win a lot of money in these Powerball and Mega Million jackpots. Usually it's at least 7 or 10 million dollars; often it's much higher. The biggest Powerball jackpot was 365 million dollars, back in 2006. The biggest Mega Millions jackpot was 390 million dollars; two people won that in 2007, so they really only got 18,500,000. So, not as good, right? Of course, winning that much money is, as I said, very unlikely, it almost certainly won't happen. Lottery tickets are not a good place to spend your money if you really want to win. Unfortunately, some people spend a lot of money on them.

The government typically takes a large percentage of the amount that you win. I'm not sure the exact percentage, but it's quite high: 30-40 percent, perhaps higher. So you win 10 million dollars, you don't actually get 10 million dollars; you're going to get, perhaps, six or seven million dollars. I say "only" six or seven million dollars, of course that's enough for me!



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Jackpot winners can received their money in one of two ways. They can get a lump sum or an annuity. A “lump (lump) sum (sum)” is when you say that you want all the money at once. Now usually if you ask for the lump sum – you want all of your money at once – you’re not going to get the full amount; they’re going to discount it, if you will. Typically it’s, again, maybe another 30 or 40 percent less than the total jackpot. So if you take a lump sum, say 100 million dollar jackpot, you probably only get about 30, maybe 40 million dollars because the government will discount – will lower the amount for those that want the money right away, and they’ll take taxes from it. If you want the full amount of money you have to do what’s called an “annuity.” An “annuity” is something related to the word “annual,” which means every year. “Anno” (anno) in Latin means year. So every year you get a certain amount of money, usually it is over a 30-year period. So if you don’t think you’re going to live for 30 years, you probably want the lump sum – everything at once, even if it’s less. But if you’re young and you think you’re going to be healthy, you could take the annuity and get the full amount, but you’ll have to wait for 30 years, getting a little bit each time.

So that’s a little bit about lottery games in the United States; people often just say “lotto” (lotto): “I’m going to go buy a lotto ticket.” They mean they going to buy a lottery ticket.

Now let’s answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Wei (Wei) in China. Wei wants to know how we use the preposition “on” with days of the week.

The preposition “on” indicates a specific day that some event – some action is taking place: “Can you come to my party on Friday?” The party will be Friday. “Natalie’s birthday is on Sunday.” Although it’s not necessary to use “on,” many people do use it. You could just say, “Can you come to my party Friday?” Or, “Natalie’s birthday is Sunday.” You don’t have to say the “on,” they’re both correct; I would the “on” is probably a little more common. People who are reading the news, what we would call “newscasters” on TV or radio often say things very quickly, and so they may not use the word “on.”

There’s one place, however, where you must use “on” when talking about the days of the week. If you say, for example, “My birthday this year is on a Friday,” you’re indicating the day of the week that your birthday falls or that your birthday will be celebrated. If you take out the article “a” (or “a”) and say simply “My birthday is Friday,” you mean something very different; you mean that your birthday will be in three or four days, within the next week. But if you say it’s



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going to be on “a Friday” (or “a Friday”), you mean that it could be 2 months from now or 6 months from now or 11 months from now; you’re just talking about the day of the week. For example: “The Christian celebration of Easter is always on a Sunday.” You can’t say “The Easter celebration is on Sunday,” unless it’s the week before Easter.

Janos (Janos) in Hungary wants to know the difference between the expressions “to travel by” and “to travel in.” Both expressions mean going from one place to another using a certain kind of transportation. “I love traveling by plane.” “Traveling by taxi is a good way to see Manhattan in New York City.” Actually, it’s a very expensive way – it’s much better to see New York by subway!

We tend to use “travel by” with car, plane, taxi, subway, train, a boat. You can also say “travel on,” but normally that’s used if you are either going by foot (you’re walking) or you’re on a horse. “I am traveling on foot” means I am walking; we wouldn’t say “I am traveling by foot.”

Well, what about “travel in”? You will also hear people use “travel in.” “I am traveling in a car.” “I am traveling in a taxi.” The use of the word “in” after “travel” is a little more difficult to explain. You’ll never get in trouble by saying “traveling by,” that’s usually the best choice if you’re not sure, but you will hear people use “in,” for example: “I’m traveling in a plane.” That means you’re in a plane traveling – you’re traveling by plane, same thing.

Finally, Ying (Ying) Chen (Chen), I’m not sure where Ying Chen is from. The question has to do with the difference between the word “individual” and “personal.”

The word “individual” can mean basically one of two things. It can mean relating to one person at a time or designed for only one person at a time. So you can say, “We’re going to the store to buy some soda. We’re not going to a six-pack of soda (six cans of soda sold together); we’re going to just buy one individual can.”

“Individual” can also refer to a person, a single person separate from the group. “This decision is good for the whole group, not just one or two individuals,” one or two people. So “individual,” or “individuals” (plural), can mean particular people, or it can mean relating to one person at a time.

“Personal” is used to indicate something that is private, something that is perhaps part of your secret information about yourself that you don’t want anyone



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else to know. Someone may say, “Are you married?” and you’ll say, “No,” and they may say, “Well, who was your last girlfriend?” and you would say, “That’s a very personal question. I prefer not to answer that.”

“Personal” can also mean related to one particular person. For example: “I love watching movies. My personal favorites are dramas or romances.” That’s my personal favorite. Everyone has their own personal favorite.

“Individual” and “personal” can sometimes be substituted for each other; you can use one for the other: “The music you listen to is an individual choice.” “The music you listen to is a personal choice.” Either is possible. “Personal,” however, is used more often to refer to something related to one individual, often something that’s private: “I took my money out of my personal bank account, not the bank account I share with my wife.” That’s my personal account. “Individual” is usually referring to when someone is separate from others in a group. For example: “I’m going to ask everyone individual questions.” That means each person will get a different question, say in a classroom. If you said “I’m going to ask everybody personal questions,” that means you’re going to ask them questions about their private, personal life, which they probably won’t want to be answer.

You can send us your questions, as long they’re not personal, to eslpod@eslpod.com. We won’t have time to answer each individual question, but we’ll do our best.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on the English Café.

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