



TOPICS

Chinatown; famous songs: “Home on the Range”; that way versus in that way
versus in such a way; neither here nor there; suffer versus suffer from

GLOSSARY

to be inspired by (something) – to be created as a result of something; to have made someone feel like doing something

* The artist said that these paintings were inspired by his years living in Asia.

conspiracy – a secret plan that many people are involved in to do something wrong or illegal

* The newspaper reporter investigated a conspiracy among the major drug companies to hide the serious negative effects of this medication.

corruption – illegal and immoral behavior by people who have a lot of power and authority, especially in government

* How will we build a new nation when the government is full of corruption?

to reveal – to show others new information; to show others secret or private information

* In Li’s book, she revealed the reasons for her controversial career decisions.

to flee – to run away from someone or something; to try to get away from someone or something as quickly as possible

* In the movie, the people tried to flee from the killer, but he caught them all.

warrant for (someone’s) arrest – a document allowing law enforcement agencies to look for someone and to arrest that person when he or she is found

* Paul didn’t appear in court when he was supposed to and now there is a warrant for his arrest.

range – a large area covered with grass used for raising cows and horses

* Even though Ethan works in the city, he spends his vacations riding horses on the range near his ranch.



antelope – an animal that is very similar to a deer, but a little smaller and more slender

* It's not common to see antelope in these woods at this time of year.

seldom – rarely; not very often

* Although all parents are invited to school events, Anna's parents seldom attend.

discouraging – doing or saying something that makes another person not want to do something, or makes another person think that he or she won't be able to do something

* It's discouraging to be told that you don't have the qualifications for a good job, but getting more education should solve that problem.

to idealize – to show others that someone is perfect and that he or she can do no wrong; to say that something is perfect or better than in reality

* Do you think children often have idealized views of their parents?

state song – a song chosen by the people who live in a particular state as something that represents them musically; the official song of a state

* Every year, we sing our state song at the start of the new baseball season.

that way – a phrase used to describe the manner or actions used to do something or the way something is right now

* Don't raise your voice and talk that way to your mother.

in that way – a phrase used to describe the manner or actions used to do something when the action being done is already known because was talked about recently or it is of a type that is well known by the people one is talking to

* - Lionel always leaves his tools dirty after work.

- If he treats his tools in that way, they won't last long.

in such a way – a phrase used to mean how something happens, usually followed by "that" or "as to" and the likely result of such action

* If you ride a horse in such a way as to hurt it, it will not allow you to ride it again.



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neither here nor there – having no importance or meaning; not being useful or meaningful to something else

* Whether he decides to come to the meeting is neither here nor there. We don't need him to discuss these important matters.

to suffer – to experience or undergo something that is unpleasant or painful; to go through something one can't get away from or avoid

* Oscar suffers from a toothache and can't go to work.

to suffer from – to experience or undergo something that is unpleasant or painful and that continues to happen over a period of time; to go through something one can't get away from or avoid for a period of time

* Pei suffered from bad dreams for most of her life, causing her to sleep poorly.

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Los Angeles Cultural Neighborhoods

One of the benefits of visiting a large city like Los Angeles is its cultural “diversity” (having many kinds; having a lot of variety). This diversity comes mainly from the immigrants who have “settled in” (come to live in) the Los Angeles area in the past, and who continue to make this city their home.

This diversity has created a city with many cultural neighborhoods with shops, restaurants, services, and other businesses. If you visit Los Angeles, you may want to spend some time in or near “downtown,” the business and governmental center of the city with a large number of “skyscrapers” (tall business buildings). Spending some time downtown will allow you to see several of Los Angeles' most famous cultural neighborhoods.

Perhaps the most well known cultural neighborhood in Los Angeles is Chinatown, a place where Chinese businesses and restaurants can be found. Although far fewer Chinese immigrants move to Chinatown these days, it is still a lively area to visit, to eat, and to shop for “souvenirs” (objects bought to remember a place one has visited).



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Near to Chinatown is El Pueblo Historic Monument. Today, this area is mainly for tourists to see a Mexican-style “marketplace” (place to buy and sell), where they can find small “stalls” (stands used for selling things) selling souvenirs. On many weekends, visitors can also to hear Mexican music being played and see folk dancing performed in the outdoor “pavilion” (a shelter with a top, usually found in parks). Not far from Chinatown and El Pueblo is Little Tokyo. Although not as “vibrant” (full of life) as it once was, this neighborhood still has Japanese restaurants offering “authentic” (real; genuine) Japanese food and stores offering goods popular in Japan.

With immigrants from over 140 countries, it is not surprising that new cultural neighborhoods continue to emerge. More recent cultural neighborhoods include, Little Ethiopia, Thai Town, and Little Armenia.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 253.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 253. 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 the movie Chinatown. We're also going to continue our series on famous American songs, we'll be talking in this Café about a song known to most Americans called "Home on the Range". And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion about a famous American movie called Chinatown, which was released in 1974. When we say a movie was "released," we mean that it was distributed so that you could see it, at that time, in a movie theater. Sometimes movies are released on DVD a few months after they are released for the movie theaters. Chinatown is part mystery and part drama, and was inspired by disputes here in Southern California over land and water rights. When we say something was "inspired" we mean that it was created as a result of or it got the idea from this other thing, in this case from these political and legal disputes or arguments about land and water in Southern California. Southern California, as you may know, is basically a desert that has been watered and made to look greener than it naturally would be, and that water has to come from somewhere.

First, let's take a moment to talk about the title, since this movie has nothing to do with China; it's not related to the country of China in any way. The word Chinatown in the United States refers to a neighborhood in which there are many Chinese people living and many Chinese-owned or Chinese American-owned businesses. Many large cities have a Chinatown. San Francisco has the most famous Chinatown; New York has a Chinatown; Los Angeles, of course, also has a Chinatown.

Other national groups – other ethnic groups often have their own part of the city. An American city is really a mixture of different cultures. Here in Los Angeles,



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we have places such as Little Tokyo, which is where you will find, of course, a lot of Japanese businesses; we have Little Saigon, we have Thai Town – dozens and dozens of neighborhoods that have some connection to another country or another culture for those who have come here to the U.S.

So, why is this movie called Chinatown? Well, apparently the idea to use Chinatown as a title came from a conversation where a police officer was explaining all the different groups of people and all the different languages in Chinatown, which made it very difficult for the police to know whether their work was helping ordinary people or helping the criminals. Because the police often don't speak those languages, and even though it's called Chinatown there are other ethnic and language groups there, it can be very confusing and, as I said, sometimes they don't know whether they're helping the good guys or the bad guys. So the police, instead, tried to do as little as possible so that they wouldn't either help the bad guys or hurt the good guys.

In this conversation, one police officer asks, "What did you do in Chinatown?" and the other police officer says, "As little as possible," meaning not very much. At the end of the movie, one of the characters says something like, "It's all Chinatown," meaning everything is very complicated, involving a lot of crime and corruption, which we'll talk about in a minute.

The movie's main character is a man named Jake, who is a detective in Los Angeles. A "detective" is a person whose job it is to solve mysteries or to find out who has done something and tried to keep it a secret – a crime. There are police detectives, but there are also private detectives, people who do not work for the police but do investigations for other people. Jake is a private detective who is hired by a woman to spy, or to secretly watch her husband. The woman believes that the husband has been committing "adultery," that is, having sexual relations with a woman who is not his wife. However, he soon finds out that he was actually hired by someone else, not by this woman, and the real wife wants him to stop his detective work immediately. Slowly, he "uncover" or discovers a large conspiracy.

A "conspiracy" refers to a secret plan that many people are involved in to do something wrong or illegal. The conspiracy in the movie Chinatown involves water management and water rights. Water management refers to how a city will use its water. Water rights would refer to who can use which river or which lake. Chinatown's conspiracy involves the government – the state and city government. It involves people who are connected with buying and selling



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property – real estate agents, and it involves murder. Much of the movie focuses on “corruption,” the illegal or immoral behavior by people who have a lot of power and authority, especially in government. Bribery is an example of corruption, when politicians agree to vote a certain way if someone pays them enough money. In Chinatown, there is a lot of government corruption related this water management and water rights, or who should have access to water.

I don’t want to say too much more about the movie. It is, after all, part mystery, and so it’s best just to watch it yourself. But I think you might enjoy it. I certainly did when I watched it.

Chinatown is important in the history of American film in part because of the way it was made – the way it was, we may say, structured, how it was put together in terms of the story. Chinatown is a movie where facts are revealed very slowly; “revealed” meaning showed to you. You learn about things one piece of information at a time. Some people thought the movie was too slow, but other people think that the “pace,” or the speed adds to the mystery, adds to the suspense of wanting to know what happens next.

There were many famous actors in Chinatown, or actors who later became famous. The main character, the detective, Jake, is played by Jack Nicholson, whom you might have seen in movies such as As Good As It Gets and One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest. Many people believe that Chinatown is the movie that made Jack Nicholson a popular movie star. Other famous actors in the movie include Faye Dunaway and John Huston.

The director of Chinatown, Roman Polanski, is also well known for his work, as well as other things. He has received many Oscar nominations – that is, he has been nominated or suggested for the awards for the best movies in the United States. He won an Academy Award, an Oscar, for Best Director for his work on a movie called The Pianist. He is also probably best known for the problems that he has had in his personal life. In 1977, a few years after Chinatown was made, he was arrested for sexually “assaulting,” or attacking a 13-year-old girl. He then “fled,” or ran away from the county, making Chinatown the last movie he filmed – he made in the U.S. Since that time, there has been a U.S. and now international warrant for his arrest, meaning that police agencies – law enforcement agencies, we sometimes call them – are looking for him and have a right to arrest him when they find him. Well, he was arrested by the Swiss police – the police of Switzerland in 2009 and the United States is, as we record this episode, trying to get him to return to the U.S. to be punished for his crime.



Chinatown was named the Best Original Screenplay. A “screenplay,” is a document that is written to make a movie. It’s basically the script, but it also has descriptions of what the movie should look like. The film was also nominated for 10 other Academy Awards, or Oscars. It received several other prestigious or famous awards. In 1990, a “sequel,” or a follow-up movie – a movie that continues a previous movie – was made, called The Two Jakes. Jack Nicholson starred in that movie, as well, but it was never as good or as popular as the original Chinatown.

Now let’s turn to our series that we started recently on famous songs in American history. We are going to talk about a song that children learn in school and most Americans are familiar with called “Home on the Range.” A “range” (range) is like a “prairie,” it’s a large area with grass, and it is used for raising “cattle,” that is, cows and horses eat the grass. So, it’s a large area where you find a lot of grass that can be eaten by cattle. There are a lot of prairies and ranges especially in the middle part of the United States. This particular song was sung by many of the people who originally came from the east coast of the United States, often from other countries originally, and “settled,” or moved into the western – central and western part of the U.S. in the 19th century.

The “lyrics,” or the words to the song, originally came from a poem called My Western Home, which was written by Brewster Higley in the early 1870s. One of Higley’s friends, Daniel E. Kelley, wrote the “melody” (melody), which is the music. The words have changed over time, but the basic idea is still the same as the original poem. We’re going to first listen to the “chorus,” that is the main part of the song that is repeated many times, and then we’ll talk about what the song means and why it’s an important part of American culture. The chorus is four lines long.

*Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play;
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.*

Or something like that. As I said before, a range is a large, open, grassy area that is used for feeding horses and cows, what we would call cattle. So this song is written for and is about people who feel like they are at home – they feel comfortable on the range, meaning in one of these large fields. So, the first line is “Home, home on the range.” The second line is “Where the deer and the



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antelope play.” A “deer” is a large, four-legged animal that eats grass and can run very quickly. The famous Disney movie Bambi is about a little deer. An “antelope” (antelope) is an animal that’s very similar to a deer, but it’s a little smaller and it’s a little more slender – a little skinnier. Both deer and antelope have what are called “antlers” (antlers), which are basically horns, they look a little like trees that are growing out of their head. So a range is not only a place where cows eat, but it’s also where you might see deer and antelope.

The next line of the song is “Where seldom is heard a discouraging word.” “Seldom” means rarely, not very often: “I seldom talk to my neighbors, because their children are always yelling so loudly I can’t hear them.” “To discourage” (discourage) means to do something or say something to someone that makes the other person not want to do that thing, or makes the person think that he or she won’t be able to do a certain thing. If you’re discouraged, you don’t feel like doing much or you are disappointed, perhaps, in something. Well, on the range, according to the song, you don’t hear discouraging words – people talking in that way. And finally, the last line of the chorus is “And the skies are not cloudy all day.” It’s kind of a poetic way: “are not cloudy.” You could just say the skies are clear. “Cloudy,” of course, is when you have big, usually white – they look like objects in the sky. They’re actually, of course, just water – a form of water, technically water vapor. But anyway, you know what a cloud is. Well, on the range, there are no clouds, meaning it’s a wonderful day; it’s a happy place to be. The song describes living on the range as being a very wonderful place to be.

Let’s listen one more time, then, just to the chorus:

*Home, home on the range,
Where the deer and the antelope play;
Where seldom is heard a discouraging word
And the skies are not cloudy all day.*

Well, the song also has a famous beginning. The first verse is “Give me a home where the buffalo roam.” “Buffalo” are technically very large oxes [oxen], they’re large animals. You may have seen them. They were very famous in the western part of the United States during the 19th century. Unfortunately, they were hunted and most of them were killed. Fortunately, there are still some buffalo left in the western U.S. But, the first verse says “Give me a home where the buffalo roam (roam).” “To roam” means to walk around in no particular direction, just sort of walking without a destination as animals might. The rest of the first verse



is the same as the chorus: “Where the deer and the antelope play; where seldom is heard a discouraging word and the skies are not cloudy all day.”

Well, what is this song about and why has it become so popular in American popular culture? Well, the song idealizes life on the Great American Prairie. “To idealize” means to make something sound better than it was, to make something sound wonderful, great, almost perfect. And, in the United States, you may know a little about our history, the settlers – the Europeans came and lived primarily in the eastern part of the U.S., I’m referring, of course to the English colonists. Eventually, as the population grew, people move towards the western part of the U.S. The Spanish, of course, were already in the western U.S., as well as Florida. But those states that are in the Great American Prairie or the Great American Plain are states in the central part of the U.S., such as Kansas, Nebraska, Iowa, Oklahoma, and so forth. Americans wanted to think things were perfect; it, of course, wasn’t that way. They had a very, and still do, romantic notion – romantic idea about movement of the American settlers to the west.

Today the song is often sung as a “patriotic” song, a song that shows one’s love of one’s country. It’s also the state song for Kansas. Kansas is located in the very center part of the United States, about halfway between the northern border with Canada and the southern border with Mexico, and also about halfway in between the Pacific and Atlantic oceans. Many states have state songs; I would guess probably most of the 50 states have an official song. States also have state birds, state flowers, state foods, state rocks, many things that the government says are somehow representative of that state. In Kansas, if you look at the license plate of the cars – the license plate is usually a metal rectangle that has letters and numbers on it to identify that particular car. In Kansas, you will see the phrase “Home on the range,” because it is the state song of Kansas, and Kansas is often associated with the Great American Plain.

Now let’s answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Uijin in South Korea. The question has to do with the differences in three phrases that used the word “way” (way): “that way,” “in that way,” and “in such a way.”

“That way” is the easiest; it’s a phrase that we use to describe the manner or method in which something is done. For example: “Do all Americans pronounce the word ‘either’ that way?” meaning as I just did. Or, “Don’t put your hat on that way, it’s backwards.”



“In that way” can also be used to describe the manner or method that we use to do something, but using the “in” shows that the action is being done in a way that people have just been talking about recently or that is well known to people. The distinction or difference is somewhat subtle – somewhat small. For example: “You left the ‘r’ sound off the end of the word ‘theater’.” Do all American people pronounce the word in that way?” meaning by leaving the “r” off. I’m referring to something that I just talked about.

“In such a way” is a phrase that is used to mean how something happens; it’s often used as part of an adverb clause, something that is modifying or saying something about the verb. “In such a way” is a prepositional phrase; you have to use the word “in,” you can’t just say “such a way.” For example: “Americans pronounce the word in such a way that it may confuse other people.” Or, “She dressed today in such a way as to attract attention, to get the boys to notice her.”

Tzu-Ling (Tzu-Ling) in Taiwan wants to know the meaning of the phrase “neither here nor there.” This is a somewhat common expression. “Neither” is a pronoun meaning not this or not that. It is often used with the word “nor” when you have two things you are talking about. “Neither here nor there,” however, means in general it’s not important; it has no meaning in this situation. It’s what we might call an adverb phrase that is used to describe something that is not useful or not relevant. For example: “The fact that the party was at six o’clock and not at eight o’clock was neither here nor there because I still had to work all night.” It didn’t matter what time the party started, I had to work and therefore I couldn’t be there, so the fact that it started is neither here nor there.

Finally, a question from Junbo (Junbo) in Canada. The question has to do with the difference between “suffer” (suffer) and “suffer from.”

“To suffer” means to experience something that is painful or unpleasant, to go through something that you can’t get away from: “There is a lot of pain and suffering in a country where a war is taking place.” People are dying, people are getting injured or hurt. There’s a lot of suffering there; people suffer in those countries, to use it as a verb.

“To suffer from” means that you are saying what the cause of that suffering is. If you say “The people are suffering in this country,” you’re not giving the cause, the reason. “They are suffering from the effects of the war,” now you know. “To suffer from” is also used to talk about something that continues to happen or



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continued to happen in the past for a period of time. For example: “He suffered from heart disease for many years. Yesterday, he suffered a heart attack.” So here, you get both uses: he suffered something, a heart attack, but he also suffered from heart disease, meaning he experienced problems, pain, some unpleasant feelings in the past as well. Or, you could say, “I suffer from headaches.” The reason that I suffer is because of the headaches. “My mother is suffering from a headache and cannot go to dinner tonight.” Well, I hope she isn’t; if she is, she should take some aspirin!

If you have a question, you can take some aspirin or you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com. We won’t answer everyone’s questions, we don’t have time, 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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