



TOPICS

Area 51 and Roswell; American Cities: Baltimore; that versus which; right away versus straightaway

GLOSSARY

conspiracy theory – the idea that something is a secret plan that is caused, covered up, or hidden by a powerful organization, such as a government

* Do you believe in the conspiracy theory that football was invented to keep people focused on sports and not on politics?

civilian – a person who is not part of the military or the police force

* At the ceremony, the officers sat on the left side and the civilians on the right.

tight-lipped – speaking very little about something; not sharing much information

* The hiring committee is very tight-lipped about who the candidates are for the manager's job.

UFO – unidentified flying object; often used to refer to spacecrafts from other planets that people believe they have seen in the sky

* We were sitting in the backyard last night when I saw a UFO in the sky, but when I told my wife, she said she didn't believe me.

extraterrestrial – aliens; a living thing that comes from places other than one's own planet

* Do you think that extraterrestrials have visited the Earth and are living among humans?

to recover – to get something back; to be able to save something that was believed to be lost

* The police recovered the stolen jewels and put the thief in jail.

cultural center – an area, building, or organization that promotes culture and the arts

* The cultural center downtown has many events for kids each month, exposing them to all kinds of music and art.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 248

Midwest – the Middle West area of the United States; area of the United States that includes states such as Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Minnesota, and Ohio

* We're not able to find a flight that will go from Los Angeles to New York on this date, without stopping in a city in the Midwest.

philanthropist – someone who donates money, time, or property to a cause they support, often for the good of others

* Her mother was a philanthropist all her life, giving money to build hospitals and other healthcare centers in low-income areas.

refurbished – renovated, brightened, or redone to make something better, easier to use, or safer

* We can buy this new printer or this refurbished one for half the price.

black history – the history and culture of African Americans; past cultural and historical events related to and/or important to African Americans in the U.S.

* Rosa Parks is an important person in black history, and she continues to be honored for her contributions to the civil rights movement in the United States.

Super Bowl – the annual championship football game, which takes place near the beginning of each year

* I'm having a Super Bowl party at my house. We'll watch the game, drink beer, and have pizza and all kinds of junk food.

that – a function word or pronoun used to begin a restrictive relative clause

* Lo fixed the bike that you ran over with your car, and it is now as good as new.

which – used as a function word or pronoun to begin a relative clause

* Did you go to the conference in Milwaukee, which ended on Friday?

right away – without delay; without waiting; immediately

* Their invitation came in the mail today. I'll call them right away to tell them we'll be there for their wedding.

straightaway – without delay; without waiting; immediately (used mainly in British English)

* - Could you give me last year's sale report?
- Sure, I'll have it on your desk straightaway.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

The Movie E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial

Many of us are curious about “outer space,” the large and “mysterious” (difficult to understand or know) areas beyond the planet Earth. One thing that has “captured our imagination” (made us very interested in and curious about something) is what aliens from outer space look like. A 1982 film gave us an image of what one of these aliens might look like and what it would be like to be visited by a friendly alien from far away.

The film E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial is a story about a lonely young boy named Elliott who one day discovers an alien “left behind” (who did not travel away with the others) on Earth. Elliott and his brother and sister try to keep E.T. “hidden” (unseen by others) while they try to figure out how to help the alien get home. It’s not easy keeping an alien in the house with their mother there while E.T. is still learning human ways. At the same time, the government is also trying to find E.T. and the children do their best to try to help E.T. “phone home,” sending a message to the “distant” (far away) planet of E.T.’s people.

The story for the movie was based on the childhood experiences of the “director” (person in charge of making the movie) Steven Spielberg. When Spielberg was young, his parents “divorced” (ended their marriage), and he created an “imaginary” (not real) friend to help him through this difficult time, someone much like E.T.

E.T. the Extra-Terrestrial was a “blockbuster” (extremely popular movie), selling more movie tickets than Star Wars. The movie was filmed in just three months and for only \$10.5 million, a small budget for a “science fiction” (stories about the future and scientific advances) movie and for a blockbuster.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 248.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 248. 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 an area of the United States known as Area 51, which many people think is a place that has been visited by extraterrestrials, and some people believe the government is involved. Hmm! And, we're also going to continue our series on American Cities, talking about another mysterious place, Baltimore, Maryland. As always, we'll also answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion of a place in the United States known as Area 51. Area 51 is the nickname – the popular name for a military base located in the southern part of the state of Nevada. Nevada is in the western U.S., it is next to California; California is to the west. A military base is a location where the military is stationed – where they are present. There are many military bases in the country and around the world.

Area 51 is famous, however, because there has been a lot of secrecy surrounding the base. That is, people thinking that there are secret things going on and the government isn't telling them. Area 51 is often been involved in what are called "conspiracy theories," the idea that there is some secret plot or plan that is organized by the government, but the government doesn't tell anyone about it.

Well, this military base in Nevada is not a conventional or traditional military base. There are no military units deployed, or sent from this military base. There are people there, but they are not typically sent to other locations. Instead, the base is used for development and testing of new airplanes and in training pilots, the people who fly the airplanes. The U.S. government has many new modern military airplanes – aircraft that have been tested at Area 51. Civilians – people



who are not in the military are called “civilians” – are not allowed into Area 51, and there is a radar station that protects the area, so it is a very difficult place to get into.

The government – the U.S. government, and here we’re talking about the federal or national government – has been very what we might describe as tight-lipped about Area 51. Their stance – their position has been very secret. When we say someone is “tight-lipped” we mean that they don’t talk, just another way of saying secret. Because of this secrecy, there are these conspiracy theories. Many of the conspiracy theories relate to UFOs and extraterrestrials. “UFO” stands for unidentified (meaning we don’t know what it is) flying object (or thing). A UFO is usually associated with some sort of being – some sort of life from other planets. “Extraterrestrials” are living things that come from somewhere outside of our planet. “Extra” means outside of, here. We also call these “aliens.” There was a famous set of movies a few years ago, the first one of which was called Alien. If you saw the movie E.T., well, E.T. is an extraterrestrial. I believe he’s also the Governor of California – no, that’s somebody else!

Well, one of the more popular theories, by people who believe in these crazy theories, is that alien spacecraft – that is, ships from another planet, spaceships – crashed in Area 51, and that the airbase is being used to study these alien spacecraft and the extraterrestrials they found inside. Some people believe that Area 51 is where the U.S. government officials regularly meet with extraterrestrials. Some of the conspiracy theories, however, don’t involve aliens. Some people believe it is a site for developing new energy weapons, other people believe it is a site for developing time travel. Some people believe Mickey Mouse, the famous Disney character, actually lives in Area 51. Actually, I just make that up! Nobody believes that Mickey Mouse lives there. Everyone knows he lives here in California!

These crazy theories have become part of popular American culture in the past 50 years or so. The state of Nevada actually decided to change the name of one of its highways that goes nearby Area 51 from State Route 375, that was the old name, to The Extraterrestrial Highway, hoping, I guess, to get tourists to come. There’s also been a number of movies that mention this site, including the movie Independence Day, and another movie called Seven Days. There’s also a series of so-called documentaries, movies that are supposed to be about things that are true, that discuss this site, and there’s even a television show that talks about Area 51 called UFO Hunters.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 248

If you're a long-time listener of these English Cafés, you may remember that we, a few years ago, did a Café about Roswell, New Mexico. New Mexico is east of Arizona, east of Nevada, but still in the southwest part of the U.S. Roswell is famous because some people believe there was a UFO that crashed there, and the alien's body inside of this spacecraft was "recovered," meaning they were able to remove it and study it. At least, that's what some people think! What do I think? Well, as you probably can guess, I'm not a believer in Area 51 or Roswell. I'm not saying that there are not extraterrestrials – there might be. I just don't think they would go to Nevada or New Mexico. They don't seem like very interesting places; they would want to visit New York City or come here to Los Angeles!

They might want to go to the city of Baltimore, which is our second topic for this English Café, part of our American Cities series. Baltimore is a city in the state of Maryland, which is on the east coast of the United States. It is next to Washington, D.C. and the state of Virginia. Baltimore is the largest city in the state of Maryland. It's so close to Washington, D.C. that some people refer to this as the Baltimore-Washington Metropolitan Area. "Metropolitan" is including more than one city. In this case, because Baltimore and Washington are close together there are people living in between the cities, so it seems as though perhaps you have never left the city – either city.

Baltimore is a "cultural center" for the state of Maryland. It's an area that has a lot of interesting culture and arts. There are about 2.7 million people who live in Baltimore; it's the 20th largest city in the U.S. Baltimore is home to a major U.S. seaport, that is a place where ships come and land. It is also a place that has a major airport, many universities, sports teams, and so forth. Baltimore is also home to the National Aquarium. An aquarium is sort of like a zoo for fish basically, and animals that live in the water – I guess not just fish!

Baltimore has been an important city in the history of the United States. It was started, or founded we would say, in 1729, before the United States existed as an independent country. It grew very quickly by producing sugar. Later, during the American Revolution, Baltimore became the temporary capital of the United States between 1776 and 1777.

As I say, the population of the city grew quickly and roads were built to link or connect Baltimore with other cities in the Midwest as well as the eastern part of the U.S. The "Midwest" refers to the middle western states, basically the area in the U.S. between the Rocky Mountains in the west and the Allegheny Mountains



in the east. We're talking about states such as Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, and Ohio. Because of this new road that connected Baltimore to these other Midwest cities, Baltimore having a seaport – this harbor – was able to become a major shipping and distribution center. So the ships would land in Baltimore, and from Baltimore the goods – the things they were selling would be transported to these other cities.

Baltimore, like many American cities, was a large manufacturing center, a place where things were made in factories. However, more recently they've become what we might call a service-oriented economy. That is, they don't make things; they do things for other people. That's what a service economy or a service company does. Baltimore's largest employers are John Hopkins University and John Hopkins Hospital. The hospital is an important center of what is called biomedical research. Both of these facilities – the hospital and the university – were started by, or money was given to them by a famous philanthropist. Someone who is a "philanthropist" donates their money or their time – usually their money – to a given organization. The philanthropist was named, you can guess, John Hopkins.

Baltimore is also an important city in American history for religious reasons. Many people refer to Baltimore as the historic home of the Catholic Church in the U.S. Many of the original people who came to Maryland were, in fact, Catholic, and it was for a long time the most Catholic city in the U.S., at least it was most closely associated with the Church. The bishops in the United States would often meet in Baltimore; they would have a meeting. One of their most important meetings was in the 1820s, when they got together and decided to write a textbook for children learning about Catholicism. The final edition was finished in 1885 and is now known as the Baltimore Catechism. A "catechism" is a summary, the main points of belief for a certain religion. Any American Catholic growing up in the U.S. before, say, the late 1960s – that is, before my generation – knows about the Baltimore Catechism. It was used in all Catholic schools. The Catechism is in a question and answer format. So, the question is asked: "Who is God?" and then, a simple one or two sentence answer is given.

Baltimore is sometimes called The City of Neighborhoods, because there are more than 300 districts or areas in the city occupied by various ethnic groups. Three of these districts, or neighborhoods, have become well-known. They include an area called Fells Point, which was once a favorite entertainment spot for sailors. Men, for the most part, who work on ships especially in the military are called sailors. But really anyone who works on a ship or a boat is a sailor.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 248

The area was recently refurbished. When we say something was “refurbished” we mean it was changed, it was renovated, it was done again to make it better or safer. Another popular neighborhood in Baltimore is Little Italy, where many Italian Americans live, or used to live. Finally, there’s a Baltimore neighborhood called Mount Vernon, and this is where there is a famous monument to George Washington.

Baltimore plays an important role in the history of African Americans, or blacks in the U.S. When we talk about “black history” we’re talking about the history and culture of those who are descendants of the slaves that worked in the United States up until the end of the Civil War. Baltimore is mostly now a black city, meaning the majority of people who live there are African American; the same is true for Washington, D.C. The city has become home to many successful black middle-class and professional communities. A Baltimore man, in fact, became the first black American justice or judge of the U.S. Supreme Court, a man by the name of Thurgood Marshall, who became a Supreme Court Justice in 1967.

Baltimore is also famous for its baseball team, the Baltimore Orioles. The Orioles have won three national baseball championships, what we call World Series. In 1995, one of the baseball players for the Orioles, Cal Ripken, Jr., broke a record of the most baseball games played in a row – that is, without missing a game. Baltimore also has a professional football team called the Baltimore Ravens, who won the national championship, what we call the Super Bowl, in 2000. The “Super Bowl” is the annual championship game for the best professional football teams.

Baltimore is a famous American city, a great American city, with strong history and culture. Although, I have never been there, so I guess it isn’t that great!

Now let’s answer a few of your questions.

The first question comes from (Ngayaberura) – I don’t want to try to pronounce it because I’m sure I’ll do it wrong! The question, and it’s a common one, is what is the difference between the word “that” and the word “which.” Well, many native speakers cannot tell you the difference, what the rules are for using them. People use them often interchangeably in a sentence, and it is really a matter of more formal grammar when it comes to trying to distinguish between the two. But a careful writer would try to, at least, use the correct word.



Let's start with "which." "Which" is a pronoun. It takes the place of a noun or a noun phrase, and it can begin what we call a relative clause. In English, there are two parts or possible parts of a sentence. One is called the independent clause. This is the part of the sentence that could be a sentence on its own. Another part of the sentence – and it isn't necessary for a sentence to have another part – is called a dependent clause. A dependent clause is not a sentence on its own; it has to be part of, and linked to, an independent clause. For example: "I am late for my English class, which starts at four o'clock." "I am late for my English class" is the independent clause. You can put a period at the end of that clause and it is a perfectly good sentence, with subject and verb. "Which starts at four o'clock" is a dependent clause; you can't use it as a separate sentence, it wouldn't make any sense.

One particular kind of dependent clause is a relative clause. A relative clause is a special kind of dependent, or what we sometimes called subordinate clause. It is a clause that is introduced by a pronoun, such as "that," "which," "who," and other pronouns.

Now just to make it more confusing, there are two kinds of relative clauses. The first is a restrictive, sometimes called an essential clause. In England they call this, I believe, a defining clause. This is a clause that is necessary – essential for you to understand the sentence. In traditional grammar books, it is the clause that must begin with the word "that." For example: "I am excited to go to the restaurant that serves tasty desserts." I am excited to go to the restaurant. Which restaurant? The restaurant that serves tasty desserts. That's the specific restaurant; you need that information to understand the sentence.

The other kind of relative clause is called a nonrestrictive or nonessential or non-defining clause. This is a clause which isn't necessary to understand the other part of the sentence. This sort of nonrestrictive clause typically begins with the word "which." For example: "My favorite restaurant, which has very good desserts, is two blocks from here." There, the clause "which has very good desserts" is not essential; you can understand the main sentence without it: "My favorite restaurant is two blocks from here." That's why we use "which" and not "that."

If you are writing English, if you use the nonrestrictive clause, the clause that begins typically with "which," you will usually see a comma (,) before the word "which." If you are using the restrictive clause – the defining clause with "that," typically there is no comma before the "that."



Now having said all this, many native speakers use the two, “that” and “which,” almost interchangeably, especially when talking about restrictive or defining clauses or essential clauses. So, you may hear many different uses of it, but what I’ve given you is the traditional grammar book approach.

Our next question comes from Upagupta (Upagupta), originally from the country of Bangladesh, now living in Hong Kong. The question has to do with the meaning of two expressions: “right away” and “straightaway.”

Both of these expressions mean immediately, without waiting, without delay. The difference is that “right away” is used more in American English and “straightaway” is used more in British English, the kind of English you may encounter more frequently in Hong Kong.

“Straightaway,” by the way, is usually spelled as one word, though sometimes you see it as two words: “straight away.” “Right away” is always two separate words.

If you have a question for us that you would like us to answer on the English Café, you should email us right away at eslpod@eslpod.com. Unfortunately, we record many weeks in advance, so you may not hear the answer to your question for a while, and because we get so many questions, we don’t have time to answer everyone’s questions 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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