



TOPICS

Yelp; Book Review: The Road; advocate versus lawyer versus attorney; any; salmon and count/mass nouns

GLOSSARY

yelp – a short, loud word that comes out of a person's (or an animal's) mouth when he or she is surprised, hurt, or frightened

* When the dog bit him, the boy yelped loudly and started to cry.

social networking – a website or another electronic tool that allows people to interact and those interested in the same thing to share information and opinions

* Gina keeps in touch with her old high school friends using different types of social networking.

profile – on the Internet, a short description with information about oneself

* Do you use your real name in your profile or do you use a nickname?

review – a written or spoken report giving one's opinion about how good or bad something is and/or describing one's experience

* We tried the new French restaurant after reading a good review of it in the newspaper.

recourse – help in a difficult situation; actions that can be taken to fix a problem or improve a bad situation

* The students thought that the professor was being unfair in her grading, but felt that there was no recourse.

escapism – looking for relief from bad things happening in real life; doing something so one does not need to think about unpleasant things, usually things happening in one's own life

* Lionel likes watching comedies on TV for pure escapism.

spare – elegantly simple; simple but beautiful

* The writer Ernest Hemingway is known for his spare writing style.

apocalypse – the final destruction of the world; the ending of the world

* Some religious people believe that only good people will be saved in an apocalypse.



deserted – without people; for a place that once had people in it, but is now empty

* I expected Los Angeles freeways to be deserted at 3:00 a.m., but found that there are still a lot of cars driving on them.

dog-eat-dog – a situation in which people are competing against each other and are willing to do anything to succeed

* This is a dog-eat-dog company. Either you work hard and make a lot of money, or you won't have a job for very long.

to grip – to hold tightly in one's hand; to capture one's attention completely; to deeply affect one's emotions

* Kara gripped her son's hand as she walked him to school through the dangerous neighborhood.

quotation mark – the punctuation mark used in writing to show dialogue; the punctuation mark in writing that shows when someone is speaking or when the writer is quoting (including every word) from a speaker or another writer

* Don't forget to put quotation marks around what you quote from the textbook or else the teacher may think you're stealing other people's ideas and calling them your own.

advocate – a person who works for an important cause, movement, or organized effort to reach an important goal

* Pam has been an advocate for animal rights for years and helps to raise money to prevent the abuse of animals.

lawyer – attorney; a professional who practices law or works in the legal system of a country or state

* After he was arrested, Shane said he had to see his lawyer before he would speak to the police.

attorney – lawyer; a professional who practices law or works in the legal system of a country or state

* In court, my attorney argued my side of the issue and told the judge why I should receive money for the mistakes my doctor made.

any – some; an amount of something; it doesn't matter which/who/what/where

* We want to go see a movie but neither of us has any money.

salmon – a type of fish with meat that is pink in color

* For dinner, she's serving baked salmon and vegetables.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Movie: Apocalypse Now

The apocalypse is a popular “theme” (subject) for books and film. In 1979, a film called Apocalypse Now “came out” (was released). This film, however, was not about the destruction of the world. It was about the Vietnam War of the 1970s. The title of the film suggests that this war was like the end of the world, not only because of the fighting, but also because of the negative affects of war on people’s minds.

The script for Apocalypse Now is based on a “novella” (short novel; short book) by Joseph Conrad called Heart of Darkness. This “classic” (old and well-respected) novella is about a man hired to travel to the “depths” (very far into) of the “jungle” (wild, tropical area with a lot of plants and animals) to bring back a man who has disappeared. “Similarly” (in the same way), the movie Apocalypse Now is about a military officer who is sent into the jungle of Vietnam to “assassinate” (kill) another officer. This officer, a “colonel” (very high-ranking and important member of the military), is “insane” (crazy) and he has “gone rogue” (become independent of another’s authority). When the military officer finally finds the colonel, he discovers a very surprising situation, one that is very dangerous.

This film became “notorious” (famous in a negative way) because of the many problems it “encountered” (met; had). Both of the lead actors – Marlon Brando and Martin Sheen – had medical problems. In fact, Martin Sheen had a “heart attack” (a serious illness of the heart) during the making of the film. The filming was delayed “time and again” (many times) because of “extreme” (very bad) weather conditions that destroyed several of the very expensive “sets” (structures built for filming). After many delays, the film was released in 1979, winning the Palme d’Or at the Cannes Film Festival in France and was nominated for an Academy Award for Best “Picture” (film).



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 261.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 261. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. You can download the Learning Guide for this episode, and every current episode on our website. That Learning Guide will help you improve your English even faster. If you're not a member of ESL Podcast consider becoming one, you'll get the Learning Guide and the good feeling that comes from supporting the podcast and keeping us available here on the web.

On this Café, we'll talk about a popular website, speaking of websites. This is an Internet review website, very popular now in the United States called Yelp. And we'll also have something a little different: a special book review by Dr. Lucy Tse. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

Our first topic today is the popular Internet website called Yelp. A "yelp" (yelp) is any short, loud word that comes out of someone's mouth when they are surprised, or hurt, or maybe frightened – afraid of something, scared of something. So, a yelp could be any word; you could go "Oh!" or [gasp (a sharp intake of breath)] – well that's more like breathing, but you get the idea. It's something you would say when you are surprised. So that's the normal use of that word: "yelp." It's a regular word in English.

However, the website is something a little different. The website allows you to express your opinions about something, in particular about restaurants, although it can be used for many different kinds of businesses. So, Yelp is what we might call a social networking website. Social networking includes websites like FaceBook and Twitter, where you are communicating with a group of friends or followers. Yelp is similar to that, although you can always read everyone's reviews on yelp. Now, when I say reviews, I mean their opinions of that particular business.

Yelp started in 2004; it was started by two people who used to work at the company PayPal. Like other social networking sites, Yelp allows you to create a "profile," a short description of who you are, with information about yourself, and then you can post – that is, put on the website reviews of any business really. A "review," as I said, is your opinion. You could have a movie review; you could have a restaurant review; you could have a podcast review I guess. Well, these are reviews written by people; usually they're about businesses in your local area. So, you will find reviews of restaurant here



in Los Angeles. Restaurants is probably the most popular category on Yelp, it's what most of the reviews are about.

Now what happens if you are a restaurant owner – you have a restaurant and someone writes a bad review about you on Yelp? Remember, people are looking at these reviews. In addition to the actual text – the actual words of your review – you can also rate (rate) the restaurant or the business. “To rate” means to give it usually a number between one and five. Some websites use stars, so it's five stars; that's the way Yelp works. Well, if you are a restaurant owner you do have some recourse. “Recourse” (recourse) means something that you can do about it, something that you can respond with. You can post your own response or your answer to this review so that people reading the review can get your side of the story – your version of the story or the situation, but mainly you see customer reviews. It's true that reviews are only individual opinions, but if a business has 30 or 50 or 100 reviews, well you get a general idea what people think of this particular business or restaurant. Some restaurants only have two or three reviews; it depends on how popular Yelp is in a particular city. In Los Angeles it's very popular; lots of people write reviews, probably younger people. So if you are really old, say 47 or more, then you might, well, not necessarily believe or want to follow the advice of someone who's 21 and may not know very much about restaurants. But in general, it's a reliable way of finding at least very good restaurants. I always use Yelp when I'm looking for a new place to eat or if I'm visiting a new city and I don't know the restaurants there, I will look at Yelp. I will find the best rated restaurants, the most popular in terms of what people like, and I will often go to those restaurants.

You can also use Yelp for other businesses. I found a dentist on Yelp; I found a mechanic to fix my car – it's much harder to find a good mechanic than a good dentist – and I've used Yelp for a few other things. So if you are coming to the United States, you certainly want to go to Yelp (Yelp.com), put in the name of the city, you can just say restaurant for what you are searching for, and you will find lots of good information.

Well speaking of reviews, in this episode we have a very special feature – a special part of today's English Café. As you know, Dr. Lucy Tse is our scriptwriter and producer of this Café. Today, she's going to what we might call “take the microphone,” she's going to use the mic to talk about a book she thinks you may like. It's a book called The Road. Take it away Lucy. That's another way of saying it's your turn Lucy, go ahead.

Thanks, Jeff. If you're like me, you read fiction for a lot of different reasons. When we talk about fiction, we are talking about stories that authors write using their imagination, not a book about true or real events. Sometimes, I read novels for “escapism” (escapism) which is when people do something to take their minds off of unpleasant or painful things, to not think about certain things, usually things going on in their own



lives. If you have a bad job or a lot of bills to pay, you might watch movies on the weekends for escapism and to relax. Usually, when I want escapism, I look for funny, or light-hearted or not very serious books that will take my mind to somewhere where everything ends well and everybody is happy.

Well, the book The Road by Cormac McCarthy is not one of those books. In fact, unless your real life is really, really horrible or very bad, you would never pick The Road for escapism. But, if you're in the mood for a well-written book with a "plot" (plot) or story that keeps you reading, this is one of those books. The Road is a short novel, and it is written in a "spare" (spare) or simple but beautiful way. The sentences are short. The language is fairly simple. But the impact and meaning of the story is big, very big – at least it was on me.

The Road is set or takes place in a post-apocalyptic world. The "apocalypse" (apocalypse) is the final destruction of the world, and when we put the prefix "post" (post) in front of it, we mean that this story takes place after the world has been destroyed. This story is about two of the "survivors" (survivors) who are left after the world has been destroyed. These two people are on the road or on a journey; they're traveling somewhere. People who are on the road don't stop anywhere for a long time. Their goal is to continue traveling. That is true of these two survivors.

When the novel begins, these two survivors, a father and a son, are walking down a deserted road; a "deserted" (deserted) road is a road without anybody else on it. We don't know much about these two people except for one thing: They're afraid; they are very afraid. They are also on a journey, traveling to a place far away. Each day, they walk long distances, and in each place they come to, they try to find food and other things that will help them stay alive. They're tired, they're dirty, they're hungry, and they only have each other. The world seems deserted, but once in a while when they do come across or see other people, they hide; they go where those people can't see them. Why do they hide? They hide because they now live in a dog-eat-dog world. A "dog-eat-dog" (dog-eat-dog) world is a world where people are competing against each other and they'll do anything, including hurting other people, to survive. That's exactly the post-apocalyptic world that this father and son live in. The big question is: Will they survive?

This doesn't sound like a very fun story, does it? To tell you the truth, I was reluctant, or not wanting very much, to read it because I thought it would be a very sad story. But after hearing and reading a lot of good things about it, I finally picked it up, and I'm so glad I did. Once in a while, I find a book that "grips" me, that holds my attention, that won't let go until I've finished reading it. This is one of those books. Once I started reading it, I couldn't put it down. I stayed up late. I think I stayed up until two o'clock in



the morning to finish it. I couldn't wait to find out what happens to this father and son, because I really liked them. These are two good people in a not very nice world. The father loves his son very much and the son loves his father just as much. I didn't want anything bad to happen to them. I needed to find out the ending. I won't spoil or ruin it for you by telling you what the ending is, but I hope you'll find out for yourself.

If you pick up The Road, you will see something a little strange, a little different. The author, Cormac McCarthy, doesn't use any "quotation marks" around dialogue in any of his books; those are the marks you see in books showing where characters in the books are speaking. At first, I thought this would make the book hard to read, but I got used to it pretty quickly and it wasn't a problem. Other than this, I think you'll find that the language in the book is not too difficult. I read an interview with Cormac McCarthy and he was asked why he doesn't use quotation marks. His simple answer was that he never liked those little marks on the page – he didn't think they were necessary or needed, and didn't like seeing them between words. In that same interview, he also said that he wrote this book with his son in mind, or in his thoughts. Cormac McCarthy was born in 1933, so he's not a young man, and when he wrote this book a few years ago, his son was only nine years old. This book for him is really about the relationship between a father and son, and the journey they take – both in life and on The Road.

The Road was published in 2006, and in 2007 it won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction. In the U.S., the Pulitzer Prize is considered the most prestigious or respected award any writer can win. And the book was made into a movie in 2009. If you read the ESL Podcast Blog, you know that I didn't see the movie, because I don't like to see the movie after reading the book, but I'm sure it was good.

If you're looking for a fairly short book, one that is written in a simple way, that will keep you up at night, for good reasons, I highly recommend The Road. It's one of those books I'll remember for a very long time.

Thank you Lucy. Now let's answer some of your questions.

Our first question comes from Jesus Carlos (Jesus Carlos). The question relates to three similar words: "advocate," "lawyer," and "attorney." We talked about "lawyers" and "attorneys" on several different episodes in the past. A "lawyer" or an "attorney" is someone who is a professional, who has a license to do well what call "practice law." This is someone who can go into a courtroom or in a legal matter and represent you or me. But probably you – you get in a lot of trouble, more than I do!

A "lawyer" is the same as an "advocate" in American English; we don't really distinguished too much between them. An "advocate" is a more general term; an



“advocate” is anyone who is fighting for or working for some important movement, often something to change the world in some way. You could say, “He’s an advocate of human rights.” He is trying to improve human rights. Or, “She’s an advocate for the poor.” She tries to help people who need money. An “advocate” is not necessarily someone who has a license, like a “lawyer,” to represent you. That, in any case, is the way we use the word in America English. In other countries it does, or can refer to what we call a “lawyer” or “attorney.”

There’s an expression: “to play the devil’s advocate.” A “devil” is an evil spirit, and if you are an advocate for the devil – if you are taking the devil’s position – that usually means you are taking the opposite position of someone. We use this in conversation when someone has an idea or a suggestion and you have some questions about it. You might say, “Well, to play the devil’s advocate here, how are we going to get the money for this new project – new suggestion?” You’re saying you are not against the idea, but you want to bring up these questions so that you can bring out any possible problem with the idea.

Our next question comes from José (José) in Mexico. By the way, I’m not sure where Jesus Carlos was from. José, I know, is from Mexico, and he has a question about a very common word in English: “any” (any). Sometimes it can mean “one” and sometimes, he thinks, it can mean the opposite: “none.” Well, it depends on what else is in the sentence in terms of the exact meaning. Let’s talk about some of the meanings for the word “any.”

One meaning is, in fact, “some.” “Do you have any money?” “Do you have some money?” “Are there any cookies left in the jar?” “Are there some cookies left in the jar?” All of those uses of “any” mean “some.”

“Any” can also mean an amount of something. For example: “Do you have any money?” means do you have an amount – a certain amount of money, and you could say, “No, I don’t have any,” or “I don’t have any money.”

“Any” can also mean “all.” “I will give you any money that I make at my job,” the husband said to the wife. “I will give you any money.” I will give you all of the money is what you are saying.

A fourth meaning for the word “any” is referring to a member of a group, a person or a thing that is part of a larger group: “Any American would know the answer to that question.” You’re saying that any one person who is an American would know the answer. “Any English teacher can explain the many uses of the word ‘any’,” again, one teacher in that larger group.



Finally, the fifth possible use of “any” is when you are saying that it is not important: which thing, or where, or what, or who. For example: “You can take any of these trains.” It doesn’t matter which one, you can take any of them. You could also say, “You can take all of these trains,” but that has a slightly different meaning that means you would get on all of the trains, each one of them. When you say “you can take any of these trains” the meaning is more one of that group of trains, but it doesn’t matter, it’s not important which one. Or you could say, “I can sing any kind of song you like,” it doesn’t matter what kind. Or you could say, “You can go to any city in Minnesota in August and you can have some very good corn.”

Those are all possible uses of the word “any”: some, an amount of something, all, one person in a group, and for something that doesn’t matter.

“Any” is used instead of “some” in negative sentences and when asking questions, and I think this was the confusion that José had. For example, you could say, “I know some good jokes.” The negative of that sentence would be “I don’t know any good jokes.” So instead of “some,” we use “any.” So there it has a meaning like “none,” a negative meaning, but only negative because there is another negative in the sentence. In addition, we often use “some” when the answer that we expect will be “yes,” and “any” when we expect the answer to be “no.” For example: “Would you like some dessert?” You are expecting the person to say “yes”: “Yes, I would love some.” If someone says, however, “Would you like any dessert?” that’s something a waiter or waitress at the end of your meal, when you are finished eating your main course, the idea is that you are probably going to say “no.” However, you can say “yes.” So when the waitress says, “Would you like any dessert?” it’s okay to say “Yes, I would like some dessert.” More often, the waitress will hear you say, “No thanks, I cannot eat any more of your terrible food.” No, you shouldn’t say that to the waitress. That’s...that’s not nice!

Finally, Naoko (Naoko) in New York City, but originally from Japan, has a question about how to order fish – how to ask for fish in a grocery store. For example, if he wants some “salmon” (which is a fish with a reddish-pink meat when you cook it, and even before), you would think that if you want, for example, to feed, or to give food to 20 people you need more than one of that particular kind of fish; you will need several. But “fish,” generally in English, is what we call a non-count noun. So we don’t say there are one, two, three fishes typically. You can actually say that, but we won’t go into that exception here.

Normally fish, and the names of fish, are non-count nouns. So, salmon is a type of fish. You could say, “I want three pieces of salmon.” So instead of making the word “salmon” the noun that you count, you use a word like “pieces.” “I want three pieces of salmon,



please.” That’s something you could say the man or woman behind the fish counter, where they sell the fish in a store. You can also say, “I want some salmon.” If you say that, the other person might say, “Well, how many pieces do you want?”

Another word for a non-count noun would be a mass (mass) noun. There are many mass nouns in English: “milk,” we don’t talk about I want two milks typically. You would say, “I want two glasses of milk.” Rice, bread, yogurt; all of these are examples of mass nouns. You can also use with all of these words “some.” “I would like some milk, please.” “I would like some rice, please.” The word “money” is normally a mass noun in English: “I would like some money, please.” Seriously, I would like some money!

If you have a question, you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening, and thank you especially to Dr. Lucy Tse for her book review. Come back and listen to us next time on the English Café.

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