



TOPICS

Yosemite National Park; PETA and animal rights; to rebuild versus to reshape; to mind your P's and Q's; tag questions

GLOSSARY

national park – a natural area that is protected by the government of the United States and it cannot be developed (buildings and homes cannot be built there)

* We spent four days at the national park, camping, hiking, and enjoying the outdoors.

developed – for houses, office buildings, stores, and other things to have been built on a piece of land or in an area

* Before this part of the city was developed, it was farmland.

valley – the area of low land between two mountains

* Jack lives in the valley, but likes to drive up into the mountains to go skiing.

striking – very impressive, perhaps because is very beautiful or very big

* Last night's sunset was striking, with red, orange, and yellow colors against the blue sky.

cliff – a part of a mountain that seems to fall downward very quickly with a sharp wall; a steep drop-off on a mountain

* The mountain road along the cliff is dangerous and few people like driving on it.

animal rights – the idea that animals should be able to live free and not be used for food or to give service to humans

* This cosmetic company believes in animal rights and doesn't use animals in its scientific research.

suffering – physical, mental, or emotional pain, usually over a period of time

* Gillian is afraid to have surgery, but doesn't want to continue living with the suffering caused by the accident a year ago.



factory farm – a very large farm where a large number of animals are raised together, usually in very small cages, so that they grow as big and as quickly as possible

* Were these chickens raised on family farms or factory farms?

tactic – the way that something is done to achieve something, especially when it is part of a plan or strategy

* The lawyer's tactic to make the witness feel nervous and say the wrong thing didn't work.

fur – animal skin and hair that is used for clothing, usually for warm coats or hats

* Monica's mother gave her a fur coat that had belonged to Monica's grandmother.

undercover – doing something in a hidden, secretive way so that other people don't know it is being done; using a disguise, so other people don't know one's true identity

* The police officer worked undercover to get information about drug dealers in the neighborhood.

arson – an attempt to burn down a building; trying to burn down a building on purpose

* The insurance investigator didn't believe that the fire was an accident. He was convinced that it was arson.

to rebuild – to construct something again after the original has been destroyed

* The mayor asked the federal government for money to help rebuild after the big storm destroyed homes and businesses.

to reshape – to reorganize; to give new form or direction to something

* Our efforts to get more customers don't seem to be working, so we need to reshape our marketing plan.

to mind your P's and Q's – to use good behavior; to have good manners; to be polite

* While you're staying with your grandparents, be sure to mind your P's and Q's.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Looney Tunes and Yosemite Sam

On Saturday mornings in the United States, many young children sit in front of the television to watch Saturday morning cartoons. “Cartoons” are shows and movies made from drawings, with no “live” (real) actors. From about 7:00 in the morning to about “noon” (12:00 p.m.), most of the major “broadcast” (stations one can get without special services; not cable) television stations show children’s shows, especially cartoons.

In the 1970s, 1980s, and early 1990s, if you turned on the television on Saturday mornings you would probably see a cartoon series called Looney Tunes. Looney Tunes was created by the well-known “animation” (creating shows using drawings) company called Warner Bros. (pronounced Warner Brothers). Warner Bros. created these cartoons to be shown in movie theaters from 1927-1969. Years later, these were shown on American television.

Looney Tunes introduced some of the most well-known cartoon characters “worldwide” (around the world; in many countries). Some of these characters include Daffy Duck, Porky Pig, and Tweedy.

One popular Looney Tunes character is called Yosemite Sam. Yosemite Sam gets his name from the Yosemite National Park and he is a cowboy. He has a very “foul temper,” getting angry very often and very easily. One thing that gets him angry are rabbits. He hates them. His “arch nemesis” (main enemy) is Bugs Bunny, a rabbit who likes to “intentionally” (on purpose; deliberately) make Yosemite Sam angry and play tricks on him.

Yosemite Sam appeared in 33 Looney Tunes cartoons. To this day, he is a well-known, and well-loved cartoon character, not only with children, but with adults who grew up watching him.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 238.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 238. 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 one of the most famous parks in the United States, Yosemite National Park, right here in California. We're also going to talk about PETA, or an organization called People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. This group is often in the news; we're going to find out who they are and what they do. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion of Yosemite (Yosemite) National Park. A national park is a natural area that is protected by the federal or national government of the United States and cannot be developed without their permission. For a piece of land to be "developed" means that there are houses, office buildings, stores, and other things being built there. A national park cannot be developed in that way; it's protected for future generations, for the people in the future, as well as those here.

Yosemite National Park was created in 1890. It is in east-central California, so it is not close to Los Angeles; it is north of Los Angeles. There are more than 3.5 million people who visit Yosemite each year; it's one of the most popular national parks in the U.S. The entire park is almost 1,200 square miles, that's 3,000 square kilometers, about the same size as the state of Rhode Island, which is a small state in the eastern part of the U.S. However, most visitors visit only a small part of the park, what's known as Yosemite Valley. A "valley" (valley) is an area of low land between two mountains or two large hills; often there is a river in the valley.

People go to Yosemite Valley; one of the reasons is that it has striking scenery. Something that is "striking" is very impressive, perhaps because it's very



beautiful or it's very big. "Scenery" (scenery) are the views at a particular place, what you can see, the things that are beautiful: the trees, the mountains, and so forth.

If you visit the United States, or live here and go to Yosemite, you'll see one of the things that Yosemite is most famous for: it's granite domes and cliffs. Granite is a type of light-colored rock. A "dome" (dome), in this case, means a rounded shape, sort of like the roof of a church – some churches, or a stadium. Some of the granite mountains in Yosemite are, in fact, domes like this. The most famous is called Half Dome, because it was a dome that broke, creating a large dome with a cliff on the side. A "cliff" (cliff) is a very steep what we would call drop-off, where the ground suddenly stops and there is like a wall that if you step off of the ground you will fall down a very long way. Well, that's what happens at Half Dome. The most famous cliff in Yosemite is called El Capitan, meaning The Captain in Spanish. It's very popular among rock climbers, people who use ropes and special tools to "climb," or to pull themselves up rock walls. Why do they climb up the rock walls? You'll have to ask them; honestly, I have no idea!

Yosemite National Park also has many clear streams, lakes, and rivers – clean lakes and rivers, as well as some very beautiful waterfalls, where the water falls over the side of the cliff, in essence. There are also "groves," or large groups of very tall trees in Yosemite. These are called the Giant Sequoias. If you visit Northern California, you definitely want to see these huge trees. Some of them are so big you can drive a car underneath them; there's a tunnel through them, that's how big they are. In Yosemite, they have Giant Sequoias. There are also other animals and plants in Yosemite. You can see deer, elk, bear, and other animals in the area. Humans are sometimes seen – you have to be very careful with the humans! You can camp in Yosemite; you can bring a tent and sleep outdoors. Or, if you're a little smarter, you stay in a cabin or hotel. These are little houses or a building next to the park where you can sleep and eat – with toilets inside!

There are many hiking trails that visitors can use to explore the park. A "hiking trail" is a path; it's like a little road that you can walk on. We use the verb "to hike" (hike) when you are walking usually a long distance through nature – through the trees or the mountains or – I don't know, whatever is out there. I don't do much hiking! Some of these trails – some of these paths are not very long; they're short, easy trails that you can walk in an hour or so. Others are more challenging, and you can be on those for days without stopping. In Yosemite Valley, there are also "trams" (trams); these are special types of public



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transportation that take you to popular areas in the park, because they don't want a lot of people with cars in park. Again, it's a very popular park.

It was the famous naturalist – the famous person who was interested in the environment and nature – John Muir, who spent a lot of time in Yosemite and it was his writings that got other people interested in Yosemite, and interested in the movement to protect this land as a park. He convinced the local government there not to allow “grazing” to continue, meaning not to have animals such as cows and sheep to go into the area and eat the grasses that were there. That's what it means, “to graze,” to eat the grass out in the field.

In 1903, John Muir invited then-President Theodore Roosevelt to actually go camping with him in Yosemite, to spend three days and nights with him exploring the area. Back then I guess the president had time to take three days to go camping! It was three years later that President Roosevelt decided to make the Yosemite area a national park. He basically took it over from the State of California, and said that it was a federal park – a national park.

If you come to California and you like to see some beautiful scenery, I can definitely recommend Yosemite. I, myself, have never been there, but I've seen pictures and it looks very beautiful, and someday maybe I'll go – probably not, but maybe!

Now let's turn to an organization called PETA (PETA). There's another kind of pita (pita), which is a type of bread; this is not the bread. This is an organization that is called People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals. “Ethical” means just, right, fair. PETA has two million members and it calls itself the world's biggest animal rights organization. “Rights” are things that people are morally and legally allowed to do; we talk about the right to vote, or the right to protest. Animal rights is a concept whereby animals are thought to have certain rights, just like humans. Not the same rights, but some protection from humans. For example, PETA believes that animals have the right to not be eaten, worn, abused, or experimented on by humans. So, I'm guessing the people who are members of PETA are vegetarians; they eat only fruits and vegetables because, of course, they believe that animals should not be eaten. Nor do they believe that the animals' skin, what in some animals we call their “fur” (fur), should be worn as clothing. Many in PETA also think that animals should not be used for scientific and medical research.



PETA says it tries to reduce or eliminate this abuse in order to get rid of – to stop animals from suffering. “Suffering” is a physical, mental, or emotional pain that you feel over a period of time. It can also be a verb; we can say we suffer when we are sick or injured, or we suffer when other people are mean or cruel to us.

PETA believes that animals suffer when they are hurt by humans. Specifically, they focus often on these scientific experiments, but also on clothing, entertainment, and factory farms. “Factory farms” are large farms where thousands of animals are raised together – are born and grow up together. Often they are in very small cages – they’re in small areas where they can’t move freely. PETA’s “slogan,” a phrase that it repeats over and over again, is that “animals are not ours (are not property of human beings) to eat, wear, experiment on, or use for entertainment.”

PETA uses many controversial tactics to get its message out to other people – to let other people know about their position, and this, in fact, is why they are so well known in the U.S. I mentioned they have controversial tactics. A “tactic” (tactic) is the way that something is done in order to get a result – to achieve something. This term is often used in talking about the military, but it can be used in other ways as well. We can talk about, for example, scare tactics, when somebody tries to tell you how bad or how evil something is so that you’ll be afraid – you’ll be scared, you’ll be frightened, and you won’t do it. This is sometimes used, for example, with teenagers, when they show them what happens if you drink and try then to drive. Of course, you can get into an accident and kill someone else, as well as yourself, so you try to give them this negative information to scare them.

Well, PETA uses tactics; some of them can be violent, sometimes “humorous,” sometimes funny. For example, in order to “protest,” or fight against bull-fighting, which you could see for example in Mexico or Spain, they have in the past had women go out into the street and take their clothes off and talk about why bull-fighting is bad – in order to get attention, that is, they take their clothes. Certainly that is one way to get people’s attention – particularly the men who happen to be on the street that day! The organization also has advertisements (or ads, we call them) where famous women, usually models and actresses who are members of PETA, pose naked for the camera. When I say “pose,” I mean they stand in a certain position. I say they are naked – they’re nude, they have no clothes on, but they are covering themselves – the, uh, certain critical areas, shall we say, of their body, and they usually say something like “I’d rather go naked than wear



fur.” “Fur,” remember, is the skin and hair of an animal that’s used especially for making warm jackets and hats.

Often the members of PETA will go further, and do things that are even more controversial. For example they sometimes have thrown blood – fake blood or ketchup – on people who are wearing these clothes in public, often famous celebrities who have a fur coat on. This, of course, does not make people very happy; it’s designed to get people to stop and think about what they’re doing, but I also would certainly not be very happy about it.

Other tactics are more controversial. For example, PETA once compared factory farming to the “Holocaust,” the murder of millions of Jewish people during World War II. This made many people very angry. PETA also sends its members to scientific laboratories, places where they do experiments. They send them there undercover. When we talk about doing something “undercover,” we mean that it is done in a hidden, secretive way. So a PETA member might go into the laboratory pretending – acting as if she were a scientist, but really taking photographs and collecting information about the laboratory. This is for laboratories that are using animals for experiments. Many people who are not members of PETA – PETA has two million members, the population of the United States is 300 million or so, so basically 298 million people think, or many of them think, that doing some experiments on animals for medical reasons is okay, and many people disagree with the way that PETA tries to get its message out. However, they have been very successful because people know about them.

Sometimes PETA has been accused of – people have said that they have organized violent acts, especially against universities that do animal research – experimentation. For example, in 1995, some members of PETA became involved in an arson attempt. “Arson” (arson) is when you try to burn down a building. In this case, it was a building at Michigan State University. The leader of the arson attempt had received money from PETA to use for his legal defense, although PETA did not organize that particular attack itself. Other PETA members, however, have physically attacked scientists and others in order to get attention. And again, most people I think would find that too extreme in terms of the tactics, even perhaps a lot of people who may agree with what some of what PETA is saying.

Now let’s answer few of your questions.



Our first question comes from Jinmin (Jinmin) in China. Jinmin wants to know the difference between the words “rebuild” and “reshape.”

“To rebuild” (rebuild) means to construct something after the original has been destroyed. “To build” means to take different materials (wood, perhaps, or cement), put them together in order to build something – in order to make something I should say, like a house or a building. In fact, the word “building” has “build” right in it. “Re” is a prefix meaning to do again, so “to rebuild” would mean to build again. The poor people of Haiti, after the tragic, sad earthquake that took place there recently have to rebuild much of their capital city.

“To reshape” means to reorganize or give a new direction to something. We talk about “reshape” usually when we are talking about a company or an organization: “The president wants to reshape the government.” He wants to organize it in a different way – to reorganize it, to organize it again in a different way.

“Rebuild” usually means that something has been completely or mostly destroyed. Sometimes we use this word in talking about, for example, someone’s confidence; it’s not a physical thing. We may say that I need to rebuild trust with my friend because I lied to him, now he’s angry at me. I need to rebuild it because the trust has been destroyed. So it can be used that way as well.

Something that is “reshaped” still exists, it hasn’t been destroyed, but you are going to change it some way. We don’t use this word usually in talking about physical objects however; we talk about this in terms of organizations or perhaps ideas.

Our next question comes from Parham (Parham) in Canada. Parham wants to know the meaning of an expression he heard: “to mind (mind) your P’s and Q’s,” the letter “P” and the letter “Q”. This is a popular expression in English.

“To mind” means to behave in a certain way that other people will respect, that is acceptable. We especially use this verb when we are talking about children who are supposed to follow their parents’ rules for good behavior. If someone says, “Mind your father,” as a verb there it means pay attention to – follow the rules of your father.



“To mind your P’s and Q’s,” however, means to ask someone to use good behavior, to have good manners, to be polite. Again, it is often said to children: “You should mind your P’s and Q’s.” It’s a little old-fashioned; you don’t hear it as much anymore.

Why do we say “P’s and Q’s”? Well, that’s a very good question. There are different stories about where this expression came from. The most common explanation is that it comes from English or British bars, what they call pubs, where “P” meant pint, which is a measurement of liquid. When you serve someone a beer, for example, in Britain – in England, they may say a pint of beer. A “Q” stood for a quart; these were larger sizes. So pints and quarts are sizes of drinks – alcoholic drinks. So “P’s” and “Q’s” refers to keeping track – paying attention to how many of these pints and quarts you have drunk, because, of course, if you drink too many pints and quarts of alcohol you will start behaving badly. So “to mind (or to pay attention to) your “P’s” and “Q’s,” the amount of alcohol you’re drinking. Which is probably good advice for all of us!

Juan Luis (Juan Luis) has a question about what we refer to in English grammar as “tag (tag) questions.” Tag (or *tag*, depending on your particular accent) questions are one of the most common ways of asking question in English, and also one of the most difficult ones for someone who is not a native English speaker to acquire – to pick up.

The word “tag” normally means something small that is added to something bigger. For example, if you have a shirt or a dress, usually in the back top of the shirt or dress there is what we would call in English a “tag” that says typically the size – what size is it, is it a small, medium, or large; often instructions on how to wash this particular piece of clothing.

So, a tag question is when you add something at the end the sentence in order to ask a question. For example: “He is very tall, isn’t he?” Or, “That isn’t true, is it?” Notice that in a tag question structure first you make a statement – first you say something, either positive or negative, then you add something after. If it’s a positive statement: “He’s very tall,” then you add a negative tag, you say: “isn’t he?” If it’s a negative statement: “That isn’t true,” you add a positive tag: “is it?”

Sometimes when someone is very much in doubt, when they’re not sure, they may say: “or is he?” “or is it?” Now you might say, well, that’s not negative, that’s positive, but actually we’re leaving out the word “not.” So when you say, for example: “He loves to ski, or does he?” what you’re really saying is he loves to



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ski, or does he not love to ski. So it's still the positive followed by negative, or negative followed by positive even though it sounds positive. In fact, it's perfectly correct to say, though not as common: "He is a fool, or is he?" or "is he not?" Either of those forms are correct, and they mean the same thing. Isn't that simple?

If you have a question or comment you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com. We don't have time to answer everyone's questions, but we'll do the best we can – or will we?

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

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