



TOPICS

U.S. government reparations; TV home shopping networks/shows; neither do I versus so do I versus either I; to talk with versus to talk to; to put the cart before the horse (to put the horse before the cart)

GLOSSARY

reparations – money that the government pays to a group of people as an apology for doing something wrong in the past

* The government decided to pay reparations after nearly all of the survivors had died.

to make up for (something) – doing something nice or good now because one did something bad or wrong in the past and feel sorry or bad about it

* Monica is making dinner for Luis to make up for running over Luis' bike with her car.

descent – one's family background and where one comes from; one's heritage; one's ethnic or racial background

* I thought that Lana was of Native American descent, but she's actually Greek.

to disburse – to pay money, usually when there is a lot of money that needs to be given in smaller amounts to many different people for a particular reason

* All bonus money for employees will be disbursed at the end of the year.

heir – one's child and grandchild; a person who receives one's money and property after one dies

* James still can't decide which heir should get his mother's valuable art collection after he dies.

slave – someone who owned by another person and is forced to work without being paid

* Without slaves, many of the large farms in the southern United States did not survive after the Civil War.

host – a person who leads a television or radio show; a person who entertains an audience during a show and welcomes guests to the show

* We listen to a radio show that has a very funny host.



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testimonial – something that someone says or writes to praise something, letting other people know how good or useful it is

* Would you buy gym equipment if it received testimonials from your favorite sports stars?

interactive voice response – a computer that speaks through the phone, asking people to respond by speaking or typing in numbers on their telephone to let the computer know their responses or what they want to buy

* I don't want to use the interactive voice response system. I want to speak to a real person!

impulse buy – when someone sees something in a store and suddenly wants to buy it very badly, but usually regret the purchase later

* That pink sofa was an impulse buy, and now I don't know what to do with it!

to regret – to wish that one hadn't done something; to wish that one hadn't made a past decision

* The dog wouldn't stop barking and Sari regretted taking him with her on the road trip

to flip through the channels – to go from one channel to another quickly, usually to find something that one wants to watch

* I couldn't sleep so I decided to flip through the channels to see if there was anything good on TV to watch.

neither do I – I also do not; I share the same negative opinion or decision

* You don't like telling lies to children and neither do I.

so do I – I do, as well; I do, too; I do also

* - This isn't working. I think we need to start again with a different idea.

- So do I.

either I – a phrase used to show the difference between two things a speaker might do

* Either I hurt my husband's feelings by not going on this trip with him, or I hurt my mother's feelings by not visiting her on her birthday.

to talk with – to converse or have a discussion involving one or more people

* I know they don't agree. Do you think it will help to talk with those members of the committee who don't want to move ahead?



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to talk to – to converse or have a discussion involving one or more people; to have a conversation with someone who is in a lower position or is considered less important than one is

* Ginny talked to her employees this morning about the new company policies.

to put the cart before the horse (to put the horse before the cart) – to do things in the wrong order (to do things in the right order)

* I know you want to buy a car, but let's put the cart before the horse. You need to get a job and earn some money first!

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Infomercials

Many people who can't sleep at night or are bored like to flip through the channels. If you flip through the channels late at night on American television, you're "bound to" (certain to) see one thing: infomercials.

"Infomercials" are long television commercials, usually selling a single product. Normally, commercials are about 30 seconds long. Infomercials, on the other hand, normally run about 30 minutes in length. Like normal commercials, television stations are paid to allow the infomercial to "air" (be broadcasted).

Originally, infomercials could only be seen in the early morning hours, usually between 2:00 and 6:00 a.m. This was the time that many stations would "sign-off" and have no programming at all. For this reason, buying "air time" (broadcast time) was relatively cheap. However, today, we can see infomercials at any time of day, especially on "cable television" stations, extra stations that people pay to see.

Unlike normal commercials, the infomercial is "structured" (organized) like a television show. Often, the infomercial has celebrities who appear who talk about the product and its uses and benefits. A large part of the infomercial is used to "demonstrate" (show) how to use the product in different ways. These elements are similar to what occurs on "talk shows" (shows with a host and guests) that one might see in regular television programming. Popular infomercial products include cooking "appliances" used for "storing" (putting away in a safe way) and making food, usually in a quick and easy way, and exercise equipment for "strengthening" (making one stronger) or for "weight loss" (losing weight).



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 211.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 211. 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 U.S. government reparations, or payments that the U.S. government makes to certain groups of people to apologize for something bad the government has done in the past, to try to make things better for those people. We're also going to talk about TV home shopping networks in the U.S., ways to buy things while watching television. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion about U.S. government reparations. "Reparations" are money that is paid to someone almost as an apology. Reparations are usually paid by a government or perhaps an organization that has done something bad or has hurt a group of people in some way. The government understands that there's no way to undo the bad thing – to take it back, but it tries to make up for it, to do something nice to offset or balance the bad thing with a good thing, by paying money to a particular group of people. Reparations are a way to do something for a group of people when you have hurt that group of people in the past. Governments sometimes pay reparations after a war to make up for the damage caused by the fighting; of course, the losing country pays the reparations, not the winning one.

In 1942, the U.S. government had what were called Japanese "internment" camps. These were special prisons where many Japanese and Japanese American people were forced to live during World War II. More than half of these were U.S. citizens, so they were American citizens, but they were treated, because they were of Japanese ancestry, meaning some of their grandparents or great-grandparents were originally from Japan, they were treated as enemies, people that the United States couldn't trust.



These internment camps seemed like a good idea to the U.S. government at the time. The United States was involved in a war against Japan, of course, in 1942. There was a fear that Japanese Americans would somehow not be loyal to the United States – would not try to help the United States. There was no good reason to think this, however, and therefore many people nowadays believe this was a very bad decision – a bad mistake the government made during that time of war.

Here in Los Angeles, we have a Japanese American museum that has information; it has exhibits about the Japanese internment camps during World War II. I was down there not too long ago visiting the museum, it's located in a part of Los Angeles called Little Tokyo, and I met a man who as a child was in one of these internment camps. He was one of the people working at the museum; he told us some stories about the camps. It was rather an amazing experience to talk to some of the people who were involved, who were arrested and put into these camps.

The internment camps treated American citizens of Japanese descent as if they weren't really U.S. citizens; they were not given the same rights. The word "descent" (descent) refers to your heritage, who your parents were. I am an American of Irish and German descent, meaning that my great-great-grandparents came from Ireland, some of them, some of them came from Germany. When Americans of Japanese descent were placed in these internment camps, they were being treated unfairly. We actually talk all about these camps in English Café 129, so I won't go into detail about that, you can listen to the previous English Café.

In 1988, then-President Ronald Reagan and the U.S. government officially apologized to all of the people who were interred in the camps. To "inter" means to put someone in a place where they can't leave. The government disbursed about 1.6 billion dollars in reparations. To "disburse" (disburse) means to pay money, usually when there is a lot of money that needs to be given in small amounts to many different people for some reason. So, each "internee," a person was interred, someone who was forced to live in the internment camps, was given 20,000 dollars. In total, as I said, about 1.6 billion was disbursed in these reparations. "Reparations" comes from the word "to repair," to make better, to try to fix.

Many of the people who had been interred, of course, had already passed away – had already died, so some of the disbursements were made to their heirs. Your "heirs" (heirs) are your relatives who are still alive: your sons and



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daughters, your grandsons and grandchildren, perhaps your nieces and nephews. Overall, there were over 82,000 internees, slightly more, and their heirs who received reparations.

Some people think the U.S. government should also make reparations to the descendants of American slaves. A “slave,” as you probably know, is someone who is forced to work without being paid. Most African Americans – black Americans in the United States today are descendants of slaves, meaning that their great-great-great-grandparents were likely slaves.

The idea is that these descendants deserve the money, because slaves should have been paid for their work. Since the United States benefited from that “labor,” that work, they should have to pay for it somehow. However, a magazine recently calculated how many hours of slave labor might have been used by the U.S. – by owners of slaves between 1619 and 1865, when the slaves were freed, and determined that there were more than 222 million hours, and that reparations should be approximately 100 trillion dollars. A trillion, in English, is one million million, with 12 zeroes, not 18 zeroes as it is in some other countries. However, even with just 12 zeroes, that’s a lot of money – just a little bit more than what you would pay to buy a coffee at Starbucks, if you know about Starbucks coffee here in the U.S.!

So, it doesn’t seem realistic or possible that the U.S. government could pay that much in reparations. Even if it could, it’s hard to know who that money would actually be given to. It would be difficult, and in most cases, impossible to know which African Americans are actually descendants of slaves, and which ones are descendants of people from other countries or from Africa after the end of slavery.

However, on July 30, 2008, the United States government officially apologized for slavery, but it didn’t say anything about reparations. This was disappointing to some people who want the government to pay for reparations. However politically, that is a relatively small number of people. Most people don’t believe that reparations would be possible, and it isn’t a political issue that is discussed very much.

We’ve been talking about lots of money, now let’s talk about one way that people spend their money in the U.S. and in other countries, and that is shopping – specifically, shopping on the television. There are some shows and even some networks, or special channels of television programs that are dedicated to (that are exclusively about) home shopping, shopping from home. In fact, there is



something called The Home Shopping Network, which is a channel that lets people buy things that they see on television 24 hours a day. Another channel that specializes in home shopping is called QVC.

When you watch a home shopping network, you get to see the products that are for sale. Usually there's a "host," the person who leads the particular show, talking about the products. The Home Shopping Network and QVC have hosts who present information about the products that they're selling; sometimes there are hosts that specialize in different types of products; sometimes they will have a celebrity host or someone who is selling something with their name on it. A famous celebrity might have, for example, some perfume, which is a liquid that mostly women put on themselves to smell nice. Men should probably wear perfume because they smell a lot worse than women, but for some reason we don't use perfume!

The home shopping networks sell almost anything; they are, however, concentrated mostly on jewelry, clothing, beauty products (things like cream for your face), health and exercise products, electronics, toys, and things for the home. You wouldn't normally see a car, for example, being sold on The Home Shopping Network. They tend to be smaller things, especially things that would appeal to what is probably largely a female audience. Depending on what's being sold, the shows might have people using the product or wearing the product if it's a piece of jewelry or clothing. I mentioned before that sometimes famous people come on the show – celebrities, who give a testimonial. A "testimonial" is something that someone says or writes "praising" something else, saying how good it is, how useful it is. Some of you have written testimonials about ESL Podcast for website or on our blog, or on iTunes, and so forth – we especially like the ones on iTunes! Testimonials help other people understand why a product or a service is good and, of course, makes them want to buy it. That's why there are so many testimonials for the products sold on these home shopping channels.

So, when people see something they want to buy, they call a telephone number that is shown on the screen on the television set. Sometimes they talk to a real person to place their order; "to place your order" means to say that you want to buy something. Other times when you call into these programs – these shopping shows, you have what's called an interactive voice response system (in short, IVR), where you actually are talking to a computer, and the computer asks what you want, or asks you to press the numbers on your telephone to let the computer know what you want to buy. These home shopping networks also



have websites, so you can look at the products online and buy them using your credit card.

Home shopping networks rely on what we would call impulse buys. An “impulse” (impulse) is a strong feeling that you should do something, usually something that is not what you would normally do, but you have this sudden, strong feeling. It lasts only a short period of time. When someone says, “I bought this on impulse,” they mean they weren’t planning on it but they saw it, and suddenly they felt like they should buy it. So an impulse buy is what happens when someone sees something and suddenly wants to buy it very badly; it could be in a store or it could be on the television. But usually, after making an impulse purchase – an impulse buy, people “regret” their decision; they wish they had not done it. They might regret their purchase because the thing they paid for was too expensive, or usually it’s something they didn’t really need.

Of course, people can make impulse buys anywhere – on the Internet, in stores, or on one of these home shopping channels. But many people are more likely to impulse buy when they’re flipping through the channels, going from one channel to the other; we call that “flipping through the channels.” Sometimes my wife and I are sitting down and I’ll ask for the remote control, which is sometimes called in some houses the flipper, and I say, “let me flip,” meaning let me go through the channels to see what’s on. This is a good sign there’s probably nothing good on television to watch! People are bored, they’re looking for something to watch, they may come across – that is, they may accidentally go to one of these home shopping channels, see something they want to buy, and on impulse, buy it.

I’ve never actually used one of the home shopping networks; I don’t know much about them. A lot of the products are for women – jewelry and perfume, things like that. I suppose I should buy some things for my wife, but I don’t really like impulse buying.

Now let’s answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Dorothea (Dorothea); I’m not sure where she’s from. The question has to do with the meaning of the expressions “neither do I,” “so do I,” and “either I.”

“Neither do I” means I also do not want to do this, or I also do not do something – whatever you’re talking about. “Do you want to see a movie?” Your friend says, “No, I don’t,” and you say, “Neither do I,” meaning I don’t want to see a movie



either. “Pat doesn’t like basketball, and neither do I.” I don’t like basketball either.

“So do I” means I do, too; it’s the opposite. “Do you want to go to the movies?” Your friend says, “Yes,” and you say, “So do I,” meaning I want to go to the movies also, as well. I want to go, too. “Do you love the paintings by Matisse? So do I.”

“Either I” is a phrase that shows a contrast between two things a speaker might do, or a contrast between what I’m saying and someone else is saying. “Either I will go to the concert or I will go to the library.” Those are my two choices, so “either” is used to show that there are two things that you are selecting from. “Either I will get the job or my friend will get the job.”

“Neither do I” and “so do I” have similar meanings; they both show an agreement between what you’re saying and what someone else is saying. But, “neither do I” is used when showing agreement over something negative – something you don’t want to do, and “so do I” is to show agreement over something positive – something you do want to do. “Neither do I” can also express something that the speaker doesn’t want to do in addition to something they’ve already mentioned; so here it would not be an agreement, but rather something else that you don’t want to do. For example: “I don’t like watermelon. Neither do I like cantaloupe.” “I don’t like watermelon. Neither do I like cantaloupe,” that means I don’t like watermelon; which is true, I don’t like watermelon. Americans eat watermelon on the Fourth of July and during the summer. I think it’s disgusting; it’s awful. I’m probably the only person in America who believes that. So, I say, “I don’t like watermelon. Neither do I like cantaloupe.” That’s not true; I actually love cantaloupe – good, sweet cantaloupe! But that’s how we would use that expression. Or you could say, “I will not watch the American football game. Neither will I watch the hockey game.” Those are two things I’m not going to do. Of course, I’m going to watch the baseball game! This use of “neither do I” is a little formal, you don’t hear it that much in conversation; you might see it in writing. It would be more common to express that same idea by saying, “I don’t like American football; I don’t like basketball either.” Or, “I don’t like hockey either,” all of which are true.

Noha (Noha) in Israel wants to know the difference between the expressions “talk with you” and “talk to you.” In most cases, these two phrases mean the same thing: “I’m going to talk with my brother.” “I’m going to talk to my brother.” They both mean to have a discussion – to have a conversation with one person or more than one person.



In some cases, “to talk to,” however, implies that you are the boss or you are in a superior – a higher position, and you are going to give this person orders or tell them something they did wrong, and so forth. So a boss is going to talk to her employees; she’s going to tell them what they’re doing right, what they’re doing wrong, what they should be doing next week. There’s an informal expression that uses “talk to”; it’s actually a noun: “a talking to.” “I’m going to give a talking to my brother.” That would mean I’m going to yell at him, I’m going to tell him something he did wrong – because my brothers are always doing things wrong, you know that. As the youngest, of course, I’m perfect so I never do anything wrong. That’s what my mother told me. If you believe that, you’ll believe anything!

“To talk to” can also mean someone who is higher up in position or authority talking to someone who is lower. “To talk with” almost always means among equals: the friends talk with each other, but the teacher talks to the students. Again, in most cases they’re the same, but sometimes “to talk to” is used to refer to a boss, a teacher, someone in a higher position of authority giving orders or correcting someone below them.

Finally Ben (Ben) in China has of question about the expression “to put the horse before the cart. Well actually, the expression is typically “to put the cart before the horse.” But let’s explained first what we’re talking about.

A “cart” is like a car; it’s usually something that has wheels on it. But unlike a car, it doesn’t have a motor – an engine; a cart is something that you either push or pull. Usually, a cart is pulled by an animal. So in the old days, before cars, back when I was a child, you would have horses that would pull these flat carts. The carts were used put things on – to move things, including people. So the horse would pull the cart, and of course, to do that the horse would have to be in front of the cart.

The expression “to put the cart before the horse” would mean to do things in the opposite, incorrect way. You, of course, cannot put the cart before the horse, because the horse can’t pull the cart if it’s in front of him. So, “to put the cart before the horse” means to do things in the wrong order, to do what you should do last first, and what you should do first last. Or, to try to do something before you’ve done the necessary preparation. If you’re a student and you have a big test – a big exam – examination next week, you would not say, “I’m going to take my exam, and then I’m going to study for it.” That would be putting the cart before the horse; you would be doing things in the opposite order. Instead, you



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would want to study first and then take your exam; you would want to put the horse before the cart.

If you have questions about horses, carts, or any other expressions in English, email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com. Remember, if you enjoy this Café and would like to support ESL Podcast, you can become a member by going to eslpod.com to become a member or to make a donation.

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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