



TOPICS

Famous authors: Maya Angelou; Universal Studios; wise versus savvy versus clever; delicatessen; to end up versus to wind up

GLOSSARY

cage – a special container used to keep animals in one place; a container shaped like a box with bars on all four sides

* Benny opened the cages and the birds flew into the sky.

racism – the way that some people are treated unfairly because of the color of their skin

* There was so much racism in the public schools that new laws had to be made so that all children could be educated more equally.

highly acclaimed – very well respected and honored; something spoken of or written about that is considered outstanding

* Have you read the highly acclaimed book written by Dr. Jeff McQuillan?

to ban – to not be allowed; to not allow someone or something to enter a place

* Our company's policy bans the use of work computers for personal use.

honorary degree – an advanced degree that a university gives to an individual to recognize his or her outstanding contributions in a particular field, even if he or she has never studied at that or any university

* The university gave the actress an honorary degree for her 40 years of outstanding acting in movies.

ritual – the way things are done in the same way over a long period of time; a series of actions or a type of behavior that is done by everyone in the same way

* The players have the same ritual before every game: They form a circle and they say to each other, "We are going to win!"

lecture circuit – when a public speaker is paid to speak at important events and meetings and who travels from one place to another to give speeches

* When popular presidents complete their term of office, they often go on the lecture circuit, charging large amounts of money for giving a speech.



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studio – a place where artistic work is done, where television shows or movies are made, or where music and sound is recorded

* We'll have six hours in the studio tomorrow to finish recording our new CD.

theme park – amusement park; places with many rides, entertainment, and fun things to do that are all related to some general idea

* Paula was too scared to go on any of the rides at the theme park.

ride – a large machine that people sit in or stand on as it moves very quickly, usually in unexpected directions, to scare, excite, and entertain

* Jorge thought the ride was fun, but Carla felt sick afterwards and said she would never go on it again.

set – the place where a show or movie is filmed, or where a play is acted, including the buildings and rooms that are used by the actors

* The set of the church looked so real that the actors immediately lowered their voices when they stepped onto it.

façade – only the front of a building, with nothing behind it or inside it, often used for television or movie filming

* The movie made it look like the actors were in space, but the spaceships in the background were just façades.

wise – showing good judgment; making good decisions for good reasons

* In our town, Mort is considered wise because of his age and wide experience.

clever – intelligent; mentally able to think and solve problems quickly and well

* No one could figure out the puzzle in the magazine except our clever son Brett.

savvy – able to understand, act, and make decisions that are the best or that give the most benefit in a particular situation

* Loretta has a lot of business savvy, so we asked for her help in opening our new restaurant.

delicatessen / deli – a restaurant or shop that offers prepared foods such as sliced meat, sliced cheese, salads, and sandwiches

* I often go to the deli down the street to buy a sandwich for lunch.



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to end up – to do or be something in the end, usually as the result of a particular choice, event, or set of circumstances

* Kara thought she would win the contest, but she ended up in last place.

to wind up – to do or be something in the end, usually as the result of a particular choice, event, or set of circumstances; to do something to complete the final portion of something that has already begun

* Shane planned a two-week vacation, but wound up returning home early when he became seriously ill.

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

The Nickelodeon

Movie theaters today show “feature” (with one main topic or story) films, but that wasn’t always “the case” (the situation). In the early 1900s in the U.S., many people went to movie theaters called Nickelodeons for entertainment that showed a different type of film and often more than one film.

Nickelodeons were small neighborhood movie theaters with a “piano” or “organ,” a wide musical instrument that one plays while sitting and hitting the individual “keys” or pieces with one’s fingers. The name “Nickelodeon” is a combination of the word “nickel” (a five-cent coin (metal money)), which was the price to enter the theater, and the Greek word “odeion,” which means a roofed theater.

In a typical show in a Nickelodeon, the audience watched a 15 to 20 minute “silent” (with no sound) film, while the piano or organ player played music that he or she believed was right for the “scene” (picture). For example, if someone is being “chased” (with someone running after him/her trying to catch him/her), then the musician might play fast, loud music to make the scene more exciting and entertaining.

The Nickelodeons played many different types of films. These films included “scenics,” which showed the natural world from different views; “actualities,” which showed real people in real events; “comedies” or funny films; “dramas” or serious stories; and even sporting events.



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In the U.S., the Nickelodeons were most popular between 1905 and 1915. In 1915, the first feature film was “released” (made available to the public). From that time on, the feature film became the most popular theater entertainment, “edging out” (replacing) the Nickeldoeons.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 262.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 262. 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 continue our series on famous writers – famous authors, focusing on poet and author Maya Angelou. She's probably the most well known living poet in the U.S. We're also going to talk about something here in Southern California that is very popular with tourists – people visiting here – called Universal Studios, which is both a place where they make movies as well as what we would call an amusement park. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a continuation of our series on famous authors. Today we're going to talk about a woman named Maya Angelou (Angelou). Maya Angelou is a famous poet; she's also an autobiographer. An "autobiographer" is someone who writes about their own life. A "biography," without the "auto" in front, is a book you write about somebody else's life. Well, Maya Angelou is a well-known autobiographer; she has also been called the most visible black female autobiographer. Something that is "visible" is something you can see. Maya Angelou is well known for her autobiography, and she is black (African American), and female (a woman).

Maya Angelou has written six autobiographical books about her experiences in childhood – when she was a young child – and early adulthood, meaning when she was a young adult, after the age of 18, before the age of perhaps 30. The first and most famous of her six autobiographies is called I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings. A "cage" (cage) is a special container that we used to keep animals in their place; it's often a box, but it could also be something, for example, for a bird. So we have a birdcage, which is not typically square – could be square; often it is round, and that's what Maya Angelou's title refers to. A caged bird is a bird in a birdcage. So, Maya Angelou is saying that she understands why a bird even though it is in a cage and it can't leave still sings. She's making a



comparison between a caged animal, like a bird, and the situation of African Americans in the United States who have been, and in some cases still are, kept from doing what they want to do because of the color of their skin – because of discrimination.

I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings was published in 1969. It addresses, or deals with many serious issues in her life. These include “racism,” the way that people are treated unfairly because of the color of their skin. It also deals with, or talks about “civil rights,” the effort of people to change society so everyone is treated equally. The book also addresses the very difficult topic of rape, when a person is made to have sexual relations against their will (when they don’t want to). It also talks about identity, black motherhood (being a mother who is African American), and the importance of family.

This first book was followed by five other autobiographical books about other things that happened in Maya Angelou's life, but the first one is the best-known one. If you ask an American to name a book by Maya Angelou – and they know who Maya Angelou is we hope – they will probably name this book, I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings. We could call it her most acclaimed book. Something that is “acclaimed” (acclaimed) is something that is very well respected and honored. People think her book is good and they say good things about it. It won the National Book Award in 1970 and became a bestseller, meaning it was one of the most popular books purchased in the U.S. at that time. In fact, her book was on The New York Times Paperback Nonfiction Bestseller List for two years – longer than any other book in that category. Many schools use this book as part of their “curriculum,” the things that you teach students. But the book is also controversial and has sometimes been banned from schools. When we say something is “banned” (banned) we mean it is not permitted in the school; it is not allowed to be put in the school and read by the students. So, people have different reactions, partly due to some of the more serious topics I mentioned earlier that appear in the book. Some parents don’t feel them appropriate for their children. Most schools, however, would probably have the book, and many teachers use it in their classes.

Maya Angelou is also very well known, as I mentioned earlier, for her poetry, especially for her 1971 collection of poetry (a book of her poems) called Just Give Me a Cool Drink of Water 'Fore I Diiie. ('Fore, here, is a short form of before; so, just give me a cool drink of water before I die is what the title means.) This collection was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, one of the top prizes in literature in the United States, although it didn't win. Maya Angelou was invited



to read one of her poems at the inauguration ceremony for President Bill Clinton in 1993. An inauguration ceremony is the official event where, in this case, the person becomes President of the United States. It has been common in some inaugurations recently to have a poet come and read something. At John F. Kennedy's inauguration in 1961 the famous poet Robert Frost came to read a poem. He's probably the best-known 20th century poet, now dead; perhaps someday we'll talk about him as well.

Getting back to Maya Angelou, she has been honored by many different universities and institutions. She has 30 honorary degrees. An "honorary degree" is an advanced degree we would call it, like a Ph.D., that a university gives to an individual to recognize their accomplishments. It's given typically at the end of the school year, at the formal ceremony called the graduation or commencement ceremony where the students all receive their diplomas, the pieces of paper that indicate they have finished their studies. They have earned their degrees, we would say. Well, Maya Angelou has received several honorary degrees for her accomplishments. She also received awards from the government: the National Medal of Arts, as well as the Lincoln Medal.

Maya Angelou has an unusual writing ritual, where a "ritual" (ritual) is a way things are done in the same manner – in the way time after time; that's a ritual, when you do something the same way. I have a morning ritual: I get up and there are certain things that I do every morning at about the same time. Well, Maya Angelou has a writing ritual. She wakes up at five o'clock in the morning and then she goes to a hotel. Once there, she lies on a bed in the hotel and writes on paper. She has a bottle of wine and a deck of cards – of playing cards so that she can play a game – a card game by herself called solitaire. She also has a Bible and a book called a "thesaurus" (thesaurus), which is like a dictionary but it gives you words that mean the same – are similar, what we would call synonyms. On a typical day, she writes about 10 to 12 pages. She edits those pages in the evening, usually eliminating things, getting them down to about three or four pages. So a rather unusual ritual for writing; I'm not sure why she goes to a hotel. I can understand the wine, of course!

Maya Angelou continues to write, but she is also on what we would call the lecture circuit in the U.S. A "lecture" is a formal speech, in this case, that you give to a large group of people. "Circuit" refers, in this case, to a series of places where you go that typically other speakers have gone before you. The "lecture circuit" refers to those famous people who go around speaking to groups, and that's almost all they do for their work. Angelou has also worked a little bit in



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movie and TV production and direction, and has written a few things. So, if you have the opportunity to find a book or a poem written by Maya Angelou, you might want to try and read it. She gives a unique perspective – a unique view of the African American experience in the late 20th century U.S.

Our next topic on this Café is a famous place instead of a famous person; it's called Universal Studios. A "studio" (studio) is a place where some artistic work is done. You could have a studio for painting; you could have a studio for photography. In this case, we're talking about a place where you make television shows or movies. There are many studios here in Los Angeles. Some of them are up in a neighborhood of Los Angeles called Hollywood; I'm sure you have heard of it. Hollywood is not a city however; Hollywood is just an area, and more generally it's a word that we use to describe the entire business of making movies and TV shows in the area of Los Angeles. There are several movie studios near where I work and live, and Los Angeles is a city where many people work for these companies. We sometimes call it in L.A. "The Industry." When someone says he works in "The Industry," we mean he works in television or making movies, perhaps it could be someone working in the music business as well. "Industry" is a general term to describe any kind of business, but in L.A. when you say "The Industry" you mean the, typically, movie or TV business.

Well, that's what a studio is. Universal Studios is one of the movie studios here in Los Angeles. It's one of the oldest; it started back in 1912. It is currently part of another company called NBC, which is a television network, one the four large companies that makes television in the U.S.

Universal Studios, however, is more than just a place where movies are made. Part of the place where they make movies – part of the studio is actually somewhere you can visit. It's called a "theme park," or an amusement park. These are places where there is entertainment; there are usually what we call are "rides," which are things that you get in and move you up very fast. A roller coaster, for example, is a ride you might find in a theme park or an amusement park. Disneyland, Disneyworld – these are theme parks.

As you would expect, Universal Studios theme park has a lot of rides related to TV shows and movies that have been made by Universal Studios. Again a ride, as a noun, in this case is a large machine that people sit in or stand on and it moves very quickly. It's supposed to be exciting. I personally don't like rides; I haven't been to Disneyland since I was nine years old. I have been to Universal Studios. It's, oh, maybe 30-40 minutes driving from where I live, maybe less.



Universal Studios has rides related to popular shows and movies such as The Simpsons, Jurassic Park, and Shrek. Well, last time I went to Universal Studios was 19 probably 94-95. I took a group of ESL students – college students there as part of a special program.

When you go to Universal Studios you can go on tours of movie sets. A “set” (set) is the place where the movie or TV show is filmed; it includes the buildings and the rooms that are used by the actors in the movie or show. For example, people who enjoy a popular television show called Desperate Housewives, which is made by Universal Studios, enjoy going to Universal Studios because you can actually walk up and down or drive down the famous street in this particular TV show called Wisteria. Of course, it isn't actually a street; it looks like one. The buildings that you see are not real buildings. On a typical television or movie set the buildings are usually what we call façades. A “façade” (faç – with a small mark underneath, like a comma underneath the “c” – ade) is just the front of a building, there's nothing actually behind it. There was a great – well, a good movie called The Truman Show with Jim Carrey a few years ago, and this was a case where you had someone who was living basically in a movie studio, and many of the buildings were not real even though they looked real.

Universal Studios also has live entertainment – performance by dancers and musicians. There are lots of nice restaurants near Universal Studios, in an area called CityWalk. You can go to CityWalk for free – in fact, L.A.'s subway actually goes there from the downtown area. However, if you want to go into Universal Studios you have to buy a ticket. I think the tickets nowadays are not cheap – rather expensive. For anyone over the age of three it's close to 80 dollars for the cheapest ticket, and there are even more expensive tickets than that. So it is expensive, but if you're coming to Los Angeles and have some time and you like television and movies, you'll probably have a good time.

I should mention before we leave this topic there are actually three Universal Studios theme parks. The most famous one is here in Los Angeles; there's also one in Orlando, Florida, which is where Disneyworld is – Florida is in the southeastern part of the U.S.; and I believe now there is a Universal Studios park in Japan.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.



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Our first question comes from César (César) in Spain. César wants to know the difference between “wise,” “savvy,” and “clever.” All three of these words have similar meanings.

“Wise” (wise) means that you make good decisions for good reasons. We might describe a leader of a group of being wise, or a president of a country if they are a good leader we might say they are wise – they make good decisions. “Clever” (clever) also means that you are smart; you’re intelligent, you’re able to solve problems quickly. It’s a little different than “wise,” “wise” is someone who has a lot of knowledge about something, for example, who makes good decisions. A clever person is a very intelligent person, who can often think very quickly about a problem and solve it. “Wise” is used in talking usually about important subjects: the meaning of life, or what the best way is to solve a major problem. “Clever” is more related to perhaps less important problems. There’s also an idea about “clever” that it is someone who knows how to do something or solve a problem in an inventive way – in a new or creative way.

“Savvy” (savvy) means to be able to understand and make decisions – to understand a situation and make decisions about a particular situation. So again, it’s related to “clever” and “wise.” But there’s a particular emphasis in this word on what we would call shrewdness or astuteness. That is, when someone is aware of the situation – aware of similar situations and is able to make a decision or take an action that will benefit him or her or his or her organization in such away that it shows that you are knowledgeable about many practical things related to that topic. So you could have, for example, someone who decides to sell their stocks in the stock market, their partial ownership in a company, a week before the company goes bankrupt, before the company loses its business – goes out of business. That’s someone who we would say is savvy. Now, they were able to understand the situation and figure it out. Of course, you could just be lucky! But someone who knows what they’re doing in that situation, we would say they were savvy. Of course, you could also say they were wise or clever, but savvy has a particular emphasis on resulting in a benefit for that person because of their awareness of the larger situation.

Let’s move on to Claire (Claire) in France, who wants to know wants to know the meaning of the word “delicatessen” (delicatessen). A delicatessen, which is usually shortened to the word “deli” (deli), is a restaurant or a store that prepares sandwiches, usually using some sort of sliced or cut meat. They’ll also sell salads and cheese. In the United States, a deli usually sells what we call cold cuts. This is sliced meat for sandwich. They’ll also sell cheese – sliced or cut



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cheese, salads, and other things. Sandwiches, however, are the most common type of food that you would buy at a deli or delicatessen. Nowadays, the big grocery stores, where you go to buy food, have delis in them, where you can buy food or sandwiches that are already made. The original definition, however, was a separate restaurant or shop that sold these particular kinds of food.

The word itself comes from German, and it means fine foods, even though, in fact, we don't find the best kind of food necessarily in a deli – well, good meat, good sandwiches. Delis have been associated in the United States with Italians: an Italian deli. There are also especially in New York City a lot of Jewish delis. Here in Los Angeles, we also have a Jewish deli restaurant called Jerry's Famous Deli. I go there often!

Finally, Rodrigo (Rodrigo) in Venezuela wants to know the difference between “end up” and “wind up,” (wind) up. Both of these expressions refer to the result of some choice or action, what happens at the end. “How did the game end up?” “It ended up with the Dodgers losing to the San Francisco Giants.” Which is very sad, of course! You could also say, “How did the game wind up?” “It wound up (notice the past tense – it wound up) that the Giants beat the Dodgers.”

So, “end up” and “wind up” are results of a situation. “End up” only means that. However, “wind up” has some additional meanings. In the game of baseball, it describes the way a pitcher will throw the ball when there is no one on base – no one who is on either first, second, or third base. Also, in the past tense we use the expression “to be wound up” to describe someone who is very anxious, or nervous, or full of energy but in a negative sort of way, perhaps because of stress.

If you are stressed about your English and want to get some help, you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com. We don't have the opportunity to answer every question, 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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