



TOPICS

The Secret Service; tween culture; on versus upon; exclamations “My God” and “Jesus Christ”; evidence versus proof

GLOSSARY

currency – type of money that is made and used by a country

* Which currency do the countries Thailand and Norway use?

to counterfeit – to make fake money; to make an exact copy of something valuable to get other people to believe it is real

* The thieves tried to counterfeit paintings by Picasso, but the police caught them before they were able to sell them.

agent – a person who works for an organization or government agency that enforces the law and/or protects people

* The woman identified herself as a government agent and said that she was investigating the selling of secrets to other countries.

to shield – to stand between someone and something that is harmful or dangerous, so that the harmful or dangerous thing will hit one’s own body before it hits the other person

* We put up an umbrella at the beach to shield the baby from the sun.

assassination – killing an important person, such as a president or senator

* The assassination of Abraham Lincoln was a tragic event in American history.

bravery – courage; not being afraid to do something difficult or dangerous

* The boys thought they could show their friends their bravery by swimming to the other side of the dangerous river.

to lay (one’s) life on the line – to risk one’s life; to do something that might make one die

* Soldiers in a war zone lay their lives on the line every day.

tween – children, and especially girls, who are no longer little kids, but are not yet teenagers; girls between the ages of 8 and 12

* When Ula was a tween, she tried to dress and talk like her older sisters.



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buying power – a group that buys a lot of things; a group that has a lot of influence on what people buy

* People between the ages 18 and 24 have a lot of buying power when it comes to music downloads.

controversial – something that many people don't agree on

* Reducing employees' vacation time was a controversial decision the company made to lower costs.

distinct – clearly very different from other things; easy to tell the difference between one thing and other things of the same type

* Cathy's dress was distinct from the other girls' dresses because it was red instead of pink.

clothing line – a group of clothes that are designed by one company and marketed to a particular group of people

* McQ is a new clothing line for young, hip podcasters who like to sing.

upon – placement of an object so that it rests in contact with the top of a surface; immediate afterward

* Upon entering the room, she placed her hands upon the table and began to cry.

“My God” – an exclamation showing surprise, shock, fear, or disgust

* My God, when are you going to stop telling lies and start telling me the truth?

“Jesus Christ” – an exclamation showing severe surprise, shock, fear, or disgust that may be offensive to some religious people

* When the boxes fell on Jim's head, he said, “Jesus Christ, that hurt!”

evidence – a sign of something; things that would lead to a conclusion, such as items found at the scene of a crime, or written or spoken statements made to the police or other official

* I don't believe it. What evidence do you have that my son stole the candy from the store?

proof – a combination of events or items of evidence that makes someone believe a certain conclusion; something that shows something to be a fact

* I have a security camera tape as proof that your son stole the candy from our store.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

The Mickey Mouse Club

Well-known performers get their start in many different ways. Some actors begin by being in “commercials” (advertisements on television or radio) and some singers begin by winning local or national singing competitions.

Some of the most famous performers today got their start on a television show called The Mickey Mouse Club. The show began in 1955 and was produced by Walt Disney Productions, an “arm” (section) of the larger company that now owns and operates Disneyland and Disneyworld, among other “theme parks” (amusement park with rides).

The Mickey Mouse Club was a “variety show” on which a group of young actors and singers performed “skits” (short comedy act) and sang. The original show only lasted four “seasons” (years) and was cancelled in 1959.

In 1989, however, The Disney Channel, a popular children’s cable television station, decided to “revive” (begin again) the show. The teenage performers on the show did a mixture of skits, comedy acts, and songs. These performers were called “The Mouseketeers” because of Disney’s popular cartoon characters Mickey Mouse and Minnie Mouse. The Mouseketeers recorded their own versions of popular songs and created music videos for them.

Some well-known performers who began their career on The Mickey Mouse Club include the singers Britney Spears, Justin Timberlake, and Christina Aguilera. Several famous actors also got their start as Mouseketeers, including Keri Russell and Ryan Gosling.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

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This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 198. 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 the Secret Service, the organization and the people that protect the President of the United States. There's a lot of, I wouldn't say mystery, but a lot of interest in the Secret Service; it's one of those government organizations that people like to talk about, that movies are often made about. We'll also talk about how companies are marketing their products to "tweens," children who are no longer little kids, but aren't yet teenagers. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

On this Café we're going to talk about a U.S. government "agency," an organization that is part of the U.S. government, known as the Secret Service. The Secret Service has two main "roles," two main things that it does that don't seem related to each other at all. One thing is to prevent counterfeiting of U.S. currency; the other is protecting the American presidents and presidential candidates.

To understand these two different roles, and we'll explain more of each, it's important to understand the history of this organization. Back in the Civil War, in the mid part of the 19th century, there was a problem, at the end of the war in particular, with people counterfeiting U.S. currency. "Currency" is the type of money that is used in a country. In the United States, our currency is the U.S. dollar. In Europe, the currency, or in much of Europe, the currency is the Euro. To "counterfeit" currency means to make fake money or false money. People who counterfeit 100 dollar bills, pieces of paper that are worth a certain amount of money, people who counterfeit 100 dollar bills buy special paper to make these bills look just like a real 100 dollar bill, but they're not made by the government. There are some people who are very good at counterfeiting and it



can be almost impossible for the ordinary person to see the difference between a counterfeit bill and a real bill. Of course, counterfeiters spend the money, and that money goes to other people who don't realize that it's not real money.

Obviously the government doesn't want people to counterfeit currency, and so it created an organization at the end of the Civil War to do just that, to investigate and to find these people and arrest them, and this was called the Secret Service. It was called the Secret Service because really it was what today we would call a domestic intelligence agency. Its job was to gather information about what was happening here in the United States and, in particular, about people who were involved in counterfeiting.

During this time, the Secret Service was part of what we call the U.S. Treasury Department. The federal government – the national government has different departments (different offices; different organizations) that take care of different parts of the government. The Treasury was responsible and is responsible for making the money – printing the money, and so the Secret Service was part of the Treasury Department.

However, at the turn of the 20th century – that is, in the early part of the 20th century, there was one of our presidents – another one of our presidents, President McKinley, who was assassinated (he was killed; he was shot). “To assassinate” means to kill an important person. After this “assassination” (the noun that comes from “assassinate”), the federal government decided it needed a special police force to protect the president and the vice-president. They didn't have, however, any federal police forces that they could use, or didn't have very many, so they decided to ask the Secret Service, which was already a police force involved in national domestic intelligence, to take over the job of protecting the president. So that's how the Secret Service got these two very different jobs: one to stop counterfeiting, the other to protect the president and the vice-president.

The Department of the Treasury was where the Secret Service was located for many years until only very recently. After the events of September 11th, 2001, the U.S. created something called the Department of Homeland Security. “Homeland” means here in the U.S. – national, domestic security. This Department of Homeland Security is now the home for the Secret Service, although they continue to do the counterfeit work, or working against, I should say, people who counterfeit money. So they still have a Treasury related role as well as their presidential security role.



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Most people are familiar with the Secret Service; if you've seen movies, you will see the Secret Service, usually men that are dressed in black suits. We call these police officers, really, who work for the Secret Service "agents." These are the people who wear the dark suits, the dark sunglasses, and seem always to be talking into their "earpieces," small microphones that they wear so they can communicate with other agents that are protecting the president.

The Secret Service protects the U.S. president, the vice-president, and their families. Beginning in 1968, the Secret Service also started protecting the major political candidates, people who were trying to be elected as president. This is because in 1968 one of those candidates, Robert F. Kennedy (the brother of President John F. Kennedy, who was assassinated in 1963), was, himself, assassinated here in the city of Los Angeles in June of 1968 as he was running for election to the presidency. So now, the presidential candidates receive Secret Service protection while they are running for president; after the election, they no longer have that protection.

The Secret Service is needed because, as I just pointed out, being president of the United States, or of any country, can be a dangerous job. Just since the 1960s, four U.S. presidents have been attacked by people who want to kill them. President John F. Kennedy, I mentioned, was riding in a car when he was shot and killed. When the gun was fired – when the bullet was shot, the Secret Service agents who were riding in the car behind the president immediately jumped onto the car and tried to shield President Kennedy as well as the First Lady (the president's wife, Mrs. Kennedy), and the Vice-President as well.

To "shield" someone means to stand between someone and something that is dangerous, so that the dangerous thing will hit your body instead of that person. We use this verb to talk about things also that are not necessarily dangerous. For example, you might shield a young child from wind or from the rain. But in the case of presidents, Secret Service agents try to shield them from bullets that are being fired at them. They put their bodies between the President and the gun so that if the gun is shot, the Secret Service agent will be the one who gets killed, or gets the bullet. Unfortunately, it was too late for President Kennedy; he had already been shot.

President Ford, during the mid-1970s, was attacked twice during while he was president; he was not hurt. President George W. Bush was also attacked during his presidency, but he wasn't hurt, either.



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President Ronald Reagan was shot in Washington, D.C., back in 1981. One bullet hit him and punctured, or put a small hole in his lung. The Secret Service agents tried to shield the president from other bullets, and one Secret Service agent, in fact, was hit by a bullet in the abdomen, which is the part of your body over your stomach, in the center of your body. The Secret Service agent was not killed, and neither was President Reagan, who survived. In fact, he was the first U.S. president to survive an assassination attempt, when someone tried to kill the president.

Only one Secret Service agent has died trying to protect the president directly, one agent who actually got in between the assassin (the person trying to kill the president) and the president himself. That was back in 1950, when a couple of people tried to kill then President Harry Truman. There have been other Secret Service agents who have died, however, including one agent who died at the World Trade Center during the attacks of September 11th.

The Secret Service protects the presidents and their families while they are president; they also protect the vice-president and his or her family. After the president leaves office, it used to be that the president would have lifetime protection (for the rest of his life) and the rest of the life of his wife; they would be protected by the Secret Service. This law changed however in the 1990s, so that beginning with President George W. Bush, you, as ex-president, get protection for 10 years, so President George W. Bush will be protected by the Secret Service until 2018 – 2019, I suppose, if it's 10 years after when he leaves office. The same will be true for all future presidents including our current president until, of course, Congress changes the law, which they might do.

I mentioned that the Secret Service agents try to protect the president, when President Reagan was attacked, there was a special award for bravery to the Secret Service agent who was himself shot trying to protect the president. "Bravery" is something that you do that other people might find scary or frightening. Sometimes in a war, the men and women fighting the war – the soldiers will receive awards for bravery, for doing things that helped protect their fellow soldiers, the other people who were fighting, for example.

Secret Service agents have to go through a lot of special training to learn how to protect the president and other important people. It takes a special kind of person who is willing to lay down his life – to lay his life on the line, you might say, to protect another person. "To lay one's life on the line" means to risk one's life, to do something that might make you die; certainly, protecting the president



is one of those roles, but so is being a police officer, a firefighter, a soldier, and so forth.

The Secret Service normally doesn't wear uniforms; they wear a black suit usually, or dark clothing. However, the Secret Service also protects the White House, and if you visit the White House in Washington D.C. you will see Secret Service agents there.

There are about 6,500 employees of the Secret Service. Not all of those, of course, not even most of those are assigned to protect the president, but some of them, of course, are. The Secret Service travels with the president wherever he or she goes throughout the world. Obviously, they work with the local police in other parts of the world to help protect the president.

Now let's turn to a completely different topic and talk about tweens (tweens). Tweens are children, especially girls, who are not old enough yet to be considered teenagers, you have to be at least 13 to be called a teenager, but they're too old to be considered young children, so we're talking about children between the ages of 8 and 12 for example. They're sometimes called "tweens," they're in *between* being teenagers and children.

In the United States these tweens – these older children have a lot of buying power. "Buying power" is the ability to buy things. Their parents, of course, give them money, and this gives them buying power. But they also have buying power by influencing their parents, by telling their parents or asking their parents to buy certain things. That's why many companies now try to market to tweens, meaning they advertise – they try to get tweens to buy their products.

Marketing to tweens in the U.S. has been a little "controversial," something that people don't necessarily agree on. Critics, people who think that tween marketing is bad, say that young people aren't old enough to evaluate – to decide based upon these marketing messages the same way that adults can. If a company advertises by showing, for example, that buying a certain kind of clothes will make you popular, the tween might believe this without really thinking about it first. This is one of the criticisms of marketing to younger children, or in this case, to older children – to children, period.

Despite this criticism, however, many companies to market to tweens because it is very profitable, they can make a lot of money on it. Tweens also have something of a distinct culture, at least in the United States. When we say something is "distinct," we mean it's different from other things around it.



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American tweens have a distinct culture, because their music, the movies they go to see, the sports they play, the technology that they use is often different than the ones that adults use or that younger children use.

There are certain people who have become very popular in recent years with this tween group of customers; again, mostly girls, but not necessarily just girls. One person that has become popular is a singer and actress by the name of Miley Cyrus. She became famous while acting on a television show that was very popular called Hannah Montana, beginning back in 2006. Soon after that, she recorded a CD – a music CD that became very popular among tweens. She has gone on to make other CDs and a movie and has even written a book called Miles to Go, or at least someone wrote a book and put her name on it. She also has a clothing line, a group of clothes that are designed by a company to be marketed to a particular group of people – in this case, to tweens, so she has clothing that she sells these young girls. Miley Cyrus has been very successful; in the year 2008 she made 25 million dollars, which just shows – just demonstrates to us how profitable selling things to tween can be.

There's a cable company – a television company called Disney, which, of course, is associated with Disneyland and Disney World – Donald Duck and Mickey Mouse and so forth. This Disney Channel used to focus just on young children, but now that tweens are so profitable a group, it has begun creating products and entertainment for that tween market. They created Hannah Montana, where Miley Cyrus became popular; they also made a show called Lizzie McGuire, where the star, the most important actress, was a 12-year-old girl named Hilary Duff. The show became extremely popular and Disney began to use it and the actress to market other products to tweens: books, music, dolls, notebooks, and so forth. Some people think that the products from just that show, Lizzie McGuire, have made over 100 million dollars for the Disney Channel.

In the past, young children who become famous by acting on shows on the Disney Channel often go on to make music, to write books, to do other things to make money on their own. Now things have changed and the Disney Channel works with those young people to continue to make money with them with this new tween market.

I don't remember this being talked about when I was a tween – when I was an older child. It's certainly something that has become more popular in the last 15 and 20 years, the popularity of making things and selling things to tweens.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.



Our first question comes from Luis (Luis) in Peru. Luis wants to know the difference between the words “on” and “upon” (upon), when we use each of these words. For example, do you say, “I sit on a chair,” or “I sit upon a chair”?

Both “on” and “upon” are used to talk about the position of an object that rests or sits on another object or a surface. A cup can, for example, be placed on a table or upon a table. When we use these words to talk about position they really mean the same thing, however, “on” is much more common. “Upon” is a little formal; it is not used that much in modern English, certainly in conversational English. “On” sounds natural for most people. So if you’re looking for one or the other, you’re safest just to say “on,” “I am sitting on the chair” instead of “I am sitting upon the chair.” Again, it’s possible say “upon,” but it’s not very common.

There is, however, a different meaning for “upon.” “Upon” can also mean immediately afterwards. For example: “Upon hearing the news, my girlfriend began to cry.” “Upon” means immediately after she heard the news, the news that I didn’t love her, she began to cry. Sad, I know. But that was 25 years ago so I think she has recovered! This is a different use of “upon,” then, that is not the same as “on.” It means immediately afterward.

One more thing, I said that “on” and “upon” mean the same thing when we’re talking about placement, where something is – the location of something. However, “on” is used in connection with other verbs to form what we call phrasal verbs, or two-word verbs, and there you can’t use “upon” in the same way. For example: “Let’s get on with this project (let’s continue with this project).” You couldn’t say “Let’s get upon with this.” So when you see “on” in other cases, especially when it’s used to talk about, for example, the topic of something: “Do you have a book on the Civil War,” meaning about, or when “on” means something different because it’s connected with another verb, then you cannot use “upon” in the same way.

Our next question comes from Jan (Jan) in the Czech Republic. The question has to do with how we use phrases or expressions such as “my God” and “Jesus Christ.” How do we use these in public? Is it polite? Is it a good idea? It’s a good question because in English these expressions are used commonly, but some people don’t like them, so you have to be careful about when and where you use them. Let’s first start with the expression “my God.”

“My God” is usually not something that people will be bothered by; it won’t cause people to take offense in public, especially among adults. There are some



people who don't say it, however, who still think that using God's name that way, as an expression, is a bad idea, and so they may say something like "my goodness." A little older way of saying this was "gosh," but "gosh" isn't used very much anymore. But, you could say "my goodness" instead of "my God" if you wanted to make sure that you weren't going to bother anyone – offend anyone, especially someone who is religious.

"Jesus Christ" is still, although it's used by adults and is popular, it's still an expression that you need to be very careful about in public. There are still many – many more people, I should say, who might be offended, who might find that expression, which, of course, refers to the founder of the Christian religion, to be a little offensive, to be something that is not appropriate, for example, in public or even in a family, especially among young children. It's an expression you should definitely not use in any formal situation, and be very careful about using. In American television, for example, you will very rarely see that expression used on the popular programs. So I think it's best to avoid it. Some people, instead, use the word "jeez" (jeez). This is considered less offensive, less of a problem.

Finally Harry (Harry) in Canada wants to know the difference between "evidence" and "proof."

"Evidence" is a sign of something that would lead you to a certain conclusion. It's often used when talking about a crime, for example, someone who did something wrong. The police look for evidence, physical evidence, things that will indicate that happened, things that will indicate who did this crime – who committed this crime.

"Proof" is a combination of evidence and events that will make you believe that something is true; it will show that there is no doubt about it: "This receipt is proof that I bought these pants yesterday." You could also use the word "evidence" there, but "proof" is stronger; "proof" says there's no doubt about it, there's no question about it.

Evidence may point in a certain direction; it may indicate a certain conclusion but it isn't final, there's still some doubt. Proof is stronger than that; it's beyond doubt.

The word "proof" has some other meanings. As a verb, for example, "to proof" means to look at a piece of writing to make sure there are no mistakes; this is called "proofreading" or simply "proofing (something)."



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“Proof” can also mean a resistance to something. We say that something is “waterproof,” we mean that if it gets wet it won’t be damaged, such as a hat or a coat, a jacket, for example.

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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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