



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 208

TOPICS

Beauty pageants and controversies; the National Weather Service; like versus same as; how do you do?; what's up; have a good one

GLOSSARY

beauty pageant – beauty contest; a competition where the most beautiful person wins

* The only reason Gina is entering the beauty pageant is to win the prize – a \$20,000 scholarship for college.

to be judged – to be analyzed to determine how good something is

* These pies need to be judged as part of the baking contest to see which one is the best.

contestant – a person who competes in a contest; a person who tries to win a competition

* The game-show contestant answered the question correctly and won \$50,000!

articulate – able to say what one wants to say very clearly; able to speak clearly and well

* The speaker at the conference was articulate and funny, and everyone found his speech not only informative, but also entertaining.

talent – ability to do something creative or difficult

* I wish I had a talent for music, but every instrument I try to play sounds awful!

poise – a way of behaving where one is very confident and calm, completely in control of one's actions

* All three of the job candidates had good qualifications, but only Sierra had poise, too.

crown – a piece of metal worn on one's head, usually with a fancy shape and many expensive and shiny jewels

* When the king leaves the castle, he always takes off his crown.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 208

sash – a long piece of colored fabric where the ends are sewn together to make a large circle and is worn over one shoulder

* The gold-colored sash is part of the official uniform of the representatives from that country.

demeaning – to show someone less respect than one should; to make someone feel ashamed, uncomfortable, or embarrassed

* Sasha complained that it's demeaning for him to have to get coffee and run errands for his boss.

forecast – prediction; statement about what will happen in the future

* Can you check the forecast to see if it will be sunny for our picnic tomorrow?

warning – statement about bad things that might happen, telling people to be careful

* The principal gave all of the students a warning: Don't leave the school unless you're with a teacher.

to disseminate – to give information to many people

* Do you think calling people or sending them a letter is the best way to disseminate this information?

like – similar to; can be compared to; resembling

* Is this sweater like the one we saw at the other store?

same as – identical to; equal to

* Her new boyfriend is the same as her old one – rich and smart.

How do you do? – How are you?; a general polite phrase used when meeting someone for the first time, often when introduced by someone else

* - Let me introduce you to the Iraqi ambassador.
- How do you do?

what's up? – an informal greeting meaning, "How are you doing?," "What's going on with you?," or "How are you?"

* When I ran into Daniel at the mall, he said, "What's up? I haven't seen you around for a few weeks."



have a good one – a parting phrase meaning “have a good day/week/etc.”; an informal phrase used to say goodbye

- * - I'll see you next week.
- Okay, I'll see you then. Have a good one.

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Great Disaster Movies

The 1970s are known for many things, and one of these is the disaster movie. “Disaster movies” are movies about a major accident or weather event that has the “potential” (possibility) of hurting or killing many, many people. Two of the most popular disaster movies of all time came out in the 1970s: The Towering Inferno and The Poseidon Adventure.

The Towering Inferno had a “cast” (group of actors) of “A-list stars” (most popular performers), including Paul Newman and Fred Astaire. Something that is “towering” is something that is very tall, and an “inferno” is a large fire. This movie, then, is about a new building that is considered the world’s tallest “skyscraper” (a very tall building with many stories). Unfortunately, the building was made with “shoddy” (poor quality) materials, and a fire starts and “spreads” (moves out in area). The movie “centers around” (is primarily about) the rescue of the people in the building, including hundreds of important “dignitaries” (people with high positions; high-level officials).

Another classic disaster movie came out in the same year, 1972, and is called The Poseidon Adventure. This movie takes place on an “ocean liner” (large luxurious passenger ship) on “New Year’s Eve” (December 31st). The ship is “struck by” (hit by) a large “tidal wave,” which is a very large ocean wave usually caused by a major movement in the earth under the ocean. The ship is turned upside down and there are only a “handful of” (few) “survivors” (people who live through a dangerous event).

Both of these movies were very popular when they came out. Both also won many awards not only for acting, but also for cinematography, the art of photographing or filming a movie.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 208.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 208. 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 beauty pageants, or contests where you have beautiful and sometimes talented women. We'll also talk about something that most Americans know about, the National Weather Service and what that is. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion about beauty pageants. A "beauty pageant" (pageant) is sometimes called a "beauty contest." It's a competition where usually you have beautiful women who are competing to see who is the most beautiful. There are many beauty pageants in America; in fact, they're common for girls of all ages and for young women, even for older women. Most of these are small beauty pageants for a particular school, a particular city, or town. For example, you might be, say, a 17-year-old girl that enters a beauty contest – a beauty pageant, and you win for your particular town or city. Then you might go to another competition, with girls representing many different towns and cities, or representing your state.

The winners of these competitions usually are called Miss, and then whatever city, town, or place they're from. So, if you have a beauty pageant here in Los Angeles and you win, you would be called Miss Los Angeles. You are the winner of the beauty contest and supposedly the most beautiful woman in Los Angeles.

Well, there are couple of different organizations that have beauty pageants, not just locally but also at the state level and the national level, even at the international level. In the United States, there are two main beauty pageant, or systems of beauty pageants. One is called Miss America and the other is called Miss U.S.A. The Miss America pageant is on television, as is the Miss U.S.A.



pageant. If you win the Miss U.S.A. award – if you become Miss U.S.A., then you go on to an international beauty pageant called Miss Universe, where every country, or many countries send the winner of their competition, supposedly the most beautiful woman from that particular country. The Miss America Pageant, however, is probably more popular – more well known here in the United States.

The women who compete in the Miss America Pageant obviously need to be beautiful, that's why they're called beauty pageants, but they're also judged on other things. In this case, "to be judged" means to be analyzed and given, usually, a number of points between 1 and 10, showing how good you are at something. In the Olympics, for example, ice skaters are judged on their speed and ability to jump, among other things. You can judge something on many different criteria – many different things that you decide are important.

The Miss America contestants (the people who compete in the pageant are called "contestants" because it's a contest) are judged in five areas. The first is a personal interview with the judges, where the contestant receives points for being polite, being confident, being "articulate," meaning they are able to say what they want very clearly. The contestants are also judged on some "talent," the ability to do something creative or difficult. Many contestants choose singing or dancing as their talent, so they have to sing something or dance in a certain way and they are judged on that.

The third thing the contestants are judged on is called "Lifestyle and Fitness in Swimsuits," where "fitness" means their health, how athletic they are. The word "lifestyle" usually refers to how a person lives, the different habits that they have. When they have the competition on television, the contestants wear swimsuits, but they also are walking in high-heeled shoes. A "heel" (heel) is a back part of a shoe. "High-heeled" would be when the back part is raised up, usually a half-inch or maybe an inch or more. So, these women are walking in high-heeled shoes because high-heeled shoes tends to make a body of a women move in a certain way that people find attractive, I'm told. These women are wearing swimsuits and high-heeled shoes, and they walk across a "stage," which is a high place where everyone can see them. They're judged on their fitness and on their "posture," how straight their body is when they stand and walk. This is definitely the most controversial part of modern beauty pageants. Something that is "controversial" is something that people disagree about. There are many people who think it's wrong for women to be judged wearing swimsuits in front of everyone else, as if they were some sort of animal, but other people enjoy watching this part of the competition. I'm sure you can understand why, especially if you're a man!



The fourth thing the contestants are judged on is their eveningwear. “Eveningwear” means very nice clothes that you would wear to a special event, such as a wedding or a formal party at night – a New Year’s Eve party, for example. It isn’t the type of clothing that you would normally wear in the evenings. The contestants wear beautiful, long dresses and expensive jewelry, diamond rings and, well, diamond earrings, and that sort of thing – lots of diamonds. They’re judged on the way that they walk in these beautiful dresses, as well; they’re judged generally on something that we would call their poise. “Poise” (poise) is the way that you behave, the way that you move your body in a very confident, calm, and controlled manner.

The fifth part of the competition is when the contestants come on stage and they are asked a different question. The questions are usually about things that are happening in the news right now, what we would call current events. Contestants don’t know what the question will be before they’re asked it, so they have to be prepared with knowledge about what is going on in the world today.

Normally, when they have the Miss America pageant they show all 50 women, and then they select 10 or 15 women, and those are the only 10 and 15 that might perform (sing and dance), and then they narrow it down (meaning they reduce the number) usually to five women, and then those five women each answer a question. So not all of the women in the pageant answer the questions and go through all different five elements.

If you win the beauty pageant – if you become Miss America, you receive a crown and a sash. A “crown” is a piece of metal worn on your head, usually in a fancy shape with many expensive jewels such as diamonds. Kings and queens, for example, traditionally wear crowns. So the beauty pageant winner is (we even use it as a verb) “crowned” Miss America, meaning they’re given a crown. The sash is a long piece of colored fabric that has the ends sewn together to make a large circle, and this is worn over one shoulder of the winner of Miss America. Even the other contestants wear sashes, usually with the names of their states on it. This sash however, if you win, says “Miss America” in on it.

Throughout the next year, Miss America travels throughout the country, speaking usually about some particular charity or cause that she’s interested in. A Miss America might go around and try to improve education, help the homeless, fight against hunger. Miss America goes to many small cities and towns, ceremonies when, for example, a new business opens, or they might even go to importance sporting games – sporting events. Miss America can also appear in television



commercials, and, of course, many people try to get their picture taken with Miss America. Some people try to get Miss America's telephone number, but that's a different issue!

When you talk about the Miss America pageant to old people like me, they will remember someone by the name of Bert Parks. Bert Parks was the man who was the host of the Miss America pageant from 1955 until 1979, so almost 25 years. After the winner was announced for Miss America, the host (Bert Parks) would sing a song that many people know, at least those who grew up in the 70s:

*There she is, Miss America.
There she is, your ideal...*

That's all I remember. "Ideal" would be what you would want, what you would like to be. So there she is, Miss America. After she wins and a crown is put on her head and she puts the sash on, she walks down what we would call a "runway," which is part of the stage that goes out into the audience, and she waves to everyone who is clapping for her, of course.

I should mention that Miss Americas, after they win, go on and have careers in singing and acting or on television. To be a former Miss America – to have once won the Miss America crown is a rather prestigious thing, at least in the entertainment industry I would guess. "Prestigious" means it is highly valued; it is highly honored.

Some people believe that beauty pageants are good opportunities for young women to learn about themselves and become more confident. The winners of these beauty pageants often receive "scholarships," money they can use to pay for their college or university studies. There are others, however, who think that beauty pageants, in general, are demeaning to women. "To demean" (demean) something means to show someone less respect than you should, to make someone uncomfortable. For example, many people who have college degrees might think it would be demeaning for them to do something that did not require a college degree, such as cleaning bathrooms. People who believe that beauty pageants are demeaning to women think that they put too much importance on how a woman looks – her physical beauty, and not enough on her intelligence.

However, the Miss America Pageant continues; it has been going on since 1921, and I doubt it will stop any day soon. So that's the Miss America pageant, in particular. Again, there's another National pageant called the Miss U.S.A. pageant. I should add that the home of the Miss America pageant is Atlantic



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 208

City, New Jersey, on the east coast of the United States, and it's famous for having the Miss America pageant there.

Now let's change topics and talk about another famous organization in the United States, but one that is a little less, how we should say, sexy, and that would be the National Weather Service, which used to be called the Weather Bureau. The National Weather Service is an American government agency that provides information about the weather and the climate in the United States.

The National Weather Service gathers information from all over the U.S. It has many regional centers, over 122 offices that give local weather forecasts. A "forecast" is a prediction, what you think is going to happen in the future, so a weather forecast would be saying what you think will happen tomorrow – will it rain, will it snow, will it be sunny, and so forth. Every morning, I look at the forecast in the newspaper to see what the weather will be like so I can decide what I'm going to wear. Unfortunately – or fortunately, here in Los Angeles the weather is almost always the same. In fact, there was a famous movie called L.A. Story, where the weather-caster didn't really have to think much on most days because the weather was always going to be the same: sunny and 72 degrees. That's a great movie, by the way. If you haven't seen L.A. Story, it makes fun of life here in Los Angeles but also, I think, is somewhat accurate in many ways.

Getting back to the National Weather Service, 'cause it's such an exciting topic – National Weather Service also "issues," or gives out what are called "weather warnings," statements about bad things that might happen, telling people, basically, to be careful because there may be bad weather coming. This could include hurricanes and tornado warnings; these are strong winds that can damage property and kill people.

The National Weather Service has special tools for "disseminating" its warnings, for sharing its warnings with other people. When a storm is "approaching" an area, when it is coming close to a certain area, the local radio programs and television stations will often be interrupted with a few loud beeps to get your attention. A beep is *beep-beep-beep-beep*, and when you hear that you know that there's going to be some special announcement and these are often from the National Weather Service, which are warning you about some storm or some weather problem that you should be aware of.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 208

You can go to the website of the National Weather Service at weather.gov (g-o-v) to see what the weather will be like in a particular area in the United States if you live here or are traveling here.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Juergen (Juergen) in Germany. The question has to do with the difference between "like" and "same as."

"Like" means similar to, it can be compared to. For example: "That shirt is like the one I bought," it is similar to the one I bought. You can use "same as," but that usually means identical; it's exactly the same; it's equal. "I bought a shirt the same as Bob's," it's the exact same shirt or type of shirt. So, "like" means similar but not necessarily exactly the same, and "same as" means identical, equal, the same.

However, both of these terms can mean slightly different things if we use them in other expressions. For example, we have an expression "just like," which, in fact, means the same as "same as." So, "just like" does mean exactly like. "This school looks just like the one I went to back in the 1970s," it's the same as, identical.

Similarly, you can also say "almost the same as," which would mean, in that case, closer to "like." "These shoes are almost the same as the ones I bought," that means same as these shoes are like the ones I bought. So, if you put a "just" in front of "like," then it means the same as "same as," and if you put "almost the same as" it means the same as "like." Confusing, a little, I know!

"Like" is also a verb, it can mean to enjoy something: "I like ice cream." "Like" can also be used, especially in informal conversation, to take up space, what we would call a conversation filler like "uh, um." It's very popular among some teenagers and younger speakers, shall we say. If you listen to a teenager, you may hear something such as: "So, I was, like, gonna go to the store. And then, like, my friend, she told me, like, she wasn't going to, like, really want to go with me. And I said, 'Well, like, okay, fine.'" That would be an example.

Jan (Jan) from the Czech Republic wants to know how we use the phrase – the question "How do you do?" When is this used?

"How do you do?" is a very polite, formal phrase used when meeting someone for the first time. I've never met this person before and I may be introduced to



them, I may say, “Oh, Mr. President. How do you do?” It means the same as how are you, but it’s a little more formal. You can also use the expression “it’s nice to meet you.” “It’s nice to meet you,” and you would say, “It’s nice to meet you, too.” However, only one person normally would say “How do you do?” If someone says, “How do you do?” you would say, “Very well. It’s nice to meet you,” or something else. You don’t also say “How do you do?” to the person back. But when you say “It’s nice to meet you,” you’re not asking a question; you’re making a statement, so it’s okay to say “It’s nice to meet you, too.”

Finally, Semere (Semere), originally from Ethiopia, now living in Boston, wants to know the meaning of the expression “what’s up?” and “have a good one.”

“What’s up?” is a general informal way of saying hello to someone. It means how are you doing, or what’s going on with you, what’s new with you. It was very popular in the 80s and the 90s. There was a famous beer commercial where there were several people saying to each other “What’s up?”, but they would say it in a very funny way, something like “Whassup?” – something like that, that’s not a very good imitation. But, “what’s up?” is an informal way of saying how’s it going. It’s still used; sometimes people will even just say “s’up,” meaning what’s up, they won’t even say the “what,” they’ll just say “s’up.” This is very informal, however, and probably not something that you would want to say unless you felt very comfortable with the person and with your English.

The second phrase, “have a good one,” is something that you would say when you were saying goodbye to someone. I would say it’s an informal, casual way of saying goodbye to someone. You’re wishing them to have a good day or a good evening. But instead of saying “have a good evening,” which is rather formal, you would say “have a good one.” You would often use this expression when, perhaps, it would be a while before you would see that other person, but not necessarily. It’s definitely not something you would use with your boss or in a formal setting. There, you would just say “have a good evening,” “have a good day,” or simply “goodbye.”

Before we say goodbye, I want to ask you to send us your comments and questions. We don’t have time to answer all of them, but we’ll do the best we can. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

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ENGLISH CAFÉ – 208

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