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TOPICS

DUIs and Mothers Against Drunk Drivers; Famous Americans: Martha Stewart; traffic versus transit; at all versus not at all; describing someone who works from home

GLOSSARY

influence – the power to change someone's opinion or behavior

* Parents sometimes wish they had more influence over their adult children's decisions.

impaired – not working well; not functioning as something normally does; working poorly

* When doctors are overworked, their ability to treat patients may be impaired.

sobriety – not being drunk; being sober; not intoxicated

* After giving up drinking for three years, David still finds it difficult sometimes to live with sobriety.

penalty – punishment; consequences of doing something wrong or against the law

* The teacher said that the penalty for coming to class late is extra homework.

to lobby – for a person or a group of people to work to influence the opinions of those making rules or laws, so that they will vote a certain way

* Our organization lobbies for more government jobs for the poor.

non-profit – an organization whose goal is not to make money, but instead to make society better in some way

* Rick left his high-paying job to work for a non-profit to help sick children.

fatality – deaths that result from an accident or a disaster

* The earthquake caused over 10,000 fatalities.



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business magnate – a person who has become very well-known within an area of business and has a lot of money

* My idea is to approach business magnates to see if they'll donate money to our cause.

empire – a large company or group of companies controlled by one person or one family

* The Carlson family's supermarket empire is in serious financial trouble.

homemaking – establishing or managing a home; doing the work needed in a home, including cooking, cleaning, taking care of children, paying bills, and more

* Pedro grew up in a house with his mother, grandmother, and aunt, and learned all about homemaking.

insider information – information about a company's plans or financial condition when that information has not been shared with the general public

* If we try to make money using insider information, we may get into serious trouble.

perfectionism – trying to do everything perfectly; refusing to accept anything that is not perfect

* Monique grew up in an unhappy home, with her parents demanded perfectionism from all of their children and accepted nothing less.

traffic – the movement of vehicles or people along a route; having too many people or vehicles along a route

* Traffic is moving smoothly, so we should be home in less than 30 minutes.

transit – moving people or things from one place to another, especially by public vehicles or routes for local transportation

* More and more people are using public transit to travel between home and work.

at all – in any way; for any reason

* Edward doesn't like cheese at all and won't eat any foods with cheese in them.

not at all – not in any way; not for any reason; not even a little; a polite response when someone says "thank you"

* This hotel room is not at all what we were promised when we reserved it online.



telecommuter – someone who works at home on a computer with a connection to a central office or employer through Internet access.

* Our company employs 30 full-time employees and about half of them are telecommuters.

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Drunk Dialing and Drunk Texting

Drunk driving is a major problem that has caused many deaths and a lot of injury and damage. When people are drunk, they tend to do many things that they would not normally do “sober” (not intoxicated; not drunk). Far less serious but also “problematic” (causing trouble) is when people “drunk dial” and “drunk text.”

“Drunk dialing” is a fairly new term referring to people who make phone calls while they’re drunk, and “drunk texting” is an even newer term referring to someone who sends text messages while drunk. We usually use these terms when we’re talking about people who get drunk and who are feeling lonely and decide to call or text a “former” (ex; old) girlfriend or boyfriend, a current “love interest” (someone we like romantically), or someone who one likes romantically but who doesn’t know about one’s feelings.

When people are drunk, they sometimes do things that we wish they could “take back” (retrieve; undo). Unfortunately, saying things to someone on the telephone, leaving a “voicemail message” (recorded phone message), or sending a text message are things that cannot be taken back. Once it is said or sent, there is “no going back” (returning to where one began).

Worst of all, people who drunk dial or drunk text are often “ridiculed” (made fun of; laughed at) and the messages they sent are shared with other people, people for whom the message was not “intended” (meant for). The result is often a lot of embarrassment and sometimes “permanent” (lasting; not temporary) damage to an important personal or professional relationship.



COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 240.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 240. 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 DUIs, or driving under the influence of alcohol, and in particular about an American organization that most Americans have heard of that tries to stop drunk driving, called Mothers Against Drunk Drivers, or MADD (MADD). We're also going to continue our series on famous Americans, this time we'll talking about a famous woman in the U.S. named Martha Stewart. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a discussion of DUIs, or driving under the influence, normally the influence of alcohol. Normally when we say you are driving under the influence of alcohol we mean that you are driving while you are drunk. You have had too much wine, too many beers, too much whiskey. Whatever your alcoholic beverage (drink) is, you have had too much, and now you are driving under the influence of that alcohol, and of course that can be very dangerous. There's also another "acronym," that is a group of letters that stands for something else, called "DWI," driving while intoxicated. "To be intoxicated" means something similar to being drunk, but it can also mean that you have been taking other drugs, maybe smoking marijuana and so you become intoxicated. It's like being drunk I guess, I don't know!

As I mentioned, DUI has the word "influence" in it; "influence," normally refers to the power to change someone's opinion or someone's behavior. For example, some people worry that movie stars and musicians have too much influence on how young people, especially teenagers, think and act. The phrase "under the influence" however, as I mentioned, means that you are intoxicated or drunk, and therefore that your thinking is impaired. When we say something is "impaired" (impaired) we mean it isn't working well, it isn't working properly. Nowadays, for someone who cannot see we used to, and still do in many cases, call that person



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“blind” (blind), someone who is not able to see. Then we started saying “visually impaired.” That is your “vision,” your ability to see has been impaired. It is no longer the way it should be, or it is not the way it should be. Someone who is unable to hear would be “deaf” (deaf) – deaf, but we could also say that person is “hearing impaired.”

Driving under the influence of alcohol is a very serious and dangerous “hazard,” a dangerous thing, and is of course against the law in every state of the United States. Each state has its own laws about how much you can drink – how much alcohol you can drink before you are considered driving under the influence or drunk. Alcohol unfortunately plays a role in many car accidents and deaths, as you know. Individuals who have been caught by the police drinking too much alcohol are usually very heavily “fined,” meaning they have to pay a lot of money. Sometimes you can be sent to jail – to prison – because you have been caught driving under the influence. The laws, nowadays, are much harsher. “Harsher” means that they are more difficult in terms of the conditions that you have to go through, in this case your punishment.

Police can stop, or pull over, cars and trucks they think are being operated by drivers who are under the influence of alcohol. For example, if a police officer sees a car moving back and forth as it drives down the street they may suspect that person is drunk, and so they can stop that car and test the person. So when you are “pulled over,” that is when you are stopped by a police officer, the police will usually conduct some sort of test to see if you are drunk. This is not a written test; this is what we call a field sobriety test. “Sobriety” (sobriety) means being sober, and being sober means that you are not drunk; sober is the opposite of drunk: “I am sober this morning.” So, the officer then is going to test you to see if you are sober. We call it a field sobriety test because you are not at the police station, you are out in the regular world; “out in the field” is sometimes a phrase we use to describe that. These tests may involve you walking in a straight line, which of course is difficult if you have been drinking too much. It may involve you standing on one leg. More commonly nowadays it involves breathing into a machine that measures how much alcohol is in your breath, and therefore how much alcohol you have drunk.

“Penalties”, which are punishments or consequences, for driving under the influence of alcohol, have, as I say, increased steadily over the last 30 years. “Steadily” meaning it seems each year they get harsher and harsher. These penalties have increased largely because of organizations that lobby around the cause of drunk driving. “To lobby” (lobby) means that a group of people try to



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influence the law; they try to influence opinions, especially the opinions of people who are in government, in order to change the law. For example, many car companies try to lobby the government to make sure there isn't what they think is too much regulation of their business.

One organization that has become very famous in the U.S. is MADD, which stands for Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD is another acronym). This organization is a non-profit organization. "Profit" is when you make money; that's what most businesses try to do. A "non-profit" organization is not worried about making money. They're an organization that tries to accomplish certain things. Often, they are organizations that people donate their money to in order to carry out their work. Mothers Against Drunk Driving was founded, when I was in high school, in 1980 by a woman named Candace Lightner. She had a thirteen-year-old daughter who was killed by a drunk driver.

Mothers Against Drunk Driving is, as I said, made up with people who want to stop people from driving while intoxicated, or under the influence. They have made laws much stronger against this activity. They have tried to prevent those who are not yet of legal age from drinking, but we would call underage drinking. "Underage drinking" is when you have high school and college students who are drinking illegally. The legal age, I believe in every state in the U.S. is 21 for drinking alcohol; you must be 21 years old before you can go into a bar and ask for a drink. When I was growing up the age was lower; in Minnesota at the time that I was growing up it was 19. But it changed in the early to mid-1980s, and now it is 21 like it is everywhere else.

One thing that this organization MADD tries to do is reduce fatalities that are caused by drunk driving; that's their main purpose. A "fatality" (fatality) is a death that results from an accident or from a disaster. "Injuries" is when you get hurt but you don't die. During, for example, the Labor Day weekend, which is a weekend at the end of the summer in early September, or New Year's Day, there are unfortunately many people who are drinking more alcohol than they should, and so what some police do is they set up sobriety checkpoints. A "checkpoint" is when the police block the road, and everyone who comes has to either answer some questions or they have to look at you to see if you are not drunk. For example, they can test you to see if you are drunk if they think you are drunk. That's a sobriety checkpoint.

Because of the lobbying of groups like MADD, the number of deaths from alcohol-related accidents has decreased since the 1980s, and the penalties have



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increased. In 1984, the group worked to pass a law that changed the drinking age to 21; I mentioned it was 19 when I was in college. More recently, the group has tried to reduce what's called the blood alcohol limit – the legal limit for blood alcohol. That refers to how much alcohol is in your blood, and of course that's related, in part, to how much you have drunk as well as how big you are. If you have a big body you can drink more alcohol, and the alcohol in your blood will be relatively less. The blood alcohol level in most states is either .08 or .10; MADD has been trying to reduce it to .08, the lower limit.

Finally, some states have changed their laws so that if you are caught drunk while driving, you lose your driving license; perhaps for six months or a year you cannot drive legally, especially if this has happened more than once. So, it's a very serious issue; you do not want to come to the United States if you are not from here, and go drinking and then driving. It's a bad idea not just for you, but of course, for everyone else.

Now we're going to continue our series on famous Americans; we're going to look at the life and successful career of Martha Stewart. A "career" is what you spend your life doing. My current career is a podcaster, for example. It's kind of like your job, but it implies that it is something you are doing for a long time during your life.

Martha Stewart is known to almost every American. She's a television host – that is she has a television show, she's a book author, she's a magazine publisher, and, perhaps most importantly, she is a business magnate. The term "business magnate" (magnate) refers to a person who has become very "prominent," that is very well known and famous and has a lot of money – someone who is very wealthy, we would say.

Martha Stewart developed her business empire by focusing on her strong passion or her interest for activities at home. An "empire" (empire) is usually a group of countries or people that are ruled by one very large government. We think of, for example, the Roman Empire in ancient times, where the government of Rome ruled over large parts of the Mediterranean area. Well, in this case we are talking about an empire of businesses. An empire means a company or a corporation usually that is controlled by a single person or a single family.

Before talking about Martha Stewart's empire, I want to talk a little bit about who Martha Stewart is, where she comes from. She was born in the state of New Jersey, which is on the East Coast of the United States, next to New York, in



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1941. Her parents were Polish Americans; that is, her relatives were originally from Poland – the country of Poland in Europe. She grew up in a family where her mother was very interested in cooking, and taught Martha how to cook. She taught her how to sew (sew), that is to make clothing, for example. Her father was very interested in gardening. He liked to go into the area behind his house and plant different types of vegetables and flowers. So, she grew up in an environment that was very interested in things done at home.

She, when she grew older, began a modeling career briefly, and then went to a famous university, Barnard College in New York City, where she initially studied chemistry. She was a very smart student. She married a lawyer. She returned to college and actually got her degree, I believe, in history. She eventually became a stockbroker; she worked on Wall Street buying and selling stocks, so she had a lot of business experience.

During the 1970s, she started a catering business in her home. A “catering (catering) business” is when you cook food for someone’s party, someone’s wedding, someone’s birthday; they pay you to cook the food and bring it to their location. Well, her catering business became very successful. Eventually she wrote a book which many people bought, and made her famous. The book was a “cookbook,” a book of recipes – of instructions about how to make different kinds of food.

Eventually she went on in the 1980s to write to many books that became very popular. She started to appear on television. In 1990 she started her own magazine called Martha Stewart Living, and continued to have many television shows. She wrote and talked about all kinds of things related to what we might call homemaking. “Homemaking” (one word) means managing your house; it’s often used to describe what women, particularly, do when they stay home and take care of their children, while their husband works full-time. But of course, that’s not necessarily the only way you can use that term.

Martha Stewart began, as I said, to appear on television; she was on popular TV programs such as The Oprah Winfrey Show (if you don’t know who Oprah is, she’s even more famous than Martha Stewart; listen to English Café 5 – number five on our website). Later, as I said, she began to produce her own magazine, and in 2001, she was voted by one magazine as the third most powerful woman in America. She was very – and is very, very rich.



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Martha Stewart, however, got into trouble. In 2001 she sold a lot of her stock, her partial ownership in a company, after receiving what is called insider information. “Insider (insider) information” is information about a company’s plans or their financial condition that the general public doesn’t know about; it’s secret information. She sold this stock right before the price of the stock dropped, and the government found out about this. In 2004, she was found guilty of lying to the government officials about her activities. Many people didn’t think this was necessarily a fair charge against her; they defended her saying that she was not guilty. But the government found her guilty and she was put into prison for five months. Now remember, this is one of the wealthiest women in America.

Well, her reputation was hurt, her business suffered – her business began to lose money. But by 2006 – by two years later she had recovered, her business has recovered, and she continues to do very well. She still has her own television show, her own magazine; there are many other parts of her business we don’t have time to talk about.

Martha Stewart, if you ask somebody about her, has the “reputation,” is well known for, being what we would call a perfectionist. A “perfectionist” wants everything to be perfect, nothing to be wrong with the things that they do. And that’s what Martha Stewart is known for. When you watch one of her shows, all of the recipes – all of the food looks beautiful, it tastes great; she makes sure that everything is perfect. Some people think almost too perfect; it depends, I guess, on who you are.

Now let’s answer some of your questions.

Our first question comes from Yuzo (Yuzo) in Japan. Yuzo wants to know the difference between “traffic” (traffic) and “transit” (transit).

“Traffic” usually refers to the movement of cars, trucks, and motorcycles – what we would call vehicles. It can also refer to the movement of people. Usually we’re talking about movement along a particular area – a particular route, a particular street or freeway, road, and so forth. So if someone says, “There was a lot of traffic today the 10 freeway here in Los Angeles (the freeway number 10, the Santa Monica Freeway),” they mean there were a lot of cars there that were not moving very fast.

“Transit” usually refers to the act of moving people or things from one place to another, often by public vehicles, vehicles owned by the government, for local



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transportation. So for example, in New York City they have a system – a transit system that includes buses and subways. “Subways” are trains that usually go underneath the ground. That’s their transit system. So it refers in that case to the government’s public transportation options. “Transit” can also mean a change or a transition.

So these two words are quite different, although they both refer to transportation. “Traffic” is the number of people or cars that are moving along a certain route – a certain avenue or road or freeway. “Transit” refers usually to the public system of transportation available in a city.

You can also use the phrase “in transit.” “In transit” means that something is being moved from one place to another; it’s left place A but has not yet arrived in place B. We would say the package or the box is in transit – it’s being transported right now.

Mohammed (Mohammed) in Iran wants to know the way we use the phrase “at all” and “not at all.” For example: “I don’t like him at all,” or, “I like him not at all.” What’s the difference?

“At all” means in any way and for any reason: “He can’t sing at all.” Not me – not talking about me there! I cannot stand cats at all. That’s the meaning there: none of them – not even the ones that look cute! I cannot tolerate them at all. Or, “She wasn’t able to walk at all after she broke her leg.” Notice that in all of those examples the verb was in the negative – or I was saying “cannot” or “not.”

The expression “not at all” means the same really, but it would be used when the verb is not in the negative. Usually it’s used with the verb “to be.” And again, it means the same although it has more emphasis. The example that Mohammed gave, “I like him not at all,” is possible in English; it’s not very common. It would be more common to put this expression, “not at all,” next to the verb, and it would become, in fact, the negating element – it would make the verb negative: “It was not at all possible for me to go to work yesterday.” “It wasn’t possible for me to go to work at all.” Those two things mean the same. Or, “I was not at all surprised by the ending of the movie.” You could also say, “I wasn’t surprised at all by the ending of the movie,” or “I wasn’t surprised by the ending of the movie at all.” All of those are possible.

Finally Felipe (Felipe) in Brazil wants to know if there’s a word to describe the situation of someone who works from home – someone who does his or her job



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from home. Do we have a specific word for that in English? The answer is yes, there are a couple that we use; it depends on the kind of work that you are doing.

A “telecommuter,” or a “teleworker,” is one of those terms. “Commuter” (commuter) is someone who drives from their house to work and back. Most people are commuters; they do not work at their home. A “telecommuter” is someone who doesn’t have to go into their office; they can just use the telephone or the fax machine or their computer in order to do their work. A “teleworker” is basically the same thing.

When we use the term “telecommuter” or “teleworker” we’re talking about someone who works for a company that has an office separate from their home. We’re not referring to people who have their own business and work at home. I don’t if know we have a good name for someone like that; we would just say this is a person who works out of their home. “Out of their home,” that means they do their business in their apartment or in their house.

There’s another term, which is “home worker.” This is a person who does not own a business, but they are doing work for which they are paid. Usually, this is someone who is doing low-paid work, not getting a lot of money, often being paid by the number of things that they make or produce. It’s not as common a term because it’s not as common a phenomenon – it’s not a common situation.

We don’t mind getting your questions and comments at all here at ESL Podcast. Email us at eslpod@eslpod.com.

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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