



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

TOPICS

Topics: Mount Rushmore, Indian summer, to cut to the chase, to jaywalk, current vs. present, to prove someone wrong

GLOSSARY

mount – a mountain or a hill

* He has been a mountain climber for ten years and hopes to climb Mount Everest someday.

monument – a statue, building, or other structure made to remember and show respect for a famous person or event

* There are a lot of monuments to see and to visit if you go to Greece this summer.

to carve – to cut into a hard material, such as stone, to make an object or design

* At the party, there was a beautiful sculpture of a bird carved out of ice!

Indian summer – a time in late fall with unusually warm weather

* It's nice to have an Indian summer so late in October. It means we won't have cold weather for a few more days.

dog days of summer – the hottest time of the year, occurring during the summer

* We're getting through these dog days of summer by drinking a lot of water and staying indoors.

humidity – wetness in the air; air with a lot of moisture

* The museum keeps the air condition on all of the time so the humidity will not damage the paintings.

severe heat wave – a long period of very hot weather

* So far, the severe heat wave hasn't reached Texas, but it may next week.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

to harvest – to pick or gather the crops (food) growing in the fields

* Do you think we can harvest the entire grape crop before the big storm arrives?

harvest moon – the full moon closest to the “autumnal equinox,” the time in the fall when day and night are the same length of time

* In some countries, there is a big festival to celebrate the harvest moon.

crops – fruits, vegetables, and grains grown for food

* Ten years ago, there was no crop on this land. Now, they grow cotton here.

horizon – the line where the sky and the earth (land) appear to meet

* If you look closely at the horizon, you’ll see their ship coming this way.

optical illusion – seeing something that isn’t there or that is different than it really is

* On a hot day, I often see water on the roads, but that’s just an optical illusion.

to cut to the chase – to come to the most interesting or important part of something right away

* Why don’t you cut to the chase and tell me whether you got the job or not?

to jaywalk – to walk across a street illegally

* She jaywalked right in front of the police officer and got a \$50 ticket!

to prove someone wrong – to show that someone is wrong; to show someone the truth so that they know they are wrong

* He told me that I was too short to become a professional basketball player, but I’m going to prove him wrong.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

“I’m shocked, shocked!”

This saying is taken from a well-known American movie called Casablanca that came out in 1942. This “classic,” or old high quality movie is about an American named Rick, who owns a bar in Casablanca, a city in Morocco. The “police chief,” or the highest ranked police officer, wants to close Rick’s bar. Rick is unhappy and asks him why. The police chief says, “because I’m shocked, shocked to find gambling at this establishment (place of business), sir.” At that very moment, a man who works at the bar gives the police chief some money and says, “You winnings, sir.” This shows that the police chief himself gambles there regularly and that the reason he gave was not the truth.

Today, this phrase, “I’m shocked, shocked!” is usually used when we want to pretend that something is surprising to us, but it is really not. For example, your friend likes to go shopping and he always buys a lot of things when he goes to the shopping mall on the weekends. He calls you on Monday and tells you that he bought a few things on his shopping trip. You respond by saying, “I’m shocked, shocked!” Of course, you are not surprised, but you are being “sarcastic.” “Sarcasm,” the noun, means that you are trying to be funny by saying something that is the opposite of your meaning. “Sarcastic” is the adjective: “Were you being sarcastic or would you really want to spend 20 hours this weekend helping me move to my new apartment?”



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 51.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 51. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com to get the complete Learning Guide for this podcast. This is an eight to ten page guide that includes all the vocabulary, additional vocabulary and definitions, as well as the complete transcript of the podcast.

On our Café today we're going to talk about a famous place in the United States called Mount Rushmore. We will talk about the terms Indian summer and dog days of summer, and as always, we'll answer a few questions. Let's get started.

Our first topic in today's Café is a place in the United States called Mount Rushmore, "Rushmore." The word mount, "mount," is short for mountain, but we don't normally call things mountain if they have a name, we give them instead the term mount. So, Mount McKinley, for example, is a tall mountain. Mount Rushmore is not a very tall mountain. It's located in a place called the Black Hills, and it's a area in the western part of the State of South Dakota. South Dakota is in the north-central part of the United States next to the beautiful State of Minnesota.

South Dakota doesn't...well, doesn't have a lot to do. It's a fairly dry state. There is farming in South Dakota, but there isn't a lot to do there. And, some of the people who lived in South Dakota wanted to get more tourism, more people to come and visit and, of course, spend money. And, back in the early part of the 20th century, back in the early 1920s, a group of people decided that they would create something that other Americans would want to come and see and what they created was a monument. A monument, "monument," is usually a building or a statue in honor of someone. In London, in Trafalgar Square in London, there's a monument to the famous British general, Lord Nelson. And, in the United States, in Washington D.C. there's a monument to President Washington:



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

the Washington Monument. Although, that doesn't look like President Washington. Maybe it looks like his nose, I'm not sure.

Mount Rushmore is a monument to four American presidents: George Washington, who is our first president; Thomas Jefferson, our third president; Abraham Lincoln, who was our sixteenth president and the president that fought on the winning side of the American Civil War in the middle of the 19th century; and finally, Theodore Roosevelt, who was a president in the early part of the twentieth century.

Well, these four presidents have their pictures carved into the mountain. To carve, “carve,” into stone or into rock means that you take a piece of metal, what we would call, in most cases, a chisel, “chisel” - that's a piece of metal that you use to break up rock or to put some sort of decoration into a rock or a stone - they take a chisel and you - with a hammer, you can hit the chisel so that it breaks up part of the stone or part of the rock. Well, Mount Rushmore - they didn't use a lot of chisels, they probably used explosives, things like dynamite, “dynamite,” which is something that explodes. Well, they decided to put these four presidents, their faces, up on the mountain, and they're huge, huge - very big pictures of them carved into the stone. It's part of the stone, the rock looks like the four president's faces, and it's a very famous scene. It became a famous scene in the United States. Most people could recognize Mount Rushmore, most Americans, if you ask them.

It was built between 1927 and 1941. It took several years to carve the stone. It's now a park, what we would call a National Park. In the United States, the federal government, the national government, has a system of parks. The Grand Canyon, for example, which is a big hole in the desert of Arizona caused by the Colorado River. That's a National Park. You may have heard of Yellowstone National Park. That's, I believe, our first National Park. There are several dozens of National Parks in the United States and Mount Rushmore is one of them. So, the federal government owns that land. And, you can drive to Mount Rushmore. It takes a while to get there from a big city. There aren't any big cities really close to that area, but you can drive there and see these four faces. I've been to Mount Rushmore. I went when I was about eight, nine years old - just as a boy. I didn't go by myself though. My parents took me. I could've gone by myself. I could have walked from Minnesota. It would have taken maybe a month or so. But, I decided to go with my parents, and it is a very impressive site



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

to see Mount Rushmore from the bottom of the mountain and you look up and there are these huge heads sticking out of the mountain. It's quite impressive.

There was some people in the Congress of the United States - the Congress, "Congress," is our national legislature - there were some people that wanted, in the late 1930's, to have a famous woman on Mount Rushmore. That famous woman is Susan B. Anthony, and she was a civil rights leader who tried to get women the right to vote in the United States. But unfortunately, there wasn't any money for putting her face on the mount, on Mount Rushmore, and so nothing really happened with that particular idea. And now, there are just the four faces of these presidents.

Our second topic today is to talk about a couple of common weather terms that you may hear. The first one is "the dog days of summer." The dog, "dog," days of summer are the weeks, usually in July and August, when it is very hot, when there is a lot of humidity. Humidity, "humidity," is when there is water or moisture in the air, so your skin feels wet. When you have a lot of heat and a lot of humidity, it's very uncomfortable and these are called the dog days of summer, when we have weather like that. It often is part of a heat wave. A heat wave, "heat wave," is when you have several days of very hot weather, and this past summer both Europe and the United States had some very long heat waves. We would probably use the adjective severe, "severe." A severe heat wave is one where it gets very hot for a long period of time, several days.

Well, these are the dog days of summer. Now, the reason they're called the dog days of summer - some people say - is that they happen when the star Sirius, "Sirius," is visible. You can see it during the summer. And Sirius is also called the Dog Star. So, that's one theory about why we call these hot weeks during July and August the dog days of summer.

The other term that you'll hear in talking about the weather is Indian summer. Indian summer isn't actually in summer at all. Indian summer is when it gets warm during the fall, or the autumn part of the year, usually in October or November. So, when the temperature warms up, it starts to go down in September in the United States, in most states it gets cooler. But then, you'll have a week or two sometimes where the weather will be warmer, and that time is called Indian summer. So, it's a time when the weather gets warm during the fall, right before winter starts.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

There are lots of theories why we call it Indian summer. One theory is that that was the time when the Native Americans, or the American Indians, went out and harvested their crops. To harvest, “harvest,” means that you go out into your farm where you have food that is growing and you take the food in with you. And, fall is the traditional time to harvest crops. Crops, “crops,” is just another word for food that you grow out on a farm.

There's also another term you might find around this time year, in the fall, and that is harvest moon. A harvest moon is the full moon - when you can see the entire moon - closest to September 23rd. You probably know that September 23rd is what we would call in English the autumnal equinox. Autumnal, “autumnal,” comes from the word autumn. Equinox is “equinox.” Well, this time of year, when we have a full moon, the moon is very low in the sky, so you can, you can see the full moon as night is just beginning very low in the sky, close to what we would call the horizon, “horizon.” Horizon is if you think about the...looking out and seeing the edge of the earth, that's the horizon - between the line that divides the earth and the sky as you look.

Well, the harvest moon tends to look much bigger than a regular moon, and that's really what we would call an optical illusion. Optical, “optical,” means eye or something to do with seeing. Illusion, “illusion,” is when something looks like one thing, but it's really not. And of course, the moon doesn't get bigger in the fall, but it looks bigger because it...where it is in the sky. It's called an optical illusion.

Now, let's go from talking about the weather to answering your questions.

Our first question today comes from Karine, “Karine,” in Quebec City, in Canada. She wants to know the meaning of a couple of expressions. The first one is to cut to the chase, “chase.” What does the expression to cut to the chase mean? It means to get to the point, to get to the most important part of what you're saying. So, for example, someone is telling you a story and they're giving you lots of information, lots of details, and you decide that you want to hear the end of the story, so you say, “cut to the chase.” What's the point of your story? What are you actually trying to say? Some people think that this expression originally comes from the silent movies - the movies that didn't have any sound in them - and the movies would often end, especially the comedies, with a chase scene. To chase someone means to go after them, to run after them or to drive your car to try to catch them. Movies today, of course, have lots of chase scenes in them.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

And, so the idea of cutting to the chase meant that you would go to that final scene. Someone who is writing the movie, who didn't know what to do next in the movie would cut or jump to that chase scene so they could end the movie. That's one theory about that expression.

The other word that Karine wants to find out about is jaywalk. To jaywalk, "jaywalk," means to cross a street illegally. In the United States in most cities, you have to cross the street - go from one side of the street to the other, is to cross the street - at the intersection, where two streets come together, or where there are white lines that are painted on the street for you to cross. To jaywalk means to cross somewhere else, to cross in the middle of the street, for example.

In some cities, especially here in Los Angeles, you can get a ticket for jaywalking. The police officer can give you a fine that you have to pay if you cross the street illegally, if you jaywalk. And, it does happen. I have seen people get tickets from police officers for jaywalking. So, if you come to Los Angeles, be sure you cross at the corner, we would say, that is where the two streets come together, the intersection.

The term probably comes from a slang word. A jay, "jay," used to be a word back in the early part of the 20th century that meant someone who was stupid, someone who was not very smart. So, to jaywalk would be to walk like a stupid person, like my neighbor. No, I'm just kidding - mostly! So, don't walk like a stupid person. Cross at the corner.

Our next question comes from Bonde, "Bonde," from Sweden. The question has to do with the expression current status and present status. Is there a difference between saying the current, "current," status and the present, "present," status? I would say that most people would use these two words as if they were the same in this situation. Present means right now and current also means right now or going on during this time. So, in terms of the word status, "status," which means the condition of something, I would say we would use these words to mean the same thing. Present and current both refer to the same idea.

As in many terms in English, the difference is really in the particular words that we use them with. For example, if I was going to talk about the temperature out right now, I would probably say, "The current temperature is 85 degrees Fahrenheit." These are not differences that you can look up in a dictionary. It



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

has to do with the way that the words are used, that sounds right to someone who is a native speaker.

Our next question is from Juan Luis in Mexico. Juan Luis wants to know the meaning of the expression “she proved me wrong,” or “he proved me wrong.” When we say you prove someone wrong, we mean that you demonstrated, or you showed them that they were wrong; you gave them reasons; you provided evidence; you showed or convinced them that they were wrong. To prove, “prove,” means that you show or demonstrate something, usually beyond any real doubt. In other words, people will believe you because you have something that shows or demonstrates that this is true. So, when someone proves you wrong, they provide evidence or they show that you are wrong. You are incorrect about something.

We also have a question from David in Germany. David wants to know about the words drugs and medicine. Is there a difference between drug and medicine?

Sometimes drug and medicine can mean the same thing. If you are sick and you go to the doctor, they will give you some medicine. They will give you a drug to help you get better. The word drug can refer to both legal substances, legal things like pills and things that you would put in your body. It can also refer to illegal substances. For example, in the United States, marijuana, which is a plant that you - I'm told - can smoke. I wouldn't know! That is an illegal drug. You wouldn't call it a medicine. Medicine is only for things that are legal that help you get better, that make you feel better. Drug could be legal, but it also could be illegal, so things like cocaine or marijuana, these are illegal drugs. And, if there is any confusion, the person will use legal or illegal so you know what they're talking about. But, in the news, if you're watching the news here in the U.S., they will talk about making sure that people who don't have enough money can afford to buy the drugs they need. They're not referring to illegal drugs. They're talking about medicine.

Well, that's all the time we have. I hope that the ESL Podcast medicine made you feel better today. Remember, you can email us with your questions and comments. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on the English Café.



English as a Second Language Podcast
www.eslpod.com

ENGLISH CAFÉ – 51

ESL Podcast's English Café is written and produced by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2006, by the Center for Educational Development.