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M: Hello English learners! Welcome back to another **advanced** lesson here at **EnglishPod**! My name is **Marco**.

E: And I'm **Erica**.

M: And today we're gonna be back in the office.

E: That's right, we are, um, listening in as somebody gets a little bit of trouble from their boss for being a bit late on a project.

M: Alright, so, we're gonna be at the office. Somebody misses a deadline and, so, well, how do you handle the situation? What can you do to explain yourself?

E: And what language can you actually use to... to talk about missed deadlines and late work.

M: Alright, so, let's see why this person **missed the deadline** and let's find out what happens.

### **DIALOGUE, FIRST TIME**

E: Well, it sounds like this guy, um, isn't really accepting a lot of the responsibility for his missed deadline.

M: Exactly, well, apparently, he's explaining that it wasn't only his fault, right?

E: Uhu, yep, so, some technical problems, but, you know, he used a lot of pretty... pretty interesting language and I think it'll help us to look at that now in "**language takeaway**".

*Voice: Language takeaway.*

M: Alright, so, on language takeaway today we have five words and let's start with the first one.

E: Alright, well, the boss is, um, not really happy with the excuse that the employee was giving and he said "An excuse like that is **tantamount** to lying".

M: Tantamount.

E: Tantamount to something.

M: Okay, so, if an excuse like that is tantamount to lying, what does... what is he trying to say here?

E: Basically, "it's the same as" or "it's almost the same as".

M: So, "similar to".

E: Uhu.

M: So, if I say "Tantamount to something else", how would I use it?

E: You know, Marco, taking my computer without asking is tantamount to stealing.

M: Okay, so, even though I'm not actually stealing it and taking it home with me...

E: Yeah.

M: Uh, it is almost like stealing.

E: Yeah, and the interesting grammatical thing here is that we almost always use a **gerund** right after, so, **tantamount** to **verb -ing**.

M: Okay, tantamount to **stealing**, tantamount to **lying**, tantamount to **killing**.

E: Okay, well, **on that happy note** let's go on to our next word. Now, the... the boss was really unhappy with the employee for **procrastinating**.

M: Procrastinating.

E: Procrastinating.

M: So, the **verb** is **to procrastinate**.

E: Uhu, and when you procrastinate, you say "Uh, I'll do it later", "I'll do it tomorrow".

M: Okay, so, you kind of delay things or you leave it for another day.

E: Yeah.

M: Alright, very good, so, to procrastinate.

E: Uhu, a favorite **verb** amongst college students.

M: I actually thought **for a little while** that **procrastinate** was to have babies.

E: Oh... oh, okay.

M: It's kind of similar...

E: Yeah.

M: What's the... what's that word?

E: **Procreate**.

M: Procreate, since so...

E: Yeah.

M: For a while I always thought that procrastinate was like having babies, like "Why are you procrastinating?" and I like "I'm not".

E: Hehe. Well...

M: So...

E: Glad you got that straight.

M: So, yeah, so...

E: Yeah.

M: Our listeners, **procrastinate is not the same as procreate**.

E: Okay.

M: **I learned that the hard way.**

E: Hehe. Yes, um, well, it sounds like you had a little bit of a **glitch** in your understanding of language and that's our next phrase. So, in the dialogue, um, they were talking about some **glitches** with the system.

M: A glitch in the system.

E: Okay, so, a glitch.

M: Now, this is common among computers, right? A glitch is a... uh, an error.

E: Right, so, when you're talking about a glitch and you're talking about computers, it's a... it's an error or mistake, but we also use it to talk about any unexpected problem, a small unexpected problem.

M: Okay, so, a... a small glitch.

E: Yeah. There was a glitch in our plan and we arrived ten minutes late.

M: Or I can say "This movie has a glitch in the story".

E: So, there's the small problem in the story that doesn't make sense.

M: Exactly.

E: Alright, so, the employee was blaming, um, his lateness on... on his, um, small technical glitches, but the boss didn't believe this, right?

M: Uhu, alright.

E: The boss said "You're trying to **rationalize** the fact that you missed the deadline".

M: Okay, to, rationalize.

E: To rationalize.

M: So, the boss is saying that he's trying to rationalize, so, that means is he trying to make sense of it?

E: Well, this is an interesting psychological word, um...

M: Uhu.

E: And when you rationalize something, you think about it or describe it, um, like especially some bad behavior in a way that makes it seem better or proper or more sensible.

M: So, you're trying to convince yourself.

E: Yeah, you... you're telling other people, but you're also telling yourself that it's better.

M: Okay, or that you're right when you're actually wrong.

E: Yes, yep.

M: Okay, so, he was trying to rationalize the fact that he missed the deadline, so, he was trying to explain to the boss and also kind of make himself believe that it wasn't really his fault when it was.

E: Uhu, now, because this is a little bit of a difficult concept to understand, I think we should hear some examples.

***Voice: Example one.***

*A: You can't rationalize your son's behavior by saying he's going through a hard time.*

***Voice: Example two.***

*B: As much as I tried I couldn't rationalize buying such an expensive pair of shoes.*

***Voice: Example three.***

*C: You know it was a wrong thing to do. Stop trying to rationalize it.*

M: Okay, so, **clear as daylight** now, this word **rationalize**.

E: Alright, and our final word, so, the boss really wasn't happy with these excuses and he said "No more **phony** excuses".

M: Okay, phony.

E: Phony.

M: P-H-O-N-Y, phony.

E: So, phony is basically **false** or **fake**.

M: Right, so, a phony statement.

E: Uhu, a phony watch.

M: Okay, a fake watch.

E: Yeah, not... not a Sony watch, but...

M: Hehe.

E: A phony watch.

M: A phony... So, a lot of great words in this dialogue, but as you mentioned we also saw some very interesting phrases that we can use in situations like this. So, why don't we start now with "**fluency builder**"?

***Voice: Fluency builder.***

E: Well, you know, one of the interesting things about English is that we have a lot of ways to make things sound, um, more direct, less direct, harder or softer and in this dialogue there're few examples of how we use **softening words** to partic... to do the opposite, actually, make it a little strong.

M: Okay. So, why don't we start with the first paragraph? In the first part of the dialogue he said "You missed a **fairly significant deadline**".

E: A fairly significant deadline.

M: Now, this word **fairly**.

E: "Kind of", "sort of".

M: So, it's not very significant.

E: Yeah.

M: It's kind of significant.

E: Yeah.

M: But in this context when you... when the person is saying it, it just sounds a little bit softer, but your understanding is...

E: It's a very important deadline.

M: Okay, a very important deadline.

E: So, another similar example of this is, um, the... the boss was saying "You're **essentially blaming** the tech team".

M: Okay, you're essentially blaming.

E: So, essentially is like basically or, um, **pretty much**, um, so, it sounds a little softer, but what it's actually really saying is "You're doing this".

M: Right, so, instead of saying "You're blaming the tech team", he adds this word **essentially** to kind of say "Well, basically you're saying is their fault".

E: Yeah.

M: But the context or... you understand that it's actually very direct and he's saying "It's your fault".

E: Yeah, so, he's... he's... he's saying "You're almost blaming the tech team", but what he means is "You're blaming the tech team".

M: Uhu. Now, our third phrase is very interesting, because it's kind of like a **saying**.

E: That's right, so, the employee says "I'm not trying to **pass the buck** here".

M: I'm not trying to pass the buck here.

E: I'm not trying to pass the buck.

M: Now, wha... what's the buck?

E: A dollar bill.

M: A dollar bill. So, he's... We understand that he's saying "I'm not trying to blame somebody else" or pass the blame on to someone else.

E: Uhu, but you can think about like this. Like imagine he had some fake or phony money, right?

M: Uhu.

E: And he wants to pass that on to the next person, so, he doesn't get in trouble.

M: Okay.

E: So, I'm not trying to pass the buck – I'm not trying to pass the blame, put the responsibility on someone else.

M: Very good, okay.

E: But you know what... you know what he really means here?

M: What?

E: I am trying to do this.

M: Because he knew, yeah, he knew that it was a fake dollar bill, right?

E: Yeah, yeah.

M: Okay.

E: Yeah.

M: Now, the fourth one is interesting as well, because it's kind of like a metaphor.

E: Uhu.

M: He said... The boss said "You're **using** these small technical glitches **as a crutch**".

E: So, using something as a crutch.

M: Now, the **crutch** is a...

E: You know, when you... when you break your leg...

M: Uhu.

E: You use those wooden or metal sticks to walk with.

M: Okay, to help you walk.

E: Yeah.

M: So, the boss is basically saying "You're using these technical glitches as an excuse or as an aid to why you missed a deadline".

E: Yeah, so, if you think about like this, some people might say "Okay, if you walk with the crutch, then you, um... you won't succeed", right?

M: Uhu.

E: Because wha... whatever, um...

M: Uhu.

E: So, he... This guy, this employee is basically saying "Yes, I know that I should meet deadlines, but these... these problems, these glitches are like my crutch, that make me not succeed".

M: Okay, so, he's trying to just make excuses.

E: Uhu, so, um, God, Marco, that was a little bit difficult to understand. Do you think we should give a couple more examples?

M: Yeah, I think... I think some more examples would be very useful, so let's listen to a couple of them now.

***Voice: Example one.***

*A: I realized that I was using alcohol as a crutch to get through the day.*

***Voice: Example two.***

*B: I think Bill's very capable being successful, but he uses his disability as a crutch.*

***Voice: Example three.***

*C: Stop using your weight as a crutch. Just because you're a bit fat doesn't mean you can't get a great job.*

M: Alright, so, a lot of great phrases, great words and, well, I think it's time for us to listen to this dialogue for the last time and then we'll come back and talk about this aspect of meeting deadlines.

## **DIALOGUE, SECOND TIME**

E: This employee got in a lot of trouble for missing his deadline.

M: Exactly, I think it's a very, ah, important aspect of not only Western culture, but also in general **assuming guilt**.

E: Hm.

M: When it's your fault.

E: Yeah.

M: In this case we saw that the employee didn't really want to accept the fact that he... it was his fault.

E: Yeah, he didn't say "Yeah, I know, it was me, I'm sorry and this is my plan to fix it".

M: Now, this is very important among cultures, because in some cultures the aspect of **losing face** is so important, right?

E: Right.

M: So, somebody may not really want to assume guilt or they have to, because it's part of the culture.

E: But what's the standard in, uh, North American business practice?

M: I would say that you would have to assume responsibility and take responsibility for your actions, right? And say "Yes, it's my fault, I did it", but "I'm gonna get it fixed" or "I'll do it" or "I'll make up for it".

E: Hm, so, some... some good, uh... some good business tips here, uh, today in this lesson. Now, um, remember if you have any questions about the language, um, or wanna tell us a little bit about how you assume responsibility in your culture, visit our website at [englishpod.com](http://englishpod.com).

M: Right, we're always there to help you out and until next time...

E: Thanks for listening and... Good bye!

M: Bye!

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