

At The Post Office



There is no way around it. Sometimes you have to go to the post office and send letters and packages to your friends and family. What is a parcel or priority mail? Come and listen to this English lesson and find out!

M: Hello everyone and welcome to **EnglishPod**! My name is **Marco**.

C: My name is **Catherine**, and welcome everyone. Today we've got an **elementary level** lesson for you. It's all about sending things through the mail.

M: That's right. So maybe gifts, maybe letters, we're **going to the post office**. So why don't we jump right into this dialogue? Let's listen to it for the first time and we'll be right back.

DIALOGUE, FIRST TIME

M: All right, so pretty simple dialogue. We wanna send a package through the mail. So why don't we take a look at some of those mail related terms in "**language takeaway**"?

Voice: Language takeaway.

C: All right, so the first item we're going to talk about in today's language takeaway is something you can send, it's called a **postcard**.

M: A postcard. Okay so very popular among people who are travelling and they wanna send a postcard back home.

C: That's right. So a postcard is something that you usually buy at a tourist destination like Walt Disney World, for example, and it has a picture on the front and some words on the back, so you can write a letter on the back of this picture.

M: Aha. So it's very simple. It's, uh ... it's not really a letter, you don't put it in an envelope, you just, uh, write whatever you want on the back of the postcard, but you do have to put a **stamp** on it, to... in order to send it.

C: That's right, to... stamp is our next word. A stamp comes in different price ranges that means that some stamps are more expensive than other stamps. This is like money for the mail.

M: Hm, so you have to buy the stamps, and in order to prove that you have paid for the letter that you wanna send, you must place the stamps on the letter on the envelope or on the postcard, right? So depending on the size and weight, it costs more.

C: That's right, and usually you **lick a stamp** to place it on the card so it doesn't fall off.

M: True, that's right, you gotta lick it. All right, so as we talked about a package, it can be a letter, a postcard, you place stamps on it, and we need **to weigh** the package, to know how much money we have to pay.

C: That's right. So sometimes a package is very heavy, if it's filled with books, for example. Sometimes it's very light, if it's filled with clothes or feathers. And so to find out how much something weighs, we have to weigh it. This is a **verb**.

M: Okay. So this is a verb, right, to weigh. So you wanna know how many kilos or how many pounds this item has.

C: Right, so you could say: it weighs a lot. Or: how much do you weigh?

M: Okay.

C: Things like this.

M: Very good. All right, moving on we have the different types of mailing speed I guess, right? So we saw three: **via** the priority mail, express mail, or standard mail. So **let's go in parts**, let's go with the first one, via **priority mail**.

C: Priority is fast, it means... priority is something that's important. So I have many priorities at work. This means they are important.

M: Very important. So this letter has a certain importance, it's a little bit more important than for example the other letters.

C: That's right. But express is the most important, the fastest. So to... something that's express is fast. Like an express way is the fast highway. **Express mail**.

M: Okay, so express mail is the fastest, and now the normal, cheapest mail is **standard mail**.

C: Standard. So the word standard usually means the average or the normal mail. And in this case it usually takes the longest.

M: Uhu, okay. So obviously standard mail is the cheapest, express mail is the most expensive, because it's the fastest.

C: Uhu, that's right. So we've got all of those speeds now, let's listen again to today's dialogue and try and listen for the words we just talked about and we'll be back in a moment to talk about some important phrases.

DIALOGUE, SECOND TIME

M: Alright, we're back, so now let's take a look at three key phrases on "**fluency builder**".

Voice: Fluency builder.

C: Alright, so the first phrase today is one that I like to use a lot. We say **it depends**. Okay, how much is this gonna cost? Well, it depends.

M: Okay. So the phrase could be: it depends. So 'it depends', when do you usually use this?

C: Okay, if you ask me a question, I can have one answer, but maybe there's another possible answer. For example, um: what are you gonna wear tomorrow, Marco?

M: Uh, it depends if it rains or not.

C: Okay, it depends. If it rains, I will wear a rain coat. If it's sunny, I will wear a normal coat. So 'it depends' means there is a situation or a circumstance that might change. And if it does, my answer will change.

M: Right. So it is a condition, 'it depends'. For example, I can ask you: what are you gonna eat tonight?

C: It depends. If I exercise I'm gonna have a hamburger, and if I don't exercise I'll have a salad.

M: Nice. Okay, so it depends. Now we have another phrase. When they were talking about how long it's going to take to mail something, he said: standard mail can take up to fifteen working days. So we have this little phrase there, **up to**.

C: Up to. So up to, when you hear this, these two words together, that's an indication... that's a sign that we're talking about the maximum, the most.

M: The maximum, uhu.

C: Okay, so tomorrow the temperature might go up to 24 degrees Celsius.

M: Okay. So the temperature maximum will reach twenty four. It could be maybe 22, 21...

C: But not 25.

M: Not 25.

C: No, cause 'up to' means the top.

M: So you're usually dealing with numbers, right? For example, this coat can cost up to a hundred and fifty dollars.

C: Wow, so the most I will spend is 150 dollars. So sometimes you have, uh, a number like this. When we're talking about sending a package, we can send packages that weigh up to 10 kilos. Not more than 10 kilos though.

M: Okay. Very good. And now for our last phrase, to close off the dialogue, the guy said: well, you know what, there's no rush. No rush, **there is no rush**.

C: Okay, well, the first word we wanna look at here is the word **rush**. In this case we're talking about sending a package, and the postcard, right? So, um, does this person want it to arrive fast? He says: no, no, there's no rush. Let's send it standard, it's cheaper.

M: Okay, so maybe... so maybe your friend is like: come on we're going to be late. And you're like: no, there's no rush. ??? like an hour.

C: There's no rush. We have one hour before the movie starts, **calm down**.

M: Okay, so **you're not in a hurry**.

C: No, there's no rush, slow down, it's okay.

M: Hehe.

C: This is a good one when to talk about with friends if you're... or if you're working on a project at work, you say: listen, there's no rush, **take your time**.

M: Okay, very good. So let's go back to our dialogue, let's listen to it for the very last time, and we'll be back in a bit.

DIALOGUE, THIRD TIME

M: All right, we're back. So now, uh, Catherine, do you usually send postcards when you are abroad, when you travel?

C: Yes, I love postcards. And actually, I have some friends who have an amazing postcard collection.

M: Oh really?

C: But it's not normal postcards.

M: No, what type ???

C: They find the most ugly postcards.

M: Wow.

C: And they buy them.

M: Wow.

C: And they write silly notes and they send them to themselves.

M: Oh really?

C: Uhu.

M: I have the tradition of always sending my parents and my grandparents a postcard when I'm abroad.

C: That's so sweet.

M: Yeah, always.

C: So they have a collection of all the places you've been.

M: Yeah, yeah. So all the time, wherever I am, the first thing that I try to do if I'm in a cool place, I send them a postcard. And sometimes if I'm in a country in various cities and there are some nice things in, for example, 2 or 3 cities, I send them three postcards.

C: That's awesome. So do they have a book at home with all of these postcards?

M: Yeah, they do. So, um, I, y'know I just send them a little thing, how I'm doing, and how great it is, and wish you could be here, y'know, little notes and then, um, they have all the collection. It's really cool, because that way I've actually kept track a little bit of what year and what date I was in certain places.

C: Oh, wow. Well, it's also nice because postcards, you don't need to write a very long note. There's no space, you just write a short note, you say: hi, how's the weather, miss you, wish you were here.

M: Right. Okay so that's all the time we have for today, but let us know if you have had any inconveniences at the post office. I actually had one, once I couldn't send batteries through the mail...

C: Really?

M: Because it has acid, apparently.

C: Oh, yeah.

M: So it's very difficult to send them.

C: Alkaline, uhu.

M: So, uh, maybe you've had a situation like this before, let us know, englishpod.com, we'll see you there.

C: Bye everyone!

M: Bye!