



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

TOPICS

Topics: How to tip in the U.S., famous American museums, pronouncing “a,” comfortable vs. convenient, “I used to” vs. “I use to,” of course

GLOSSARY

direct flight – when an airplane goes to the city you want to visit without stopping at another airport

* I hate having to stop in New York when I go to London. I wish I could get a direct flight instead.

to tip – to give money to someone who helps you, such as a waiter or taxi cab driver

* The waiters in that restaurant are awful. I don't usually tip them very much unless they do a good job.

host/hostess – the person at a restaurant who greets you when you first enter and who takes you to your table

* Be sure to tell the host that there are 10 people in our group. We'll need a big table.

waiter/waitress – the person who takes your order and brings you your food at a restaurant

* Excuse me. Could you tell my waitress that we need our check now?

bellboy – the person at a hotel who takes your luggage or bags, and carries them up to your room

* When you get out of the taxi, be sure to get a bellboy to help you with the suitcases.

coat check – the place at a restaurant or theater where you can keep your coat until you are ready to leave

* I left my jacket at the coat check. I need to go back to get it!



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

maid – the person in a hotel who cleans your room and makes your bed everyday

* Leave the maid a couple of dollars for a tip. She did a good job keeping the room clean.

conciierge – the person at a nice hotel who provides you information and recommendation about the city, and who makes reservations or gets tickets for you

* The conciierge recommended a nice little Italian restaurant about two blocks from the hotel.

usher – the person who works in a theater who takes you to your seat

* The play was about to start, so the usher showed us to our seats quickly.

permanent collection – works of art such as paintings and sculpture that are owned by a museum

* The British Museum has a great permanent collection of European art.

exhibition – a showing of art works at a museum, often for just a short period of time

* I wanted to see the Monet exhibition when it came to Los Angeles, but the tickets were too expensive.

admission – the price you pay to get into a museum, sporting event, movie, play, or other performance

* What's the admission for the ballet performance this weekend?

comfortable – an adjective used to describe something or someplace that is pleasant, nice, or relaxing

* We had a very comfortable hotel room when we stayed in Singapore last year.

convenient – easy to find or to use; something that does not require a lot of time or effort to use or to visit

* It's very convenient for me to get gas in the morning since there is a gas station on my way to work.

of course – used when no explanation is needed, when something is very obvious

* Of course, the best place to meet men is at a sporting event.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

ENGLISH LEARNING TIPS

One of the best ways to improve your comprehension of English is to listen to things you can understand. But what should you listen to? Many people believe that they should listen and watch programs about many different subjects to build their vocabulary. It is possible to do that, but there is a problem with this method: the vocabulary is different for each new topic, and you never get to hear the words used more than once. We know that it often takes hearing something several times before you really understand it. If you do “wide listening” – listening to many different topics – you will not hear the vocabulary repeated very much, and will not be able to pick up the words very quickly.

There is another way to listen, what we will call “narrow listening.” Narrow listening is when you listen or watch different programs on the same topic. For example, if you are interested in the World Cup, you listen to three stories in English about a specific game. Each story or program will talk about the same things, using very similar vocabulary. By using narrow listening in this way, you can hear the same words used over and over again, and have a more opportunities to understand and acquire them. You may listen to a story about a certain topic from three or four different Internet news programs in English, such as the BBC, Voice of America, CNN, and others. Be sure to listen to stories on the same topics or about the same news event. After listening to them a couple of times, you will begin to understand more and more.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Cafe Number 41.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast English Cafe. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Go to our website at eslpod.com to get the complete transcript as well as the definitions and sample sentences for all the terms we use in this podcast. Today's podcast is going to be about tipping. We're also going to talk about museums, famous museums and vocabulary related to museums and as always, we're going to answer some of your questions. Let's get started.

I took a little trip last weekend back to my home state, back to Minnesota to visit my parents. My father had his eighty-third (83rd) birthday party. And, my mother was also celebrating her birthday this summer. We had a combined party since I live in Los Angeles and everyone else but my sister lives in Minnesota, we have to go back to Minnesota, fly back there. Takes about three and a half hours, if you go on a direct flight. A "direct flight" is one where you don't have to stop anywhere else. We would say you don't have any layovers. And, a "layover" is when you have to stop in a different city before you get to the city where you want to go. Well, we had a very good time and we rented a car and stayed in a little hotel.

And, one of the things you notice when you travel is whether or not you should tip someone. "To tip" means to give someone who is helping you money, such as a person in a restaurant, the waiter, or the person driving your taxi cab, if you take a taxi cab, and so forth. So, I thought it would be useful to talk a little bit about tipping customs in the United States. That is, what are the practices, what are people...how much do people tip, and who should you tip. And, this is different in different countries. I'm going to talk a little bit about here in the United States in my experiences, other people may have different experiences. I got a little information from a website called tipping.org. "Tipping," of course, is the noun that comes from the verb "to tip." And, tipping describes the action of giving someone money for helping you.

Well, let's start with restaurants. If you come to the United States or if you go to an American restaurant, you are usually expected to give a tip. This is for any



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

sort of restaurant in which you have to sit down, and someone comes to help you, who we would call the “waiter” or the “waitress” if it’s a woman. This is not true for a fast food restaurant, a restaurant like McDonald’s, for example, where you walk up and you order your food, you tell them what food you want, then you stand there and you wait, then they give you your food. Nobody goes to your table with your food. Nobody goes to your table to get your order. In those sorts of restaurants, you don’t leave a tip, because really, no one is helping you very much. You have to get your own food.

But, in a regular restaurant where you sit down, you walk in and you have the host or the hostess. The “host” is a man; the “hostess” is a woman. And, that’s the person who says “hello” to you when you walk in, and asks you how many of you are there, how many of you – I should say – how many are in your party, you might say. Here, “party” just means your group and they take you to a table and you sit down and after a few hours, I mean, a few minutes, your waiter comes and takes your order, asks you the kind of food you want. The host or hostess doesn’t get a tip in an American restaurant. The only exception to that would be is if you are in a very nice restaurant and you don’t have a reservation and you want to get a good seat, you want to get a good table. You may, sometimes people will give money to the host or the hostess and...ten dollars, twenty dollars...so they can get in in front of other people who are waiting. I don’t recommend doing that, but there are some people who do that. But, normally the host or the hostess does not get a tip.

The waiter or waitress does get a tip and the amount depends on how good a restaurant it is. Normally, we talk about tipping for restaurants, we talk about percentages. And, a good percentage to think about is 15 percent. That’s 15 percent of the total bill, or the total check. So, let’s say you order two dinners and it costs \$30 for the two dinners. That includes the tax. Well, then you would tip 15 percent on that. And, 15 percent of \$30...that’s \$4.50. And, that’s how much you would leave for the tip, either on the credit card statement or in cash. Either way is okay. Some restaurants, if you get very poor service, very bad service, you may only leave 10 percent or 5 percent. Or, if you are in a very nice restaurant or you get really good service - when I say get good service, I mean the waiter or waitress is very helpful, gets your food quickly, asks you if you need anything else. That would be very good service. Then, you may give them even more than 15 percent, often 20 percent. Many people tip either 15 or 20 percent. It depends on the type of restaurant and whether they get good service or not.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

The same is true for a taxi driver. If you are taking a taxi in New York City, for example, or here in Los Angeles, you would probably give them 10 or 15 percent. So, if it were \$20, you would give them a \$3 tip; 15 percent is pretty good. A bartender, the person in the bar that gives you your drinks, again 15 percent is about right. Hairdressers, if you are going to get your hair cut, something I don't have to worry about anymore, and you want to give them a tip, they do a good job, 15 percent is probably good for that.

There are some people who we don't think about percentages, we think about just the amount of dollars. And, there are certain people that help you, you think of percentage, you think in terms of a dollar, two dollars, five dollars. For example, when you go into a nice restaurant, there is often a place where you can put your coat and your umbrella or anything else that you don't want to take with you while you go and eat. And, we call these little places coat checks. A "coat check." And, a coat check is a place where you can check or leave your coat, and they give you a little ticket and you can come back and get your coat or your jacket when you are done at the end of the night. Well, usually, restaurants do not charge you money for that, extra. But, you still want to give a small tip to the person who is running the coat check stand or the person who in...taking care of the coat check. Usually, a dollar is enough for them, maybe two dollars. But, a dollar is usually okay.

Now, if you are going to a hotel and you have someone help you with your bags, help you with your luggage. You come out of your taxi and usually someone will come out and we call that person, traditionally, "a bellboy." It's often a man, but we say "bellboy," all one word. He's the person, could be a woman, but usually he is the person who helps you with your luggage, takes it in the hotel, may take it up to your room. Now, I'm one of those people who don't want people helping me with my luggage. I don't want the bellboy. So, I usually just say, "No, thank you." But, if it's a very nice restaurant, or nice hotel, usually you let the bellboy help you. And, again, there's no percentage you would give that person, but typically you would want to give them a dollar or two dollars for every piece of luggage, or every bag that you have. So, you have three bags, for example, or you and your wife or your husband has five bags total between you. You might give that person five, six, or seven dollars total. So, about a dollar, maybe \$1.50 per piece of luggage. If you're staying in a nice hotel people sometimes also leave a tip for the maid. The "maid" is the person who cleans your room and you may want to leave a dollar for everyday that you stay there. Usually, you leave



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

that the last day and you put it on the table next to your bed. So they know that that's a tip.

The final person that you may want to give a tip, well two more people actually, the person in a nice hotel who gives you information, who helps you with making local reservations, getting a tour for you, that person we sometimes call the concierge. The “concierge” is the man or woman who gives you information at a nice hotel and usually helps you make reservations, and so forth, recommends good restaurants to you. That person you would also want to give a tip on the last day before you leave the hotel, usually \$5 to \$10 dollars is okay for that person.

Finally, you may go to a or go on a tour where you, for example, take a tour of the city of Los Angeles in one day. You get on a big bus and they take you to Venice Beach which is close to where I am, about five minutes from here or they may take you to Hollywood or down to Disneyland or any of the other famous places here in Los Angeles. Jeff McQuillan's house, for example. Those kinds of tours usually have a tour guide, somebody who is telling you about the different places where you are, where you are visiting. And, it's often common to give that person, who is sometimes the driver, he or she may be driving the bus and giving you the tour, usually you give them a small tip, \$5 maybe \$10 if it was an all-day tour. That may be something that they will suggest to you and it's always a good idea if you have a good driver or a good tour guide. If you go to a theater the person that helps you to your seat or shows you to where you should sit is called an “usher” and that person usually does not get a tip. We do not give money, typically, to ushers. So, those are some tipping suggestions when you visit a hotel or a restaurant, at least in the United States. It may be different in Great Britain, in Australia, in other countries, but that's the general rule for most places here.

Second topic we're going to talk about today is museums. And, there are lots of famous museums, here in the United States. Here, in Los Angeles, I have talked about one of the museums in a previous Café or podcast called the “Getty Museum.” They're actually two museums, one with modern art and one with ancient art, ancient Greek and Roman art, mostly. And, there are many other types of museums. Most museums have what's called a permanent collection. “Permanent” is the opposite of “temporary.” Permanent means that it is always there, that it's there at the museum and you can always find it there or they always have that painting there. They may not show it to the public, but they always have it. That's their permanent collection. That's what the museum owns.



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

So, in the Louvre in Paris, part of the permanent collection is the picture of the Mona Lisa by Leonardo Da Vinci...and...who wrote the Da Vinci Code, right? So, the museums have their permanent connection...collections...and a “collection” is just a name we give for all the pieces of art. The paintings, the sculptures, all the different types of art, we call that the collection. So, the permanent collection is something that every museum has.

There's also what are called “temporary collections,” or probably more often called “temporary exhibitions.” They may also be called “traveling exhibitions.” And, an exhibition is like a special show where the museum brings art from other museums and from private owners of art, and shows them to the public, usually for two or three months, maybe longer. Here, in Los Angeles, for example, I think it was last summer, we had a traveling exhibit or exhibition, either word is okay, that was from the ancient Egyptian tomb or place of burial, where you go...your body goes when you die, of King Tut. King Tut, Tutankhamen, I believe is the full name in Egyptian and that was a(n) exhibit and the art that came here to Los Angeles. It was just here for a month or two months.

Museums in the United States, even if they are public museums, are...often cost money. Usually its \$10 or \$15 a person to go into a museum. There are some museums that are free. The Getty Museum is free, here in Los Angeles, but we also have a modern art museum, we have another museum called the Los Angeles County Museum of Art and those museums charge an admission price. “Admission” is the money you pay to get into somewhere. And, that is usually the cost, I think the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, which is probably the greatest museum in the United States – if you go to New York City, you must go to the Metropolitan Museum of Art. It's sometimes just called “the Met.” “The Met.” They, I think, charge \$10. I was there last year, I think that's how much the admission is. If it's a special exhibit, if it's a traveling exhibit, they may charge extra money to see that exhibit. I think I paid \$25 or \$30 to see the King Tut exhibit, so that's extra money.

Well, let me say a little bit about some of the most famous museums in the United States. I've mentioned probably our best museum which is the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City, or the Met, we call it. It's one of the world's largest museums, like the British Museum in London or the Louvre in Paris. It's a very large museum, not as large as the Louvre or the British Museum, but has a very good collection of both art from all over the world, as well as from the United States. It is located in the center of New York City, in the



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

area we call Manhattan. And it's a...it's an excellent museum if you ever have the chance to go there. New York City has several good museums. Another famous museum in New York City you will want to visit is called the Guggenheim Museum. Now, "Guggenheim" is a name...was a family name and there is actually several Guggenheim Museums throughout the world. One of the most famous is in Bilbao, Spain, where there is a famous...new art building, new art museum building. There's also a famous one in New York City. And, the building is also very interesting. It was a building that was designed or planned by one of the most famous architects in the United States. The architect was Frank Lloyd Wright.

Outside New York City, there are other famous museums, and of course, I can't name all of them, but some of the more famous ones are in Washington DC. There are actually a nation, or a federal museum in Washington DC. And, if you go to Washington DC, most of these museums are called Smithsonian Museums. "Smithsonian" is the name of several museums in Washington. There's the Smithsonian Museum of Air and Space. There's the Smithsonian National Museum of African Art. And, there are all...several of these museums that are run by the federal government. They're called the Smithsonian museums because the first person that gave money to start the museum was named James Smithsonian. So now, they're called the Smithsonian Museums. There is several different types of museums in Washington DC that you can visit. There are also famous museums in other cities. Chicago and Boston both have very good art museums. There are some museums that have new buildings that you might want to see. Many of these museums have good collections of art, especially from the area where they are located. But, the Chicago, the Boston Museum, the museums in Los Angeles, San Francisco, some pretty good museums there if you are interested in going to museums. You might want to look at those if you ever visit those cities. Now, let's answer a few questions.

Well, our first question from Guillem in Majorca, the island in the Mediterranean Sea. He wants to know why I sometimes pronounce the letter "a" as "ah" and sometimes I pronounce it as "ae." I think I've answered this question before but often when I speak slowly or when we speak slowly in English, we sometimes pronounce the words a little differently. The word "ah" or "ae" can be pronounced either way. When I am speaking fast, and when people speak fast, they usually will say "ah." "I'm going...I want 'ah' piece of ham." "I want 'ah' piece of ham." But, if I said it slowly I may say, "I want 'ae' of ham." Especially if I wanted to



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

emphasize or to call your attention to something. Speaking more slowly, we will often say "ae" instead of "ah." I know I do.

Erika in Lithuania has a question about the difference between “comfortable” and “convenient.” What does it mean to be comfortable and what does it mean to be...or for something to be convenient? Let's start with comfortable.

“Comfortable” comes from the verb “to comfort” and to comfort someone means to make them feel relaxed, to make them feel pleasurable, to make them feel good. That's to make someone...that's to comfort someone. Sometimes we use that verb to comfort when someone is crying, for example, they're very sad. Maybe their father died, or something bad happened. You can comfort them, you can try to make them feel better. Comfortable means, as an adjective, something that makes you feel better, something that is nice for you, and makes you feel good. For example, you can describe a chair as comfortable. If you sit down, and "Oh, its a nice chair," you relax, that's a comfortable chair. An uncomfortable chair, with the “un” in front, uncomfortable means not comfortable, that would be the chair I'm sitting in right now, not comfortable.

“Convenient,” convenient means that, it usually means that it's something easy for you to do or an easy place for you to go. Something that doesn't cause you a lot of problems. We don't talk about chairs as being convenient. Convenient has to do with things like, for example, the grocery store. "I have a grocery store that is only five minutes from my house, if I walk." That's very convenient. The grocery store is convenient. It is close to me; it is easy for me to use. So, convenience has to do with things that usually are easy for you to go to, or easy for you to use. It doesn't require you...require a lot of extra work from you. So, comfortable is feeling good and convenient is easy to use. So, thank you Erika for that question. Sometimes we use both of those words together. It's a comfortable, convenient hotel, means it's a nice hotel, with nice rooms and it's close, for example, to the downtown area. That would be comfortable and convenient.

Jean-Rene from Quebec wants to know the difference the expression "I used to" and "I use to." What's the difference between "He used to" or "I used to do something" and "I use to do something" without the D? Well, its hard to hear the difference because the D and the T come together when we pronounce it quickly and because of that reason, when we see it written, some people will write it incorrectly. And, I probably have done that myself because it's a very easy mistake to make. The correct form is with the D. “Used to.” I say correct form



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 41

because if you look in a grammar book, that's what it will tell you. Although, the language is changing. All languages change as people change and use them differently. And, this particular used to with the D and without a D is so common now, so common that people don't write the D, that I think many people would consider it acceptable to do either way. There's no difference in meaning, certainly, but the most formal way, the most...the way that most grammar books would tell you is that there should be a D there when you spell it. Now, when you pronounce it, there's no difference. Used to, use to, the D and the T sounds come together as one.

Finally, Jean-Rene has a question about the expression which I use a lot, which is "of course." "Of course." What does that mean? "Of course" means usually that what you are saying, or what you are about to say, is obvious. It's something that you should know already. It's something that isn't necessary to say, really, because you know it already. So, for example you might say, "It is a beautiful day here in Los Angeles. Of course, it's always beautiful here in Los Angeles." The of course in that example means it is not necessary for me to say it. You already know it's always beautiful here in Los Angeles. So, thank you Jean-Rene for your questions.

Well, that's all we have time for today. Remember to come back to our next ESL Podcast and next week to our ESL Café. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on the English Café.

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