



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 49

TOPICS

Labor Day, charitable organizations in the U.S., safety vs. security, clutch vs. grip vs. grab

GLOSSARY

labor – work; difficult physical work

* The prisoners in that country are not only put in jail, but also have to do hard labor.

to barbecue – to cook outside over a fire on a grill

* Instead of a dinner party, we're having an informal barbecue to celebrate Zia's birthday.

muscular – something having to do with muscles; having big muscles

* After the tests, the doctor now thinks that the problem is muscular.

telethon – a very long television program, usually used to get money for a charity or for people who need help

* After the bad hurricane that left so many people homeless, their group decided to hold a telethon to raise money to rebuild houses.

to raise money – to collect money; to get money from others for a charity or for a specific purpose

* Can you help me think of some ways to raise money for college?

to pledge money – to promise to give money

* Although several hundred people pledged money during the telethon, we've only collected money from 60 percent.

poster child – a person whose picture is on the advertisement for an organization that is trying to get money for people who need help; a person who is a good example of something

* We need a poster child for our organization that others will find interesting and appealing.



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charity – an organization that helps people who need help, such as the poor

* In addition to his job, he spends 10 hours a week helping a children's charity.

tax exempt – when the government says that you or your organization does not need to pay taxes

* If we are tax exempt from the U.S. government, we can use all of the money we collect to help the sick.

raffle – a way to make money by selling tickets; the winning ticket is chosen by chance and the winner gets a prize

* All of the children in her class sold raffle tickets and she ended buying more than 50 of them!

rummage sale – a sale of things other people owned before and that they give to the organization to be sold, usually to make money for a charity or another specific reason

* There were some great bargains at the church rummage sale last weekend.

safety – protected from danger, often used to talk about people

* For your safety, the company has hired two guards to protect you wherever you go.

security – protected from danger, often used for things such as buildings or countries

* The security of this building depends on you locking the outer doors at the end of each day.

to clutch – to hold something very tightly, usually close to your body or in your hand

* When the firefighter brought his son out of the burning building, Manuel clutched him tightly, and wouldn't let him go until they reached the hospital.

to grip – to hold something very tightly, usually in your hand

* Her music teacher told her not to grip her instrument so hard and she will get a better sound.

to grab – to take something from someone or some place else and to hold it

* He dropped his glass and tried to grab it before it fell on the ground.



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WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

“Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.”

The saying, “Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200” comes from a very popular board game called, “Monopoly.” A “board game” is any game played on a board where players move pieces around. In this game, each player moves their piece around the board by rolling a “dice,” a small square cube with six sides and numbers on each side. The “object,” or goal, of the game is to make as much money as possible by the end of the game. Each time a player goes all the way around the board and passes the beginning of the game again, or the space marked “Go,” they collect \$200. On some of the spaces on the board, players must pick a card that tells them if they will get something good or something bad. The worse card you can get is one that puts the player in “jail,” or prison, and they are instructed to go directly there: “Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.”

This saying is now used in a more general way to mean that someone is being punished, and that they are being told to do something unpleasant right away. For example, if your boss catches you stealing and fires you without giving you any warning, you might say: “My boss told me to pack up my things and to leave the building immediately. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.” Another example is if your girlfriend thinks that you have lied to her and she decides to end your relationship. You may say: “She came over and told me that she was breaking up with me. Do not pass go. Do not collect \$200.”



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 49.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 49. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On today's Café we're going to talk about the annual holiday in the United States called Labor Day and how it is different from other Labor Days across the world. We're also going to talk about charity - people giving money and the biggest charitable organizations in the United States, and as always, we'll answer a few questions. Now, let's get started.

Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com. You can get a complete Learning Guide to this podcast. It's an eight to ten page guide that includes all of the vocabulary that we discuss, as well as additional vocabulary, culture notes and the complete transcript of this podcast.

Well, our first topic today is Labor Day. Labor, "labor," is another word for work. It can be a noun. It also can be a verb. To labor means to work. Labor Day in the United States is a day that is celebrated each year to honor all of those who work, which is, of course, most people. So, it's a day of honoring or remembering all of us who have to work every day, and it is celebrated on the first Monday of September. Americans love to have their holidays on a Monday so they can have a long weekend: Saturday, Sunday, Monday. In fact, many holidays, traditional holidays, have been moved to Monday so that we could have a long weekend. The exception would be July 4th. We don't move July 4th to a Monday, I don't think that would be easy to do. But, many other holidays in the United States are on a Monday: Memorial Day, which we celebrate in May honoring those who have died, that is on a Monday. My birthday is always celebrated on a Monday, so all the big holidays!

Well, Labor Day is somewhat different than the Labor Day in many countries. Most countries celebrate what we call Labor Day in the United States on May 1st, and they call it May Day. And, May 1st is a time when there are often in many countries political demonstrations or parades. People get together and there are



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often protests if there is a problem, but usually it's a celebration with political connections.

In the United States it is not a political event. There are no demonstrations, there are no meetings. It's basically a day where people get off work. To get off work means that you don't have to work. People spend the day with their families, so it's a day for a picnic, a day for barbecue. To barbecue, "barbecue," means to cook food over a fire, and that's a very popular thing people do on Labor Day. They get together with their families, maybe go to the beach.

Labor Day is also considered the last weekend of summertime. Most schools have holidays. They don't have school in June, July and August. But, the first week of September many schools begin again, so Labor Day is sort of the last chance for students to relax before they have to go back to school.

One of the best-known traditions for Labor Day in the last 30 to 40 years is a telethon. A telethon, "telethon," is when you have a television program that usually goes on all day. Sometimes it goes on two or three days. The telethon tries to raise money for some group or organization. To raise, "raise," money means to get money for a group. Well, the group that has a telethon on Labor Day every year is the Muscular Dystrophy Association. Muscular, "muscular," comes from the word muscle, "muscle." Your muscles are the things that move your bones and help you move your entire body. You need your muscles. Muscular is an adjective that comes from the word muscle. Dystrophy, "dystrophy," is a medical term that refers to the fact that the muscles stop working properly. The muscles become weak. And, this is a disease - Muscular Dystrophy - that affects young children. The Muscular Dystrophy Association is an organization that tries to get money to have more research to help these children with this disease.

One of the reasons this telethon, which everyone in the United States can watch - and most people have watched it at one time or another - is hosted by Jerry Lewis. Jerry Lewis is a famous comedian and actor. He was famous especially in the 1960's and 70's. He is the person who is the host of the program, and he's very well known in the United States for his support of this organization. Usually, he has different music groups or actors - famous people who come on the program. So, you are watching the telethon on TV and there is entertainment for you, but there is also a number, a telephone number, for you to call to pledge



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money. To pledge, “pledge,” means to say you are going to give money. It's to promise to give money to an organization.

The telethon is always on Labor Day weekend. It lasts about 20 hours or so. It is very successful in getting people to donate money. Last year, I think, they had about 55 million dollars that people donated to the Muscular Dystrophy Association, so it's probably the most successful and well-known telethon in the United States. There are also telethons for other organizations that are trying to get money for their group.

Another term that people associate with the Muscular Dystrophy Association is the poster child. The poster, “poster,” child, two words, is the picture of one the children who has this unfortunate disease, and they put his or her picture on a poster. A poster is a big piece of paper that you put up on the wall that has a picture of someone on it. The poster child is someone who, we would say, gives a face to the disease that lets people see a specific person, in this case a child that is affected by or hurt by the disease. The term, poster child, is also used in other context now. Usually it means someone who is the representative of a certain problem or of a certain situation. Well, when we're talking about pledges and telethons we're talking about charitable organizations and that's our next topic for today's Café.

The word charity, “charity,” is usually used to mean money or things that you give people who need money or need things, people who are poorer than you are or who have certain needs that they cannot meet. This would be what we would call charity, and the adjective, charitable, comes from this word charity. So, when we talk about a charitable organization, like the Muscular Dystrophy Association, we're talking about organizations or groups that give money, collect money, and then give money and things to people who need it. And there are many different charitable organizations in the United States, probably more than a million organizations.

In the United States, if you want to collect money to give to other people who need help, usually you will get a permit from the government, from the federal government, the national government, so that you are tax exempt. To be tax exempt, “exempt,” means that you do not have to pay taxes on the money that you get from other people. It also means that people who give you money, who give your organization money, can deduct that amount from their own income taxes. Income, “income,” taxes, “taxes,” is the money that you have to pay the



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government, a percentage of the money that you make. Your income is the money that you get from your job. Income taxes are money that you have to pay the government. In the United States, if you give money to a charitable organization you pay less taxes. You pay a lower amount of taxes. It's not a huge difference for most people, but it does help reduce, or lower, the amount of money you have to give the federal government for taxes every year. So, it's very important for an organization to have a tax-exempt status.

Now, the United States has a long tradition of private charitable organizations, that is, organizations that are not part of the government, and many people are surprised that the US government doesn't do more to help people who need help, and that's probably true. There is, however, a lot of private groups that try to help people who are poor or people who are sick, who need money or who need help, and there is a long tradition of giving money, giving some of your money, to these private organizations.

There are lots of different ways that these organizations try to get money. Sometimes they have a raffle. A raffle, "raffle," is when you sell tickets to win a prize. It's kind of like a lottery, but it's done by private organizations to get money for a charitable group, and that is a raffle. Usually, churches and small organizations have raffles to get money for their organization or group. The raffle is usually something big for a prize, maybe a car or \$5,000 dollars. Sometimes the raffles are for smaller things, and the idea is that you have a chance to win something if you give some money.

Some groups have what are called rummage sales in order to get money. A rummage, "rummage," sale is similar to a garage sale. It's when you have things that people don't want, they give you, they donate to you, and then you sell those things. Usually, a rummage sale is on one or two days and it is a way of trying to get money for your organization.

The biggest charitable organizations in the United States are probably the religious organizations - churches and other religious organizations: Christian, Jewish, Muslim, Hindi - many different types of religious organizations. The two most popular charitable organizations that most people know of are Goodwill and the Salvation Army. Goodwill is a private charitable organization that tries to help many of those who have physical problems, people who need to get a job that perhaps don't have very much education or training. Goodwill helps lots of different groups. And, the reason they're very well known is that most cities you



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will find a Goodwill store, and this is a place where people come and they give their old computers or their old desks and chairs, and you can go and then buy those things and that money goes to the Goodwill organization.

The other big group is the Salvation Army. Salvation, “Salvation,” Army, “Army,” is not a real army. They don't have any guns. It's a religious organization, a private religious organization that helps feed homeless people, give them a place to stay. It helps people who are poor. And, the Salvation Army is very well known because every December at Christmastime, they go to some of the big stores and they stand outside of the stores and they have a little place where you can give money. Usually the person from the Salvation Army is ringing a bell, and they ring a bell so that people look and go over there and donate money, or give some money to the organization. And, those are just two of the many different charitable organizations here in the United States.

Well, now let's answer a few questions. Our first question today comes from Michael in Germany. Michael wants to know the difference between the word safety, “safety,” and security, “security.” Well, sometimes safety and security mean the same thing. Safety comes from the word safe, “safe,” which means that you are protected, that nothing bad will happen to you if you are safe. Safety can mean things such as making sure that you lock your doors so that no one steals your car or comes into your house. These are all part of safety. Safety can also be used for example - you are working with some dangerous chemicals and you have to make sure that you don't burn yourself or get hurt. This would be part of your job safety, or that you don't injure yourself or hurt yourself on some equipment at your job. This would be part of job safety. So, safety has to do with being protected or being in a situation where you cannot be hurt.

Security is also used sometimes to mean the same idea. Security is something that we use when we are talking about the entire country, for example. We say that we need to protect our national security, which means we need to make sure that no one attacks us or no one hurts us as a country. That would be one use of security. Security is also something that we might use in talking about a building. A security guard is a person who usually is a private - from a private organization that tries to protect the building of a business, for example, from people who might want to hurt the business or steal something. We also have the term job security. Job security means that your job is safe or your job is protected, that you will not lose your job.



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So, the words safety and security are sometimes used to mean the same things. The difference is really the particular phrase or expression. For example, we wouldn't say job safety to mean job security. Those are two different ideas. Job safety, as we talked about before, has to do with not getting hurt on your job. Job security means that you will not lose your job. So, it depends on the particular expression when you use safety and when you use security.

Our next question comes from Carmine, "Carmine," in Italy. Carmine wants to know the difference between the words to clutch, "clutch," to grip, "grip," and to grab, "grab." All three of these words are similar. To grab means to take something and to hold onto it, usually with your hand. The words grip and clutch are less common than grab. "I am gripping the steering wheel," means I'm holding it very tightly. The steering wheel is what you use to direct your car, so that you turn your car left or right with your steering wheel. Well, if you grip your steering wheel, you are holding the wheel very tightly.

To clutch means something very similar to to grip, which is to hold very tightly, to grab very tightly. "She was clutching her purse so that no one would steal it." Once again, the way we use these words depends on the particular expression. If you're talking about a bag or a purse, we would probably say clutch, especially if you are holding it or grabbing it so that no one takes it. To grip is something that we would usually use when the hand is going around something smaller, or something that you can put your entire hand around and hold in your hand. So, you could grip a microphone or grip a pen, but people will many times use clutch and grip to mean the same thing.

One other difference between to grab and to grip and to clutch is that to grab usually, or can mean, to take something from someone else or to take something that is in a different place and put it into your hands, whereas when we talk about to grip or to clutch, we mean it's already in your hand. You can say to grab on or to grab a hold of something, and that has a similar meaning as to grip and to clutch. So, thank you Carmine, for that question.

That's all we have time for on today's English Café. Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com. And, if you have a question that you want answered on the Café, just email us at eslpod@eslpod.com.

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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