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## TOPICS

American Presidents: Harry S. Truman; to handle versus to address versus to deal with versus to cope with; naysayer; hold that thought

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## GLOSSARY

**to enlist** – to join the military; to volunteer to become a member of the military  
\* When Devon graduates from high school, he plans on enlisting in the Marines.

**leadership qualities** – having characteristics that make other people admire and respect someone, listen to what that person says, and follow him or her  
\* The new president of the university needs to have very good leadership qualities.

**haberdashery** – a small store that sells items used for sewing, such as needles, thread, and buttons  
\* My great-grandparents owned a haberdashery in a small town in Iowa.

**atomic bomb** – nuclear weapon; a very dangerous explosive weapon  
\* The atomic bomb caused death and destruction across this entire city.

**to surrender** – to give up; to stop resisting an enemy and to accept their authority  
\* Stop tickling me! I surrender! You can have the last piece of cake.

**to flourish** – to grow and to do very well; to develop quickly and successfully  
\* The boy lived in a dangerous neighborhood and had a lot of problems, but when his family moved to a safer area, he flourished.

**public approval rating** – the percentage of people who have a positive opinion about a person or his or her actions  
\* The governor's public approval rating has gone up since she announced her new program to attract more businesses to the state.

**to defeat** – to beat; to win a victory over someone in a battle or contest  
\* It will be very difficult to defeat a team that hasn't lost a game yet this year.



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**to integrate** – to allow people of different races or ethnicities to be in the same places and to use the same things and services

\* The process to integrate schools in the American South in the 1960s was a long and difficult one.

**memoir** – biography; a written account of one's own past experiences

\* Should Dr. Jeff McQuillan write a memoir about his life as a podcaster?

**folksy** – informal and simple, having the characteristics of traditional culture or customs, and very likeable

\* The host of my favorite talk show has a folksy manner that is easy to watch.

**to portray** – to show or represent in a movie, television show, or play

\* Why is Abraham Lincoln often portrayed as a very serious man who seldom laughed?

**to handle** – to deal with an issue or problem; to resolve an issue or problem

\* Mel's job at the bar is to handle difficult people who have had too much to drink.

**to address** – to introduce an issue or problem and begin to deal with it or discuss how to deal with it

\* When will the government begin to address the growing homeless problem?

**to deal with** – to address and handle an issue, problem, or bad situation

\* Carl doesn't have time to deal with his three young kids and cook dinner every night.

**to cope with** – to deal with an issue, problem, or bad situation and live through it

\* Katherine is doing a great job coping with an illness that has no cure.

**naysayer** – someone who says "no"; someone who opposes something; someone who denies that something is true; someone who does not believe in something, such as a cause

\* The bridge was built despite the naysayers who said it couldn't be done in under a year.

**hold that thought** – a phrase used to tell someone to wait a moment, that what they have to say is important or relevant, but it needs to be heard later, either because there is an interruption or something else must come first

\* Jemiel, I know that you want to present a solution, but hold that thought while I finish giving everyone the facts about the problem.



## **WHAT INSIDERS KNOW**

### **M\*A\*S\*H**

MASH: A Novel About Three Army Doctors was a book “published” (printed and sold) in 1968. Written by Richard Hooker, MASH was about the lives of three doctors who worked in an army camp during the “Korean War” (a war fought between North and South Korea from 1950 to 1953, with the United States helping the South Koreans). “MASH” was the name of their “unit” (the group they worked in) and the letters stood for “Mobile Army Surgical Hospital” (a movable hospital where doctors and nurses could help people who had been hurt).

A few years after it was published, the novel was made into a film starring Donald Sutherland and Elliot Gould, two respected actors. After the film, the story was made into a much more popular television series.

The television series MASH (usually written as “M\*A\*S\*H”) is considered to be one of the best television shows in American history and, although the real Korean War only lasted three years, the series lasted eleven years, from 1972 to 1983. The series is a “black comedy,” meaning that it is funny, but deals with a serious topic.

The main character, “Hawkeye” Pierce, played by Alan Alda, was particularly funny. Although he was the “chief surgeon” (the doctor who specializes in cutting into the body and who is in charge), Hawkeye also enjoyed playing “pranks” (tricks or jokes) on the other members of the group. His best friends “Trapper John” McIntyre (played by Wayne Rogers) and later B.J. Hunnicutt (played by Mike Farrell) helped with the pranks, many of which were played on Frank Burns (Larry Linville), a much more serious, but “incompetent” (not skilled) doctor. Some of the other characters were Margaret “Hot Lips” Houlihan (Loretta Swit), who was in charge of the nurses, and Maxwell Klinger (Jamie Farr), who wore women’s dresses for several years “in an attempt” (to try) to get “thrown out of” (released from) the army.

The characters in the show were so funny and so “relatable” (where people were able to see some of themselves in them) that the show became one of the best-loved television shows of all time and is still often seen on television in “reruns” (episodes played more than once) today.



## **COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 362.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 362. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful – I did say beautiful – in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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On this Café, we're going to continue our series on American presidents, focusing on, today, Harry S. Truman one of our 20<sup>th</sup> century presidents. And, as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

This Café begins with a continuation of our series on American presidents. We're going to talk about the 33<sup>rd</sup> President of the United States today, Harry S. Truman.

Harry S. Truman was born in the State of Missouri, in the Midwestern part of the United States, at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, in 1884. He "enlisted" (enlisted) or joined the Army – the American military in 1917. This, of course, was when the United States entered World War I. Truman fought in France during World War I, and many say he brought out his leadership qualities when he was there. "To bring out" means to show, to demonstrate in this case. "Leadership" is when you are the leader or the person who is in charge of a lot of other people. Leadership is the idea of being a leader, the concept or situation of having a leader. "Qualities" are characteristics. So when we say "leadership qualities," we mean those characteristics – those things that make other people think of you as a leader. And that's what Truman was in the Army back in 1917.

After Truman returned to the United States he took some classes – some courses in business and law, but he never finished his college degree. In fact, he became the last U.S. president who did not have a college degree. He took some courses in college, but he never finished. All of the other U.S. presidents after Truman have had college degrees, even when they appear to be rather stupid they still have graduated from college, which just proves that going to the university doesn't make you intelligent!



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Truman took some classes, as I said, in business and law, but he did not get his college degree. Instead, he opened up a store that sold things that people used to make clothes, to sew (sew). It was called a “haberdashery.” It’s a word we don’t use a lot anymore. “Haberdashery” (haberdashery) is a word you’ll probably not see very often, but it’s a word for a store that sells “sewing notions,” or small things used for making clothing.

Truman had an administration position in the county where he was living – the area of the state where he was living, and eventually he went into politics. In 1934, he was elected to the United States Senate. Remember, there are two senators from every U.S. state in our national Senate, and he continued to serve, or be a U.S. senator, until 1945. As a senator, he was known as someone who tried to fight against we might call “waste” (waste). Waste is when the government doesn’t spend the money that they have very wisely – which is most of the time!

In 1944, then-President Franklin Roosevelt asked Harry S. Truman to be his vice-president, to run as his vice-president in the election of 1944. But, as you probably know, in American elections you become president, or in this case vice-president, the following year after the November election. Well, Truman was elected vice-president in November of 1944, and Franklin Roosevelt was president. But although the American people didn’t realize it, Franklin Roosevelt, who was elected to his fourth term as president in 1944, had become very sick. In fact, he became sick even before the election, although people didn’t realize it. But as you know, the United States, and indeed many countries in the world were involved in World War II during this time, and people didn’t want to pick a new president. So, Roosevelt continued as president but he died three months into his fourth and final term. So in April of 1945 Roosevelt died, and in the United States when the president dies the vice-president becomes president.

Truman then was vice president for, as I say, only about three months before he became president. He didn’t feel prepared. He said to some of the reporters, “Boys” – and at that time most of the reporters were men – “Boys, if you ever pray, pray for me now.” He was asking for their help and for God’s help because he didn’t feel as though he was prepared to take over as president – not only as president, but as a wartime president, a president who was involved in running a war.

One of Truman’s first decisions was his probably most difficult decision, and that was to “authorize,” or to give permission, for the use of atomic bombs. “Atomic bombs” were, as you probably know, also called “nuclear weapons.” The United



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States, in 1945, dropped two bombs in August of 1945 on Japan, on Nagasaki and Hiroshima, killing more than 200,000 people. The bombing was very controversial. Some people believed it prevented more deaths that would've occurred if the United States had to "invade" Japan – had to go and fight in Japan city by city. Other people said there was no excuse for killing civilians – innocent people in the bombing of Nagasaki and Hiroshima. That's a question that historians will argue over for many years, perhaps many centuries. In any case, the dropping of the bombs did, in fact, end World War II because Japan surrendered. Remember, by August of 1945 Germany had already surrendered, so the war was basically over in Europe. Japan was the last country to "surrender," or stop fighting. Japan said okay, you win, we lose.

In 1945, Harry S. Truman – President Truman attended a meeting of the other leaders of World War II, the leaders of the "Allies" we called them. This meeting was at Potsdam; it is called the Potsdam Conference. Potsdam is a city in Germany. The leaders of the Allies were President Truman, the Soviet Union's Joseph Stalin, and the United Kingdom's or Great Britain's Winston Churchill. During this very important meeting, the leaders decided how they would punish Nazi Germany, the loser of the war in Europe, and how the countries would behave following the war.

When Truman returned to the United States, he said that communism would "flourish," or would grow, and would do very well in areas that didn't have a lot of money. Therefore, he said, Congress should spend a lot of money to help Europe recover and to keep it strong. Truman himself made good on that promise; that is, he actually did something about it, especially after the Allies had divided up Germany into different sections, when the Soviet Union decided to not allow the Allies to go into Berlin. Berlin itself, you probably know, as a city was divided among the Allies, including France. When the Soviet Union decided to block entry for supplies into Berlin, President Truman approved the Berlin Airlift, where planes flew to Berlin in order to keep the city supplied with food and other necessary materials and goods. Truman also helped coordinate a relief effort for Europe; that is, a general effort to bring food, clothing, and other things needed in the countries of Europe after World War II, what we sometimes call the Marshall Plan because it was one of the U.S. generals, General Marshall, who helped organize this relief effort, this effort to bring things that people need who need them, especially after some sort of disaster, or in this case after a war.

In 1948, however, Truman had very low public approval ratings. "Public approval" is what people think about how the president is doing. Only 36 percent of the people thought that Truman was doing a good job as president, and so



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many people – most people – thought that he would lose the presidential election of 1948. However, he was able to defeat the other presidential candidate, the Republican candidate, Thomas Dewey. “To defeat” means to beat or to win, in this case an election. So many people thought that Truman would lose that a newspaper, the Chicago Tribune, famously published after the election – the day after the election – an article that said, “Dewey Defeats Truman.” Dewey was the person that was also running for president, against President Truman. There’s a famous picture of President Truman holding this newspaper up. Of course, the newspaper was wrong; Dewey did not defeat Truman, Truman defeated Dewey. So, Truman continued as president from 1948 to 1952 – technically from 1949 to 1953.

During Truman’s second term as president he took a very strong position on civil rights. He, for example, integrated the United States Army. “To integrate” (integrate) means to combine or put things together. The opposite would be “to segregate” (segregate). The U.S. Armed Services were segregated; the blacks and whites were put into different parts of the Armed Services. One of the things that Truman did was to integrate, to put those two groups together so there was no longer a separate place for blacks and whites. Truman’s position on civil rights was controversial, and many people thought that it would destroy his political party, the Democratic Party.

In general, Truman’s policies here in the United States, what we would call his “domestic” policies, were not very successful. There was at the time a strong anti-Communist movement, and many people thought that Truman was that not sufficiently tough or did not oppose Communism and Communists, especially here in the United States. We talked about something called McCarthyism back on English Café number 299.

Although Truman could have run again for president in 1952, he decided not to. Instead, he returned to his home in Missouri with his wife. Truman collected a lot of donations in order to start something called the Truman Library, where all of his presidential papers – all of his presidential documents were put. Truman also wrote his “memoirs,” an autobiography of his life, especially as his time as president. He published two books, and this is something that presidents often do when they leave office; when they stop being president they write a book about their life. And Truman did that, in fact, he published two books.

He made some money from the books, but he didn’t make very much money. In fact, there’s one story that Truman, after he left the White House – the presidency – and he returned to Missouri he decided to take a trip. So he and



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his wife got in his car and he drove, himself, to different parts of the country as part of his vacation. Truman didn't have a lot of money. In fact, in 1958 the U.S. Congress passed a law that would give presidents money after they leave the White House; we would call it a "pension" (pension). Your pension is the money you live on after you retire.

Truman traveled in Europe, and was involved in other political campaigns, but he began to become sick in the 1960s. He finally died in 1972 when he was 88 years old. I remember when Truman died in 1972.

Although he was not very popular when he left the presidency, in the years since Truman has become one of our most popular presidents. One reason is that people thought of, or think of now, Truman as being someone who was very down to earth, someone who was folksy (folksy). Someone who's "down to earth" or "folksy" is someone who's plain. They may not have a lot of education or money, but you like them. They seem wise; they seem smart. Truman spoke like a lot of normal people did, and that made him likable to the average person.

Truman has been "portrayed" or shown in movies and television shows about his life. Probably one of the most famous portrayals of Truman was a play, that was later made a movie, called Give 'em hell, Harry! That was made in 1975 – the film was made in 1975. The expression "to give (someone) hell" (hell) is an informal one meaning to give someone a difficult time; it's often used in a joking way. The phrase "Give 'em hell, Harry!" was one of the slogans or phrases that Truman's supporters used during his campaigns. He would give a very strong speech, for example, attacking the other candidate, and someone would yell, "Give 'em hell, Harry!" meaning yeah, go on, criticize them, attack them. That was the name, then, of this play and film. I remember seeing in the 1970s when it was released.

Truman was "memorialized" or remembered by a special law that established something called the Truman Scholarships. This is a federal scholarship program for college students who are interested in going into public service – going into government service. If you nowadays win a Truman Scholarship you get 30,000 dollars to help you pay for your graduate school. Of course, this is somewhat funny since Truman was our last president not to go to college.

Now let's answer some of the questions that you have sent to us.

Our first question comes from André (André) in Brazil. André wants to know the meaning of the following expressions: "to handle," "to address," "to deal with,"



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and “to cope with.” Well, all four of these can be used in a similar way, but there are some differences. Let’s talk the first one, which is “to handle” (handle).

“To handle” is a verb that means to take care of a problem or to solve a problem. “We handled the problem by telling her that she was fired.” We got rid of her, that’s how we handled the problem. That’s usually the best way to handle problems, just get rid of it!

“To address” (address) means to introduce a problem and begin to handle it. “Address” doesn’t mean that we’ve actually solved the problem, but we’ve talked about it or we’ve tried to solve the problem. Now maybe you solved it and maybe you didn’t. Usually when you use the word “address” you’re not saying that you have figured out the solution – you have solved the problem. Often it refers to just people talking about the problem. But, the biggest difference here would be that “address” doesn’t mean that you’ve solved the problem. “To handle” usually means that you have solved the problem or taken care of the problem.

“To deal (deal) with (something)” or “to cope (cope) with (something)” means to take care of, to handle a problem or an issue or a bad situation. “To deal with” usually means that you’ve handled it, so “to handle” and “to deal with” are synonymous in many cases. “To cope with” doesn’t mean that you’ve solved the problem, it just means that you are surviving really. You’ve perhaps tried to solve the problem, but you haven’t completely solved the issue. You’re addressing the issue, you’re trying to solve it, but you haven’t solved it. “Cope with” is almost always used for a negative situation. You wouldn’t say “I have to cope with my new girlfriend” if you meant that you were handling and solving all of her problems in a good way. “To cope with” is when you have a bad situation, often a situation can’t change. “To deal with” is much closer to the verb “to handle” in that it suggests that you are trying to solve a problem and often you succeed, in which case we would use the past tense: “I dealt with him already.” That means I’ve talked to him or I did what I need to do with him so that the problem is basically solved.

The word “address” can also be used as a noun. It can be used for the number and the street where a building or a house is located. As a noun it can also mean a formal speech that you give to a large group of people.

Ahmad (Ahmad) in Cameroon – in Africa, of course – wants to know the meaning of a word, “naysayer.” A “naysayer” (naysayer – all one word) is someone who always says “no” to something. The word “nay” (nay) is an old word meaning no. When you vote in a meeting, for example, and you have a formal vote where



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people have to raise their hands, the no vote is called the “nay” vote. The yes vote is called an “aye” (aye) vote. So the person leading the meeting might say, “All those in favor (meaning all those who want to do what we talked about) say ‘aye’,” and then everyone who wants to do it will say, “Aye.” “Aye.” “Aye.” “Aye.” “Those opposed (those against) say ‘nay’,” and then people will say, “Nay.” “Nay.” “Nay.” And, of course, if the ayes are greater than the nays, we say, “The ayes have it,” meaning the ayes win. Or if the nays are greater, we’d say, “The nays have it,” and the vote is negative or no, we’re not going to do that.

So, a “naysayer” is someone who always says “no” to something, someone who’s always saying something isn’t true or someone who doesn’t believe anyone else, someone who’s very negative. That would be a naysayer.

Finally, Norbert (Norbert), originally from Poland now living in Germany, wants to the meaning of the expression “hold that thought.” “Hold” here means wait or stop doing what you’re doing. Sometimes we’ll tell someone to hold on, meaning don’t go anywhere but stop what you’re doing. “Thought,” of course, is an idea or an opinion that you have in your mind as the result of thinking about something.

“Hold that thought” is a phrase we use to tell someone to wait a minute, someone who perhaps is talking to us, but we want them to stop talking because we need to finish what we’re saying or because we need to take a break. For example, someone says to you, “I have to tell you a very, very big secret,” and then your cell phone rings – your telephone rings, and you say, “Hold that thought,” and then you answer your phone. You’re telling the person I want to hear what you’re saying, but please stop talking right now so I can answer my telephone. Obviously, you don’t think this person is very important if you interrupt your conversation to answer your cell phone! But, you get the idea. It’s not an expression you would use in writing, it’s something that would only be used in a conversation because you’re telling the person to stop talking, to wait a minute until you’re finished doing something else because you’ve been interrupted or because you have something else more important to do.

If you have nothing important to do in your life but have a question, you can email us. Our email address is [eslpod@eslpod.com](mailto:eslpod@eslpod.com). We get lots of questions, too many questions to answer all of them here on the Café, but we’ll do our best.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again – why not? – here on the English Café.



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