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**ESL Podcast 82 – In a Rut**

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**GLOSSARY**

**in a rut** – stuck; in the habit of repeating the same thing instead of trying different things, usually used in a negative way

\* Fred never did anything other than going to work and watching television at home, and he soon realized that he was stuck in a rut.

**to get bogged down** – to get stuck; to stop changing, growing, or making progress

\* Quiana got bogged down by all the work she needed to do for other people, and she forgot about working toward her own goals.

**the day to day** – the everyday routine; the tasks and actions one must do on a daily basis

\* Tyrell did not mind the usual day to day, but he really enjoyed taking a break occasionally and doing something completely different with his time.

**to change things up** – to break from routine; to do something different from what one normally does

\* Even though Lulu usually took the direct route to work, she decided to change things up today and drive there by a different road.

**to break out** – to break from the ordinary; to do something that is not part of one's routine (the things that one usually does on a daily basis)

\* Pablo broke out of his ordinary routine by not working and going fishing instead.

**sold out** – when all the tickets to an event have been sold; with no tickets available to buy for an event

\* The band was so popular that the concert was sold out, and no one else was able to buy a ticket.

**venue** – the place where a special event happens; the location of an event

\* The venue for the play was damaged during a storm, and the actors needed to find a new place to perform.

**bummer** – something that makes one upset; an upsetting experience or situation

\* The fight Natalie had with her friend was a real bummer, making her upset for the rest of the day.

**to take a peek** – to look at something quickly, without looking for many details

\* Hans was curious about what his children were doing in the other room, so he took a peek and found them playing quietly.



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**hopping** – busy; exciting, usually because of a large crowd of people

\* The music at the club was really good, so the club was almost always hopping and full of people dancing.

**DJ** – disc jockey; someone who plays music at a dance club or special event

\* The couple hired a DJ to play music during their wedding reception.

**dance floor** – a large space intended for people to dance; a large area in a room that is kept empty so that people can dance there

\* Very few people were on the dance floor, and Jolanda felt too shy to go there and dance alone.

**cover charge** – an admission fee; money one must pay to be allowed inside a club

\* The club did not have a cover charge. It made its money by selling food and drinks, making it a popular place for young people with limited money to spend.

**in the mood** – having the desire to do something; believing that an action would be enjoyable or appealing

\* Even though Graham usually enjoys playing golf, he is not in the mood for it today and decided not to go playing with his friends.

**to veg** – to vegetate; to relax without doing much or thinking about anything serious

\* After a hard day of work, Heather was tired and did not have the energy to do anything except sit on the couch and veg.



## **CULTURE NOTE**

### **I'm a Yankee Doodle Dandy**

A popular song in the early part of the 20th century was written by a famous American composer, George M. Cohan, called “The Yankee Doodle Boy.” It was written for a Broadway “musical” (a play with a lot of singing, music, and dancing) called *Little Johnny Jones*. It “opened” (had its first show) in November of 1904. The song became popular, however, in 1942 when there was a movie made about Cohan’s life called *Yankee Doodle Dandy*. Cohan was an actor, singer, songwriter, and producer, who was sometimes called the “man who owns Broadway.” Broadway is the famous street in New York City where there are many famous theaters that have musical shows.

Cohan was an Irish-American who wrote many plays and songs, and even “starred in” (was the main actor in) Hollywood movies. In the movie about his life, another Irish-American actor named James Cagney “played the part of” (acted as the character of) Cohan. Several of Cohan’s famous songs can be heard in the movie, including “Give My Regards to Broadway,” “Your Grand Old Flag,” and “Over There.”

The song “The Yankee Doodle Boy” was in part about Cohan himself. He was, according to his parents, but not his “birth certificate” (the official document the government creates when you are born) born on America’s Independence Day, July 4th. The “lyrics” (words) of the song refer to another song, “Yankee Doodle,” from the time of the American Revolution of the late 18th century. A “doodle” was a foolish or stupid person, and “Yankee” (in the Revolutionary War) referred to the American colonists fighting for their independence from the British. So a “Yankee Doodle” meant a stupid American, but because the Americans were smart enough to win the war, the song is often sung with pride.



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 82: In a Rut.

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 82. My name is Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Today's podcast is about being in a rut. Let's get started!

[start of dialogue]

Woman: What do you want to do tonight?

Man: I don't know. What do you want to do?

W: I have no idea. Do you think we're in a rut?

M: What do you mean?

W: Well, we do the same things every weekend. We go to the same restaurants. We see the same friends. You know what I mean?

M: Yeah, I guess you're right. It's easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day and forget to change things up once in a while. Let's break out and do something completely different tonight.

W: Okay, I'll look in the events section of the paper to see what's going on tonight. Hmm, we could go to a concert. There is a good one tonight. I bet it's not sold out but we'll have to drive an hour to the venue.

M: An hour? That's a bit of a bummer. Let me take a peek and see what else there is. How about going dancing? We haven't done that in a while. There's a club in Silver Lake that's supposed to be hopping on Friday nights. Eddie from work told me that they have a really good DJ and a big dance floor, and the cover charge isn't bad.

W: I'm not really in the mood for dancing, actually. You know what? I just feel like staying home tonight and vegging, after all. How about you?



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M: Yeah, I was hoping you'd say that. It's nice to have the option to go out but I'd rather stay in. Maybe we can go out tomorrow night.

W: Yeah, definitely tomorrow night.

[end of dialogue]

We're talking in this podcast about "being in a rut." "To be in a rut" means that you are doing the same thing over and over again until you get bored. It's like having the same routine or same things that you do all the time. When you start to get bored with that, we use the expression "in a rut." A "rut" (rut) is if, for example, you have a bicycle and the bicycle goes back and forth in the ground. Many bicycles go back and forth. Eventually, there will be a path or a line that is formed by the bicycles going back and forth, and so that when you go in your bicycle, it will fall into that little hole, that little path which we call a "rut." So, "to be stuck in a rut" or "to be in a rut" means that you are moving in a direction and that you always go in that direction.

The woman says that they go to the same restaurants and see the same friends. "You know what I mean?" That expression, "you know what I mean," or sometimes we might just say, "You know?" means "Do you understand?" Though sometimes, we use it just to make sure the other person is listening. The man answers that, "It's easy to get bogged down in the day-to-day." "To get bogged down" (bogged), the verb is "to bog down" or "to get bogged down," means that you are slowed down or that you get stuck in a certain position. A "bog" (bog) is very wet, muddy ground that if you put something on it, it will sink, it will go down into it and it's hard to get it out. So, "to be bogged down" means that you have these burdens, these problems or these things that keep you from doing something different. The expression, "the day-to-day" (day) -- "the day-to-day" just means the common ordinary normal things that you do every day.

One way of getting out of being "bogged down" is "to change things up." "To change things up" – notice this is another two-word verb, "to change up" – again, it means pretty much the same as to change – to change the way you do things. "Let's change things up and tonight we are going to the beach instead of to a movie." That is the expression we might use. The "up" doesn't change the meaning very much. It's a little more common, however, when we say that we're going to change the way we do something. The man suggests that they "break out" and do something different. "To break out" – literally, if you are in prison, and you want to get out before your time, you have to "break out" – means you have



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to escape. You have to get out. So, the man here is using this as a metaphor. “To break out” means to get out of, to escape what they’re doing right now.

The woman suggests that they look in the “events section” of the paper. The “events section” is the part of a newspaper that has the listing of all the movies and the dance clubs and the theater and so forth. Sometimes we call this the “calendar section” because it often has a calendar, a list date by date of when things will happen. She suggests going to a concert and says, “I bet it’s not sold out.” “I bet” – “to bet” (bet) again has a couple of different meanings. One meaning of “to bet” is that you go, for example, to Las Vegas or to Monte Carlo or someplace where you can gamble, play poker or do other sorts of gambling, and you can place a “bet” or simply “bet,” which means you put money down and you hope that you win that particular game. Here, however, when we say, “I bet,” what we’re really saying is “I think.” We use the phrase “bet,” I suppose, because we’re saying, “I could bet; I could put money down and be sure that I was going to win.” More generally though, it simply means “I think” or “in my opinion.” The woman says it’s probably not “sold out.” “To sell out,” or “to be sold out” means that there are no more tickets, there’s no more tickets to the event. She says that it’s going to take an hour to drive to the “venue.” A “venue” (venue) is a place where a concert or a play is performed. A theater is a type of “venue.” The man doesn’t want to travel for an hour. In fact, he says, “That’s a bit of a bummer.” A “bummer” (bummer) simply means something that you don’t like, an unfortunate event. It’s an informal expression, probably used more often by younger people. “Boy, that’s a bummer.” It just means that’s a bad thing, that’s an unfortunate thing.

The man says, “Let me take a peek and see what else there is.” “To take a peek” (peek) means to take a look, usually a quick look. A “peek” is when you look at something very quickly. There’s a game that young children play called “peek-a-boo.” And “peek-a-boo” is when you hide behind something – little child will hide behind something then stick their head out and then put it back so you can’t see it. That’s kind of like playing “peek-a-boo.” Or you put your hand in front of your eyes, you take a quick look, a “peek,” and then you put your hand back in front of your eyes. The suggestion of the man is that they go dancing and he points out – or he says to the woman that there’s a “club” in Silver Lake that’s supposed to be “hopping” on Friday nights. A “club” is a place where people dance, in this instance, a “dance club.” “Silver Lake” is just a neighborhood here in Los Angeles. “To be hopping” means to be very busy, to have lots of excitement. Usually we talk about a “dance club” or a “party” as being “hopping.” It means there are a lot of people there and there is a lot of excitement there.



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The dance club usually has a “DJ.” And “DJ” stands for “Disc Jockey” and that’s the person who plays CD’s nowadays or the records in the old days. A “dance floor,” of course, is the place in the club where you can dance. And the “cover charge” is how much you have to pay to get into a dance club. That fee, or that price, is called the “cover charge.” Sometimes, people will just say, “the cover.” “How much is the cover for that club?” How much do you have to pay to get in? The woman says that she’s not really “in the mood for dancing.” “To be in the mood” means that you feel like doing something, that you want to do something. She’s not “in the mood.” She wants to stay home and “veg.” She says, “I’m staying home tonight and vegging.” “To veg” (veg) is an informal verb, means to relax, not to do any sort of thinking or anything that would make you have to work. So, someone who is “vegging” is someone who is relaxing but not doing anything intellectual. The man says that he wants to stay home, too. He says, “It’s nice to have the option to go out but I’d rather stay in.” “To have the option” just means to have the choice. “To go out” and “to stay in” are opposites. “To go out” means to go somewhere like a play or a theater or a movie theater or a concert, to leave your house and to go somewhere, usually for entertainment. “To stay in” means to stay at your house. When someone says, “I’m staying in tonight,” they mean I’m not going to leave my house or my apartment.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of dialogue]

Woman: What do you want to do tonight?

Man: I don't know. What do you want to do?

W: I have no idea. Do you think we're in a rut?

M: What do you mean?

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M: Yeah, I was hoping you'd say that. It's nice to have the option to go out but I'd rather stay in. Maybe we can go out tomorrow night.

W: Yeah, definitely tomorrow night.

[end of dialogue]

You can find the scripts for all our podcasts on [www.eslpod.com](http://www.eslpod.com). I'm Jeff McQuillan from Los Angeles, California on ESL Podcast.

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