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**ESL Podcast 378 – Talking About Time**

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**GLOSSARY**

**a quarter to** – 15 minutes before the hour

\* My classes start at four o'clock, but I must leave at a quarter to four because it takes fifteen minutes to walk to the school.

**noon, on the dot** – exactly noon; precisely 12:00 p.m.

\* My boss said that if I don't arrive at the meeting at noon, on the dot, I will lose my job.

**past** – after; following; later than

\* Licia arrived at the train station at 10 past seven and missed her seven o'clock train.

**knock it off** – an informal phrase used to tell someone to stop doing something; similar to "stop it!"

\* "Knock it off," the girl finally said to the boy who had hit her five times with his toy car.

**to be on time** – to be somewhere at the correct time; to arrive at the agreed upon time; the opposite of "late"; to be punctual

\* Did you make it to your son's school on time or were you late again?

**to turn up** – to arrive somewhere; to show up to a place, either late or unexpectedly

\* We waited in front of the theater for hours, but AJ never turned up.

**'til** – short for "until"; before

\* Meet me at twenty-five 'til two, so we will have a few minutes to prepare.

**you don't know the half of it** – another way to say, "You don't know how bad it really was."

\* Yes, having my wallet stolen sounds terrible, but you don't know the half of it! I had \$500 in cash in it!

**quarter after** – 15 minutes after the hour

\* Alejandro will arrive at nine-thirty and give his speech at a quarter after ten.

**to show up** – to arrive somewhere; to turn up at a place

\* Don's girlfriend is angry that he didn't show up at her art show.



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**nearly** – almost; not quite; very close to

\* Did you hear that Baracka nearly got hit by a car last week?

**to add insult to injury** – to make a bad thing worse; to add to an already bad situation

\* I fell down the stairs, and then, to add insult to injury, I broke my shoe!

**well after** – a long time after; much later

\* The nine o'clock movie was so long that it didn't end until well after midnight.

**to be pissed off** – informal phrase that means “very angry”; impolite way to say one is annoyed or upset

\* I am pissed off at my sister because she forgot my birthday again this year.

**charm** – the ability to make others like and admire one; attractiveness; appeal

\* Debbie has a happy personality and friendly manner, and everyone agreed that she has a lot of charm.

**to lose track of time** – to forget about the time; to be so busy that one doesn't remember to look at the clock

\* Sorry I didn't call you earlier. I was playing a computer game and I lost track of time.



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why is James pissed off at Juanita?
    - a) She forgot to buy tickets at the movies.
    - b) She thinks Chuck is charming.
    - c) She is often late.
  
  2. What does it mean to add “insult to injury”?
    - a) To make something worse.
    - b) To hurt someone.
    - c) To call someone a mean name.
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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**to turn up**

In this podcast, the phrase “to turn up” means to arrive or be somewhere: “Jake is a terrible father! He didn’t even turn up for his daughter’s piano recital.” People aren’t the only ones who can “turn up,” though; an item that has been lost can also “turn up”: “My lost car keys finally turned up under the kitchen table.” Or, “I thought I had lost my wallet, but it turned up in my office.” “Turn up” can also mean to shorten or put a hem on a piece of clothing: “My skirt is too long, so I will take it to the tailor and have it turned up.” You can also “turn up” anything electronic that makes sound, from a television to a MP3 player: “Turn the radio up. That’s my favorite song.” “To turn up your nose” at someone or something is to act like you are better than they are: “Anja loved fashion very much and turned up her nose at the badly dressed girl.”

**to show up**

The phrase “to show up,” in this podcast, is to come to or to arrive at a place: “Monika showed up at the doctor’s office 15 minutes early.” In the U.S., the phrase “to show up” is often used when referring to courts and trials, or for another type of official appointment or meeting: “The judge was very angry that Hans did not show up for his court date.” “To show someone up” is to embarrass or make another person look stupid, usually by doing something better than that person or by knowing more than that person: “Henri showed up Pierre by selling twice as many paintings in the same amount of time.” “To show up” can also mean to discredit or shame another person: “I showed the salesman up as a liar when I easily broke his ‘unbreakable’ product.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

In the U.S., it is “critical” (extremely important) to be on time for business “functions” (events), meetings, classes and trainings, and formal social events. At most companies, bosses and “colleagues” (co-workers) consider “tardiness” (lateness) to be unprofessional behavior. In many businesses, tardiness could even cause a person to lose his or her job. In the “academic world” (school), professors and teachers will often give late students lower marks in class. There are a few acceptable excuses for tardiness, such as a previous meeting that has run late or things beyond anyone’s control like heavy traffic, but it is still polite to call the host, boss, or teacher on the telephone and “inform them” (let them know) that you will be late.

“Punctuality” (being on time) is also important in other “aspects” (parts) of American life. Religious services and social club meetings almost always begin on time, as do most movies, concerts, and performances. Arrive late and you may miss the opening act or the first 10 minutes of a movie. When meeting with a friend, it is expected that you try to arrive at the agreed upon time as it is considered “insulting” (very rude) to show up late for a dinner or other planned social event. It is also important to show up on time for any appointment you make, whether it is with a doctor or a hair stylist. Failure to show up on time can result in losing your appointment.

While in most cases it is best to be punctual, there are certain “occasions” (times or events) when it is acceptable, even desirable, to be late. When “attending” (going to) casual social events like “cocktail parties” (parties in which alcohol is served) and art gallery openings, it is common to show up “fashionably late.” To show up fashionably late to an event means that you arrive late so that others think you are a very busy and important person with many other things to do. A “good rule of thumb” (standard rule to follow) is to arrive at least thirty minutes late to such functions. But be careful. Arrive too late and you “run the risk” (take the chance) of missing the best parts of the party!

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Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – a



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 378: Talking About Time.

This is ESL Podcast episode 378. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). You can download a Learning Guide for this episode. You can also take look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has some additional courses in business and daily English I think you may be interested in.

On this episode, we're going to talk about time; common time-telling expressions will be our focus today. We'll listen to a dialogue between Juanita and Chuck about the time. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Juanita: What time is it?

Chuck: It's a quarter to 12. Why?

Juanita: At noon, on the dot, I'm supposed to meet James.

Chuck: On the dot? What if you don't get there until a few minutes past four? Will you turn into a pumpkin?

Juanita: Knock it off. I have good reason to be on time. I was supposed to meet him at the movies at 8:30 last Saturday and I didn't turn up until 10 'til 9:00. We missed the first 10 minutes of the movie.

Chuck: That doesn't sound too bad.

Juanita: You don't know the half of it. The week before that, I was supposed to pick him up from work at a quarter after 5:00, and I didn't show up until nearly 20 minutes to six. To add insult to injury, James' boss saw that he was still in the office and gave him an extra assignment to do that night and he didn't finish until well after 10:00.

Chuck: I can see why he's pissed off at you.



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Juanita: What time is it now?

Chuck: It's 12:03.

Juanita: Oh my god! I'm late again! What am I going to tell him?

Chuck: Tell him it was all my fault. My incredible charm made you lose track of time.

[end of dialogue]

Juanita begins our dialogue by asking Chuck, "What time is it?" Chuck says, "It's quarter to 12." "Quarter to" is 15 minutes before the hour. The opposite would be "a quarter after 12," that would be 12:15. Juanita says, "At noon, on the dot, I'm supposed to meet James." "Noon," you probably know, is 12 p.m., the beginning of the afternoon. "On the dot" is an expression we use to mean exactly – at this exact time. "I want to see you at 4:00 on the dot in my office," that means that at 4:00 you must be here, exactly at that time.

Juanita says that she needs to meet her friend James at noon on the dot. Chuck says, "On the dot?" And then, making a little fun of Juanita, he goes on, "What if you don't get there until a few minutes past four. Will you turn into a pumpkin?" A "pumpkin" is a vegetable, most often associated with Halloween. But here, he's referring to the story of Cinderella, where the transportation that Cinderella takes to the dance is magically made from a pumpkin, but if she doesn't get home by midnight, the carriage – the little horse-drawn car that she's in will turn back into a pumpkin.

Chuck refers to getting there "a few minutes past four," that would be after four. Juanita says, "Knock it off." That's a common, informal expression you'll hear among friends and family members. "Knock it off" means stop doing it – stop it. Sometimes it can be said in a more serious way; a parent may say to a child, "You're making too much noise. Knock it off." That's what I'd like to say to my neighbor's child! Here, she's using it more as a joke. "Oh, knock it off" – stop it; stop trying to make fun of me, in this case.

"I have good reason to be on time," she says. "On time" meaning at the time you are expected. Juanita says, "I was supposed to meet him at the movies at 8:30 last Saturday and I didn't turn up until 10 'til 9:00." "To turn up" is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to arrive somewhere. "To show up" is another way of saying this. You usually use this when you arrive late, or perhaps, unexpectedly: "I was having coffee with my girlfriend, and suddenly my wife turned up" – wasn't



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expecting her. That's a joke – don't tell my wife I said that! Juanita says she didn't turn up until 10 'til 9:00. "Til," here, is short for "until," and when used in a time expression it means before. So, "10 'til 9:00" means 10 minutes before 9:00.

"We missed the first 10 minutes of the movie," Juanita says. Chuck says, "That doesn't sound too bad" – that doesn't sound like a very bad situation. But, Juanita responds, "You don't know the half of it." This expression, "you don't know the half of it," is another way of saying you don't know how bad it really was, it's much worse than you think. Juanita explains that the week before that, she was supposed to pick up James at his work at a quarter after five, but didn't show up until nearly 20 minutes to six. "A quarter after five," we already know, means 5:15; "to show up," we already know, means the same as to turn up – to arrive. For some additional uses of these expressions, "turn up" and "show up," take a look at our Learning Guide; you'll find more information there.

Juanita goes on that she didn't show up until nearly 20 minutes to six. "Nearly" means almost, and "20 minutes to six" is the same as 20 to six, or 5:40. Juanita says, "To add insult to injury, James' boss saw that he was still in the office and gave him an extra assignment," more work to do. The expression "to add insult to injury" means to make a bad thing worse, to take a bad situation and make it even a worse situation. Well, that's what Juanita did when she didn't show up on time to pick up James; James' boss gave him more work to do. She says that James didn't finish his work until well after 10:00. "Well after" means much later than 10:00. So, 10:20, 10:30, 10:40, that would be well after 10:00.

Chuck says, "I can see why (James) is pissed off at you." To be "pissed off" is a very informal expression – not a nice expression, an expression you would only use as an adult and only with other adults, not something you would say around a child. "To piss," as a verb, is an informal and somewhat vulgar word meaning to urinate. "To be pissed off" means to be very angry. It's a very impolite way to say that you are upset or annoyed. So, if you say to your boss "I'm pissed off," you can expect to be fired! Don't use that expression unless you are with a very close friend or family member.

Juanita then asks, "What time is it now?" And Chuck says, "It's 12:03," three minutes after 12. Juanita says, "Oh my god! I'm late again! What am I going to tell him?" "On my god" is an expression of surprise. Some people don't like using the word "god" that way; they may say "oh my gosh," but a lot of people do, so it's important to know it means. She says, "I'm late again! What am I going to tell him?" Chuck says, "Tell him it was all my fault" – I'm the one to blame. And again, he makes a joke, "My incredible charm made you lose track of time."



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“Charm” is the ability to make other people like you and admire you; it’s an attractiveness about a person. The character James Bond in the 007 movies is a character with a lot of charm – the ladies love him. Well, Chuck is saying that his charm made Juanita lose track of time. “To lose track of time” means to forget about the time, to be so busy that you don’t remember what time it is.

Now let’s listen to the dialogue again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Juanita: What time is it?

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Chuck: I can see why he’s pissed off at you.

Juanita: What time is it now?

Chuck: It’s 12:03.

Juanita: Oh my god! I’m late again! What am I going to tell him?

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[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by the very charming Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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