



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

GLOSSARY

to be in the market for (something) – to be shopping for something; to be considering all the types of something that are available for sale, deciding which one to buy

* How long have you been in the market for a new computer?

truck – a large vehicle used to carry many things, not just people, usually with an open area in the back to carry large items

* Some people who live in rural areas like to have a truck so that they can carry farm goods.

just about – almost; approximately

* Mariah likes just about every type of dessert: cake, pie, cookies, ice cream, candy, pudding, pastries, and more!

vehicle – a large machine with an engine that is used to carry people and things from one place to another

* The bus company just bought 20 new vehicles to provide more frequent transportation service within the city.

compact – a small-sized car

* Many people choose the Toyota Yaris, Honda Civic, or other compact cars because they have better gas mileage than larger cars do.

mid-size cars – a medium-sized car, not too small and not too big

* With four people and a baby going on vacation, we'll need to rent a mid-sized car to fit everyone comfortably.

sedan – a four-door car with room for at least four passengers

* When James got married and became a father, he had to sell his motorcycle and buy a sedan instead.

coupe – a sports car; a small car with only two doors

* It's difficult to put children into the rear seat of a coupe, so most families prefer to have a larger car.

hatchback – a car that offers a lot of storage space in the back, with a back door that opens from bottom to top

* Do you think my bike will fit in your hatchback?



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

convertible – a car with a roof that folds down or can be removed, so that one feels the wind while driving

* A convertible isn't a very practical car if you live in an area where it rains a lot.

sports car – a small car that goes very fast; a car made to travel at high speeds

* When Geoffrey had a mid-life crisis, he bought a bright red sports car because it made him feel younger.

no sweat – no problem; a phrase used to let someone else know that one isn't worried about something and/or has a solution for a problem

* If you haven't finished your taxes by April 15th, no sweat. Just request an extension.

station wagon – a large car that has a lot of storage space in the back

* The station wagon has plenty of room for grocery bags, sports equipment, and all the other things we need to take around town.

minivan – a large vehicle with seven or eight seats

* With four kids in car seats, a minivan was really their only option when they needed to buy a car.

SUV – sports utility vehicle; a strong, large car that is designed to travel over uneven surfaces

* Why do you need an SUV if you only drive in the city?

to seat – to have enough seats for a certain number of people

* This airplane seats more than 150 passengers.

anywhere from (something) to (something) – ranging from something to something; with a specific minimum and maximum amount

* Our employees have annual vacation leave periods of anywhere from one week to five weeks, depending on how long they have worked for the company.

pickup – a small truck with a large, open area in the back with low sides, used for carrying heavy things from one place to another

* They filled their pickup truck with hay for the horses to eat.



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these vehicles is the largest?
 - a) A compact.
 - b) A sedan.
 - c) A minivan.

 2. Which of these vehicles would be most helpful on a farm?
 - a) A coupe.
 - b) A convertible sports car.
 - c) A pickup.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

just about

The phrase “just about,” in this podcast, means almost or approximately: “That was just about the best movie I’ve ever seen!” The phrase “just then” means at that exact time, or precisely then: “Mrs. Hagstrom was taking the cake out of the oven, but just then her cat ran into her and the cake fell to the floor.” The phrase “just the thing” is used to describe something that is perfect, or exactly what someone wanted: “At the end of a long day, a glass of good wine is just the thing.” Finally, the phrase “not just yet” is used when one doesn’t want to do something at that exact moment, but will probably do it soon: A: “Are you ready to go?” B: “Not just yet. I need to finish putting on my makeup.”

to seat

In this podcast, the verb “to seat” means to have enough seats for a certain number of people: “They’re looking for a conference room that can seat up to 500 participants.” When used as a formal command, “to seat” can mean to have a seat or to sit down: “Please be seated and open your materials to page 483.” A “car seat” is a special chair put inside a car for babies and very young children, to keep them safe in an accident: “Babies should be in a rear-facing car seat until they are one year old, and then they can be in a forward-facing car seat.” A “booster seat” is used for older children who aren’t yet big enough to use a regular seat belt: “Small children are safest in booster seats, because they put the child higher up so that the car’s seatbelt can work properly.”



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

CULTURE NOTE

SUVs and other large cars were very popular among American “consumers” (buyers; shoppers) in the 1990s and early 2000s. Most people believed that SUVs were safer, because they had a larger, “sturdier” (stronger) “frame” (the main structural pieces) and would “fare better” (not be damaged as much) in “collisions” (hits; accidents) with other cars. Many drivers also liked the “ride height” of the SUVs, which let them feel higher up than other cars and, in some ways, safer.

In addition, many people liked the “rugged” (rough; outdoor-like) “styling” (the way something looks) of most SUVs. Even if they drove the SUVs “primarily” (mostly) in the city, they liked having the image of someone who enjoys the outdoors. People who needed a “higher-performance” (capable of doing more things better) vehicle liked the “four-wheel drive” (ability to control all four wheels) offered in most SUVs, especially in areas where the roads are often covered in snow and ice.

As long as gas prices were “relatively” (comparatively) low, people could drive their SUVs without worrying about their lower “gas mileage” (the number of miles that can be driven with one gallon of gasoline). In the mid-2000s, however, economic conditions changed and SUVs began to “lose ground” (become less competitive or less attractive) in the “automobile market” (sales of vehicles). Gas prices “rose” (increased) and suddenly it became “prohibitively” (making something impossible) expensive to “fill the tank” (fill a car with gasoline) of an SUV. People began selling their SUVs, “opting” (choosing) to replace them with smaller, more “fuel-efficient” (with higher gas mileage) cars and even “hybrids” (cars that get very good gas mileage because they use an electric system). Today, Americans still drive many SUVs, but they are not as popular as they were 10 years ago.

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



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 609: Types of Cars and Vehicles.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 609. 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 and download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Types of Cars and Vehicles." It's a dialogue between Robert and Mary, where we're going to hear a lot of vocabulary related to types, or kinds, of cars. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Robert: Hi, I'm Robert. What are you in the market for today?

Mary: I want to buy a new car, but I'm not sure what I want.

Robert: Well, you've come to the right place. We have a very large selection of cars and trucks – just about any type of vehicle you can think of. Why don't I show you around?

Mary: Okay, that would be great.

Robert: Over here, we have some nice compacts and mid-size cars. We have two-door or four-door sedans, coupes, and hatchbacks. We even have this beautiful convertible sports car. What do you think?

Mary: It's very nice, but I want something a little bigger for my family.

Robert: Okay, no sweat. Walk this way and you'll see our station wagons, minivans, and SUVs. These seat anywhere from 6 to 10 people. We even have pickups.

Mary: I'm not sure if any of these will fit my family?

Robert: How many children do you have?



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

Mary: Eleven.

Robert: Eleven? In that case, you might want to buy two!

[end of dialogue]

The scene of this dialogue is a “car dealership,” a place where they sell new cars. The salesperson is named Robert, and Robert begins our dialogue by saying, “Hi, I’m Robert. What are you in the market for today?” “To be in the market for (something)” means to be shopping for something, to be considering a certain kind of something that is available for sale; you’re deciding which one you’re going to buy. You might say, “I’m in the market for a new phone.” I really need a new phone. I wish the listeners of ESL Podcast would give me an iPhone and an iPad. That’s what I’m in the market for; I’m going to buy them. Of course, if someone gave them to me, I would not say no!

Well, Mary is in the market for buying a new car, or simply in the market for a new car. She says, “I want to buy a new car, but I’m not sure what I want.” Robert says, “Well, you’ve come to the right place (you are in the right place). We have a very large selection of cars and trucks – just about any type of vehicle you can think of.” A “truck” is a large vehicle used to carry things, not just carry people. Usually there is an open area in the back of the vehicle to put large objects. The expression “just about” means almost or approximately. “What time is it?” “It’s just about noon.” Or, you could say, “We have just about every kind of dessert here. Cakes, pies, cookies, ice cream, candy, and so forth.” So, “just about” is almost or approximately, but there are some other meanings you can find in our Learning Guide for these words.

Robert says they have just about any type of vehicle you can think of. “Vehicle” (vehicle) is any large machine with an engine that is used to carry people or things from one place to another. It could be a car; it could be a truck; it could be a motorcycle, anything that has a motor – an engine – that is used to move people from one place to another. Robert says, “Why don’t I show you around?” “Why don’t” here means I think it is a good idea. “To show (someone) around” is a phrasal verb meaning to give you a tour of an area or to show you what, in this case, the store has for sale.

Mary says, “Okay, that would be great,” meaning yes. Robert says, “Over here, we have some nice compacts and mid-size cars.” A “compact car” is a very small car, one of the smallest you can find. A “mid-size (mid-size) car” is a



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

medium-sized car – not too small, not too big, somewhere in the middle. Robert says, “We have two-door or four-door sedans, coupes, and hatchbacks.” These are three kinds of cars. A “sedan” (sedan) is usually a car with four doors – two in front, two in back – that has room for at least four people. A “coupe” (coupe) is a small car with only two doors, and is usually what we would call a “sports car.” It’s a car that goes fast, that looks nice, that will allow you to attract a lot of beautiful women – well, certain kinds of women! A “hatchback” (hatchback – one word) is a car that has either two or four doors, but in the back it has a very large door that opens up, and usually you can put large items in the back of this kind of car. Often the seats in the back will go down – will fold down so you have more room. I have a hatchback car; there are four doors and then there is a fifth door, a large door that is where you would normally find the trunk of the car – the back storage part of the car, and that is used just like a trunk but it’s much bigger than a trunk. So, we have sedans, coupes, and hatchbacks. Robert says, “We even have this beautiful convertible sports car.” A “convertible car” is one where the roof – the top of the car folds down or can be removed so that you don’t have anything above you, there’s no roof. A sports car, as I mentioned earlier, is often a small car, usually expensive, that can go very fast, so you can attract the attention of police officers!

Robert shows all these cars to Mary and says, “What do you think?” What do you think of these cars? Mary says, “It’s very nice, but I want something bigger for my family.” Robert says, “Okay, no sweat.” “No sweat” (sweat) means no problem. It’s an informal phrase we use to let someone else know that what they are concerned about or what they are worried about is not a problem; you have a solution for your problem.

“No sweat,” he says, “Walk this way (come with me) and you’ll see our station wagons, minivans, and SUVs.” A “station wagon” is a large car that has a lot of storage space in the back. It’s long more than it is tall. So, it is a long car, usually four doors, but there is also a hatchback-like door in the back, but there’s a lot more space. These were very popular in the 60s and the 70s and the 80s. They’ve become less popular now because there are some other kinds of large vehicles that are used such as minivans and SUVs, which we’ll explain in a moment. But station wagons were very popular. My father always drove a station wagon until he was at least in his 70s. Part of the reason was that he had a big family, and so he needed all of that room. In fact, I bought his old station wagon and drove it when I was in graduate school. That really attracted the beautiful women! “Minivans” are large vehicles that have a lot of room for passengers – for people. Typically they’ll have seven or eight seats. It’s long, but much taller than a station wagon. A “SUV” is a sports utility vehicle. This is a



ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

large car, both tall and long, and very heavy. It was originally designed to travel on uneven surfaces, places like the desert or in the country where there are no roads. But in fact, most people that own these SUVs don't use them anywhere outside of the regular roads and highways. They're very popular here in Los Angeles and in many other cities. They are definitely not the cheapest cars you can buy.

Getting back to the dialogue, Robert says, "These seat anywhere from 6 to 10 people." The expression "to seat" (seat) as a verb means it has enough seats for that many people. So for example, a stadium – a baseball stadium that has 55,000 seats would be described as a stadium that seats 55,000. Robert says that these station wagons, minivans, and SUVs seat anywhere from 6 to 10 people. The expression "anywhere from...(one number to another – anywhere from 5 to 50)" is simply used to express a range of something, to give the minimum and the maximum – anywhere from X to Y. Robert also says that they have pickups (pickups – one word). A "pickup," or sometimes it's called a "pickup truck" is a small truck with a large open area in the back that has low sides. It's very similar to other kinds of trucks, except the pickup truck always, or almost always doesn't have a cover on the back part where you put large objects, the flat part in the back of the vehicle.

Mary says, "I'm not sure if any of these will fit my family?" meaning will be good enough or big enough. Robert says, "How many children do you have?" Mary says, "Eleven." Robert says, "Eleven? In that case (in that situation), you might want to buy two (two cars or two trucks or two station wagons)!" Of course, some of you know I am the youngest of 11 children, so perhaps this dialogue was written for me – after all, my mother's name is Mary!

Now let's listen to the dialogue at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Robert: Hi, I'm Robert. What are you in the market for today?

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ESL Podcast 609 – Types of Cars and Vehicles

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Robert: How many children do you have?

Mary: Eleven.

Robert: Eleven? In that case, you might want to buy two!

[end of dialogue]

She can write scripts on just about any topic, that's our own Dr. Lucy Tse.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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