



ESL Podcast 617 – Buying Bathroom Supplies

GLOSSARY

supply – something that is needed for a particular purpose or to do a particular activity

* Each fall, families buy school supplies like pencils, pens, and paper for their children.

towel – a large, soft piece of fabric that absorbs a lot of water, used for drying one's hands, body, dishes, and more

* Sandra uses two towels after a shower: one for her body and one for her hair.

bathmat – a large, soft piece of fabric that absorbs water and is placed on the floor of the bathroom to protect the floor from any water that falls from the bathtub or shower

* Most bathmats have a little bit of rubber on the bottom so that they don't move around when people walk on them.

bathroom scale – a device placed on the bathroom floor that people stand on to find out how much they weigh

* This morning he stepped on the bathroom scale and was surprised to see that he had gained 10 pounds, so he's going to start eating less and exercising more.

rubber gloves – a piece of clothing made of plastic, worn over one's hands with a separate area for each finger, used to keep one's hands dry while washing dishes or cleaning

* Jin-soo wore rubber gloves while washing the dishes, because she wanted to protect her hands.

disinfectant – a cleaning product, usually a liquid, that kills bacteria, used to make surfaces cleaner and safer

* Be sure to use a disinfectant to clean cutting boards after you work with raw chicken or pork.

bowl cleaner – a cleaning product used to clean the inside of a toilet, where the water is

* If your toilet bowl is stained, try using a bowl cleaner with bleach.

plunger – a tool with a long wooden handle and a round piece of rubber at one end, used to push against drains in toilets and sinks to clear blockages

* Do you have a plunger I can use? I think someone used too much toilet paper and now the toilet isn't working.



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soap dish – a small piece of metal, plastic, or ceramic that holds a bar of soap next to a sink so that the sink or bathroom counter don't become covered in soap
* They bought a beautiful soap dish that matches the colors they used to decorate their bathroom.

toothbrush holder – a metal, plastic, or ceramic stand with several holes in the top and a toothbrush can be placed in each hole, used to keep toothbrushes clean and dry
* Five people use this bathroom, so we need a toothbrush holder with room for at least five toothbrushes.

trashcan – a small bucket that is used to hold garbage, usually placed on the floor or under a sink
* If we use all of the toothpaste, we are supposed to put the tube in the trashcan instead of leaving it on the counter.

to go overboard – to do too much of something; to take something to an extreme
* Marsha has always enjoyed gardening, but last year she went overboard, planting enough fruits and vegetables to feed an army!

toilet paper – very soft paper sold in a long roll that breaks into small squares, used to clean and dry the area between one's legs after using the toilet
* The softest, strongest toilet paper is usually the most expensive.

Kleenex – facial tissues; a brand name for very soft, square pieces of paper that are used to blow one's nose or to dry the skin around one's eyes when crying
* Lorraine always holds a box of Kleenex when she watches sad movies, because she knows they'll make her cry.

to live on (one's) own – to live independently, without one's parents; to live by oneself, without relatives or roommates
* Edwin moved out of his parents' home when he was 18, but he hasn't ever lived on his own, because he has always had roommates.

(number)-month supply – with enough of something to last a certain number of months
* We got a great price on a 12-month supply of rice!



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to go through – to use all of something so that nothing is left and one needs more

* How did you go through such a big box of cookies in just one day?

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these things would not be placed on the floor?

- a) A bathmat.
- b) A soap dish.
- c) A trashcan.

2. Which of these things would you not expect to see when entering a bathroom?

- a) Towels.
 - b) Rubber gloves.
 - c) A plunger.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to live on (one's) own

The phrase “to live on (one’s) own,” in this podcast, means to live independently or alone, without relatives or roommates: “Andrea thought she would enjoy living on her own, but she actually became very lonely.” The phrase “to live on borrowed time” means to live longer than expected, especially when one has been sick: “The doctors said he would die within three months, but now, almost 10 years later, he is still living on borrowed time.” The phrase “to live it up” means to do things one enjoys very much, especially if they are expensive: “Grayson works very hard and saves his money so that in retirement he can travel and live it up.” Finally, the phrase “to live from hand to mouth” means to have just enough money to cover one’s basic expenses, but nothing else: “Ever since Ward took a lower-paying job, they have been living from hand to mouth.”

to go through

In this podcast, the phrase “to go through” means to use all of something so that nothing is left and one needs more: “They go through a bag of coffee beans



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every two weeks.” The phrase “to go through” is also used to talk about having a difficult experience: “I’m sorry you had to go through that alone. It must have been really difficult.” If a deal “goes through,” it means that all the parties have reached an agreement: “The only way this deal will go through is if they lower their price.” The phrase “to go through” can also mean to review or analyze something in detail: “This contract can be confusing, so let’s go through the details together.” Another meaning of “to go through” is to rehearse or practice something: “Let’s go through Act II, Scene 4 one more time.”

CULTURE NOTE

Many Americans want their “master bathroom” (the bathroom in a home that is next to the largest bedroom) to be “luxurious” (very nice and expensive). Many new homes have very large master bathrooms with many “amenities” (special features for comfort).

It is not uncommon for a master bathroom to have a “double vanity.” This means that the bathroom counter is longer than normal and has two sinks, so that two people can brush their teeth or “get ready” (brush hair, put on makeup, etc.) at the same time, without getting in each other’s way.

Many master bathrooms also have “Jacuzzi” (with hot water that moves strongly, almost giving a massage) bathtubs or special showers with multiple “showerheads” (the piece of metal that water comes out of). Some of these showerheads have different “settings” (controls) that, for example, can make the water come out in a “steady” (unchanging) “stream” (flow of water) or in a “pulsing” (turning on and off rhythmically) massage.

The most expensive bathrooms have “marble” (stone that is polished to be very smooth, with swirling colors) tubs and “granite” (a very hard, polished rock) countertops. They might also have “radiant heat floors” that heat the floor from below, so the owners’ feet don’t get cold when walking over “tile” (made from many small ceramic pieces) floors. Some fancy bathrooms even have “towel warmers” that heat up the towels so that they don’t feel cold against one’s body after taking a shower or bath.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 617: Buying Bathroom Supplies.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 617. 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. You probably know that, but did you know that you can download a Learning Guide for this episode? You did? Oh, all right!

Well, this episode is a dialogue between Tim and Jan about buying things that you would need in your bathroom. We all need bathrooms, and there are things you need to buy for them. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Jan: We're almost done. We just need to get some bathroom supplies for Kimberly.

Tim: Okay, here are some towels, a bathmat and a bathroom scale. Don't forget the cleaning supplies. She'll need some rubber gloves, disinfectant, bowl cleaner, and a plunger.

Jan: All right. We have all that. Where are you going?

Tim: She'll need a soap dish and a toothbrush holder. She'll need a trashcan, too.

Jan: Okay, I think we're all done. Kimberly is moving into an apartment with college roommates, not starting her own bathroom supply store. Let's not go overboard.

Tim: I just need to get a couple more things.

Jan: What?

Tim: I'm buying her 10 packages of toilet paper and 20 boxes of Kleenex. She'll be living on her own for the first time and she'll need all that.



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Jan: Ten packages of toilet paper and 20 boxes of Kleenex?! She can shop for herself, you know. You don't need to buy her a six-month supply.

Tim: Clearly you don't know college students. They'll go through that in a week!

[end of dialogue]

Jan begins our dialogue by saying, "We're almost done," meaning we're almost finished; we've almost completed our job – our task. "We just need to get some bathroom supplies for Kimberly." "Supply" (supply) is something that you need to do a particular activity or for a particular purpose. So if you are going to climb a mountain, you would probably need certain supplies such as food, water, clothing – I hope!

Well, these supplies that Jan and Tim are buying are for Kimberly's bathroom. Kimberly is, I guess, their daughter. Tim says, "Okay, here are some towels, a bathmat and a bathroom scale." A "towel" is a large piece of fabric, something that absorbs water and you use it to dry yourself or to dry something else. Most towels are made of what we would call cloth; you could also have towels made of paper – paper towels, but for the bathroom you probably aren't going to use paper towels. A "bathmat" (bathmat – one word) is something you put on the ground in front of your shower or your bathtub, which is where you wash yourself. The bathmat helps prevent the floor from getting wet from the water that would, of course, come off of you if you took a shower or a bath. A "bathroom scale" (scale) is something you put on the floor, you stand on it, and it tells you how much you weigh – that is, how many pounds or how many kilos. I personally like to weigh myself in kilos because it's always a smaller number than pounds!

Tim says, "Don't forget the cleaning supplies," the things you would need to clean a bathroom. He says that Kimberly will need some rubber gloves, disinfectant, bowl cleaner, and a plunger. "Gloves" are things you put on your hands that cover your fingers and your hand. "Rubber gloves" are gloves made either from a plant or artificially, we would say synthetically. Rubber is what you usually see on tires; tires are made of rubber – tires for your car. Well, this is rubber gloves to keep your hands dry. The other things that Tim thinks they need to buy include disinfectant. "Disinfectant" (disinfectant) is typically a liquid cleaning product, something that will kill bacteria – will kill things that might harm you. To disinfect something is to remove the bacteria – the germs (germs) that might be on that surface, things that could make you sick. A bowl cleaner is also recommended by Tim. The "bowl" here refers to the toilet bowl, so a "bowl cleaner" is cleaner that will clean the inside of a toilet. Finally, he recommends a



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plunger, which is not a cleaning supply. A “plunger” (plunger) is something that has a long, typically wooden stick, and at the end of the stick is a round piece of rubber, and you use this if you have a toilet that is not flushing – that is, the water is not taking away what’s inside the toilet bowl. You use a plunger to create pressure to push what is preventing the water from leaving the toilet bowl out into the pipes, which take the water from the toilet bowl down into your city’s sewer system. A “sewer” (sewer) is a system of pipes that take dirty water away from your house.

So, that’s what a plunger is, and Tim thinks that Kimberly needs one. Jan says, “All right. We have all that. Where are you going?” Tim says, “She’ll need a soap dish and a toothbrush holder.” You can buy soap for your bathroom that is a liquid. You can also buy a solid form of soap, what we would call a bar (bar) of soap, but you need a place to put the bar of soap so that it doesn’t slide around – it doesn’t move around. That little container is called a “soap dish.” “Dish” like you use for food, but this is one for soap. A “toothbrush” is what you use to clean your teeth; “tooth” is the singular of “teeth.” A “toothbrush holder” is a place to put your toothbrush. Usually it’s something that has holes in it that you can put a toothbrush in so that it will hold it – a toothbrush holder. Tim also says that she’ll need a trashcan. “Trash” (trash) is another word for garbage, things that you are throwing away that you don’t want anymore. A “trashcan” is where you put that garbage – those things.

Jan says, “Okay, I think we’re all done (we’re all finished). Kimberly is moving into an apartment with college roommates,” people that she went to college with; her “roommates” are sharing the apartment. “She’s not starting her own bathroom supply store,” Jan says. She’s joking; she thinks Tim is buying too many things. She says, “Let’s not go overboard.” The expression “to go overboard” (overboard – one word) means to do too much of something, to go to an extreme about something, to do too much.

Tim says, “I just need to get a couple more things (I just need to get two or three, maybe four things).” Jan says, “What?” Tim says, “I’m buying her 10 packages of toilet paper and 20 boxes of Kleenex.” “Toilet paper” is soft paper that you use when you are going to the bathroom, when you are using the toilet – I think you know how that works! “Kleenex” (Kleenex) is technically a type of what we would otherwise call tissues or facial tissues, but this particular company’s product has become so popular that people just call facial tissues Kleenex even if it isn’t made by that company. It’s what you use, for example, if you are going to blow your nose, or if you need to wipe your eyes after you’ve been crying, then you would want to have some Kleenex. Notice we typically say “boxes of Kleenex.”



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We sometimes refer to the toilet paper as “rolls of toilet paper” because the paper is wrapped around in a circle.

Tim says that Kimberly will be living on her own for the first time and she’ll need all that – all of those things. “To live on your own” means to live outside of your family’s house, to live by yourself without any relatives. It can also mean without any roommates, although that isn’t what Tim means here.

Jan says, “Ten packages of toilet paper and 20 boxes of Kleenex?! She can shop for herself, you know (she can buy things for herself).” She says, “You don’t need to buy her a six-month supply.” That is, enough toilet paper for six months. Tim says, “Clearly you don’t know college students. They’ll go through that in a week!” So it seems that Kim is still in college; I said before she was living with people she went – past tense – to college with. But I guess she’s still in college because Tim says that Jan doesn’t know college students. She doesn’t have experience – information about them. Tim says, “They’ll go through that in a week!” “To go through (something)” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to use all of something so that there is nothing left. If you work in an office and you have to print out a lot of letters and reports, you will go through a lot of paper – you will use up a lot of paper. “Go through” has some other meanings in English, and those can be found in the Learning Guide.

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

[start of dialogue]

Jan: We’re almost done. We just need to get some bathroom supplies for Kimberly.

Tim: Okay, here are some towels, a bathmat and a bathroom scale. Don’t forget the cleaning supplies. She’ll need some rubber gloves, disinfectant, bowl cleaner, and a plunger.

Jan: All right. We have all that. Where are you going?

Tim: She’ll need a soap dish and a toothbrush holder. She’ll need a trashcan, too.

Jan: Okay, I think we’re all done. Kimberly is moving into an apartment with college roommates, not starting her own bathroom supply store. Let’s not go overboard.



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Tim: I just need to get a couple more things.

Jan: What?

Tim: I'm buying her 10 packages of toilet paper and 20 boxes of Kleenex. She'll be living on her own for the first time and she'll need all that.

Jan: Ten packages of toilet paper and 20 boxes of Kleenex?! She can shop for herself, you know. You don't need to buy her a six-month supply.

Tim: Clearly you don't know college students. They'll go through that in a week!

[end of dialogue]

We try to make sure our scripts don't go overboard with too much vocabulary, and that's thanks to our wonderful scriptwriter 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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