



ESL Podcast 671 – Vacationing on an Island

GLOSSARY

island – an area of land surrounded by water

* When did the Hawaiian Islands become part of the United States?

island fever – cabin fever; a feeling of anxiousness when one cannot move around freely, often because of geographic limitations

* I enjoyed the first few days of our vacation, but once we had seen everything there, we started to get island fever and I couldn't wait to go back home.

to give (something) a chance – to delay one's evaluation that something is bad, instead waiting long enough to find out whether it is good or bad; to experience something fully before concluding whether one does or does not like it

* Yes, higher-level math such as trigonometry can be confusing at first, but give it a chance. It will probably get easier.

pace of life – the speed at which things are done in a particular lifestyle or culture, especially related to the amount of stress and the sense of urgency people have

* When Walter moved from New York City to Wyoming, it took him a while to get used to the slower pace of life.

isolated – far away from other people and cities; with a great distance between oneself and areas with people, without communication with other people or places

* Dangerous prisoners are sometimes isolated from the other prisoners.

living soul – a human being; a person who is alive

* This cemetery wouldn't be so scary if there were other living souls around us.

secluded – being used by only one or a few people, without other people nearby

* Jacob looked for a secluded place where he would be able to propose to his girlfriend without having other people see and hear them speaking.

privacy – the ability to keep things secret, especially related to one's confidential information or personal thoughts and actions

* Adult children living with their parents may not have as much privacy as they'd like.

serenity – tranquility; calm; a feeling of peace and relaxation, without worry

* If we want to have more serenity in our lives, maybe we should consider meditation.



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creature comforts – things that are not really necessary, but make one feel good and relaxed, such as hot water and favorite foods

* Lynn doesn't like to go camping, because she misses her creature comforts, like taking a long, hot bath while listening to her favorite music.

Internet access – the ability to go online to find information, read emails, participate in chat rooms, etc.; the ability to access the World Wide Web

* We don't have Internet access at home, so I have to go to the library to read my email.

cell phone service – the area where one can use a cell phone; an area where one's mobile phone can send and receive signals

* We don't have very good cell phone service up in the mountains.

to rough it – to go camping or otherwise spend time outdoors, without many of the things that one relies on for comfort and ease at home; to live for a period of time without certain technologies and other things that make life more comfortable.

* Amanda thinks she's roughing it if she doesn't have a hair dryer and a curling iron to do her hair each morning, so she would never want to go camping with us.

to unwind – to relax and become calmer, especially after a period when one has experienced a lot of stress.

* Do you think it's a good idea to use alcohol to unwind?

whole point – the main idea or objective; the most important reason why someone is doing something

* The whole point of going out to dinner is so that we don't have to cook or wash dishes.

to be cut off from civilization – to be separated from one's normal life in a city or town, without communication with other people or interaction with technologies

* If you were cut off from civilization for one week, how would you survive?

stressful – filled with feelings of anxiousness and worry, often caused by needing to do too many things in a short period of time

* Many people feel that the holidays are stressful, because they have to spend a lot of time shopping, wrapping presents, buying special foods, and going to parties and other events.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Mohsen want to get off the island?
 - a) Because he's sick and has a high fever.
 - b) Because he thinks the island is too hot.
 - c) Because he is tired of being there and wants to explore a larger area.

 2. What does Mohsen mean when he says, "I'm cut off from civilization"?
 - a) He has been fired.
 - b) He doesn't have very many friends.
 - c) He doesn't have enough communication with other people.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

island

The word "island," in this podcast, means an area of land surrounded by water: "Richie dreams of vacationing on a tropical island where he can surf every day." The phrase "no man is an island" expresses the idea that humans need to be around other people and cannot be happy by themselves, or that they need help from other people: "Pierre seems self-sufficient, but no man is an island and I'm sure he gets lonely sometimes." The phrase "marooned on a desert island" is often used as a small game to ask people what they would want to have if someone left them alone on a small island: "If you were marooned on a desert island, which book would you most want to have?"

to be cut off from (someone/something)

In this podcast, the phrase "to be cut off from civilization" means to be separated from one's normal life in a city or town, without communication with other people or interaction with technologies: "When Toshiyuki's parents took away her cell phone for one week, she felt as if she had been cut off from civilization." The phrase "to cut (someone) off" also means to stop supporting someone financially: "His parents have been sending him money every week for years, but now that he's finishing college, they're going to cut him off." When driving, the phrase "to cut (someone) off" means to move in front of another car very quickly and with a small distance between the two cars, so that it has to slow down: "Did you see how that guy just cut us off? He almost caused an accident!"



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CULTURE NOTE

The Hawaiian Islands are some of the best-known vacation “spots” (destinations) in the United States. However, there are also many island vacation spots in the southern United States, too, although they are less well known. Some are romantic, others are historical, and still others are simply fun to visit.

People often go the Florida Keys, which are a group of about 1,700 islands off the “tip” (end) of the “peninsula” (a long, narrow piece of land that extends into the water). Many of those islands are popular vacation spots, offering “natural attractions” (interesting things to look at in nature), shopping, and other things, depending on what the visitor is interested in.

Amelia Island is near the border between the states of Georgia and Florida. It has a fascinating history and many “bed and breakfasts” (a small hotel in someone’s home, where breakfast is served by and eaten with the owner) where tourists can “stay” (sleep overnight) while exploring the island during the day.

The State of Texas also has some interesting island vacation spots. The sandy beaches and warm weather “attract” (bring) many “sunbathers” (people who like to sit or lay in the sun to get a tan) in the spring and summer, especially on Mustang Island, Padre Island, and South Padre Island.

The islands “off of” (near) North Carolina and South Carolina are also beautiful and interesting to visit, but tourists generally shouldn’t go there during “hurricane season” (the time of year when there are many storms with very fast, destructive winds), or they may get “caught” (involved unexpectedly) in a dangerous situation.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 671: Vacationing on an Island.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 671. I am your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful – and I do mean beautiful – Los Angeles, California.

Oh, I should mention that our website is eslpod.com, and you can download a Learning Guide to this episode on the website.

This is an episode called “Vacationing on an Island,” let’s get started.

[start of dialogue]

Mohsen: I need to get off this island. I’m getting island fever.

Ella: We’ve only been here two days. Give it a chance. We’re here to enjoy a slower pace of life, remember?

Mohsen: When you said we were going on an island vacation, I didn’t know we’d be so isolated. There isn’t a living soul within five miles!

Ella: This isn’t isolated; it’s secluded. We have privacy and serenity. Isn’t that what we wanted?

Mohsen: I wanted a vacation with all of the creature comforts.

Ella: That’s what we have, don’t you think? We’re staying in a very nice house.

Mohsen: Yes, but what about the creature comforts? I have no Internet access and no cell phone service. This is what I call roughing it.

Ella: We agreed that we both needed a little time away to unwind. The whole point of this vacation is for us to relax.

Mohsen: I’m cut off from civilization and I have no access to email and my favorite websites. What could be more stressful than this?!

[end of dialogue]



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We begin our dialogue with Mohsen saying to Ella, “I need to get off this island.” “To get off,” here, means to leave. Mohsen needs to get off this island. An “island,” of course, is an area of land completely surrounded by water. Great Britain – at least England, Scotland, and Wales – is an island. Ireland is an island. Hawaii is a state with a number of different islands. Mohsen says he’s getting island fever. A “fever” (fever) is normally when your body has a very high temperature, too high because you are sick. Here, however, it means feeling anxious when you cannot move around freely; because of where you are, you feel as though you are trapped. You can’t move and travel the way you want to because you’re on an island, and you can only go so far and then there’s the water. So, “island fever” is this idea that you need to leave this place because you feel that you are limited somehow. Now, we have the same idea when we are talking about people not on islands, we call that “cabin (cabin) fever.” “Cabin fever” is when you are in a place and perhaps because of the weather or some other reason you can’t leave and you want to, and so you start getting very anxious about it. You start getting uncomfortable. A “cabin” is like a small, little house that would be outside of the city near a lake or in the mountains.

Ella says, “We’ve only been here for two days. Give it a chance,” meaning even if it’s bad right now, wait a little longer. “Give it time,” we might also say. “Give it a chance. We’re here to enjoy a slower pace of life, remember?” The “pace (pace) of life” is like the speed that things are done in a particular culture or in a particular situation. To have a slow pace of life means to be very relaxed; you don’t hurry around. Or, a certain culture – a certain area has a different pace of life. The pace of life in New York City – in Manhattan – is very different than the pace of life on a farm in Minnesota, very different speeds that things happen.

Well, Ella and Mohsen are on this island to relax, but Mohsen says, “When you said we were going on an island vacation, I didn’t know we’d be so isolated.” “To be isolated” means to be far away from other people; it may also mean you don’t have communication with other people because you are so far away from them. Mohsen says, “There isn’t a living soul within five miles!” The expression “a living soul” (soul) just means a human being. In many philosophies and religions, the human being has a physical body but also has a spiritual soul, sort of your being that is not physical, what is not physical that is part of you that makes who you are. That’s the idea. So, a “living soul” would be another human being, and Mohsen says there is not a living soul within five miles, meaning you could travel five miles from where you are now and you would not see another person.

Ella says, “This isn’t isolated; it’s secluded.” “Secluded” (secluded) is something that is being used by a very few number of people, without other people near them. It’s really the same phenomenon – the same situation as “isolated,” but it’s



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a positive thing usually. “We’re going to a secluded beach,” we’re going to a beach that has very few people, that very few people perhaps even know about. So it’s a positive thing, whereas “isolated” is a negative thing.

Okay, so Mohsen is not very happy. Ella’s trying to make him happier by saying that it’s not isolated; it’s secluded. “We have privacy and serenity.” “Privacy” is the ability to keep things secret, to not have other people around you in this situation. “Serenity” is calmness; we might also say “tranquility.” It’s a feeling of peace and relaxation – “serenity” (serenity). Ella then asks, “Isn’t that what we wanted (isn’t that what we wanted for our relaxing vacation)?” Mohsen says, “I wanted a vacation with all of the creature comforts.” “Creature (creature) comforts (comforts)” are things that are not necessary to live but make you feel relaxed, things that help you. Having a hot shower, having good food, these are creature comforts; they’re things that make you comfortable, things that make you feel better, feel good. Ella says, “That’s what we have, don’t we?” meaning we have creature comforts here. “We’re staying in a very nice house.” I should also mention that the word “creature” is often used for a living being, not just human beings; in fact, usually it refers to animals: “Get that creature out of my house! You know I don’t want dogs in here.” The dog is the creature. It has sort of a negative meaning about it when referring to animals – not always, but sometimes. When I use it, it always does!

Ella says that they’re staying in a nice house, and Mohsen says, “Yes, but what about the creature comforts? I have no Internet access and no cell phone service.” “Internet access” is, of course, the ability to go online to find information, to read your emails, and so forth. “Cell phone” is the same as “mobile phone” or “cellular phone.” It’s a phone that you can carry with you. “Service” means that you are able to use the phone, that you have the ability to send the electronic signals to the telephone company so that you can talk to people. If you are out in a very isolated area the telephone company may not have service there. That is, you may not be able to use their phone in that area. Mohsen says, “This is what I call roughing it.” The expression “to rough (rough) it” means to go camping or spend time outdoors without the nice things you have at home. “To rough it” could mean to live without technology that you are used to: no television, no cell phones, no iPods or iPads or i-whatever. That’s to rough it.

Mohsen thinks that he is roughing it; he thinks that this is very uncomfortable. Ella says, “We agreed that we both needed a little time away to unwind.” “Away” here simply means at a distance from where they normally live and work. “To unwind” (unwind) means to relax and become calmer, especially after a period of time where you are very stressed. So you come home from work, you’ve had a



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difficult day, you sit down in front of the television, you get a glass of wine or a bottle of beer or something else, and you unwind – you relax. You watch the Dodgers on television, the local baseball station, or you watch some other program, or you read, whatever; all of this is part of unwinding. Ella says, “The whole point of this vacation is for us to relax.” “The whole point” means the main idea or objective, the most important reason why we are doing something; it’s a very common expression. “The whole point of going to a restaurant is not having to cook and clean,” that’s one example.

Mohsen says, “I’m cut off from civilization and I have no access to email and my favorite websites.” “To be cut off from (something)” means to be separated from something. “Civilization” here just means the modern world, where you have technology and creature comforts. Mohsen thinks that he’s cut off; he’s separated from civilization because he doesn’t have email and Internet access. He then says, “What could be more stressful than this?!” “To be stressful” means that you are worried, you are anxious, you feel like you have many things to do and not very much time to do them in. I feel this way all time; I guess I need a vacation on an island!

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

The whole point of this part of the podcast is to thank our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, and everyone else that helps make ESL Podcast possible.

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

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