



ESL Podcast 815 – Buying Dinnerware

GLOSSARY

dinnerware – plates, bowls, cups, and silverware used for eating meals

* When their kids were little, they used plastic dinnerware that couldn't break.

cracked – with lines running through an object that is supposed to be solid, like a glass, plate, or wall

* The windshield is cracked, but it will cost too much to get it fixed.

chipped – with a small gouge or hole in an object that should have a smooth, flat surface, especially a piece of glass or porcelain

* How did this vase get chipped?

to trust (one's) judgment – to believe that another person will do the right thing and allow him or her to do something or make a decision without one's involvement

* Why doesn't the manager trust our judgment? She won't let us make any of the decisions around here.

input – feedback; opinion about how to do something

* Please review the attached file and send me your feedback by the end of the week.

place setting – one set of dishes, plates, cups, silverware, and a napkin intended for use by one person during a meal

* They set the table with formal place settings with three forks, two spoons, and a knife for each person!

dinner plate – a large plate used for the entrée (main course) in a meal

* If you want to lose weight, try using a smaller dinner plate so you don't eat as much.

salad plate – a smaller plate used for salad (a mixture of small pieces of vegetables), usually when the rest of the meal is served on one or more larger plates

* Trent filled his salad plate with spinach, small tomatoes, and sliced carrots.

soup bowl – a large bowl used for soup or stew

* She put chili in a soup bowl and sprinkled it with chopped onions and grated cheese.



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mug – a large, tall, thick cup with a handle, used for hot beverages or soup

* After a long walk in the snow, he was looking forward to sitting in front of the fireplace with a mug of hot chocolate.

microwave-safe – able to be put in a microwave without cracking or melting

* Is this glass bowl microwave-safe, or do I need to use a different bowl?

pattern – decoration; a repeating design of colors or shapes on the surface of an object

* The blue, green, and pink pattern in the wallpaper makes me dizzy.

diameter – the distance across a circle; the length of a line that passes through the center of a circle and stretches from one side of the circle to another

* This bicycle tire has a 20-inch diameter.

half-assed – an informal, vulgar expression for mediocre or without very much effort; a weak or half-hearted attempt to do something

* I've never read such a half-assed report. Who wrote this?

dishes – dinnerware; plates and bowls; pieces of ceramic or plastic used to hold food for serving or eating

* They're asking for new dishes as a wedding present.

dream on – an informal, slightly rude phrase used to show that what another person has asked for or is hoping for will not happen and is an impossible fantasy

* There's no way Mom and Dad will loan you that much money. Dream on!



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What's wrong with their dinnerware?
 - a) It is starting to break.
 - b) It is ugly.
 - c) It was made with dangerous chemicals.

2. What does Jason mean when he says, "Dream on"?
 - a) He wants Wendy to take a nap before shopping.
 - b) He doesn't want to do what Wendy has proposed.
 - c) He doesn't want Wendy to spend too much money on the new dishes.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

pattern

The word "pattern," in this podcast, means a decoration or a repeating design of colors or shapes on the surface of an object: "This dress has such a pretty pattern of flowers and leaves." A "pattern" is also the way something typically happens or develops: "Most people follow a typical pattern of adaptation for the first few months when they live in a foreign country." When talking about sewing or knitting, a "pattern" is the written instructions that are followed and/or the shapes that are traced to create a particular object: "I wanted to make this hat, but the pattern is too confusing." Finally, a "pattern" can be an example of something that other people want to copy: "Hemingway's writing style has been used as a pattern by hundreds of aspiring authors."

dream on

In this podcast, the phrase "dream on" is an informal, slightly rude phrase used to show that what another person has asked for or is hoping for will not happen and is an impossible fantasy: "Do you really think Ted is going to pick you for the promotion? Dream on!" The phrase "to dream (something) up" means to think of a creative or unusual idea or plan, especially if it is unlikely to succeed: "How long did it take you to dream up that idea?" Or, "Who dreamt up that crazy plan?" Finally, the phrase "to dream away" means to waste time thinking about silly, unimportant things: "Gisele got a part-time job instead of dreaming away her summer vacation."



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CULTURE NOTE

Tableware

There are many kinds of “tableware” (ceramic or plastic objects placed on a table during a meal) that were not mentioned in today’s episode. For example, “well-set tables” (dining tables that are beautiful to look at and include many pieces) include “serving bowls” (large bowls that hold food until it is moved to individual plates) and “serving platters” (large, flat plates, often in an oval shape, that hold food until it is moved to individual plates) that are usually placed in the center of the table.

“Pitchers” are another type of tableware. They are large containers with a handle and an open top, used for holding drinks that are poured into individual glasses. A “gravy bowl” is like a very small pitcher, used to hold “gravy” (a thick liquid made from the liquids remaining after cooking meat, often poured over meat or mashed potatoes) or other “sauces” (liquids poured over foods to give them more flavor).

After the meal, the dishes are taken away and the “host” or “hostess” (the person who is responsible for organizing the meal) might bring out with a “tea tray” (a large, flat surface with two handles, used to carry many objects). The tea tray might have a small “teapot” or “coffee pot” and many “teacups” and “saucers” (small plates put underneath small cups with handles, used for hot drinks). There might also be a “sugar bowl” (a small bowl with a lid, used to hold sugar or sugar cubes) and a “creamer” (a small pitcher with an open top, used to hold milk or cream).

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 815: Buying Dinnerware.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 815. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California, home of Hollywood, home of ESL Podcast.

On this episode, you will listen to a dialogue, but what if you want more (and don't we all want more in this life)? If you want more, you can download the Learning Guide. Yes, the Learning Guide will help you improve your English even faster. Go to our website at eslpod.com to find it.

This episode is about buying some new things to eat with, what we would call "dinnerware." Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Wendy: We need some new dinnerware. Nearly all of our plates and bowls are cracked or chipped.

Jason: All right, you do that.

Wendy: Aren't you going to help?

Jason: I trust your judgment. Whatever you like, I'll like, too.

Wendy: But I need your input. For instance, this set has eight place settings: eight dinner plates, eight salad plates, eight soup bowls, and eight mugs. Everything is microwave-safe, too. What do you think of this pattern?

Jason: It's great. Let's get that one.

Wendy: Wait! This set is a little more formal and the plates are bigger, about an inch larger in diameter. It has a nice blue pattern, see?

Jason: Yeah, it's perfect. Let's buy that one.

Wendy: Oh, but look at these other options on this website. I don't think I can decide unless I can see them in person. Let's go.



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Jason: Go where?

Wendy: To the store. I don't want to buy something half-assed. We'll be using these dishes for many, many years.

Jason: Like I said, I trust your judgment. Buy whatever you want.

Wendy: You're not coming with me? Come on. What can I do to get you to come with me?

Jason: You want me to go with you shopping on my day off and while the game is on? Dream on!

[end of dialogue]

Wendy begins our dialogue by saying to Jason, "We need some new dinnerware." "Dinnerware" (dinnerware), one word, includes plates, bowls, cups, silverware, a knife, a spoon, a fork – all of the things that you use what we would call the "dishes" to eat a meal. "Dinner" of course is one of the three meals during the day: breakfast in the morning, lunch at noon, and dinner in the evening.

Wendy says, "Nearly all, almost all, of our plates and bowls are cracked or chipped." To be "cracked" (cracked) here means to have little lines through it. It's broken but it isn't completely broken. You could have a glass with a crack in it. You would see a little line in the glass indicating that it might break completely soon. To be "chipped" (chipped) means there's a little hole or a little bit of the object that is missing. Usually this happens with a piece of glass or other material, hard material, and there'll be sort of like a little hole in it, not completely, not going through it, but just on the outside, on the surface of it. We would say that is chipped.

Jason says, "All right, you do that," meaning yes, you go and get some new dinnerware. Wendy says, "Aren't you going to help (you lazy husband!)" Well, she just says, "Aren't you going to help?" Jason says, "I trust your judgment." To "trust someone's judgment" means that you believe that whatever this person does will be right. They will do the right thing. So, you're not going to go with them or help them. You don't need to. You say to them, you do what you think is right and I'm sure that will be just fine with me. He says, "Whatever you like, I'll like, too." This, of course, is what all husbands want to do when their wives ask them to help them buy things for the house, for example. You know, I really don't care what color the table is or what kind of rug we have. Just go ahead, buy it. If



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you're happy, I'm happy. That's what Jason is saying – not me, Jason! Jason says, "Whatever you like, I'll like, too."

Wendy says, "But I need your input." "Input" (input) means your opinion about how to do something. We might also use the word "feedback" (feedback). Wendy says, "For instance, this set has eight place settings." "For instance," meaning for example, this set, this collection of plates or dinnerware has eight place settings. A "place setting" is what one person sitting down at the table would need to eat with, so it would be a cup, a plate, a fork, a spoon, a knife and so forth. Each one of those would be a place setting.

Wendy says, "This set of dishes has eight place settings," so enough for eight people: "eight dinner plates, eight salad plates, eight soup bowls, eight mugs." A "dinner plate" is a large plate where you can put usually all of the main dish, the "entrée," we would say, the main course for your meal. A "salad plate" quite obviously is a smaller plate used for eating "salad," a mixture of small pieces of vegetables usually when we talk about it in an American context, a salad. A salad plate is smaller than a dinner plate. Wendy also says, "This set of place settings has eight soup bowls." A "bowl" is a small container that you use to put something in, usually liquid, often liquid. In this case, it's a bowl for eating, of course, soup.

Wendy says, "Everything is microwave-safe, too." To be "microwave-safe" means that you can put in a microwave and you won't damage it, you won't hurt it. You know sometimes you put things in a "microwave," which is a special little oven that heats not using a flame, a fire or some sort of hot piece of metal, but it heats food using microwaves, a special kind of radiation really. Well, if you put some things in a microwave oven, sometimes they can melt or you can hurt them. You can damage them. These plates, however, according to Wendy, are microwave-safe meaning it's okay, it won't damage the plates and the bowls.

Wendy says, "What do you think of this pattern?" A "pattern" (pattern) is a decoration, usually a repeating design of colors or shapes on an object, so you might have a shirt that has lines that go up and down, black and white lines – that would be a pattern, kind of a strange pattern, but it would be a pattern. Or you might have a dress that has flowers on it, small little flowers on it, that flower pattern repeats itself, so you have one, two, three, and then next to that you have three more flowers and so forth. That's the pattern.

Wendy asks Jason what he thinks of the pattern. Jason says, "It's great. Let's get that one." Let's buy that one. Wendy says, "Wait! This set is a little more formal and the plates are bigger, about an inch larger in diameter." So Wendy says,



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“Oh, wait a minute, there's this other set of dishes. It's a little more formal.” It's perhaps for more formal kinds of dinners, maybe when you have your boss over to your house for dinner. The plates are bigger, about a half an inch larger – I'm sorry, an inch larger in “diameter” (diameter). Diameter is the distance across a circle, the length of the line that goes through the center of a circle and touches both sides of a circle. You learned about that back in geometry when you were in school, and if you didn't well, you can read a man named Euclid, an old Greek who wrote all about it.

Wendy says, “It has a nice blue pattern, see?” Jason says, “Yeah, it's perfect. Let's buy that one.” Jason, of course, doesn't care. He just wants to make the decision and be done with it. Wendy, however, says, “Oh, but look at these other options on this website.” She's showing him more examples of dinnerware. “I don't think I can decide unless I see them in person,” that is, unless I actually go to a store and see them, not just look at them on the internet. She says, “Let's go.” Jason says, “Go where?”

Wendy says, “To the store. I don't want to buy something half-assed.” To do something “half-assed” (half-assed) means not to do a very good job at it, to attempt it, but not to be very serious about it. This expression is a vulgar one. I wouldn't use it, really, myself. I would probably never use it, but if you did use it, it would only be in your family or with your spouse. The word “ass” is a vulgar word, (ass) and so any terms that have that word in it are probably ones that you don't want to use very often if at all. Wendy says, “We'll be using these dishes for many, many years.” “Dishes” is the same as dinnerware – the plates, the bowls, and so forth.

Jason says, “Like I said,” like I said before “I trust your judgment. Buy whatever you want.” Wendy says, “You're not coming with me? Come on!” – meaning “let's go.” “What can I do to get you to come with me?” Jason says, “You want me to go with you shopping on my day off, (on a day I don't have to work) and while the game is on.” The “game” would be some sporting game: soccer, baseball, football, etc. Jason says, “Dream on.” The word “dream” (dream) has a couple of different meanings in English, as does the word “pattern,” which we mentioned earlier. Go to our Learning Guide for some additional definitions of those two terms. The expression “dream on” or the phrase “dream on” is an informal, sort of rude, phrase where you are telling a person that whatever they are asking for or whatever they are hoping for is impossible. It's not going to happen. “You think you're going to win the lottery and be a millionaire and have a million dollars? Dream on!” I'm saying that's ridiculous, that's impossible, that's not going to happen. That's what Jason is saying to Wendy. He's not going to go with her to



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buy dinnerware on a day where he doesn't have to work and there is a sport event on the television.

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

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[end of dialogue]

We trust our scriptwriter's judgment when it comes to writing good scripts with real dialogues. Thank you, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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