



ESL Podcast 52 – Preparing for a Business Trip

GLOSSARY

conference – a large meeting in which many people come to talk and learn about a specific topic

* There were many interesting presentations about new computer programs at the computer technology conference.

to address – to talk to; to give a speech to

* The teacher addressed his students about their bad behavior in class and told them why it needed to change.

convention – conference; a large group of people who meet at one location to listen to speakers talk about a specific topic

* Many historians went to the historical society convention to listen to what others in the field had recently learned.

librarian – someone who works at, controls, and organizes a library (a collection of books that people can borrow)

* The librarian needed to determine which new books people wanted to read most so that she could order those books for the library.

on the road – traveling; away from home; on the path to someplace

* Alphonso left home and went on the road to visit his brothers in Seattle and Portland.

checklist – an outline of needed items or actions; a list of tasks that must be done

* Yolanda had a checklist of tasks that needed to be finished by Saturday when her parents were coming for a visit.

to confirm – to check the truth of something; to find out if a situation is the way it should be

* Nathan called the company he ordered from to confirm that the package would be delivered by Tuesday, as he was previously told.

flight – a trip made by airplane; a visit made by traveling in an airplane

* The flight became scary when the airplane traveled through stormy weather.

on time – at the time that something should arrive or depart; occurring at the planned time

* The bus was supposed to come at 4:00 p.m., but it was not on time, and it came at 4:20 instead.



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to double-check – to ask about something two times to make sure that the situation is correct

* Marsha thought that the exam was on Wednesday, but she double-checked and found out that it was on Tuesday instead.

to rent a car – to pay money to a business to use a car temporarily, usually for a few days or weeks

* When Jonas traveled to Los Angeles, he rented a car so he could see some of the major sights.

light packer – someone who does not take many items when traveling; someone who brings the smallest amount of items possible when visiting somewhere

* Alaina is a very light packer, and even on long trips, only takes a small bag.

to throw in – to quickly add something to what one already has

* Greg was ready to make his purchase at the store, but he decided to throw in a box of candy at the last minute.

toiletory – an item used to clean oneself or to make one's appearance look better

* The hotel provided guests with basic toiletries, including shampoo, soap, and toothpaste.

briefcase – a small bag, usually in the shape of a rectangle, that one packs with business documents and carries by a handle

* Mr. Ashbrook became very worried when he lost his briefcase because it held all of the papers and supplies he needed for his meeting.

badge – a card that one wears showing who one is; a card that one wears that allows someone to be in a certain location

* The guard had a security badge that allowed him to travel in the restricted sections of the building.

overhead – overhead projector; a machine used to make small images or text large enough for large groups of people to see

* Reatha needed to use an overhead for her presentation to the large crowd.

transparency – a clear piece of thin plastic with information on it, which one displays on a flat surface for others to see using an overhead projector

* The transparency was upside-down, so the image displayed on the projector screen was also upside-down.



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CULTURE NOTE

The Screens are Watching You

Do you feel like someone is watching you, even when you're in a room alone? Well, maybe they are.

A recent Los Angeles Times article talked about the many ways that screens — a computer screen, a TV screen, a cell phone screen — is “collecting” (gathering) information about you. Most people know that what we do on our personal computers is not always “private” (not seen or known by other people). “No matter” (it doesn't matter) which “web search engine” (such as Google, Bing) you use, what you search for, what you buy, how long you visit certain types of websites, and what you do on “social networking websites” (connecting with friends using a website, such as Facebook), all of that activity is a “source of data” (information that can be used).

If you own a “smartphone” (a cell phone that can access the Internet, check email, and more), the phone company is “keeping track of” (watching and recording) where you are and where you go, so that it can find you if you get a telephone call, if you ask for driving instructions, or if you want a list of restaurants or stores near you. If you use “apps” (computer programs downloaded onto cell phones and other devices to play games and to get specific services), these apps gather a lot of the same information that personal computers do.

Do you have “cable television” or “satellite TV,” where you get extra channels by paying a monthly fee? If you do, you probably have a box next to your television that allows you to view those additional channels. That box also allows the company providing you with the service to “log” (record) which shows you watch, which “commercials” (TV advertisements) you watch and don't watch, and “in some cases” (with some companies; in some situations), even when you “mute” (turn off the sound for a short time) on your TV.

Of course, companies that gather this kind of data say that they don't watch individuals when they gather this data. Instead, they “aggregate” (combine) data to help improve their products and services. However, in this “age” (period) of technology, it's difficult to be truly private.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 52 – Preparing for a Business Trip.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 52. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In this episode, we're going to discuss taking a business trip. Let's get started.

[start of story]

I'm going to a conference this weekend back in my home state of Minnesota. I am going there to address a convention full of librarians, believe it or not. For me, the worst part of going on the road for business is not the traveling; it's all the preparation you have to do. I created a whole checklist of things I have to do when I travel.

First, I confirm that my flight will be on time departing from LAX. Next, I call to double-check on my reservation for the hotel and the rent-a-car. After that, I pull out my suitcase and start packing. I'm a light packer, so I bring only the pants, shirts, socks, and underwear I'm going to need, nothing more. I throw in my toiletries bag with the usual stuff – shaver, shaving cream, toothbrush, toothpaste, and floss – and then I'm just about done.

Finally, I go through my briefcase to make sure I have all the things I'll need for the conference: my badge, my laptop, my overhead transparencies, a notepad, and some pens. Now I'm ready. Off I go to my old home.

[end of story]

I talked about preparing for a business trip I have to take. I said I am “going to a conference this weekend back in my home state of Minnesota.” A “conference” is a large meeting of people interested in the same subject or topic. You can have a conference for automobile makers, or a conference of teachers, or a conference of doctors. Anything that you can talk about and have presentations about, you can have a conference.

I said that I was going this weekend to this conference “back in my home state.” To say “back in” is just to say “in my home state,” but it sort of implies that you have moved to another place and now you are going back to that place. So, I



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lived in Minnesota. I now live in California. I can go “back” to Minnesota to visit. And, of course, since I was born and raised, or grew up, in Minnesota, it is my “home state.” It is the state where I was born.

I’m going there “to address a convention.” “To address” means to talk to, to give a presentation to. “I am now going to address the students” means I’m going to give them a presentation or talk to them all as one big group. This convention – and “convention” is here really just another word for a conference – this convention is a librarian convention. “Librarians,” of course, are the people who take care of books and other things in a library.

And I said I’m going there, “believe it or not.” “Believe it or not” is an expression we use when we are telling someone something that they may not believe or that is very unusual. “Believe it or not, it actually snowed in Los Angeles once.” I just made that up. I don’t know if that’s true. But that would be certainly a good place to say “believe it or not.” I said, “The worst part of going on the road for business is not the traveling.” “On the road” is an expression that we use to say “traveling.” “I’m on the road this week” means I am traveling this week, usually for some business purpose.

I said that I “created a whole checklist.” A “checklist” is a list of things that you have to do or that you need to make sure are done. “To check” something, you probably know, means to investigate, but here it means to put a little “x” or a little . . . what we call a “check mark,” which is sort of like a “v” but with one very short side and one very long side. A “checklist” is a list of things that we “check off,” which is to say, if I have a checklist of things to do, after I do it I can “check it off,” meaning I can put a little “x” indicating that I’m done.

The use of the word “whole” here (whole) – “I created a whole checklist.” This is a common, informal way that we talk about something that is bigger or more work than you expected, or is something more than you thought. For example, “My sister called me the other day and she gave me this whole story about how her friend . . . ,” and so on and so forth. “Gave me this whole story,” meaning it was a long story. So, anything that seems to be greater than or more than we expect, we can sometimes use that expression. It’s an informal expression, for the most part.

I said that I “confirm [that] my flight will be on time departing from LAX.” Lots of things there: “To confirm your flight” means to call up the airline and make sure that your plane is going to leave “on time” – the time that it’s supposed to leave. “Your flight” is the plane that you’re going to go in, and “departing” just means to leave. There are departing flights and arriving flights. The noun would be



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“departures.” Those are the flights that are leaving the airport, and “arrivals” are the flights or planes that are arriving or coming to the airport.

I said I called “to double-check on my reservation for the hotel and the rent-a-car.” “To double-check” means that I’m checking again. I want to be very sure that they have my reservation. So, I’m going to double-check it. I already checked it last week. I’m going to check or investigate it this week – that’s double-checking. A “rent-a-car” is the same as a “rental car.” “Rent-a-car,” “rental car” – it’s the same.

I said, “I pull out my suitcase and start packing.” “To pull out” implies that it was stored somewhere in my closet and I have to take it out or pull it out – remove it. My “suitcase,” of course, is where you put your clothes and other things when you go on a trip so that they all stay in one place, especially if you are going on an airplane. “To pack” means to put things in your suitcase in order to leave. We also use this verb “to pack” if you are moving from one house or one apartment to another. You have to pack your things. You have to put them all in boxes or something that you can move them easily with. I said I’m “a light packer,” which means I don’t like to pack or put very many things in my suitcase.

I said that I was going to “throw in my toiletries bag.” “To throw in” means literally to take something up, pick something up, and throw it. But here, “to throw in” means to put in my suitcase. “Toiletries” is a general term that refers to all the sort of things you might find in a bathroom that you would need and you can take with you – shaving cream, toothbrush, shampoo, toothpaste. All of these could be called “toiletries.” One of the toiletries I’m bringing is “floss” (floss). “Floss” is like a little piece of string that you use in between your teeth to get the food out.

I said that I “go through my briefcase” to make sure I have all the things I need. My “briefcase” is a place where a businessperson carries their papers and their computer, perhaps. This little bag is called a “briefcase” if it’s used in a business setting or business situation.

If you’re going to a convention or a conference, usually they give you a “badge” (badge). A “badge” is a little piece of paper, usually inside a plastic holder, and it has your name on it, and it’s like a ticket for you to get into the conference. And conferences and conventions always – almost always – have badges that people wear so you can also see what their name is and say, “Oh, you’re the guy that called me last week and wasted my time.” That’s what a badge is for.

“Overhead transparency” is a piece of plastic that is clear – in other words, you can see through it – and you write on it, and you put it on an “overhead



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projector,” which is basically a big lamp with a mirror that projects or shows what’s on the transparency up on a big screen.

Now let’s listen to our story, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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[end of story]

Thanks to our great scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse, for all of her hard work. And thanks to you for listening.

From Los Angeles, California, I’m Jeff McQuillan. Come back and listen to us again here on ESL Podcast.

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