



ESL Podcast 56 – Noisy Neighbors

GLOSSARY

cul de sac – a street that cars can only drive onto from one end, instead of from both ends, usually shaped like a half circle

* The street Carol lived on was very quiet because it was a cul de sac, so cars could not use it to drive through from one street to another.

residential – an area where people live and where there are houses but no, or few businesses

* When Jeffrey reached the residential section of town, he knew he must have already driven past the department store he was looking for.

couple – two people who are romantic partners; two people in a romantic relationship

* The couple had been married for three years before they decided to have a child.

kitty corner – diagonally across; placed in the corner that is directly across from something else

* The secretary's desk was kitty corner from the manager's desk, and she could see him clearly when he waved her over to give her more work.

to renovate – to improve the condition of a room or building; to change a room or building so that it can be used for another purpose

* Mr. Lochner renovated his basement so that it could be used as a bedroom for visitors.

guesthouse – a small house, where visitors or renters can live, located behind the larger main house

* Janise could not afford her own house, so she lived in the guesthouse behind her grandfather's house.

to rent out – to allow someone to use something temporarily in exchange for a monthly fee or payment

* Desmond did not own a car, so he rented out his garage to his neighbor's roommate to park his car.

to make ends meet – to be able to have enough money to pay one's bills and to pay for other living expenses

* After Eloise lost her job, she did not have enough money to make ends meet and needed to move back home with her parents.



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to keep very late hours – to stay up late into the night; to do things late at night

* Walt kept very late hours when he was a student in college, and he often did not go to sleep until 3:00 a.m.

at (one's) wits' end – unable to think of any solutions to a problem; unable to remain patient or willing to accept a bad situation

* After Mrs. Depaolo's son came home late for the third time in less than a week, she was almost at her wits' end, but didn't know how what to do.

tenant – someone who pays someone else money to temporarily live in or use a space that the other person owns

* The apartment tenants were reckless and caused major damage to the apartment, so landlord told them they had to move out.

to move out – to permanently leave the home one lives in; to remove one's belongings from a home and no longer live there

* Terrence got a job in a different city, so he moved out of his old home and found a new one that was closer to work.

month-to-month – monthly; renewed or updated every month, instead of every year

* Saka leases his car on a month-to-month basis and could return it any time he wants to.

lease – a written agreement stating that one is allowed to rent (use someone else's building for a fee) for a specific period of time.

* The lease was good for one year, but after that year ended, Leif would have to leave the apartment or sign a new lease.

to learn (one's) lesson – to learn from a mistake; to realize that one should not do something after an unpleasant experience

* Roger learned his lesson after trying unsuccessfully to fix his own refrigerator and causing more damage.

widow – a woman whose husband has died

* Mrs. Spinella was married 52 years before her husband died, and now she is a widow.



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CULTURE NOTE

I Have Five Goats and Eight Chickens in my Apartment

Have you ever wanted the benefits of living on a farm, but live in an apartment or house in the city? Some people in the U.S. are not allowing their small living spaces to “get in the way of” (prevent them from) their desire for fresh meat and “dairy” (milk) products.

One recent “trend” (general direction that something is developing) is for “urban-dwellers” (people living in cities) to keep “barnyard” (farm) animals in their backyards or even indoors. Some people keep chickens, rabbits, turkeys, bees, and even “dwarf” (miniature; small-sized) goats! This trend has been “fueled by” (encouraged by) people wanting to eat food grown locally and “organically” (without the use of chemicals), and also because the uncertain economy has made people want to be more “self-sufficient,” able to rely on themselves for producing food.

Some people keep chickens for eggs, and there are even companies that sell “diapers” (material you normally put around a baby’s bottom and between his/her legs to keep clean) for your indoor chickens. Miniature goats are kept for milk and for eating “weeds” (unwanted plants) in the yard, and bees are kept for honey.

As you can imagine, not everyone is happy about having barnyard animals as their neighbors. Some animals are noisy, others smell, and still others can do serious damage if they “escape” (get out of their cage or living space). That is why cities are “scrambling” (doing something quickly and perhaps not doing it well) to change or develop new laws to control and limit this type of “animal husbandry” (the science and keeping of farm animals).

In Seattle, Washington, for example, you can have no more than three goats on a 5,000-square-foot property. In Atlanta, Georgia, you are limited to 75 rabbits on a “residential” (home) property, and in Oakland, California, you must leave 20 feet between any place chickens are kept and a place where people live; “roosters” (male chickens) are not allowed.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 56 – Noisy Neighbors.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 56. 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 noisy neighbors. Let's get started.

[start of story]

I live in a quiet neighborhood. At least that's what I thought until last week.

I live in a cul-de-sac in a residential neighborhood in Los Angeles. There is a nice retired couple that lives kitty-corner from me. They have always been very friendly and we have gotten along very well.

About three months ago, they decided to renovate their garage and turn it into a guesthouse. Since they don't have a lot of money, they wanted to rent out the unit to help make ends meet.

A new renter moved in about three weeks ago, and that's when the trouble began. She was a student at the local university and she liked to invite her friends over. The trouble was they kept very late hours, and they liked to play loud music. My neighbors were at their wits' end. They talked to their tenant several times about the noise, but nothing worked. Finally, they asked her to move out. Fortunately, she was on a month-to-month lease and they didn't have any problems.

Now that my neighbors have learned their lesson, their new tenant is a nice widow with two cats. I'm so glad that everything worked out in the end!

[end of story]

Today's story had to do with my noisy neighbors. I started by saying that "I live in a quiet neighborhood. . . . I live in a cul-de-sac" (cul) (de) (sac). It comes from French. It's one of the many loan words, or words that we borrow in English from other languages. A "cul-de-sac" is street that is a "dead end" that doesn't go any farther. It's where a street ends and there are houses around this little – normally,



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a circle – and it's considered a quiet place, usually, because there isn't very much traffic. The road ends in the cul-de-sac.

So, we live in a cul-de-sac in a "residential neighborhood." A "residential neighborhood" just means that's a neighborhood where there are lots of houses and apartments, not a lot of buildings or businesses or factories. If it's "residential," that means it's usually mostly houses and apartments. It comes from the word "resident," which is someone who lives in a place. I am a resident of Los Angeles; I live here.

There's "a nice retired couple that lives kitty-corner from me." A "couple" is two people – a man and a wife, for example – who live together. The couple lives "kitty-corner." "Kitty (kitty) corner," two words. Imagine you have two streets that cross, okay? The building that is on the southwest corner is "kitty-corner" from the building on the northeast corner. It's diagonal from the house or the building. So, this house is "kitty-corner," meaning it's diagonal – not right next to me but diagonal across the street.

I said that this couple has "always been very friendly" and that we "have gotten along very well." "To get along" with someone, you probably know, means to be friendly, to be polite – not to have any arguments. This is what we want from all of our neighbors, that they get along. Actually, that they just be quiet. That would be more important to me.

The neighbors "decided to renovate their garage and turn it into a guesthouse." "To renovate" means to make better, to change – particularly a house or a building. "We are going to renovate our house" means we're going to add something to it, change it, improve it, make it better. A "garage," you know, is where you park your car – where you put your car. I said they were going to "turn it into." "To turn something into" means to change it into – in this case, a "guesthouse," all one word. "Guesthouse" is, you can guess, a place where you have someone staying who is a guest of yours. It could be a family member. It could be someone that you rent the guesthouse to.

I said this couple doesn't have a lot of money, so they "wanted to rent out the unit to help make ends meet." "To rent out" is the same as to rent. Remember, in English we have lots of verbs where we add a preposition at the end. It doesn't change the meaning often. "To rent," "to rent out" mean really the same thing. When we talk about an apartment or a condominium or a townhouse, we call each one of those a "unit." You could have "a 20-unit apartment building," meaning there are 20 apartments that you can rent.



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My neighbors wanted “to help make ends meet.” “To make ends meet” means you can pay for all of your bills: your gas bill, your mortgage, your downloads from the iTunes music store . . . all of those things are part of “making ends meet.”

The trouble began with my neighbor when a “new renter” – a “renter” (renter), a noun for someone who rents – a “new renter” moved in. She was “a student at the local university” and she and her friends liked to keep “very late hours.” “To keep late hours” means that you stay up. You don’t go to bed until very late. They liked to “keep late hours” and “play loud music,” and my neighbors “were at their wits’ end.”

The expression “to be at your wits’ end” means that you don’t know what to do. You’ve tried everything else. You can’t think of a solution. You are desperate. The word “wits” (wits) is another word for intelligence, ability. “He doesn’t have his wits about him” is another expression with this word “wits.” “To have your wits about you” means to know what you are doing, to have some intelligence. Here, “to be at your wits’ end (end)” means that you’ve reached the end, if you will, of your intelligence. You don’t know what to do: “to be at your wits’ end.”

My neighbors asked their “tenant” (tenant) – that’s a noun meaning the same as a “renter”; a “tenant” is someone who rents a building or apartment, a house – they asked their “tenant” or “renter” to “move out.” “To move out” – again, notice that verb with the preposition “out” – “to move out” means, really, to move, to leave a place. So, we add that word “out” to give it a little more emphasis. “To move out” means to move to another place, to leave.

The “renter” or “tenant” was on a “month-to-month lease.” A “lease” (lease) is a contract or an agreement to rent a house, apartment, or some other building, or what we might call a “property.” “To be on a month-to-month lease” means that you only are obligated – you only have to stay somewhere – for 30 days. Then, if you want to leave, you can leave.

A different kind of lease would be a “one-year lease,” where you are required to be there for one year, and if you leave or move out before, you have to pay the difference in rent that you owe to the “landlord.”

Finally, I said that my neighbors had “learned their lesson.” “To learn your lesson,” as an expression, means that I know better now. I won’t make that mistake again. I was wrong and the experience taught me something.



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My neighbors rented their guesthouse to “a nice widow.” “Widow” is (widow). A “widow” is a woman whose husband has died. Or another expression is “passed away.” When someone dies, we say, perhaps a little bit more politely, “They passed away.” Well, a “widow” is someone, a woman, whose husband has passed away. A man whose wife has passed away is called a “widower,” with an -er at the end.

I said at the end that I was “so glad everything worked out in the end.” For something “to work out in the end” means that it came to a successful conclusion or resolution – that all the problems were solved.

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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