



ESL Podcast 81 – Airplane Announcements

GLOSSARY

flight attendant – a person who works on an airplane and serves during a flight by bringing meals and drinks, and keeping passengers comfortable and safe

* The flight attendant asked Darren if he needed a pillow and a blanket when he started falling asleep on the airplane.

emergency exit – a door that people should not use under normal conditions, but that one can use if there is an emergency or urgent need to leave

* A fire started inside the movie theater, causing people to run out through the emergency exits.

aft – the location nearest the tail of the airplane; the back section of the airplane

* The luggage was kept in the aft section of the airplane.

to lose pressure – for air pressure to leak out; for an airplane to quickly and dangerously lose the air pressure that keeps the inside of the airplane safe and comfortable during flight

* The airplane needed to have its air valves fixed so that air would not leak out of the plane in the middle of a flight and cause the airplane to lose pressure.

oxygen mask – a mask someone wears over the nose and mouth that gives the wearer oxygen (breathable air) when the wearer cannot naturally breathe in enough oxygen from the air around him or her

* The air at the top of the tall mountain did not have much oxygen, so Bao needed to wear an oxygen mask in order to breathe well there.

to secure (something) – to hold something in place; to keep an object where it needs to be so that it cannot move away accidentally

* Zachary did not want the boat to float away, so he secured it in place by tying it to the pier with thick ropes.

elastic band – a thick, flexible string or rope that can fit tightly over objects of different sizes

* When Jill became pregnant, she began wearing pants and skirts with elastic bands.

flotation device – life preserver; an object that floats on water and can be used to prevent someone from sinking under water and drowning

* When the boat sank, Edith needed to use a flotation device to keep her head above the water and prevent herself from drowning.



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detector – a machine that can detect or discover when something specific is nearby; a machine that sounds an alarm when touched by smoke

* The smoke detector sounded an alarm, waking up everyone in the house and letting them know that a fire had started.

lavatory – bathroom; a small room with a toilet and sink

* David needed to wash his hands so he went to the lavatory.

compliance – obedience; the act of doing what one is instructed, asked, or demanded to do

* Miguelina's office was in full compliance with air safety laws.

takeoff – when an airplane leaves the ground and begins flying

* Hoyt was nervous during takeoff, but once the plane was safely in the sky, he felt more relaxed.

landing – when an airplane ends its flight and sets down on the ground

* The landing was a little bumpy, but otherwise, the airplane safely returned to the ground.

to be stowed – to be put away; to be hidden away instead of kept out

* The extra pencils and pens are stowed away in the top desk drawer.

seatbelt – a thick strip of material attached to a seat in an airplane or vehicle, used to prevent someone sitting in the seat from falling

* When Adella got into a minor car accident, her seatbelt kept her in her seat and out of danger.

upright – vertical; raised in a straight up and down position

* Roberto had been lying down, but when the boss entered the room, Roberto sat up in an upright position.

overhead compartment – an empty space above a seat in an airplane, in which one can place small luggage, bags, and other belongings during a flight

* Zula put her bag in the overhead compartment instead of on the floor beneath the seat in front of her.



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CULTURE NOTE

Taking a Staycation

Beginning in the late 2000's when the American "economy" (the wealth of a country) began to "decline" (go down), people in the United States began to save its money. Rather than "booking" (reserving) expensive vacations, many people decided to spend their vacations "close to home" (near where they live).

This is when a new word began being used: "staycation." "Staycation" is used to describe a vacation very close to your own home, or simply staying at home during your vacation. It is a combination of the words "stay" and "vacation."

According to many news reports during this time, these staycations were very popular among American families. Why? The high price of gasoline for cars and airplanes made it very expensive for Americans to travel compared to past years. When you combine this with the "weak American dollar" (an unfavorable exchange rate for the American dollar), it all "adds up to" (leads to the conclusion that) people deciding to stay close to home during their traditional summer vacations.

The "travel industry" (businesses related to travel, such as hotels, rental car companies, and airlines) began "catering to" (trying to satisfy) individuals and families that chose a staycation. Many offered special "discounts" (lower prices) for people living in the same "region" (area) or state, and developed "advertising campaigns" (announcements in newspapers and magazines, on television and the Internet, to attract customers) "targeting" (aimed at) people who lived nearby



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 81: Airplane Announcements.

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 81. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Honolulu, Hawaii – just kidding – in Los Angeles, California. Be sure to visit our website at www.eslpod.com.

Today's podcast is about airplane announcements, what you hear when you take an airplane in the United States. Let's go!

[start of story]

I had to fly from Minneapolis to Los Angeles recently and, like most travelers, I've almost memorized the standard safety announcement made by the flight attendants. It goes something like this:

Good afternoon and welcome to Flight 345, service to Los Angeles International Airport. We appreciate your full attention to this important safety announcement. This 747 aircraft is equipped with four emergency exits, two in the front of the plane and two in the aft. Be sure to identify the nearest exit to you, which may be behind you. If the plane should lose pressure, an oxygen mask will drop from the compartment above your seat. Reach up, pull down on the mask until the tubing is fully extended, place the mask over your nose and mouth, secure it with the elastic band, and breathe normally.

Passenger seat cushions on this aircraft may be used as a flotation device and detailed instructions may be found on the safety information card in the seat pocket in front of you. Smoking is not permitted at any time while on board this aircraft. Also, federal law prohibits tampering, disabling, or destroying these detectors in the lavatories. Your compliance with all crew member instructions, all placards, and lighted seat belt and no smoking signs is required.

The following electronic devices may not be used during takeoff or landing: portable compact disk players, portable computers, and cellular phones, which should be in the off position and stowed. Now, in preparation for take-off, please fasten your seatbelt, return your seatback and tray tables to the full upright and locked position. Your carry-on luggage must be stowed in the overhead compartments or underneath the seat in front of you. On behalf of all Mar Vista



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Airline employees, we'd like to thank you for selecting us today. We hope you enjoy your flight.

[end of story]

Today we are on an airplane, listening to the opening, or beginning, announcement from the “flight attendants.” The “flight attendant” is the man or woman who works in the plane that gives you your coffee and gives you safety information and so forth. A “safety announcement” is what we listen to today. A “safety announcement” is the announcement the flight attendant makes to tell you all the rules that you have to follow on the airplane. The announcement begins by saying that “this is flight 345, service to Los Angeles International Airport.” “Service to” just means that is where the plane is going. It’s where this plane is going to land. You can sometimes be on a plane that is going to more than one city so they may say, “Service to Los Angeles International Airport and continuing on,” or going on, to, for example, San Francisco. So, when they say, “continuing on,” they mean this plane is going to stop and then it’s going to go somewhere else.

The airplane that we are in here is also called an “aircraft,” all one word, “aircraft” is the same as the “airplane.” It’s the actual plane you are in. The announcement says that this aircraft is “equipped with four emergency exits.” When we say it’s “equipped” – something that is “equipped” (equipped), we mean it has. It’s usually something we talk about for a machine or, in this case a plane, or a car. You can say your car is “equipped with air-conditioning” – means it has air-conditioning in it. “Four emergency exits.” The “emergency exits,” you probably know, are the doors in the plane where you escape from if you are in an emergency. There are usually a couple of these doors. In this announcement there were two in the front of the plane and two in the “aft.” “Aft” (aft) is the back of the plane – just means the back of a vehicle, in this case a plane. The flight attendant says that “You should look for the nearest exit to you, which may be behind you,” meaning you may have to go back in the plane to the closest door.

The announcement continues that, “If the plane should lose pressure, an oxygen mask will drop from the compartment above.” For a plane to fly, in order for you to breathe, it has to be “pressurized,” meaning the air has to be “pressurized” so that you can breathe it. If an airplane loses pressure if, for example, there’s a problem or there is a hole in the plane and it loses pressure, you will not be able to breathe and that’s why airplanes have oxygen masks. An “oxygen mask” – a mask, you probably know, is what goes over your face. An “oxygen mask” is something that goes over your mouth and your nose and you can breathe oxygen in order to breathe properly. It comes down from the “compartment”



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above your seat. “Compartment” just means a place where something is stored – something that you keep something. Anything can be a “compartment” but we use this term especially in airplanes. The “compartment above you” just means in the space above you in the airplane.

Now, the instructions here are to “reach up,” in other words, to put your hand up and take the oxygen mask until the “tubing is fully extended.” The “tubing” is – a “tube” is a round, usually hollow, meaning it’s empty inside, thing that you can put water or gas. In this case, oxygen can go through. You can have “tubes” in all sorts of places. Here, you have “tubing” from the compartment in the plane, on the top, to the mask so the oxygen goes through. For something to be “fully extended” just means that it is out as far as it can go, you have the tube so that it is as long as you can get it. The instructions are to put this mask over your nose and mouth, “secure it with an elastic band and breathe normally.” “To secure something” means to make sure that it isn’t going to move. So, you’re “securing it,” meaning you’re putting it on your face and you’re using an elastic band. An “elastic band” is something that stretches and we use those to keep something on our head like a mask. You can also use an “elastic band” for putting something together, for example, you have a bunch of pens. I have a bunch of pens sitting in front of me and they are put together with a rubber band or “elastic band.”

A “seat cushion” is what you are sitting on in the airplane, and “seat cushions” can be used in an emergency as “flotation devices.” The verb “to float” means to stay on top of the water. It doesn’t go down into the water. It doesn’t sink (sink). The opposite of “to float” is to sink. A “flotation device” is just a fancy way of saying something that will not sink. So, if you can’t swim, you have a “flotation device” that keeps you, or your head above water. Airplanes in the United States also have little cards, little pieces of paper, that give these instructions on how to use certain emergency parts of the airplane. Now, we call this a “safety information card,” information about safety. And you can find these in the “seat pocket” in front of you. The “seat pocket” is the pocket that is on the seat that is directly in front of you. It’s on the back of the seat in front of you and it’s where you put magazines and newspapers and the “safety information card.”

In the United States, “smoking” is not allowed on any airplane and the announcement says, “Smoking is not permitted while on board this aircraft. To be “on board” an airplane means to be on the airplane, to be physically – your body is present on the airplane. When you get onto an airplane, the verb we use is “to board” (board). “To board” an airplane means to get on the airplane. The opposite would be “to de-board” (de-board), to get off an airplane. And when you are on it, we say you are “on board.” “Federal law,” which is to say, the United



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States government, prohibits tampering, disabling, or destroying smoke detectors in lavatories. “To tamper with something” (tamper) is a verb which means to change it, to do something to it so that it doesn’t work. “To disable” is similar. “Disable” (disable) is a verb, which means to make a machine or something to stop working, so very similar with tampering. “Tampering” doesn’t necessarily mean that you break it, but you change it somehow, whereas, “to disable” means to make the machine not work.” The “detectors” or “smoke detectors” are, of course, those little, usually round things that if there’s smoke, it begins to buzz; it begins to make a noise. These are in the “lavatories.” A “lavatory” is just another word in English for a bathroom or the restroom.

The announcement also says that “Your compliance with all crew member instructions, all placards, and lighted seatbelts signs is required.” “Compliance” is a noun. The verb is “to comply” (comply). “To comply” means to follow someone’s orders, to do what you are told to do. “Crew members” are anyone who works for the airline that is on the airplane. That would be the pilot, the co-pilot, the flight attendants, so forth; these are all “crew members” (crew), “crew member”. A “placard” (placard) – a “placard” is just a fancy word in English for a “sign.” So, there’s a sign that says, “No smoking.” That could be called a “placard.” The electronic devices that you can take on an airplane, such as a compact disc player, a computer, cellular phone or mobile phone, cannot be used “during take-off or landing.” “Take-off,” and the verb is “to take off,” means when the plane is going up into the air. And “to land,” or a “landing” as a noun, means when the plane is coming back down on the ground. The cellular phone or mobile phones have to be in the “off position” – means they have to be turned off and “stowed.” “To stow something” (stow) just means to store it, to put it in a certain place so that it is safe. We use that word a lot when talking about airplanes or ships or boats. We talk about “stowing planes”-- just means where you store something, where you put something.

The announcement finishes by saying that you should “fasten your seatbelt.” Of course, your “seatbelt,” all one word, “seatbelt” is what goes around your waist so that you don’t fall out of your seat if there’s an emergency. It also tells you to “return your seatback and tray tables into the full upright and locked position.” Couple of different phrases or words here, first of all, “seatback.” “Seatback” is the part of your seat, or the chair if you will, you’re sitting in – that’s the part of the seat that goes back and forth. So, you can lean back. You can put your seat back. The verb we would use here is “to recline.” You can “recline” (recline) your seat back, but when you are taking off and landing, it has to be in its “upright” position. “To be upright,” all one word (upright), means to be straight, not to be leaning forward or leaning backwards.



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The “tray table” is that little piece of plastic that comes down from the seat in front of you where you can put your meal and your coffee and your books. It’s like a little table. A “tray table” is a small table that has to be also in its upright and locked position. You have to put the little lock on it so it doesn’t fall down. Finally, you’re told that, “Your carry-on luggage must be stowed in the overhead compartments.” “Carry-on luggage,” you can guess, is the luggage that you “carry on,” or take on to the airplane. The opposite of “carry-on” would be your “checked luggage.” Your “checked luggage” is the luggage that is down below, underneath the airplane. The “carry-on” is what you put either above your head, and those spaces above your head are called the “overhead compartments.” We sometimes call these the “overhead bins” (bins), same thing as a compartment. Or they have to be put in the seat in front of you.

Now let’s listen to the announcement again this time at a native rate of speech.

[start of story]

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compartments or underneath the seat in front of you. On behalf of all Mar Vista Airline employees, we'd like to thank you for selecting us today. We hope you enjoy your flight.

[end of story]

That's it for this somewhat long version of ESL Podcast.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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