



ESL Podcast 189 – Getting Home Late from School

GLOSSARY

to lose track of time – to forget to pay attention to the time

* He lost track of time at the library and was late for his doctor's appointment.

to be worried sick – to be very worried or concerned

* I was worried sick when my younger sister had a high fever.

supposed to – to be expected to do something; to have the responsibility to do something

* My friend was supposed to give me a ride to work, but she called and said her car broke down.

straight – directly, without stopping anywhere else

* When you arrive at the airport, be sure to go straight to the hotel where someone will be waiting to take you to the meeting.

locker – a small storage space with a lock; usually found in schools, workplaces, and gyms

* The gym has lockers where I can store my wallet and clothes while I'm working out.

to break out – to happen suddenly

* The people at the soccer match broke out into a cheer when he scored a goal.

hallway – the walkways in a building; the area where you walk from room to room

* There are so many boxes in the hallway that it's difficult to get into her office.

vice principal – the second highest official in a school, after the principal

* The vice principal is talking to those two students who went to see a movie today instead of going to class.

to break (something) up – to end an event or action

* My brothers were having an argument, but luckily, my mother broke it up.

excuse – a reason given for doing something wrong, usually to try to lessen the blame

* Teachers hear a lot of excuses from students who don't do their homework.



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(someone) is trouble – someone who often causes problems or gets into trouble

* I don't like that boy. Stay away from him. I think he's trouble.

to hang around with – to spend time with; to be friends with

* Do you want to come over after school and hang around with my friends?

curfew – a specific time when people are required to return home; usually a time parents set for their children to come home at night

* Now that I'm older, can we change my curfew from 9 o'clock to 11?

just wait until – an expression that suggests that someone else is going to have a big reaction; usually it is used when someone will be very angry or very happy

* Just wait until she get home and finds out you've had a party for 100 people in her house!

to be grounded – to be punished by having restrictions placed on free time; usually this means that a child must stay in his or her room, cannot talk on the phone, and may not spend time with friends outside of school

* After my parents saw the grade I got in math class, they grounded me for two weeks.

that's not fair – an expression used to claim that someone is being treated more poorly than others; often used by children and teenagers

* My friends get to see the late movie, but I can't. That's not fair!

strict – to have many rules and to strongly enforce them

* Benny's parents aren't strict at all. He does whatever he wants.

won't have – will not accept or approve of

* Gina has been late for work every day this week. I won't have it.

to talk back to – to argue or complain to someone in authority

* Melissa was fired from work because she talked back to the boss.

go to your room – an order to wait in one's room; usually used when a child is being punished for misbehaving.

* This isn't a good time to talk about this. Go to your room!



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why was Caitlin late?
 - a) She was listening to podcasts with her friends.
 - b) She was hanging out with Dan.
 - c) There was a fight at school.

2. Why is Caitlin's father angry?
 - a) Caitlin wants to change her curfew.
 - b) Caitlin was hanging out with Janet's parents.
 - c) Caitlin was talking back to him.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to be grounded

The word “grounded,” in this podcast, means a punishment given to children who has misbehaved, usually not allowing them to do what they like during their free time: “Dina's parents grounded her when they found out she had driven the car without permission.” “Grounded” can also be used as an adjective to describe an airplane that is not allowed to fly. “All of the planes at the airport are grounded because of the big storm.” “Grounded” can also be used to describe a person who is sensible and well-balanced: “Even though her father is a rock star, she is very grounded.” Or, “People who are grounded don't usually go crazy when something bad happens to them.” “To ground” is also the past tense of the verb “to grind,” which means to break a large thing into smaller pieces by pressing against it many times, like “grinding pepper” or “grinding coffee beans.”

broke out

In this podcast, the phrase “broke out” describes something that happens suddenly: “An argument broke out between those two drivers when they almost hit each other on the road.” The event is usually something negative. “To break out” can also mean to separate someone from a group. The expression “to break out of a mold” means to be unique and not be like everyone else: “Everyone in my family is an artist. I want to break out of the mold and do something different with my life.” Or, “This company broke out the mold to become a leader in their field.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Children and teenagers in the U.S. are often involved in activities after school and on weekends. These “extracurricular activities,” or activities aside from school studies, sometimes take place at school itself after school hours. For instance, some students play school sports such as American football, soccer, basketball, and baseball. These school sports teams usually require that the student “try out,” or audition before they are accepted as a team player. Each school’s teams play against other school teams, and the best teams may travel to other cities or states to compete.

Another type of extracurricular activity students participate in at school are school organizations for special interests. Student “clubs,” or organizations, usually has a teacher who oversees the students, but the students often lead their own activities. For example, “French club” would be for students learning French and are interested in French-speaking cultures; “Future Farmers of America” would be for students who plan to have a career in farming; “chess club” would be for students who like to play chess, a board game for two players; “drama club” would be for students interested in acting and the theater. Each school has different clubs and participation in clubs is voluntary.

Many children and teenagers are not involved in school activities. They may go to a library after school to study or they may just go home to do homework or to simply relax. It’s very common for children and teenagers to invite their friends over to their house after school to study or to play.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 189, “Getting Home Late from School.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 189. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Be sure to visit our website at eslpod.com for a Learning Guide to this podcast, which contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, culture notes, additional uses of some of these words that we don't talk about on the podcast and a complete transcript of this episode.

Today's podcast is called “Getting Home Late from School.” Let's get started.

[Start of story]

Dad: Where have you been? Do you know what time it is?

Caitlin: I'm sorry, Dad. I lost track of time.

Dad: Lost track of time? We've been worried sick about you. You were supposed to come straight home after school.

Caitlin: I know, but Janet was showing me something in her locker when a fight broke out in the hallway. The vice principal, Mr. Lopez, finally came out and broke it up.

Dad: That still doesn't explain why you're late. And, I don't want any excuses.

Caitlin: Well, one of the guys in the fight was Dan, Janet's brother. Mr. Lopez called their parents and I waited with her until they got there.

Dad: I never liked Dan. He's trouble. I don't want you hanging around with him.

Caitlin: I don't. I'm friends with Janet, not her brother. I didn't do anything wrong.

Dad: Oh, really? You missed curfew last week and now you're late again. Just wait until your mother hears about this. You're grounded for a week.



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Caitlin: Dad! That's not fair! None of my friend's parents are as strict as you are.

Dad: That's enough. I won't have you talking back to me. Now, go to your room.

[End of story]

This podcast is about a father and a daughter having a conversation, and it begins by the father asking his daughter, Caitlin, "Where have you been?" and you know from the way he says that that he's angry, he's mad. "Where have you been?" Where were you? "Do you know what time it is?" Of course, he's asking her if she knows what time it is because she's late, and that's a common way of saying to someone you're very late: "Do you know what time it is?" Or if someone arrives very late and you were going to yell at them, like a father would, perhaps, yell at or speak very strongly to his daughter. To "yell" usually means to shout or to talk very loudly. So, to yell at someone is when you are angry with them and you talk very loudly.

Caitlin says, "I'm sorry, Dad. I lost track of time." The expression, "to lose track" of time means that you didn't realize what time it was. You didn't realize that you were late. You were usually so busy doing something else, listening to ESL Podcast or reading a good book that you lost track of time, you didn't pay attention to what time it was. And Dad says, "Lost track of time," as a question, meaning he doesn't really believe her, or he isn't very happy with her answer. He says, "We've been worried sick about you." The expression, "to be worried sick" means that you are extremely worried; you're very worried. You don't know what happened to the other person, you think something bad might have happened to them. And so we use the expression to be worried sick, worried so much that you almost feel sick.

Dad says, "You were supposed to come straight home after school." "You were supposed to" means that that was what you were told to do, that is what you had to do, that is what you should have done. "You were supposed to." We use that expression a lot, supposed to, "I'm supposed to go school today," means that they are expecting me at school. I have an obligation to go to school. Dad says that Caitlin was "supposed to come straight home after school." The use of the word "straight" here means immediately, without stopping somewhere else. So,



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if you tell someone “I’m going straight to the hospital” – that means I’m not going to stop at the store or at the post office and then go to the hospital. I’m going to go directly to the hospital. So here it can also mean, simply, directly home.

Caitlin says, “I know, but Janet,” we can guess is one of her friends, Janet, she says, “was showing me something in her locker.” She wanted me to see something in her locker. A “locker” is a small box, usually a metal box that you can lock, that’s why we call it a locker, and it’s where you keep things. In most American high schools there are lockers in the halls, in the space between the rooms where the students walk, the hall or the hallway, we would say, all one word, “hallway.” There are lockers, and each student gets...or usually gets their own locker, they may have to share their locker. It’s a place where they can put their coats in the morning, they can put books, extra books they don’t need, and they can go back to their locker, they can put their lunch, if they bring their lunch, in their locker. You’ll also find lockers at a gym, where you can put your clothes while you are exercising. And, there are lockers in many airports, where you can leave something and take the key.

Well, Caitlin says that her friend Janet was showing something in her locker, a locker that belonged to her, “when a fight broke out in the hallway.” When we say a fight “broke out,” we mean that it began, that it started. We often use that verb, “to break out,” when we’re talking about something like a fight, something that starts suddenly. A hallway, we’ve already talked about, is the path, or that place where students walk to go from one classroom to another in a school, or in any building. “The vice principal,” Caitlin continues, “Mr. Lopez, finally came out and broke it up.” The “vice principal” is the person in the school who works for the principal. The principal is the leader of the school. We use that word, principal, for high schools, for junior high schools, for grade schools or elementary schools. We don’t use it for colleges. We don’t say the head of the college is the principal. We only use that for high school or younger. Well, the principal is the boss of the school, and he, or she, has usually one, and sometimes three or four people who are vice principals, and they do some of the work that the principal doesn’t have time to. One of the things that a vice principal does is take care of discipline problems. “Discipline” is the same as behaving or behavior, in this case. When we talk about discipline problems, we’re talking about kids who are doing things wrong, and the vice principal has to punish them or tell them that they are doing something wrong and give them some punishment, some price they have to pay. Not a price in the sense of money, but often they have to stay



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in school after the school day ends. That would be a punishment that the vice principal might give a student who was causing problems.

The vice principal is often called the assistant principal, or just AP, and that is the same person. Of course, sometimes students do things that are more serious, and so the assistant, or vice principal has to give them a more serious punishment. Staying in school after the day ends is a pretty good punishment, though. It's saying that school is such a painful place to be that if you have to stay there longer, that's a punishment. Well, that's the way most students think of the situation. "Mr. Lopez," the vice principal, "came out and broke the fight up." "To break a fight up" means to stop a fight, to stand in between the two people who are fighting and separate them. That's to break up a fight. The police can also break up a fight or break up an argument.

Well, Dad says that Caitlin's story doesn't explain why she was late, doesn't say or give the reason why she was late. Dad says that "I don't want any excuses." An "excuse" is a reason why you did something, usually a reason why you did something wrong or something incorrectly. And, it can just mean the reason, but often it means a bad reason. Someone says, "Don't give me any excuses," means don't give me any bad reasons or false reasons why you did something wrong. Caitlin then explains that "one of the guys," in this case one of the boys in the fight was Janet's brother, Dan. Mr. Lopez called Dan and Janet's parents, and Caitlin waited with her friend, Janet, until Janet's parents came to the school to pick them up. Well, Dad says, "I never liked Dan. He's trouble," meaning he causes problems, he causes trouble. Somebody says, "she's trouble," means she causes problems. He tells Caitlin that he doesn't want her "hanging around with him." "To hang around with (someone)" means to spend time with them as a friend.

Caitlin says that she doesn't hang around with Dan, she hangs around with Janet, Dan's sister, and that she "didn't do anything wrong." Now, we can guess that Caitlin is a teenager, and most teenagers think that they never do anything wrong. So, Dad says, "Oh, really?" He doesn't believe Caitlin. He tells her that she "missed curfew last week." "Curfew" is the time, in this case, children or teenagers have to come home. So, if your curfew is ten o'clock that means that you have to come back home, from where ever you are, by ten o'clock at night. And many parents give their teenage children a curfew, so they don't want them coming home too late. The idea, of course, is that they will stay out of trouble.



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Dad says, “Just wait until your mother hears about this.” “Just wait until” – this is a very common expression that a parent may say. “Just wait until your father hears about this,” means that your father, or here in this story your mother will be very angry when she finds out. “Just wait until your mother hears about this.” “You’re grounded for a week.” “To be grounded” means that you can’t leave the house to do anything fun. You can go to school, but when you’re done with school, you have to come home right away, immediately, and not go anywhere else. And that, again, is a common punishment that parents will give their children. They will ground them for a week or ground them for a month. “To ground” means to tell the child that they can’t leave the house. And Caitlin, of course, is not very happy. And she says, “That’s not fair,” which is what every teenager says to their parent. “That’s not fair,” they’re not being just; they’re not being fair. Caitlin says none of her “friend’s parents are as strict as” her father is. “To be strict” means that you have lots of rules, and that you expect your children to obey or to follow all of these rules. If you have lots of rules and you are very...you tell your children they have to follow all of them, you may be called strict.

Dad says, “That’s enough.” He doesn’t want to hear Caitlin talking anymore. “That’s enough. I won’t have you talking back to me.” “I won’t have you,” means I am not going to allow you, or permit you, or let you talk back to me. “To talk back” means that someone is, usually a child, is arguing with the parents and saying things that are not respectful of the parent, and that is to talk back. It’s usually something we use with a child talking to the parent in a way that is not one that the parent likes. Finally, Dad says, “Go to your room.” Again, this is a very traditional punishment for children if they do something wrong. We tell them to go to their room, meaning go to their bedroom and don’t leave. They can’t watch television or do other things, that’s the idea.

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

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[End of story]

The script for today's podcast was very well done by our own Dr. Lucy Tse. To e-mail us a question or a comment about these podcasts, you can send your e-mail to eslpod@eslpod.com.

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

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