



## ESL Podcast 193 – Placing a Business Order

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### GLOSSARY

**to place an order** – to order something, usually in a restaurant or from a business

\* I called this morning and placed an order for two shirts and a pair of pants.

**to order from a catalog** – to order items listed in a book that the company produces

\* I'm going to order some paper and pens from this catalog. Do you need anything?

**item number** – a number that each item has that makes it easy to find

\* It's easy to order these on the Internet from that company. All you need are the item numbers.

**backorder** – something that has been ordered but is not available yet

\* The camera I ordered three weeks ago is still on backorder, and it won't be here in time for my trip.

**account** – a record of a person's or a company's information and buying and selling in the past

\* Your account shows that you bought from our company three times last year.

**outstanding** – something that hasn't been done or delivered yet

\* His came back from the conference two weeks ago but his report is still outstanding.

**delivery date** – a date that something should arrive

\* The delivery date has been pushed back a week because of bad weather.

**no later than** – before; by

\* We start our trip today and we should arrive in Florida no later than Thursday.

**to buy in bulk** – to buy a large amount of something; usually at a lower price

\* My family drinks so much soda that we usually buy it in bulk.

**wholesale** – products bought in large amounts, usually to be sold to other people at a higher price

\* Our store buys these cameras wholesale and resells them to our customers.



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**to negotiate** – to agree on something after some talking, usually with each side giving to the other side something the other wants

\* Are those two countries willing to negotiate an agreement to stop the fighting?

**price reduction** – discount; the lowering of a price

\* The car companies are trying price reductions to get people to buy more cars.

**net price** – the price after you take away any discounts or costs

\* Don't include the price of shipping when figuring out the net price.

**requisition** – a written request to ask your own company to approve the buying of something

\* This department's requisition for three new printers will need to be approved by the Ms. Lazzo.

**purchase order** – written permission from your company that you give to the company you want to buy from that promises that your company will pay; usually used so that your company does not pay immediately, but only after the item is received

\* Here is the purchase order for the supplies we want to order.

**invoice** – a bill showing how much is owed for something that has been ordered

\* I think this invoice is wrong. The price should be \$200 less.

**by the end of the day** – before the end of the work day

\* If I don't hear from you by the end of the day, I'll know that you're not coming with us this weekend.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How many items are backordered and how many did Jessie order today?
    - a) There are two items on backorder and two items in today's order.
    - b) There are three items on backorder and two items in today's order.
    - c) There are no items on backorder and two items in today's order.
  
  2. Jessie's company is paying less for one of the items ordered today because
    - a) the item will not be delivered on time.
    - b) the price of the item has gone down.
    - c) Jessie told Rudy that if they did not lower the price, she would not order from his company again.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **outstanding**

The word "outstanding," in this podcast, means that something still needs to be done: "How many of the reports are still outstanding?" We can also use "outstanding" to talk about money that is owed: "I'm sorry but you can't check out of this hotel until you pay your outstanding bill." Or, "After we received your check, your account still shows a small outstanding amount." "Outstanding" can also be used to describe someone or something as very, very good: "The food here is really outstanding." Or, "She is an outstanding student."

#### **wholesale**

In this podcast, the phrase "wholesale" means to buy a product from a company in large quantity and at a lower price, usually with the plan to sell it again to someone else at a higher, or "retail," price: "If I can buy these MP3 players at a good wholesale price, I plan to sell them in my store." The person or company who sells wholesale is called the "wholesaler." "Wholesale" can also be used as an adjective to mean to do something on a large scale or to do something completely: "It's hard to believe the wholesale destruction caused by the storm unless you see it for yourself." Or, "That company plans to move all of the families out of this neighborhood wholesale so that they can build a shopping mall."



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### CULTURE NOTE

Many U.S. companies have two types of people who do work for them: employees and independent contractors. The difference between these two groups is the amount of control the company has over the worker and how the work is being done.

“Employees” are people who usually work only for one company and are “supervised,” or watched, by someone with more power in the company. Employees can “moonlight,” or have a second job, but many companies don’t like that, so employees sometimes keep their second job a secret. Employees are “on the payroll,” or get paid a set amount on a regularly basis. Employees also get “benefits,” including health insurance and paid vacation time. A company has to pay employment taxes to the government for each of their employees.

An “independent contractor” is someone who is hired by a company, usually to do one specific job. They may be hired for a short-term project or work on a long-term “contract,” or agreement. Usually, independent contractors work without someone closely supervising their work, but they aren’t paid unless their work is acceptable. The independent contractor is not on the payroll and must “invoice,” or submit a bill, to get paid and they do not receive benefits as employees do. Independent contractors usually work for more than one company and it is the contractor’s own responsibility to pay taxes.

Many small business hire contractors rather than employees because it is cheaper and more flexible. Medium to large-size companies usually have a mix of employees and contractors working for them.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 193, “Placing a Business Order.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 193. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) to get the Learning Guide for this podcast. That's an eight to ten page guide that includes the vocabulary, additional explanations, cultural notes and the complete transcript of this podcast.

Today's podcast is about a person from a company trying to buy something from another company. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

Jessie: Good morning. This is Jessie Lipman calling from Wexman. I wanted to place an order.

Rudy: Certainly. Are you ordering from our catalog?

Jessie: Yes, I have the item numbers. But, before I place the new order, I wanted to check on some items we have on backorder.

Rudy: Sure, let me pull up your account. It looks like you have two items that are still outstanding, but we should have that to you by the end of the week.

Jessie: Can you give me a delivery date?

Rudy: It should arrive no later than the 19th.

Jessie: Okay. Let me give you the new order. The first item is 2456. We'd like 52 boxes. Last time, we were able to buy in bulk and got the wholesale price. I'm hoping we can negotiate that again for this order.

Rudy: That's not a problem. What are the other items?



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Jessie: The second item is 6849. We'd like 40 of them.

Rudy: There's a price reduction of ten percent on that item. That brings the net price to 19 dollars. Anything else?

Jessie: That's it for now. There are a few other things we need to order, but I still need to submit a requisition for a purchase order. Can you fax over an invoice for the items I just ordered?

Rudy: Sure, I'll get that to you by the end of the day. We appreciate your order.

Jessie: No problem. Thanks.

[End of story]

In this podcast we listened to a conversation between two people from two different businesses. The conversation begins with Jessie saying, "Good morning." She identifies herself on the telephone, she gives her name and the company that she is with, or that she is calling from. She's talking on the telephone. Often, people will say, "This is Bob Jones from Johnson Incorporated." "I'm calling from Johnson Incorporated," this just means that that is the name of the company that you work for.

Jessie says that she wants to "place an order." "To place an order" means that you are asking the company to send you something. To place an order is the same as to order something, to buy something, and here we use "order" as a noun rather than a verb. So, "to place an order," or "to order," mean the same. Rudy says, "Certainly. Are you ordering from our catalog?" A "catalog" is a book usually, usually it's printed, that is it's on paper, and you can look in the catalog. We would probably say you can "flip through" the catalog. "To flip through" means to turn the pages looking for something you want to buy, in this case from the catalog, and it is a list of all of things that the company sells. We're not quite sure what the company sells. That is a mystery here.

Jessie says that, "yes," she is ordering from the catalog. She could also say that she wanted to place an order from the catalog. She says she has the "item numbers." An "item" means a thing or the thing that you are buying. We might also call it the "product." She has the "item numbers." In most catalogs each thing that you sell in your catalog has its own number and these are called item



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numbers. So, she says in the dialogue, “Before I place the new order, I wanted to check on some items,” some products, “we have on backorder.” “To have something on backorder,” all one word, means that you place an order, but the company doesn't have any more of that item, any more of that product, left to sell. They have to make another one, for example. So, to have something on backorder means that you're waiting for the company to get the product so they can send it to you. There may be a delay of a couple of days. It may take a couple of weeks for the company to get the product so they can send to you. So, Jessie here is checking on a previous order, an old order that has not yet been delivered, they have not yet received the products.

Rudy says that he will check, or investigate, this backorder. He starts by saying, “Let me pull up your account.” To “pull up,” two words, here it means to find, usually to find on a computer. So, you're talking to someone and they say, “Well, let me pull up that email message,” or, “Let me pull up your account.” We usually use that for an account that you have with a business. What is an account? Well, “account,” is your information that the company has: your name, your address, your telephone number, all of the things you've purchased or bought from them in the past; that would be your account.

Rudy says that, “It looks like” Jessie has “two items that are still outstanding.” To say that something is “outstanding” means that it has not yet been delivered; that the company has not yet sent it to you. So here, Rudy says that Jessie has “two items that are outstanding,” they still have not yet been sent to the company. But, he says that they should have those “by the end of the week.” Jessie says, “Can you give me a delivery date?” To “deliver” means to give something to someone, usually by mailing it to them or sending it to them through a delivery company. “Delivery” is the act of delivering, the action of delivering something. So, a “delivery date” is the date that you will get the product. So, if I order a book from a company and they say that the delivery date is August 25th, that's the day I should get the product.

Rudy says that the two items that are outstanding “should arrive no later than the 19th.” When he says, “it should arrive,” he means that it should arrive at Jessie's company, they will get it “no later than the 19th,” meaning it could come the 17th, the 18th, but it will definitely be there on the 19<sup>th</sup>, no later than that, that's the latest that they will get it.





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Jessie says, “Okay. Let me give you the new order,” and she gives the item numbers and the amount, or the number of those items that she wants to order. She says, “Last time, we were able to buy in bulk and got the wholesale price.” “To buy in bulk” means that you buy a lot of something. So, for example, if your company needs a lot of aspirin because you get a lot of headaches from your boss, that would be something you could buy in bulk, you could buy 50 boxes of aspirin. I think I need some aspirin right now!

Well, Jessie says that she want to buy this item “in bulk” and get “the wholesale price.” “Wholesale,” all one word, is the price that you pay when you are a business buying from another business. Usually it is something that you pay for an item or a product that you are going to, perhaps, sell again, but not necessarily. The wholesale price is usually a cheaper price. Now, the “retail” price is the price that an individual customer will pay, and the retail price is usually higher than the wholesale price. So, the wholesale price is a special lower price that you can get if you are buying a lot of something from a certain business.

Jessie says that she is hoping that her company can negotiate the wholesale price again for this order. “To negotiate” means to come to an agreement. She is hoping that her company and Rudy's company can agree to sell these items at the wholesale price. Negotiate can also mean when you have two countries, or two people, who have a disagreement about something and they try to come to an understanding, they try to come to a common agreement. Rudy says it's, “not a problem,” that Jessie can get the cheaper wholesale price. He then asks what other items Jessie wants to order. Jessie gives him the number for the second item and says that she wants “40 of them.” Rudy tells her that there is “a price reduction of ten percent on that item.” “To reduce” means to lower or make less. A “reduction” is the noun that comes from the verb, “to reduce.” It means that something is lower or less than. In this case, it's a price reduction, which means the price will be lower. If you lose weight, you would have a weight reduction, something I need to do. But, this is a price reduction, and Rudy says that the ten percent price reduction “brings the net price to 19 dollars.” When he says, “brings the price,” means that the result is the “net price” of 19 dollars. The “net price” is the final price after the discount, in this case.

Jessie says that she doesn't need to order anything else right now. She does need to order some things in the future, but she needs to “submit a requisition for a purchase order.” A “requisition” is a request that you will send to someone in





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your company that you want to buy something. It's used to...for someone in a company to ask permission to buy something from another company. So, you may say to your boss, "here's a requisition for that aspirin that we need for my headache." When the boss says "yes," he or she will give you a purchase order. A "purchase order," two words, is permission from the company to buy that product. And usually, if you're buying something from another company, they will ask you for the purchase order number, and that's the number...and sometimes the actual copy of the purchase order, to show that you have the permission of your company to buy from this other company.

Jessie then says, "Can you fax over an invoice for the items I just ordered?" She's asking Rudy here to send her a fax. The expression she uses is "to fax over," meaning to fax to me, at my company, an "invoice." An "invoice" is a bill. It's what the company that is selling the product will give you, and says, "You have to pay us \$3000 dollars for your aspirin," or whatever product you ordered. So, an invoice is a bill that one company sends another company to get money for the products that they ordered. Rudy says that he will fax over the invoice "by the end of the day." "By the end of the day," is an expression that means before the business closes. So, if your business closes, normally in the United States at 5:00 or 5:30 in the afternoon, that you will do whatever you are promising before that time, that same day.

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

[Start of story]

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Rudy: Sure, I'll get that to you by the end of the day. We appreciate your order.

Jessie: No problem. Thanks.

[End of story]

Jeff McQuillan: The script for today's podcast was written by Dr. Lucy Tse. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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