



ESL Podcast 203 – Text Messaging

GLOSSARY

to text – to send a text message to someone

* I texted my friend to tell him where to meet us so we could all go to dinner together.

I M @ lib wher r u? – “I am at (the) library. Where are you?”

* When Megan didn’t arrive by 8:30, Tim texted her the message, “I M @ lib wher r u?”

template – something that is a sample or a model that someone can change and use for their own purposes

* The template we used to build our website uses red as a background color, but I changed it to yellow.

to make up – to invent; to create

* All he said was he that he couldn’t come tonight. Don’t make up a story in your head about the reasons why.

to compose – to write something

* Could you please wait a minute while I finish composing an email?

setting – the part of something that can be set, changed, or adjusted according to someone’s preference

* She changed the settings on her alarm clock so that she could wake up to her favorite CD playing.

predictive text mode – a setting for text messages that allows the machine to complete words for you as you enter the first letters in a word

* Predictive text mode makes it easier for me to text people quickly.

normal tap mode – a setting for text messages that allows you to enter your own words instead of having the words completed for you by the machine

* I don’t use normal tap mode very much anymore unless I’m texting a list of names.



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character – any text that takes up one space in a text message; usually letters, numbers, and symbols

* This screen has a limit of 200 characters. I hope my message is short enough to fit.

symbol – a character that is not a number or a letter; a small picture that represents something else

* The logo for that company was created as a symbol of their long history.

screen – the area on an electronic device where you can see the characters

* My computer screen stopped working so I can't see what I'm typing!

capital letter – a letter used to begin sentences and names, for example, "W" and "D."

* This sentence begins with the capital letter, "T."

option – a type of setting that can be turned on or off, or changed; a choice

* When you purchase this camera, you have the option of paying just \$20 more for a photo printer.

abbreviation – a shortened version of a word

* Do you know what the abbreviation for Texas is? I'm not sure if it's TX or TS.

to get up to speed – to be able to do something that you are learning as well as others

* He just started sailing two weeks ago, so please help him to get up to speed.

to not make (any) sense – to be difficult to understand; not to be logical

* It doesn't make any sense to take the elevator when the stairs are faster.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Jenny text Richard?
 - a) Instead of the library, Jenny wants to meet at the café.
 - b) Jenny can't meet Richard at the library after all.
 - c) Richard hasn't arrived and Jenny wants to know where he is.

 2. What kind of message did Richard send to Jenny?
 - a) He sent her a message with predictive text.
 - b) He used a template.
 - c) He sent a message written with only capital letters.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to make up

The phrase “to make up,” in this podcast, means to invent something: “I am making up this recipe as I go along.” It can also be used in a negative way to mean that someone is lying: “Don't tell me your dog ate your homework because I know you're making it up.” The phrase can also be used to mean to stop fighting and to be kind to one another again: “After fighting for two days, Bill and Stephanie made up at lunch today and said that they would never fight again.” A similar phrase, “to make up for something,” means to do something nice for someone after you've made a mistake or done something bad: “To make up for running over her bicycle with his car, he bought her a new and better one.”

character

In this podcast, the word “character” means any text that takes up space in a message or document: “This business card doesn't allow enough characters for my full name.” Another meaning for the word “character” is a person in a story, usually not a real person: “The main character in the Harry Potter books is Harry Potter.” As a noun, “character” can be used to describe someone who is different from other people or strange in some way. If there is someone who does strange things for no reason, he might be described as “a character”: “I didn't know that Lia's brother was such a character until I met him last week.” It's common to hear people say, “he/she is quite a character.” From this, people will know that this person is a little different or is unique.



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CULTURE NOTE

Below is a list of common texting abbreviations, also known as “txtspk” (text-speak).

Text	Meaning	Text	Meaning
b	be	ne1	anyone
c	see	b4	before
k	okay	ur	your, you are, you're
m	am	l8r	later
n	and	atm	at the moment; right now
r	are	asap	as soon as possible
u	you	btw	by the way
y	why	cya	see you (later)
1	used for part of a word that sounds like “one”	cnt	cannot or can't
2	to, two, or too	g2g or gtg	got to go; must leave
4	for, or part of a word that sounds like “four”	nm	never mind; forget what I said before
8	used for part of a word that sounds like “eight”	thx	thanks or thank you

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 203, “Text Messaging.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 203. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com for more information about this podcast and for a complete Learning Guide to this episode. The Learning Guide is an eight to ten page PDF file that you can download. It will give you all of the vocabulary, the definitions, additional vocabulary and definitions that we don't talk about on the podcast, as well as cultural notes and a complete transcript of everything that we say on the podcast.

Today's episode is called, “Text Messaging.” Let's get started.

[Start of story]

I was supposed to meet Jenny at the library, but I was late. Jenny texted me: “I M @ lib wher r u?”

I'm not very good at texting so I used a template to say I was going to be late. When I arrived at the library, Jenny laughed at me because she knew I didn't know how to text.

Richard: I don't know how to use this thing. The phone kept making up words for me.

Jenny: That's because you were composing in predictive text mode. You have to change your settings to normal tap mode so only the characters you want show up in the screen.

Richard: Okay, but everything still shows up in capital letters.



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Jenny: You can change the option by pressing the button. See? The screen will show you what kind of letters or numbers you can get, and you keep pushing the button until the one you want comes up.

Richard: What about the symbol you used in your message?

Jenny: You press the 1 button or the 0 button for those. I use them as abbreviations to save time when I am texting. I always use the symbols “@” and “&” for “at” and “and.” Simple words like “you,” “are,” and “be” can be spelled with the letters “u,” “r,” and “b.” It saves time.

Richard: Thanks. I think I’ve got it, but it’ll take some practice for me to get up to speed.

Jenny: No problem. Each time I get a strange message that doesn’t make any sense, I’ll know it’s from you.

[End of story]

Today's episode is called, “Text Messaging.” Text messaging is something that you can do on your cellular phone normally - your mobile phone - and it means to send a message like an email but through your telephone to someone else who has a cell phone or a mobile phone. The word text, “text,” just means that it is something that is appearing on your screen or on a piece of paper as writing. So, you are writing someone a message, instead of calling them and talking to them you can send them a message on your cell phone. This is very popular, especially among younger adults and teenagers. I have to say that I don't think I have ever text messaged anyone. Notice that we use that expression as a verb. To text someone, or to text message someone, is a verb which means to send them a text message.

Our dialogue begins with Richard saying that he “was supposed to meet Jenny at the library.” They had made plans to meet at the library, but he was late. Jenny texted him. She sent him a text message, which said in regular English, “I am at the library. Where are you?” But the actual letters that Jenny used were not the same as you would use in a normal English sentence. If you know something about text messaging, you know that people use letters and other signs and symbols to keep the message short. In this case, Jenny wrote in her text message, “I M,” the letter “M,” meaning I am. The letter “M” is short for, or stands



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for, “am” in a text message. This would be a good podcast to go to our website and look at the script for the podcast. You can see the script for the dialogue by clicking on the name of the podcast on our web page, and there you can see how Jenny spelled. how she typed in her text message.

She said, “I M,” and then she used a symbol [@]. And a symbol is something that, in this case, is not a letter like A, B, C - it's not a number like 1, 2, 3 - it's something different. This symbol means “at.” But continuing with Jenny's message she says, “I am at,” and instead of saying the library, instead of typing that in her text message, she simply said lib, “lib.” That meant the library - lib was short for library, and people do that when they send text messages, I guess. They shorten words so they don't have to type as much.

She then said “wher r u,” but she didn't spell it like we would normally. She spelled where, “wher.” Where is actually “where” in normal English, but in text message English you can shorten it. The verb are is normally spelled “are,” but in a text message it's just the letter “r,” And you is not “you” in text message English, it's the letter “u.”

So, Jenny sends this text message, and I say that “I'm not very good at texting,” that is sending text messages, “so I used a template to say I was going to be late.” A template, “template,” is a model that you can use or change. When we talk about text messaging, it's a list of common messages or common expressions that you can select on your cell phone so you don't have to type them out.

Well, “I used a template to say I was going to be late.” When I got to the library, “When I arrived at the library, Jenny laughed at me because she knew I didn't know how to text.” I said to her that, “I don't know how to use this thing. The phone kept making up words for me.” To make, “make,” up, “up,” two words, is a verb that means to invent, things that you didn't, in this case, plan. The phone was making up words. It was inventing words. It was coming up with words. It was putting words on the screen almost by itself. And, Jenny said the reason that my phone was doing that was because I was “composing in predictive text mode.” To compose, “compose,” as a verb means to write, to think about and to write. We use this verb, to compose, often when we are talking about a letter or a message. We also use this verb when we are talking about music. We say that, for example, J.S. Bach was a person who composed beautiful music. The



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person that composes music is called a composer. But here, compose means to write, and Jenny says that I was “composing in predictive text mode.”

The word predictive, “predictive,” comes from the verb to predict, “predict.” To predict means to guess something, to guess something about the future, to say what will happen. So, the adjective, predictive, means that the phone guesses, in this case, what word you are going to try to type, because the phone is like a little computer and it has memory of what common words that people use. So, when you have a text messaging telephone, cell phone, it will often have this predictive text mode. A mode, “mode,” is a way of doing something. So, when we say it's in predictive text mode that means that the phone will try to guess what you are going to say, so you may only type or press the first two or three letters of a word and it will guess what you want.

Jenny says that Richard has “to change” his “settings to normal tap mode.” Your settings, “settings,” are the rules, if you will, that your computer uses, or your cell phone uses. We talk about settings to mean things that you can change about a machine. For example, on your computer you can make the screen bright or you can make it dark, light or dark, bright or not bright. You can change the colors on your computer screen. These are settings, variables that you can change, things that you can change about the machine so that will perform or act differently.

Normal tap, “tap,” mode is the opposite of predictive text mode. It's when the computer doesn't guess what you want. You have to put in every letter that you want to send in your text message. The word tap, “tap,” as a verb, means to press. To tap also can mean to touch something lightly. “He was tapping his fingers on the top of the desk.” He was touching his fingers, hitting the desk with his fingers lightly. Jenny says that if Richard uses normal tap mode only the characters he wants will appear, or show up, on the screen. The characters, “characters,” are the letters and the numbers. The screen is the little thing that you can view the message on on your telephone.

Well, Richard says, “everything still shows up in capital letters.” Everything on the screen appears in capital letters. Capital, “capital,” letters are letters that are large or big. We sometimes call these upper case letters, upper case, “case,” letters. For example, in English your name begins with a capital letter, or an upper case letter. The opposite - the small letters would be lower case letters.



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Jenny says that, “You can change the option by pressing the button.” The option, “option,” is the...the way that something is done, the mode or the manner that something is done. “The screen,” she says, “will show you what kind of letters and numbers you can get, and you just keep pushing the button until the one you want comes up,” or appears.

Richard asks about the symbol that Jenny used in her message. Remember a symbol, “symbol,” is something that is not a number or a letter. And, Jenny explains that on her phone, you press the number one or the number zero button for those special symbols. She uses “them as abbreviations to save time.” An abbreviation is a short form of a word or expression. Jenny says she always uses the symbol at [@], which is an “a” with a circle around it, and ampersand [&], “ampersand.” Ampersand is that funny symbol that sort of looks like the number eight. Jenny also explains that simple words like you, are and be are often spelled with just the letter “u,” “r” and “b.”

Richard thanks Jenny and says that he thinks he's “got it,” or he thinks he's understood it, “but it'll take some practice for” him “to get up to speed.” The expression, to get up to speed, means to be able to do something as well as someone else, or as well as an expert, to get better at something, to get up to speed. If you are learning, for example, how to play a musical instrument, and you want to play with someone else who is very good, you may have to practice in order to get up to speed, to be as good as them.

Jenny says, “No problem. Each time I get a strange” text “message that doesn't make any sense,” she'll “know it's from” Richard. To not make any sense, “sense,” means that it is not logical or that it doesn't have any meaning because, it's done, in this case, incorrectly.

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

[Start of story]

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Richard: I don't know how to use this thing. The phone kept making up words for me.

Jenny: That's because you were composing in predictive text mode. You have to change your settings to normal tap mode so only the characters you want show up in the screen.

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Richard: What about the symbol you used in your message?

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Richard: Thanks. I think I've got it, but it'll take some practice for me to get up to speed.

Jenny: No problem. Each time I get a strange message that doesn't make any sense, I'll know it's from you.

[End of story]

The script for today's podcast was written by one of our college interns, Clara Asuncion. So, thank you Clara for that interesting dialogue.

That's all we have time for today. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

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