



**ESL Podcast 206 – A Generation Gap**

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**GLOSSARY**

**to get** – to understand someone or something

\* I don't get why you have to leave this week if your job in Jacksonville doesn't start for three weeks.

**tattoo** – permanent ink words or pictures made on the skin

\* She doesn't want to get a tattoo now because she's not sure if she will still like it when she's 60-years-old.

**to freak out** – to have extreme emotions, usually when someone is very angry or very sad, but can also be used when someone is very happy

\* Denny freaked out when he heard that he had won the drawing contest.

**any better than** – at the same level; used when comparing two people or things

\* I can't type any better than she can, but she always finishes her letters before I do.

**behind the times** – to be uninformed of recent trends or news

\* We want to buy a present for our grandchildren, but we're so behind the times, we don't know what they would like.

**to keep up with** – to know; to be informed about

\* It's hard to keep up with the changes in the tax laws in this country when they change so often.

**what's in/what's out** – what is fashionable (what's in) and what is unfashionable (what's out)

\* She never looks at fashion magazines and has no idea what's in and what's out.

**to express (oneself)** – to show your thoughts, ideas, personality, or style

\* He has trouble expressing himself in front of the other students in class.

**hippie** – young adults in the 1960's who were seen as rebels or people who rejected traditional culture

\* Aidan's parents were hippies, but he became a politician and is nothing like them.



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**hipster** – someone who is very fashionable or well-informed about what is popular

\* The most popular students in school are usually the hipsters.

**pop culture** – the popular culture right now based on current trends

\* Reading fashion, gossip, and music magazines can help you learn more about American pop culture.

**club** – a place where people go to dance and socialize

\* We went to that new club on Saturday night and the music was great.

**blog** – short for web log; a place on the Internet where people post news about themselves or something that interests them

\* My sister kept a blog while she traveled around Asia last summer, and her friends and I could read about her travels.

**to suck** – to be bad; to be disappointing (very informal)

\* It sucks that everybody else gets to go to the concert and we have to work all night.

**to make (one's) point** – to prove an argument is correct by using examples or other evidence

\* You've made your point that taking this job would be a bad idea.

**things could be a lot worse** – the situation is not as bad as it could be

\* Even though our house burned down, at least my family is safe. Things could be a lot worse.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. How did Carlos' parents react to his tattoos.
    - a) They were excited.
    - b) They wanted to get tattoos, too.
    - c) They were not happy.
  2. Carlos is confused about his parents' reaction because
    - a) they used to be hipsters.
    - b) they used to be hippies.
    - c) they like to be behind the times.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **to get**

The verb “to get,” in this podcast, is used informally and means to understand someone or something: “I don't get how to use this new email program.” “To get” is usually used more traditionally to mean to receive something: “I got a package in the mail yesterday.” Sometimes people use the verb to mean that they will do something or that they want to be the person who will do that. For example, if the doorbell rings, you may say, “I'll get it,” to mean that you will answer the door. There is also a negative way to use the verb “to get.” It can be used to mean that you plan to harm someone else: “Dan is always laughing at me. I'm going to get him for making fun of me.” Or, “I'm going to get him for taking the job I wanted.”

#### **to keep up with**

In this podcast, the phrase “to keep up with” means to know or to be informed about certain issues or trends: “It's so hard to keep up with the news around the world when you don't read the newspaper everyday.” It can also mean to physically stay at the same pace, or speed, as others. For instance, if you are walking with a group of people and you are walking more slowly than everyone else, you could say, “I'm having trouble keeping up with you guys. Slow down!” This phrase can also be used in other situations where you are having difficulty understanding or learning something: “This professor talks so quickly it's hard to keep up with what he's saying.” Or, “Can you explain that again? I'm having trouble keeping up with your arguments.”



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### CULTURE NOTE

In the U.S., people who are born and living during certain years are usually grouped together in a “generation.” These groups are usually given names. For example, people born between 1883 and 1900 are known as the “Lost Generation” because many of them fought and died in World War I. People born from 1901 through 1924 are known as the “Civic Generation,” because they were considered more “civic-minded,” or cared more about their own town, city, or community.

People born between 1925 and 1945 are known as the “Silent Generation.” Most people born during this period were too young to fight in World War I or World War II, and could not be war heroes. The Baby Boomers were born between 1946 and 1964, and they are considered “idealist,” or people who wanted things to be perfect or believed that they could make the world much better than it was. They were called the “Baby Boomers” because a lot of babies were born after World War II ended, and a “boom” is a time when things grow or increase quickly

Other than the “Baby Boomers” generation, the most well-known generations today are “Generation X,” “The MTV Generation,” and “Generation Y.” Generation X refers to people born between 1961 and 1981. This generation is known for being “street smart,” or being able to understand and function in urban culture because they grew up during a period in the U.S. when the culture changed so much. The MTV Generation include people born between 1975 and 1985, and is named after a popular cable television station that began broadcasting during this time and that plays music videos. Generation Y was born between the years 1982 and 2001. They are also known for being civic-minded and for wanting to advance quickly in the world. The most recent generation, since 2002, is the “Cyber Generation” or the “Internet Generation” named because of all of the computer advancements there have been in the past few years. “Cyber” is used to mean anything related to computers and technology.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 206, “A Generation Gap.”

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast episode 206. 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](http://eslpod.com) for more information about this podcast and for a complete Learning Guide, an eight to ten page guide to the podcast that includes additional definitions, culture notes, definitions of all the words we talk about on this podcast and a complete transcript.

On today's podcast we're going to talk about how parents and their children sometimes don't understand each other. It's called, “A Generation Gap.” Let's get started.

[Start of story]

Carlos: Belinda, maybe you can explain it to me. My parents still don't get me. I got a couple of tattoos and they freaked out.

Belinda: Why are you asking me? I may be a few years older than you are, but I don't understand parents any better than you do. They're hopelessly behind the times.

Carlos: I don't really expect them to keep up with what's going on right now or to know anything about what's in and what's out, but I thought they'd understand if I wanted to express myself. They were hippies in their day.

Belinda: Yeah, but being a hippie isn't the same thing as being a hipster. Most of them just don't keep up with pop culture. You know, now that I think about it, I'm not sure that's such a bad thing.

Carlos: What do you mean?

Belinda: Can you imagine going to the same clubs as your parents, or you and your parents reading the same blogs?



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Carlos: Oh, that would really suck. Okay, you've made your point. Things could be a lot worse.

[End of story]

The title of today's episode is, "A Generation Gap." A generation is a group of people who are born during the same years or during the same set of years. Usually it's people born within 10 or 15 years of when you are born. The term doesn't have a scientific definition when we use it in general conversation, but people who are born in the same 10, 15, maybe even 20 period that you are born would be part of your generation.

A gap, "gap," is a space between two things, an empty space, usually. But, the term generation gap refers to the differences between people who are born 15 or 20 years apart. Usually the parent and the child are considered to be in separate generations, and so they often don't understand each other and we call that problem of not understanding people who are older than you or younger than you a generation gap.

Well, our dialogue is between Carlos and Belinda. Carlos begins by asking Belinda to explain something to him. He says, "My parents still don't get me." The use of the verb "get" here is similar to the verb under - to understand. What he's saying is that my parents still don't understand me, they still don't get me - it's a little more informal.

He says "I got a couple of tattoos and they freaked out." A tattoo, "tattoo," is when you put ink on your skin. You color your skin, usually put a word or some artistic design, some picture on your skin. Most tattoos are permanent, which means even after you wash your skin you can still see the ink. And, this is very popular among...well, it used to be popular among rock stars, for example, but now many younger people have tattoos. I have a tattoo on the back of my head. It's the sign, or logo, for ESL Podcast, so if you ever see me, look at the back of my head!

The parents of Carlos "freaked out." When Carlos says his parents freaked, "freaked," out, he meant that they became very angry or they became very excited. To freak out means to have very strong emotions about something, usually negative emotions, usually anger, or when someone gets mad.



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Belinda says, “Why are you asking me” this question. “I may be a few years older than you, but,” she says, “I don’t understand parents any better than you do.” That expression, any better than, is used when we want to say that you are equal to someone else, when you are comparing someone else. You might actually be a little worse, but you are not any better than, you are not higher than them or superior to them in your understanding or your ability to do something. So, Belinda says that she doesn’t understand parents better than Carlos, or any better than Carlos. She says, “They’re hopelessly behind the times.” To be behind the times means to not understand or not know the most recent or the most current news and events. Someone who doesn’t know what has happened recently is considered behind the times.

Carlos says that he doesn’t really expect his parents “to keep up with what’s going on right now.” The expression, to keep, “keep,” up with, means that you understand and know about all the things that are happening. So, it’s sort of the opposite of being behind the times. To keep up with means that you know about the current or most recent news about something. There are other meanings to that expression, to keep up with, and we talk about those additional meanings in our Learning Guide, so take a look at that. We also talk about other meanings of the verb to get.

Well, Carlos says that he doesn’t expect his parents “to keep up with what’s going on right now or to know anything about what’s in and what’s out.” The expression “what’s in and what’s out” refer to knowing what’s popular and what’s not popular. So, something that is “in” is something that is popular; many people are doing it. Something that is “out” is something that is unpopular; it’s not something that many people are doing.

Carlos says he thought his parents would understand if he wanted to express himself. To express yourself means to show your creativity, to do something that tells other people what you are like, what you think. It’s often an expression that we use when someone does something artistic, but it could also mean that you are showing other people what you think about something by something that you do, such as getting a tattoo, especially a tattoo on the back of your head, like me!

Carlos says that his parents “were hippies in their day.” Hippies, “hippies,” is a word that we use to talk about people who were teenagers or college students usually in the 1960’s, especially in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, and hippies



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were young people, like my older brother, Pat. He was definitely a hippie. These were people that protested against the war in Vietnam, when the United States was in Vietnam. These are also people that may have used illegal drugs or dressed in a very different kind of clothing. There are many things that we associate with the hippie culture, but that is...those are some of the most important things. So, they were considered somewhat radical from a cultural point of view. They were people that rejected the traditional culture.

Belinda says that “being a hippie” is not the same “as being a hipster.” A hipster, hipster,” is someone who keeps up with or knows about all of the latest trends or latest ideas in fashion and music. It's a term we usually use now to describe people in their 20's or in their late teens who knows all of the most popular bands and dresses with all the most popular type of clothing. We generally talk about the culture that is associated, especially with young people, we generally call that “pop culture” - “pop,” pop culture. Pop is short for popular. So, it's the culture of young people, but it's also the culture of the general population really. Popular television shows, popular music - these are all parts of pop culture.

Belinda says that not having the parents know about things is not such a bad idea, not “such a bad thing.” Carlos says “What do you mean,” and Belinda says, “Can you imagine going to the same clubs as your parents?” A club, “club,” is short for a dance club, a place where you go to dance, and if you are over 21 years old, a place where you can also go to drink alcohol. Belinda says imagine if you or your parents were “reading the same blogs.” A blog, “blog,” is short for a web log, and you probably know this is a web page where people can put their own ideas on any topic they want onto a web page.

Carlos says, “Oh,” if that were true - if his parents went to the same clubs or read the same blogs, “that would really suck,” “suck.” The verb, to suck, is an informal verb, popular especially among younger speakers, but it's now become popular, really informally, among many people of different ages. To suck means that it is very bad, that it is a very negative or bad thing, it would be bad thing. For example, it would suck to have to go to work every day for 20 hours a day. That would be a bad thing. Or, it would suck not to be able to listen to ESL Podcast every day. Again, it's an informal word, and you would only want to use that with friends, close friends. You would not want to say that to your boss, for example.

Carlos says that Belinda has made her point. To make your point means that you prove, or demonstrate, or show that something is true. He says, “Things





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could be a lot worse.” This means that the situation is not as bad as it could be. It could be worse.

If you are interested in this idea of a generation gap and different generations, be sure to look at the cultural note for this podcast. We explain terms like “generation X,” “generation Y,” “baby boomer.” These are very popular terms in English, and we give more information there.

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

[Start of story]

Carlos: Belinda, maybe you can explain it to me. My parents still don't get me. I got a couple of tattoos and they freaked out.

Belinda: Why are you asking me? I may be a few years older than you are, but I don't understand parents any better than you do. They're hopelessly behind the times.

Carlos: I don't really expect them to keep up with what's going on right now or to know anything about what's in and what's out, but I thought they'd understand if I wanted to express myself. They were hippies in their day.

Belinda: Yeah, but being a hippie isn't the same thing as being a hipster. Most of them just don't keep up with pop culture. You know, now that I think about it, I'm not sure that's such a bad thing.

Carlos: What do you mean?

Belinda: Can you imagine going to the same clubs as your parents, or you and your parents reading the same blogs?

Carlos: Oh, that would really suck. Okay, you've made your point. Things could be a lot worse.

[End of story]



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

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