



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

GLOSSARY

to pick (someone's) brain – to ask someone for advice or suggestions

* Mike and his girlfriend have been fighting a lot. He asked me if he could pick my brain on how to make things better.

to make it quick – to hurry

* We can stop for something to eat but we have to make it quick or we'll miss the beginning of the game.

a raise – an increase in an employee's salary or pay

* My boss finally gave me a big raise when he found out that I got a job offer from another company.

on (one's) plate – what a person is responsible for; work a person must do

* I have too much on my plate right now to take on even more work.

to broach – to raise a sensitive or difficult subject; to bring up a topic

* Have you had a chance to broach the topic with your parents about lending us some money?

to bring up – to introduce into conversation; to raise

* I wish you wouldn't bring up the past every time we talk about getting married.

qualifications – talent, skill, or training that makes someone a good match for a job

* Zayra has all of the qualifications she needs to be our new leader.

indispensable – very necessary; can't do without

* Jeff is indispensable and we couldn't do this show without him.

promotion – to move someone to a higher position or rank

* After working in this company for five years, Dana deserves a promotion.

bump in pay – raise in salary; getting paid more money at work

* Your new title won't mean a bump in pay, but you'll have more influence on the decisions we make.



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

to sell (oneself) – to promote oneself; to get others to see your value, such as your qualities, talents, or skills

* In a job interview, you have to sell yourself to the interviewer in order to impress her.

to be self-serving – to care about one's own interests more than anyone else's

* The employees accused the manager of being self-serving when he fired two people in order to buy himself a new company car.

ultimatum – the final demand for something that, if it isn't given or done, will result in something very bad happening

* We gave him an ultimatum: Stop smoking or you're sleeping outside!

to fly – to be acceptable; to work

* If I go to the concert, I have to stay overnight in Las Vegas, and I'm sure that's not going to fly with my parents.

to see things (someone's) way – to have someone agree with you or your opinion

* Life would be so much easier if you could just see everything my way!



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Patty think she deserves a raise?
 - a) Alberto, who does the same job, makes more money than she does.
 - b) She has some new qualifications.
 - c) She has more responsibilities now.

 2. Alberto tells Patty to:
 - a) Make Wayne see that she is indispensable.
 - b) Give Wayne an ultimatum.
 - c) Say to Wayne, “Give me a raise!”
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to bring up

The verb “to bring up,” in this podcast, means to raise or to introduce a topic into conversation: “Before we end our meeting today, I’d like to bring up one last issue.” “To bring up” can also be used to mean to raise children or to take care of children who are your responsibility: “Dan and Lucinda decided to bring up all three children themselves when their friends died in the car accident.” Or, “It’s not easy to bring up healthy and happy children in these modern times.”

to fly

In this podcast, the verb “to fly” is used informally to mean to be acceptable or to succeed: “I tried to convince the president of the university that we need to have a day off for the school’s celebration, but I don’t think it’s going to fly.” “To fly” is more often used to mean be in control of an airplane: “Knowing that there is an experienced pilot flying this plane makes me feel a little less nervous about this trip.” But, it can also be used to mean to be a passenger on an airplane: “Last week, I flew from Beijing to Paris and this week I’ll be flying from Milan to Lima.” Used as a noun, “fly” means a small insect or bug with wings: “Close that window! The flies are coming in and bothering our guests.”



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

CULTURE NOTE

Giving raises to employees is just one way that American companies reward their employees. Some provide an “incentive,” or something that encourages someone to do something, that is often “financial,” or involve money. One of the most popular is to give employees one-time “bonuses,” which are cash payments to an employee, usually as a reward for things like completing a difficult project or for getting an important “client,” or customer. Some companies give “year-end bonuses,” and the amount of money an employee gets depends on the employee’s performance during the past year. Another possible financial incentive is to give employees “stock options,” or the possibility to buy the company’s stock at a discounted or lower price.

Instead of raises, bonuses, or stock options, employees may ask for rewards that don’t involve money. They may want a change in their work schedule, for example. Some American companies allow “compressed” or shortened work weeks where, for example, an employee may work longer hours each day but only work four instead of five days. Another time-related benefit is to work on “flextime,” or to be able to work when the employee wants as long as they work the number of hours that’s required for their job. More recently, employees have asked for days when they can “telecommute,” or work from home but still are connected to the office by using technology.

Other rewards that a company may give an employee include things like a better workspace or office, a “reserved” parking space that is only to be used by that employee, more vacation time, better work assignments, or money to travel to “conferences,” or professional meetings.

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



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 212, “Asking for a Raise.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 212. 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. There you will find a Learning Guide for this episode of ESL Podcast. It contains all of the words, definitions, additional explanations and a complete transcript of this episode.

Today we are going to talk about asking for a raise at work. Let's go.

[Start of story]

Patty: Alberto, can I pick your brain for a minute?

Alberto: Yeah, sure, but you'll have to make it quick. I'm going into a meeting at 3.

Patty: Sure. Hopefully, this won't take long. I'm thinking about asking for a raise. I've been working here for a year and half, and I now have a lot more responsibilities on my plate than when I started. I think I've earned a raise, but I don't know how to broach the issue with Wayne. I can't just go into his office and say, “Give me a raise!”

Alberto: You're right. It's not an easy thing to bring up. One thing I did when I asked for a raise last year was to remind Wayne of my qualifications and all of the work I do around here. I tried to convince Wayne that I was indispensable.

Patty: Obviously it worked. You got a raise and a promotion, too. All I want is a bump in pay.

Alberto: The trick is to sell yourself without seeming self-serving. And, you don't want to give any ultimatums either. That definitely won't fly with Wayne.



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

Patty: I can see that. I plan to talk to him at the end of the week so wish me luck.

Alberto: You don't need it. I'm sure Wayne will see things your way.

[End of story]

Our podcast is called, "Asking for a Raise." A raise, "raise," is when you want more money for the job that you do for someone. To ask for a raise means to ask for more money, to be paid more money at your job.

Our dialogue is between Patty and Alberto. Patty asks Alberto, "Can I pick your brain for a minute?" To pick, "pick," can mean to take and remove something, so when you say to someone, "I want to pick your brain," you're saying I want to get some ideas from your brain. I want you to give me some ideas. Your brain, of course, is what is, well, what should be in your head. Some people have it other places! So, to pick your brain means to get ideas, to get your opinion about something.

Alberto says, "Yeah, sure," okay, "but you'll have to make it quick." When someone says, "make it quick," they mean don't take a very much time. You have to hurry. I'm busy and I have to go, so make it quick: speak quickly, tell me quickly what you want to tell me. The opposite of make it quick would be take your time. If someone says, "Take your time," they mean you can go slowly. Alberto doesn't say take your time, he says, "make it quick. I'm going into a meeting at three," at three o'clock.

Patty says that she's been "thinking about a raise." She has been working at the company for a year and half, and now she has more things to do, more responsibilities on her plate. When we say I have more things or more responsibility on my plate, "plate," we mean that I have many more things that I am doing, many more projects, many more tasks that I am responsible for. You can think of your plate like a plate that you would eat your food off of, so to have more things on the plate means that you have more things that you have to do.

Patty says that she thinks she's "earned a raise." To earn a raise, "earn," here means that she deserves a raise, that she should get a raise because she has done the work required in order to get more money. However, she says that she doesn't "know how to broach the issue with Wayne." To broach, "broach," means



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

the same as to begin talking about. We may also use the verb here, to raise. As a verb, not as a noun, we use raise to mean the same as broach, to begin talking about something, to be the first one to start talking about something. This is the same meaning as the expression to bring up. To bring, “bring,” up, two words, means to raise, to start talking about. The verb to bring up actually has a couple of different meanings. Look today's Learning Guide for some additional explanations of those meanings.

Alberto says, “It’s not an easy thing to bring up.” It’s not an easy thing to broach. “One thing I did when I asked for a raise,” he says, was to tell Wayne, “to remind Wayne of” his “qualifications.” Your qualifications, “qualifications,” plural, your qualifications are your skills, your knowledge - the things that make you good at your job or the things that makes you able to do your job. Someone might say, “I went to the university and I have a bachelor's degree in engineering. I have good qualifications for this job.” I have the things this job requires.

Alberto says that he tried to convince the boss, Wayne, that he was indispensable. To be indispensable, “indispensable,” means that you cannot do without this person, that you must have this person. The opposite of indispensable is dispensable, and that, what we would call prefix that comes at the beginning of a word, the prefix “in” means not, in many cases. So, when we say someone is indispensable, we mean that they are not dispensable. If you say something is inconvenient, you mean it is not convenient.

Patty says that obviously, or clearly, Alberto's strategy, what Alberto did, worked because he “got a raise and a promotion.” A promotion, “promotion,” is when you get a better job, usually a job that is higher up. You move up, we might say, in the company, you have a higher position in the company. Promotion is almost always used to talk about people in a job or at work. You can get a promotion without a raise, and you can get a raise without a promotion. A raise is more money. A promotion is a higher position in the company. I have a high position at the Center for Educational Development, but I have never gotten a raise.

Well, Patty says also that she wants “a bump in pay.” A bump, “bump,” means here an increase. She wants an increase in pay. *zit* means the same as a raise. Alberto says, “The trick,” or the best approach, “is to sell yourself without seeming self-serving.” To sell yourself means to convince someone else that you are the best person, that you deserve what you are asking for. To be self-serving, “self-serving,” means that you are only interested in yourself. You're not



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

interested in other people, and therefore you may not be trustworthy. If you say things that are self-serving, they are only going to be good for you. They're only going to benefit you.

Alberto warns Patty that she should not “give any ultimatums.” An ultimatum, “ultimatum,” is a demand. When you say to someone, “If you do not give me a raise, I will quit,” that is an ultimatum. You're saying if something doesn't happen then you will do something else. Alberto says that ultimatums “definitely won't fly with Wayne.” When we say something won't fly, “fly,” we mean they won't work. There are other very different meanings of the verb, to fly. Take a look at today's Learning Guide for more explanation of those.

Patty says that she can see what Alberto means, she understands what he means, and that she is going to talk to Wayne next week. Alberto says that he is sure that Wayne, their boss, will see things Patty's way. To see things (someone's) way, or to see things your way, in the case of the dialogue, means that he will agree with you. It means when someone will look at a situation, will understand a situation the same way you look at it, the same way you understand it. The opposite of that would be to have someone who doesn't see eye to eye with you. The expression to be unable or not to see eye, “eye,” to eye means that you don't agree with someone. But, in the dialogue, Alberto says that Wayne will see things the same way.

The whole topic of how Americans get promotions and raises is an interesting one. We have a discussion of that in our culture note in today's Learning Guide.

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

[Start of story]

Patty: Alberto, can I pick your brain for a minute?

Alberto: Yeah, sure, but you'll have to make it quick. I'm going into a meeting at 3.

Patty: Sure. Hopefully, this won't take long. I'm thinking about asking for a raise. I've been working here for a year and half, and I now have a lot more responsibilities on my plate than when I started. I think I've earned a raise, but I



ESL Podcast 212 – Asking for a Raise

don't know how to broach the issue with Wayne. I can't just go into his office and say, "Give me a raise!"

Alberto: You're right. It's not an easy thing to bring up. One thing I did when I asked for a raise last year was to remind Wayne of my qualifications and all of the work I do around here. I tried to convince Wayne that I was indispensable.

Patty: Obviously it worked. You got a raise and a promotion, too. All I want is a bump in pay.

Alberto: The trick is to sell yourself without seeming self-serving. And, you don't want to give any ultimatums either. That definitely won't fly with Wayne.

Patty: I can see that. I plan to talk to him at the end of the week so wish me luck.

Alberto: You don't need it. I'm sure Wayne will see things your way.

[End of story]

Our script today was by Dr. Lucy Tse. She needs a raise too, I think.

If you have questions or comments about our podcast, feel free to email us at eslpod@eslpod.com. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2006.