



ESL Podcast 213– Buying a Bicycle

GLOSSARY

bike shop – a store that sells bicycles and other things related to bicycles

* I'm going to the bike shop this afternoon to get a new bike lock.

road bike – a bicycle designed for paved or smooth roads rather than dirt, sand, or other rough surfaces

* Vera takes good care of her road bike and tries not to ride it over rough roads.

mountain bike – a bicycle designed for rough or bumpy surfaces, as well as paved or smooth roads

* My sister uses her mountain bike when she goes camping in the woods.

beach cruiser – a simple bicycle designed for comfort and style with usually only one gear

* Billy likes his beach cruiser, but I prefer to have one with more options.

racing bike – a bicycle designed for speed

* Many of the riders in the Tour de France ride the most technologically-advanced racing bikes available.

versatile – able to change easily or handle different types of situations easily

* This chair is so versatile! I can sit up straight or lean back as far as I want to.

frame – on a bicycle, the supporting structure, usually made of metal

* The frame on this bike is really heavy, making it hard for me to carry it up the stairs to my apartment.

tire – a round ring of rubber with air inside that goes around the wheel to support a bicycle or vehicle (car)

* On my way home from work, my car had a flat tire and I couldn't figure out how to change it.

seat – on a bicycle, the part of the bicycle where the rider sits; a place intended for people to sit

* If you want more light, take a seat next to the window.



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handlebars – on a bicycle, the part that the rider holds onto with his or her hands while riding and uses to control the direction of the bicycle

* When I was little, my sister would let me sit on the handlebars while she rode her bike into town.

sturdy – strong; will not break or fall apart easily

* My desk is so sturdy that five people can sit on it!

off-road – not on a paved (or smooth) road or street; usually a rough surface such as dirt or grass

* Her dad doesn't want her to ride off-road because he's afraid she'll fall and hurt herself.

gear – a set of small wheels in a car or on a bicycle that determines how fast you will move

* When we were in San Francisco, we often had to shift our car to the lower gears to get up the steep hills.

brakes – the part on a bicycle or vehicle (car) used to stop its movement

* I need to get my brakes fixed. They make this funny noise every time I try to stop.

foot brakes – on a bicycle, a brake that can be controlled with the foot

* He's more comfortable with foot brakes because he's used to driving and braking in a car.

hand brakes – on a bicycle, a brake that can be controlled with the hands

* Some new riders have trouble using hand brakes because they're not used to the idea.

air pump – a tool that is used to put air into things, such as tires

* This air pump was not expensive, but it takes a long time to fill my tires with air.

bike lock – a thick wire or rope attached to a lock that is used to secure a bike to an object, such as a telephone pole, so that the bike cannot move

* If you don't want to get your bike stolen, remember to use your bike lock.

helmet – a hard cover that is worn on the head for protection

* I won't ride on a motorcycle unless I have a helmet on.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Lance want to buy a bicycle?
 - a) He wants to win the Tour de France.
 - b) He wants to ride it to work.
 - c) He old one was stolen.

 2. What type of bicycle does the clerk recommend for Lance?
 - a) A road bike and a mountain bike.
 - b) A road bike and a beach cruiser.
 - c) A mountain bike and a racing bike.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

frame

The word “frame,” in this podcast, means the main part of a bicycle that supports the other parts: “This bike’s strong frame is good for off-road bicycling.” A frame can also be something that you use to display a picture or photograph often with a glass or plastic covering: “I used a silver frame for our wedding photo and hung it in the living room.” People also use the word frame when talking about cartoons or films. A frame in this case is the individual picture that is created and put together with many others to make a moving image: “How many frames are in that scene?” Frame can also be used as a verb informally to mean to create false evidence against someone so they will seem guilty, usually of a crime: “He stole \$1 million from the bank but framed another employee who worked with him.”

gear

In this podcast, the word “gear” means the set of small wheels that controls how far a bicycle will go each time a pedal is pushed around: “When I’m riding down hills, I don’t usually change gears.” Another way people use the word gear is to refer to equipment or supplies in general: “Do you have all of your camping gear?” Or, “I never knew that a professional photographer needed so much gear.” The verb “to gear up” means to get ready or to prepare for something: “He’s geared up to take his trip this summer to Alaska.”



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CULTURE NOTE

There are different types of bike riding that people do for fun in the U.S. A very popular type is mountain biking. Mountain biking refers to biking anywhere that is off-road, and is not restricted to mountains. Many areas with mountains or hills have trails just for people who like to go mountain biking. It can be done for fun or seriously as a sport. There are groups that people who enjoy mountain biking can join, such as clubs or teams that organize events so riders can ride together or compete with one another.

Other types of bike riding include road bicycle racing, which is done on a normal paved road, and track cycling, which is done in an area specially made for racing. BMX racing is a type of bicycle racing that is done off-road, on a track that is designed with obstacles for the racers. Racers often do tricks with the bicycles during the race and ride over many tall and challenging hills.

Triathlons also involve racing on a bicycle, but that is only one part of a triathlon. Usually, competitors have to swim, bike, and run in a triathlon, but there are variations on this type of competition. The cycling portion is completed on a marked or prepared course, where preparation for cycling (changing clothes after swimming) and then preparation for the next activity (taking off the helmet for running) are included in the racer's total time.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 213, “Buying a Bicycle.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 213. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in the beautiful City of Los Angeles, in the State of California.

Today's podcast is going to be about buying a bicycle. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

I went to the bike shop on Saturday morning to buy a bicycle.

Clerk: What kind of bike are you looking for?

Lance: I'm really not sure.

Clerk: Well, let me show you what we have. We carry road bikes, mountain bikes, beach cruisers, and racing bikes.

Lance: I'm going to start biking to work. I'll be riding mainly on the road, but I want something versatile enough for anything.

Clerk: Well, the road bikes are for everyday use. They have heavy frames and tires. The seats are comfortable and so are the handlebars. The mountain bikes are very sturdy for off-road cycling and have wider tires. Beach cruisers have just one speed, so you won't be shifting any gears.

Lance: Okay. Are the brakes hard to handle?

Clerk: No. You either have foot brakes, like on the beach cruisers, or you have hand brakes. They're very easy to get used to. If you want to keep it simple, I would either go for a road bike or a mountain bike. Those are the most popular.

Lance: If I get a bike, what other things do I need?

Clerk: I usually recommend an air pump, a bike lock, and a helmet.



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Lance: Okay, I'll take a look around.

Clerk: Sure. Just let me know if you have other questions.

[End of story]

Our podcast today is called, “Buying a Bicycle.” A bicycle, you probably know, is a machine with two wheels on it that you can ride. The verb we use for a bicycle, for putting your feet and moving them up and down is to pedal, “pedal.” You pedal a bicycle. That's moving the bicycle with your feet.

The dialogue today is between Lance, no relation to Lance Armstrong - well, maybe his cousin - and a clerk, a person working at a store. The story begins by Lance saying, “I went to the bike shop on Saturday to buy a bicycle.” The word bike, “bike,” is short for bicycle, so you can say bicycle or you can say bike. A shop is the same as a store.

A person who rides a bicycle is called a bicyclist, “bicyclist.” We sometimes also use the word biker, “biker,” for the person who rides a bicycle. But normally, the word biker refers to someone who rides a motorcycle, a bicycle with a motor or an engine on it. For example, the Harley-Davidson motorcycle, a very famous type of motorcycle. That person would be called a biker. When I was in college I was a biker. I had a big motorcycle and a leather jacket. All the women would come around and want to talk to me - no, wait a minute, that was a movie I saw in college! Anyway, back to the story.

The clerk asks Lance, what “bike are you looking for,” and Lance says, “I'm not really sure.” The clerk says, “Well, let me show you what we have,” let me take you to the bicycles that we have, and then she gives him a list of different types of bicycles. The first one is a road bike, “road,” and a road bike would be a bicycle that you would ride in the city on the road or on a bike path, “path,” which is a special road just for bicyclists, or a special part of a road for bicyclists. This would be a road bike. The idea is that you can ride a road bike on a smooth surface. Smooth, “smooth,” is the opposite of rough, “rough.” If something is smooth it is like it's flat, in this case. A smooth surface is something that doesn't have any bumps. There are no holes; there are no bumps. It's very even; it's very regular. The opposite would be rough. Something that is rough, or a



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surface, a road that is rough would have lots of holes in it, and if you would ride a bicycle, or a car, you would be going up and down because the road was rough.

So, a road bike is for riding on a smooth area. A mountain bike, “mountain,” a mountain bike is for riding in a rough area. A beach cruiser, “beach,” cruiser, “cruiser,” is a bike, a very simple bike that you would use for going, probably, short distances, not going very far. Usually it's a bicycle that has only one speed. A more expensive bike - a road bike or a mountain bike - will have different speeds so you can go faster and faster. When I was a child, I wanted to get a ten-speed bicycle. That means that there were ten speeds that you could go by pedaling the bicycle. A beach cruiser is usually just a one-speed bicycle.

A racing bike, “racing,” is a bike that you would use, for example, in the Tour de France, where you would have a bicycle that you are racing, competing against other people. A good racing bike is very important, and of course, a little bit of drugs! Lance says that “I’m going to start biking to work.” Notice he uses the verb to bike. You can say, “I’m going to bike to work,” which means I’m going to ride my bicycle to work. Lance is looking for something that is “versatile enough for anything.” To be versatile, “versatile,” means that you can use it for many different things.

The clerk says, “Well, the road bikes are for everyday use. They have heavy frames and tires.” The frame of a bicycle, “frame,” is the main part of it, and the frame holds the tires. The tires, “tires,” are the wheels that go around. Technically, we talk about the wheel as being both the rubber tube that goes around, as well as the metal that connects to the frame.

The seats are the things that you sit on, “seats.” Bicycles usually have seats. They also have handlebars. A handlebar, “handlebar,” one word, a handlebar, or handlebars, are the things you use to control the bicycle, to turn it left or to turn it right or to go straight. The verb we would use here is to steer, “steer.” To steer the bicycle means to put it in the right direction. We also use that verb for a car. To steer the car means to direct it, to tell it to go left or right. In a car, the thing you use is called a steering wheel to change direction in the car. On a bicycle, we use a handlebar, or handlebars.

The clerk says that “mountain bikes are very sturdy for off-road cycling.” Sturdy, “sturdy,” means that it is strong, that it won't break easily. The opposite of sturdy is fragile, “fragile.” When the clerk says that the bicycle, the mountain bike is



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“sturdy for off-road cycling,” she means that you can use it on places that are not smooth, on rough places such as in the desert or on a hill.

“Beach cruisers,” the clerk says, “have just one speed, so you won’t be shifting any gears.” A gear, “gear,” is a part of the bicycle. Usually it’s a around wheel that determines how fast you go. In a bicycle with ten speeds, there usually are several gears. So, the gears are related to how fast you can go. If you just have one speed, you don’t have to change the gears. The word we use is to shift, “shift.” To shift gears means to change gears, to go faster or to go more slowly.

That word, gear, is used in a couple of different ways. It is similar to the word frame. It has many different meanings. If you look at the Learning Guide for today, we talk about the other meanings of frame and gear.

Lance asks if the brakes are “hard to handle?” The brakes, “brakes,” are the things you use to slow down or to stop a bike. We also use that same word for a car. Your car has brakes. When Lance says are they “hard to handle,” “handle,” he means are they difficult to control, are they difficult to use. The clerk says, “No. You either have foot brakes, or hand brakes.” The foot brakes are controlled by your feet. The hand brakes are controlled by your hands, very logical.

Lance asks if he needs anything else and the clerk says that he should buy an air pump, “air pump,” two words. An air pump is used to put air into the tire of the wheel. A bike lock, that’s a lock that you use so no one steals your bicycle, and a helmet, “helmet.” A helmet is something that you put on your head so that you won’t get hurt.

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

[Start of story]

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Lance: Okay. Are the brakes hard to handle?

Clerk: No. You either have foot brakes, like on the beach cruisers, or you have hand brakes. They're very easy to get used to. If you want to keep it simple, I would either go for a road bike or a mountain bike. Those are the most popular.

Lance: If I get a bike, what other things do I need?

Clerk: I usually recommend an air pump, a bike lock, and a helmet.

Lance: Okay, I'll take a look around.

Clerk: Sure. Just let me know if you have other questions.

[End of story]

The script for today's podcast was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com. You can get the Learning Guide for this episode of the podcast, which contains all of the words and definitions we talked about, sample sentences as well as a complete transcript of this podcast.

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

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