



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

GLOSSARY

to ask (someone) over – to invite someone to your home or to the place where you are

* Benjy asked Julia over to his place to see the changes he made to his house.

to be more than friends – to date; to be romantically involved

* She told Christopher that they couldn't be more than friends because she already had a boyfriend.

compliment – praise; a nice thing said about a person or a thing that is meant to make the other person feel good

* Oscar gave Angelica a compliment about her new hairstyle and she had a smile on her face for the rest of the day.

to make it – to come; to arrive; to attend

* Now that the meeting has moved to Tuesday, I'm not sure the other department heads can make it.

to look great on (someone) – to make someone look good

* I wasn't so sure about that tie when I bought it for my father, but it looks great on him.

What a fantastic... – This is a very good...

* What a fantastic idea! Let's call the others to see if they want to join us.

This is a really nice... – You have a very nice...; This is a good...

* This is a really nice car. Can I take it for a test drive?

to decorate – to add details such as paint, furniture, or decorations to a place to make it look nice

* Will you be able to come over early to help us decorate the house for the surprise party?

That's nice of (someone) to say. – Thank you for saying that.; a polite response to a compliment

* He told me that he had never worked with anyone as hard working as I am, and I told him that that was nice of him to say.



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

cool – excellent; very nice

* We saw a really cool exhibit of modern art at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art.

you know – an expression used to get someone’s attention, often to a different topic; an expression used to emphasis what you are about to say

* You know, this is the first time your dog hasn’t barked at me when I walked in the door.

to drink up – to finish your drink

* The bartender said, “Drink up, everybody. The bar closes in 20 minutes.”

any minute – very soon; can occur anytime

* I know you’re in pain but don’t try to move. The doctor should be here any minute.

cheers – an expression said before taking a drink; often used after making a toast (a speech in honor of someone)

* Congratulations to Elena and Ethan, and may they have a long and happy life together. Cheers!



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Sebastian saying nice things to Nia?
 - a) They had a fight and he wants to be her friend again.
 - b) He wants to be her boyfriend.
 - c) He says nice things all the time to everyone he meets.

 2. How does Nia feel about the compliments?
 - a) She thinks that Sebastian must be drunk.
 - b) She doesn't want compliments.
 - c) She is confused and doesn't know why she is getting so many compliments.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

compliment

The word “compliment” in this podcast means something nice you say to someone to make them feel good or to be kind: “It’s easy to compliment Lisa because she has a great sense of style.” This word is part of two phrases that are commonly used: “to pay (one’s) compliments” and “to return the compliment.” “To pay (one’s) compliments” means to give someone a formal greeting: “The Queen pays her compliments to the people of the village.” “To return the compliment” means to say or do something similar to what the other person has said or done to you: “Jade decided to return Cornelius’ compliment by buying one of his paintings after he bought one of her drawings.”

you know

In this podcast, the phrase “you know” is used to bring attention to a different topic: “You know, I don’t think the food is supposed to be green.” People sometimes use “you know” to refer to something that they don’t want to talk about or that they assume the other person probably already knows: “I was walking my dog in the park, and just when we were about to leave, he, you know, on the grass and I had to clean it up.” Or, “I wanted to come to dinner with you but it was so late when I left work and I was so tired so, you know...” At the beginning of a question, “you know” is usually short for “Do you know...?” For example, “You know that guy’s name?”



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

CULTURE NOTE

When flirting or dating someone in the U.S., it is important to use compliments to show your interest and to make the other person feel comfortable about spending time with you. Compliments can make the other person feel like you are paying attention to them, but don't "overdo it" or try to do too much. You don't want to "come off" or appear "desperate" or like someone who needs or wants something very, very badly.

If you are on a first date, it's a good idea to find two or three things that you really like about the other person. Don't just "blurt it out" (say it aloud quickly and without thinking). Instead, save them for later in the date or "space them out" (put some time between each one) so that you'll sound more "sincere" or are showing your true feelings.

Here are some acceptable compliments on a date.

- "You look really nice tonight."
- "You look great."
- "That's a very pretty dress." (women) "That's a nice jacket." (men)
- "You have beautiful eyes/hair."
- "Great car!"
- "You are really good at that." Or, "You did that really well."
- "I bet you get asked out a lot." (women) = (Meaning: "I'm sure that many men ask you for dates.")
- "I can't remember the last time I had so much fun."
- "I'm having a great time with you."

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



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 219, “Giving Compliments.”

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 219. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

If you visit our website at eslpod.com, you can pick up the Learning Guide for this episode, which has all of the vocabulary, definitions, additional definitions we don't talk about on the podcast, cultural notes and a complete transcript of everything we say.

This podcast is called, “Giving Compliments,” or saying something nice to someone. Let's go!

[Start of story]

A friend from work, Nia, asked a few of us over to her apartment to watch the game this Sunday and I was really nervous. I've always liked Nia and I was hoping we could be more than friends. My brother, Charlie, said that if I really liked her, I should be sure to give her plenty of compliments when I saw her.

I arrived on Sunday and knocked on her door.

Nia: Hi, I'm glad you could make it. You're the first one here. Make yourself comfortable.

Sebastian: Thanks and you look great. Red looks great on you.

Nia: Oh, thanks. It's nice to be out of work clothes. Can I get you something to drink?

Sebastian: Sure. What are you having?

Nia: I'm just having a beer. Want one?

Sebastian: Sure. What a cool place! This is a really nice apartment.



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

Nia: Here you go. Actually, I just moved in last month and I'm still decorating. But, that's nice of you to say.

Sebastian: Wow, nice picture. Did you paint this?

Nia: No, I didn't. Someone named Picasso did. It's just a copy. You know, I really appreciate the compliments, but what's up?

Sebastian: Up? Nothing. I'm just glad to be here.

Nia: Well, I'm glad you're here, too. Now, drink up. The others should be here any minute.

Sebastian: Sure. Cheers!

[End of story]

Our podcast episode is called, "Giving Compliments," and a compliment is something nice you say to someone. It's spelled "compliment," very important that you spell this word with an "i" in the middle. There's another word that sounds the same, complement, spelled with an "e." That word means something that completes or finishes something else. You could say, for example that the song's words - the words of the song, the lyrics - complement the music well. They complete it. It's a good match. In our story, we're talking about compliments with an "i," and those are nice things you say to someone. We usually use the verb to give a compliment, means to say something nice. And, the compliments are not necessarily for someone you are romantically interested in, like Sebastian in our story, you can also compliment your boss or your friend or the host of ESL Podcast, for example.

Well, our story begins by Sebastian saying that, "A friend from" his "work, Nia, asked a few of" his friends "over to her apartment." To ask someone over means to invite them to come to your house or to your apartment. So, I could ask you over to my house means I'm inviting you to come over to my house. Now, if you are in a car and you are with someone outside of their house, then you would say, "May I invite you in?" meaning would you like to come into the house. If you live in an apartment building, you might say, "Can I invite you up?" meaning do you want to go up to my apartment. But here, we're talking about just inviting



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

someone in advance, someone for tomorrow or next week or next month, then you would ask them over.

Nia has invited Sebastian and a few others “to watch the game this Sunday.” Now normally, if you say you’re going to watch the game, you usually mean the American football game that’s on, especially if it’s during the football season, from August to, I think, February or March. Sebastian says that he’s nervous because he likes Nia, and he hopes that they can become “more than friends.” When someone says, “I want to be more than friends,” they mean I want to be romantically connected to you, and this is what Sebastian, like so many people, want. He mentions that his brother, Charlie, told him that he should give Nia lots of compliments when he saw her.

He goes to her apartment on Sunday, and she answers the door. To answer the door means to open the door for someone who is knocking on it. And, she says, “Hi, I’m glad you could make it.” To make it here means to be here, to come here. So, she’s saying I’m glad you are here; I’m glad you could come today. “You’re the first one here. Make yourself comfortable.” Make yourself comfortable means come in, sit down, relax. You may also say, “Make yourself at home,” it means the same thing.

Sebastian says, “Thanks and you look great.” You see? He’s already saying nice things to her. Then he says, “Red looks great on you.” He is complimenting - and that’s a verb as well as a noun, compliment - he is complimenting Nia on her shirt, or perhaps her dress. He says, “Red looks great on you.” You say if someone has a nice piece of clothing that it looks good on them or it looks great on them. Nia says thank you and asks Sebastian if he wants “something to drink.” He says, “Sure,” I’ll have what you’re having. What are you drinking? Nia says that she’s going to have a beer and asks Sebastian if he wants one. She says, “Want one?” meaning, do you want one? Sebastian says, “Sure,” and then he gives her another compliment.

He says, “What a cool place.” Cool, “cool,” means nice or great. The expression, what a, is something we use when we want to say something usually very positive about someone or something. If someone says, “What a movie!” you mean isn’t that a great movie or that was a fantastic movie. Well he is complimenting her apartment by saying, “What a cool place! This is a really nice apartment.” Again, “This is a really nice apartment” is another type of compliment.



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

Nia says that she “just moved in last month and” she’s “still decorating.” To decorate, “decorate,” is a verb that means to try to make your house or your apartment look better by painting the walls, by getting nice pictures, maybe by putting carpet on the floor - this would be a way of decorating. She says, “that’s nice of you to say,” so she’s accepting the compliment, and that’s a nice way, a good way to accept or thank someone for a compliment. “Oh, that’s nice of you to say.” Then Sebastian asks who painted the nice picture that she has. Somewhat stupidly, he asks if Nia painted it and Nia says, “No. Someone named Picasso did.” Of course, Sebastian is trying to compliment Nia too much, thinks that she painted a Picasso picture. Nia says that has a copy of this picture, that’s what they’re looking at.

And then she says, “You know, I really appreciate the compliments, but what’s up?” Notice the use there of “you know,” that is a way of getting someone’s attention, in this case. It would be the same as saying listen. We also use that expression, you know, in other instances. Take a look at the Learning Guide for today for additional information about how we use that very common expression. So, Nia is asking Sebastian “what’s up?” meaning what is he trying to do, and Sebastian says, “Up? Nothing,” meaning I’m not trying to do anything special here.

Nia says, “Well, I’m glad you’re here. Now, drink up.” Drink up means finish whatever you are drinking. It’s one of those two word verbs, those phrasal verbs in English. To drink up means to finish what you are drinking. “The others,” Nia says, “should be here any minute,” meaning they’ll be here very soon. If you say, “I’m going to be there any minute,” you mean I’m going to be there very soon.

Sebastian says to Nia, “Cheers!” Cheers, “cheers,” is what you say when you are drinking something, usually alcohol. Most cultures have a word or an expression that you are wishing good health or are celebrating something you would raise up your glass, lift up your glass and say, “Cheers!” There was actually a very popular television program in the United States many years ago called “Cheers” about a bar in, I think, Boston, Massachusetts. That was called “Cheers.”

You notice that Sebastian tries to give lots of compliments to Nia, in our Learning Guide today, we have a very interesting section about what kind of compliments you can give to a man or woman that you are interested in. So, if you want some help with that, look at the Learning Guide.



ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

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

[Start of story]

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Sebastian: Sure. Cheers!



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ESL Podcast 219 – Giving Compliments

[End of story]

The podcast episode today was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

Remember, if you have a question or comment about our podcast, you can 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.

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