



www.eslpod.com

GLOSSARY

to get on (someone's) nerves – to annoy someone; to irritate someone

* I love my sister, but we really get on each other's nerves sometimes.

cut that out! – a rude (not polite) expression meaning “Stop that!” or “Stop doing what you're doing!”

* Can you please cut that out? I can't talk on the phone while you're making so much noise!

to drive (someone) crazy – to annoy someone; to irritate someone

* Josephina's mother always comes into her room without knocking and it drives her crazy.

to slurp – to make a loud noise while drinking a beverage

* I really hope that the kids will remember not to slurp their soup at dinner tonight.

you've got to be kidding me – you must be joking; I can't believe what I'm hearing; you can't be serious

* You were *never* allowed to watch TV when you were growing up? You've got to be kidding me!

to shoot the breeze – to have a relaxed conversation about things that aren't important

* Aleksy doesn't really like fishing, but he does like spending time on the boat, just shooting the breeze with his friends.

to not be able to stand (something) – to not be able to tolerate something; to be frustrated and tired of something

* I can't stand the way my girlfriend is always trying to tell me what to do with my free time.

no skin off my nose – something that does not matter to someone because it does not affect him or her; it doesn't matter to me

* Jacqueline can sit in the front seat if she wants to. It's no skin off my nose.

pent-up – built up over time; an emotion that has been growing stronger over time but has not been let out

* He didn't cry when his father died, but at the funeral, he cried for hours with all of his pent-up feelings of anger and sadness over his death.



www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

close quarters – cramped or crowded space; a room with little space for the people in it

* In college, I lived with three other guys in a small apartment. Those close quarters made it hard to have any privacy.

to let off steam – to do or say something that lets someone get rid of negative emotions that have been growing over time

* I'm sorry I yelled at you earlier. I was just letting off steam from my frustration at work, but it really had nothing to do with you.

to keep (something) up – to continue to do something

* You played really well in the basketball game yesterday! If you keep it up, you'll be the next team captain.

to forgive and forget – to stop fighting, apologize, and behave as if a fight had never happened; to reconcile and be friends again

* The brothers had a huge fight five years ago and stopped talking to each other, but last week, they finally decided to forgive and forget.

truce – an agreement to stop fighting

* Jill has been fighting with her roommate all week. Her roommate wants to call a truce, but Jill isn't interested. She's still too angry.

considerate – thoughtful of another person's feelings; careful not to hurt someone else's feelings

* Manuel is the most considerate person I know. He always thinks before he speaks, and he never says anything that would hurt someone else's feelings.



www.eslpod.com

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why is Isabel irritated by Pete’s friend Deepak?
 - a) Because he interrupts her phone calls.
 - b) Because he leaves the window open and lets in the breeze.
 - c) Because he comes to the office to talk too often.

2. Pete is upset with Isabel because:
 - a) She is too noisy.
 - b) She took his pencil.
 - c) She uses his phone.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

close quarters

The phrase “close quarters,” in this podcast, means a cramped or crowded space, or a room with little space for the people in it: “The soldiers live in very close quarters.” A “quarter” can also refer to one-fourth (1/4) of something: “The recipe says that we should use a quarter of a cup of sugar and three-quarters of a cup of flour.” A “quarter” is also one-fourth (1/4) of an academic year at some colleges and universities: “Even though she received all A’s in the fall quarter, she almost failed in the winter and spring quarters because of family problems.” A “quarter” is also a 25-cent coin: “This public telephone accepts only quarters.” Finally, a “quarter” can refer to a part of town: “The French Quarter of New Orleans was destroyed by the flood last year.”

to keep it up

In this podcast, the phrase “to keep it up” means to continue to do something: “Michael is eating too much. If he keeps it up, he’ll weigh 300 pounds soon.” The phrase “to keep it real” is an informal expression that means to not be fake or superficial, or to not pretend to be something that one is not: “Dominique always keeps it real. No matter what kind of people she’s with, she never changes how she acts.” The phrase “to keep it down” means to be quieter or to stop making a noise: “Okay kids, keep it down in your room or you’ll have to stop playing that game.” The phrase “to keep (something) under wraps” means to not talk about something or to keep something a secret: “We need to keep this project under wraps, because if our competitors hear about, they will try to copy us.”



www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

CULTURE NOTE

Many companies and organizations try to improve relationships among their employees by forming sports leagues at work. A “league” is a group of sports teams that play games against each other to determine which team is the best. Playing on a work-based sports team is a good way to make friends with your co-workers, and is also a good way to meet people who work for other companies in your industry or field.

Common work-based sports leagues are for: “softball,” a game that is similar to baseball, but that uses a larger ball; “volleyball,” which uses a large white ball that the players hit back and forth over a net; or “bowling,” a game where players roll a large heavy ball to knock down “pins” (pieces shaped like bottles).

Most of the teams are “co-ed,” meaning that men and women play together, but sometimes there are separate teams for men and women. Sometimes companies and organizations buy “uniforms” (special clothing that is the same for all players on a team) for their employees. People who play in sports leagues often bring their athletic clothing to work and change clothes at the end of the day. They leave the office together to go to the game. Family members often come to watch the games and sometimes they play, too.

Work-based sports leagues are mostly interested in having a good time and don’t care very much whether they win or lose. But other sports leagues are extremely competitive and the teams welcome only good athletes. This is especially true for work-based sports leagues that have prizes for the winners.

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



www.eslpod.com

English as a Second Language Podcast

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 229: Irritating Co-workers.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 229. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Be sure to visit our website at eslpod.com, and download the Learning Guide for this episode.

On this podcast, we are going to talk about people you work with that may sometimes irritate or bother you. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

Since our office reorganization, I've been sharing an office with Isabel. We've been getting on each other's nerves.

Pete: Hey, Isabel, can you cut that out?

Isabel: Cut what out? I'm not doing anything.

Pete: You're tapping your pencil on your desk. It's driving me crazy.

Isabel: Okay, I will if you'll stop slurping your coffee.

Pete: I don't slurp my coffee. And plus, how can you hear it when you're shouting into your phone all the time?

Isabel: You've got to be kidding me! You're complaining about me talking on the phone when your friend Deepak stops by ten times a day to shoot the breeze? I can't stand that guy.

Pete: It's no skin off my nose if you don't like Deepak. Look, we have a lot of pent-up anger from working in these close quarters, and it's probably okay to let off steam once in a while. But, it's probably not a good idea to keep it up. I'm willing to forgive and forget if you are.



www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

Isabel: Fine. Let's call a truce. I'll try to be more considerate and to keep the noise down.

Pete: Yeah, I'll try to do the same.

[End of story]

Our podcast today is called "Irritating Co-workers." To irritate, "irritate," means to get someone mad or to bother someone.

Our story begins by Pete saying that since their office had been reorganized - since they had changed the company and who was working with whom - now he has to share "an office with Isabel. We've been getting on each other's nerves," Pete says. To get on someone's nerves, "nerves," means the same as to irritate someone. It's another way of saying that you are bothering or annoying someone. To annoy, "annoy," is similar to irritate. So, you're getting on my nerves - or that person is getting on his nerves.

Pete says, "Hey, Isabel, can you cut that out?" To cut something out means to stop it. It's an informal expression, usually something that would be considered impolite or rude. If you say to a child, "Cut that out," you're telling the child to stop doing what they're doing. So, it's not a nice thing to say, not something you would want to say to your co-workers - the people you work with.

Isabel says, "Cut what out? I'm not doing anything." And Pete says, "You're tapping your pencil on the desk." To tap, "tap," means to hit lightly. Isabel is taking her pencil and she's hitting it on the desk several times. Pete says that this is driving him crazy. To drive someone crazy is, again, similar to to get on someone's nerves; it means to annoy or to irritate. There was also a song, I think in the 1980s, (Jeff sings) "She drives me crazy - ooh - ooh." When a woman drives you crazy, you mean you love her a lot - you are very excited to be with her. It means something very different than the normal meaning, which is when someone drives you crazy, they bother you - they annoy you. Unless it's a beautiful woman, in that case, it would be a good thing!

Isabel says, "Okay," I'll stop tapping my pencil, if you, Pete, will "stop slurping your coffee." To slurp, "slurp," means to make a noise when you are drinking something. It's considered somewhat rude in United States to do that. For example, if you are sipping your tea and you go (Jeff slurps), that would be considered impolite - not a nice thing to do.



www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

Pete says that he doesn't slurp his coffee - he disagrees with Isabel. "And plus," he says, or in addition, "how can you hear it when you're shouting into your phone all the time?" Because Isabel talks into her phone loudly, Pete is saying that she could not hear him slurping his coffee, even if he was slurping his coffee.

Isabel says, "You've got to be kidding me!" This, again, is an informal expression, which means you must be joking - I can't believe I'm hearing what you are telling me or you cannot be serious - this is wrong - you've got to be kidding me. Not something you would say to your boss; maybe something you could say to a friend. It means that you don't believe the other person.

Isabel says, "You're complaining about me talking on the phone when your friend Deepak stops by ten times a day to shoot the breeze?" Isabel is saying how can you complain about me when your friend is always here talking to you. To shoot, "shoot," the breeze, "breeze," means to gossip - to talk, usually not about anything very serious, to have a relaxed conversation.

Isabel goes on to say, "I can't stand" Deepak - "I can't stand that guy." To not be able to stand someone or something means to not be able to put up with or to tolerate someone or something - to be frustrated - to be tired of being bothered by that thing or that person. If you say, "I can't stand my mother-in-law," you mean I don't like her - I don't get along with her. That's just an example, of course!

Pete says, "It's no skin off my nose if you don't like Deepak." The expression it's no skin, "skin," off my nose, "nose," means that something isn't important or doesn't matter to someone because it doesn't effect him or her. You might say, "It's snowing in Moscow, but that's no skin off my nose," meaning I don't care - it doesn't bother me - it's not important to me because I'm not affected by it.

Pete says, "Look, we have a lot of pent-up anger from working in these close quarters." When something is pent-up, "pent" (hyphen) up, you mean that it is building up over time. Usually emotions that you haven't expressed, anger for example. It's something that bothers you for a long time; you can get pent-up anger. The anger is inside you and it hasn't been let out, and that's what Pete is saying. "We have a lot of pent-up anger."

The reason is because they are working in close quarters, "quarters." Quarters, here, just means the space or an area. Close quarters would mean that it is a very crowded space, where you don't have a lot of room, and that is the problem with Pete and Isabel. They're in an office and they have to share one office.



www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

Pete says, “it’s probably okay to let off steam once in a while.” The expression to let off steam, “steam,” means to do something to get rid of those negative emotions - those negative feelings. Maybe you will go play a sport or maybe you will yell or get angry at someone to let off steam.

“It’s probably not a good idea,” Pete says, “to keep it up.” To keep something up means to continue to do something. Someone says to you, “Keep it up, you’re doing a good job,” you mean continue doing what you are doing. It could be a good thing; it could be a bad thing. To keep it up means to continue.

There are other meanings of the word or expression keep it up and close quarters, and we talk about those in today’s Learning Guide. Take a look at that.

Pete says, “I’m willing to forgive and forget if you are.” The expression to forgive and forget means to stop fighting, apologize to the other person and behave or act as if nothing had happened. To forgive and forget means to forgive the other person and forget about your disagreements.

Isabel says, “Fine” - okay. “Let’s call a truce.” A truce, “truce,” is an agreement to stop fighting, usually between two countries, but here she’s using it to mean between herself and Pete. “Let’s call a truce,” notice we use the verb to call, means let’s begin - let’s start a truce - let’s stop fighting. While

Isabel says, “I’ll try to be more considerate and to keep the noise down.” To be considerate, “considerate,” means to be nice to someone - to be thoughtful - to be careful not hurt someone else’s feelings. To keep the noise down means to be less noisy - not to be so loud.

And Pete says, “Yeah, I’ll try to do the same.” So now, everyone is happy.

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

[Start of story]

Since our office reorganization, I’ve been sharing an office with Isabel. We’ve been getting on each other’s nerves.

Pete: Hey, Isabel, can you cut that out?

Isabel: Cut what out? I’m not doing anything.



www.eslpod.com

English as a Second Language Podcast

ESL Podcast 229 – Irritating Co-Workers

Pete: You're tapping your pencil on your desk. It's driving me crazy.

Isabel: Okay, I will if you'll stop slurping your coffee.

Pete: I don't slurp my coffee. And plus, how can you hear it when you're shouting into your phone all the time?

Isabel: You've got to be kidding me! You're complaining about me talking on the phone when your friend Deepak stops by ten times a day to shoot the breeze? I can't stand that guy.

Pete: It's no skin off my nose if you don't like Deepak. Look, we have a lot of pent-up anger from working in these close quarters, and it's probably okay to let off steam once in a while. But, it's probably not a good idea to keep it up. I'm willing to forgive and forget if you are.

Isabel: Fine. Let's call a truce. I'll try to be more considerate and to keep the noise down.

Pete: Yeah, I'll try to do the same.

[End of story]

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

That's all we have time for. From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. This is the last podcast of 2006, so we'll see you next year 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.