



ESL Podcast 234 – Seeing an Eye Doctor

GLOSSARY

optometrist – a doctor for the eyes; a doctor who studies eye problems and helps people see better

* The optometrist said that I should wear glasses whenever I drive at night.

glasses – eyeglasses; a piece of metal or plastic that is worn over one's ears and the front of one's face and that holds pieces of clear plastic or glass in front of one's eyes to help one see better

* Sofia lost her glasses yesterday and she can't see anything! She needs to buy another pair as soon as possible.

contacts – contact lenses; thin pieces of plastic that are worn over one's eyes to help one see better

* It's important to wash your hands before you put in your contacts, so that you don't get an infection.

laser eye surgery – a surgery (operation; medical procedure) where a laser beam makes a small cut in or changes the shape of one's eyes to help one see better

* Youngwoo couldn't see anything before his laser eye surgery, but now his sight is perfect!

vision – sight; one's ability to see

* Elvira's vision has always been bad. Even when she was a child she had to wear thick, heavy glasses.

20/20 – perfect vision; the ability to see perfectly

* Victor wanted to fly planes for the government, but he couldn't because he didn't have 20/20 vision.

near-sighted – able to see things that are near, but not able to see things that are far away

* He's near-sighted, so he couldn't see the movie without his glasses.

far-sighted – able to see things that are far away, but not able to see things that are near

* Olga wears glasses only when she's reading or when she's working at the computer because she's far-sighted.



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eye chart – a piece of paper that hangs on a wall and is used to test one’s ability to see; it has letters in rows – letters are biggest in the top rows and smallest in the bottom rows

* When I was a child, I could easily read all the letters on the eye chart, but now I can only read the top two rows without my glasses.

to make out – to see clearly; to recognize; to identify

* The car that hit us drove off too quickly. It was already down the street when I tried to make out the numbers on its license plate.

sharp – clear; definite; having detailed lines; not blurry

* They don’t like the painting, because the lines are very sharp and unnatural.

blurry – unclear; without detailed lines; not sharp

* After the book got wet, the words on the pages were very blurry and difficult to read.

prescription – a piece of paper that a doctor uses to write the type of medicine or glasses that a patient needs

* After I left the doctor’s office, I took my prescription to the drugstore so that I could get my medication.

frame – the piece of metal or plastic that is worn over one’s ears and in front of one’s face that holds lenses (pieces of clear plastic or glass) in front of one’s eyes to help one see better; the metal or plastic part of a pair of glasses

* Have you seen Jacob’s new glasses? The frames make his look older and smarter.

lenses – the pieces of clear plastic or glass that are held in front of one’s eyes by a frame (the piece of metal or plastic that is worn over one’s ears and in front of one’s face) to help one see better; the clear plastic or glass parts of a pair of glasses

* Nikolai’s lenses broke while he was playing basketball, but the frames are fine, so he just needs to buy new lenses.

glaucoma – an eye disease where too much pressure in the eye can make someone blind (unable to see)

* Grandma’s glaucoma gets worse every year, and the doctors are worried that in a few months, she won’t be able to see anything.



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grateful – thankful; the feeling of appreciating something

* Maxine was very grateful when her husband said that he would take care of cooking and washing the dishes while she rested last night.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why did Virginia go to see an optometrist?
 - a) Because she goes every year.
 - b) Because her eyes are hurting.
 - c) Because she has a lot of headaches.

 2. Virginia tells Dr. Olho that she's "not that old" because:
 - a) She thinks only old people wear reading glasses.
 - b) She thinks that he needs to know how old she is for the eye exam.
 - c) She wants to get glasses that make her look younger.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

contacts

The word "contacts," in this podcast, means thin pieces of plastic that are worn over one's eyes to help one see better: "The doctor told me that I should always take out my contacts before I fall asleep at night." The word "contacts" can also mean the people whom you know, especially through work: "I sent an email to all of my contacts, asking them if they had any job openings." As a verb, "to contact (someone)" means to communicate with someone: "I tried to contact you yesterday, but you never answered the phone." To "make contact" with someone means to successfully communicate with someone: "After leaving messages for each other all last week, we finally made contact this morning."

frame

In this podcast, the word "frame" means the metal or plastic part of a pair of glasses: "Ivan hates wearing glasses, so he always tries to find small frames that aren't very noticeable." The word "frame" can also mean the size of a person's body: "Michelle has a very small frame, so she has trouble finding clothes that fit." A "frame" can also mean the wooden or metal rectangle or square that holds a painting or photograph: "I want to buy some new picture frames for the photos of my grandchildren." As a verb, "to frame" means to put a picture or painting into a wooden or metal rectangle or square: "After graduation, he decided to frame his degree and hang it in the living room where everyone could see it."



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CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, if you are worried about your eyes or your vision, you can see an optician, an optometrist, or an ophthalmologist. They all have different “specialties” (areas of focus in an academic or professional field) and different educational background.

An “optician” helps a “patient” (someone who goes to a medical office) find the right pair of glasses. He or she makes the lenses and puts them into frames. Then he or she helps the patient “adjust” or to gently bend the frames to fit the patient’s face. Some opticians are “certified” (evaluated and approved) by national organizations, but this is “optional” (not required). Some states require opticians to have “licenses,” which are papers that show that the optician has a certain amount of education or has passed a test.

An “optometrist” “examines” or studies patients’ eyes to help them see better and to identify any eye diseases. An optometrist writes the prescription that the optician uses to make a pair of glasses. An optometrist must complete four years of college and four years of graduate education. Optometrists must be certified by a national organization and have a state license.

An “ophthalmologist” is a medical doctor who is an expert in eye diseases and can perform eye surgery. Ophthalmologists must complete four years of college, four years of medical school, and four years of “residency” where they train and work with an ophthalmologist.

If you want an eye exam, you should see an optometrist. If you need to wear glasses, the optometrist will give you a prescription, and then an optician will help you find a good pair of frames. If the optometrist says that you have an eye disease or need surgery, you will see an ophthalmologist. Opticians, optometrists, and ophthalmologists work together to improve patients’ vision and eye health.

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



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English as a Second Language Podcast

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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 234: Seeing an Eye Doctor.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 234. 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 to get the Learning Guide for this podcast. It has all of the vocabulary, the definitions, additional sample sentences that use all of the new words that we explain in the podcast, it also has additional meanings of words, a culture note and a complete transcript of this episode.

Our topic today is “Seeing an Eye Doctor.” Let's go!

[Start of story]

I've been getting a lot of headaches the past few weeks and my co-worker suggested I go see an optometrist.

Dr. Olho: Okay, let's take a look. Do you wear glasses or contacts?

Virginia: I used to, but I had laser eye surgery three years ago and I don't wear them anymore.

Dr. Olho: I see. Well, let's check your vision. It may be that even though your vision was 20/20 after the surgery, it's changed and you are now either near-sighted or far-sighted. Cover your left eye and take a look at the eye chart. Read the last line that you can make out.

Virginia: I can read the fourth line down – X, C, D, O, M, A.

Dr. Olho: Hmm...okay. Cover your other eye and do the same. Good. I'm going to have you look through this machine and I want you to tell me if A or B is sharper and clearer. Okay, A or B, A or B?

Virginia: A is a little blurry. I think B is better.

Dr. Olho: Okay, I think that you've developed some far-sightedness and will need reading glasses. I'm writing out a prescription for you. When you've picked



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out a frame, give them the prescription and they'll make your lenses. Any questions?

Virginia: So, do you really think I need reading glasses? I'm not that old.

Dr. Olho: I'm sorry to say that you do. Some people have to get them earlier than others. At least you're not having any serious eye problems like glaucoma.

Virginia: Yeah, I guess that's one thing to be grateful for.

[End of story]

Today, we take a trip to the eye doctor - to visit the person who will help us with our eyes. I know I've been going to the eye doctor for many years. I think I got my first pair of glasses when I was about ten or 11 years old, so I have a lot of experience with eye doctors, maybe you do too.

In our dialogue today, the story begins by Virginia saying that she's "been getting a lot of headaches" in "the past few weeks," and so she decides to go see an optometrist. An optometrist, "optometrist," is a doctor for your eyes. It's the doctor that you would normally go see if you were having problems with your eyes - an optometrist.

She says that she's having headaches she thinks that might caused by her eyes, so she goes to see Dr. Olho, and Dr. Olho says, "Okay, let's take a look" - let me look at you. He asks Virginia if she wears "glasses or contacts." Glasses, "glasses," is short for eyeglasses, and those are the things that you wear to help you see better.

Some people have contacts instead of glasses. Contacts, "contacts," are little lenses - they are thin pieces of plastic that you put right on your eye. I never liked the idea of contacts, but they are very popular for people who don't want to wear glasses - people who would be more beautiful, perhaps, without glasses. I would not be more beautiful without glasses, so it doesn't matter to me!

Virginia says that she used to wear glasses or contacts, but she "had laser eye surgery three years ago." Laser, "laser," eye surgery is an operation - a medical procedure - where the doctor takes a laser beam and makes a small cut in your eye to help you see better. This has become very popular in the last ten years or so in many countries.



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Dr. Olho says okay, “let’s check your vision.” Vision, “vision,” is another word for sight, “sight,” which is another word for your ability to see - how well you can see. Sometimes we also use that word, vision, when we are talking about your plans for the future or your new ideas for the future. “I have a vision for my company” - I know what we should be doing. Here though, the word vision just means the ability for you to see - your sight.

Dr. Olho says that “It may be” - it's possible - “that your vision was 20/20 after the surgery,” but now, “it’s changed.” The expression, 20/20, means perfect vision - the ability to see perfectly without any major problems.

Dr. Olho says that maybe now, Virginia is “near-sighted or far-sighted.” To be near-sighted means that you can see things that are close to you but you can't see things that are far away from you. To be far-sighted means that you can see things that are far away but you're not able to see things that are close to you - that are near you. So, it's a little confusing.

The doctor tells Virginia to cover her left eye, meaning close it - make sure you cannot see out of it by putting your hand in front of it for example, “and take a look at the eye chart.” The eye chart, “chart,” is a piece of paper - something on the wall that you look at to help the doctor determine what your problem is. Usually an eye chart has a bunch of letters. These letters are usually very big on the top of the page, and then they become smaller and smaller.

Dr. Olho asks Virginia to “Read the last line that” she “can make out.” To make out (two words) means to see clearly - to recognize or identify. So, she needs to read the smallest line that she can understand - that she can read and see clearly. Virginia does that, and Dr. Olho says that he wants her to cover her other eye and do the same thing.

He then asks Virginia to look through a certain machine, and this machine is going to have different kinds of lenses in it. A lens, “lens,” is usually a piece of glass or plastic that helps you see better. It's what you have in your eyeglasses; you have two lenses. These lenses are sometimes put in a machine so the doctor can test to see which lens works best for you.

In this dialogue, Dr. Olho asks Virginia “if A or B” - the lens A or the lens B - “is sharper and clearer” - which of them is sharper and clearer. When we say something is sharp, “sharp,” we mean that it is very clear - you can see it very clearly. The opposite of sharp would be blurry, “blurry.” Something that is blurry



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is something that you can't see very well. James says that “A is a little blurry,” and B is a little better, so that the B lens seems to be better for her.

Dr. Olho says that Virginia seems to have “developed some far-sightedness,” meaning that her eyes have become far-sighted - she can see far things but she can't see things that are close to her. That's why he tells her that she needs to get reading glasses, and he writes a prescription for her. A prescription, “prescription,” is usually a piece of paper that the doctor gives you; sometimes it can be for a drug - some medicine, in this case it's for a new pair of glasses - some new eyeglasses.

He tells Virginia that after she has selected or picked out a frame, she should give the prescription to the people working at the eyeglass store. Usually we call those people opticians, “opticians.” An optician is not a doctor; the doctor is called an optometrist.

So, Virginia is going to pick out a frame. Frame, “frame,” is a piece of metal or plastic that holds the lenses. So, it's the thing that keeps the glasses on your head and holds the lenses together. Frame is a word that we have other meanings for in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for today for the explanation of other meanings of the word frame, as well as the word contact.

Well, Virginia is not happy, and she asks if she really needs to have reading glasses. She says, “I'm not that old.” Well, I'm not that old either Virginia, but I have glasses!

Dr. Olho says, “I'm sorry to say that you do” - you do need glasses. He says, “At least you're not having any serious eye problems like glaucoma.” Glaucoma, “glaucoma,” is a certain disease of the eye that can make someone blind. Virginia says, “Yeah, I guess that's one thing to be grateful for.” To be grateful, “grateful,” means to appreciate something - to be thankful that you have something good.

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

[Start of story]

I've been getting a lot of headaches the past few weeks and my co-worker suggested I see an optometrist.

Dr. Olho: Okay, let's take a look. Do you wear glasses or contacts?



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Virginia: I used to, but I had laser eye surgery three years ago and I don't wear them anymore.

Dr. Olho: I see. Well, let's check your vision. It may be that even though your vision was 20/20 after the surgery, it's changed and you are now either near-sighted or far-sighted. Cover your left eye and take a look at the eye chart. Read the last line that you can make out.

Virginia: I can read the fourth line down – X, C, D, O, M, A.

Dr. Olho: Hmm...okay. Cover your other eye and do the same. Good. I'm going to have you look through this machine and I want you to tell me if A or B is sharper and clearer. Okay, A or B, A or B?

Virginia: A is a little blurry. I think B is better.

Dr. Olho: Okay, I think that you've developed some far-sightedness and will need reading glasses. I'm writing out a prescription for you. When you've picked out a frame, give them the prescription and they'll make your lenses. Any questions?

Virginia: So, do you really think I need reading glasses? I'm not that old.

Dr. Olho: I'm sorry to say that you do. Some people have to get them earlier than others. At least you're not having any serious eye problems like glaucoma.

Virginia: Yeah, I guess that's one thing to be grateful for.

[End of story]

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

If you have a suggestion, 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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