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**ESL Podcast 255 – Questions About a Product**

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**GLOSSARY**

**printer** – a machine that puts an image or text from a computer onto paper

\* This printer is great for printing photos at home.

**What I'm wondering is...** – I would like to know; I want to know; I am curious about something

\* Chandler says he loves Phoebe, but what I'm wondering is whether she loves him.

**copier** – a machine that makes a copy or duplicate of a piece of paper

\* The teacher used the copier this morning to make copies of the test for his students.

**multifunction** – able to do more than one thing

\* This multifunction alarm clock shows the time, wakes you up in the morning, plays CDs, and lets you listen to the radio.

**fax machine** – a machine that sends an image or text on a piece of paper to a machine at another office by sending information over a phone line

\* When a document has to be sent to another office very quickly, using a fax machine is much faster than mailing it.

**Can you show me...?** – please show me; please demonstrate

\* Can you show me where the bathroom is? I can't find it.

**straightforward** – basic; easy to understand; not difficult or confusing

\* I wish tax information were more straightforward because it's very difficult for me to understand it.

**to hook (something) up** – to connect cords and cables between two machines

\* Grandpa spent hours trying to hook up the DVD player to his television.

**feeder** – a piece of plastic on a copier, printer, or fax machine that holds a piece of paper as it enters the machine automatically

\* If you have to copy many pages, using a feeder is much faster than putting pages into the machine one at a time.

**to come with** – to have; to include; to be included in the purchase or the price

\* At this restaurant, all the hamburgers come with lettuce, tomatoes, and onions.



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**warranty** – an agreement from a company to repair something that doesn't work well or that stops working after it is purchased

\* This computer has a free three-month warranty, but if you want a longer warranty, you'll have to pay extra.

**defect** – something that is broken because it was made poorly

\* This CD player has a serious defect. The "play" button doesn't work!

**to replace** – to take someone's broken product and give him or her a new one

\* When Charlie called the company to complain about his broken washing machine, they replaced it with a new one for free.

**to change (one's) mind** – to do or decide on one thing and then decide to do something different later

\* Melissa has changed her mind about studying architecture at the university, and now, she's studying Spanish instead.

**exchange** – returning one product to the store where it was bought and getting a different one

\* Most stores will exchange a piece of clothing only if it hasn't been worn already.

**refund** – returning a product to a store and receiving the money that you originally paid for it

\* This bookstore will give you a refund only if you return the books within 10 days of buying them.

**restocking fee** – money that must be paid to the store when returning a product so that the store can sell it again

\* The restocking fee for the radio was more than we originally paid for it, so we decided not to return it.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does the clerk explain how the machine works?
    - a) Because he had to press a button for the feeder.
    - b) Because the machine is very straightforward.
    - c) Because Paul asked him to show him the machine's functions.
  
  2. What can Paul do if the machine breaks?
    - a) He can change his mind and decide it's not what he wants.
    - b) He can ask the manufacturer to repair or replace it.
    - c) He can pay a restocking fee if he has his receipt.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **to hook (something) up**

The phrase "to hook (something) up," in this podcast, means to connect cords and cables between two machines: "Carlos is hooking up a computer for the new employee." The phrase "to hook up" can also mean for two people to begin dating, but sometimes it has a sexual meaning: "Maxine and Jeffrey hooked up at the party last weekend." A "hook" is a small piece of metal or plastic that is bent to hold something: "Please hang your jacket and purse on the hook behind the door." Or "When you go fishing and you catch a fish, you have to take the hook out of the fish's mouth." In a famous story, "Captain Hook" is a man with a large metal hook instead of a hand.

#### **exchange**

In this podcast, the word "exchange" means returning one product to the store where it was bought and getting a different one: "This store offers exchanges on any of its products, but it never gives you your money back." As a verb, the word has the same meaning: "Jacques bought a shirt, but it was too small, so he had to exchange it for a bigger one." One can also "exchange" things with another person, receiving something and giving something else: "They exchanged telephone numbers at the party on Saturday." The verb "to exchange" also means to buy one country's money with another country's money: "Where can I exchange my dollars for Euros?" The "stock exchange" is the market where people buy and sell stocks in public companies: "Sampson lost a lot of money on the stock exchange in the late 1990s."



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### CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, most expensive products come with a product warranty. This helps customers feel more comfortable buying an expensive product, because they know that if something is wrong with it, the “manufacturer” (the company that made the product) will repair it or replace it with a new one for free.

When a product does not work well, the customer usually has to call the manufacturer directly. The store that sold the product is usually not able to help the customer get it repaired or replaced.

Customers must read their warranty agreements very carefully because warranties don’t cover all types of problems. In general, warranties cover “manufacturer defects,” which are problems that occur because the product was made poorly. The product is usually repaired or replaced for free, but the customer sometimes has to pay the costs of sending the broken product to the manufacturer – and this can be expensive for big, heavy products!

Most warranties do not cover damage from “misuse” (using a product incorrectly) or “abuse” (trying to break the product). For example, if you drop a computer or spill coffee on it, the manufacturer usually will not repair or replace the damaged item. Fortunately, you can often buy an “accidental damage warranty” to cover these types of problems, but it is usually very expensive.

Most warranties are for 3, 6, 12, or 18 months. If you want a longer warranty, you can try to buy an “extended warranty plan” that covers damages for a longer period of time.

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



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 255: Questions About a Product.

This is ESL Podcast episode 255. 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](http://eslpod.com) for more information about this podcast, and for our Learning Guide for this episode.

This episode is called "Questions About a Product." We're going to hear a conversation between Paul and the clerk of a - an electronics store, and they're going to be talking about a particular machine and questions, and how to ask questions about electronic machines. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Paul: Could you help me? I have a few questions about this computer printer.

Clerk: Sure. I'll try.

Paul: What I'm wondering is whether this machine can be used as a copier as well as a printer.

Clerk: Yeah, it can. This is a multifunction machine. It can be used as a printer, copier, and a fax machine.

Paul: Can you show me how that works?

Clerk: Well, it's pretty straightforward. Just hook it up to your computer and you can use it like any other printer. If you want to make copies, just put the document on the glass or in the feeder and press this button.

Paul: That seems pretty simple. How do I use it as a fax machine?

Clerk: Just put the document in the feeder like you would for copying, but instead of pushing the "copy" button, press the "fax" button. Make sure it's hooked up to a phone line, of course.

Paul: Okay. I think I've got it. Does this model come with a warranty?



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Clerk: All of the machines made by this company have a one-year warranty against defects. If there's a problem with it, the manufacturer will repair or replace it.

Paul: That's good. If I change my mind or decide it's not what I want, can I return it?

Clerk: You can return the item for an exchange or a refund within 30 days.

Paul: Is there a restocking fee?

Clerk: No, we don't have a restocking fee. Just make sure you have your receipt.

Paul: I think those are all the questions I had. I appreciate your help.

Clerk: You're welcome. Let me know if you have other questions.

[end of story]

Our dialogue begins with Paul asking someone who works at a store - he's in a store, an electronics store - if they could help him. He says, "Could you help me? I have a few questions about this computer printer." A printer, "printer," is a machine that puts an image or words that are on your computer onto a piece of paper.

The clerk says, "Sure. I'll try," meaning I'll try to help you. Paul then says, "What I'm wondering is whether this machine can be used as a copier as well as a printer." What I'm wondering, "wondering," is an expression that means I want to know - I would like to know - I'm curious about something - I want to know about something. Here, it's used as a polite way of asking a question. Instead of saying, "Can this machine be used as a copier as well as a printer," Paul says, "What I'm wondering is whether" - if - "this machine can be used as a copier as well as a printer." So, it's another way - a polite way - of asking a question, really.

The clerk says yes, "it can." It can be used as a copier, "copier," as well as a printer. It can do both things. A copier is a machine that makes a copy of a piece of paper - gives you another piece of paper with the same information on it.



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The clerk says that the machine that Paul is looking at “is a multifunction machine.” Multifunction, “multifunction,” (all one word) means something can do more than one thing. It's a common word that we use in talking about a machine that can be a copier and a printer and something else - it's multifunction. Multi, “multi,” means many.

The clerk says, “It can be used as a printer, copier, and a fax machine,” “fax” machine. A fax machine is something you use to send an image or some words on a piece of paper to a machine somewhere else, and that machine will make a copy of that page. Fax machines are still, I think in most businesses, very popular. Even though we have the Internet now, people still use fax machines frequently.

Paul says, “Can you show me how that works?” “Can you show me” is an expression that means please show me - please tell me - please demonstrate it. You may ask someone, “Can you show me where the bathroom is? I can't find it.” There you're asking them to point you, or to take you, to where the bathroom is. In the dialogue, Paul is asking the clerk if he could tell him how this machine works, meaning how do you use it.

The clerk says, “it's pretty straightforward.” Straightforward, “straightforward,” (one word) means easy to understand - not difficult - not confusing - basic. The clerk says that the machine is “pretty straightforward,” meaning it's easy to use; you won't have a problem with it. Of course, this is what all people who are selling machines tell you so that you will buy their machine. Then you bring it home, you put it on your desk and you - you can't understand how to use it. Maybe that's just me, I don't know!

The clerk says, “Just hook” the machine “up to your computer and you can use it like any other printer.” To hook, “hook,” something up means, usually, to connect two machines together, or to connect one machine to another machine using what we would call cables, “cables.” To hook something up, or to hook up, has some different meanings as well in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for today's episode for more information on that.

The clerk says that if Paul wants “to make copies” with the machine, he just needs to put the “document” - the paper - “on the glass or in the feeder and press” the “button.” A feeder, “feeder,” is the part of a copier or a printer or a fax machine that holds the paper so it enters automatically into the machine. So, if you are making copies of three pieces of paper, you can put all three pieces of paper into the feeder and the machine will automatically copy each page.



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Paul says that it “seems pretty simple.” He then asks how to use the fax machine, and the clerk explains he that just puts the document - or the piece of paper - into the feeder, “but instead of pushing the 'copy' button,” he should “press” - or push - “the 'fax' button.” You can say either “press” or “push.”

He says, “Make sure” that “it’s hooked up to a phone line, of course.” Make sure means check - make sure that this is happening, in this case that it’s hooked up to a phone line, meaning there is a phone cable connected to the machine.

Paul then asks if “this model” - this machine - “comes with a warrant?” When we say something “comes with” (two words) we mean that it includes - that it has, or that it will be included with the price of the machine or the purchase of the machine. You may buy a car that comes with a warranty, so when you buy the car, for the same price, you also get a warranty.

Now, what is a warranty? “Warranty.” A warranty is an agreement from the company that sells you the products - sells you the machine - to repair it if something doesn't work. So, if the machine breaks - it stops working - you can bring it back and they will fix it if it's under warranty. We use the expression “under warranty” to mean it's still within the time that is covered or included in your warranty.

The clerk says that “the machines made by this company have a one-year warranty against defects.” Defects, “defects,” are things that are broken or break because the machine was not made correctly. The expression the clerk uses here is a “warranty against defects,” meaning the warranty will cover or include defects - the company will fix it for free if they made it incorrectly.

He says, “If there’s a problem with” the machine “the manufacturer” - the people who made the machine - “will repair or replace it.” To replace, “replace,” something means to take something that is broken and give the person a new machine. So, you're giving them something new. To repair means to fix the machine that they have.

Paul says, “If I change my mind” and “decide it’s not what I want” - that I don't want this machine, “can I return it?” The expression to change, “change,” your mind means to decide to do something different. You decide to buy something, you go home, a couple of days later your wife finds out that you bought a new computer, and she says, “You have to return it.” So, you go back to the store, and you say, “I changed my mind,” or “My wife changed my mind; I need to return this.” So, it's to do something different from what you had decided on before.





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The clerk says, “You can return the item” - you can bring it back - “for an exchange or a refund within 30 days.” So, you have one month after you buy it to bring it back and get either an exchange, “exchange,” or a refund, “refund.” When you get an exchange on something, that means that you bring the machine back and then get a different machine, or maybe the same machine but a new model of the machine - you can exchange it. To refund means to give money back, so to get a refund means that the company will give you your money back - the store will give you your money back.

Finally, Paul asks if there is “a restocking fee?” A restocking, “restocking,” (one word) fee, “fee,” means that when you buy some machines and you bring it back to the store, sometimes the store doesn't give you all of your money back. They keep ten percent or 15 percent as a restocking fee, meaning they have to do something to make the machine salable again - to be able to sell the machine again. This is very common with electronics - computers, sometimes televisions - that the stores in the United States will not give you 100 percent of your money back if you return it; they'll charge you, or they'll make you pay, a restocking fee. To stock, “stock,” something in a store is to put it in the store to sell it. So, restock means to put something back. The prefix re, “re,” means again.

The clerk says they “don't have a restocking fee.” All the Paul needs is his receipt - piece of paper saying that he bought it and for how much money.

Paul then thanks the clerk by saying, “I appreciate your help.” That's a polite way - a nice way - of saying thank you - “I appreciate your help.”

Now let's listen to the dialogue again, this time at a normal speed.

[start of story]

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Clerk: No, we don't have a restocking fee. Just make sure you have your receipt.

Paul: I think those are all the questions I had. I appreciate your help.

Clerk: You're welcome. Let me know if you have any other questions.

[end of story]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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