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**ESL Podcast 259 – Making a Restaurant Reservation**

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**GLOSSARY**

**reservation** – a request that a table, seat, or room be available for one’s use at a future time

\* Have you made hotel reservations yet for your trip to San Diego?

**How many will be in the party?** – How many people will be in your group?

How many people will be eating with you at the restaurant?

\* - Good evening, sir. How many will be in the party? Just the two of you?

- No, we’re waiting for a friend, so there will be three of us total.

**to reach (someone)** – to contact someone; to communicate with someone

\* From Monday to Friday you can reach me at work, but on the weekends you can call me on my cell phone.

**to repeat back (something) to (someone)** – to say what someone else just told one, to make sure that one heard it correctly

\* Let me repeat back your telephone number to make sure I wrote it down correctly. Is it 202-555-4015?

**the Friday after next** – not this Friday, but the one after it; not the Friday in the immediate future, but the one that is after it

\* This Friday, the 23<sup>rd</sup>, we’re going to the mountains, and the Friday after next, the 30<sup>th</sup>, we’re going to the beach.

**table by the window** – a table at a restaurant that is next to a window and has a view

\* The waiter said that if we wanted a table by the window we would have to wait at least 40 minutes.

**non-smoking section** – a part of a place, such as a restaurant or airplane where smoking is not allowed

\* The non-smoking section is full right now. Would you like to sit in the smoking section?

**to be away from (something)** – to not be near something; to be far away from something; to not be close to something

\* Duncan wants to live in an apartment that is away from the train tracks because it’s too noisy at night.



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**to guarantee** – to promise that something will happen; to promise to do something

\* This company guarantees that you'll like its product or it will give your money back.

**to note (something)** – to write something down quickly so that one does not forget it later

\* You want to meet next Thursday instead of Wednesday? That's fine. I've made a note on my calendar.

**preference** – something that one likes more than something else; what one would like to have or do

\* Lewis wants to go to Missouri for vacation, but his wife has a strong preference for Texas.

**parking situation** – the availability of parking; whether it is easy or difficult to park somewhere

\* The parking situation around the university is horrible. It's almost impossible to find a place to park, so we take the bus instead.

**valet parking** – a service offered by restaurants, hotels, and other businesses where visitors can take their car to the front of a building and an employee called a valet parks the car and then brings it back when they are ready to leave

\* The new restaurant charges \$18 for valet parking. I'd rather save the money and park the car myself!

**special need** – something that a person needs that isn't usual, often because of a physical or mental issue or problem

\* People who don't see well have special needs for larger computer screens.

**high chair** – a tall chair that is used for babies and young children, so that they can sit next to adults who are sitting at a table

\* Parents usually know to carefully watch a child sitting in a high chair to make sure that the child doesn't fall out.

**booster seat** – a plastic seat that is put on top of a chair so that young children can sit at a table and be taller than they normally would be

\* If a restaurant doesn't have booster seats, you can ask them to give you thick phone books for your child to sit on.

**lively** – full of energy; interesting; enthusiastic; busy

\* The Punkays like to have dinner parties with lively discussions about politics.



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**You're telling me!** – a phrase used to show that one completely agrees with what another person has said because one has experienced it

\* Quincy was telling me how difficult it is to raise two kids. I said, "You're telling me!" because I have four kids!

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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Can the hostess reserve a table by the window for Randy?
  - a) Yes, but it will be away from the kitchen.
  - b) She isn't sure, but she's going to try.
  - c) No, because his preference wasn't noted.
2. Why does Randy need high chairs and booster seats?
  - a) Because his guests will use valet parking.
  - b) Because he wants his guests to be comfortable.
  - c) Because his guests are young children.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### reservation

The word "reservation," in this podcast, means a request that a table, seat, or room be available for one's use at a future time: "At some very popular restaurants, you have to make a reservation weeks or months before you want to eat there." Or, "Making a hotel reservation online is sometimes cheaper than making one over the phone." A "reservation" is also an area of land in the United States where Native Americans (American Indians) live: "About 3,000 Native Americans live on the Umatilla Indian in northeastern Oregon." A "reservation" can also be a feeling of doubt or wanting to question a plan: "Sabrina has a lot of reservations about moving away from her parents next year to go to college."

#### to note

In this podcast, the verb "to note (something)" means to write something down quickly so that one does not forget it later: "Please note your reservation number and use it when you arrive at the hotel." As a noun, a "note" is a short piece of writing that helps you remember something: "Where did I put that note with Jeff's phone number?" A "note" can also be a short letter to someone: "Don't forget to write a thank you note to your grandma for the Christmas gift that she sent you." When you write down information that you hear during class or that you read in a book, you are "taking notes": "Can you please take notes for me this Friday? I won't be able to go to class that day."



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### CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, many people like to take their children to restaurants. Regular restaurants are sometimes boring for small children, so many families like to go to “theme restaurants.” A “theme restaurant” is a restaurant that is built around an idea or style.

One popular theme restaurant “chain” (restaurants in many different locations) is the Rainforest Cafe. Walking into the restaurant is a little bit like walking into a “tropical rainforest” (an area with a lot of trees and animal life found in some parts of the world). Inside the restaurant there are a lot of “fake,” (man-made or artificial) trees, a small river, plastic animals like monkeys and birds, and a lot of animal noises. The “menu,” or the piece of paper that lets one know what kind of food is available, lists foods with names like “Planet Earth Pasta,” “Congo Catfish,” and “Rainforest Burger.” The restaurant also has a “gift shop” where people can buy toys and other things related to rainforests.

Another theme restaurant is “Medieval Times.” The “Medieval times” are also known in history as the “middle ages” and lasted from about the year 400 to the year 1500. When one goes into a Medieval Times restaurant, it feels like one is walking into the past. The restaurant’s employees are dressed in clothing from that time. People eat medieval food while watching a show or performance. Men dressed as medieval “knights” (strong and brave men who worked for the king), ride horses and “joust,” meaning that they try to make each other fall off of their horses by using long pointed sticks.

Theme restaurants combine food and fun activities, so that having dinner becomes a fun evening for the whole family.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 259: Making a Restaurant Reservation.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 259. 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). You can get a Learning Guide for this episode, which contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, cultural notes and a complete transcript of this episode.

In this episode, we will be “Making a Restaurant Reservation.” Let's get started.

[start of story]

Hostess: Thank you for calling Sakia Restaurant. How may I help you?

Randy: I'd like to make a reservation.

Hostess: For which day and for what time?

Randy: It's for Friday, the 24th, at seven o'clock.

Hostess: How many will be in the party?

Randy: There will be seven of us.

Hostess: And the name on the reservation?

Randy: Johnson.

Hostess: And a phone number where we can reach you?

Randy: 310-555-9023.

Hostess: Okay. Let me repeat back to you the information I have. This is a reservation for the Friday after next for seven at seven p.m. Is that correct?

Randy: Yes, that's right. Can we have a table by the window in a non-smoking section? I want to be away from the kitchen, if possible.



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Hostess: Our restaurant is all non-smoking. We can't guarantee a window table, but I'll note your preference.

Randy: Okay, that's fine. What's the parking situation at the restaurant?

Hostess: We have a parking lot behind the restaurant, and we also have valet parking. Do any of the guests have special needs?

Randy: I'm glad you asked. I'll need two high chairs and four booster seats.

Hostess: I'm sorry, but did you say two high chairs and four booster seats?

Randy: Yes, I did. I'm taking all of my nieces and nephews out to dinner.

Hostess: That sounds nice. It should be a lively evening.

Randy: You're telling me!

[end of story]

Our dialogue is between Randy and a restaurant hostess. A hostess, "hostess," is a woman who works at a restaurant who answers the telephone to write down reservations. She also helps people find the right table - she takes them to their table in the restaurant. A man who does this would be called a host, "host."

The hostess answers the phone by saying, "Thank you for calling Sakia Restaurant. How may I help you?" Randy says, "I'd like to make a reservation." A reservation, "reservation," is a request for, in this case, a table at the restaurant. It could be a reservation for a seat on an airplane. It could be a reservation at a hotel for a room. Something that you will be using in the future is the idea. Reservation has a couple of different meanings, at least in American English. Take a look at the Learning Guide today for more explanation of that.

The hostess then asks Randy, "For which day and for what time?" Randy says, "It's for Friday," meaning the reservation is for Friday, "the 24th, at seven o'clock."

The hostess then asks, "How many will be in the party?" How many will be in the party, "party," or your party, means how many people are going to be with him at the table. How many places - how many seats do they need at the table? How many will be your party? Your party is the group of people you are with. We also



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use that word, party, for a celebration - for having a fun time. But here, it means the people who are in your group.

Randy says, “There will be seven of us,” so seven people including Randy. The hostess then asks for a name; Randy gives the name, “Johnson.” Johnson is one of the most common names in American English; at least it used to be one of most common last names. Johnson, Jones, Smith - those are all common last names. Of course, the population of the United States has changed in the last 50 years, and so now there are other last names that might be more common.

The hostess then asks if there is a telephone number where they can reach Randy. The use of the verb reach, “reach,” here means to contact someone or to communicate with someone. “Where can I reach you” means what is the telephone number I can use to contact you.

Randy gives a telephone number - not a real telephone number. You know it is not a real telephone number because after the first three numbers, which are the area code, there are the numbers “555,” and there are no telephone numbers in the United States that use the numbers “555.” So, whenever you are watching TV or an American movie and you hear someone give a telephone number, they’ll usually give a number that has “555” in it because it’s not a real number.

The hostess then says, “Okay. Let me repeat back to you the information I have.” To repeat back, “back,” means to say what someone just told you back to them, so to repeat it to them. So, she’s going to repeat back the information to Randy to make sure that she has it correct.

She says, “This is a reservation for the Friday after next for seven” - seven people - “at seven p.m.” The expression, “the Friday after next,” “next,” means not this Friday - not the closest Friday - but the Friday one week later. For example, if it is Thursday, you could say, “Let’s meet a week from Friday,” or “the Friday after next.” That means you would be not meeting the next day, but a whole week later. We use that expression for days; you can use that for weeks. You can say, “the week after next,” you can say, “the month after next.”

Randy then asks for “a table by the window.” A table by the window means a table that is close to the window - the outside of the restaurant. Usually those are tables that people want because you have a better view - you’re better able to see things going on outside.

Randy also asks for a table “in a non-smoking section,” a part of the restaurant where you are not allowed to smoke. In many states, all restaurants are non-



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smoking - the entire restaurant. In California this is true, and it is true in many cities in states, where you cannot smoke at all in a restaurant - you have to go outside of the restaurant.

Randy says he wants “to be away from the kitchen, if possible.” To be away from something means not to be near something - to be far away - not to be close to something. Randy doesn't want to be close to the kitchen so he doesn't have to hear the noise of the kitchen.

The hostess says that the “restaurant is all non-smoking,” meaning all of the tables are non-smoking. She says that they cannot “guarantee a window table, but” they will “note” his “preference.” To guarantee, “guarantee,” means to promise that something will happen. So, the hostess is saying we can't promise you a window table, but we will note, “note,” your preference, “preference.” To note something usually means to write something down quickly so that you don't forget it later on. There are also other uses of this verb to note; take a look at the Learning Guide for more explanation of that. Preference means your choice - something that you want, usually something that you like more than another thing.

Randy says, “Okay, that's fine.” Then he asks, “What's the parking situation at the restaurant?” The parking situation means the availability of parking. Randy is asking if it's easy or difficult to find a place to park near the restaurant.

The hostess says, “We have a parking lot” - a place where you can park your car - “behind the restaurant, and we also have valet parking.” Valet, “valet,” parking is a service offered by many restaurants and hotels, especially here in Los Angeles, where because it is difficult to find a place to park near the restaurant, you can leave your car with someone - we call that person a valet - and the valet will park your car and then bring it back to you. Of course, you have to pay extra money for this service. It may be four or five dollars; it could be 15 or 20 dollars if it's a very expensive restaurant. Hotels often offer valet service as well.

The hostess asks if Randy or any of his guests have any “special needs.” In a restaurant, when someone asks for “special needs,” they're referring to something that isn't usual, often because of a physical problem.

The answer that Randy gives is yes, “I'll need two high chairs, and four booster seats.” A high chair, “high,” chair, is a special chair - a tall chair - for babies and young children so they can sit next to the adult, but they have their own little seat. A booster seat, “booster,” seat is a, usually, plastic seat that you put on top of a chair so that slightly older children, who are too big for a high chair, can sit at the





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table and still be able to reach the table - be tall enough for the table. So, a booster seat boosts you or makes you higher so that it's easier for you to eat.

The hostess says, "I'm sorry, but did you say two high chairs and four booster seats?" She can't quite believe that Randy needs so many high chairs and booster seats.

Randy says, "Yes," that he's "taking all of" his "nieces and nephews out to dinner." So, the nieces and nephews are the daughters and sons of his brothers and sisters, therefore they're probably, in this case, young children, so he needs the high chairs and the booster seats.

The hostess says, "It should be a lively evening." The word lively, "lively," means busy - interesting - full of lots of energy, we might say, because of course, with six children, there'll be lots of excitement.

Randy says at the end, "You're telling me!" The expression "you're telling me" means I agree with you completely because I have had a similar experience. For example, you go to the dentist and the next day you talk to your friend, and you say, "Oh, I went to the dentist and it was terrible," and your friend says, "You're telling me. I also went to the dentist and it was terrible." So, they have had a similar experience, and they agree with you completely. Well, listening to ESL Podcast is not as bad as going to the dentist, I hope, for you!

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

[start of story]

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Randy: You're telling me!

[end of story]

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

If you have a question or comment, be sure to email us. Our email address is [eslpod@eslpod.com](mailto: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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