



ESL Podcast 262 – Missing the Tour Group Bus

GLOSSARY

to talk to (oneself) – to speak quietly to oneself, not expecting anyone else to hear

* Sawyer shares an office with someone who always talks to himself, so it's difficult for him to concentrate on his work.

tour group – a group of people who go to see a city, town, or place together with one person who leads them and explains what they're seeing

* Shelly doesn't like tour groups because she prefers seeing things by herself and not following a schedule.

to rendezvous – to meet someone at a specific time and place

* After they finish their final exam, all of the students are going to rendezvous at the restaurant down the street to celebrate.

return trip – a journey to go back to the place one came from, or to where one began

* We came to Hawaii last Tuesday, and our return trip to Duluth is this Friday.

no trace of – no sign of something; no indication of something; not there at all

* There was no trace of the original house after they demolished it to build the new one.

to take off – to leave a place quickly

* What time did you take off from work last night?

(a time)-ish – around that time; at approximately that time; about that time

* The movie starts at 8:00, so let's meet 6:30-ish and have dinner first.

precisely – exactly

* This shirt and this skirt are precisely the same color, so when I wear them together it looks like I'm wearing a dress.

tour guide – a person who leads a group of tourists to different places and explains what they are seeing

* When Wayne and his family went to Machu Picchu, they had a wonderful tour guide who spoke English very well and talked about the history of the place.

to stick to (something) – to follow a plan or a decision without changing it

* Sanjay wanted to change the meeting to Friday afternoon, but everyone else thought they should stick to Wednesday morning, as they had planned.



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tour company – a business that organizes visits to interesting places for tourists

* This tour company takes people to three different islands with guides who talk about the birds that live there.

idiot – a stupid person; a person who does stupid things; a person who is not very intelligent

* Gwen, don't call your brother an idiot! It isn't nice.

oh my gosh – an expression used to show surprise or shock

* Oh my gosh! Is that Antonio Banderas eating at the next table? He's my favorite actor!

to make a run for it – to run quickly to try to do something when one has little time; to leave or escape by running

* Your plane is leaving in five minutes, but if you make a run for it, you might get there in time.

to spot – to see something that is difficult to see

* We were supposed to meet our friends at the basketball game, but there were so many people there that we couldn't spot them inside the stadium.

to step on it – to hurry; to rush; to do something very quickly

* Your friends are coming in 15 minutes. You need to step on it if you're going to take a shower and get ready before they get here.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Kelly say that she feels like an idiot?
 - a) Because she was talking to herself.
 - b) Because she came at 5:10 instead of 5:00.
 - c) Because she doesn't have the tour company's phone number.

2. Why does the man tell Kelly she should step on it?
 - a) Because she needs to hurry.
 - b) Because she needs to step through the park.
 - c) Because she is stepping on his foot.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to take off

The phrase “to take off” has many meanings. In this podcast, “to take off” means to leave a place very quickly: “The Stubbert family took off early because they were bored at the party.” “To take off” can also mean for a plane to leave the ground and start flying: “What time did your plane take off this morning?” The same phrase, “to take off,” means to remove a piece of clothing: “Please take off your dirty shoes before you walk into the house.” Finally, “to take off” can mean that a business or product is doing very well or is becoming very popular very quickly: “Her cake business is taking off and she can't make enough cakes for all her new customers!”

to stick

In this podcast, the verb “to stick to (something)” means to follow a plan without changing it: “Do you want to stick to our original idea and write about Sacajawea, or should we write about something else?” “To stick with (something) has the same meaning: “Let's stick with our plan to save our money and buy a house next year.” “To stick to (something)” can also mean to continue doing something that is very difficult: “I don't know how you can stick to a diet that doesn't let you eat any chocolate.” The phrase, “to stick out,” means to be seen easily: “If you make the letters on your sign bigger, they'll stick out when people drive by your store.”



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CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, many people like to be in tour groups during their vacations because the tour company makes all the “arrangements,” such as reservations and transportation, and a tour guide is there to explain what they are seeing. However, it’s important to ask questions before the tour begins, to make sure that the tour “offers” (provides) everything you’re looking for.

Before you “select” (choose) a tour company, you should be clear about what the price includes. Does the price include all transportation, “entrance fees” (money paid to enter a park, museum, or other location), food, and drinks? Are you expected to give the bus driver and the guide a “tip” (money given to thank someone for good service)?

It’s also a good idea to ask about the guide. What kind of “background,” or experience and education, does the guide have? How much will he or she talk about the “sites” (the places that you’re visiting)? Will the guide mostly talk about history, nature, or art? Does the guide speak more than one language? Will the guide speak while you are on the bus, or only when you’re at a site?

Try to understand what the tour will be like. Some questions you may want to ask are: How many people will be in the tour group? How old are they and where are they from? Is smoking allowed? How many hours will the tour be, and how early will you have to wake up each day? Will the tour bus “pick you up,” or come to meet you, at your hotel? If you’re very interested in one site, will you be able to stay there longer, or will you have to stay with the rest of the group all the time?

Tour companies should be able to answer all of these questions to help you find the right type of tour.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 262: Missing the Tour Group Bus.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 262. 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 download the Learning Guide for this episode as well as to look at some of the other new things we have on our website.

This episode is called "Missing the Tour Group Bus." It's going to be a conversation between a woman who is looking for her group that she is on a tour with - visiting; vacationing - and a man standing on the street. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Kelly: Where is everybody?

Man: Excuse me? Were you talking to me?

Kelly: Oh, no. I was just talking to myself. Our tour group was supposed to rendezvous here at five o'clock for our return trip to the hotel. But there's no trace of the bus and I don't see any other people from my group anywhere.

Man: You know, it's 5:10. Maybe the bus took off already.

Kelly: That can't be! Our tour guide said that we would meet back here at five-ish. She didn't say precisely at five.

Man: Maybe that's what she meant. You know, tour guides usually stick pretty closely to a time schedule.

Kelly: Yes, I know, but what am I supposed to do now? I don't have any way to get back to the hotel.

Man: Do you have the number of the tour company? I could lend you my cell phone to call them.

Kelly: Let me see. No, I don't. I feel like such an idiot!



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Man: Wait a second. Is that your bus over there?

Kelly: Where? Oh my gosh, I think it is! I must be on the wrong side of the park. If I make a run for it, I may be able to catch it before it takes off. Thanks a lot for spotting it!

Man: No sweat, but you'd better step on it!

[end of story]

The title of our episode is "Missing the Tour Group Bus." "To miss something" means that, in this case, you are too late; you arrive too late. We say, "I missed my bus," or "I missed my train," it means that I did not get to the train before it left, or the bus. So, "Missing the Tour Group Bus" is about a woman who thinks that she missed her bus with her group, where she is taking a vacation.

Kelly says, to begin the dialogue, "Where is everybody?" And the man standing on the street, who does not know her, says, "Excuse me? Were you talking to me?" Kelly says, "Oh, no. I was just talking to myself." "To talk to yourself" means to speak quietly to yourself, not expecting other people to hear. This is something that I think we actually - all of us - do at one time or another - "talk to yourself." Some people think that talking to yourself is a sign of, or an indication, that you are crazy, so I must be crazy!

Kelly says that, "Our tour group," the group of people that she was with, visiting the city or the town where she was, "was supposed to rendezvous here at five o'clock for our return trip to the hotel." "To rendezvous" (rendezvous) means to meet someone at a specific place and time. "Let's rendezvous at the restaurant at seven p.m." That means let us meet - we will meet at the restaurant at seven o'clock in the evening. The "return trip" would be the trip going back to the place where you began, or the place where you came from.

So, Kelly says that her "tour group was supposed to rendezvous here at five o'clock for" their "return trip to the hotel. But," she says, "there's no trace of the bus." The expression "no trace (trace) of something" means there's no sign of something; there's no indication of something; it's not there at all. You might say, "There's no trace of the original house after they built the new house." They destroyed the old house and they built a new house - there's no trace of; no sign of; no indication; no way for you to tell that there was an old house there before.



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The man says, “You know, it’s 5:10.” They were supposed to rendezvous at five o’clock, and it is now ten minutes after five. “Maybe,” the man says, “the bus took off already.” “To take off” (“took off” is the past tense), “to take off” means to leave a place quickly. “We’re going to take off at five o’clock” - we’re going to leave here at five o’clock. “To take off” has a couple of meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide today for additional explanations.

Kelly is not very happy. She says, “That can’t be!” “That can’t be,” meaning that’s not possible. “Our tour guide,” the person who leads the group, “said that we would meet back here at five-ish.” When we talk about a time and we add the word, or the suffix, “ish,” such as “five-ish,” or “six-ish,” or “ten-ish,” we mean approximately at that time; not exactly at that time; around that time; about that time. Someone may say, “Let’s meet at the restaurant at three-ish,” or “We’ll meet here around three-ish,” they mean somewhere around three o’clock but not exactly at three o’clock.

Kelly says the woman “didn’t say precisely at five.” To say “precisely” (precisely) means exactly. You could also say, “five o’clock sharp,” that would also mean at an exact time. The man says, “Maybe that’s what she meant,” meaning she said “five-ish” but the tour guide meant exactly or precisely at five. The man says, “tour guides,” the person leading the tours, “usually stick pretty closely to a time schedule.” “To stick (stick) to something” means to follow a plan very carefully; to do exactly what you plan to do without making any changes.

Kelly says, “Yes, I know, but what am I supposed to do now” - what can I do now? “I don’t have any way to get back to the hotel.” The man asks Kelly if she has “the number,” meaning the telephone number, “of the tour company?” The “tour company” is a business that organizes visits to interesting places, often using buses. So for example, there are tour companies here in Los Angeles that organize tours on buses to visit all of the important sites - the important things here in Los Angeles things, the beach and Hollywood; the Center for Educational Development - all the most important things!

The man says that he could lend his cell phone to Kelly so she could call them. Kelly says that she does not have the telephone number of the tour company. She says, “I feel like such an idiot!” An idiot (idiot) is a very stupid person, someone who is not very intelligent.

The man says, “Wait a second. Is that your bus over there?” And Kelly says, “Where? Oh my gosh, I think it is!” The expression “oh my gosh” (gosh) is one we use to show surprise or shock. “Oh my gosh, it’s very warm outside!” You weren’t expecting it to be warm outside; it’s a surprise - “Oh my gosh!”



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Kelly says, “I must be on the wrong side of the park. If I make a run for it, I may be able to catch it before it takes off” - before it leaves. “To make a run for something” means to run or walk very quickly when you have very little time. It could also mean to leave or escape by running. So, “to make a run for it” means basically to run or to walk quickly so you can get somewhere very quickly.

Kelly thanks the man “for spotting” the bus. “To spot” (spot) here means to see something that is difficult to see. Kelly didn't see the bus, but the man spotted it; he saw something even though it was difficult to see because it was on the other side of the park.

The man says, “No sweat,” (sweat). “No sweat,” which is informal for it's no problem; you're welcome. The man says to Kelly, “You'd better step on it!” You should - “You'd better step on it.” “To step on it” means to hurry; to rush; to do something very quickly.

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

[start of story]

Kelly: Where is everybody?

Man: Excuse me? Were you talking to me?

Kelly: Oh, no. I was just talking to myself. Our tour group was supposed to rendezvous here at five o'clock for our return trip to the hotel. But there's no trace of the bus and I don't see any other people from my group anywhere.

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Man: No sweat, but you'd better step on it!

[end of story]

Our thanks to Dr. Lucy Tse for writing the script for this podcast.

If you have a question or comment, be sure to email us. Our email address is 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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