



ESL Podcast 264 – Preparing for a Video Conference

GLOSSARY

video conference – a meeting between two or more people at different locations using video so that they can see each other on a TV or video screen

* Video conferences are better than phone conferences when negotiating an agreement because you can see the other person's reactions more easily.

the next best thing to (something) – almost as good as; the second best option

* Seeing that documentary film about Antarctica is the next best thing to actually going there.

face-to-face – in-person; a meeting between two or more people who are in the same place

* Willow says that he is in love with a woman he met over the Internet, but they've never met face-to-face.

a piece of cake – very easy, quick, and simple

* Sending an email is a piece of cake – just write your message and click “send.”

run-through – a practice session; doing a performance to practice and to make it better

* The team members are meeting one hour early to do another run-through before they have to give their presentation to the company president.

to work (something) – to use; to make something work correctly; to make something function correctly

* Do you know how to work this CD player? I push the “play” button, but nothing happens.

webcam – a small electronic machine that takes a video recording of something and sends it to other people through the Internet

* Chatting online is more fun if both people have webcams. That way, they can see each other.

microphone – a small electronic device that makes one's voice louder and/or allows a computer to “hear” and record what one is saying

* If you have a microphone, you can use your computer to make “telephone” calls to other computers with programs like Skype.



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Internet connectivity – an Internet connection; the ability to connect with other computers through the Internet

* This university has Internet connectivity everywhere on campus, from the library to the cafeteria.

streaming – seeing or hearing something in real time, or as it actually happens, usually over the Internet

* You need to have a very fast Internet connection to be able to see streaming video. If you have a slow computer, it won't work very well.

speaker – the part of an electronic machine that sound (music or voices) comes out of

* Hurley sat too close to the speakers at the concert last night, and today, his ears hurt.

to turn up (something) – to increase the volume; to put music or another recording at high or full volume; to make something louder

* The radio in Jason's car was turned up and everyone who was on the sidewalk could hear his music when he drove by.

to adjust – to make a small change to something

* Welcome to Houston, where the local time is 4:42 p.m. Please adjust your watches for the time zone difference.

to zoom – to make something bigger or smaller on an electronic screen

* When you take a picture of someone, you should zoom in so that his or her face is easier to see in the photo.

to tilt – to change the angle of something so that it gently moves up or down

* Please tilt your head down so that I can cut the hair on the back of your neck.

audio – recorded sound coming from an electronic machine

* Cary is very good at making videos, but she doesn't have the equipment to record good audio for her movies.

loud and clear – very clearly; easy to hear and understand

* Yoko is amazed by how loud and clear her son's voice was on the telephone, even though he was on the other side of the world.

in business – ready to do something; ready to start; successful

* After Hal washed the car, put on new tires, and changed the oil, he said, "We're in business!" and the family got started on its roadtrip.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Fatima say, “It’s a piece of cake”?
 - a) Because the equipment looks like a piece of cake.
 - b) Because she thinks video conferencing is easy.
 - c) Because Fatima wants to eat a piece of cake.
2. Why does Fatima say, “We’re in business”?
 - a) Because now they can open their video conferencing business.
 - b) Because they need to use the video conference to talk about business.
 - c) Because they are ready to begin their video conference.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

speaker

The word “speaker,” in this podcast, means the part of an electronic machine, such as a computer, radio, or CD player, that sound (music or voices) comes out of: “Aaron bought some large speakers so that the audience can hear him playing his electric guitar on stage.” A “speaker” is also a person who gives a presentation or a lecture: “Last night, Betty went to hear a speaker give a lecture at the university about genetic engineering.” Or, “Our teacher said that to be a good public speaker, we need to learn to speak slowly and to organize our ideas.” We also use the word “speaker” to talk about people who speak a specific language: “These days, there are a lot of English speakers trying to learn Arabic and Chinese.”

to turn up

In this podcast, the verb “to turn up (something)” means to increase the volume or to make something louder: “Can you please turn up the TV? I can’t hear it very well.” The verb “to turn up” can also mean to appear or to be found: “Fannie lost her keys last week, and today they turned up in the refrigerator!” “To turn up” can also mean to arrive: “What time did Jackie finally turn up at the party?” The phrase “to turn down” can mean to decrease the volume or make something quieter: “Please turn down the music. It’s giving me a headache!” “To turn down” can also mean to say “no” to something that is offered to you: “Amanda decided to turn down the job offer because she didn’t want to leave her current job.”



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CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, many companies need to have “conferences,” or meetings, with people in different “locations” or places. Companies used to use phone conferencing and then video conferencing for these meetings. But today, “web conferencing” is becoming more common. “Web conferencing” uses computers and the Internet to let people in different locations communicate with each other.

In a “web conference,” people at each location have a computer. Each computer sends video and audio to the other computers, so that people can see and hear each other in “real time” (live). Web conferencing also allows people to share information in other ways. The “participants,” or the people in the web conference, can see the same “screen,” the rectangular box that shows information from a computer. Participants can put text and “images” (pictures) on the screen and then other people can make comments or change the information. This lets people in “distant” (far) locations “collaborate,” or share ideas, about a project.

One popular type of web conference is a “webinar.” A “webinar” is an online “seminar,” or an instructional or educational conference for many people. A webinar has a “presenter,” or the person who is giving or sending information. The other participants are in the audience and want to learn from the presenter. Because the webinar is in real time, people can hear the presenter as he or she speaks, and they can ask questions at any time. This makes webinars “interactive,” meaning that people can actively communicate with each other while asking and answering questions, rather than just listening. Many companies use webinars to share important information about new products or projects. Webinars are also used to “train” or educate new employees who work at different office buildings.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 264: Preparing for a Video Conference.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 264. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. How are you today?

On this podcast, we're going to hear a dialogue between two people talking about getting ready, or getting prepared, for a Internet video conference. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Emiliano: I'm not sure about this video conference today. It's the next best thing to having a meeting face-to-face, but I've never used most of this equipment before.

Fatima: It's a piece of cake. Do you want to do a run-through with me?

Emiliano: Do you mind? I'd really like to make sure that I know how to work this webcam and microphone.

Fatima: I don't mind at all. Okay, we have Internet connectivity, so streaming won't be a problem. The speakers on both computers are turned up.

Emiliano: Do you know how to adjust this webcam? Right now, it's focused on my right ear!

Fatima: That's easy. Just use these buttons to zoom in or out, and you can tilt up or down.

Emiliano: Oh, I see. That's better. Now you can see my entire face. Are you getting audio on your side?

Fatima: Yes, you're coming in loud and clear. I think we're in business.

Emiliano: Well, that wasn't so hard. Let's hope it goes this smoothly this afternoon.

Fatima: If you have a problem, just give me a call.



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Emiliano: Thanks. I really appreciate it!

[end of story]

Our dialogue begins with Emiliano saying to Fatima, “I’m not sure about this video conference today.” A “conference” is a general word we use to mean a meeting between two or more people. A “video conference” is when you have two or more people in a different place, sometimes in different countries, but they are able to talk to each other on the television or video screen. Nowadays, we do this on the Internet.

Emiliano says that he's “not sure about this,” he doesn't know quite what to do. He says that “It’s the next best thing to having a meeting face-to-face, but I’ve never used most of this equipment before.” The expression “the next best thing” to something means it is almost as good as; it's the second best choice or second best option—“the next best thing.”

To meet someone “face-to-face” means to meet someone in person; you are physically both in the same location. You are in the same room; that's meeting someone “face-to-face.” The other expression we use there is “in person” (in)—“in person.”

Fatima says that using the video conferencing equipment is “a piece of cake.” The expression “a piece of cake” (cake), like the cake that you eat, means it's very easy; it's quick; it's simple. Someone may say, “Downloading ESL Podcast is a piece of cake! It's very easy to do.”

Fatima asks Emiliano, “Do you want to do a run-through with me?” To do a “run-through” something means to practice something before you actually do it. Or, if you are going to be doing a performance—you're a musician or a speaker, and you are going to be talking or performing in front of many people, you want to practice first; you're going to do a “run-through.”

Emiliano says, “Do you mind,” meaning yes, if it's okay, if you have time to help me. “I’d really like to make sure that I know how to work this webcam and microphone.” Notice the use of the verb to “work” something; to “work” means to use something in this case, or to make something function properly or correctly—to make something work correctly. Usually, we use this when we are talking about electronic gadgets, things like televisions, or iPods, or computers. “Can you show me how to work this”—can you show me how this works; how do you use it correctly.



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A “webcam” (webcam) is short for a web camera, and that is a small camera that takes your picture so that you can send the video over the Internet. The web, of course, is the Internet. A “microphone” (microphone) is, you probably know, a small, electronic thing that makes your voice louder. I’m speaking into a microphone right now. Notice the verb to “speak into” the microphone.

Fatima says, “I don’t mind at all,” meaning it is no problem; I would be happy to help you. She then says, “we have Internet connectivity, so streaming won’t be a problem.” To have “Internet connectivity” means that you have an Internet connection—you are able to get on the Internet.

“Streaming” (streaming) is a word we use on the Internet for when you are able to hear something or see something as it actually happens, that’s one meaning of the word. So, you may want to watch your favorite baseball team, and you go onto the Internet and you find someone that has a streaming video of the baseball game as it is being played live, that would be one way of using this word “streaming.”

Fatima says that “The speakers on both computers are turned up.” “Speakers” (speakers) are things that make sound louder. There’s a couple of different meanings, however, of the word “speaker,” take a look at the Learning Guide for more explanation.

To “turn something up,” or to “turn up” something is another one of those two-word verbs in English. Here it means to increase the volume; to make something louder. Usually, when you have a speaker on your television, or on a radio, or on your computer, you can “turn it up”—you can make it louder.

Emiliano asks Fatima if she knows “how to adjust the webcam?” The verb to “adjust” (adjust) means to make a small change in something. If you are watching the television and the picture doesn’t seem very clear, you can “adjust” the antenna—you can change the antenna, make a small change so it works better.

Fatima says that it’s easy to adjust the webcam. She says, “Just use these buttons to zoom in or out, and you can tilt up and down.” To “zoom” (zoom) means to make something bigger. For example, in a video camera, to zoom in, or to zoom, means to make one part of the picture bigger. To “tilt” (tilt) means to change, or adjust, the angle of something. You can usually tilt something up or down, left or right. We often use this verb in talking about a camera—a video camera, so that you can move it in one direction or another. That’s to “tilt” it.



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Emiliano asks Fatima, “Are you getting audio on your side?” “Audio” (audio) is recorded sound that comes from a speaker or a machine. Fatima says, “Yes, you’re coming in loud and clear.” When we say, “you’re coming in,” we mean I am hearing you—I am receiving the information. “You’re coming in loud and clear,” meaning very clearly; it’s very easy to understand you.

Then Fatima says, “I think we’re in business.” The expression, to “be in business,” in this case, means to be ready to begin; to be ready to do something. To be successful at something is to “be in business.” The expression “in business” can also mean that you have a company—a business that sells something, for example, but here it just means that you are ready to do something. In this case, Emiliano is ready to be part of his video conference.

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

[start of story]

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Fatima: If you have a problem, just give me a call.

Emiliano: Thanks. I really appreciate it!

[end of story]

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

If you have a question or comment for ESL Podcast, please 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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