



ESL Podcast 272 – Time Management

GLOSSARY

to be snowed under – to have too much work to do; to be very busy

* During finals week, students are snowed under with exams and essays.

efficient – able to do things very well and very quickly, without wasting time

* Ike is very efficient, so he's able to do twice as much work as anyone else in a day.

time management – the practice of planning one's activities during a day to make good use of the time that is available

* Susana must have exceptional time management skills, because she's going to school, working full-time, and raising two children.

tool – a thing or idea that helps people do something better, more quickly, or more easily

* Many websites give people tools for saving their money, such as special calculators and ideas for spending less.

to keep track of (something) – to monitor something; to know what is happening with something at all times

* Makiko keeps track of how she spends her money by writing all her purchases in a small book that she carries with her.

deadline – the day or time when something is due; the day or time when something has to be finished

* People who write for daily newspapers have deadlines every afternoon.

definitely – certainly; without a doubt; a word used to show that something is true

* Arturas and his wife definitely want to have children soon.

to-do list – a list of the things that one has to do; a piece of paper with the things that one needs to do written on it.

* What's on your to-do list for today?

task – something that needs to be done; a small activity or project that needs to be finished

* My task for the project is to call the health department, and Janie's task is to read about the diseases we're researching.



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high-priority, low-priority – the very important (high-priority) and less important (low-priority) important things that need to be done before or after other things
* A high-priority for Jean this week is to finish moving into her new apartment before her new job begins, and going out with friends has to be low-priority until that's done.

to assign – to say that something should be done by a specific person or finished at a specific time
* The director assigned Sibyl to head new project.

urgent – very important and needing to be finished very quickly
* When Kaur broke his leg, it was urgent that we get him to the hospital.

to slip through the cracks – to be forgotten or overlooked because one was paying attention to other things
* My highest priority as your new mayor is to make sure that the poor do not slip through the cracks.

to check off – to put a check mark (✓) next to one line in a list to show that that thing has been finished and no longer needs to be considered
* The airline employee had a list of all the passengers' names and he checked them off as they got on the plane.

to cross off – to draw a line through one line in a list (~~example~~) to show that the thing has been finished and no longer needs to be considered
* There are only three weeks until my vacation and I'm crossing off each day on the calendar as I get closer.

reminder – something that is written or said to make one remember something
* Can you please send everyone a reminder that our group will meet in front of the museum before the tour?

to schedule – to decide when things will happen in the future; to decide that something will happen at a certain time and date in the future
* Many businesspeople have secretaries or assistants to help them with their scheduling.

to allocate – to give time, money, or something else to someone or something for a specific purpose
* Every month, Sean allocates \$350 for food, \$100 for entertainment, and \$100 for transportation.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Ruby say that she's snowed under with work?
 - a) Because it is snowing too much to work.
 - b) Because she works only when it snows.
 - c) Because she has a lot of work to do.

2. What does Ian check off and cross off?
 - a) Reminders.
 - b) Tasks.
 - c) Cracks.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

tool

The word “tool,” in this podcast, means a thing or idea that helps people do something better or more quickly or easily: “Knowing how to listen well is a wonderful tool for making new friends.” The word “tool” is also a small thing, usually made of metal, plastic, or wood, that is used for a specific purpose: “You’ll need some tools to make a table: a saw, a hammer, and a screwdriver.” Or, “The garden tools, like shovels and spades, are stored in the outdoor shed.” When we talk about a person being a “tool,” we mean that he or she is being controlled and used by another person: “The new secretary of the Department of Energy is a tool of the president.”

to check off

In this podcast, the phrase “to check off” means to put a check mark (✓) next to one line in a list to show that a thing has been finished and no longer needs to be considered: “Hal made a list of all the Christmas presents he wanted to buy and checked them off as he found them.” The phrase “to check out” means to look at something interesting: “Hey, check out what Camilo is wearing today!” The phrase “to check out” also means to take a book from a library, or to get a video or DVD from a rental store: “Yesterday they went to the library and checked out books about George Washington.” The phrase “to check on (someone)” means to make sure that someone is okay and not having problems: “Can you please check on the children sleeping upstairs?”



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CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, “punctuality,” or not being late, is very important. People are expected to be “punctual” and arrive “on time,” or when things are scheduled.

In the world of business, if you have a meeting or an interview, it is a good idea to get there a few minutes early. If you are late, it is very rude or impolite. Many people view “tardiness,” or being late, as a sign that one does not take his or her work seriously, or as a sign that one is lazy. If you are going to arrive late to a business meeting, perhaps because you are “stuck in traffic” (driving slowly because there are too many other cars on the road), it is a good idea to call to let the other people know that you will be late, the reasons why, and an “estimate,” or guess, of when you will arrive.

For social events, being punctual is not as important as in the world of business, but it is still important. When friends agree to meet each other somewhere at a certain time, they try “to show up” (arrive) exactly at that time. The friends will usually wait for each other for 10 or 15 minutes, but probably not any longer than that. After that, friends will feel like they have been “stood up” (made to wait for someone who does not plan to arrive).

Sometimes people like to arrive “fashionably late” at a party. They might come 30 or even 60 minutes late “to make a grand entrance” so that everyone notices them when they enter the building. But in almost all other “circumstances,” or situations, it is a good idea to arrive at events on time.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 272: Time Management.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 272. 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 and download a Learning Guide for this episode. It contains all of the vocabulary, sample sentences, additional vocabulary we don't talk about on the podcast, cultural notes, and a complete transcript of this episode.

This episode is called "Time Management." It's going to talk about something we all need to do, which is figure out how we're going to spend our time every day. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Ruby: I'm snowed under with work! I can't seem to keep up with everything I have to do. You're always so organized and efficient. How do you do it?

Ian: I'm not always organized and efficient, but I've gotten better since I read a book about time management. I use a few tools that the book recommends, which help me to plan and to keep track of deadlines.

Ruby: Do you think it would help me?

Ian: Definitely. This is what I do. I keep a to-do list of all of the things I need to do. Then, I decide which tasks are high-priority and which have low-priority. I write down the deadline I'm given for the task or I assign a deadline of my own, and I make a note of the most urgent tasks.

Ruby: That seems pretty simple, but how do I keep track of the progress I make on a task? Sometimes things just slip through the cracks for me.

Ian: I do a couple of things. First, I keep my list updated. I check off or cross off those that I've done. I also put reminders for myself on my computer to help me with scheduling. It helps me to remember my appointments and to allocate my time better.



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Ruby: That sounds like a great system. All I need now is some extra time so I can start doing some time management!

[end of story]

Our dialogue between Ruby and Ian begins by Ruby complaining that she is snowed under with work. “To be snowed under” means to have too much work to do; to be very busy. “Snow,” of course, is the white stuff that falls from the sky when it’s cold in the wintertime in the northern or mountainous climates.

Ruby says she’s snowed under with work. She says, “I can’t seem to keep up with everything.” “To keep up with” means to get everything done. Ruby says to Ian, “You’re always so organized and efficient. How do you do it?” “To be efficient” (efficient) means to be able to do things very well and very quickly without wasting time. The opposite of efficient is inefficient. I, for example, am very inefficient!

Ian says that “I’m not always organized and efficient, but I’ve gotten better since I read a book about time management.” “Time management” is the name of this episode; it’s a practice of planning your events – your activities – so that you make good use of your time. Ian says he uses a few tools that the book recommends. Here “tool” (tool) is a thing or an idea that helps people do something better, more quickly, or more easily. There are other meanings of this word “tool,” take a look at our Learning Guide for additional definitions.

The tools that Ian uses help him keep track of deadlines. The expression “to keep track (track) of something” means to monitor something; to know what is happening with something at all times. “I need to keep track of my money,” that means I need to know where I am spending my money every day. Ian uses these tools to keep track of deadlines. A “deadline” (deadline – one word) is when you have to complete something; it’s the time or day that you have to have something done.

Ruby asks if these tools would help her, too, and Ian says, “Definitely.” Here, “definitely” means certainly, without a doubt. We use it to show that something is true. We really agree with a person; we’re saying, “Definitely, that is true.” Ian then explains what he does. He has a to-do list. A “to-do list” is a list of things that you have to do. It could be on a piece of paper; it could be on yourself phone or on your computer. It’s a list of the things that you have to do.

Ian says after he puts everything on his to-do list, he decides which tasks are high-priority and which are low-priority. A “task” (task) is something that needs to



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be done; anything that you have to do is a task. Tasks can be “high-priority,” meaning they're very important, or “low-priority,” meaning they're less important, not things you have to do right away.

Ian writes down the deadline for the task – when he has to have it completed – or he assigns a deadline of his own. “To assign” (assign) means to say something should be done at a certain time. Here, it could also mean to give yourself a deadline; to assign a deadline. We also use this word in school. The teacher assigns homework to the students, she says to the students, “You must read this book,” or, “You must write this paper.” She gives them a task – she gives them homework – she assigns them homework.

Ian says that he makes a note, or he indicates on his list, the most urgent tasks. “Urgent” (urgent) means something that is very important that has to get done right away. It's something that you must do immediately; it's urgent. If someone says, “I have an urgent message for you,” they mean you must look at this right away.

Ruby says to Ian, “That seems pretty simple, but how do I keep track of the progress I make on a task?” How does she know how well she is doing? She says, “Sometimes things just slip through the cracks.” The expression “to slip (slip) through the cracks (cracks)” means to be forgotten; to forget something; to not do something because you were paying attention to something else; to forget about something. That's to slip through the cracks.

Ian says he does a couple of things so that his important tasks don't slip through the cracks. First, he keeps his list “updated,” meaning he makes sure that it is current; it is up to date. He checks off or crosses off the tasks that he's completed. “To check off,” (check) off, means to put a check mark, which is a line. It looks like a “V” that has one side of it much longer than the other; that's a check mark. So, “to check off” means to put a check mark next to something to indicate that you have completed it. The other possibility is to cross off. “To cross (cross) off something” means to draw a line through it, usually one line to show that you have completed it. So, it is used the same as a check mark. I should mention the verb “to check off” has a couple of different meanings. Again, take a look at the learning guide for more explanations.

Ian says he also puts reminders for himself on his computer to help him with scheduling. A “reminder” is something that is written down or said that makes you remember something. It could be a piece of paper you put on your computer screen: “Call the dentist.” That would be a reminder; it's helping you remember



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to do something. I need lots of reminders because as I get old, I forget things. Not too old, but I'm getting there!

“Scheduling” is from the verb “to schedule,” and that means to decide when you are going to do things in the future: what time or what day are you going to do something. We all try to schedule time to relax, for example, at the end of the day or on the weekend.

Finally, Ian says these reminders help him remember his appointments and to allocate his time better. “To allocate” (allocate) means to give time or money or something to someone for a specific purpose. So here, he is allocating his time. He's saying, “I'm going to spend one hour doing this; I'm going to spend two hours doing that.” You could also allocate your money, decide how much money you are going to spend on each specific thing. If you go on vacation, you may decide to allocate \$50 every day for your lunch and dinner; that would be to allocate.

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

[start of story]

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[end of story]

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

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

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