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**ESL Podcast 300 – Arriving for an Appointment**

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**GLOSSARY**

**office manager** – a person who is responsible for the administration and daily operations of an office

\* The office manager will help you write a job description and hire a new employee.

**receptionist** – a person who answers the phones and speaks to people when they first enter an office building

\* Our receptionist always knows who is in the office, who has left for lunch, and who is on vacation.

**to send (someone) up** – to give someone permission to go upstairs to a specific office; to tell someone to go to a particular office

\* When the electrician gets here, please send him up to the 14<sup>th</sup> floor to fix those lights.

**to run a little late** – to be a little bit behind schedule; to be doing things later than one had planned; to not be on time

\* I called the company to let them know that I was running a little late this morning, but that I would be at the office by 8:45.

**to be tied up** – to be busy doing something; to be unable to do something because one has to finish something else first

\* Chandy wanted to have lunch with Kevin, but she was tied up with her work and wasn't able to meet him at the restaurant.

**to wrap things up** – to finish something so that one is available to do something else; to end something

\* Let's hurry up and wrap things up so that we can go home for the evening.

**free** – available; not busy with something else; unoccupied

\* Are you free to go with me to the movies on Saturday night?

**precisely** – exactly; very accurately

\* The earthquake happened at precisely 3:48 p.m. yesterday.

**to expand** – to grow; to get bigger

\* The use of cell phones is expanding to many people over the age of 65.



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**to pump (someone) for information** – to try to get a lot of information from someone; to use someone as a source of information

\* The reporter was pumping the politician’s assistant for information about their plans for the next election.

**to get the inside scoop** – to get information that isn’t available to most people; to get information that only a few people have

\* Many people read People magazine to get the inside scoop about the lives of famous actors and actresses.

**if you’ll excuse me...** – a polite phrase used to ask for permission to end a conversation so that one can do something else or to leave a place

\* I’ve really enjoyed talking with you, but if you’ll excuse me, I need to get home.

**in no time** – very soon; in a very short period of time

\* Jake types very quickly so he was able to finish the report in no time.

**to keep (someone)** – to not let someone do what he or she wants or needs to do; to prevent someone from doing what he or she wants or needs to do; to use too much of someone else’s time; to delay someone

\* Thank you for waiting for me! I didn’t mean to keep you so long.



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why isn't Ms. Gibbons available for the meeting right now?
  - a) Because she's running for exercise.
  - b) Because she's busy with another meeting.
  - c) Because she's wrapping up some presents.
  
2. Why does Juri ask the receptionist about the number of employees?
  - a) Because he wants to have more information about the company.
  - b) Because more employees make it easier to pump for information.
  - c) Because the inside scoop is the number of employees.

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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**tied up**

The phrase "tied up," in this podcast, means busy with something: "Ruby was so tied up with work that she forgot to go to her son's soccer game." Normally, the verb "to tie (something) up" means to close something with a knot or to fold a string or rope over an opening so that it is closed: "Please use this string to tie up the garbage bag." The verb "to tie (someone) up" means to hold someone's arms and legs with a string or rope so that he or she cannot move: "The thief tied up the bank employee and then ran away with the money." The phrase "to tie up loose ends" means to finish doing all the small pieces of work that need to be done to finish a big project: "Most of the project is finished, but we still need to tie up loose ends before Friday."

**to keep (someone)**

In this podcast, the verb "to keep (someone)" means to not let someone do what he or she wants or needs to do: "Please don't let me keep you. Go back to the office, and I'll wait for the taxi by myself." The phrase "to keep (someone) going" means to give someone the ability to continue doing something: "Many college students drink coffee to keep them going while studying late at night." The phrase "to keep at (something)" means to continue to do something, even if it is difficult: "When Drake starting playing the violin, it sounded terrible, but he kept at it and now he makes beautiful music." Finally, "to keep" means to give something to someone so that they are the new owner: "Are you giving me this book to keep or do you want it back after I've read it?"



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**CULTURE NOTE**

When people in the United States have a business “appointment” (scheduled meeting), it is very important to arrive on time. If they “arrive late” (come after the time of the appointment), it is a sign of disrespect and it is not considered professional.

Sometimes, of course, it is impossible to arrive on time. When this happens, it’s important to “call ahead” (use the phone to call the office before arriving) to let the people know that you are “delayed” (you will be coming later than expected). You might tell them that you are “stuck in traffic,” or in your car on a road where cars aren’t moving very quickly, and give them your “estimated arrival time,” or the time when you think you will come to the office. Most people are very understanding, as long as they are told about your delay before the meeting begins, so that they can “rearrange” (change) their schedules.

When businesspeople arrive at an office, they tell the receptionist their name, the name of the person they have come to see, and the scheduled time of their appointment. Many professionals believe that “treating” (acting toward) the receptionist with respect is a good idea. The receptionist is often called the “gatekeeper,” because he or she is the person who has control over whether you will actually get to see the person whom you have come to see.

Also, many business professionals have close relationships with their receptionists and secretaries, and they may ask them for their “opinion” (thoughts) about you after the meeting. This way, the business professional can have a better idea of how well or poorly you treat people in a business environment when you are not trying “to impress” (to cause someone to have a good opinion of you).

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 300: Arriving for an Appointment.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 300. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com), and download a Learning Guide for this episode. It contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, new sample sentences using each of the words in a different sentence, additional explanations of vocabulary that we don't talk about on the podcast, cultural notes that help you understand U.S. culture better, a comprehension check, and a complete transcript of every word we use on this podcast.

This podcast episode is called "Arriving for an Appointment." Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

I arrived a little early for my sales appointment with the office manager of Lyon Industries, and spoke to the receptionist.

Juri: Hello. I'm here for my 11:30 appointment with Sue Gibbons.

Receptionist: What is your name?

Juri: It's Juri Lakoff.

Receptionist: I'll let her know that you're here. [Speaking into the telephone] Sue, this is Rhonda. Your 11:30 appointment is here. Should I send him up? Okay, I'll do that. [Hangs up the telephone] Ms. Gibbons says that she's running a little late and is tied up in another meeting right now. She should be wrapping things up very quickly and will be free in a few minutes. Would you like to wait in the reception area right over there?

Juri: Sure. No problem.

Receptionist: Can I get you something? Coffee or tea?

Juri: No, I'm fine. I was just wondering how many employees you have in this office.



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Receptionist: I don't know precisely, but I think we have about 80.

Juri: Oh, that's a lot. Is the company planning on expanding?

Receptionist: I'm sorry, but I really don't know. I'm sure Ms. Gibbons can answer those questions for you.

Juri: Right, right. I didn't mean to pump you for information. I was just trying to get the inside scoop on the company before my meeting.

Receptionist: I understand. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to answer this call. Ms. Gibbons should be finished with her other meeting in no time.

Juri: Oh, sure. I didn't mean to keep you. Sorry.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Juri saying that he arrived a little early for his sales appointment with the office manager at Lyon Industries. A "sales appointment" would be when someone who is selling something to a company would go and have a meeting. "Appointment" is often the same as a meeting. He's going have a meeting with the "office manager," the person who runs the office, the person who is responsible for the "day to day," or the daily, operations of an office.

Before he can talk to the office manager, he has to talk to the receptionist. A "receptionist" (receptionist) is the person who receives those who are calling or entering the office. The word "receptionist" comes from the verb "to receive." It's the first person that you would talk to at an office. This receptionist answers the phones and talks to people who enter the office building. Usually, the receptionist is kind of like a secretary, though not always. In this case, the receptionist works for the office manager, and is the person who receives people who first enter into the office.

Juri says to the receptionist, "Hello. I'm here for my 11:30 appointment with Sue Gibbons." The receptionist says, "What is your name?" Juri says, "It's Juri Lakoff."

The receptionist says, "I'll let her know that you're here" – I'll let Sue Gibbons know; I will tell her that you are here. She then talks to Sue Gibbons by telephone. She says, "Sue, this is Rhonda. Your 11:30 appointment is here." Sometimes secretaries or receptionists might say simply, "Your 11:30 is here," meaning your 11:30 appointment. The receptionist says, "Should I send him



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up?” To “send someone up,” in this context, means to give someone permission, usually, to go upstairs (up to a higher level in a building). If it’s on the same level of the building you would say, “Shall I send him in?” (into your office). So, if the receptionist is on the first floor and Sue Gibbons is on the fourth or fifth floor, Sue is upstairs (on a different level), so the receptionist says, “Shall I,” or “Should I send him up?” (up to your office). Again, if they were on the same floor (the same level), she would probably say, “Shall I send him in?”

Sue says, “yes,” although we don’t hear Sue on the phone. Rhonda, the receptionist, says, “Okay, I’ll do that. Ms. Gibbons says (according to the receptionist) that she is running a little late.” To be “running late” means to be behind schedule. You are supposed to be somewhere at 11:00, for example, and it is already 11:15 and you have not arrived, you would be running a little late, arriving late or doing things later than what you had planned.

Ms. Gibbons “is tied up in another meeting right now.” To be “tied up” means to be busy doing something. To “tie someone up” (as a “phrasal,” or two-word verb) means to occupy someone’s time (to keep them busy). Here, Ms. Gibbons is tied up in a meeting. She’s busy in a meeting, another meeting, and cannot see Juri right away. Ms. Gibbons says she is wrapping things up very quickly. To “wrap (wrap) things up” means to finish something that you are doing now, usually so that you can go on and do something different. To end something – “let’s wrap this up” – lets end this discussion or this meeting.

The receptionist says Ms. Gibbons “will be free in a few minutes.” “Free,” here, means available (not busy – unoccupied). “Are you free?” – are you busy – are you doing something? Ms. Gibbons will free in a few minutes, the receptionist asks Juri if he would “like to wait in the reception area over there.” A “reception area” is a place where people sit when they are waiting for their appointment. If you go to a doctor’s office, for example, there’s usually a reception area where you wait for the doctor – who’s often late, of course! At least, my doctor is always late.

Juri says, “Sure. No problem.” The receptionist says, “Can I get you something? (Something to drink, in this case.) Coffee or tea?” Juri says, “No, I’m fine. I was just wondering how many employees you have in this office.” The receptionist says, “I don’t know precisely.” “Precisely” (precisely) means exactly, when you need to be very accurate – “precisely.” The receptionist doesn’t know precisely (or exactly) how many office employees they have. She thinks they have about (approximately; around – all those mean the same thing) 80.



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Juri says, “Oh, that’s a lot (that’s many employees). Is the company planning on expanding?” To “expand” (expand) means to grow (to get bigger). The receptionist says, “I’m sorry, I really don’t know. I’m sure Ms. Gibbons can answer those questions for you.”

Juri says, “Right, right (meaning oh yes, of course – okay). I don’t mean to pump you for information.” To “pump someone for information” means to try to get a lot of information from someone – to use someone as a source of information. I am going to pump you for some information about using ESL Podcast: How do you use it? How often do you listen to it? I ask you lots of questions – I’m pumping you for information. It’s a somewhat informal expression. Juri says, “I was just trying to get the inside scoop” (scoop). To “get the inside scoop” is an idiom which means to get information that isn’t available to most people; to get information that only a few people have. If you are working for a company and you have a secret project, and someone says, “Tell me about your secret project, I want to get the inside scoop” (information that only few people know).

The receptionist says, “I understand. Now, if you’ll excuse me, I need to answer this call.” The expression “if you’ll excuse me” (if you will excuse me) is a polite phrase used to ask for permission, of the other person, to end a conversation so you can go and do something else. So, if someone is talking to you at your office and you need to go back to your desk and answer your phone, you could say, “If you’ll excuse me, I have to answer my phone now.” It’s a polite way of leaving someone – of saying you have to stop your conversation with them.

“Ms. Gibbons,” the receptionist says, “should be finished with her other meeting in no time.” “In no time” means very soon, in a very short period of time. Juri says, “Oh, sure. I didn’t mean to keep you.” To “keep” someone means to prevent them from doing something else because you are keeping them busy by taking up too much of their time. You’ll usually hear the verb “to keep” with this meaning when someone uses the expression “I don’t mean to keep you” (I don’t mean to take up too much of your time). The verb “to keep” has several different meanings; look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Juri: Hello. I’m here for my 11:30 appointment with Sue Gibbons.





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Receptionist: What is your name?

Juri: It's Juri Lakoff.

Receptionist: I'll let her know that you're here. [Speaking into the telephone] Sue, this is Rhonda. Your 11:30 appointment is here. Should I send him up? Okay, I'll do that. [Hangs up the telephone] Ms. Gibbons says that she's running a little late and is tied up in another meeting right now. She should be wrapping things up very quickly and will be free in a few minutes. Would you like to wait in the reception area right over there?

Juri: Sure. No problem.

Receptionist: Can I get you something? Coffee or tea?

Juri: No, I'm fine. I was just wondering how many employees you have in this office.

Receptionist: I don't know precisely, but I think we have about 80.

Juri: Oh, that's a lot. Is the company planning on expanding?

Receptionist: I'm sorry, but I really don't know. I'm sure Ms. Gibbons can answer those questions for you.

Juri: Right, right. I didn't mean to pump you for information. I was just trying to get the inside scoop on the company before my meeting.

Receptionist: I understand. Now, if you'll excuse me, I need to answer this call. Ms. Gibbons should be finished with her other meeting in no time.

Juri: Oh, sure. I didn't mean to keep you. Sorry.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this podcast, and all of our podcast episodes, is by Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy, for your great work!

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Come back and listen to us for another 300 podcasts here at ESL Podcast.



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