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**ESL Podcast 307 – Cable and Satellite TV**

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**GLOSSARY**

**cable TV** – cable television; television services that are delivered through long wires that are underground or high in the air

\* With cable TV you can see hundreds of channels from all around the world.

**satellite TV** – satellite television; television services that are delivered by sending signals from electronic devices in space (not on Earth)

\* We live far away from the city, and satellite TV is the only kind of TV that we can watch at our house.

**satellite dish** – a large, round piece of equipment that is placed outside on a roof or behind a house to receive TV signals from satellites in space

\* Aaron became angry when his neighbor put up a large satellite dish that blocked his view of the mountains.

**to install** – to put equipment or a service into place so that it can be used

\* How long did it take the workers to install Internet service in your house?

**basic channels** – television stations that are included with the lowest cost of cable or satellite TV

\* Maude just likes to watch the news, so she's happy having the basic channels and not paying for extra channels each month.

**premium channels** – television stations that are not included with the basic cost of cable or satellite TV and which one must pay extra to have

\* Some of our favorite premium channels are movie channels and sports channels.

**package** – a group of things that are sold together for a single price

\* This travel package includes your plane ticket, hotel room, and meals for one week.

**monthly fee** – an amount of money that is paid every month for a service

\* How much is the monthly fee for being a member of that gym?

**excluding** – without; not including

\* The one-week trip to Hawaii costs \$1,200, excluding airfare, which is an additional \$875.



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**deposit** – an amount of money that one pays to use something, where the money is returned if the thing is given back to the company in good condition; a percentage of the money that is owed which a customer pays in advance, with the rest being paid when the service is completed or the product is delivered  
\* When you go skiing here, you pay a \$100 deposit for rental skis, but if you return them without any damage, you get your money back.

**outright** – completely; totally; all at once; in full  
\* Did you buy your car outright, or are you making monthly payments?

**pay-per-view** – a single scheduled movie, sports game, and other TV show that one pays to be able to watch  
\* Many people watch World Cup soccer games as pay-per-view programs.

**video on demand** – a single program that one can ask to see on one's TV at any time  
\* Sometimes my schedule is too busy and I can't see my favorite shows, but with video on demand, that isn't a problem.

**as (one) goes along** – as one proceeds with something; over time; as one continues with something  
\* Right now Makiko has a basic gym membership, but as she goes along and starts exercising more, she might get a more expensive gym membership so that she can take the dance classes.

**round-the-clock** – all the time; all day and night; 24 hours a day, 7 days a week  
\* The panel of experts said that doctors should not be allowed to work round-the-clock because they can't make good decisions if they haven't slept enough.

**to drop by** – to visit someone unexpectedly for a short time; to go to someone's house without calling ahead of time to let him or her know that one is coming  
\* It annoys me that Tom often drops by without calling first.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What did Cesar need to buy to have TV service?
    - a) A sports package.
    - b) A cable box.
    - c) A satellite dish.
  
  2. Why does Cesar invite Marion to drop by?
    - a) So that she can add services as she goes along.
    - b) So that she can watch TV at his house.
    - c) So that she can watch movies round-the-clock.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **package**

The word “package,” in this podcast, means a group of things that are sold together for a single price: “With this back-to-school package, you can buy all the paper, pens, and pencils your child needs in just one box.” In your job, you may have a set of things you receive in addition to your salary called a “benefits package,” which includes health insurance and paid vacation days: “What kind of benefits package does your company offer to its employees?” A “package” is often a box or bag that things are wrapped in: “Can you please mail this package to Jim?” Or, “How many cookies come in this package?” Finally, a “software package” is a group of computer programs that are sold together: “Microsoft Office is probably the world’s most popular software package.”

#### **deposit**

In this podcast, the word “deposit” means an amount of money that one pays to use something, where the money is returned if the thing is given back to the company in good condition: “At some hotels, you have to leave a credit card or a \$100 security deposit before you can get into the room.” A “deposit” is also the money that is paid as part of a larger payment: “We made a 20% deposit for the cost of the new home, and now we have to make smaller payments every month for the next 30 years.” When you go to the bank to put money in your account, you are making a deposit: “Please don’t forget to make your deposit at the bank this afternoon.” Finally, a “deposit” is a layer or minerals that are underground: “Lance made a lot of money when he found a gold deposit in his backyard.”



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### CULTURE NOTE

In 1984, the United States “passed a law” (made a new law) that created “public access television.” “Public access television” means that cable TV companies must give money, “training” (education about how to do something), and “access” (the ability to use something) to media technology to local organizations. This law was made to help small communities use TV and other electronic “media” (ways of sharing information with many people) to talk about important topics.

Today, many “grassroots organizations” (small groups that do not make money), individuals, schools, and city governments have their own public access television channels. They get these channels for free or by paying a very low price. In general, large cities have more money for public access television than do small towns, so large cities have more public access television channels.

Many public access television channels “broadcast” (show) national or regional programs, but there are also many small, locally produced TV programs on public access television. Many of these programs are educational and “designed” (made for a specific purpose) to teach adults and children. Other public access channels are “run” (operated by) the government, and are used to broadcast public meetings and “debates” (detailed conversations about the reasons to do or not to something).

Public access television is an important part of America’s “freedom of speech” (the right to say whatever one wants, without fear of the government). However, the cable companies must “balance” (find the right solution or level) people’s freedom of speech with the need to be “fair” (treating all parties equally) and not allow programs to “demean” (say bad things about) other people and groups.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 307: Cable and Satellite TV.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 307. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Good morning, good afternoon, or good evening, depending on when you are listening to us.

Remember to visit our website – yes, we do have a website – at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). Take a look at our premium courses; these are special business and personal English courses that you might be interested in, in addition to our regular Learning Guide membership that we offer.

This episode is called “Cable and Satellite Television (or TV).” It's a dialogue between two people talking about the differences between these two ways of getting television service. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Marion: I'm trying to decide whether to get cable or satellite TV. Which one do you have at your apartment?

Cesar: I have satellite, but I used to have cable.

Marion: What's the difference?

Cesar: Not a lot. With satellite, you have to have a satellite dish installed on the roof and you don't with cable. Otherwise, you get similar options. You can get basic channels and choose from a lot of different premium channels. I have a package that includes the basic channels and some premium movie channels, and I also have a sports package so I can watch all of the soccer matches I want.

Marion: How much is the monthly fee?

Cesar: I think I pay \$59.99 a month, excluding the taxes and fees, but the basic service is probably cheaper. When I had cable, I had to pay a deposit for the cable box, but with satellite, I had to buy the dish outright, but it wasn't too expensive.



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Marion: What I want are pay-per-view channels, so I don't need to run to the video rental store every time I want to watch a movie.

Cesar: That's not a problem. There's video on demand on both cable and satellite, and there are a lot of movies to choose from.

Marion: That's great. I'll check out whether my local cable company or satellite service has better packages and make a decision this weekend.

Cesar: You could always start with the basic channels and then add services as you go along.

Marion: That's a good idea, especially since I know someone who has premium channels and round-the-clock soccer.

Cesar: You bet. Drop by anytime, but don't forget the beer and popcorn!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue is called "Cable and Satellite TV." There are three common ways of getting television in your home; the easiest is what we call "broadcast," or "over the air" TV. These are usually channels three, four, five, maybe more, that you can buy a television set for; put up an antenna and you can get that those channels. If you want more channels – more variety – you can get either cable TV or satellite TV.

"Cable television" is when the company puts a wire into your house. So, it's a long wire that connects to your television. "Satellite TV" is when the company puts a small what we would call a "dish" on the roof, on the top of your house. A "satellite dish" is a piece of equipment that is pointed to a "satellite," which is a machine that is up very high in the earth's atmosphere that goes around the earth. You get the television channels from the satellite dish.

In our dialogue, Marion says to Cesar, "I'm trying to decide whether to get cable or satellite TV. Which one do you have at your apartment?" Cesar says, "I have satellite, but I used to have cable." Marion asks, "What's the difference?"

Cesar says, "Not a lot (not very much, they're very similar). With satellite, you have to have a satellite dish installed on the roof and you don't with cable." Cesar is saying that if you have satellite TV, they have to "install," or put, the dish on your roof, on the top of your building. To "install" means to put a piece of equipment or some sort of service into place so that it works. We also use that



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word for software: “I’m going to install some software on my computer” – I’m going to put it on my computer so that it works.

Cesar says that “You can get basic channels and choose from a lot of different premium channels.” “Basic channels” are the channels, or stations, that are included in the lower cost type of cable or satellite TV. “Premium channels” are ones that cost more money. For example, there is a popular movie cable channel called “HBO” (Home Box Office). That is something you have to pay extra for. Here in Los Angeles, cable television, for the basic service, is probably about \$40-\$50 a month; satellite television is about the same, maybe \$40-\$50-\$60 a month. If you want premium channels – movie channels – you have to pay another \$10 a month, usually.

Cesar says that he has “a package that includes the basic channels and some premium movie channels.” He also has a sports package so he can watch all of the soccer matches he wants. A “package” here means a group of things that are sold together. So you can get maybe two or three movie channels, and they give you a discount if you order all three of them as a package. The word “package” has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Marion asks Cesar, “How much is the monthly fee?” – how much money do you have to pay every month – the monthly fee. “Fee” (fee) is the cost – the price. Cesar says, “I think I pay \$59.99 a month (59 dollars and 99 cents), excluding the taxes and fees.” To “exclude” means not to include; it’s the opposite of include – not to count. So, “excluding taxes” means \$59.99 does not include the taxes and fees.

Cesar says, “When I had cable, I had to pay a deposit for the cable box.” When you have cable television, or satellite television, they usually give you a little electronic box that you put on top of your television and the cable goes into the back of the box. For cable TV, sometimes you have to pay the local company a deposit. A “deposit” is money that you give them; you get your money back when you bring them the box back. So, it makes sure that you are going to return the box. If you don’t return the box, then you are going to lose your deposit. He says with satellite he owns his dish outright – he owns the equipment outright (one word). “Outright” means completely, totally, in full. He owns the equipment, he doesn’t have to pay a deposit or rent it.

Marion says, “What I want are pay-per-view channels.” “Pay-per-view channels” is a service that allows you to get just one movie or one sports game: “I just want to watch one movie.” You can buy that movie to watch it on your television. It



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usually costs \$2, \$3, maybe \$4. That’s “pay-per-view,” you pay for each one that you want.

Cesar says, “That’s not a problem. There’s video on demand on both cable and satellite.” “Video on demand” is a program that you can watch any time you want to; you don’t have to wait until a certain time for the program to begin. We call that “video on demand.” Podcasting is audio on demand; whenever you want it, whenever you ask for it, you can listen to it.

Marion says, “That’s great. I’ll check out whether my local cable company or satellite service has better packages and make a decision this weekend.” Cesar says, “You could always start with the basic channels and then add services as you go along.” The expression “as you go along” means over time, as you continue with something.

Marion says, “That’s a good idea, especially since I know someone who has premium channels and round-the-clock soccer.” “Round-the-clock” means all the time – 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Marion is, of course, referring to Cesar, who has the soccer package – the sports package.

Cesar says, “You bet,” meaning “yes, no problem.” “Drop by anytime, but don’t forget the beer and popcorn!” Cesar is saying “you can visit me any time.” To “drop by” means to visit someone who is not expecting you. You don’t have an appointment with that person, you just go to their house or office, knock on their door, and visit them.

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

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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