



ESL Podcast 315 – Going to the Park

GLOSSARY

park – a natural area in a city with a lot of trees and grass where people can relax or play

* The children are going to the park to play with their friends after school today.

to kill some time – to do something with extra time; to do something with one's free time; to find some activity to do when one doesn't have anything else to do

* We went into the airport bookstore to kill some time while waiting for our flight to start boarding.

trail – a footpath; an unpaved (dirt) path to walk on outdoors

* This map shows that there is a four-mile trail to the lake from here.

scenery – views; the beauty of the natural things around you, such as mountains, a forest, or a lake

* Do you prefer the scenery in the mountains or on the coast?

to come across – to meet someone by chance; to find someone or something without planning to do so

* While I was cleaning the closet, I came across some old letters that my grandfather had sent to my grandmother before they were married.

tree – a tall plant with wood at the bottom and green leaves on top

* My parents have an apple tree in their backyard.

grass – a green plant with thin leaves that is cut short and used for people to walk or sit on, and/or to decorate the ground around homes and other buildings

* We ate lunch together while sitting on the grass in front of the museum.

shade – an area that isn't in direct sunlight; an area that is darker and cooler than other areas because something is blocking the light and heat from the sun

* Today it was too hot to walk outside, so we sat in the shade and drank iced tea.

spot – a place; a small area

* They got married in a beautiful spot on the beach.

playground – an area for children to play, with equipment like swings and slides

* Santiago spent hours with his cousins on the playground.

every so often – once in a while; occasionally; a phrase used to indicate that something happens occasionally, but not on a regular schedule



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* Every so often, the Stubbert family likes to do something fun together, such as going to the movies or going bowling.

picnic – a meal eaten outside; a time when people bring food to a place and eat together outdoors

* Every Sunday, they have a nice picnic near the lake.

fountain – a piece of art or sculpture that sends water into the air so that it falls down beautifully, used for decoration

* Many people like to throw a coin into a fountain to make a wish.

peaceful – calm; tranquil; without noise or stress

* Sometimes it's nice to leave the city for a weekend and go to a more peaceful place in the country.

field – an outdoor area where a sport is played

* Which soccer field is Russell playing on today?

to warm up – to prepare for exercise or a sports game by moving one's muscles slowly to get one's body ready for the activity

* Doctors say that you should warm up for 5-10 minutes before exercising.

in ages – in a long time; since a long time ago

* It feels like we haven't seen each other in ages!

take care – take care of yourself; a phrase used to say goodbye

* Are you leaving for Albany right now? Take care, and don't forget to write to us!



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Irene come to this spot?
 - a) Because it's peaceful.
 - b) Because it's near the playground.
 - c) Because she wants to have a picnic.

2. Why is Octavi warming up?
 - a) Because it's cold in the shade.
 - b) Because he's getting ready to play baseball.
 - c) Because he wants to ask Irene for a date.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

spot

The word “spot,” in this podcast, means a small place: “Pick out a good spot where we can watch the sunset.” A “spot” is also a small, round area that has a different color than what is around it: “How many spots does a giraffe have?” Or, “Hank spilled tomato sauce on his shirt, and now there’s a red spot there.” As a verb, “to spot” means to see something that is far away or difficult to see: “Were you able to spot Michael in the crowd at the graduation ceremony?” The phrase “to put (somebody) on the spot” means to ask someone to do or answer something difficult immediately, so that he or she feels embarrassed and uncomfortable: “The teacher put Denise on the spot by asking her to solve the math problem while all the other students were watching and listening.”

field

In this podcast, the word “field” means an outdoor area where a sport is played: “The cheerleaders are practicing on the football field.” A “field” is also a large area where plants are grown for food: “That farm has two corn fields and one potato field.” A “field” is sometimes an area of study: “Chanterelle wants to study in the field of medicine, but she doesn’t know what to specialize in.” The phrase “in the field” means in real life and with real people or animals, instead of in a classroom or laboratory: “We’ve done all the lab tests, and now we need to test our work in the field.” As a verb, “to field questions” means to receive many questions from an audience or from reporters: “The president fielded difficult questions from reporters about his new plan.”



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CULTURE NOTE

New York City is the biggest city in the United States, so many people expect that it is an ugly city without many natural areas. However, New York City is famous for its “Central Park,” which is a very large green area in the center of the city.

Central Park covers almost 850 acres, or about 3.5 km². Located in Manhattan, it is the most visited park in the United States, with “approximately” (about) 25 million visitors every year. Many people go to Central Park to use the trails for “jogging” (running slowly), bird watching, “rollerblading” (skating where the wheels are in one line under each foot), bicycle riding, and more. Many workers in New York City have picnic lunches in the park.

In the early 1800s, New York City was growing very quickly, and people wanted “respite” (rest) from the noisy “crowds” (large groups of people in small spaces). So, in 1853, the state of New York “designated” (named for a special purpose) the land for Central Park. At that time, the land was “worth” (valued at) more than \$5 million. Today, it is worth much more money.

The people who created the park were very “forward-thinking” (thinking about the future more than the present). The park was “designed” (organized and created) by a famous “landscape architect” (a person who designs outdoor areas) named Frederick Law Olmsted. The park has many small lakes, two ice skating “rinks” (places to skate on ice), an “amphitheater” (outdoor theater), “forested areas” (areas with a lot of trees), and playgrounds. Today the park is one of New York City’s greatest “assets” (a thing that has value).

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 315: Going to the Park.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 315. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Go to our website at eslpod.com and take a look at some of the new features on our website. If you haven't visited it recently, we have some new, exciting things on the website. You can also download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you learn English even faster.

Our episode is called "Going to the Park." It's a dialogue between a man and a woman who meet in the park. What will happen next? Let's find out.

[start of dialogue]

I arrived at the park a little early for our neighborhood baseball game and I needed to kill some time. I decided to take a walk along one of the trails so I could look at the scenery. Suddenly, I came across a woman sitting under a tree.

Octavi: What a beautiful day to be at the park!

Irene: Oh, hi. Yes, it's a nice day, isn't it?

Octavi: You look comfortable sitting on the grass in the shade reading.

Irene: It's a quiet spot away from the playground.

Octavi: Do you come here often?

Irene: Not too often. I come here every so often on the weekends.

Octavi: This is a great spot for a picnic. I saw a lot of people on the other side near the fountain, but this is much more peaceful.

Irene: Yeah, that's why I like it here. Were you looking for the baseball field? It's on the other side of the park.



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Octavi: Yes, I know. I was just warming up with a little walk around the park. We have a baseball game starting in a half hour.

Irene: I saw some people practicing when I walked past the field earlier. I haven't seen a baseball game in ages.

Octavi: Why don't you come and watch? It should be a good game.

Irene: Maybe I will. Thanks for the invitation.

Octavi: No problem. Take care.

Irene: You, too.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Octavi saying, "I arrived at the park a little early for our neighborhood baseball game." The word "park" describes any natural area, usually one with trees or places to play, usually in a city, although you can have a park anywhere. But we usually think of parks as being in a city, a green area in the city. Central Park in New York City is an example.

Octavi says he "needed to kill some time." The idiom "to kill some time" means to do something with extra time that you have. You arrive at your doctor's appointment 15 minutes early so you have to wait at least 15 minutes – probably an hour, if it's the doctor – before you can see him or her. You need to kill some time, so you read a magazine or a book, for example.

Well, Octavi needs to kill some time because he's early for a baseball game. He decides "to take a walk along one of the trails." A "trail" is a footpath; it's a dirt area where you can walk, usually outdoors in a park. Usually a trail is unpaved; "unpaved" means there's no cement or asphalt, it's just the ground. So he's walking along one of the trails in the park to take a look at the scenery. The "scenery" (scenery) are the views of the park, the beautiful things around you such as mountains or a forest or a lake; those could all be part of the scenery – nice things to look at.

"Suddenly," he says he "came across a woman sitting under a tree." To "come across" someone means to meet someone by chance – by accident, without planning to do so. You can come across a thing as well: "I was looking on my desk yesterday, and I came across a credit card bill." I wasn't expecting to find it.



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I guess I was hoping I wouldn't find it, but I did, so I had to pay it! That's to "come across" something.

So he comes "across a woman sitting under a tree," a tall plant with wood at the bottom and leaves at the top is a tree. Octavi says, "What a beautiful day to be at the park!" He's trying to start a conversation with the beautiful woman. Irene says, "Oh, hi. It's a nice day, isn't it?" She's agreeing and continuing the conversation. Octavi says, "You look comfortable sitting on the grass in the shade reading." The "grass" is, you may know, the green plant that is usually very short and is used by people to walk on or sit on, or sometimes just to make an area look beautiful. Irene is sitting on the grass in the shade. "Shade" (shade) is an area where there isn't any direct sunlight. For example, if you are underneath a tree, and the tree is blocking the light of the sun, you are in the shade – there's no direct sunlight. It's usually cooler in the shade as well, of course.

Irene says that "It's a quiet spot away from the playground." "Spot" here just means place – a small area. There are a couple of different meanings for the word "spot"; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Irene says that "It's a quiet spot away from the playground." A "playground" is an area for, usually, young children to play. It often has equipment for the children to play on such as a swing, which is when you have like a small chair that hangs from a tree and you go back and forth in it; that would be something you might find on a playground. It's usually a word we only use to talk about an area for children, however.

Octavi then asks a question, "Do you come here often?" Octavi uses this expression seriously, but when a native English speaker hears this, they would laugh somewhat. It's considered a very old way – an obvious way of trying to continue a conversation with a woman whom you are interested in. And so, if you actually wanted to meet this woman, you probably wouldn't use this expression, "Do you come here often?" It's a very old expression, and she might laugh because it's so obvious what you are trying to do. I've only used it once in my life, and it didn't work. I never did get to talk to the woman!

So Irene, apparently, doesn't care that this is an old, what we would call, "pick-up line," where you try to meet another person, often a man meeting a girl usually – well, not a girl, a woman. Irene says, "Not too often," meaning I don't come here very often. "I come here every so often on the weekends." "Every so often" means once in a while, occasionally, not something you do every weekend or every day.



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Octavi says, “This is a great spot for a picnic.” A “picnic” is when you eat food outside. People bring food, and you come and you sit on the grass, and you can have a picnic. Octavi says, “I saw a lot of people on the other side (the other side of the park) near the fountain.” A “fountain” (fountain) is a piece of art or sculpture that sends water into the air; it’s usually used for decoration, to make something more beautiful with water. In Rome, for example, there’s the famous Trevi Fountain, where you go to see a million other tourists trying to see the same fountain. It’s beautiful if you can see it without the other million people!

Octavi says that the place where Irene is “is much more peaceful.” It’s more calm, calmer; it’s more tranquil, less noise. Irene says, “Yeah, that’s why I like it here. Were you looking for the baseball field?” She’s asking Octavi if he’s looking for the area where a game is played, in this case, the baseball game. You can have a baseball field, you can have a soccer field, you can have a football field; these are all areas or places where you play certain organized games.

Irene says the baseball field is “on the other side of the park.” Octavi says, “Yes, I know. I was just warming up with a little walk around the park.” To “warm up” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to prepare for exercising or to prepare for a big game – a sports game – by moving your muscles slowly to get them ready. That’s “warming up.” I warm up for ESL Podcast by running two miles – no, I don’t really!

Irene says, “I saw some people practicing (on the baseball field) when I walked past earlier.” She says, “I haven’t seen a baseball game in ages.” “In ages” means in a long time. Irene is then asked by Octavi, “Why don’t you come and watch? It should be a good game.” Irene says, “Maybe I will. Thanks for the invitation.” This, of course, is a way for Octavi to try to talk even more to Irene. Octavi says, “No problem.” Irene thanks him, and he says, “No problem,” which is an informal way of saying “you’re welcome.” Then he says, “Take care.” This is an expression – an informal expression we use with people to say “goodbye, take care of yourself.” Usually we just say “take care.”

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

[start of dialogue]

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Irene: I saw some people practicing when I walked past the field earlier. I haven't seen a baseball game in ages.

Octavi: Why don't you come and watch? It should be a good game.

Irene: Maybe I will. Thanks for the invitation.

Octavi: No problem. Take care.

Irene: You, too.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written, as always, by our very own Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you Lucy!

That's all we have time for today. If you have a question or comment, you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast. Take care!



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