



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

GLOSSARY

washing machine – a large machine that washes clothing, towels, and sheets

* The washing machine broke and now there's water and soap all over the floor.

load – a group of clothes, towels, and sheets that are washed at the same time; the amount of clothing, towels, and sheets that are put inside a washing machine at one time

* Chirag washes three loads every week: one of whites, one of colors, and one of towels and sheets.

laundry – the process of washing clothes, towels, and sheets

* Do you do a little bit of laundry every day, or do you prefer to do it all at once at the end of the week?

dyed – colored; made a different color by putting something in a colored liquid

* Is her hair really blond, or is it dyed?

stain – a dirty mark that is difficult to remove from a piece of fabric

* Yolanda spilled red wine on her white shirt and it left a big stain.

bleach – a clear, liquid chemical that is used to clean things or make something white by removing color

* Chet accidentally spilled bleach on his jeans, and now they have white spots on them.

dryer – a large machine that uses hot air and movement to dry clothing, towels, and sheets

* Some people try to save electricity by hanging their clothes outside to dry in the sun instead of using a dryer.

detergent – a liquid or powder soap that is used to wash clothing or dishes

* Your clothes smell great! What brand of detergent do you use?

dishwashing liquid – a liquid soap used to wash dishes

* This dishwashing liquid is supposed to be gentle on your hands because it doesn't dry out the skin.

stiff as a board – very difficult to move, bend, or fold; not soft

* The day after running in the marathon, Jered's legs felt as stiff as a board and he could barely walk.



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

delicates – clothing, often sexy underwear or very nice sweaters, that is made from special fabrics that need to be washed carefully so that they don't fall apart

* Do you wash your delicates, like silk sweaters, by hand or in a machine?

lint filter – the small part of a clothes dryer that collects the small pieces of fabric that come off while drying, so that they can be thrown away

* Sometimes fires start when people forget to empty the lint filters in their dryers.

fabric softener – a liquid that is used when washing clothes to make them softer

* Lynn always uses fabric softener on her clothes, but not with her towels.

clothesline – a piece of rope or string that is tied between two things so that clothes can be hung on it to dry

* Oh no! A bird landed on the clothesline and got our clean clothes dirty!



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. According to Mina, what's wrong with Arlo's clothes?
 - a) They are stained.
 - b) They are bleached.
 - c) They are stiff.

 2. Which of these things is used with a dryer?
 - a) Detergent.
 - b) A lint filter.
 - c) A clothesline.
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

load

The word “load,” in this podcast, means a group of clothes, towels, and sheets that are washed at the same time: “Could you please start washing a load of towels before you go to work tomorrow?” A “load” is also the amount of something carried by a truck or person: “The truck driver is taking a load of corn to Nebraska.” Or, “The restaurant filled with a bus load of tourists.” A “heavy/light load” refers to the amount of work that a person has to do: “Shelly has a heavy load at work this week because all of her co-workers are on vacation.” As a verb, “to load” means to put something into a vehicle or a large container: “We need to ask our friends to help us load the moving van this weekend.”

delicates

In this podcast, the word “delicates” means clothing that is made from special fabrics that need to be washed carefully so that they don't fall apart: “Do you have any delicates in here, or can I wash everything together in the washing machine?” As an adjective, the word “delicate” means fragile, or something that breaks very easily: “These sculptures are very delicate, so please keep them away from small children.” When talking about skin, the word “delicate” means skin that is damaged easily, or that is very sensitive: “This soap is specially designed for delicate skin.” The word “delicate” can also refer to something that needs to be handled very carefully: “Talking to a woman about her weight is a very delicate subject, so be careful what you say.”



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

CULTURE NOTE

Most clothing that is sold in stores has a small “tag” (a small piece of cloth with writing, usually sewn into the neck, waist, or side of a piece of clothing) that “indicates” (shows) the size, manufacturer, and washing instructions. “Following” (doing what something or someone says should be done) these washing instructions can help ensure that the “garment” (piece of clothing) isn’t damaged.

Many garments that are made from special fabrics have a tag that says “dry clean only.” This means that they shouldn’t be washed in a washing machine or by hand. Instead, they should be taken to the “dry cleaner’s” where clothing is washed by using special chemicals instead of water.

Other garments say “machine wash,” meaning that they can be washed in washing machines, but there are often instructions about the water temperature. Sometimes the labels say “only with like colors,” meaning that the garment should be washed only with clothes that have the same color, because otherwise, it might “bleed” (share its color in the water, dyeing the other garments). Other garments have tags saying “hand wash only,” meaning that they should not be put in a washing machine, but instead washed by hand.

Other common washing instructions include “no bleach,” meaning that bleach shouldn’t be used because it will destroy the fabric. Some washing instructions say “lay flat to dry,” which means that they should be laid flat to dry, because hanging them from a clothesline would “stretch them out” (change their shape in a bad way).

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



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 331: Washing Clothes.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 331. 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. Download a Learning Guide, while you're there, for this episode. Take a look at our ESL Podcast Store that has additional premium courses in business and daily English that we think you'll be interested in, and read our new ESL Podcast Blog.

This episode is about something everyone has to do, or have done for them, and that is washing your clothes. It's a dialogue between Mina and Arlo about using a washing machine. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Mina: What happened here? Is the washing machine not working?

Arlo: What do you mean?

Mina: Why are all of your white T-shirts now pink?

Arlo: That just happens. Sometimes they turn pink, gray, or another color, depending on which clothes I put in a load.

Mina: Didn't anyone teach you how to do laundry? You're supposed to separate your whites from your colors and wash them separately.

Arlo: It doesn't really matter. I don't mind if they get dyed a different color. As long as they get clean and the stains come out, I don't really care what color they are.

Mina: I have some bleach that may be able to get your T-shirts white again. I better try before you put them in the dryer.

Arlo: Don't bother. It really doesn't matter to me. I'm almost done here. I'm just waiting for one more load to finish.



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

Mina: What kind of detergent are you using?

Arlo: I ran out of detergent, so I've been using dishwashing liquid. It works pretty well.

Mina: No wonder your shirts are as stiff as a board. Good thing you don't own any delicates or they would be completely ruined. Before you put your clothes in the dryer, clean out this lint filter. It's really dirty. I don't suppose you use fabric softener.

Arlo: No, I like to keep things simple and dry my clothes on a clothesline. I don't mind if they're a little stiff.

Mina: Remind me never to ask you to do my laundry.

Arlo: Life is too short to worry about laundry.

[end of dialogue]

Mina begins our dialogue by asking Arlo, "What happened here?" Usually when someone says "what happened here," something bad has happened – something has gone wrong; the person asking the question might be a little angry or upset. Mina says, "What happened here? Is the washing machine not working?" The "washing machine" is a large machine that washes clothes with water and soap.

Arlo says, "What do you mean?" – what are you saying? Mina says, "Why are all of your white T-shirts now pink?" "Pink" is a type of red, a light red color. White T-shirts, of course, should be white, not pink. Arlo says, "That just happens. Sometimes they turn pink, gray, or another color, depending on which clothes I put in a load." Arlo is saying that sometimes his clothes changes color; that's what he means when he says "they turn pink, gray, or another color." It depends on the clothes he puts in a load. A "load" is a group of clothes or towels that you wash at the same time. Arlo sounds a little like me, when I wash my clothes – put all the colors together and see what happens!

Mina says, "Didn't anyone teach you how to do laundry?" "To do laundry" means to wash your clothes. "Laundry" can be a noun referring to the actual clothes that you need to wash – that are dirty. We often use this expression "to do laundry" meaning to wash the clothes. Mina is asking if Arlo knows how to wash clothes with a washing machine. "You're supposed to separate your whites from your colors," she says, "and wash them separately." So, you need to have a load of dark clothing and a load of white or light clothing.



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

Arlo says, “It doesn’t really matter. I don’t mind if the clothes get dyed a different color.” “To dye” (dye) means to change the color of something. So, Arlo is saying, “I don’t mind if they get dyed” – I don’t mind if the color changes. “Dye” is pronounced the same as “D I E,” which, of course, means to stop living. I think when you stop living you also change colors!

Arlo says, “As long as they get clean and the stains come out, I don’t really care what color they are.” A “stain” (stain) is a dirty mark – a dirty section of your clothing, or a sheet, or a towel; it could be on a rug, any kind of fabric. A “stain” is a dirty spot - a dirty section. Usually it’s very difficult to get the stain clean – to get it out. Notice Arlo uses the two-word phrasal verb “come out,” in this case, it means to remove, to get rid of. So, “As long as the stains come out,” he says, he doesn’t really care what color the clothes are.

Mina says, “I have some bleach that may be able to get your T-shirts white again.” “Bleach” is a clear, liquid chemical that you use to clean things or to make things white – to turn them white, we might say – to change the color to white. “I better try before you put them in the dryer,” Mina says, meaning I will try to use the bleach before you put them in the other machine that will dry the clothes. The clothes come out of the washing machine wet; you put them into the dryer to dry them using hot air and movement. Some people don’t use a dryer; they use what we would call a “clothesline,” and they hang up the clothes on a long piece of wire. This isn’t very common anymore; even in warm places like Los Angeles, most people use a dryer. For the environment, however, it might be better for people to use the old clotheslines, like my mother used to do when I was a child.

Arlo says to Mina, “Don’t bother (meaning don’t go to any trouble – don’t try it). It doesn’t matter to me (it’s not important to me). I’m almost done here. I’m just waiting for one more load to finish (one more group of clothes to finish).” That word “load” actually has a couple of different meanings; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Mina says, “What kind of detergent are you using?” “Detergent” (detergent) is a liquid or powder (dry) soap that you use to wash clothes, or it might be detergent for washing dishes – different kinds of detergent, different kinds of soap, of course. Arlo says, “I ran out of detergent (meaning I didn’t have any clothes washing detergent left), so I’ve been using dishwashing liquid.” Well, remember these are two different kinds of soap. You’re not supposed to use the soap you use to wash dishes for washing your clothes, but this is what Arlo has done. He used dishwashing liquid, which is a liquid soap – a liquid detergent used to wash



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

dishes. He used that detergent to wash his clothes, which is probably not a good idea!

Arlo says, however, “It works pretty well.” Mina, who clearly thinks Arlo is an idiot – that’s probably because he is – says, “No wonder your shirts are as stiff as a board.” “To be stiff” (stiff) means to be unbending. For example, you could have a piece of wood, the wood is not going to bend, it’s going to be very straight, very solid. So the expression “stiff as a board” means it’s very difficult to move or to bend. Because Arlo is using the wrong kind of soap, his “shirts are stiff as a board” – they’re not very soft. “Good thing you don’t own any delicates or they would be completely ruined.” When referring to clothes, the word “delicates” are clothing that is made from a very special kind of fabric, something you need to wash very carefully. A nice sweater, for example, or certain kinds of women’s underwear would be considered delicates; you would have to wash them specially.

Mina says, “Before you put your clothes in the dryer, clean out this lint filter. It’s really dirty.” “Lint” (lint) is the very small pieces of the clothing material – the fabric – that come off. If you have a dryer – a machine that dries your clothes, somewhere in the dryer there is a lint filter. A “filter” is something that stops or prevents something from going through. The lint filter catches all these little pieces of fabric, we would call them these little “fibers,” so you can collect them easily to throw them away.

Mina says, “I don’t suppose you use fabric softener.” “Fabric softener” is a liquid that you use when you are washing your clothes to make the clothes softer; they feel better with the fabric softener. Arlo says, “No, I like to keep things simple and dry my clothes on a clothesline.” We talked before about putting a wire or a string in your yard or outside of your house, that wire or string is called a “clothesline” (one word), and that’s what Arlo wants to use to dry his clothes.

Mina says, “Remind me never to ask you to do my laundry,” meaning I don’t ever want you to do my laundry – to wash my clothes. Arlo says, “Life is too short to worry about laundry.”

Now we’ll listen to the dialogue, this time at a normal speed.

[start of dialogue]

Mina: What happened here? Is the washing machine not working?

Arlo: What do you mean?



ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

Mina: Why are all of your white T-shirts now pink?

Arlo: That just happens. Sometimes they turn pink, gray, or another color, depending on which clothes I put in a load.

Mina: Didn't anyone teach you how to do laundry? You're supposed to separate your whites from your colors and wash them separately.

Arlo: It doesn't really matter. I don't mind if they get dyed a different color. As long as they get clean and the stains come out, I don't really care what color they are.

Mina: I have some bleach that may be able to get your T-shirts white again. I better try before you put them in the dryer.

Arlo: Don't bother. It really doesn't matter to me. I'm almost done here. I'm just waiting for one more load to finish.

Mina: What kind of detergent are you using?

Arlo: I ran out of detergent, so I've been using dishwashing liquid. It works pretty well.

Mina: No wonder your shirts are as stiff as a board. Good thing you don't own any delicates or they would be completely ruined. Before you put your clothes in the dryer, clean out this lint filter. It's really dirty. I don't suppose you use fabric softener.

Arlo: No, I like to keep things simple and dry my clothes on a clothesline. I don't mind if they're a little stiff.

Mina: Remind me never to ask you to do my laundry.

Arlo: Life is too short to worry about laundry.

[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.



English as a Second Language Podcast
www.eslpod.com

ESL Podcast 331 – Washing Clothes

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2007.