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**ESL Podcast 346 – Using the Restroom**

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**GLOSSARY**

**restroom** – a public bathroom; a large room with one or more toilets and sinks

\* Do you know where the men's restroom is?

**mess** – disordered; unclean; not organized or neat

\* Your room is a mess! Please clean it up before your grandparents get here.

**stall** – one small area with a toilet, surrounded by metal or wooden walls and a door that closes to give one privacy in a public bathroom

\* Even though the women's restroom has six stalls, there is always a long line of women waiting to use them.

**toilet paper** – a roll of soft white paper that can be torn into squares and is used to clean one's skin after using the toilet

\* This brand of toilet paper is expensive, but it's softer than all the other brands.

**toilet seat cover** – a piece of thin white paper that has the shape of the seat of a toilet, is put on a toilet seat before one sits on it to avoid germs, and then is thrown away

\* I don't like using the public bathrooms at a sports stadium when there are no toilet seat covers.

**toilet** – a ceramic device that one stands in front of or sits on to urinate (pee) or defecate (poop) and then pushes a handle to have everything wash away

\* The janitor cleans all of the toilets on this floor everyday.

**to flush** – to push a handle on a toilet so that everything in it washes away and it partially fills again with clean water

\* Who forgot to flush the toilet?

**toilet seat** – the flat, circular part of the toilet that one sits on

\* Sherri gets mad at her husband when he forgets to put down the toilet seat after going to the bathroom.

**to give up** – to stop trying to do something, usually because it is too difficult, time-consuming, or frustrating

\* Craig tried to play the violin for years, but last month he gave up and stopped taking lessons.



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**urinal** – a ceramic device that hangs on a wall and that men stand in front of to urinate (pee)

\* Do you prefer to use a urinal or a toilet?

**soap** – detergent; a liquid or powder that is used with water to wash one's skin, especially to remove dirt and grease

\* Soap makes her skin very dry, so she always uses lotion after washing her hands.

**dispenser** – a device that holds a liquid or small objects and gives out a small amount at a time

\* He has a candy dispenser on his desk that gives out one piece of candy whenever someone pushes on the top of it.

**pump** – the part of a machine that is moved up and down to move liquid or air into or out of something

\* Can I use your bicycle pump to fix my flat tire?

**faucet** – the metal part above a sink that water comes out of

\* Old sinks have two faucets: one for hot water and one for cold water. Newer sinks have just one faucet so that you can control the temperature.

**to splash** – to throw small drops of water or another liquid at something, often at one's face

\* Henrietta splashed cold water on her face, trying to make it look like she hadn't been crying.

**paper towel** – a square, soft piece of paper used to dry one's hands

\* Keith dried his hands on a paper towel and then threw the towel away.

**out** – not available; used up; with no more of something remaining

\* The store was out of 2% milk, so I bought 1% milk instead.

**hand dryer** – an electronic device that blows hot air, used for drying one's hands in a public restroom

\* To start the hand dryer, just push this button. It will stop automatically after 45 seconds.



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Which of these things is part of a sink?
  - a) Dispenser.
  - b) Pump.
  - c) Faucet.
  
2. Why are his pants wet?
  - a) He tried to wash them.
  - b) The faucet sprayed too much water.
  - c) The faucet was out.

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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**stall**

The word “stall,” in this podcast, means one small area with a toilet, surrounded by metal or wooden walls and a door that closes to give one privacy in a restroom: “Knock on the stall door to find out whether anyone is inside.” A “stall” is also one small part of a barn where a horse, cow, pig, or other animal is kept: “Every morning he goes to the horse stalls and makes sure that the animals have enough food and water for the day.” As a verb, “to stall” means to procrastinate, or to delay doing something until later: “It was time for the children to go to bed, but they were stalling, asking for a glass of water and a bedtime story so that they wouldn’t have to go to sleep so early.”

**to give up**

In this podcast, the phrase “to give up” means to stop trying to do something, usually because it is too difficult, time-consuming, or frustrating: “I give up! This math homework is impossible!” The phrase “to give (something) out” means to distribute something, or to give one copy of something to many people: “She stood on the street corner all day, giving out flyers about the concert.” The phrase “to give (something) away” means to give something to another person for free: “The store gives away free radios to the first 25 customers the day after Thanksgiving.” The phrase “to give (something) away” can also mean to accidentally tell a secret, or to share information that one wasn’t supposed to share: “We were planning a surprise birthday party for Sanjay, but someone gave it away and now he knows all about it.”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Most public bathrooms are “segregated” (separated) by sex. For example, in most public buildings there is usually a “men’s room” (a restroom only for men) and a “women’s room” (a restroom only for women). Sometimes, however, smaller businesses will have “unisex” restrooms that can be used by either men or women. Some places have “family restrooms” which are designed for parents with young children who need help using the restroom. If there isn’t a family restroom, these parents often take their children into the regular adult restrooms, but sometimes this is uncomfortable if a man is with his daughter or if a woman is with her son. Family restrooms also have changing tables where babies’ “diapers” (material babies wear around their bottom so they can go to the bathroom) can be changed.

Outdoors, many public places have “porta-potties” (portable toilets), where people can go to the bathroom. These porta-potties are not connected to water, so they often smell bad. They can be picked up by special trucks and taken away to be emptied. In other public places, like sports stadiums or on popular “pedestrian streets” (streets where many people walk and where cars are not allowed), sometimes there are “paid toilets” where people have to pay a little bit of money, usually less than one dollar, to use the toilet.

In a home, there are three types of bathrooms: a “full bathroom,” “three-quarter bathroom,” and a “half bathroom.” A “full bathroom” or “full bath” has a toilet, sink, shower, and bathtub. A “three-quarter bathroom” has everything a “full bath” has, but it only has a shower and no bathtub. A “half bathroom” or “half bath” has only a toilet and sink, but no shower or bathtub. A home with “one-and-a-half baths” is a home that has one full bath and one half bath. Usually the full bath is near the bedrooms and is used by the family, and the half bath is closer to the living room and is used by visitors.

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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 346: Using the Restroom.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 346. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from – where else? – beautiful Los Angeles, California, and the Center for Educational Development.

Our website is [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). On it you can find a Learning Guide for this episode that you can download to help you improve your English even faster. You can also find our ESL Podcast Blog, where several times a week we give you additional help in learning English, and our ESL Podcast Store, where we have business and personal English courses for you to purchase.

This episode is called “Using the Restroom.” A “restroom” is another name for a bathroom – a public, usually, bathroom, where you have toilets and sinks and so forth. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Denzel: Excuse me, where is the restroom?

Server: It's down the hall, on your left.

Denzel: Thanks.

When I got into the bathroom, it was a mess. I walked into a stall and there was toilet paper all over the floor. There were no toilet seat covers and the toilet wouldn't flush. Even the toilet seat was broken!

I gave up on the stall and decided to use a urinal. I went to wash my hands, but there was no soap in the dispenser. I kept hitting the pump, but nothing came out.

When I turned on the faucet, water splashed all over my pants. I looked for some paper towels to dry myself, but they were out. I tried using one of the hand dryers, but that was broken, too.

I couldn't believe what a mess this bathroom was. I just thought, what happened here? World War III?



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[end of story]

Our story begins with Denzel saying to someone at the restaurant, “Excuse me, where is the restroom?” He could also say, “Could you tell me where the restroom is?” The server says, “It’s down the hall, on your left,” meaning walk down the hallway, you’ll see the door on your left-hand side. Denzel says, “Thanks.” He then says, “When I got into the bathroom, it was a mess.” Something that’s a “mess” is unclean, it’s unorganized or disorganized; it’s the opposite of neat. My mother would always tell me, “Jeffrey, your room is a mess!” She was right. Now, my desk is a mess!

Denzel says, “I walked into a stall and there was toilet paper all over the floor.” A “stall” (stall) is a small area with one toilet. Usually, there is a toilet that has walls on either side and a door in front for privacy, so no one else can see in. That’s a “stall,” or a “restroom stall.” So he walks into the restroom stall, “and there was toilet paper all over the floor.” “Stall,” I should say, has a couple of different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for additional definitions. “Toilet paper” is a usually white, soft paper that is put on what we would call a “roll.” It goes round and round and round a center stick. You tear the toilet paper off and use it to clean your skin, basically, after you have used the toilet.

He then says, “There were no toilet seat covers and the toilet wouldn’t flush.” The “toilet” is usually a device that is made from a material called “ceramic,” and you either sit on the toilet or you stand in front of the toilet in order to urinate. The informal word for “urinate” would be “to pee” (pee); that’s a word that children may use, not a word that you would use in general public. The technical term is “to urinate.” The other thing that happens is, on a toilet, you can “defecate.” The informal, sometimes a word used by little children is “poop” (poop). Again, you don’t want to say that to your boss. The technical word is “to defecate,” although you probably don’t want to tell your boss about that either! So, a “toilet” is a device that takes that urination or the results of your defecation and washes it away, usually with water. That’s a “toilet”; “toilet seat covers” are the things that go on top of the toilet. They’re thin pieces of paper that you can put on so you don’t have to sit on a public toilet seat. Usually you will find these, if they are available, above the toilet on the wall.

Denzel says, “the toilet wouldn’t flush. “To flush” means that water moves in the toilet to take away the results of your going to the bathroom. “To flush a toilet,” then, means you push down on a handle so that the water comes out and washes things away. Someone says to you, “Be sure to flush the toilet when you are finished,” seems like an obvious thing to do, but some people need to be told – children, in particular.



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Denzel says, “Even the toilet seat was broken!” The “toilet seat” is the part of the toilet that you would sit on. He then says, “I gave up on the stall and decided to use a urinal.” “To give up on something,” or “to give something up,” is a phrasal verb meaning to stop trying to do something, usually because it is too difficult. So, Denzel is having problems in the stall, so he decides to use a urinal. “Urinal” (urinal) is related to the word “to urinate,” it’s a ceramic device that men can use – women don’t normally use a urinal. It’s something you would find in a men’s bathroom, and it is a place where you can urinate by standing – you don’t have to sit down. One of the few advantages of being a man, I think! There are several different kinds of bathrooms that you might encounter in the United States; take a look at our Learning Guide, in our cultural note, where we talk about those different kinds of bathrooms, or restrooms.

Denzel says, “I went to wash my hands, but there was no soap in the dispenser.” There was no soap – no detergent, what you use to clean something – in the dispenser. The noun “dispenser” comes from the verb “to dispense,” which means to give something to someone. A “dispenser” is a small device, in this case, a thing that holds liquid and allows you to get the liquid out. The soap is liquid, and the soap dispenser is a place where you get the soap from; it’s what holds the soap.

He then says, “I kept hitting the pump (on the dispenser), but nothing came out.” The “pump” (pump) is the part of the machine that you move up and down on the dispenser so you can get something out of somewhere. If you are putting gasoline into your car, you use a “gasoline pump” – takes it out of the tank below, and puts the gasoline into your car.

“When I turned on the faucet, water splashed all over my pants.” Denzel’s having a bad day! The “faucet” is the part of the sink where the water comes out. The “sink” is where you wash your hands; the “faucet” is the little piece of metal where the water comes out of to wash your hands. To say something “splashed all over your pants” means that the water went onto your pants. We use this verb, “to splash,” when we are talking about something liquid. Sometimes you can splash something in someone’s face. In this case, the water splashed on his pants – his pants got wet, the water went onto them.

Denzel says, “I looked for some paper towels to dry myself, but they were out.” “Paper towels are small, square pieces of paper you can use to dry your hands. When we say “something is out,” we mean it is no longer available – there’s no more remaining. You may say to someone, “We’re out of milk. I need to go to the store to buy some” – we no longer have any. Well, they were out of paper



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towels, so Denzel tried using one of the hand dryers. A “hand dryer” is something you find in many restrooms – public restrooms – nowadays. It’s a electric device that blows hot air onto your hands, and you move your hands back and forth so you can dry them. It’s better for the environment, of course – at least I think it is!

Denzel ends the story by saying, “I couldn’t believe what a mess this bathroom was. I just thought, what happened here? World War III?” It was like there was a war in the bathroom; things were so messy, things were so broken.

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

[start of story]

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Denzel: Thanks.

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I couldn’t believe what a mess this bathroom was. I just thought, what happened here? World War III?

[end of story]

The script for this episode was written by the never messy Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you Lucy!

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





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