



ESL Podcast 351 – Asking for a First Date

GLOSSARY

could I speak to (someone) – a phrase used to ask to speak with someone over the phone; a phrase used to show who one wants to speak with on the telephone

* Hello, could I speak to Mr. Alvarez, please?

this is he/she – a phrase used to identify oneself as the person who has been asked for on the phone

* - Could I speak to Matthew, please?
- Yes, this is he.

How about you? – a phrase used to ask someone the same question that one just answered; a phrase used to ask whether another person thinks or feels the same way as oneself

* I'm hungry. How about you?

to go out – to do something with another person; to have a date; to go somewhere with another person

* Last night Sheryl and Rickie went out to have dinner and see a movie together.

date – a romantic meeting between two people; an opportunity to do something with another person, learn more about that person, and find out whether one is romantically interested in that person

* On Ernie's first date, he took a girl to see Swan Lake at the theater.

to grab – to get; to have; to do something quickly and informally

* Let's grab something to eat before we start studying.

How does that sound? – a phrase used to ask for one's opinion about something that one has just said or proposed

* I think we should go to Nebraska for Christmas next year. How does that sound?

to have plans – to be busy; to be scheduled to do something; to have already made another commitment

* He said he would like to go to your wedding, but he already has plans for that day.

tied up – busy; occupied; unable to do something because one has to do something else

* Kristoff was tied up at the office until almost 9:30 p.m. last night.



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free – available; not busy; not occupied

* Are you free next Thursday night, or do you have to work?

I don't suppose... – a polite phrase used to ask someone whether something is true, or whether another person knows something or can do something

* I don't suppose you know where there's a pharmacy around here, do you?

to make it – to be able to do something, go somewhere, or attend an event

* They weren't able to make it to the party last night because they couldn't find anyone to take care of their kids.

to pick (someone) up – to drive somewhere and meet a person, taking that person to another place in one's car

* The tour guide picked us up from the hotel at 7:30 a.m.

to work – to be acceptable; to be all right; to not create any problems or difficulty

* Will it work for you if I wait until Tuesday to pay you?

to look forward to (something) – to be excited, happy, and eager about something that will happen in the future; to think about some future event positively

* They are looking forward to their vacation in Miami this summer.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. When is Natalie available?
 - a) Tomorrow.
 - b) On Friday.
 - c) On Saturday.

2. What will happen at 7:00?
 - a) Sergio and Natalie will meet at the movie theater.
 - b) Sergio will call Natalie.
 - c) Sergio will arrive at Natalie's house.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

tied up

The phrase “tied up,” in this podcast, means busy and unable to do something because one has to do something else: “Shane is tied up in a meeting right now, but I’ll have him return your call when he is back at his desk.” The phrase “tied down” means feeling that one doesn’t have enough freedom because one has many responsibilities: “Lately, he has felt really tied down by his family.” The phrase “tied in” means connected with something or related to something: “Everything I heard from your uncle tied in with everything I know about Desmond and how he isn’t a very good friend.” Finally, the phrase “to tie the knot” means to get married: “After dating for four years, they’re finally going to tie the knot next month.”

to work

In this podcast, the verb “to work” means to be acceptable and to not create any problems or difficulty: “James said he wanted to write the report by himself, and I said, ‘That works for me!’” The phrase “to work at something” means to make a big effort to do something that is difficult: “Becoming a good tennis player can be difficult. You may have to work at it for years.” The phrase “to work on (something)” means to make an effort to make something better: “The house is a disaster, but they’re working on cleaning it up.” The phrase “to work on (someone)” means to try to persuade someone to do or say something: “Lawrence plans to vote for the other candidate, but we’re working on him.” Finally, the phrase “to work something off” means to do something to get rid of a negative feeling: “He started exercising to work off stress from work.”



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CULTURE NOTE

A first date is very important, because it gives people an opportunity to make a positive “first impression” (the way that one person first reacts to another person). It is important to dress nicely and to be “punctual” (arrive on time).

Traditionally, some women like it when men bring them a gift on a first date. Common gifts include a “floral bouquet” (a pretty group of flowers), a small box of chocolate candies, or a small “stuffed animal” (a soft toy made to look like an animal).

If it is a formal date, especially for an important dance, a man usually gives a woman a “corsage” (a small arrangement of flowers worn on a woman’s dress or wrist) and a woman gives a man a “boutonnière” (a small flower worn on a man’s suit jacket).

The most common type of first date is probably having dinner and seeing a movie. Other first date ideas include going to the theater, having a “picnic” (a meal eaten outdoors) at a park, visiting an art gallery or museum, or going “bowling” (a game where heavy balls are rolled to knock down large pieces or pins). Generally it isn’t a good idea to introduce the other person to your relatives because it is considered too early in the relationship.

Some people prefer to go on “group dates” with many couples. They think these types of first dates are safer, especially when they do not know the other person well. Other people go on first dates that are “blind dates,” meaning that they have never seen the other person before.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 351: Asking for a First Date.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 351. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in – you know where – beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Visit our website at eslpod.com and download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide contains all of the definitions, vocabulary, sample sentences, additional definitions not discussed on the episode, cultural notes, comprehension questions, secrets to living forever, and a complete transcript of this episode.

This episode is called “Asking for a First Date.” It's a conversation between Natalie and Sergio. Sergio likes Natalie, and he's going to do that most dangerous thing: ask her to go on a date with him. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Natalie: Hello.

Sergio: Hi, could I speak to Natalie?

Natalie: This is she.

Sergio: Oh hi, this is Sergio. How are you?

Natalie: Good. How about you?

Sergio: I'm great. Uh, well, the reason I'm calling is I was wondering if you'd like to go out sometime?

Natalie: You mean on a date?

Sergio: Yeah, with me.

Natalie: I'd love to.

Sergio: Really? I mean, that's great. I was thinking we could grab dinner on Friday and then see a movie. How does that sound?



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Natalie: Oh, I already have plans for Friday.

Sergio: How about Saturday?

Natalie: I'm tied up on Saturday, too. I'm free tomorrow, though. I don't suppose you want to go out tomorrow night?

Sergio: Sure, I can make it tomorrow. I'll pick you up around 7:00. Is that okay?

Natalie: Yeah, that works for me. See you tomorrow at 7:00.

Sergio: I'm really looking forward to it.

Natalie: Me, too.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Natalie answering the telephone; Sergio has called her. She says, "Hello," which is how most people answer the phone. Sergio says, "Hi, could I speak to Natalie?" When you call someone and you, perhaps, don't recognize their voice or if it's not the person you want to speak with, you say "could I speak to..." and then the person's name. It's a polite way of asking to talk to someone. Natalie says, "This is she." She's saying I am the person you are asking for; I am Natalie.

Sergio says, "Oh hi, this is Sergio. How are you?" Natalie says, "Good. How about you?" "How about you?" is a phrase used to ask someone the same question that you just answered, or to ask someone if they think or feel the same way as you do. For example you say, "I'm hungry," and then you turn to your friend and you ask, "How about you?" meaning are you hungry.

Sergio is a little nervous; he says, "I'm great. Uh, well, the reason I'm calling is I was wondering (I was thinking about – I was asking myself) if you'd like to go out sometime?" "To go out" is another way of, in most cases, saying to have a date. It can just mean to go with someone else to do something. You may say to your friend, "Let's go out tonight," meaning let's go somewhere – to a movie, to a game, to take a walk. "To go out" can also mean to be in a romantic relationship with someone: "I'm going out with a beautiful woman." That would be saying I am dating a beautiful woman. I'm not, of course, I'm already married – I don't do that sort of thing!



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Natalie says, “You mean on a date?” She’s not sure if Sergio is just asking her as a friend or as a possible girlfriend. Sergio says, “Yeah (yes), with me” – of course! Natalie says, “I’d love to.” Sergio must be very happy, he says, “Really?” – a little surprised; lack of confidence Sergio! “I mean, that’s great.” He realizes that he shouldn’t have said “really,” which expresses surprise, so he says, “I mean,” correcting himself, “that’s great.”

“I was thinking we could grab dinner on Friday and then see a movie.” “To grab” (grab) usually means to get, or to take something with your hand, but we use this expression also to mean, in this case, to go and do something, usually informally: “Let’s grab some dinner.” We often say, “Let’s grab a bite to eat,” meaning let’s go eat something – not a fancy, formal place, but an informal place. Sergio says, “How does that sound?” The expression “how does that sound” is used when you are asking someone’s opinion about something you have said or you have “proposed” – you have recommended.

Natalie says, “Oh, I already have plans for Friday.” If someone says they “have plans,” they mean they’re busy, they can’t do something; they have another commitment. We hope Natalie doesn’t have another date! Sergio says, “How about Saturday?” Natalie says, “I’m tied up on Saturday, too.” To be “tied up” means to be busy, to be occupied; you’re not able to do something because you have another commitment. It’s similar to “to have plans.” “Tied up” has a couple of meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Things are not sounding too good here for poor Sergio; Natalie seems to have a very busy life! Natalie says, “I’m free tomorrow, though.” “I’m free” means I’m not busy; I’m available, I can go with you tomorrow. “I don’t suppose you want to go out tomorrow night,” she asks Sergio. This expression, “I don’t suppose...” is a polite way of asking a question, of asking someone whether something is true or whether someone can do something. For example: “I don’t suppose that it’s raining out right now?” You’re asking someone “Is it raining out?” – you don’t think so. You can also use it to be polite: “I don’t suppose you want to go to dinner with me,” meaning you probably don’t, but I want to ask you anyway. Of course, you really want to go to dinner with that person, you’re just being polite by saying “I don’t suppose.”

Sergio says, “Sure, I can make it tomorrow.” “To make it,” here, means to be able to do something – to go somewhere. “Can you make it to the movie?” meaning are you able to go to the movie. Or you may say, “I can’t make it” – I’m not able to go. “I’ll pick you up,” Sergio says, “around 7:00.” “To pick someone up” is a phrasal verb meaning to drive to someone’s house in your car and take



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that person with you in your car. Usually it means you have a car – an automobile.

Sergio says, “I’ll pick you up at 7:00. Is that okay?” Natalie says, “Yeah, that works for me.” “To work,” here, means to be acceptable, to be okay, not to cause any problems. “To work” has lots of meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Sergio says, “I’m really looking forward to it.” “To look forward to something” means to be excited, to be happy about something. Of course, Sergio is excited about going on a date with Natalie. Natalie says, “Me, too,” which is our informal way of saying I am looking forward to it also.

What will happen with Natalie and Sergio? I’m not sure. Perhaps this will be the first of many dates!

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

[start of dialogue]

Natalie: Hello.

Sergio: Hi, could I speak to Natalie?

Natalie: This is she.

Sergio: Oh hi, this is Sergio. How are you?

Natalie: Good. How about you?

Sergio: I’m great. Uh, well, the reason I’m calling is I was wondering if you’d like to go out sometime?

Natalie: You mean on a date?

Sergio: Yeah, with me.

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Sergio: Sure, I can make it tomorrow. I'll pick you up around 7:00. Is that okay?

Natalie: Yeah, that works for me. See you tomorrow at 7:00.

Sergio: I'm really looking forward to it.

Natalie: Me, too.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse. We're looking forward to your next script 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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