



ESL Podcast 365 – Putting the Children to Bed

GLOSSARY

turn – the time when one person needs to do something, because another person did it previously; the moment when one person does something in a sequence with other people

* They were playing a long game and took a break for lunch, but when they came back they couldn't remember whose turn it was.

to put the kids to bed – to help young children get ready to go to sleep

* When you put the kids to bed, did you remind them to brush their teeth?

nope – no; an informal way to make a negative response

* - Do you like green beans?

- Nope, I don't.

bedtime story – a short story that is told or read to young children while they are lying in bed to make them tired at night when it is time to sleep

* When I was a child, my favorite bedtime story was The Giant Jam Sandwich.

pajamas – comfortable clothes worn while sleeping

* Mike used to wear pajamas to bed, but now he prefers to wear an old t-shirt instead.

lights out – the time when the lights in a room must be turned off so that one can fall asleep

* The soldiers are on a strict schedule with lights out at 11:00 p.m.

to watch over (someone or something) – to observe; to monitor; to watch what someone or something is doing to make sure that it is done correctly

* Who is going to watch over your daughter while you are at the meeting tonight?

method – a way of doing something; technique

* Melissa's method for making a sale is to be very friendly with the client and always send a thank-you note after a meeting.

this I've got to see – a phrase used to show that one does not think something is possible and needs to see it to be able to believe it

* When Jimmy said that he could clean his room in just four minutes, his mom said, "This I've got to see!"

cuddle – hugs, caresses, and gentle touches to show affection and love



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* Peggy Sue cannot fall asleep unless she has time for a cuddle with her favorite teddy bear.

monster – an imaginary (not real) creature that scares children

* When you were a child, did you believe that monsters lived under your bed?

through the night – all night long; during an entire night

* Chelsea didn't sleep well, because she had strange dreams all through the night.

nonsense – foolishness; silliness; a word used to show that one does not believe or agree with what another person has said or done

* Keith said that walking under a ladder is bad luck, but I think that's nonsense.

harm – damage, pain, or injury; negative consequences of doing something

* Riding a bicycle without a helmet can cause great physical harm.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these is part of putting the kids to bed?
 - a) Forgetting the bedtime story.
 - b) Telling the kids to brush their teeth.
 - c) Finishing the newspaper.

2. Why does Andrea think that telling the children about Norman is a bad idea?
 - a) Because they need to have a cuddle.
 - b) Because they will have bad dreams.
 - c) Because it will put them to sleep.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

turn

The word “turn,” in this podcast, means the time when one person needs to do something, because another person did it previously: “Paulina and Kristoff take turns washing the dishes: she does it on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, and he does it on Tuesdays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.” As a verb, “to turn” means to move toward the right or left: “Drive straight for three blocks and then turn right.” Or, “When she heard someone call her name, she turned toward the sound of the voice.” The verb “to turn” can also mean to move an object so that it is facing a different direction: “The little girl turned the dolls toward each other and pretended that they were having a conversation.”

lights out

In this podcast, the phrase “lights out” means the time when the lights in a room must be turned off so that one can fall asleep: “At the children’s summer camp, lights out is always at 9:45 p.m.” The phrase “to knock (someone’s) lights out” means to hit someone very hard so that he or she falls down and is not conscious: “Two drunk men got into a fight and the bigger one knocked his friend’s lights out.” The phrase “to light up (something)” means to illuminate something, or to shine light on something: “When are they going to light up the Christmas tree in Rockefeller Center?” Finally, the phrase “to light up (one’s) life” means to make one’s life better, happier, and/or more interesting: “Grandchildren light up their grandparents’ life.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Many American families have bedtime “rituals” (things that are done the same way every time) for their children. These rituals not only help children do all the things they need to do before going to bed, but also help them “calm down” (become quiet) at the end of the day so that they can “fall asleep” (begin to sleep) more easily.

Bedtime rituals usually begin in the bathroom, where children use the toilet, brush their teeth, and wash their face and hands. Parents help young children do these things, and often watch older children do them by themselves. Next, children change into their pajamas.

Once these things are finished, the children get into bed and the parents “tuck” (fold fabric around something) the blankets around them. Often they tuck in the child’s favorite “stuffed animal” (a soft toy in the shape of an animal), too. Then they often spend time talking together.

Parents of young children usually read a bedtime story, pointing to the pictures and using a soft voice until the children fall asleep. Parents often ask older children to tell them about their day at school. Some religious families pray together before falling asleep. Parents often give their children a kiss on the “forehead” (the skin above one’s eyes and below one’s hair) before they fall asleep.

Even with these bedtime rituals, children often do not want to fall asleep and try to “stall” (do something to cause a delay and make something happen later than it normally would). These children often ask their parents for a glass of water, or say that they have to go to the bathroom again before they can fall asleep.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 365: Putting the Children to Bed.

This is ESL Podcast number 365. 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 and download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guide is an 8 to 10 page PDF file that you can download, print out, and use to improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Putting the Children to Bed." "Putting the children to bed" means to get the young children ready so that they can go to sleep. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Andrea: It's your turn to put the kids to bed.

Marlon: No, I put them to bed last night, didn't I?

Andrea: Nope, I did that. Don't forget their bedtime story.

Marlon: The kids won't let me forget it. Okay, time for bed! Go brush your teeth and put on your pajamas. It's lights out in 15 minutes.

Andrea: What are you doing?

Marlon: I'm finishing my newspaper.

Andrea: Aren't you going to watch over them to make sure they're getting ready for bed?

Marlon: Nope. You have your methods and I have mine.

Andrea: Okay, this I've got to see.

Marlon: I don't hear anyone brushing their teeth. If everyone isn't in bed in five minutes, they're going to get a cuddle from Norman.



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Andrea: Who's Norman?

Marlon: Norman is just a little scary monster I told them about. Norman eats little children who aren't in bed when they're supposed to be. It's my way of making sure they stay in bed through the night.

Andrea: That's terrible! That'll give them nightmares.

Marlon: Nonsense. It won't do them any harm. As my father told me, Norman only eats bad children.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Andrea saying to Marlon, "It's your turn to put the kids to bed." "Turn," here, is the time when someone needs to do something, because, usually, the other person did it before. For example, if there are five children and each one has to answer a question, after the first child answers it's the second child's turn, and then the third child's turn, and the fourth child's turn, and the fifth child's turn. Each one has to do something following the other person. "Turn" has several meanings in English; take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations of those.

Andrea says to Marlon, "It's your turn to put the kids to bed," to get the children ready to go to sleep. Marlon says, "No, I put them to bed last night, didn't I?" And Andrea says, "Nope (meaning no), I did that. "Nope" is an informal way of saying no, you don't want to say it to your boss, but it's okay in a family or among friends. "Nope" is a little stronger way of emphasizing the "no."

Andrea says, "Don't forget their bedtime story." The "bedtime" is the time that children go to bed; the "bedtime story" is usually a short story, a book perhaps, that is told or read to young children while they are lying in bed to make them tired, to make them relaxed so they can sleep more easily. That's the "bedtime story."

Marlon says, "The kids won't let me forget it," meaning they'll tell me about the bedtime story because children generally like a bedtime story, at least that's the tradition here in the United States. Marlon then shouts at the children, "Okay, time for bed (meaning it's time for you to go to sleep)! Go brush your teeth (go clean your teeth) and put on your pajamas." "Pajamas" (pajamas) are comfortable clothes that you wear while you are sleeping. Not everyone wears pajamas, but many people do, especially children. Marlon says to them, "It's lights out in 15 minutes." "Lights out" is the time when the lights in a room must



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be turned off, or will be turned off, so everyone can fall the asleep. Often in the army, or in the military services, there are men and women who are sleeping together in a big room, and they turn the lights off at a certain time so everyone can fall asleep. That's "lights out." There are a couple of other meanings of this expression; once again, take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations.

Andrea says, "What are you doing?" Marlon, who is still sitting at the table, says, "I'm finishing my newspaper (I'm finishing reading my newspaper)." Andrea says, "Aren't you going to watch over them to make sure they're getting ready for bed?" "To watch over someone (or something)" is a phrasal verb meaning to look and observe something to make sure that it is actually happening, or the person is doing what they are supposed to be doing; It's monitoring, or supervising.

Marlon says, "Nope. You have your methods and I have mine," you have your way of doing something – your technique, and I have mine. Andrea says, "Okay, this I've got to see." This expression, "this I've got to see," is a phrase we use to show that we don't really think something is possible and need to see it in order to believe it. If we don't see it, we won't believe it, usually because it's something we don't think is true or don't think is possible. Andrea doesn't think it's possible for the children to be put to bed unless Marlon goes and watches over them.

Marlon then shouts to the children, "I don't hear anyone brushing their teeth," meaning the children aren't doing what he told them to do. Then he says, "If everyone isn't in bed in five minutes, they're going to get a cuddle from Norman." A "cuddle" (cuddle) is like a hug, when you touch someone else to show them that you love them or that you like them, that is "to cuddle." It's something that a married couple, for example, might do in bed; they may "cuddle," they may hold each other close to show that they love each other.

Marlon says the children will get a cuddle from Norman. Andrea asks who Norman is. Marlon answers, "Norman is just a little scary monster I told them about." Something that is "scary" is something that makes you afraid, something that frightens you. A "monster" is an imaginary – not real – creature or animal that is supposed to scare people, especially children. You'll often read about a monster in a story or see a monster in some sort of cartoon for children. Monsters are usually bad people – or I should say, bad creatures or animals.

Marlon says Norman is a monster he told his children about, "Norman eats little children who aren't in bed when they're supposed to." So he told his children that if they are not in bed when they're supposed to be, Norman will come and



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eat them. He says, “It’s my way of making sure they stay in bed through the night.” He doesn’t want them getting out of bed, so he tells them this story about Norman the monster. The expression “through the night” means during the entire night, or all night long.

Andrea says, “That’s terrible! That will give them nightmares.” “Nightmares” are bad dreams. Marlon says, “Nonsense.” This is a word to show that you don’t agree with what someone has just said or done, you are expressing a very strong feeling that the person is wrong, that they are foolish; they are ridiculous, perhaps. Someone says “nonsense” to you, that means they disagree very strongly with what you just said. Once again, not something you would say to your boss or colleague at work.

Marlon, then, is disagreeing with Andrea, saying that this idea of Norman coming to eat them will not give them nightmares. I kind of like this idea that Marlon has, actually! Marlon says, “It won’t do them any harm.” “Harm” is damage, pain, or injury; “harm” is the negative consequence of doing something, something bad that will happen to you if you do something. Marlon says, “It won’t do them any harm (it won’t cause the children any damage). As my father told me, Norman only eats bad children.” So obviously, Marlon got this story from his father and is just using it with his own children, just as his father used it with him.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Marlon: Nope. You have your methods and I have mine.

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Andrea: That's terrible! That'll give them nightmares.

Marlon: Nonsense. It won't do them any harm. As my father told me, Norman only eats bad children.

[end of dialogue]

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

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on ESL Podcast.

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