



ESL Podcast 376 – Asking About Business Hours

GLOSSARY

business hours – the time a business is open; the hours during the day customers can spend time in a store, restaurant, or other business

* The store's business hours are from 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

24/7 – 24 hours a day, seven days a week; to always be open; to never close

* Why are so many gas stations open 24/7?

seven days a week – every day of the week; Sunday through Saturday

* He works out at the gym seven days a week.

more often than not – most of the time; almost always

* Because she is a good student, she will get her homework done long before it is due, more often than not.

major holidays – most celebrated holidays in the United States, such as Christmas, Easter, Fourth of July, etc.; nationally celebrated holidays

* None of our employees have to work on major holidays so they can be with their families.

every other – every alternate; every second

* My uncle goes for a bike ride every other evening throughout the summer.

extended hours – hours a business is open past its normal business hours; business hours which are added past normal business hours

* The store is open extended hours during the Christmas season for late-night shoppers.

renovation – repair; making new; restoring to a better condition

* Since the apartment building was built in the early 1900s, the landlord decided it was time to hire a construction company to renovate the building.

no good – useless; pointless; not useful

* That pen is no good anymore because I broke it.

exterminator – one who gets rid of unwanted insects, such as cockroaches and termites, or varmints (mice, bats, etc.); one who uses deadly chemicals to destroy pests in a building

*The exterminator laid poison out to try and kill all the rats in the building.



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to pull (one's) leg – to joke; to kid

- * - New York City is the capitol of the United States.
- Stop pulling my leg. I know that the capitol of the U.S. is Washington, D.C.

respectable – known by others to be good; with a good reputation

- * I consider that a nice, respectable restaurant, because it serves good food at good prices, its staff is friendly, and it's family oriented.

the week after next – two weeks from this week; the week that follows next week

- * I have to fly to Chicago the week after next.

out of luck – not lucky; not fortunate; without success

- * If you sleep in tomorrow and are late for your math test tomorrow, you'll be out of luck. The professor doesn't allow students who arrive late to take the test.

exception – leaving something out of a list or group; unusual; different from what is normal or typical

- * I don't normally eat meat, but I made an exception when my girlfriend's mother invited me over to her house for dinner.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is one of the reasons the shoe store will be closed in the next couple of weeks?
 - a) The store is closing for Memorial Day.
 - b) The store is closing due to bad weather.
 - c) The store is closing for renovation.

2. If you go to the store next Wednesday, what will you find?
 - a) The store will be open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
 - b) The store will be closed because the exterminators will be there.
 - c) The store will be closed because the owner will be on vacation.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

out of Luck

In this podcast, the phrase “out of luck” means not lucky or not fortunate: “The man showed up to the post office to buy stamps five minutes after it had closed, so he was out of luck.” The opposite, “in luck,” means to be fortunate or to be lucky: “I know many of you haven’t finished your homework, but you’re in luck because I’m not going to have you hand it in until tomorrow.” The phrase “to luck out” also means to be fortunate or to be lucky: “We lucked out because we arrived two minutes before the store closed.” Finally, the phrase “as luck would have it” means by chance or by fate: “Our bus ran out of gas, but as luck would have it there was a gas station only two blocks away.”

to pull (one’s) leg

The phrase “to pull one’s leg” means to joke with someone or to tell him or her something untrue as a joke, usually as harmless fun: “I think Beatrice was just pulling my leg when she said she is 75 years old this year.” The phrase “to pull something” means to play a trick on someone or to try to deceive someone: “We’d better watched those kids carefully or they may try to pull something.” “To pull the wool over (someone’s) eyes” means to deceive or to trick someone: “We can try, but I don’t think we can pull the wool over Mom’s eyes about the broken lamp.” Or, “The company tried to pull the wool over its customers’ eyes by telling them there was nothing wrong with their product even though they knew differently.”



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CULTURE NOTE

There are many kinds of businesses and organizations in the United States, and each type has a different set of standard business hours. These include government offices, “convenience stores” (small stores selling food, daily items, and gas), “supermarkets” (grocery stores), “pharmacies” (drugstores), and shopping malls. The “products” (goods; items) a business sells and the type of people the business sells its products to often helps “determine” (choose) when its business will be open.

Convenience stores, for example, give shoppers an option when other stores are closed and many stay open 24 hours a day, seven days a week “to cater to” (meet the needs of) people who work or stay up late (or very early), or for travelers. People who are traveling need to stop “periodically” (every now and then; occasionally) to fill their cars with gas, “to grab a bite to eat” (get some food), or to get something to drink, and being able to do all these things in one place makes it very convenient.

Supermarkets and pharmacies are usually open for business either 24/7 or from early in the morning to late at night. Supermarkets and pharmacies like to be open for business before people go to work and after people finish their workday. Supermarkets and pharmacies know that people need to buy “groceries” (food products) and other “essential” (necessary, needed) items for their homes, but that most people won’t be able to shop during the standard work hours of 9:00 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Shopping malls are also open fairly long hours during the day “to accommodate” (make things convenience for) shoppers who work standard work hours. They are usually open from 9:00 a.m. or 10:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m. or 9:00 p.m. on “weekdays” (Monday through Friday), and until 5:00 p.m. or 6:00 p.m. on the weekends.

The offices that people who work 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. have the most difficulty visiting are government offices such as “county courthouses” (buildings where a court of law and other government offices are located) or “post offices” (buildings where mail is handled). These are typically open from about 8:00 or 9:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 376: Asking About Business Hours.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 376. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

You can visit our website at eslpod.com. When you're there, you can download a Learning Guide to this episode, an 8 to 10 page guide that contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, new sample sentences using the words that we describe and discuss on the podcast. You'll also find comprehension questions, cultural notes, additional explanations of vocabulary not found on the audio portion of this episode, and a complete transcript of everything we say.

This episode is called "Asking About Business Hours." It's a telephone conversation between Karin and a man who owns a store, and she asks about their hours of business. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Store owner: Hello.

Karin: Hello, is this Joe's Shoe Repair?

Store owner: Yes, how can I help you?

Karin: I'm calling to find out your business hours.

Store owner: We're open 24/7.

Karin: Really? You're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week?

Store owner: Yes, we are, more often than not. Of course we close for major holidays.

Karin: Is that all?

Store owner: We also close the first and third Monday and every other Sunday of each month, except the fourth Sunday, when we're always open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., unless we have extended hours.



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Karin: Oh, okay. If I brought in a pair of shoes to be fixed today, how quickly can you have them ready?

Store owner: Normally, we can have shoes repaired in three or four days, but not this week.

Karin: Why?

Store owner: We're closed Wednesday through Friday for renovation.

Karin: Okay, what if I brought them in next week?

Store owner: That's no good either. The exterminators are coming in and we're closed Monday through Thursday.

Karin: Are you pulling my leg?

Store owner: Of course not! This is a respectable business. I never joke about business.

Karin: How about the week after next?

Store owner: Sorry, but you're out of luck. The week after next we're closed for vacation.

Karin: When do you actually open 24/7?

Store owner: We're always open 24/7 – with just a few exceptions.

[end of dialogue]

Our phone conversation begins with the store owner answering the phone, saying, "Hello." Karin says, "Hello, is this Joe's Shoe Repair?" The store owner says, "Yes, how can I help you," which is a standard way of answering the phone for a business. Someone calls, you say, "How can help you?" Karin says, "I'm calling to find out your business hours," the time that the business is open. The store owner says, "We're open 24/7." This means 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In other words, they're always open; they never close.

Karin says, "Really? You're open 24 hours a day, seven days a week (every single day of the week, Sunday through Saturday)?" The store owner says,



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“Yes, we are, more often than not.” So, already he’s beginning to change the message here. He says they’re open 24/7, but then he says, “more often than not,” which means most of the time – almost always. “Of course,” he says, “we close for major holidays.” “Major holidays” would be the most celebrated holidays – the most important holidays. In the United States, the Fourth of July, Christmas, Thanksgiving, these are major holidays.

The woman then asks, “Is that all (meaning are those the only days and times you’re closed)?” The store owner says, “We also close the first and third Monday and every other Sunday of each month, except the fourth Sunday.” “We close the first and third Monday” means the first and third Monday of the month, “and every other Sunday.” “Every other” means every second, every alternate. He also says that on the fourth Sunday they’re “always open 8:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., unless we have extended hours.” So, on the last Sunday – or the fourth Sunday, I should say, of the month, they’re only open from 8:00 in the morning to 5:00 in the afternoon unless they have extended hours. “Extended hours” are hours a business is open past its normal time for closing. So if you normally close at 5:00 p.m., and one day you decide to be open until 9:00 p.m., that’s extended hours. Stores often have extended hours before Christmas, to give people more of a chance to spend their money.

It’s obvious now that the store owner isn’t open 24/7. Karin says, “Oh, okay. If I brought in a pair of shoes to be fixed today, how quickly can you have them ready?” This is a shoe repair business, so she wants to have her shoes repaired, and, in this case, she wants to know how quickly the store owner can have them ready – how long will it take to fix them. He says, “Normally, we can have shoes repaired in three or four days, but not this week.” Karin says, “Why?” Once again, we suspect – we think here that there’s going to be a problem with this store owner. The store owner says, “We’re closed Wednesday through Friday for renovation.” Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday would be Wednesday through Friday. “Renovation” is repair. Often when a building gets old, or it needs work, they “renovate” it; they have a renovation of the building. They make it new; they repair it so it looks better.

Karin says, “Okay, what if I brought them in next week (what if I brought them to you next week)?” The store owner says, “That’s no good either.” “That’s no good” means that’s not useful, that is not going to help, that won’t be better. He says, “The exterminators are coming in and we’re closed Monday through Thursday.” An “exterminator” is someone who gets rid of unwanted insects, such as cockroaches, termites, mice, or other animals that are in your building that you don’t want. Usually an exterminator uses some deadly chemicals to kill what we



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would call “pests,” little animals that are in your house or your building that you don’t want there – like my neighbors cat!

Karin then asks the owner, “Are you pulling my leg?” The expression “to pull someone’s leg” means to be joking, to be kidding, to say something just to be funny. Karin can’t believe the store owner is serious that he is closed all of these different days, especially when he started the conversation by saying that he was open 24/7, all the time. For some additional explanations and definitions of that expression, go to our Learning Guide for today.

The store owner says, “Of course not (meaning I’m not joking)! This is a respectable business. I never joke about business.” “Respectable” means it is known to be good; it has a good reputation; people have a good opinion of this business. Karin then asks, “How about the week after next?” She’s asking if she can bring her shoes in the week after next week, which would be two weeks from this week; the week that follows next week.

The store owner says, “Sorry, but you’re out of luck.” “You’re out of luck” means you are not lucky; you are not fortunate; you will not be successful. “You’re out of luck. The week after next we’re closed for vacation.” So now he’s saying that they are going to be gone an entire week on vacation. Karin says, “When do actually open 24/7?” The store owner says, “We’re always open 24/7 – with just a few exceptions.” An “exception” is something that is not normal, not typical, something that is left out of a group or a list – unusual. Of course, there aren’t a few exceptions; there are many exceptions to his rule of being open 24/7!

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by the very respectable Dr. Lucy Tse.



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

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