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**ESL Podcast 410 – Being Evasive**

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**GLOSSARY**

**ask away** – a phrase used to invite someone to ask whatever questions he or she wants to ask; a phrase used to let someone know that he or she can ask anything

- \* - I'd like to ask you some questions about your experience in our store today.
- Okay, ask away.

**to come up with (something)** – to think of something; to have a new idea

- \* Where did you come up with the idea to open a Vietnamese restaurant?

**let me tell you** – a phrase used to show that one knows a lot about a topic and can answer another person's questions; a phrase used to show that one knows more about something than another person does

- \* Let me tell you about what that neighborhood was like 20 years ago.

**grown-up** – adult; a person who is more than 18 years old

- \* When I was a child, I thought that being a grown-up would be exciting and lots of fun, but really it's a lot of work!

**pipsqueak** – an informal term for a small, unimportant person; a young child

- \* Bruno doesn't like his new employee and he calls her a pipsqueak when he's out of the office.

**to mind (one's) own business** – to pay attention to one's own life and the things that are important to oneself, not paying attention to things in other people's lives or things that one shouldn't or doesn't need to know about

- \* Shimo was asking a lot of questions about my personal life, so I told him to mind his own business.

**no comment** – a phrase used to show that one does not want to answer a question or talk about a topic, often used when people don't want to answer questions from reporters (journalists)

- \* - Mr. President, could you please explain why you spent more than \$200,000 in travel last year?
- No comment.

**confidential** – information that should not be shared with other people; secret information

- \* Bank employees often work with confidential information, like how much money people have.



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**personal** – relating to a single person, not needing to be shared with other people

\* Maurizio left his job for personal reasons. No one really knows why he stopped working here.

**never you mind** – a phrase used to tell someone that he or she doesn't need to know something and should stop asking about it

\* - Daddy, do we have enough money to buy a new car?  
- Never you mind. Your mother and I will take care of the family's finances.

**peace and quiet** – tranquility; a time and place where everything is calm

\* Jake often leaves the city and goes to the mountains to enjoy some peace and quiet.

**don't "(something)" me** – a phrase used to show that one is not happy with what another person has said; a phrase used to show irritation or annoyance with what someone has said

\* Don't "oh, Mom" me. You're not going anywhere until you clean your room.

**to wait and see** – to wait and see what will happen in the future; to show that one will make a decision later, depending on some later event(s)

\* They decided to wait and see how much the tickets would be before they decided to go to the concert.

**out of (something)** – without something; not having any more of something

\* The store was out of limes, so I bought some lemons instead.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Olivia's dad tell her to ask away?
    - a) Because he wants her to stand further away as she asks questions.
    - b) Because he wants her to ask him her questions.
    - c) Because he wants her to change the way that she's asking something.
  
  2. Why does Olivia's dad tell her to mind her own business?
    - a) Because he wants her to work harder.
    - b) Because he wants her to find the answer at work.
    - c) Because he wants her to pay attention to the things that affect her.
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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **comment**

The phrase “no comment,” in this podcast, is used to show that one does not want to answer a question or talk about a topic and is often used when people don't want to answer questions from reporters (journalists): “When the police asked the man why he had stolen the money, he said, ‘no comment.’” A “comment” is also something that one says or writes to show an opinion about something: “Do you have any comments on our report?” As a verb, “to comment” means to provide an opinion about something: “More than 150 people called to comment about what was said on the radio yesterday.” Or, “At the art museum, the artist sadly commented that very few people understand his paintings.”

#### **personal**

In this podcast, the word “personal” means relating to a single person and not needing to be shared with other people: “Our company keeps employees' personal information in a locked office.” The phrase “to get personal” means to say something that is very hurtful and unkind to or about a person: “Sometimes the candidates who want to become president get personal and attack each other's personal lives or their families.” The phrase “it's nothing personal” is used when one has to do or say something but wants the other person to know that it is not because of the other person: “The woman looked angry when I asked her how old she was, so I told her, ‘It's nothing personal’ and explained that we have to ask all our patients how old they are.



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**CULTURE NOTE**

Young children are often very interested in knowing where babies come from, but their parents are often “embarrassed” (uncomfortable) telling them the truth. Some parents say that a “stork” (a large, white bird that lives near the ocean) carries babies in its “beak” (the long, hard part of a bird’s face, where its mouth is), but only very young children believe this. Most of them want to know all about “the birds and the bees,” which means “sex education,” or information about how men and women are different physically and can have sex to “conceive” (make babies).

In the United States, “public schools” (schools that are created and operated by the government and are not owned by a business) have sex education classes. These are often “controversial,” with some people thinking that the classes are very good and other people thinking that the classes are very bad. People who “favor” sex education classes think that they are good because they teach children what they want and need to know, which will help them make better, healthier decisions. People who dislike sex education classes think that they give children too much information and “encourage” (help someone do something) children to have sex while they are too young.

American schools usually tell parents when sex education classes will be “held” (when they will happen) and what will be “discussed” (talked about) in the classes. Parents can choose to “opt out” (decide not to participate) and “pull their children out” of the classes (not allow their children go to those classes) if they think the information would be “inappropriate” (wrong) for their children.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 410: Being Evasive.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 410. 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](http://eslpod.com). When you go there, you can download a Learning Guide that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is called "Being Evasive." Someone who is "evasive" doesn't tell you the truth; gives you the half truth, but not the whole truth. It's a dialogue between a daughter and her father, and the father has difficulty answering the questions of his daughter. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Olivia: Dad, can I ask you a question?

Dad: You just did.

Olivia: I mean, can I ask you another question?

Dad: Ask away.

Olivia: Where do babies come from?

Dad: What? Where did you come up with that one?

Olivia: I don't know.

Dad: Let me tell you. That's for grown-ups to know. You're just a pipsqueak. You mind your own business and I'll tell you when you're a little older.

Olivia: Why can't you tell me now?

Dad: No comment.

Olivia: Dad, what does no comment mean?



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Dad: That's confidential.

Olivia: Why is it confidential?

Dad: That's personal.

Olivia: Dad, just tell me.

Dad: Never you mind.

Olivia: But I want to know!

Dad: And I want to know why I can't get some peace and quiet in this house.

Olivia: Oh, Dad.

Dad: Don't "oh, Dad" me. Just wait and see. You'll get all the answers you want when you're older.

Olivia: But Dad, I want to know now. Where do babies come from?

Dad: I'm out of answers. Go ask your mother.

Olivia: I did. Mom said to ask you.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Olivia saying, "Dad, can I ask you a question?" and Dad says, trying to be funny, "You just did," meaning if you ask someone if you can ask a question, of course, you're asking a question already. So, Dad's a funny guy. Olivia says, "I mean, can I ask another question?" – an additional question. Dad says, "Ask away." This is a phrase, "ask away," that we use to invite someone to ask whatever questions he or she wants to ask. It's saying you can ask me anything: "ask away." So Olivia says, "Where do babies come from?" This, of course, is one of those questions that children ask their parents at some point, at some age. Parents often have a difficult time explaining this for reasons you probably understand.

Dad says, "What? Where did you come up with that one?" Dad is a little surprised; he says, "Where did you come up with that one." To "come up with" something means to think of something, to have an idea. You might even say,



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“I’ve come up with a plan to save the environment” – I’ve thought of, I have created in my mind.

So, Dad is asking where she came up with this question – how did she think of this. Olivia says, “I don’t know.” Dad says, trying to explain it to her, “Let me tell you.” This is a phrase you use if you are an expert, if you know a lot about a subject or a topic. It tells the other person I know what I’m talking about: “Well, let me tell you.” Sometimes people use that to emphasize the point they are about to make.

Dad says, “That’s for grown-ups to know,” meaning the answer to your question is not for children but for adults. “Grown-up” is a noun referring to someone usually over the age of 18, maybe 21. Dad says, “You’re just a pipsqueak.” This is an interesting word; “pipsqueak” (pipsqueak) is an informal term for someone who is small or not very important. We often use this for a young child. It’s usually a negative term to describe a young child.

Dad says, “You mind your own business and I’ll tell you when you’re a little older.” To “mind your own business” means to pay attention to things that are part of your own life – your own experience, not to worry about other people or other things that you don’t need to know about. So, Dad is saying you don’t need to know the answer to that question. “Mind your own business” is somewhat of a negative expression as well. It’s saying I’m not going to answer your question; it’s none of your business; it’s not anything that concerns you; you don’t have a right to know the answer.

Olivia says, “Why can’t you tell me now?” Dad responds by saying, “No comment.” Usually, this is an expression you’ll hear a politician or a famous person say when a reporter or a journalist from a newspaper or a television station asks a question. When the person doesn’t want to give an answer, they’ll simply say, “No, comment.” Dad is being, again, a little funny here, because it’s his own daughter who’s asking the question. “Comment” has several different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations of that word.

Olivia says, “Dad, what does no comment mean?” She doesn’t really understand the expression; it’s something you see in the news mostly. Dad says, “That’s confidential.” Remember, Dad is being “evasive,” meaning he’s trying not to answer the question, or only answer part of the question. Usually, this is a sign of someone who is trying to hide something, or perhaps someone who is dishonest – not honest. So Dad says the answer is confidential. Again, he’s



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trying to be funny a little bit. Something that is “confidential” is information that you do not give or share with other people; it’s secret information.

Olivia then asks, “Why is it confidential?” and Dad answers, “That’s personal.” Here, when you say something is “personal,” you mean it’s only for one specific or single person, not something for everyone. People may talk about their “personal lives,” meaning their life outside of work, outside of the public view, things that no one else needs to know about. Again, Dad, always the joker, says “That’s personal,” meaning it’s just for me to know. “Personal” has several meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations of that word.

Dad then hears Olivia say something that you would hear from someone who really wants to know something, especially a child. Olivia says, “Dad, just tell me.” “Just tell me” – please tell me. Dad says, “Never you mind.” This means you don’t need to know something, and you should stop asking me about it. It’s a bit old-fashioned; it’s a bit of an older expression: “Never you mind.” It does not mean exactly the same thing as “never mind.” “Never mind” means it’s not important, don’t worry about it. For example, when you are asking someone a question and they can’t understand your question, after a few minutes you may say, “Oh, never mind. It’s not important.” “Never you mind” means you should stop asking me this question.

Olivia says, “But I want to know!” Dad responds by saying, “And I want to know why I can’t get some peace and quiet in this house.” The expression “peace and quiet” means a time and a place where everything is calm. “Peace” means no fighting, no shouting, no loud noises. “Quiet” means pretty much the same thing; the opposite of loud is quiet.

Olivia then says, “Oh, Dad,” which is something a child would say when they are frustrated, when they don’t like what is happening: “Oh, Dad.” In this case, she’s mad at her father, or disappointed. Her father responds, “Don’t ‘oh, Dad’ me. Just wait and see.” The expression “don’t (something) me” is a phrase we use to show that you are not happy with what the other person said. It’s a phrase to show your frustration or irritation at someone. So Olivia says, “Oh, Dad,” and Dad responds, “Don’t ‘oh, Dad’ me,” meaning don’t say that to me, don’t say that expression “oh, Dad.”

Dad says, “Just wait and see,” meaning wait and see what will happen in the future. Dad says, “You’ll get all the answers you want when you’re older.” Olivia says, “But Dad, I want to know now. Where do babies come from?” – where do we get babies? Dad says, “I’m out of answers. When you say you are “out of”





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something, you mean you don't have any more of that thing. So Dad is saying I don't have any more answers: "I'm out of answers," and then he says what all good parents say, in this case fathers, "Go ask your mother." When you don't want to deal with what your child is asking you, you send them to the other parent.

Olivia said, "I did (meaning I did ask Mom). Mom said to ask you." Of course, the parents are sending the child back and forth because neither wants to answer the question.

We won't answer the question here. If you don't know where babies come from, just wait and see!

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

[start of dialogue]

Olivia: Dad, can I ask you a question?

Dad: You just did.

Olivia: I mean, can I ask you another question?

Dad: Ask away.

Olivia: Where do babies come from?

Dad: What? Where did you come up with that one?

Olivia: I don't know.

Dad: Let me tell you. That's for grown-ups to know. You're just a pipsqueak. You mind your own business and I'll tell you when you're a little older.

Olivia: Why can't you tell me now?

Dad: No comment.

Olivia: Dad, what does no comment mean?

Dad: That's confidential.



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Olivia: Why is it confidential?

Dad: That's personal.

Olivia: Dad, just tell me.

Dad: Never you mind.

Olivia: But I want to know!

Dad: And I want to know why I can't get some peace and quiet in this house.

Olivia: Oh, Dad.

Dad: Don't "oh, Dad" me. Just wait and see. You'll get all the answers you want when you're older.

Olivia: But Dad, I want to know now. Where do babies come from?

Dad: I'm out of answers. Go ask your mother.

Olivia: I did. Mom said to ask you.

[end of dialogue]

If you want to know who came up with the script, the answer, for this episode, is Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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