



ESL Podcast 411 – Eating Junk Food

GLOSSARY

to hand (someone) (something) – to give something to someone; to pass something to someone

* Could you please hand me the phone? Thanks.

potato chips – a snack made by frying very thin slices of potato in oil and then adding salt and/or other flavors

* Sebastian always has a sandwich, potato chips, and an apple for lunch.

burger – hamburger or cheeseburger; a sandwich made by cooking ground beef and putting it inside bread with mustard, ketchup, onion, lettuce, tomato, and sometimes other things

* Do you want a regular burger or one with bacon and mushrooms?

French fries – a snack made by frying long pieces of potato in oil and then adding salt

* Most people eat their French fries with ketchup, but Christian likes to eat them with mustard.

popcorn – a snack made by taking small pieces of dry corn and putting them over heat until they burst open (explode) into light, white pieces that are usually covered with butter and salt

* Let's make popcorn and eat it while watching a movie tonight.

junk food – food that is not healthy; food that is not very nutritious

* If you eat a lot of junk food every day, you will weigh too much and not be very healthy.

to watch what (one) eats – to try to eat healthy foods, usually so that one can lose weight or become healthier

* The doctor said she must watch what she eats and try to eat less salt.

to stuff (one's) face – to eat a lot of something very quickly; to eat too much

* Katrina stuffed her face at the party and now her stomach hurts.

tradition – something that is done on the same day, at the same time, and in the same way every year/month/week; something that has been done the same way many times in the past and continues to be done

* In our family, it's a tradition to eat Christmas breakfast before opening any presents.



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candy bar – a sweet, rectangular food that usually has nuts, chocolate, and caramel in it

* Do you want a candy bar with or without nuts?

door-to-door – going to all the homes and/or businesses on a street, knocking on each door to speak with whomever is at home

* Kumio is going door-to-door, trying to get more people to vote for his cousin.

duty – something that one should do; something that one must or needs to do

* The civil engineer's duty is to make sure that the bridge will be safe.

softy – a person who has difficulty saying no and does whatever people ask him or her to do; someone who is easily persuaded to do something

* Ask Fritz to do your work for you. He's too much of a softy to say 'no.'

soda – pop; soda pop; a sweet drink that has many small bubbles

* Soda tastes good, but it is very bad for your teeth because most sodas have a lot of sugar in them.

pizza – a food made by taking a large, round piece of bread, covering it with tomato sauce, cheese, meats, and vegetables, and baking it in an oven

* We had a delicious pizza with mushrooms, red peppers, and olives.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is the American tradition that Frank talks about?
 - a) Eating and watching football at the same time.
 - b) Eating unhealthy foods.
 - c) Watching kids sell things door-to-door.

 2. Why is Frank a softy?
 - a) Because he is fat from eating too much junk food.
 - b) Because he couldn't say 'no' when he was asked to buy candy bars.
 - c) Because he ate 10 candy bars at once.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to hand

The phrase “to hand (someone) (something)” means to give something to someone or to pass something to someone: “Hand me your pen so I can write down your phone number.” The phrase “to hand (something) to (someone)” means the same thing: “Did you hand your wallet to him or did he take it from you?” The phrase “to have to hand it to (someone)” means to admire someone or to think that someone has done something well: “We have to hand it to Mariah. Even though she has had a difficult year, she always comes to work with a smile.” Finally, the phrase “to hand (something) in” means to submit or to give something to someone who is in charge, often giving homework to a teacher: “Don't forget to hand in your homework tomorrow morning.”

duty

In this podcast, the word “duty” means something that one should or must do: “When his sister died, he thought it was his duty to take care of her children.” The phrase “to be on/off duty” means to be working or not working at a given time: “She comes on duty at 9:30 gets off duty at 4:30 on Tuesdays.” The phrase “heavy-duty” means very strong and is often used to describe products: “Which heavy-duty cleaner do you use to clean the bathtub?” The phrase “on active duty” means working in the military: “Their son is on active duty in Cuba.” Finally, a “duty on (something)” is a tax on something, or money that must be paid to the government before something can be bought: “This country has a high duty on cigarettes.”



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CULTURE NOTE

The United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) wants to help Americans eat more healthily. It has “created” (made) a drawing called the food “pyramid” (a triangle with the biggest part on the bottom and the smallest part on the top) to help people understand which kinds of foods they should eat. People should eat more of the foods shown in the bigger parts of the pyramid and less of the foods listed in the smaller parts of the pyramid.

The food pyramid has four big parts, one medium part, and two small parts. The first big part is for “grains” (cereals, like wheat, oats, and barley). The USDA says that people should eat “whole grains” (grains that still have the outside part) which are more “nutritious” (better for one’s health) than other grains. The second big part of the food pyramid is for vegetables and the third big part is for fruits. The USDA “recommends” (says that it is a good idea) “varying” (changing) the vegetables and fruits that people eat and choosing ones with many different colors. The fourth and last big part is for milk and “dairy products” (things made from milk, such as yogurt and cheese). The USDA recommends picking (or choosing) low-fat or fat-free dairy products.

The medium part of the food pyramid is for meat and beans. The USDA recommends picking “lean” (with little fat) meats, like chicken and fish. It also recommends cooking meat in the oven instead of “frying” it (cooking it in oil). Finally, the small part of the food pyramid is for “oils” (fats). The USDA recommends “limiting” (not having very much) oils and picking oils from plants and fish instead of animals.

You can see the USDA food pyramid at www.mypyramid.gov.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 411: Eating Junk Food.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 411. 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. When you go there, you can download a Learning Guide for this episode that contains all of the vocabulary, definitions, new sample sentences using the vocabulary, additional explanations of words we use on this episode that are not explained on the audio file, cultural notes, comprehension questions, and a complete transcript of everything we say on this episode.

This episode is called "Eating Junk Food." It's a dialogue between Frank and Katie about eating food that isn't necessarily very good for your health but tastes good. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Frank: Hand me that bag of potato chips.

Katie: Here. You mean you're still hungry after two burgers and French fries?

Frank: Yeah, I am. I'm a growing boy. Where's the popcorn?

Katie: I can't believe we're eating all of this junk food. I'm supposed to be watching what I eat.

Frank: Forget about it. Who can watch a football game without stuffing their faces? It's an American tradition.

Katie: Where did you get those candy bars?

Frank: Some kids were selling them door-to-door and I thought it was my duty to buy some.

Katie: It was your duty to buy 10 candy bars?!

Frank: What can I say? I'm a softy.



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Katie: I'm getting another soda. Do you want one?

Frank: No, thanks. But while you're up, can you hand me the phone?

Katie: Sure, why?

Frank: I'm ordering a pizza.

[end of dialogue]

We begin with Frank saying to Katie, "Hand me that bag of potato chips." To "hand" someone something means to give something to someone, to pass something to someone. "Hand me" is a command form; it's a little informal. If you were being a little more polite, you would say, "please give me," or "could you please hand me." If you're sitting at a dinner table, you may say, "Hand me the salt" to your husband or child. The word "hand" has many different meanings in English; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations of that term.

Frank says, "Hand me that bag of potato chips." Potato chips is an example of "junk food," food that is not healthy. "Junk" is another word for trash, something you would throw away. Junk food describes food that is bad for you, often cheap food. "Potato chips" are made from very thin slices of a potato that are fried in oil; you put them in hot oil and you get potato chips. You put salt on them. In British English, potato chips are called "crisps," and "chips" means something different in British English. But in American English, "potato chips" is the term we use for this particular kind of junk food.

Katie says, "Here." That's what you might say to someone when you are giving something to someone who is right next to you or in front of you. "Here," meaning here it is. Then she says, "You mean you're still hungry after (eating) two burgers and French fries?" A "burger" is a hamburger. It's a sandwich made by cooking ground beef (from a cow) and putting it in between two pieces of bread, usually adding mustard, ketchup, perhaps lettuce and tomatoes, onions, other things. McDonald's is the largest restaurant that makes hamburgers – that sells hamburgers. They are famous for their hamburgers. "French fries" are a snack that is made by frying long pieces of potato in oil and then adding salt. Once again, you can usually buy French fries at a place that sells hamburgers.

So, Katie is wondering how Frank can still be hungry after eating so much food. Frank says, "Yeah, I am" – yes, I am still hungry. Then he jokes, "I'm a growing



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boy.” When we say someone is a “growing boy,” or a “growing girl,” we mean that they need a lot of energy – they need a lot of food. So, he’s giving this as an excuse. Then he says, “Where’s the popcorn?” “Popcorn” is a snack, something you would eat at, for example the movie theater, where you take small pieces of corn – dry corn – and you put them over heat until they open – until they burst open or explode, and you end up with these little white pieces of corn that you can then put butter and salt on.

Katie then says, “I can’t believe we’re eating all of this junk food. I’m supposed to be watching what I eat.” To “watch what you eat” is an expression that means to try to eat better foods, usually so you can lose weight (if you have too much weight) or become healthier. I need to watch what I eat – that’s for sure!

Frank says, “Forget about it (meaning don’t worry about it). Who can watch a football game without stuffing their faces?” So, Frank and Katie are watching an American football game, which usually takes place on Sunday afternoon. And it is a common tradition to watch the game on television at home and eat junk food, and have snacks while you are watching it. To “stuff your face” means to eat a lot of something very quickly. It’s an informal expression: to “stuff (stuff) your face.” Frank says, “It’s an American tradition.” It’s something that all Americans do on a regular basis – stuff their faces during a football game!

Katie then asks Frank, “Where did you get those candy bars?” A “candy bar” is a small, usually “rectangular” (long and narrow) food that has nuts, chocolate, perhaps something else on it or in it. There are many famous kinds of candy bars; they’re very popular with children. You can buy them in most stores. They are made with a lot of sugar, typically.

Frank says, “Some kids were selling them door-to-door and I thought it was my duty to buy some.” So, where did he buy the candy bars? Well, normally you would buy them in a store, but there are many youth groups and schools that try to “raise money,” meaning they try to get money for their school or their organization by selling things. And they go to your house, they knock on your door, and they try to sell you these things. This is very common; it happens to me in my house maybe two or three times a week. To go “door-to-door” means to go from house to house, or from business to business, knocking on each door, asking to speak to the person so you can sell them something.

Frank says he thought it was his duty to buy some. Your “duty” is something that you are supposed to do, you must do, you need to do. We talk about voting in a democracy being your civic duty, “civic” meaning, in this case, what you owe the rest of society – what you owe your country. So, a duty is something you are



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supposed to do. Of course, Frank is joking here. He doesn't have a duty to buy candy, but he says he does, probably because he was trying to help this school or organization.

Katie says, "It was your duty to buy 10 candy bars?!" Frank says, "What can I say?" This expression is used when you don't have a good answer for what the person is asking you. "Well, what can I say?" – I have no excuse. He says, "I'm a softy" (softy). A "softy" is someone who has difficulty saying no, someone who does whatever people ask him or her to do.

Katie says, "I'm getting another soda. Do you want one?" "Soda," sometimes called "soda pop" or, in Minnesota and in some of the Midwestern states, it's just called "pop." It all refers a sweet drink that usually has small bubbles in it; we say it's "carbonated." Coca-Cola, Pepsi-Cola – these are all examples of sodas, or as we say back in Minnesota, pop.

Frank says, "No, thanks (he does not want another soda). But while you're up," meaning since you are already standing up and going into the kitchen – "while you're up, can you hand me the phone?" Katie says, "Sure, why?" Frank says, "I'm ordering a pizza." "Pizza" is a very typically Italian food, made with a large, in the United States usually round, piece of bread that you put tomato sauce, cheese, perhaps different kinds of meat on top of, and then you bake it in an oven. Pizza is a very popular type of snack food, especially when you are watching a game – a sporting event like a football game.

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

[start of dialogue]

Frank: Hand me that bag of potato chips.

Katie: Here. You mean you're still hungry after two burgers and French fries?

Frank: Yeah, I am. I'm a growing boy. Where's the popcorn?

Katie: I can't believe we're eating all of this junk food. I'm supposed to be watching what I eat.

Frank: Forget about it. Who can watch a football game without stuffing their faces? It's an American tradition.

Katie: Where did you get those candy bars?



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Frank: Some kids were selling them door-to-door and I thought it was my duty to buy some.

Katie: It was your duty to buy 10 candy bars?!

Frank: What can I say? I'm a softy.

Katie: I'm getting another soda. Do you want one?

Frank: No, thanks. But while you're up, can you hand me the phone?

Katie: Sure, why?

Frank: I'm ordering a pizza.

[end of dialogue]

It's my duty to tell you that the script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse – a real softy!

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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