



ESL Podcast 429 – Giving Awards and Congratulations

GLOSSARY

award – something given to a person because he or she has done something well

* Mickey got a “good attendance award” for having come to school every day this past year.

scholarship – money given to a person so that he or she can pay to study in a particular school or program

* The U.S. government offers scholarships to students who want to study science and technology.

ceremony – a special event that honors a person or a group of people, using special words or actions that are often similar or the same every time

* How many people did you invite to your wedding ceremony?

to do just that – to do exactly what one was just talking about

* Each spring, we clean the house thoroughly, and now that it’s April again, it’s time to do just that.

to commend (someone) – to praise someone; to say publicly that someone has done something well

* The soldier was commended for his bravery in the war.

to congratulate (someone) – to say that one is happy because of something good that has happened to another person

* We congratulate you on the birth of your son!

well deserved – with merit; something that should have happened because someone worked hard for it or did all the things that were necessary

* Margie’s Most Valuable Player award was well deserved, since she scored more than twice as many points as anyone else on her team did.

recipient – the person who receives something; the person who is given something

* Do you like to give people presents or do you prefer to be the recipient?

outstanding achievement – a very good and impressive accomplishment, in school or in a specific field

* Verna was recognized by the city officials for her outstanding achievement in community service.



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hearty – friendly, happy, and loud; sincere; heart-felt

* Joe gave his friend a hearty hug.

to be awarded (something) – to receive an award, honor, or recognition

* Who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize?

prestigious – very important and well respected; one of the best

* These are three of the most prestigious universities in the United States.

to honor – to show publicly that someone has done something very well and that other people are grateful and/or admire him or her

* The reporter was honored with a Pulitzer Prize for her outstanding writing.

a job well done – a phrase used to show that someone has done something very well

* Thank you for your excellent work on that report – a job well done!

dedication – commitment; hard work put into something

* This organization is a success thanks to the dedication of its volunteers.

deserving – having earned something because of what one has done; very good

* Of all the applicants, I think this one is most deserving of the job.

please accept my sincere congratulations – a formal phrase used to tell someone that one is very happy and proud of what he or she has done

* Please accept my sincere congratulations on your engagement.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What is a prestigious award?
 - a) A very important award.
 - b) A very expensive award.
 - c) A very well deserved award.

 2. Why is Ms. Niehbur deserving?
 - a) Because she doesn't have very much money.
 - b) Because she always serves other people.
 - c) Because she is very committed to her work.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

ceremony

The word “ceremony,” in this podcast, means a special event that honors a person or a group of people: “What time will the graduation ceremony begin?” The phrase “without ceremony” means very informally, or sometimes without being polite: “The actress surprised everyone, accepting the award without ceremony, simply saying ‘thank you.’” The phrase “to not stand on ceremony” means to be informal and not worry about the rules regarding how one should behave and what one should do: “Don’t stand on ceremony. Come in, relax, and drink a beer with us!” Finally, the “master of ceremonies,” or “MC,” is the person who introduces guests or speakers at an event: “The master of ceremonies shared the speaker’s biography with the audience.”

to honor

In this podcast, the verb “to honor” means to show publicly that someone has done something very well and that other people are grateful and/or admire him or her for it: “Maggie was honored as the ‘most likely to succeed’ by her fellow students.” Or, “The city had a special event to honor its police officers.” The phrase “to honor (something)” means to do what one has agreed to do: “Do you think they’ll honor their agreement?” Or, “The electrician didn’t honor the contract.” The phrase “to honor a check” means for a bank to pay money to someone because a check has been written to that person: “I took your check to the bank, but they said that they couldn’t honor it because there wasn’t enough money in your account.”



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CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, there are many types of awards. Some of the most simple awards are just a “certificate,” or a piece of paper that states which award was won, by whom, and when. Sometimes an organization will give someone a “framed certificate,” where the piece of paper is put underneath a piece of glass or plastic and has wood around the edges, so that it is ready to hang on a wall.

Other awards are much more “elaborate” (fancy and impressive). Companies and universities sometimes have “plaques” for their awards. A plaque is a flat piece of metal, wood, glass, or stone where a person’s name and the date are written each time someone wins an award. Plaques are most common when the same award is given every year, and they are usually hung where many people can see them.

Many sports-related awards are “trophies,” or large objects made of metal that sit on a table or shelf. A trophy often has a small “sculpture” (three-dimensional art made from metal) of an athlete for that sport, but other trophies might just be a very large cup or plate. Often the name of the award recipient is “engraved” (cut into metal) on the trophy.

Finally, some awards are things that people can wear, such as a gold watch. Many companies used to give their “long-time” (having done something for many years) employees a gold watch on their 20th or 25th anniversary of working for the company. The watch might have the award recipient’s name engraved on it, too.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 429: Giving Awards and Congratulations.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 429. 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, where you can download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster

This episode is called "Giving Awards and Congratulations." It will use several vocabulary words that we associate with "congratulating," telling someone they did a good job, as well as giving out awards to people. Let's get started.

[start of story]

Part of my job as school principal is to hand out awards and scholarships to students. We recently had a ceremony to do just that.

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Principal: Miguel, I want to commend you for your work this year and congratulate you for winning the science award. It is well deserved.

The recipient of this year's community service award is Monique for her outstanding achievements. My heartiest congratulations to you, Monique.

I am also very proud of another one of our students, Yugo, who has been awarded the ESL Podcast award. This prestigious award honors the achievements of outstanding students. Yugo, a job well done.

Finally, we are also honoring one of our teachers today. For her dedication to her students and to the school, we are recognizing the achievements of Ms. Niehbur. I cannot imagine a more deserving teacher. Please accept my sincere congratulations.

[end of story]

Our story begins with the "principal" of a school, the leader or head of a school, talking about how one of his "duties," one of his responsibilities, is to "hand out,"



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or to give out, awards and scholarships to students. An “award” is something you give a person because they have done something very well. A “scholarship” is money you give to a person so that he or she can pay for an education, to go to a school.

“We recently had a ceremony to do just that,” says the man in the story, the principal. A “ceremony” is a special event that honors a person or a group of people. Usually it’s a somewhat formal event. “Ceremony” has a couple of different meanings in English, however, so take a look at the Learning Guide for this episode for some additional explanations.

The principal says, “We recently had a ceremony to do just that.” The expression “to do just that” means to do exactly what we were just talking about. We were talking about handing out awards and scholarships; we had a ceremony to do just that, to hand out awards and scholarships.

The principal begins first by giving an award to Miguel. He says, “Miguel, I want to commend (commend) you for your work this year.” To “commend” someone means to praise them, to say publicly that they have done something very well. So, he’s commending Miguel for his work, and he congratulates him for winning the science award. To “congratulate” means to say you are happy because something good has happened to another person. If someone gets a new job, you may congratulate them. If your girlfriend leaves you, her friends might congratulate her – because they didn’t like you to begin with!

Well, back to the principal. The principal says the science award was well deserved. When we say something is “well deserved,” we mean that something should have happened because this person worked hard for it or did all the things that were necessary. Something that is well deserved is something that you have earned. You have worked for it and now you get this reward, and that is only right; that is the correct thing.

The principal then says that the recipient of this year’s community service award is Monique. A “recipient” is someone who receives something, someone to whom something is given. To be the recipient of an award means that the award was given to you. This award is for “community service,” for students who help out in their local community. The winner is Monique, and she won for her outstanding achievements. Something that is “outstanding” is something that is very good, something that is very impressive. An “achievement” is something that you have done, usually something that’s difficult or something that is in a specific field. You may have achievements at work. You sold more than anyone



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else, or you did a better project than anyone else; you achieved your goals, you achieved what you wanted to.

So, Monique has had outstanding achievements, she has done some very good things. The principal says, “My heartiest congratulations to you, Monique.” Something that is “heartiest” means friendly, happy, something that is sincere, something that you really mean. So, “heartiest congratulations” are my most sincere, my friendliest, my happiest congratulations.

The principal says that he is also proud of one of his other students, Yugo, who has been awarded the ESL Podcast award. To be “awarded” something means to receive an award, to receive an honor, to receive recognition. The Nobel Prizes are among the most important awards in literature, science, and so forth. Yugo won the ESL Podcast award, probably for the smartest student since only the smartest people listen to ESL Podcast!

“This prestigious award,” he says, “honors the achievements of outstanding students.” Something that is “prestigious” is something that is well respected, very important, one of the best. The Nobel Prizes are prestigious. If you win one you are considered a very important person. Now, if you’re a professor at the University of California at Berkeley, and you receive a Nobel Prize, you get your own parking space! You see, there are very few parking spaces – good parking spaces – at that university, so if you win a Nobel Prize, well, you get a parking space. In some places, a parking space is as important as winning a prize!

Yugo has won a prestigious award that honors the achievements of outstanding students. The verb “to honor” means to show publicly that you have done something very well. This is something that is usually done to someone who is important or someone who has done something that you want other people to know about. Yugo is told by the principal “a job well done.” The expression “a job well done” is a phrase used to show that someone has done something very well. It’s a way of congratulating someone on doing a good job: “a job well done.”

Finally, there is an award given to one of the teachers. The award is for her dedication to her students and to the school. “Dedication,” here, means commitment, working hard on something. This teacher has worked hard, and so they are recognizing her achievements. This is Ms. Niehbur winning this award. “I can’t imagine a more deserving teacher,” the principal says. Someone who is “deserving” is someone who has earned something for what they have done, someone who should get this award because of all they have done. The



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principal says to Ms. Niehbur, “Please accept my sincere congratulations.” This is a somewhat formal expression to congratulate someone: “please accept my sincere congratulations.” You are telling someone you are very happy or proud of what he or she has done.

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

[start of story]

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[end of story]

The outstanding script for this episode was written by 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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