



---

**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

**GLOSSARY**

**airline reservations** – arrangements to take a flight at a specific date and time in the future

\* If we make our airline reservations early, we'll pay less than people who wait until the last minute.

**itinerary** – a travel plan that states what one will do and when

\* According to the itinerary, they're spending the first night in Mobile, Alabama.

**low-cost airline** – a company that offers less expensive flights for customers, but also less customer service

\* She can save hundreds of dollars by buying her airplane ticket from a low-cost airline.

**assigned seats** – a system where each traveler has a specific seat number, usually printed on the ticket

\* If they offer assigned seats, let's request a window seat.

**passenger** – a person who travels in a plane, bus, train, car, or boat

\* This small bus can carry 40 passengers.

**to rush** – to hurry; to do something very quickly; to move toward something very quickly

\* The teenagers rushed the entrance of the auditorium an hour before the concert started.

**gate** – the area in an airport where people with tickets can get onto a plane

\* Please have your ticket and identification in hand as you walk through the gate.

**boarding** – the process where people get on a plane, find their seats, store their bags, and sit down

\* Boarding would be much faster if people in the back of the plane got on first.

**a small price to pay** – something that is easy or painless to do, considering the advantages or benefits of what will happen as a result

\* I think that having eye surgery is a small price to pay to never have to wear glasses again.

**fare** – the price of a ticket on an airplane, train, bus, or boat

\* Airline fares are usually most expensive around the holidays.



---

**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

**stripped down** – without a lot of nice, extra, fancy things; only the basics

\* I don't have time to read such a long report. Do you have a stripped-down version?

**no-frills** – without a lot of nice, extra, fancy things or services; only the basics

\* They bought a no-frills car that didn't have a CD player, air conditioning, or power windows.

**to depart from (somewhere)** – to leave a place, especially to leave an airport in an airplane

\* Our plane will depart from Omaha at 4:35 p.m.

**secondary airport** – an airport that is not used as much as another airport in the same area

\* If we need to fly to Washington, D.C., but flights into Reagan Airport are too expensive, you might want to look at a secondary airport like the Baltimore Airport.

**hand it over** – a phrase used to ask someone to give control of a project to oneself; a phrase used to ask another person to let one do or have something

\* You've been trying to fix the sink for 30 minutes with no success. Hand it over and let me try.

**to take over (something)** – to take control of something; to begin doing something that another person had been doing

\* From now on, I'm taking over cooking dinner each night.

**to sacrifice** – to give up or to not have or do something, usually so that one can have or do something else

\* She decided to sacrifice her \$3.50 cup of coffee each morning in order to save money.

**buck** – one dollar

\* Why does that jacket cost 200 bucks?



---

**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Why might one choose a no-frills flight?
  - a) To have more convenience.
  - b) To save a few bucks.
  - c) To have stripped-down service.
  
2. According to Alex, what happens when there aren't assigned seats?
  - a) There aren't enough seats for all the passengers.
  - b) People don't know where to sit.
  - c) Passengers try to get on the plane very quickly.

---

**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**rush**

The verb “to rush,” in this podcast, means to hurry, do something very quickly, or move toward something very quickly: “The shoppers rushed into the store for the big sale.” The phrase “to rush things” means to make a decision too quickly, without taking enough time to think about it: “Don’t you think you’re rushing things by getting married after you’ve dated for only one month?” A “rush” is also an intense feeling of excitement: “She gets a rush from skiing quickly down steep mountains.” Finally, a “rush” is a big party at American universities where students try to get accepted into large social organizations called fraternities (for men) and sororities (for women): “Becca participated in rush last year and now she’s a member of Gamma Delta Delta.”

**to hand (something) over**

In this podcast, the phrase “to hand it over” is used to ask someone to give control of a project to oneself, or to let one do or have something: “Hand it over! I want to try playing that game now.” The phrase “to hand it to (someone)” means to compliment someone or say that one admires someone, recognizing that he or she is responsible for something good that has happened: “I have to hand it to Jaime because this project could never have been finished without his hard work.” Finally, the phrase “to hand (something) down to (someone)” means to give something to a younger relative who will live after you have died: “Grandma is going to hand her jewelry down to me.” Or, “This store was handed down to me by my father and I’ll hand it to my daughter when I die.”



**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

**CULTURE NOTE**

Many American airlines are taking “cost-cutting measures” (ways to decrease costs), even if that means decreasing their level of “customer service” (the way that employees treat customers).

In the past, people who flew across the country could expect to receive a full meal. Over time, however, the meals have become smaller and smaller. Now many airlines simply give their passengers a small bag of peanuts or another “snack food” (something eaten between meals) and a drink. Passengers who want to eat more need to pay extra for a “boxed” (prepared and packaged) meal.

Airlines also used to give passengers “headphones” (long wires with one end that connects to a radio and another end that is put in a person’s ears) to listen to music or watch TV shows or a movie while flying. Today, however, most airlines make passengers pay “extra” (an additional amount) to use their headphones.

The amount of “legroom” (the space in front of a seat, where one can put one’s legs) gets smaller and smaller as the airline tries to “cram” (put many things in a small space) more seats onto each plane. Passengers are uncomfortable, but if they want more legroom they have to pay more to sit in “business class” or “first class” (parts of the plane that have better service and more comfort, but are more expensive).

Many airlines are also “restricting” (limiting) the amount of “luggage” (baggage) that people can bring with them. Passengers can have only one or two “carry-on items” (luggage brought into the plane where the passengers are), and some airlines are charging passengers extra if they want to bring one or more pieces of “checked luggage” (luggage stored underneath the plane).

---

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



---

## ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines

---

### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 442: Flying on Low-Cost Airlines.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 442. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in the beautiful City of Los Angeles, California.

Our website is [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). You can download a Learning Guide for this episode on our website to help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is a dialogue between Sue and Alex about something called "low-cost airlines," or airlines that do not charge a lot of money for their airline tickets. We'll talk about some common vocabulary that we use when talking about traveling by air. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Sue: I just made airline reservations for our trip. Do you want to look over the itinerary before I purchase the tickets?

Alex: Which airline is it?

Sue: It's McTse Air.

Alex: Oh, no, I don't want to fly on that low-cost airline! We don't get assigned seats and all of the passengers rush the gate when boarding begins. I hate that!

Sue: Not having assigned seats is a small price to pay for low fares. The service may be stripped down, but I don't think the experience is that bad.

Alex: I don't mind a no-frills flight, but I don't want to fly out of some tiny airport that's an hour away. Which airport would we be departing from?

Sue: It's the Burbank Airport. Yes, I know it's less convenient to fly out of a secondary airport, but I don't see what the big deal is.

Alex: Okay, hand it over. I'm taking over the planning for our vacation. I'm not willing to sacrifice comfort to save a few bucks.

Sue: Fine, be my guest.



---

**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

[end of dialogue]

In our dialogue Sue says to Alex, “I just made airline reservations for our trip.” “Airlines” are companies that will fly you in an airplane from one place to another. “Reservations” are arrangements or contracts or agreements for you to do something at sometime in the future. So, “airline reservations” are, really, tickets that you buy for a trip you are going to take in the future. Sue says, “Do you want to look over (do you want to look and examine) the itinerary before I purchase the tickets?” So, Sue hasn’t paid for the tickets; she made a reservation. She went, probably online, and said yes, I want this ticket for this day. Usually, the airline will give you 24 hours, for example, to actually purchase (or buy) the tickets. The “itinerary” (itinerary) is the specific information that says when you are going to leave, when you are going to arrive, and so forth. The itinerary can include other details or information also, including where you are going and how you are getting there.

Alex says, “Which airline is it?” Sue says, “It’s McTse Air.” Alex says, “Oh, no, I don’t want to fly (I don’t want to travel) on that low-cost airline!” Something that is “low-cost” is something that is not expensive, something that is cheap. Here in the U.S., in Europe, and in other parts of the world in the last 10 or 15 years there have been many new low-cost airlines that do not charge a lot for the tickets that they sell. Alex doesn’t like low-cost airlines; one reason is that you don’t get assigned seats on the plane. “Assigned seats” are when the airline says what specific seat you can sit in. Many low-cost airlines, in order to save money, don’t have that system, at least here in the U.S. You simply go and you take whatever seat is open – that is, is available.

Alex doesn’t like the fact that all of the passengers rush the gate when boarding begins. The “passengers” are the people who are traveling on the plane. You can also be a passenger in a bus, on a train, in a car, on a boat or ship. “To rush,” in this case, means to do something very quickly. In this example, “to rush the gate” means to move toward the gate very quickly. The “gate” is the place where you go through to get onto the airplane; it’s the place where they take your ticket before you get on the airline, or check your ticket. So, Alex doesn’t like when passengers rush the gate when boarding begins. “Boarding” (boarding) is the process of people getting on the plane. If they announce that the plane is going to board at 3:00, or begin boarding at 3:00, they mean that that is when people are going to start getting on the airplane. They will allow people (or let people) go onto the airplane itself and get their seat.



---

**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

Sue says, “Not having assigned seats is a small price to pay for low fares.” “A small price to pay” is something that is easy to do, especially when you consider the advantages of doing it. So for example, going to the doctor once a year and getting an examination is a small price to pay for your health. It doesn’t cost that much, it isn’t that inconvenient, and it could save your life so it’s a small price to pay. In this case, Sue says that not having assigned seats is a small price to pay for this greater benefit – this greater advantage, which is lower fares. A “fare” (fare) is the price of a ticket on an airplane, a train, a bus, or a boat. “Airfare” refers to the price of the tickets. So, low fares are low airfares, is what Sue is interested in.

Sue says, “The service may be stripped down, but I don’t think the experience is that bad.” When we say something is “stripped down,” we mean it only has the very basic or essential things; it doesn’t have a lot of nice, comfortable extra things. So on a low-cost airline they may give you water but if you want soda you have to pay money, or if you want something to eat you have to pay extra.

Alex says, “I don’t mind a no-frills flight.” “No-frills” means basically the same as stripped down, not a lot of extra or fancy things, only the basics. He says, “I don’t want to fly out of some tiny airport that’s an hour away. To fly out of an airport means to leave from that airport; that’s where the plane leaves from, where it takes off from. To fly out of a tiny airport would be a small airport. Many of the low-cost airlines in Europe and other places will fly out of small airports, not the main airport for example, and so, you have to travel farther than you might otherwise. Alex says, “Which airport would we be departing from?” To “depart from” somewhere means to leave a place, especially an airport – leaving the place: “The plane departs at 5:00; it departs from the Burbank Airport.”

Well, Sue says, “It’s the Burbank Airport.” You have to understand a little bit about Southern California; Burbank is north of the main part of the city. It’s north of where I live. It would be very inconvenient, or at least somewhat inconvenient, to have to go to Burbank Airport if you live where I live in Los Angeles. Sue says, “I know it’s less convenient to fly out of a secondary airport, but I don’t see what the big deal is.” A “secondary airport” is an airport that is part of a larger city but is the less important airport. So for example, in London Heathrow Airport is the main airport and Gatwick would be a secondary airport. In Los Angeles, Los Angeles International Airport (or LAX, as we call it) is the main airport; Burbank, Ontario, and Orange County (or the John Wayne) Airports would be secondary airports.

Sues says that she doesn’t know what the big deal is, meaning she doesn’t know why Alex thinks this is so important. Alex says, “Okay, hand it over.” The



---

**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

expression “to hand something over” is used to ask someone to give you something or let you have something, often times in order for you to take over or control the situation. It’s not something that you would say to be polite; it’s not a polite or nice expression. “Hand it over,” in this case, means Alex wants to see the itinerary – wants to see the tickets and where and when they will be going.

Alex says, “I’m taking over the planning for our vacation.” To “take over” something is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to take control of something, to begin to be the person who is the boss or organizes something. Alex says, “I’m not willing to sacrifice comfort to save a few bucks.” To “sacrifice,” here, means to give up or not to have to do something. “Bucks” is an informal expression for a dollar (money) in the U.S.

Sue says, “Fine, be my guest,” meaning okay, you go ahead and you plan the vacation.

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

[start of dialogue]

Sue: I just made airline reservations for our trip. Do you want to look over the itinerary before I purchase the tickets?

Alex: Which airline is it?

Sue: It’s McTse Air.

Alex: Oh, no, I don’t want to fly on that low-cost airline! We don’t get assigned seats and all of the passengers rush the gate when boarding begins. I hate that!

Sue: Not having assigned seats is a small price to pay for low fares. The service may be stripped down, but I don’t think the experience is that bad.

Alex: I don’t mind a no-frills flight, but I don’t want to fly out of some tiny airport that’s an hour away. Which airport would we be departing from?

Sue: It’s the Burbank Airport. Yes, I know it’s less convenient to fly out of a secondary airport, but I don’t see what the big deal is.

Alex: Okay, hand it over. I’m taking over the planning for our vacation. I’m not willing to sacrifice comfort to save a few bucks.





**ESL Podcast 442 – Flying on Low-Cost Airlines**

---

Sue: Fine, be my guest.

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was by the always wonderful Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you Lucy.

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

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. Copyright 2009, by the Center for Educational Development.