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## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 109

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### TOPICS

Cities: Tucson, Arizona (Interview with Dr. Lucy Tse), Harper's Index, to get a kick out of (something), to commute, to not stand for (something), "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy and wise"

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### GLOSSARY

**landmark** – a natural or man-made object that is very large and/or important and identifies an area, helping people know where they are

\* The Statue of Liberty is a famous landmark in New York City.

**border** – the imaginary line between two countries, states, or provinces that shows where one ends and another begins

\* Washington, DC has borders with Virginia and Maryland.

**canyon** – a deep area like a valley that is surrounded by steep rock and was created over many years by a river running over and through the rocks.

\* A canyon is formed over millions of years as water slowly changes the shape of the rocks.

**reservation** – an area of the United States given to a group of Native Americans so that they can form their own government

\* How many Cherokee live on this reservation?

**to fry** – to cook something with oil in a hot pan until it has a golden brown color

\* When you cook with chicken, do you prefer to fry it or bake it in the oven?

**desert** – a hot, dry area with a lot of sand and few plants and animals

\* People who go to the desert need to bring lots of water, hats, and sunscreen.

**crop** – a plant that is grown on farms for food, clothing, or other uses

\* The most important crops in this area are potatoes and corn.

**cactus** – a plant that grows in the desert, can live on little water, and is covered with sharp points for protection from animals

\* Don't touch the cactus! It's sharp and it will hurt your hand.



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**needle** – a small sharp and pointed object that is used to give people medicine; a pointed part of a plant, such as a cactus

\* The little boy started screaming when he saw the nurse coming towards him with a needle in his hand.

**snowbird** – a person who spends the cold part of the year in a warm climate (southern United States) and the hot part of the year in a cooler climate (northern United States)

\* They bought a house in Florida so that they could be snowbirds, spending the winter in Miami and the summer in Philadelphia.

**retired** – no longer working because one has worked one's whole life and now has enough money to relax and enjoy old age

\* Grandpa Henry is 82 years old, but he still isn't retired because he likes his job too much to quit.

**cowboy** – a man who rides horses and works with cows all day, usually wearing a large hat, jeans, and boots

\* In Texas, some people dress like cowboys even though they work in the city.

**to get a kick out of (something)** – to enjoy something very much; to like doing something

\* Joel gets a kick out of watching old black-and-white movies.

**to commute** – to drive between one's home and office every day to go to and from work

\* Rhea has to commute for 55 minutes each way because she lives very far from her office.

**to not stand for (something)** – to not tolerate something; to not be able to support something; to strongly feel that something is wrong or inappropriate

\* I won't stand for his poor performance any longer. I'm going to ask him to leave the company.



## **WHAT INSIDERS KNOW**

### **Louis L'Amour and Zane Grey**

Louis L'Amour and Zane Grey were American “authors” (writers) who wrote about the “Old West,” or the period of time when there were many cowboys and Native Americans in the Western United States. Their “westerns” (books or movies relating to the Old West) continue to be very popular “novels” (long books) today.

Louis L'Amour (1908-1988) thought of himself as a “storyteller” (a person who tells stories informally) rather than a great writer. He wrote more than 100 novels that have been translated into many languages. Many of his novels were “adapted for film” (made into movies). Louis L'Amour loved the Old West so much that he even tried to build a western-style town called Shalako, but he “ran out of money” (didn't have enough money) to finish. Before he died, he won many awards for his work, including the Congressional Gold Medal and the Medal of Freedom, two very “prestigious” (respected) awards.

Zane Grey (1872-1939) wrote his first “bestseller” (a book that is very popular and sells many copies), Heritage of the Desert, in 1910. After that, he wrote many books about “conquering the Wild West” (bringing American societies and civilization into the Western United States) and “manifest destiny” (the idea that the United States was meant to cover the entire continent, from the Atlantic Ocean to the Pacific Ocean). His most famous book is Riders of the Purple Sage, which was written in 1912. He wrote more than 90 books in total. As with Louis L'Amour, many of Grey's books were adapted for film. Grey's novels were very popular and he became one of the first “millionaire” (a person with at least one million dollars) authors.



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 109.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 109. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Remember to visit our website, [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com). You can download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster. You can visit our ESL Podcast Store, which has business and daily English courses, and you can look at the ESL Podcast Blog, where we provide even more cultural information and information about ESL Podcast during the week.

Our first topic today is going to be Tucson, Arizona. We're going to talk about the city of Tucson, and we're going to do a special interview about Tucson. We're also going to talk about something called the "Harper's Index," and as always, we'll answer some of your questions. Let's get started.

Our first topic today is going to be about the city of Tucson, as part of our "Cities Series" that we've been doing every month or so here on the English Café. Today, we're going to do something a little different; we are going to interview someone who is from, originally, this city. We're going to talk about Tucson, Arizona, and we're going to interview our own Dr. Lucy Tse, who grew up in the city of Tucson. So Lucy, welcome to the English Café.

Lucy: Thank you, I'm happy to be here.

Jeff: Now Lucy, let's start by talking about where Tucson is in the United States, for people who don't know.

Lucy: Tucson is in the state of Arizona, and Arizona is in the southwestern part of the U.S. It's next to California, in the southern part. Arizona is also part of the "Four Corners" in the United States. In the southwestern part of the U.S., there are four states that meet each other at the corner, and those states are, of course, Arizona, New Mexico, Utah, and Colorado. So, if you visit the Four Corners area you could actually stand in a place and take a step this way, that way, and the other way and be in four different states in a very short time. Arizona is also right next to Mexico. It shares a "border," that's B-O-R-D-E-R, meaning it's right next to Mexico, and they share this border for nearly 400 miles.



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Jeff: What are some things, Lucy, that someone visiting Arizona could see? What should a tourist see if they go to Arizona?

Lucy: Well, the most well known landmark in Arizona is probably the Grand Canyon (canyon). And the Grand Canyon is a very, very large hole in the ground that was formed by the Colorado River over many, many centuries. The Grand Canyon is considered to be one of the “Wonders of the World,” or one of the most amazing natural things of interest in the world.

The other thing that Arizona is known for is the Indian reservation. The Navajo Indians have a reservation (reservation). The “reservation” is a place that the U.S. government gave to the Indians as a separate place to live, with its own government and its own laws.

Jeff: Isn't it true that many of the places that the government gave for Native Americans, or American Indians, to live were some of the worst places in that particular area?

Lucy: Yes, that's absolutely true. Many of the areas where reservations are located in the United States, it's difficult to grow crops. It's a place where it's not very welcoming to the people who live there, and it's difficult for them to make a living.

Jeff: That's a good point. In order to make a living – in order to make enough money to live on – you need land that will allow you to grow “crops,” or plants that you can eat and sell. Let's talk a little bit now about the place where you grew up, Tucson. Tell us a little bit about Tucson.

Lucy: Well, Tucson is a city in Arizona, but it's not the largest city and it's not the capital. The capital of Arizona is Phoenix. But, it is the second-largest city in the state, and it has a population of about half a million. If you include the entire metropolitan area, it has almost a million residents – a million people who live there. And it's also close to Mexico; it's only about a two-hour drive from the border.

Jeff: When you mention Tucson to an average American, what would they think of? What is Tucson known for?

Lucy: Well, I think it's known for two things – probably two things will come into your mind. One is that it's very, very hot. In the summer, the temperature regularly gets to be over 100 degrees Fahrenheit. When I was little, we used to



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joke that you can fry an egg – you can break open an egg – on the sidewalk – on the cement part of the street, and you can fry it and eat it. Of course, I never tried it, but we all believe it because if you ever drive in Tucson in the summertime, as I did growing up – I had a car that had a black interior, the seats were black – and if you ever drive in Tucson with a car with a black interior, you’ll know that it can fry many, many things, including an egg!

Another thing that people think of when you mention Tucson or Arizona is the desert. The “desert” is the place where there are very few trees, where there are animals that don’t need a lot of water, and you’ll find a lot of “cactus” (cactus). Those are the plants that you’ll find in the desert that have sharp needles coming out of them, and there are a lot of these cactus in Tucson. When I was little and we used to play, we had to be very careful that we didn’t fall or run into, with our bicycles, these very large cactus. Of course, everybody had experience running into cactus, and everybody had experience pulling these needles out of their legs or their arms or other parts of their body.

Jeff: That’s an interesting story. Normally when we think of needles, we think of what a doctor uses to put drugs into you; they have a long, sharp piece of metal. But of course, needles are also things that you will find on a cactus – we call those things “needles” as well, and it sounds like they hurt just like the needle from the doctor.

When I was growing up in Minnesota, there were a lot of people who would go to Arizona during the winter, because it was warm, and I think you have a special word for those people. Is that right?

Lucy: Yes. In Arizona, we called those people “snowbirds” (snowbirds – one word). These are people who come from places, like Minnesota, where it’s very cold in the wintertime, usually people who are “retired.” That means that they’re older and they don’t work anymore. They come from these cold states and come to spend the winter in Arizona, so we definitely saw more people in Arizona during the winter than during the summer months.

Jeff: Arizona, when I think of it, is also associated with “cowboys,” men who ride on horses and take care of cows and other animals. Can you tell us a little bit about the culture of the cowboy in Arizona?

Lucy: Cowboys are definitely a part of the history of Arizona. It was an area, back probably about 100 years ago, where it was mostly cowboys there. Today, you probably won’t find too many cowboys walking down the street in Tucson



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carrying guns at their waist and ready for a gunfight, but you will still see people wearing cowboy hats and wearing cowboy boots. It isn't everyone who wears these things, but it's still part of the culture of Tucson and Arizona. In fact today, we still celebrate the culture of the cowboy by having Rodeo Week every February.

“Rodeo” (rodeo) is a competition where cowboys who ride horses and bulls – those are male cows – compete to see who can ride the horse or the bull better than everyone else. And so, you can go to a rodeo, you go inside of a stadium and you watch cowboys sit on “bulls,” which are male cows who don't want people sitting on them and riding them! So, once you get on them, they try to throw you off, and you will see competitions to see who can stay on the bull the longest. I and many, many schoolchildren in Tucson look forward to Rodeo Week every year, not because we love the rodeo, even though it was very interesting, it's because all public schoolchildren in Tucson got two days off of school – that means we didn't have to go to school for two days – to celebrate Rodeo Week. So, we all loved Rodeo Week every year.

Jeff: Thank you Lucy, for taking some time to talk about the city where you grew up in, Tucson, Arizona. Perhaps we can have you back again, some other time, here on the Café.

Lucy: Any time. It was my pleasure.

Jeff: Our second topic today is something called the “Harper's Index.” Harper's is the name of a monthly magazine. It is an old magazine; it has been publishing for many, many years. It's basically a political and literary magazine – a magazine has articles about culture and politics in the United States.

A few years ago, Harper's began a new feature – a new part of the magazine – where they would have one page of interesting statistics, statistics about all different kinds of topics. Each of these statistics would have just one sentence telling you what it was. It has become popular among many people who like to read this magazine. For example, here are some of the statistics about U.S. life in a recent Harper's issue. (An “issue” of a magazine is a copy of the magazine. For example, the September issue is the September publication of that magazine.) The average number of miles driven by an American in 2004 was 13,711. That would be about 22,000 kilometers, so the average American drives about 22,000 kilometers a year. This number has increased almost every year. The next statistic in the index is “Last year there was a decrease,” meaning the last year in which Americans drove less this year than they did the previous year,



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and that was 1980. So, Americans have been driving more and more every year, on average, since 1980.

These are the kinds of statistics that you'll find in Harper's Index. They can be very interesting, tell you a little bit about American life. Here's another one: the percentage change – the change in the percentage – since 2002 in the number of U.S. teens – teenagers – using illegal drugs, drugs like marijuana for example. The statistic is -15% (minus 15%), so the number of U.S. teens using illegal drugs has gone down 15% since 2002. The next statistic is the percentage change in the number of adults in their 50s – 50 years to 59 years old – who are using illegal drugs; that percentage change is +63 (plus 63), meaning the number has increased 63% since 2002. So, the number of teenagers using drugs has declined – illegal drugs – whereas the number of adults in their 50s using drugs has increased dramatically.

Those are some of the kinds of statistics that you can find in Harper's Index; some of them are political statistics, some of them are cultural statistics. All of them can tell you a little bit about the way that Americans live today.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Sihyung (Sihyung) in South Korea. The question is: What is the meaning of the expression “to get a kick out of” something? For example, what does it mean if someone says, “I got a big kick out of watching the children play”?

“To get a kick out of,” or “to get a big kick out of” something means to find something interesting and funny – to be amused by something, to laugh about something or to get some sort of pleasure out of watching something. For example, “My mother says she gets a big kick out of hearing my four-year-old nephew sing to her on the telephone whenever she calls” – she finds it funny, she likes it. She doesn't like it when I sing; I'm not sure why!

Estela (Estela), from Mexico, wants to know the meaning of the verb “to commute” (commute). To “commute” means to travel between your home and your office – the place where you work – on a regular basis; to drive or to take public transportation to go from your home to where you work. If you work at home, you don't have any commute – you don't have to commute. We can use “commute” as a noun or a verb. For example, many of you listen to ESL Podcast on your morning commute, or when you are commuting. You're sitting in a





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subway, a train, a bus, your car and you're listening to the podcast as you are going from your house to the place where you work.

Eugenia (Eugenia) from Spain wants to know the meaning of the expression "I won't stand for" something.

"I won't stand for" something means I won't tolerate – I won't put up with this situation; I am not going to allow this situation to continue. Usually it is some sort of negative situation. For example, your neighbor's dog is making a lot of noise and you say, "I am not going to stand for all of this noise" – listening to all of this noise – I'm going to do something about it to change the situation. Or you could say, "My boss doesn't want any of us to talk about our new services to other companies. He won't stand for it, and will fire anyone who does." He won't stand for it; he won't allow it; he won't tolerate it.

Finally, Yoshi (Yoshi) in Tokyo, Japan, wants to know the meaning of the proverb (or the expression) "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise."

This is an old American saying that Benjamin Franklin, one of the founders of the United States, in the late 18th century wrote or was said to have written. It's a famous quotation, in other words, of something that he said. "Early to bed" means going to bed early, at 9:00 or 9:30 at night for example. "Early to rise" means getting up early – waking up and getting up out of your bed early. So, if you go to bed early and you wake up and get up early you will be "healthy" (you will have good health, physically), you will be "wealthy" (you will have a lot of money), and you will be "wise" (you will be very intelligent, very smart). "Early to bed, early to rise, makes a man healthy, wealthy, and wise." The idea is that if you work hard, you go to bed early, you get up early your life will be better. If you go to bed late and you get up late in the morning, you will be in poor health, you will be financially poor, and you will be stupid. Well, not exactly!

Someone actually did a study – did some research – and they looked at when people go to bed when they get up. And they also looked at their health, how much money they made, and their educational attainment, meaning how many years of schooling they had – how good of an education they had – and they found that there was no relationship between going to bed early and being healthy, wealthy, and wise. This was a study that was published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal, back in 2006. The article was called "Early to Bed and Early to Rise: Does it Matter?" So, modern science appears to have shown



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that Benjamin Franklin was wrong. That's good news for me because I always go to bed late and I get up late!

No matter whether you are an early riser or a late riser, we welcome your questions or comments. You can email us at [eslpod@eslpod.com](mailto:eslpod@eslpod.com).

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on the English Café.

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