



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 110

TOPICS

How to become a teacher in the U.S., steps in ordering food in a restaurant, to walk the walk and talk the talk, constraint versus restraint, monkey business, on a regular basis

GLOSSARY

reciprocal – with two people or groups of people behaving in the same way toward each other or helping each other; agreement to do or accept the same thing

* The two countries have a reciprocal arrangement where they each send the other country food if the people don't have enough to eat.

credential – qualification, especially for a new job, such as degrees, certificates, work experience, or languages spoken

* He has excellent academic credentials, but he doesn't have very much work experience.

postbaccalaureate – relating to academic courses taken after one has earned one's undergraduate (bachelor's) degree

* After Saida earned her degree in nutrition, she started to take postbaccalaureate courses in psychology.

practicum – internship; unpaid or low-paying work experience for a short period of time while one is a student

* She is studying computer science and last summer she completed a practicum at a nearby computer chip company.

basic skills – subjects that everyone needs to study in school, such as reading, writing, and mathematics

* Students need to have a strong foundation in basic skills before they can begin to understand more complicated subjects.

host/hostess – a restaurant employee who greets customers, takes them to their table, gives them menus, and brings them drinks

* We asked the hostess for a table by the window, but she explained that they were all reserved for a birthday party.



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server – waiter/waitress; a restaurant employee who takes one's order and brings one's food to the table

* Our server accidentally spilled the tomato soup when he was putting the bowl on the table.

split charge – an extra fee charged by a restaurant when two or more people share a meal

* I don't understand why the restaurant added a split charge when we each ordered a main dish.

diner – a person who eats at a restaurant; a restaurant customer

* On average, how many of your diners order dessert?

to walk the walk and talk the talk – to do as one says; to do what one tells other people to do; to act as one says one believes

* Many people say that they believe it's important to give money to charity, but few of us actually walk the walk and talk the talk.

constraint – limitation; something that makes it difficult or impossible for one to do something

* We have passports, money, and the desire to travel, but our biggest constraint against going on a longer trip is that we don't have very much vacation time this year.

restraint – limitation; a rule or idea that prevents one from doing something; something used to control a person's behavior

* The Mormon church has restraints on drinking beverages with caffeine.

monkey business – dishonest or silly behavior

* I'm so tired of reading about the government's monkey business being paid for with our tax dollars!

on a regular basis – regularly; frequently; often; periodically

* They have department-wide meetings on a regular basis.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Detention in TV and Movies

In the United States, students who “misbehave” (act inappropriately) at school are often “sent to detention,” meaning that for a certain period of time during a break, at lunchtime, or after school, they have to sit quietly in a classroom while other students have “free time” (time when they can choose what they want to do). Detention is a “light” (not very serious) punishment. If students in detention continue to misbehave, they may be “suspended” (temporarily not allowed to come to school) or “expelled” (not allowed to come to school ever again).

Often students are told to study during detention. Sometimes they are given special assignments, like writing an essay about what they did wrong, or writing a sentence like, “I should not talk during class,” 500 times on a piece of paper. At some schools, students in detention are supposed to clean the classroom or the school.

Many American movies are about detention. Probably the most famous detention-related movie is The Breakfast Club, where five students with very different “backgrounds” (experiences and interests) are sent to detention and have to spend all day Saturday together. In a movie called Some Kind of Wonderful, a student tries to get into detention to spend extra time with a girl he likes, but then the girl “gets out of” (avoids a punishment) detention and he is there without her. In the popular “animated” (with drawings instead of people) TV show The Simpsons, Bart Simpson is in detention at the beginning of every show and writes funny sentences on the chalkboard, like “I will not drive the principal’s car.”



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 110.

This is the English Café episode one-one-zero (110). 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, and download a Learning Guide for this episode. You can also look at our ESL Podcast Store, which contains business and daily English courses to help you learn even more English.

In this Café, we're going to talk about how you become a teacher in the United States. We've talked about different occupations – different jobs – in previous cafes, and how you get those jobs in the U.S., what kind of education and training you need. Today, we'll talk about teachers. We'll also talk little bit about what happens when you have a meal in a restaurant in the United States. It's not always the same, in different countries, what happens during the meal, so we'll talk a little bit about that. As always, we'll answer a few of your questions as well. Let's get started.

Our first topic today is how to become a teacher in the United States, specifically how to become a teacher for the elementary, or grade school, as well as the high school, or secondary level. Teachers in the U.S. must receive a license in most states in order to be able to teach in a public school. There are also teacher licenses for what we would call "preschool." These are programs for children who are younger than first grade.

Teachers are licensed, like many different occupations – many different jobs – by each individual state. There is no U.S. national teaching license. Each state you work in has its own license, and when you move from one state to another, you often have to get an additional license or take some additional training in order to teach in that state. Many states, however, have what's called "reciprocal agreements." "Reciprocal" (reciprocal) means that both people, or both states will act the same toward each other – give each other the same rights. So, if I have a license in Minnesota and I want to teach in Iowa – a different state – and they have a reciprocal agreement, that means that I can go to Iowa and teach, and I don't need any additional coursework – any additional education – to get that Iowa license.



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In all of the U.S. states you are required, to become a teacher, to first get a bachelor's degree. This is the four-year Bachelor of Arts or Bachelor of Sciences degree; this is the minimum requirement for becoming a teacher in the U.S. Back many years ago, the requirement for becoming a teacher was much lower. You only needed usually two years of education, and you would go to a special school, what we used to call a "normal school," and this was a place where teachers would get their education in order to become regular classroom teachers. Many of the great public universities in the United States began in the 19th century as teacher colleges – as two-year colleges. As the country grew, and as the need for higher education increased, these colleges were made bigger – they were expanded – and eventually the requirements for becoming a teacher became greater and greater.

I said earlier that each state in the United States has its own rules – its own license. This is something that is often surprising to people from other countries. They think that if you live in California, you'd do the same things you would do if you lived in New York to become, for example, a teacher, but that's not true. In some states, you only need a bachelor's degree with a specialization, what we would call a "major" or a "minor," in education. And so, during those four years of your bachelor's degree you take courses in education and you do the other training required. In other states, such as California, you have to get your bachelor's degree first, and then you have to go to one or two more years of schooling in order to get a teaching license, what we would call a "teaching credential" (credential). The word "credential" means qualifications or a certificate that says that you can do a certain thing, in this case, that you can teach.

The teaching license in California requires you go an additional two years – one to two years – after you complete your bachelor's degree. We call this a "postbaccalaureate program." "Postbaccalaureate" comes from the word "bachelor," as in "bachelor's degree"; "post" is after, so after your bachelor's degree.

In some states, you can get a master's degree. A master's degree usually requires one to three years of additional education. For example, when I got my teaching license back in Minnesota, I had a bachelor's degree in Spanish and in history. I then went to get my teaching license in a postbaccalaureate program, but I also decided to get a master's degree at the same time. So during the year and a half that I studied, I got a master's degree and I got a teaching license. Most states don't require a master's degree in order to teach; as I say, each state is different.



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The training that you have to do in your bachelor's degree or postbaccalaureate program usually requires you take classes about education – about how to teach – that should be obvious! You also are required to do student teaching; this is sometimes called a “practicum” (practicum). A “practicum” is when you are training for a certain position; you have the education, but now you need the actual practical experience. Again, this is something that depends on the state where you are living; in some states you are required to teach three or four months with the supervision, or under the supervision, of what we'd call a “master teacher” – an experienced teacher who helps you in your classroom. So, you begin to teach these classes, and there is another teacher – an experienced, licensed teacher – who helps you.

In addition to taking these special courses and doing student teaching, most states require that you take an examination – that you pass an examination – in order to get your teaching license. These are examinations that usually test what we call “basic skills.” This is the ability to read and write, do basic arithmetic and math. There are also exams for the specific topics or subjects that you teach. So, if you're a history teacher, you have to take an examination on history. This is especially true for high school, or secondary teachers.

Finally, because there is such a need for teachers in many schools – many schools have difficulties finding good teachers – many states now have what's called an “alternative teacher certification program.” These are ways of getting your teaching license that are faster than the traditional way. These are typically for people who have lots of experience already in the world; they already have a bachelor's degree, perhaps a master's degree, in the topic that they are going to teach. They still have to pass examinations, but they often start teaching as part of what we would call an “internship program.” An “internship program” is where they get paid to teach like a regular teacher, but they have someone who works with them to help them become a better teacher. They still have to take some additional classes, but it doesn't take as long as a traditional teacher credential program.

When I got my license, many years ago, to teach at the high school level, I went through a traditional program. I did one semester – three or four months of student teaching. Usually in student teaching, you are not paid, so you are working for free as you are going through your practicum, or your student teaching experience.

So, if you want to become a teacher in the United States, now you know what you need to do.



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Our second topic is about eating at a restaurant. Not too long ago – recently – one of our ESL Podcast listeners from Italy, Matteo, was visiting here in Los Angeles and emailed me – asked if we could get together for dinner, and we did. One of the things that we talked about was the differences between eating in an Italian restaurant and eating in an American restaurant, so I thought it would be a nice idea to talk a little bit about what happens when you walk into a restaurant in the United States.

Typically, you walk in – and this may be the same in your country, in many cases – you walk in and there is a person, who we would call the “host” – or the “hostess” if it’s a woman – who is going to seat you. He or she is going to take you to your table. They usually ask you “How many?” or “How many people are in your party?” – in your group. You can say, “Just two,” or whatever the number is. Then you’ll sit down and the waiter – or the waitress, if it’s a woman – will come to your table and ask you for your drink order. Do you want a beer; do you want Coca-Cola; do you want just water? They’ll also tell you, in many restaurants, about the “specials” for the day. These are things that are not on the regular menu – the regular list of what the restaurant offers – but are available that day to order. They’ll often also tell you what the soup of the day is. Then they’ll leave you and give you time to look at the menu, and come back with your drinks.

The server will usually – and notice I use the word “server” to mean either waiter or waitress; it means the same. The server will bring your drinks then ask you want to order an appetizer. In a nice restaurant, you usually order the appetizers first and then, later, you order your main meal – your main dish – your entrée. But in an informal restaurant, they expect you to give them the appetizer and the entrée at the same time. If you’re not sure, just order both of them at the same time. In a formal restaurant, after your appetizer is served – after it is brought to your table so you can eat it – then the server will ask you for your entrée. For an informal restaurant, they will bring you your appetizer, and then perhaps 10 minutes later or so, maybe 20 minutes, they will bring you your entrée.

Sometimes people want to share a meal. They’re not that hungry and they want the meal to be split – to be divided between them. Some restaurants will charge what is called a “split charge,” meaning you have to pay a couple of extra dollars if you want to share your entrée. Look at the menu – at the bottom of the menu, and if there is a split charge it will usually tell you.

So then your entrée is served, and, in a U.S. restaurant, you order usually all of your courses at one time. That is, if you are going to have a soup, and then



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you're going to have a steak, and you also want to have a salad or something else, you tell the server this – all this information – when you order your entrée at the beginning of the meal. In some countries, you order one part of your meal, then you go and you order your next part of your meal, and so forth. But in a U.S. restaurant, usually you order all of the main parts of your meal together. This is especially true in an informal restaurant, a what we would call a “diner” or a café, where it's a smaller, informal restaurant.

In a formal restaurant, the waiter or waitress usually “checks back” with you, meaning they come back two, three, maybe 10 minutes later and ask you if everything is okay. And if there are no problems, you usually just say, “Everything's fine.”

After you finish your entrée, then you can order your dessert. The dessert – the sweet part of the meal after the entrée – is usually ordered after you finish your entrée in both a formal and an informal restaurant. This is the one thing that you will not order at the very beginning when you sit down.

The waiter or waitress will then bring your dessert or your after-dinner drink, if you ordered one. If you don't want a dessert, you can say, “No thank you, just the check please.” In American restaurants, the server will usually bring you the bill – the check – even when you don't ask for it. When they think that you are done with your meal, they will bring you the check and put on your table and usually say something like, “Whenever you're ready.” In some countries this is not done. In fact, it's considered almost insulting, like they're trying to get you to leave the restaurant as soon as possible. But it's a common custom in U.S. restaurants, and you shouldn't be surprised by it.

In most restaurants, except a fast food restaurant like McDonald's, you usually leave a tip. For a lunch meal it's between 10 and 15% of your bill; for dinner it's usually between 15 and 20%. This is for both informal and formal restaurants, if you have a waiter or a waitress. Many of the waiters and waitresses make most of their money from tips, so it's a common custom to leave a tip in both formal and informal restaurants in the U.S.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.

Our first question comes from Rony, or Rony [Jeff uses two different pronunciations] (Rony), in Brazil. The question has to do with the expression “to walk the walk and talk the talk.” What does it mean when someone says, “You have to walk the walk and talk the talk”?



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This means you have to behave, or act, the way someone in your situation or position is supposed to act – you have to talk the way someone in your position is supposed to talk. It means you have to behave, or act, according to what you say, doing what you say you are going to do as well. For example, Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger of California, our governor now, got into trouble because he was trying to show how he was helping the environment, but he also drove a very large car that used a lot of gasoline. In this case, it was a Hummer. So, he sold his Hummer – he sold the car that was not very environmentally friendly – something that was not good for the environment – and bought a smaller car. This is a case where someone who talked the talk but didn't walk the walk, so he had to change his actions.

Joyce, from I'm not sure where, wants to know the difference between the words "constraint" and "restraint."

"Constraint" (constraint) means a limitation or a restriction. "Restraint" (restraint) is something you do to keep someone under your control. So, they are similar meanings; we usually use the word "restraint" when we are talking about controlling a person – someone who is out of control, someone who needs to be controlled. For example, "The police arrested two men who were fighting, and they had to put restraints on each of them" – so they wouldn't continue fighting. In a car, we have special things that are used especially for young children to prevent them from getting hurt if there's an accident. They keep them in their seat, and these are called "restraints."

"Constraint" would be used more, for example, if we were talking about some restriction or limitation in what we could do. For example, one main constraint on how many podcasts we make each week is the amount of time we have each day. Time is a constraint; it limits us. We don't have 100 hours to record our podcasts; that's a "constraint."

Finally, Arnoldo in Costa Rica wants to know the meaning of the expression "no monkey business." This is an interesting expression!

"Monkey business" – monkey like the animal, a monkey – is to behave silly or, perhaps, to try to cheat someone. For example, "Before my parents left home, they told my brothers 'No monkey business when we're gone.'" Here, it would mean don't be doing anything that would damage the house, or don't be doing anything stupid, really is what that means. So, "monkey business" is something that you are doing that is wrong that is causing a problem. It's an informal expression, however; you wouldn't say that in a business.



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The other expression Arnoldo wanted to have defined is “on a regular basis.”

“On a regular basis” just means at a regular or same or similar time. For example, we have our podcast on a regular basis: on Mondays, on Wednesdays, and on Fridays. We release our podcast on a regular basis; it’s the same amount of time between each podcast each week.

We hope you will listen to us here on a regular basis. You can email us your questions or comments at 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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