



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 134

TOPICS

American Author: F. Scott Fitzgerald; cigarette and alcohol advertising;
pronouncing -ed, someone's John Hancock

GLOSSARY

to regard (someone or something) as (something) – to have a certain opinion about someone or something; to think about someone or something in a certain way; to admire someone or something in a certain way

* This is regarded as one of the best business schools in the country.

to break off – to end; to cancel; to decide not to do something that has been planned

* They wanted to go to Alaska for vacation, but they broke off their plans when they found out how expensive the airplane tickets would be.

to resume – to restart; to continue doing something that was temporarily stopped; to begin doing something again after it has been stopped for a period of time

* Isaac will resume his running once his knee stops hurting.

set – placed in a specific location and time, especially when talking about a book or movie

* Star Wars is set in the future.

Jazz Age – a period of time in the 1920s in the United States, after World War I, when the economy was doing very well and jazz music was very popular

* Women had short hair, beautiful dresses, and wore long necklaces during the Jazz Age.

Prohibition – a period in U.S. history when making and selling alcohol was against the law

* During the prohibition, many people started to brew alcohol secretly in their bathtubs because they could make a lot of money by selling it.

lavish – very fancy, expensive, and generous; extravagant; with almost too much

* They are building a lavish home with marble floors and gold sinks.



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to bootleg – to make and sell alcohol when it is against the law

* Bootlegging was a great way to make money in the 1920s, but many of the people who did it were arrested.

to degrade – to make something less pure or special than it should be; to make something dirty; to demean or disgrace

* Many women feel degraded when men whistle at them on the street.

prominent – easily seen; obvious; well-known

* The Empire State Building is one of the most prominent buildings in New York City.

in moderation – without too much or too little of something; with just the right amount; with just as much as is necessary and good

* The doctor told me that when I begin exercising, do so in moderation, or else I might hurt myself.

designated driver – a person who goes to a bar with friends but does not drink alcohol even though everyone else is drinking, so that he or she can drive everyone home at the end of the evening without driving dangerously under the influence of alcohol

* If you and your friends don't have a designated driver, let me help you call a taxi.

self-regulation – the ability of a person, company, or organization to control its own thoughts and actions, without another person or organization telling one how to do it

* If companies had better self-regulation, we wouldn't need to have so many laws telling companies what they can and cannot do.

minor – a person who is not yet an adult, less than 18 or 21 years old; a child

* In the United States, minors are not allowed to go into bars.

(someone's) John Hancock – someone's signature, because the real John Hancock made a very large, fancy signature on the Declaration of Independence

* Please put your John Hancock on this line of the contract, and then the job is yours.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Famous Cigarette Mascots

Cigarette companies have very “effective” (good at doing what something is supposed to do) advertising that is very “memorable” (easy to remember). Some of their most memorable advertising campaigns are based around a “mascot” (an imaginary person or animal that represents a company, organization, or school).

One famous mascot is Joe Camel for Camel cigarettes. The mascot is a “camel” (a large, horse-like animal that lives in dry areas, drinks little water, and has an unusually shaped back). The drawn camel wears sunglasses and holds a “saxophone” (a musical instrument) while smoking a cigarette. In 1991, a study showed that more young children could “recognize” (know who someone is) Joe Camel than Mickey Mouse, which made many people believe that this cigarette mascot is directed at children more than adults.

The Marlboro Man is a famous mascot for Marlboro Cigarettes. It is a photograph of a “cowboy” (a man who rides horses and works with cows). He appears to be very “rugged” (tough, manly, not soft) and usually is shown alone in nature, usually in a “desert-like” (an area with little or no rain) or rocky area. Originally, Marlboro Cigarettes were marketed to women. However, when the Marlboro Man appeared in the advertising campaign in the mid-1950s, the brand immediately began to “appeal” (be attractive) to men. Interestingly, two of the men who were photographed in the ads later died of lung cancer.

Today, “anti-smoking groups” (organizations that want to help people stop smoking) use these cigarette mascots. One anti-smoking advertisement shows two Marlboro Men riding horses. One cowboy says to the other, “I miss my lung, Bob,” where a “lung” is the organ that processes oxygen in the body and is damaged by smoking.



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 134.

This is ESL Podcast's English Café episode 134. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

You can our website at eslpod.com – that's www.eslpod.com. You can download a Learning Guide for this episode on our website, which will give you some additional help in improving your English. You can also look at our ESL Podcast Blog, where several times a week we provide even more help to you in improving your English.

On this Café, we're going to continue our series on American writers – American authors, focusing on F. Scott Fitzgerald. We're also going to talk about cigarette and alcohol advertising in the United States. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

Today we're going to talk about the great American author F. Scott Fitzgerald, who wrote four complete novels, including his most famous novel The Great Gatsby, which we'll talk about in a minute. A "novel," is a work of "fiction," something that isn't true, based on someone's imagination. Many people regard Fitzgerald as one of the greatest writers in English in the 20th century. "To regard someone as something" means to think of them in a certain way, usually to admire someone in a certain way. Einstein, for example, is regarded as a genius in physics, just as F. Scott Fitzgerald is regarded as one of the century's greatest writers – one of the 20th century's greatest writers.

Fitzgerald, whose last name is sometimes pronounced "*Fitzgerald*," was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on September 24, 1896. I was born in St. Paul, Minnesota, on September 24, 1963, 67 years later to the date, meaning on the same date, in this case, September 24th. Fitzgerald's mother was named McQuillan; my mother, of course, was married to a McQuillan. So, as you can probably guess, Fitzgerald is actually one of my cousins; he's my second cousin.

He was a member of the Lost Generation. A "generation" is a group of people who were born around the same time. We often give a name to these generations, for example, people who were born after World War II, between 1946 and 1964 or so, are usually called "baby boomers." People who are now in their late 20s and early 30s are sometimes called "Generation X," and people



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who are in their early 20s are sometimes called “Generation Y.” The Lost Generation refers to people who grew up or became adults during the first World War, what was called then “The Great War,” we now refer to it as “World War I” in English. Fitzgerald was one of these people, and his experiences at that time are reflected, or seen, in the themes of his writing. A “theme” is a main idea, what a book or story is about. Fitzgerald’s writing has themes of age, despair, and youth. “Despair” means that you don’t see any hope.

Not everyone believed that Fitzgerald was going to be a successful writer. In fact, his own fiancée didn’t believe it. A “fiancée” is a person that you are engaged to – a person that you are planning to marry. It is a French word that we use in English to talk about this person. Fitzgerald’s fiancée said that she would marry him, but then she became worried that he would not be able to support her with his writing. In other words, she didn’t think he would be able to make enough money for the family by being a writer. So she “broke off,” or ended, the engagement. Fortunately for Fitzgerald, later that year, I believe it was 1920, he published his first novel, This Side of Paradise. He and his fiancée then “resumed,” or restarted – continued, their engagement. This Side of Paradise was a book I remember reading when I was in high school or college. It’s about a boy who is growing up in St. Paul and then goes to a university on the East Coast. For me, it was very interesting to read the descriptions of St. Paul from Fitzgerald.

Fitzgerald’s most well-known novel, however, is The Great Gatsby, which was published in 1925. This novel is considered his masterpiece. A “masterpiece” is the best thing that an artist creates in his or her lifetime. Many people might say that the Mona Lisa is Leonardo DaVinci’s masterpiece.

Most people agree that The Great Gatsby is Fitzgerald’s masterpiece. The novel is “set,” or takes place, in what we sometimes call the “Roaring 20s.” “To roar” means to make a very loud noise. In this case, the Roaring 20s refers the very economically successful decade of the 1920s. It is sometimes also called the “Jazz Age,” a period of time after World War I when the economy was doing very well; jazz became a very popular musical form in the 1920s. It is also sometimes a period known as “Prohibition.” “Prohibition” comes from the word “to prohibit,” which means not to allow something. As a noun, “Prohibition,” which is written with a capital “P,” refers to a period in U.S. history when making and selling alcohol – beer and wine, for example – was illegal, or against the law. Some people made and sold alcohol anyway during this time, and they made a lot of money. Some of these people were also involved in other crimes, but not all of them. My grandfather worked in a bar – an illegal bar during the 1920s. These



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were sometimes called “speakeasies,” these were illegal bars where alcohol was sold.

The novel The Great Gatsby is about a very wealthy man named Jay Gatsby; he has a lot of money. He also has a lot of “lavish,” or very fancy and expensive parties, but no one is sure where he gets his money from. The money, people assume in the story, comes from bootlegging. “To bootleg” is the practice of making and selling illegal alcohol. Someone who bootlegs is called a “bootlegger.”

Although The Great Gatsby received a lot of favorable attention from professional critics and other writers, many ordinary people in the 1920s didn’t like it, and only 25,000 copies were sold during the next 15 years. Fitzgerald went on to write two more novels, The Beautiful and the Damned and Tender is the Night. He also wrote a novel which he didn’t finish, called The Last Tycoon. Fitzgerald found it difficult to make money on his writing; he was always in debt. To be “in debt” means that you owe other people money. He found it necessary, in order to get enough work to support himself and his family, to go and move to Los Angeles – to Hollywood – writing scripts for movies. The “script” is the dialogue, what people say in a movie. He didn’t like working here in Los Angeles, unlike me – I love working here in Los Angeles! He found, however, that going from being a novelist to a scriptwriter was degrading his writing. “To degrade (degrade) something” means to make it dirty, or to make it less pure, less good. This is a term that Fitzgerald felt applied to his writing here in Hollywood.

Fitzgerald had many problems in his personal life. His wife was living in a “mental institution,” a special hospital for people with mental illnesses and other problems of the mind. Fitzgerald, himself, was an “alcoholic,” he was someone who drank too much alcohol, and it began to affect him. In 1940 he became very sick and died here in Los Angeles; he was only 44 years old, which is how old I am – I hope I don’t die this year!

I never, of course, nor anyone in my family of my father’s generation, met F. Scott Fitzgerald; he was a second cousin. However, we did have a chance – those of us in our family – to meet his daughter. He and his wife, Zelda, had one daughter; her name was Scottie, or at least that’s the name that she called herself. She, herself, became a writer, and back in the 1970s – I don’t remember the year – she came and had dinner at our house and talked about her father and the family. She was a wonderful woman; very smart, very happy, very interested in talking to other people about her father and the life that he had in St. Paul when he grew up.



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I won't say that reading Fitzgerald's novels is easy, but if you have a chance to read The Great Gatsby, although it may be a little difficult, I think you will enjoy it very much and learn a great deal about the United States in the 1920s and 30s.

Fitzgerald had this problem with alcohol, and that brings us to our next topic, which is cigarette and alcohol advertising in the United States. Most advertising is done on TV, radio, the newspapers, and on the Internet. Many people believe that advertising for cigarettes and alcohol should be "restricted," it should be limited because these products are very addictive. When we say that cigarettes or alcohol can be "addictive," we mean that your body always wants more of it; cocaine, for example, and other drugs you may take and become addicted to, little by little. Because cigarettes and alcohol are considered addictive, the government restricts how they can be "advertised," how companies can promote them.

In the U.S., the packaging for cigarettes must have what are called "health warnings" on them, meaning they need a statement that says what will happen to your health what will happen to your health if you smoke the cigarette. One warning is "Quitting smoking now greatly reduces serious risks to your health." In other words, if you are smoking and you stop smoking, you will become healthier. I think most doctors would probably agree with that. The United States was one of the first countries to require these warnings to appear on the packaging for cigarettes and other tobacco products; tobacco is one of the substances in cigarettes. However, other countries have made their warnings bigger, and the U.S. now has one of the smallest, or least prominent – least easily seen compared to other countries.

Alcohol advertisements also have statements, when they appear on television or radio, to remind people to drink responsibly. When we say someone should "drink responsibly," we mean they should be careful. Sometimes advertisements tell people that they should enjoy the beer and the wine they drink "in moderation." "Moderation" means only a little bit, not too much. Most things in life should probably be done in moderation. For example, if you love eating ice cream, like I do, you should probably only eat it only in moderation. Otherwise you'll feel sick if you eat too much, and you'll get fat, of course! Other alcohol ads remind people to choose a designated driver when they drink. This became very popular when I was in high school and college, the idea of a designated driver. "To designate" means to pick or select. The term "designated driver" refers to someone who goes with you to a party or to a bar, but who doesn't drink because they're responsible for driving the car. Of course, we don't want people



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drinking and driving at the same time, or driving after they have drunk too much alcohol. So, the designated driver drives everyone home at the end of the night, and he or she doesn't drink that night.

If you come to the U.S. and watch television or listen to the radio, one of the things you will notice is that there are no cigarette advertisements on television or radio; it is against the law. The companies can advertise in magazines or newspapers, but not on the TV and radio. Alcohol advertisements are allowed; they are permitted on television and radio, but you don't see them very often. This is probably for two reasons. First, the company that own the television stations and the radio stations, what we would call the "media outlets," have a choice of which ads they can accept, or want to accept, and they sometimes refuse to accept alcohol advertisements, because some people watching their television programs or listening to the radio may not like people who drink. There are still a lot of people in the United States who don't believe that alcohol drinking is a moral or correct thing to do. The alcohol industry – the people who make the alcohol – also have controlled their own advertising. Because of this what we might refer to as "self-regulation," the alcohol companies have never made controversial ads, at least not as controversial as the cigarette companies, and so the government has never restricted their advertising.

One thing that cigarette companies did to get them in trouble was to advertise their products to minors. A "minor" (minor) is someone who, in the U.S., is less than 18 years old. If you are less than 18 years old, you cannot legally buy cigarettes in the U.S. When the advertising from the cigarette companies started to be "aimed at," or to be directed at minors, that got many people very angry, and the government, in part for that reason, decided to restrict their advertising.

Now let's answer a few of the questions that you have sent us.

Our first question comes from Naglaa (Naglaa) in Egypt. The question has to do about how you pronounced the "-ed" at the end of a verb. Should it be a "D" sound, or should it be a "T" sound? Let's begin by talking about the difference between a "D" and a "T."

A "D," as a consonant, is a voiced sound. When we say the consonant is "voiced," we mean that your "vocal cords," the tubes in your neck that help you make sounds out of your mouth, are being used. "T" is "unvoiced," meaning you don't use your vocal cords to make that sound. "D" "T" are the two sounds you make with the voiced "D" and the unvoiced "T." You can tell something is voiced by putting your thumb and your first finger in the front section of your throat; if



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you feel something move, then it is voiced, if you don't, then it's not. I'm explaining the difference between voiced and unvoiced consonants because that is one of the ways of determining whether you should use the "D" sound or the "T" sound at the end of a word.

If the sound before the "-ed" is unvoiced, words like "laugh," "wash," "jump," the "-ed" is pronounced as a "T," so we would say "laughed," "washed," "jumped." If the sound before the "-ed" is voiced, in words such as "beg" – put your fingers to your throat and say the word "beg," you'll hear (feel) the "G" sound vibrating or moving in your throat. Words that end in a voiced sound, such as "beg" or "allow" or "play" use the "D," so we would say "played," "begged," "allowed."

Finally, there are words for which "-ed" is an actually an additional syllable, something like "-id" or "-ud" with words that end in a "D" or a "T" sound. So for example, the word "want" is "wanted." "Want" ends in an unvoiced consonant, but when the constant is "T," then you use the "-ed." So with the "T" and the "D" we have this "-ud" or "-id" sound. For example, the word "to plead" would be "pleaded," "rot," "rotted," and so forth.

So I hope that helps clarify a little bit how we pronounce the "-ed" sound at the end of the verb. Of course, the "-ed" sound usually indicates a past tense.

Oleg (Oleg), originally from Russia and now living in Canada, wants to know the meaning of the expression "John Hancock," such as "I need your John Hancock on this piece of paper." This is an informal noun that refers to a person's signature. So if someone says, in the U.S., they want your John Hancock, they're asking for your signature – writing your name down on a letter or a piece of paper.

Why do we use this expression? Well, John Hancock was a member of the revolutionary movement in the United States, and when the American colonies decided to separate from Great Britain they "declared," or announced, their independence and they wrote a document called the "Declaration of Independence." The first person to sign this declaration was John Hancock; he was a member of the government of the 13 colonies. Hancock said he was going to write his name very big so that the King of England could read it without his glasses. At least that's the story that we are told in school. Now the term "John Hancock" just refers to your signature.

If you have a question or comment, you can send us an email. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.



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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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