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**ENGLISH CAFÉ – 141**

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**TOPICS**

Classic children's television: Sesame Street and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood;  
American Cities: Washington, D.C.; mix, combine, stir, and beat; stock  
photography

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**GLOSSARY**

**series** – a group of things that happen in order, one after another; a television program with shows shown on a regular basis, such as every day or week

\* We started watching this series from the beginning, so we can tell you what happened before you started watching it this season.

**episode** – one show in a series of shows

\* Did you hear that on this week's episode, one of the major characters is going to die?

**animation** – drawings that are put together to make a moving picture; a series of pictures put together to show motion

\* Will you be adding sound and music to your animation?

**puppet** – a large doll with parts that people can move to make the dolls look like it is talking and moving on its own

\* For our school show, we are doing a puppet show with puppets that look like some of our favorite teachers.

**make-believe** – something that is imaginary; something that is not real and only in one's mind

\* Sheila keeps telling everyone that she's moving to Paris, but I think it's all make-believe.

**values** – important beliefs about how people should behave and how the world should be

\* Parents and teachers are the people most responsible for teaching values to children.

**founding fathers** – the group of men who created the United States

\* The founding fathers did an admirable job writing the important documents still used to govern the American people.



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**Congress** – the part of our government where laws are made, with representatives from each U.S. state

\* The Congress is meeting today to try to pass a new law to protect the environment.

**free and open to the public** – a place that anyone can enter for free; an event that anyone can attend without paying money

\* There will be plays and concerts in the park all summer and they are free and open to the public.

**monument** – a statue or structure that is built in honor of something or someone that people are very proud of

\* When will we put up a monument of Dr. Jeff McQuillan for his work on ESL Podcast?

**memorial** – something that is built to help people remember a person or event

\* A new war memorial will be built to honor those who died fighting.

**bike path** – a narrow road for people to ride their bicycles on, where cars are not allowed

\* This is a busy road, but if you stay on the bike path, you should have no problems with the traffic.

**to mix** – to put together ingredients and to blend them well so that they become one substance

\* The recipe says to mix together some milk, flour, and sugar.

**to combine** – to put ingredients together; to put substances together in a container; to put things together in one space

\* This is a very big closet, so there is room to combine your clothes and mine.

**to stir** – to lightly and slowly mix substances together in a container using a tool, such as a long spoon

\* Make sure you stir this soup while it cooks or it will burn.

**to beat** – to mix substances using a kitchen tool using a lot of energy and a fast motion

\* Be careful not to beat the eggs too long or we won't be able to use them in our cake.



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**stock photography** – photographs that are generic and can be used for many different purposes; photographs of common things not taken for a specific purpose

\* Let's find some stock photography for the cover of this brochure so we won't have to take any photos ourselves.

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### WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

#### Well-Known Sesame Street Characters

Sesame Street is a show that many Americans grew up watching. As of 2007, over 4,000 Sesame Street episodes have been shown on television. Many of the characters on Sesame Street are well known to every child and adult in the U.S., and the most “beloved” (loved by people) are the puppets on the show.

Probably the most famous character is Big Bird. Big Bird is a large yellow bird who is very tall, over eight feet. He lives on Sesame Street. He is a simple, honest, and “lovable” (easy to like or love) character, who has a lot of friends, both imaginary and real.

Another character who is not as lovable is Oscar the Grouch. A “grouch” is someone who has a bad temper and who gets angry easily. He is often unfriendly and likes things that other people hate. He likes rainy days, but he doesn't like little “puppies” (young dogs). The thing he loves the most is garbage and that's why he lives in a garbage can.

The Cookie Monster is a character who also lives on Sesame Street. As you may have guessed from his name, he loves cookies. He knows he shouldn't eat all of the cookies and other sweets that are around him, so he tries very hard not to. But in the end, he can't control himself and eats all of the cookies he sees.

Finally, Bert and Ernie are two male puppets who are roommates and share an apartment on Sesame Street. Bert and Ernie are good friends, but they are “polar opposites” (very different). For example, Bert is very neat and tidy, while Ernie is messy. Ernie is always trying to get Bert interested in his crazy ideas, and Bert wants to spend time doing things that other people may find boring, such as collecting “paperclips,” the small metal clip used to keep papers together.



## **COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 141.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 141. 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](http://eslpod.com). Download this episode's Learning Guide, an 8 to 10 page guide we provide for all of our current episodes that gives you some additional help in improving your English. You can also take a look at our ESL Podcast Store, with additional courses in personal and business English, as well as our ESL Podcast Blog, where several times a week we provide even more help in helping you increase your English.

On this Café, we're going to talk about two classic American television programs for children: Sesame Street and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood. Then we're going to do another one of our American cities segments, focusing on our nation's capitol, Washington, D.C. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

Television is certainly a large part of American life, especially for young people and even young children. There are many programs created especially for children in the U.S., as there is in other countries. Most of these programs are "cartoons," or animated stories with fictional characters, things that you might see from Walt Disney, for example. There are, however, some educational programs that are quite popular with some young children. These educational programs have become very famous. We're going to talk about two of these television "series," or group of programs. A "series" is a group of things that happen in a certain order. For example, we produce a series of ESL podcasts, one after the other. When we talk about television, a series is a set of shows that have the same characters each week or each day. Without a doubt, in the U.S., the two most popular series in children's television – educational television – are Sesame Street and Mister Rogers' Neighborhood.

Sesame Street combines education and entertainment for preschool-aged children. We say "preschool," we're talking about three or four years old children. The series was created back in 1969 and is still extremely popular with children and parents. It was a little too late for me; I was born in 1963, so by 1969 I was already six years old, a little too old for this particular program. But all of my nieces and nephews have watched this program. The series, as I say, has been



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around for almost 40 years. It has created more than 4,000 episodes. An “episode,” you probably know from listening to our podcast, is one show in a series. Television channels usually show one episode of Sesame Street every day. So every day, Monday through Friday, there’s a new episode.

This is an interesting program because it tries to teach children things, and there has been a lot of research done by scientists on Sesame Street and the effects of Sesame Street. Almost 80 million American children have watched Sesame Street at one point or another in the last 40 years, so it has been very influential; it has had a very large impact or influence on American culture. It has also had influence internationally, since, you may know in your own country, and many countries, Sesame Street is produced in different languages.

Sesame Street uses live actors, that is, as you would normally see on a television series or a movie – people. It uses animation, like cartoons, and it uses puppets. “Animation,” we already explained, is something like Walt Disney movies. “Puppets,” are large dolls with parts that people can move to make the dolls look as if they were talking and moving on their own. The main character in Sesame Street is a large bird called Big Bird, but the show has puppets of all different shapes and sizes. Big Bird is actually a man – or a woman, I’m not sure which – that is in a big costume dressed like – well – a big bird!

Sesame Street tries to teach children basically simple reading and math skills. It tries to help children recognize English letters and words and to do very simple math. Each episode features, or pays special attention to, one letter and one number. Of course, there are 26 letters in the English alphabet. The show also tries to teach other “skills,” or abilities. It tries to teach children about keeping clean, what we would call “hygiene” (hygiene). It tries to teach them about eating healthy, about being nice to their friends and family, and so forth.

Another very popular children’s program that you may not know about, but is known by most Americans, is Mister Rogers’ Neighborhood. Like Sesame Street, this series began in the late 1960s. It’s a very simple show; it is about a man named Mister Rogers. This, in fact, is his real name; his name is Fred Rogers, or was Fred Rogers. Each episode begins with Mister Rogers coming into his home through the front door and singing a song “Won’t You Be My Neighbor?” while he’s taking off his coat, putting on a sweater, and changing his shoes. (Jeff sings)

It’s a beautiful day in this neighborhood  
A beautiful day for a neighbor



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Won't you be mine?  
Could you be mine?

And so forth. He's saying it's a nice day in the neighborhood, a beautiful day for a neighbor – that is, a beautiful day to have someone who lives next to you who is also your friend. Well, Fred Rogers – Mister Rogers – sings this song at the beginning of every show, and it's a song that many people know.

During the show itself, Mister Rogers always talks directly into the camera as if he were talking directly to you. Other people come to Mister Rogers' home to talk with him; these are often are famous people – famous actors. This is also something you will see on Sesame Street, where famous TV and movie actors will appear on the program – will come on one of the episodes and be part of the show. Mister Rogers leaves his home and often takes the young children who are watching on a tour, for example, of a local factory where they make things; sometimes they do science experiments. Sometimes they do what we would call “arts and crafts,” creative, artistic projects that you can do with your hands. So, Mister Rogers is teaching the children simple, entertaining things.

Each episode of Mister Rogers' Neighborhood has a section called the “Neighborhood of Make-Believe.” “Make-believe” is something that is imaginary, something that is not real, that is only in your own mind. Children often play make-believe games, pretending they are pirates, or princesses, or cowboys. My make-believe world is having a date with Cameron Diaz and Jennifer Aniston – that's my imaginary world! Other children have imaginary friends; this is another example of make-believe. On Mister Rogers' Neighborhood, the Neighborhood of Make-Believe is a world of puppets.

Like Sesame Street, Mister Rogers' Neighborhood is an educational program. As I said before, it tries to teach children. It also tries to teach “values,” or important beliefs about how children should behave and act.

These shows were created for children, but if you have a chance to watch them in English, you might want to see how much you can understand. They usually speak slowly and about simple topics, and sometimes they can be very entertaining. Many adults will watch the shows with their children, so sometimes there are jokes that are for the adults instead of the children.

Our second topic today is an Americans city. Today we're going to talk about the Capitol of the United States, Washington, D.C. The “D.C.” stands for “District of Columbia.” Be careful not to confuse the State of Washington with the City of



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Washington, D.C. The State of Washington is on the West Coast; it is north of California – actually north of Oregon, between Oregon and Canada. The City of Washington, D.C. is on the East Coast of the U.S. Most people usually, when they say “Washington,” they mean Washington, D.C. If they want to talk about the State of Washington, they’ll say “Washington State,” unless it’s very clear that that is what they are talking about. So, if you’re reading about Washington, you’re usually reading about the capitol, Washington, D.C.

Washington, D.C. borders Maryland and Virginia. It is not inside any state; it’s its own area. Much like Mexico City is its own Federal District, Washington, D.C. is not part of any state. One reason is that the people who started the United States, who we would call the “founders,” didn’t want any States to have too much power, so they created this district – this area – just for the capitol. Interestingly enough, the people who live in Washington, D.C. do not have a representative who can vote in the U.S. Congress, at least not vote on the main laws and bills. So, the people who live in Washington, D.C. are not technically represented by anyone in the federal government.

Washington, D.C. is the home of the U.S. president’s home, the White House; the Supreme Court, the highest legal authority in the U.S.; and the United States “Congress,” which is the legislative or representative part of the U.S. government.

Washington, D.C. is a fascinating place to visit. I’ve been there twice and really loved it. It has an excellent subway system, or what we might call a metro system, that allows you to move from one place to another underground very quickly, just like other cities such as New York, Paris, and London have. You can also take the metro to go just about anywhere in the city.

The most interesting or popular places to visit would be the government buildings. The most famous museums in the U.S. are located in Washington; they’re called the Smithsonian museums. These museums are “free and open to the public,” meaning anyone can go there for free. There are many Smithsonian museums, including ones about natural history, American history, air and space technology, art, and a special museum for Native Americans. You can visit, also, other government buildings, and if you go to Washington, you should try to visit the White House. You can take a tour where the president lives; you probably won’t get to see the president, however. The U.S. Capitol Building is also a good place to visit. It’s a little bit more difficult to visit some of these buildings now, in the last seven or eight years, because of security concerns, but you can still visit them.



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There are also many monuments and memorials in Washington, D.C. A “monument” is a statue or something that is built in honor of someone or something else. Washington, D.C. has many monuments to past presidents. The Washington Monument is one of the most famous. It is a large tower, technically what we would call an “obelisk,” like they had in ancient Egypt. This is a monument to our first president, George Washington. A “memorial” is something that is built to help people remember a person or an event; it’s similar to a monument. Washington, D.C. has the Jefferson Memorial and the Lincoln Memorial, for presidents Thomas Jefferson and Abraham Lincoln. It also has memorials to people who died in different wars. Perhaps one the most interesting things for me when I went to Washington was the Vietnam War Memorial, which is a beautiful and very moving, very emotional place to visit. There is also now a new memorial to those that fought in World War II. I haven’t seen that. The last time I was in Washington was almost 20 years ago, so I need to go back soon.

Many of these monuments or memorials are on what is called the National Mall. So when you go to Washington, you will see a very large area. This is mostly a grass-covered area right in the center of Washington, and around this area are many of the most important government buildings. Normally when we think of a mall, we think of a place to shop. But this is a different kind of mall; it’s a large, open space with buildings around it. The National Mall is also connected by many different “bike paths,” small, narrow roads where you can ride your bicycle on. Washington, D.C. has many different neighborhoods; one of the most famous neighborhoods is called Georgetown. It is the home of a famous university, Georgetown University in Washington, D.C. Washington has a couple of other universities as well.

My nephew lives in Washington, D.C. right now. He works for one of the major political parties here in the U.S.

I was mentioning the National Mall in Washington. This area has also been the site or the area where there have been many famous protests and demonstrations. When people try to change political policies, they often will gather many different people together and they will go to the National Mall. The most famous is perhaps the civil rights demonstrations of the 1960s, where Martin Luther King, the great civil rights leader, would talk to people. They had a very famous meeting on the National Mall of people who were protesting the laws that discriminated against African Americans. Other political causes have used the National Mall. There were famous Vietnam War protests that took place on





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the National Mall. Just about every major political issue has had demonstrations or protests on the National Mall, so if you go to Washington, you might see one of those as well.

Washington, D.C. is a beautiful place, especially in the spring and the fall. It's a little hot in the summertime, and a little too cold in the winter. But if you go in the spring and fall, I think you will very much enjoy it if you have the opportunity.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.

Our first question is from Haru (Haru) in Japan. Haru wants to know the definitions of the words "mix," "combine," "stir," and "beat." These are all verbs that we use when talking about cooking, and they can be a little confusing. If you are reading a "recipe," instructions about how to make a certain kind of meal or dish, you will often see these verbs.

Let's start with "mix." "Mix" means to put different ingredients – different types of food, together and to blend them well. That is, to use a spoon, a fork, or perhaps a small mixing machine to get the ingredients to blend together – to come together.

"Combine" means to put ingredients together, but not necessarily to mix them – not necessarily to take a fork or spoon and try to blend them together. Usually, however, when you combine different food ingredients they end up mixing with the other ingredients.

"Stir" means to mix two substances – two ingredients together using a spoon, for example. This is, again, similar to "mix." Usually "stir," involves a spoon.

"To beat" means to mix or blend two ingredients together using either very fast movements with a spoon or fork, or using a special machine. So, "to beat" means to use a lot of energy, we might say a lot of "intensity," to put the ingredients together.

So you can see they're all similar in meaning. They have slightly different uses, but many times you'll see "mix," "combine," and "stir" all used to mean basically the same thing. "Beat" is probably the only one that has a more significant difference. It usually implies mixing or stirring very quickly. For example, if you were making cookies, you might have to beat the butter and the sugar together very fast in order to get the right consistency, the right texture, the right feel for the food.



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Our second question comes from Sebastian (Sebastian) in Uruguay – or as we would say in English, Uruguay. Sebastian wants to know the meaning of the term “stock,” as in “stock photography” or “stock photos.”

There are two common definitions of the word “stock.” One is a supply that you keep in a certain place. This will often be used in a store where you go to buy something, and you may ask the employee or the clerk, “Do you have this thing in stock?” meaning do you have it here, physically at your store. The opposite of “in stock” would be “out of stock” meaning they don’t have it in the store.

Another meaning of “stock” is common, not special, not unique. “That was a stock answer” – that was a common answer. The idea is usually that it wasn’t a very interesting or special answer; the person was just trying to get rid of you, perhaps. When we say “stock photography,” then, we’re talking about common photography, not unique. “Stock photography” are pictures that people take not for a specific reason, but just to have different pictures of things. People can then go on, for example, the Internet and purchase these pictures. So let’s say I’m looking for a picture of a man riding a bicycle. I can go onto a website and look at stock photography of men riding bicycles. The people who took the pictures didn’t take them for me, specifically; they were not specially for me. They were simply pictures that they wanted to sell for people who were looking for men on bicycles.

“Stock photography,” then, is not something that is created for a specific use, but to be used later by other people for whatever their specific uses are, but not created by the photographer especially for one person.

If you have a question or comment you can email us. Our email address is [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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