



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 175

TOPICS

Appalachia; family arrangements in the U.S.; pain, ache, and sore; diehard; fruitcake

GLOSSARY

folk music – simple, traditional music that is sung in a particular area and is considered part of a culture

* When Shana returned from her trip, she gave me a CD of folk music from the villages she had visited.

coal – a hard, dark mineral that people can take out of the earth and burn to make heat and energy

* Will it be possible to use clean coal as an energy source in the future?

mine – a place where workers dig into the ground to take out valuable materials from the earth

* Working in a mine means being underground for hours at a time.

isolated – separated from areas with many people; without very much contact or communication with other areas

* The town that Malik moved to is pretty isolated, with no airports nearby.

poverty – the condition of being very poor and not having enough money for all the things that one needs

* Many families are living in poverty and having difficulty feeding themselves and their children.

hillbilly – an insulting term used to describe someone who lives in the country, who isn't very smart and who doesn't have very much education

* When I went to college, I felt like a hillbilly compare to the students who came from large cities.

family arrangement – the way that a family is organized; a way to talk about who is in a family, or who makes up a family

* In this neighborhood, you'll find people living in many different family arrangements.



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nuclear family – a family arrangement with a mother, a father, and their children, living together

* With the high rate of divorce, fewer and fewer children are growing up in nuclear families.

extended family – a family arrangement with other relatives, such as grandparents, uncles, aunts, or others living with the mother, father, and children

* We've invited our extended families to celebrate Grandma Lupe's 80th birthday!

generation – a group of people who have approximately the same age; a group of people who were born around the same year

* Every generation wants the lives of the next generation of children to be better.

empty-nester – a family where the parents are older and their children have grown up and moved out to start living on their own

* Now that Dong and Christine are empty-nesters, they intend to rent out part of their house to paying tenants.

DINK – dual-income, no kids; a family arrangement where the two adults work and they have no children

* Most of the couples in this condo building are DINKs, so we don't have a play area for children.

label – a word or phrase used for a group of people or things that are similar to each other; a term used to categorize a group of people or things

* It was difficult to put a label on the movie as a comedy or a drama because it was such a strange story.

pain – physical discomfort; emotional suffering

* Because of his injury, James feels pain every time he walks down stairs.

ache – dull pain; physical pain in muscles or specific parts of the body

* She had an ache in her hand from typing on her computer every day.

sore – physically painful or sensitive, usually from too much activity (using the muscles too much)

* Lifting heavy boxes all day gave everyone sore backs.

diehard (or die-hard) – someone who strongly supports something; someone who admires or likes something very much, and continues to be a fan

* Lisle is a diehard soccer fan. She'll go to see a game even when it's raining!



fruitcake – a person who is crazy or strange, and does strange things; a type of cake with dried fruit

* Who is that fruitcake yelling at the children as they walk by on the street?

WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

The Hillbilly Stereotype and The Beverly Hillbillies

In the United States, there is a negative “stereotype” (an incorrect idea about a group of people) about those who live in the countryside. The unkind term that people use to describe someone from the countryside is “hillbilly.” These stereotypes include the idea that people who live in “rural” (country; not city) areas are uneducated and are not very smart.

This stereotype is so well known that there was even a popular television show about one group of hillbillies. The show, called The Beverly Hillbillies was on American television from 1962 to 1971 and continues to be shown on television in “re-runs” (broadcasting of shows that had already been shown before). It even won seven Emmy Awards, which are the “annual” (yearly) awards given to the best television shows.

The Beverly Hillbillies was a half-hour comedy about a family that finds valuable oil on their land in the Ozark Mountains. The family becomes very wealthy and moves to Beverly Hills, California, one of the most expensive neighborhoods in the U.S., where many successful actors and other rich celebrities live. The “patriarch” (male leader) and the other members of the family tries to continue living their country life, even though they are now wealthy and live in the city.

Most of the episodes were about how this family had different ways of doing things from those in “civilized” (well-mannered; educated) culture. A lot of the laughs came from showing the stereotypical ways a hillbilly family lived. For example, in the show, every member of the family knew how to shoot “firearms” (guns; weapons) and they continued to make their own liquor.

Despite these stereotypes, the show was very popular and even its “theme song” (a song that is played at the beginning of each show) became a “hit” (popular song) on the music “charts” (listing of the most popular things, with the most popular thing as number one).



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 175.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 175. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

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On this Café, we're going to talk about Appalachia (or Appalachia, either pronunciation is correct), which is a special area in the eastern United States. We're also going to talk about different family arrangements or different types of families in the U.S. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

Our first topic today is Appalachia. Appalachia is a big "region," or area in the United States. It goes from, or reaches from Mississippi in the south to New York in the northeast. Appalachia is about the same size as the United Kingdom, the country. More than 20 million people live in Appalachia, but it is mostly a "rural" area, an area with few cities.

Appalachia is famous in the United States in part for its folk music. "Folk" music is simple, traditional music that is sung in a particular area or by a particular culture. The immigrants who came to live in this area, in Appalachia, were mostly from Scotland, Ireland, England, and a few from Germany. They brought much of their music and other "elements," or parts of their culture with them when they came to the United States. Many of these cultural elements can still be seen today, although they have changed over the years and become something unique – something you will only find in this region of the United States.

Appalachia is also famous in the U.S. for having a lot of coal. "Coal" (coal) is a hard, dark mineral that people can take out of the earth and burn to make heat and energy. When coal was discovered in Appalachia in the 19th century (the 1800s), many immigrants came to work in the coal "mines," or places where the coal is taken from the earth. Today there is still a lot of coal mining in Appalachia, but not nearly as much as there used to be. There is a concern now



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about the pollution that coal causes, and this has reduced in part the number of coal mines in Appalachia.

There was a famous movie about Appalachia called Coal Miner's Daughter that gives you some idea of the culture and history and economics of one part of Appalachia.

For a long time, Appalachia was very “isolated,” or separated from the rest of the United States, without very much contact or communication with other areas. This is because Appalachia has tall mountains and wide rivers that make transportation difficult in the region, especially before airplanes and telephones and electronic communication became popular. “Consequently,” or as a result, the Appalachian economy has not developed as quickly or as well as the economy in other parts of the U.S. Appalachia should be rich, because there is a lot of coal and minerals in the land. However, much of this “wealth,” or richness was taken away by businesses that took the coal and minerals out of Appalachia and spent the money elsewhere.

Even today, there is still a lot of poverty in Appalachia. “Poverty” is the condition of being very poor, of not having enough money for all of the things that you need. Back in 1965, more than 40 years ago, the United States federal government created the Appalachian Regional Commission, or ARC. A “commission,” in this case, is basically a large committee, part of the government. ARC continues to this day in trying to fight against poverty and improve the economy of that area. Economic conditions have gotten better, but there still is a lot of poverty.

If you say Appalachia to most Americans, they'll probably think of the term “hillbilly.” A “hillbilly” (hillbilly) is not a nice thing to call someone; it's something of an insult. A hillbilly is someone who lives in the country, who isn't very smart, who doesn't have a lot of education, and probably doesn't have a job. It is, what we would call, a “stereotype,” an unfair way of thinking about a whole group of people, but unfortunately it's still somewhat common in places outside of this region. There was a famous TV program in the 1960s called The Beverly Hillbillies. There's a rich area here in Los Angeles, you probably know, called Beverly Hills. Well, this was a story about, supposedly, a group of people from Appalachia who found oil, became rich, and then moved to Beverly Hills. It was full of these sorts of stereotypes about the Appalachian region.

Although Appalachia is a large region, the states that most people associate with this region are Kentucky, Tennessee, and West Virginia, though it includes other



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states as well. I've driven through this region myself once (well, I didn't drive, my parents drove; I was in the car) many years ago – 30 years ago. I remember driving through West Virginia and seeing the incredible poverty of the people there. Things have gotten better in 30 years, but there's still a long way to go for many people who live in that area.

Now let's move on to our next topic, which is different family arrangements in the United States. An "arrangement" is a way that things are done. In this case, it refers to how people are grouped and placed together. You can have a flower arrangement, for example, which is a group of flowers that are put together in a certain way so they look beautiful. "Arrangements" can also refer more generally to simply plans: "We've made other arrangements" – we've made other plans for something. A family arrangement is the way that a family is organized; it's a way of talking about who is considered part of the family.

In the past, most American families were what we call "nuclear families." A nuclear family is made up of a mother, a father, and their children, living together in the same house or apartment. Times have changed, however, in the last 50 years in the U.S., and today only about 25 percent of American families are this traditional nuclear families, with mother, father, and children in one what we would call "household," in one area – a house or an apartment.

If you have your grandparents, uncles, aunts, or other family members – other family "relatives" that live with the mother, the father, and the children, then we call this family arrangement "extended family." Extended families are not as common in the United States as they are in many other parts of the world. In general, only two generations typically live together. A "generation" is a group of people in a family who are roughly the same age. Parents are one generation; children are a second generation. If you had grandparents, that would be a third generation. In the United States, usually only parents and their children live together. Sometimes, however, especially when the grandparents get too old to live on their own, or independently, they might move in with, or move to the house or apartment of their children and grandchildren; this would create an extended family.

There are also single-parent families that have become increasingly common in the United States. In a single-parent family, there is just one parent (either the mother or the father, usually the mother) living with the children. This might be because one of the parents has "passed away," or died. More likely it is because parents are separated (married but living apart from each other, usually because there are serious problems in their marriage), "divorced," (meaning they are no



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longer married to each other), or simply mothers who never married the father of their children.

Another term we use in talking about family arrangements is empty-nesters. The term “empty-nesters” (nesters) is used to describe families where the parents are older and their children have grown up and moved out to start living on their own or with other people or having families of their own. A “nest” (nest) is a small home that a bird makes for itself; it’s where the bird raises its babies – its “chicks.” Once the babies are old enough, they leave the nest making the nest empty, the opposite of full. In the same way, human adults have a home (a nest) where they raise their children, and then those children leave when they are old enough to go to college or live independently. The parents are now left alone in a big, empty house and are called empty-nesters.

There’s another term that uses the word “nest” that means something very different, and that’s a “nest egg.” A nest egg is an amount of money that people save, often for when they retire (when they stop working). Someone says, “I have a nice, big nest egg,” they mean I have a lot of money saved.

Another term we use in the U.S. in talking about families – this one is a little older, not as common anymore as it was maybe 20 years ago – and that is “DINKs” (DINK – “s” is added for the plural). DINKs stands for dual (or two) income, no kids. These would be married couples who are both working, and therefore both have “income,” both are getting money from a job, but they don’t have any children. Now, most nuclear families in the United States are also dual income, meaning both the husband and the wife work outside of the home and get income or money from their work. Families that have a man and woman who are married but don’t have children, that is what we call a DINK. DINKs have a lot of extra money because they don’t have children they need to spend money on. We call this money “disposable” income. Disposable is money that you can spend on things that you want rather than things that you absolutely need.

The word “dink” is actually an old insulting word. It used to refer to the male sexual organ – I’ll leave it at that! So, it isn’t necessarily a complimentary thing. The idea was that these DINKs were, perhaps, selfish for not having children, at least that was one “connotation,” one meaning that people used this term, especially in the 70s and 80s. It is not as common anymore, however.

All of these “labels,” or terms that we use to talk about family arrangements, can be a little bit silly. They don’t always apply to every family, but they do help us make sense of American families in general. I mentioned earlier when talking



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about nuclear families about how the population has changed. Back in the 1970s, about 45 percent of all families in the U.S. were nuclear families, now it is something less than 25 percent. However, most children still do live with both of their parents in the U.S.; about 70 percent of all children live in a two-parent family. A little less than 30 percent of all families are DINKs – double income, no children – or least married with no children, not necessarily double income.

Family arrangements can affect many different things, including, of course, your schedule. Someone was telling me how she and her husband always used to sleep in, or sleep late, on Saturdays and they would go down to a local café – a local coffee shop around 10 or 11:00 in the morning. And when they went there, they would always see other young couples without children. Then they have their first child and their schedule changed. They had to get up early, when the baby woke up. So she and her husband started going to the café earlier, usually around 7:30 or 8:00 in the morning, and there she was surprised to see lots of young families, couples with small children at the coffee shop. This apparently, according to the employee (the person working there), is very common. The young couples with small children come in early, and the couples with no children come in a little later. Of course, your life is determined in many ways by these family arrangements.

Now let's answer some of the questions that you have sent to us.

Our first question is from Peter, from an unknown country. Peter wants to know the meanings of the words “pain,” “ache” (ache), and “sore” (sore). All three of these words are used to refer to something that hurts.

“Pain” is a general term for some sort of physical or perhaps emotional (or mental) suffering, something that is causing you difficulty. “After the girl broke her arm, she was in a lot of pain.” Notice, when we use “pain,” we often use the preposition “in.” “I’m in pain” means something hurts. You could also say that the boy who broke up with his girlfriend caused her a lot of pain – emotional pain.

An “ache” is sometimes referred to as a “dull” (dull) pain, a pain that is more generalized, usually, again, a physical pain. For example, we use the term “headache” to refer to pain that you may feel in your head. It isn't in one specific area many times; it's in a general area. Often, an ache is something that hurts, but it doesn't hurt so much that, for example, you need to go to the hospital or you need to stop doing what you're doing. Ache can also refer to emotional pain, however. We have the expression “heartache.” “When the woman's mother died there was great heartache” – she felt the emotional pain.



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“Sore” is when you have physical pain or sensitivity, usually from doing too much activity – usually from using your muscles too much. So, if you like to bicycle or you like to run or jog, do too much of that your muscles may get sore. You may say, “Oh, my legs are sore. I walked a lot.” When I go and visit another city and I do a lot of walking, my legs get sore.

In some ways, “sore,” “ache, and “pain” could be thought of as being on what we might call a “continuum.” Pain is usually more suffering, ache is less, and sore is less than that. Although that always doesn’t work as a rule, but it gives you some idea about how these three words are related. There’s also an expression “aches and pains” that refers to general discomfort, especially for example if you are ill, if you have the flu. Someone says, “Oh, I have aches and pains,” meaning my body hurts in many different places.

Our next question comes from Ahmed (Ahmed) in Iraq. The question has to do with the word “diehard” (diehard), referring, in this case, to someone who believes in something very strongly; someone who supports something strongly; someone who is very stubborn, who will not change their belief in something even though the situation has changed or it is no longer necessarily something that you want to do or should believe in.

It can be used as a noun or an adjective. You can say, for example: “Jeff is a diehard Dodgers fan.” That means he watches the baseball team, the Los Angeles Dodgers, and he is a very strong supporter of that team; he wants them to win: “I am a diehard fan.” A “diehard” can also be someone who, as I mentioned, believes in something: “They are a diehard supporter of environmental action,” they want the government to do more to help the environment.

Finally, the word “diehard” can also refer to some famous movies that were made with the actor Bruce Willis back, oh, 15-20 years ago; the original movie was called Diehard. It referred to the main character, who would not give up – who would continue to fight even though there were many difficulties.

Finally, Rodrigo (Rodrigo) in Venezuela, in South America, wants to know what the expression, or the term “fruitcake” means. If you call a person a “fruitcake,” what does that mean?

Well, “fruitcake” has a couple of different meanings. It can be a cake that is made with dried fruit and nuts that you eat. My mother used to make fruitcake at



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Christmas time; it's a popular dish – a popular dessert (sweet) at Christmas time. When referring to a person, however, a fruitcake is a crazy person, a strange person, someone who has unusual behaviors, who does things in a very strange way.

“Fruitcake” is also an insulting (a negative) term to refer to someone who is a homosexual – someone who is gay, especially a man who is gay, so you need to be careful about using that term.

It's not really that common anymore in any of these definitions. A more popular term for someone who you thought was crazy, for example, would probably just be a nut: “Oh, he's a nut.” Or you might say, “He's a nut job,” or a “nut case,” meaning he is crazy.

Well, we don't think you're a nut job! We want you to email us your questions. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. Come back and listen to us next time on the English Café.

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