



## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 38

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### TOPICS

Topics: Newsmagazines, AMBER Alert, reading a map, “Get out of here!” followed by, “excuse me” vs. “I’m sorry,” to have something on someone, to teeter on the brink

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### GLOSSARY

**in-depth** – deep; complete

\* This book takes an in-depth look at the problems in our world today.

**worldwide** – throughout the world; in every country

\* How many people to listen to ESL Podcast worldwide?

**to kidnap** – to take someone away illegally and by force

\* I saw on the news that the baby who was kidnapped last week has been returned to his parents.

**ransom** – money that must be paid for the release of a prisoner

\* The kidnapers asked for a ransom of \$1 million.

**foldout (map)** – a piece of paper (map) that is folded and that must be unfolded to be used

\* Foldout maps are convenient but I can never re-fold them properly.

**legend (map)** – the part of a map that explains the symbols used on it

\* I’m not sure what these lines on the map mean. Let’s look at the legend.

**town** – a geographic area that is larger than a village, but smaller than a city

\* I would rather grow up in a small town than a big city.

**city** – a urban area, usually with many people and businesses

\* It’s convenient to live in the city if you work there, too.

**stream** – a small, narrow river

\* We can step on these big stones in the stream to go across it.



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**pond** – a small area with water that doesn't move

\* My brother and sister and I go swimming in the pond everyday in the summer.

**interstate** – a long and wide road with no stoplights that begins in one state and that goes to one or more other states

\* You can drive across the U.S. on Interstate 10 freeway.

**toll road** – a road where drivers are charged money to travel on it

\* Do you have enough money to pay the toll on this road?

**to have something on someone** – to know a secret about someone; usually something bad or damaging to that person if the information is told to others

\* Could it be that Manny has something on Cathy and that's why she is willing to do all of his work?

**to teeter on the brink** – to be on the edge of something and to be unsteady or uncertain; to almost do something

\* He teetered on the brink of making a decision for two weeks.

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### ENGLISH LEARNING TIPS

One good way to improve your English is to use a conversation or language partner. A language partner is someone who is trying to learn your native or first language, and who speaks the language that you want to learn or improve. When you have a language partner, you both speak one language for a certain amount of time (for example, 15 minutes), then the same amount of time in the other language. Each person "exchanges" or gives to the other person something that they want. (To exchange means to give something to someone and to receive something in return.)

Language partners work best for those who are intermediate or advanced speakers. You may find a language partner to talk to in your own city, or you may find them on the Internet (see the list of websites below to find language partners). Language partners give you a chance to speak the language, which will give you confidence. Here are some suggestions for using language partners:



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- If possible, record your conversation so you can listen to it again later. (If you are speaking to someone over the Internet, you need first to ask their permission to record your conversation.)
- Ask the person you are speaking with to speak slowly and repeat things you don't understand. Remember that listening is still the best way to get better at understanding English, so ask the person who speaks English with you to talk about topics you are interested in while you listen.
- Have a list of topics you are both interested in talking about. Ask your partner to talk about what they did that day, what their favorite movies are, what they enjoy to read, what is happening in the news – anything that you find interesting.
- Don't worry too much about correcting your partner's mistakes when they speak your language. Correcting people's mistakes while they are speaking can actually make them speak worse, because it often causes the person to lose their confidence in speaking. The most important thing is to listen and to speak in a normal conversation, and not be too concerned about errors.

### Some Places to Find Language Partners on the Internet:

<http://www.babelpod.com>

<http://www.xlingo.com>

<http://www.mylanguageexchange.com>

<http://www.lingozone.com/>

<http://community.jyve.com/> (Part of Skype)



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to English as a Second Language Podcast, English Café Number 38.

This is English as a Second Language, English Café Number 38. I'm your host Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development, in the beautiful city of Los Angeles, California.

Remember to visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com) and read the Learning Guide for this podcast. It contains a complete transcript of the podcast, every word that we say is in our transcript. You can also get additional vocabulary and tips on learning English in today's Learning Guide.

Today we're going to talk about on the Café a little bit about newsmagazines in the United States, what the popular magazines are that people read. We're also going to talk about "missing children" and something called an "AMBER Alert."

It's summertime, so lots of people are traveling. So, we'll take a look at map today and how to read a map in English, and as usual, we'll answer a few questions. Now let's get started.

One of the questions that I get about once a week is about the music for ESL Podcast's English Café and where that music comes from, that jazz music that we use. It actually is a free piece of music, a free selection of music that comes with the software that I use to record called GarageBand on a Macintosh computer. So, it's actually not a regular commercial song. It's just some music that came with the software and I really like it. I hope you like it, too.

Our first topic today is on newsmagazines, the popular magazines that people read in the United States. Now, there are many popular weekly and monthly magazines on different topics. There are entertainment magazines. Magazines like People, which talk about movie stars and famous people. There are also famous sports magazines, the most famous is called Sports Illustrated and that covers all different kinds of sports. And then, there are newsmagazines, and these are magazines, of course, about the news.



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In the United States, there are three popular magazines. One is called Time, another is called Newsweek and the third is called US News and World Report. I want to talk about the first two, because those are the two most popular ones.

Time magazine is the most popular magazine, newsmagazine in the United States. Like Newsweek, it has a summary of the news from the week. It also has in-depth stories. In-depth, usually a hyphen - "in" hyphen "depth." In-depth means that it is a longer story, a story with more information, a story that gives you more information about the news, and these, this newsmagazine, Time, is also the oldest newsmagazine in the United States.

It's probably most famous for its annual award called the "Person of the Year." And, every year they select a person or persons who have had the greatest influence on the news in the world or the greatest influence in the world, you might say. And this person is put on the front cover of the magazine and called "Person of the Year." It's not always a good thing, however. Sometimes the "Person of the Year" is someone who is, has done a lot of wrong in the world. But, usually it's someone who has done something right, has done something important. We used to call, the magazine used to call, this person "The Man of the Year" because it was always a man. But they've changed that now to "Person of the Year." They have both men and women. Sometimes the person of the year isn't actually a person. One year, back in 1983, they named the "Machine of the Year," and the machine of the year was the personal computer which, of course, is now everywhere in the United States and most countries.

Well Time has a couple of European, or rather I should say, foreign editions. There's a Time Europe, a Time Asia, and Time Canada, and these are magazines that cover the news specifically in those different areas or regions of the world.

The other popular magazine is called Newsweek, all one word, and Newsweek is, like Time, a weekly publication that has summaries of the news, of the important news, as well as in-depth stories. It is sometimes considered the more liberal of the two newsmagazines, the more liberal one, liberal politically that is, and it is also one that has a worldwide circulation. "Worldwide," all one word, means across the world and the entire world. "Circulation" is how many people read the magazine. So you can ask, "What is the circulation of Time magazine?" means how many people buy it and read it. We usually use the term "circulation" from magazines and newspapers, not for television and radio. For television and



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radio, you would talk about the viewers - people watching, or the listeners - people listening, like to ESL podcast, for example. So, Newsweek is a world, has a worldwide circulation, of about 4 million people. They also have foreign language additions. There's a Japanese, a Korean, a Polish, Russian, Spanish and Arabic version of Newsweek magazine. You can read it in those different languages. And some of you, perhaps, have read it in your native language.

There are a couple of other weekly or what we would call “bi-weekly,” meaning every two weeks. Another word for that is fortnightly. A “fortnight,” one word, means every two weeks or every fourteen days. Not a very common term anymore but you will sometimes see magazines referred to as fortnightlies; it means they're published twice a month or every two weeks.

There are several political magazines. Newsweek and Time are newsmagazines and the ideas that they're suppose to be not liberal, not conservative, somewhere in the middle. Of course, that usually doesn't actually happen. There are some magazines that are political, a very liberal magazine, would be Nation and Nation magazine is a, I believe that's a fortnightly, every other week. And one of the most conservative political magazines is called the National Review. So if you are politically conservative, you have a magazine, and if you are politically liberal, you have a magazine. Of course there are several magazines that are about political topics.

In Great Britain the most popular newsmagazine is probably is The Economist. The Economist is an excellent newsmagazine. It has international, U.S. and of course, news about Great Britain. So, those are some of the popular magazines. Magazines are good to read to help build your vocabulary. It's useful to try to read stories about the same topic every week because you have some information already about it and it makes it easier for you to understand.

One of the stories that has been in several of the newsmagazines in the last few years is cases of missing children. These are children who are usually abducted from their home or from their parents. “To abduct” means to take, to take a person without their permission. We also call this a kidnapping - “to kidnap,” that's the verb; the noun would be “kidnapping.” To kidnap is to take a child or an adult against their will and take them with you somewhere. Usually kidnappings are involved with people wanting money in order to return the person. We call that money “ransom.” But many, probably most child abductions or kidnappings are not for money. Usually they are, well, they can be one parent who's divorced



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or separated who wants to have the child back from the other parent. Sometimes they are strangers, that is, people that the family doesn't know, who may take the child. Of course, it's a very sad and unfortunate thing that happens.

In the United States and Canada in the last few years, they've started a new system called the AMBER Alert. "AMBER Alert." An AMBER Alert is when a child is taken, a child is abducted. The police, when they have some information about who might have taken them, usually it's, for example, the kind of car and perhaps the license plate of the car. This is a warning to everyone to be looking for that car. So, they have a news announcement and they tell every, all the police officers and the public, just the people who watch TV and listen to the radio, to be looking for this person, to try to catch them. This is called an AMBER Alert. It was named after a girl who was abducted back in Texas in 1996, and unfortunately, was killed. And, the AMBER Alert is something that you will see in different states. Sometimes you will see an announcement even on the signs on the freeway, on the highway.

Well, since we are talking about freeway and highways, this is a good time to talk about our next topic. It is the summertime and so people are traveling, more and more, and of course if you are going to travel in a car, it's always a good idea to have a map. So, I thought we will talk a little bit about the terms, the vocabulary, related to maps and reading a map. The verb is "to read a map." It's the same as to look at a map. Someone may say to you "Do you how to read a map?" means do you know how to look at a map and figure out, understand where things are. Well, maps go by different names. Most maps that you use to drive are what we would call "fold-out" maps. Fold-out, "fold" hyphen "out." Those are maps that are usually big pieces of paper but they're folded several times so that it's smaller. So, you take the piece of paper and you fold it in half, then you fold it in half again, and then you fold it in half again, that's called a fold-out map.

Another kind of map that you would use when you were driving would be, what you would sometimes call a "guide" and these are book maps, these are maps that are actually books and each page has a different section of the map. These are very popular, especially in big cities like Los Angeles and New York. Here in Los Angeles there's something called the Thomas Guide, and that's the name of the company that publishes or makes the map. And, it's a thick book, maybe, I don't know, two hundred, three hundred pages of maps for all the different parts of the city. So, sometimes you'll want to have one of those bigger maps.



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Now, when you look on a map, there is always a legend on the map. The “legend” is a little box usually in the corner of a map that tells you what all the different symbols are, what all the different symbols on the map mean. This is also sometimes called the “key.” The key or the legend is the part of the map that tells you what all the different signs and symbols mean.

Now, on a map you will usually have different signs or symbols or marks for towns and cities and metropolitan areas. A town is usually smaller than a city, and a city is smaller than a metropolitan area. Metropolitan area would be a place like Los Angeles where there's one city but then there are many other cities around it and they all look like one big city, and that's what we call metropolitan area. A city is smaller than that. A metropolitan area could have different cities inside of it. Here in southern California, we have the city of Los Angeles, that's the biggest city, but there are also smaller cities like Santa Monica and Beverly Hills and Malibu. Those are all smaller cities in the metropolitan area.

A town is usually much smaller in population, fewer people in a town. The word “village” is not used very much in American English, but you will see that in British English and that's also a small town.

Maps will often have indications of where rivers and streams are located. A “stream” is a small river, a stream. A stream. And then, you have a river which is bigger. Often you will also see indications of where lakes, ponds and oceans are. A “lake,” you know is what we would call a “body of water.” It's surrounded by land. A “pond” is a small lake. And, of course, an “ocean” is well, the Pacific Ocean, the Atlantic Ocean, the Indian Ocean, those are all large bodies of water.

The most important thing on a map, however, are the roads, are the streets and highways, where you're going to drive. We often use the term “highway” and “freeway” to mean the same thing. Someone says the highway, the freeway, usually...often they're the same thing. If there's a difference, the freeway is usually a little bigger. A highway could be a smaller road than a freeway. But most of the time we use them to mean the same thing.

There are a couple of words you will also hear or see on a map. One of them is “interstate.” In the United States, we have interstate highways or interstate freeways. An interstate means that they go from one state to another, and these interstates are paid for by the national or federal government and there's a whole system of interstates that connect all the different parts of the United States.





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Another term that you will hear is “expressway,” especially the east part of the United States, in New York and Pennsylvania, Washington DC, Massachusetts. The states out in the eastern part of the United States will often call their highway or freeway an expressway, and an expressway is very similar to a freeway or a highway. Sometimes the expressways are toll roads. A toll, “toll road,” two words, is a freeway or a highway that you have to pay money.

Most states do not have toll roads for most of their roads but sometimes, especially in the eastern part of the United States, there are many toll roads. We have toll roads here in California. A “toll” is money that you have to pay in order to use that freeway and usually you have to pay it when you are getting on the freeway. If you use the toll road a lot, you can get an electronic ticket that means you don't have to stop and pay. There is a computer that can read your electronic pass or ticket and are able to take the money from you or make sure that you have paid in order to use that road.

One of the things you'll see on a freeway or a highway is a rest stop, “rest stop.” A rest stop is a place, you can guess, where you can stop and rest. Usually these are located on big freeways or highways outside of the city. So, there aren't any rest stops inside a city or a metropolitan area. But every thirty to sixty miles, most states have rest stops on both sides of the freeway where you can stop and use the bathroom and eat and get some water, that sort of thing. Now you're ready to read a map when you come to the United States or if you live in the United States, in English.

Now, it's time to answer a few questions. Our first question today comes from Nicholas in France and Nicholas wants to know what the expression “Get out of here!” means. Well, there are actually two meanings to this expression. The most common one is when you want someone to leave, when you are angry or mad at someone and you want them to leave the room or leave where you are. So, you may say to your, your friend, “Why did you go with my girlfriend to the bar? I don't want to be your friend anymore. Get out of here!” means, “Leave! I don't want you here.”

In the last few years, however, there's another meaning to this expression, and it is when you are talking to someone and you don't believe what they are saying, or they are telling you something that's very surprising, that you find difficult to believe. So, your friend comes up to you and says, “I just got a date with Jennifer Aniston. She's going to go on a date with me,” and you say “Get out of here!”



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means you don't believe them. There's also a little difference in the way that you say it. You can say "Get out of here!" means leave. But if I say "Get out of here!" with that sort of intonation, that means that you don't believe the person. It's an informal expression that has become popular in the last few years. So, thank you Nicholas for that question.

Next question comes from Denis in Vladivostok in Russia. He wants to know what the expression "followed by" means. Well, "followed by," two words, means that something comes after something else. So if you are watching a television program, then the program ends and a new program starts, we say the new program, or the old program that you were watching, is followed by the new program, it comes after that. And you can also use this expression when you are following another person. Usually that's something that is not a good thing, when someone else is following you without your permission. Because, perhaps, they want to hurt you or do something bad to you. You can say "I'm being followed by this strange person." They are following you; they are going after you trying to find you or trying to get you.

Next question comes from Aram. Aram is originally from Armenia but is now living in New York City with his family. And Aram has a question. His father and he have a disagreement and they want me to tell them who is right, and the disagreement has to do with the two expressions "I'm sorry" and "Excuse me." When do you say "I'm sorry" and when do you say "Excuse me"?

Aram says that you only say "I'm sorry" when, for example, you accidentally hit someone or bump someone or do something wrong. So, if you are on the subway, for example, or a bus and you are walking on the bus or subway and you hit somebody as you are walking, you would say "I'm sorry," when you do something wrong. If, however, you are trying to, for example, get out of the bus and someone is standing in front of you and you want them to move, you would say "Excuse me," meaning "I want to go by you, please move."

So, "I'm sorry" is usually when you accidentally hit someone, we would say "bump," which is to hit very lightly. You use that when you accidentally bump into someone or bump someone. The expression "excuse me" is when you are trying to get by someone, you want them to move. We also use "excuse me" when you are trying to ask a question of someone. For example, I want to know what time it is and I don't have a watch. I would say, "Excuse me, can you tell me what time



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it is?" We wouldn't say "I'm sorry" there, we would say, "Excuse me." So, "I'm sorry" is usually for when you do something wrong.

There is, however, a way of using the word "sorry" when you have not done something wrong, so Aram's father is also correct here. In British English, we (or they) sometimes say "Sorry?" when you didn't hear what someone said. So, someone says something to you and you didn't hear them; you didn't understand them. In British English, you would say "Sorry?" meaning, "I didn't hear you," "I didn't understand you." In American English, we would probably say, "Excuse me?" Someone says something to you, you don't understand, you might say "Excuse me? I didn't understand what you've said." In British English you would say, more likely, "Sorry?" as a question, of course. So, thank you Aram, for your question. I hope I didn't cause any problems in the family with my explanation.

Satsuki in Japan has a question about the expression "to have something on someone." What does that mean when someone says "he's got something on him" or "he has something on him." Usually that means that one person has some information about another person, some information about what this other person did wrong, something that they did wrong. Maybe they did something illegal, maybe they committed a crime. They did something bad. If you have information, you say, "Well, I have something on you" means I have some negative, bad information about you or information about something bad that you did. Often we use that expression when the person is trying to influence the other, saying, "Well, you better not do anything, because I have something on you" means you have to behave in a different way. You have to act in a different way because I have this information, so you are trying to influence them.

Our last question comes from Luis in Spain. Luis has a question about the expression "to teeter on the brink." "To teeter on the brink." That's an interesting expression. To teeter on the brink means to be very close to a dangerous situation. Usually we say "to teeter on the brink" of something. For example, "The country is teetering on the brink of war," means it's very close to being at, in a war. "To teeter" as verb means to move in a unsteady way; that is, you are not walking straight. You're leaning this way and then you're leaning that way; you're not...like you've had too much to drink, for example. You may teeter, means you're not walking or moving very well. The "brink" is similar to the edge and usually it means the point, or the...you're at a situation where something is very dangerous and if you move a little more, you're going to be in danger. To be on the brink means that you are very close to being...very, in a very dangerous or



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bad situation. So to “teeter on the brink” means that you are close to this dangerous situation. You are moving closer to this dangerous situation. You do not want to teeter on the brink. It's not usually a good thing.

Well, that's all we have time for on today's Café. As always, if you have questions feel free to 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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