



ENGLISH CAFÉ – 76

TOPICS

Scientology, Wikipedia, establishment figures, to not have a clue, at that time, Pardon my French!, Right on!

GLOSSARY

celebrity – a famous person; a person well known to the public

* If I visit Los Angeles, where can I go to see some celebrities from TV and the movies?

self-help – helping oneself without depending on other people; trying to improve oneself

* Derek bought a self-help book at the bookstore to help him improve his memory.

immortal – living forever; never dying

* In the movie, the woman drank some water from the magic lake and became immortal.

psychiatry – the study and treatment of mental (in the mind) illnesses, often using medication

* In the US, you would need to attend medical school if you want to specialize in psychiatry.

psychology – the study of the mind and how it works

* Researchers are doing studies to better understand the psychology of teenagers.

to brainwash – to make someone think very differently by putting pressure on them

* You used to like partying all night, but now you don't. I think getting married has brainwashed you.

shuttle – a type of transportation between two places, such as a bus or train

* When we arrive at the airport, we'll need to take a shuttle to the other terminal to catch our next flight.



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entry – an item written or published in a place where others go for information, such as a dictionary or an encyclopedia

* I can't find any information on whales. Do you know where I can find that entry in this book?

encyclopedia – a set of books or a website with information on many different topics

* Jeannette is a walking encyclopedia! She knows information about every topic I can think of.

accurate – correct; right about all of the details

* Is your clock accurate? I thought it was on 2:30, but that clock says it's 3:00 already.

reliable – able to be trusted; always of good quality

* For this project, we need a very reliable person to be in charge to make sure it's completed by the end of the month.

establishment figures – a group of people in society who have power and authority to make or change rules, and who have a lot of influence on what people think are good and bad

* The students said that their protest is in response to some bad decisions made by the establishment figures at the university.

to not have a clue – to not understand at all; to have no idea

* The mechanic said that he would have no problems fixing my car, but after three hours, he still doesn't have a clue what's wrong with it.

at that time – at a specific time period

* I regret my decision to not go to college, but at that time, I wanted to get a job so I could be independent of my parents as soon as possible.

Pardon my French! – a phrase used either before or after saying profanity (bad words) to excuse or apologize for saying it

* Pardon my French, but I think that the boss is a big idiot for firing him!

Right on! – I agree completely!; That is exactly right!

* - I think that this is a great day to go to the beach.

- Right on! That's exactly what I was thinking.



WHAT INSIDERS KNOW

Jokes about Psychologists and Psychiatrists

Joke 1:

Two psychologists meet at their 20th “college reunion” (a social meeting many years after graduating from school). One of them looks very young and very much like he did when he graduated. The other psychologist looks old, worried, and “withered” (dry and small).

The older-looking psychologist asks the other, “What's your secret? Listening to other people's problems every day, all day long, for “years on end” (year after year), has made me an old man.”

The younger looking one replies, “Who listens?”

[Explanation: The younger looking psychologist means, of course, that he doesn't listen to his “patients” (people getting medical help). That is why he is still looks and feels so young.]

Joke 2:

How many psychologists does it take to change a light bulb?

Answer 1: None. The light bulb will change itself when it's ready.

Answer 2: Just one, but the light bulb really has to want to change.

Answer 3: Just one, but it takes nine “sessions” (visits or appointments).

Joke 3:

The patient said to his psychologist: “I used to be “indecisive” (not able to make a decision). Now I'm not sure.”s



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café number 76.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 76. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

On this Café, we're going to talk about a controversial religious organization in the United States called Scientology. We're also going to talk a little bit about Wikipedia, and what that is if you don't know already. And as always, we'll answer a few questions. Let's get started!

This podcast, like all of our episodes now, has a Learning Guide that you can download that includes the entire transcript of the podcast, as well as the words - important words we use with definitions, sample sentences and additional cultural notes. Go to our website at eslpod.com to look at that, and to look at some other new things we have now on our website.

Our first topic today is the Church of Scientology. Scientology, "Scientology," is a organization that has become famous in the last few years in the US, mostly because there are some famous actors and actresses and some famous singers who have become members of this organization.

Most Americans have heard of Scientology because Tom Cruise, the famous movie star, is a member of this organization and has talked about the organization in the American media - in the newspapers and on television - and there are some other famous people who are members of this group. Most Americans also, I think like me, don't really know very much about this group. It is popular, here in Los Angeles, among certain famous people, what we would call celebrities, "celebrities" - a celebrity is someone who's famous.

I had to do a little research, myself, to find out about Scientology. Scientology was started by an American science fiction writer, a man by the name of L. Ron Hubbard, and it began back in the 1950s as what we would probably describe as a self-help philosophy. Self-help, "self-help," means that you try to do things that will improve your life on your own - that you don't rely on other people to help you. The most common way people get introduced to self-help ideas is through self-help books. They go buy a book about improving your life - being happier, for example, having a better marriage - these are all part of the self-help movement, it's sometimes called.



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Well, L. Ron Hubbard started this movement called Scientology; it is sometimes called a religion. In fact, the building here in Los Angeles where the Scientologists - the people who believe in Scientology - is called the Church of Scientology.

The Scientologists have their own - what they call - technology; we would probably call them teachings or approaches - methods - to help people improve their lives. It is somewhat difficult to understand all of these beliefs - all of these teachings. One of the main ideas of Scientology is that you are trying to get what we would probably call in most religions your soul - your internal spirit - you're trying to get that to a certain place of, what they would call in Scientology, total freedom, and you do this through a series of steps or levels.

Scientology, like some other religions, believes that you have an immortal soul. Immortal, "immortal," means that it never dies. Scientologists believe the immortal soul - what I think they call the thetan, "thetan" - also has experienced past lives, and will continue to have different lives in the future. I'm not exactly sure how this all relates together, but those are some of the ideas of Scientologists.

It's sometimes difficult for people to try this particular organization or religion because it seems to be a mix of self-help philosophy and some religious ideas. Interestingly enough, however, the Scientologists don't believe in psychiatry or psychology. Psychology, "psychology," is the study of human behavior - the way we think. Psychiatry, "psychiatry," is a medical science of behavior. Psychiatrists, for example, can give you drugs to make you happier; psychologists don't have that authority - that power - at least in the United States. But, Scientology is against both of these things.

I mentioned before that there are some famous people who are Scientologists, and I think that's why most people know about this group. It's not a very large group; some people say there's only about a half a million people in the world - 500,000 people in the world - who are part of this organization. So, compared to most religious organizations, it's quite small, but it's famous because of the famous people. I mentioned Tom Cruise, the actor; John Travolta is also a member of this organization.

The other reason it's famous - other than the famous people who are in it - is because there have been many people who have criticized this organization. Some people have said that the organization brainwashes people. To brainwash, "brainwash," means to make people believe things that they would



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not otherwise believe by using certain psychological tricks on them. I'm not saying these criticisms are true; these are just some of the things that people have said. Scientology is also known for taking legal action against people who criticize it - against its enemies - and some people have complained about that particular behavior - that they are trying to stop any discussion of their group.

It's a small group; it's not one that most people understand in the United States, but it is one that you've been reading about, perhaps, in the news, because of some of its famous members. Well, I found about Scientology - what I did find out about comes from something called Wikipedia, "Wikipedia."

The word wiki, "wiki," originally comes from the Hawaiian language. If you are ever lucky enough to go to Hawaii, and you arrive in the Honolulu airport - Honolulu is a capital of Hawaii - when you get off of your plane, you go out into the street and there are buses outside the airport that are called wiki-wikis, and wiki is the Hawaiian word for fast - quick. So, these are buses that take you to different parts of the airport; in most places, we would call this a shuttle, "shuttle." A shuttle is a small bus that takes you short distances - from one part of the airport to another, for example.

Wikipedia is the name that was given by the people who started this software and website, back in 2001. Essentially, what Wikipedia is is a web-based encyclopedia, and in fact, the word Wikipedia takes part of its name from encyclopedia. An encyclopedia, "encyclopedia," is a book that has information about many different topics, usually alphabetically. A Wikipedia is like a web encyclopedia, except that people can come on and change it - they can add their own information or correct information.

It started back in 2001; there are now over six million articles in more than 250 languages. So, in your language, there's probably a Wikipedia site where you can find information and add information about almost any topic that you are interested in.

Some people have criticized Wikipedia, saying that it wasn't reliable and accurate, like a normal encyclopedia. To be reliable, "reliable," means that you can trust it - you know it is true. To be accurate, "accurate," means to be correct. Some people say that because anyone can go on Wikipedia and make changes, you can't really trust it. Other people say that, well, the fact that other people change the wrong information is a good check against error. When we say it's a check, "check," we mean here that it prevents that from happening - that many people look at the pages, so if there's wrong information, someone will correct it.



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Each article that appears in Wikipedia or an encyclopedia is called an entry, “entry,” the article are called entries. Wikipedia does actually have some people who are editors, who goes through and check information, correct information, eliminate some entries that are not considered important enough to have in Wikipedia.

It is not recommended that you go and make your own entry - your own article about yourself or your organization. The Wikipedia editors don't like that. It's okay if you start an article about another organization. For example, if you wanted to put an article in Wikipedia in your language about ESL Podcast describing what it was, where to find it, information about it, that would be okay, but I can't do that. They don't want the people, themselves, to do it. So, if you're interested in your own language, and you know about Wikipedia, feel free to put information about ESL Podcast on there! Feel free is an expression that we use to mean go ahead - it's okay - at least it's okay by me!

Now let's answer a few questions.

Our first question comes from the Elena, “Elena,” in Italy. Elena found a sentence that she didn't understand, and asked us to explain it. The sentence was “It's actually about establishment figures who don't have a clue about how people were living in England at that time, and what people had done to the country.” There are a couple phrases there that need some explanation.

Establishment figures is a term we use for a group of people in a society that have power and authority - people who have power over rules, or even those who have influence over what people consider good and bad. So, establishment figures are - could be political figures, could be entertainment people, could be religious people - leaders of those groups that have an influence on society. We often use the term establishment, or the establishment, to refer to the traditional, old way - the group that is in power that doesn't want to change. It is often used as a negative term - the establishment. Here, we're talking about establishment figures. The word figure, “figure,” just means people or person.

The quote says, “It's actually about establishment figures who don't have a clue.” To not have a clue, “clue,” means to not understand at all - to have no idea. Usually we use this, again, in a negative sense. We often talk about someone doesn't have a clue, we mean they're not very intelligent - they don't understand - they don't understand the situation that they're in.



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So, these are “establishment figures” - people in power - who don't understand “about how people were living in England” - the country of England - “at that time, and what people had done to the country.” At that time refers to a time period in the past.

So, this quote means the problem or issue is about the people in power and authority, who have no understanding about how people lived in England in the past, and what people had done in the country. I hope that is a explanation that makes sense to you Elena. It does contain some popular expressions, like establishment figures, to not have a clue, and at that time.

Our second question comes from Pierre, “Pierre,” in - where else - France. Pierre has an interesting question, which is what is the meaning of the expression in English, “pardon my French?” Pardon, “pardon,” my French.

This is an old expression in English. It's a phrase that we use either before or after saying a bad word, what we would call profanity “profanity.” Profanity are those words that you shouldn't say. They're dirty words or bad words; I think you know what I mean. If you are talking to someone, and you are going to use a bad word - you're going to use some profanity - you may want to let your listener - the person listening to you - know. You are essentially trying to excuse yourself so that you don't hurt or insult the person by using this profanity. You would say, for example - well, it's hard to give an example without using a bad word, so I'll just use a somewhat better word and you can use your imagination for a bad word.

For example, your friend takes your car without asking for it, and he crashes the car - he gets into an accident and the car has some problems now. You're very angry and you say, “He is such a jerk” - a jerk, “jerk,” is an idiot - someone who does bad things - you can think of a more profane word - something that would be stronger, we would say. “This guy is such a jerk,” and then you realize that your parents are in the room, and you've used a bad word, you might say, “Pardon my French.”

Now, why French? Why not some other language? The idea is that, however, you are using a word from another language, and that this is, therefore, you're not really using a bad word here - you're saying that it's another language, French, as an excuse. But of course, you're also apologizing, in some ways, for using that word.



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Let's say, for example, you are at work and something falls on your foot - a very big book falls off of the desk and onto your foot and it really hurts, and you want to say something - you might want to shout something that would be a bad word. You say something, and then you realize that you may have offended other people who were listening to you, so you'll say, "Pardon my French." So, it's a way, sort of, of saying you're sorry - of excusing yourself for using bad language.

This is, as I said, a old expression. It actually started back in the late 19th century - back in the 1800s - in the United States. One reason it may be the French language that we use in this expression is because some Americans, at the time, thought the French did not have very moral or ethical ideas, and therefore, if you said something bad - said something that was bad language - you were saying that that's something that someone speaking French might say.

Again, I don't think now Americans use that expression as an insult to the French. It's so old that I think people have forgotten what it means. I did not know until I looked it up on Wikipedia. I don't think most Americans think of it as an insult, but it is a common expression.

Our final question comes from Andras, "Andras," from Hungary. Andras wants to know what the expression "right on" means. Right, "right," on (two words).

Right on is something that we say to mean I agree completely, or that's exactly right. It was more common in the 60s and the 70s than it is today. For example, you might say after working three hours outside - you're working out in the sun and you're tired, and your friend says, "Let's stop working and go and get some soda" - go get something to drink. You say, "Right on," meaning yes, I agree with you completely.

Well, if you agree with me completely, or even if you don't agree with me completely and have a question, you can email us. Our email address is 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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