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**ENGLISH CAFÉ – 85**

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**TOPICS**

U.S. census, driving while texting, as well as versus as long as, change versus alter versus modify versus transform

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**GLOSSARY**

**census** – the process of finding out how many people live in a country, and getting information about those people

\* The United States has a census at least once every 10 years.

**household** – the people living together in a single home; one family

\* Jannette’s household consists of her, her husband, her two children, and her mother.

**questionnaire** – a list of questions that many people are asked to answer to get information about something

\* The company created a questionnaire to learn what kinds of things people look for when they buy a toothbrush.

**gender** – sex; male or female

\* Many forms ask for your gender, asking you to mark “M” for male or “F” for female.

**privacy** – the condition of something being hidden from other people who don’t need to or shouldn’t see it, usually because it is personal

\* It’s a good idea to read a website’s privacy policy before sharing your personal information or bank account number.

**Driving while Texting (DWT)** – driving a car while typing text messages on a cell phone or wireless email device like a Blackberry

\* Driving while texting is very dangerous, because the drivers concentrate on typing more than on driving.

**Driving while Intoxicated (DWI)** – driving a car after drinking alcohol; driving a car while being drunk

\* In many states, you will lose your driver’s license if a police officer sees you driving while intoxicated.



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**drunk** – unable to think, walk, or talk well because one has drunk too much alcohol; under the influence of alcohol

\* Smaller people get drunk more easily than people who are big and tall.

**crackdown** – a sudden or strong government or police action against a crime, especially if many people are involved

\* The school principal has started a crackdown against students smoking between classes.

**to multitask** – to do many things at once; to do more than one thing at a time

\* Laura multitasks very well. She can answer emails, talk on the phone, and do paperwork all at the same time.

**as well as** – in addition to; and; including; used to add or include something else, often at the end of a list

\* This store sells soups as well as sandwiches.

**as long as** – if a condition (situation or fact) is there, then something else will happen or I will agree to do something; used in a situation when something will happen only if another condition or circumstance occurs or already exists

\* As long as you go to class each day and read the textbook, you will pass the test.

**to change** – to make something different from what it is right now; to make something different from what it was; to make any kind of difference

\* Justin changed a lot while he was studying in Asia last spring.

**to alter** – to change something in a small way; to make something different in a small way

\* Do you know who altered the group's travel plans to return at 9:00 instead of 8:00?

**to modify** – to change something in a small way, usually to improve it; to make a small difference to make something better

\* The report is okay, but please modify the text in the introduction to make it easier to understand.

**to transform** – to change in a very big way; to make a huge difference in something; to change something completely

\* They bought an old, dirty, cheap house and completely transformed it into a beautiful, expensive home.



## **WHAT INSIDERS KNOW**

### **U.S. Prohibition**

A “prohibition” is a law that “prevents” (doesn’t allow) people from making, transporting, or selling “alcoholic beverages,” or drinks with alcohol in them, such as beer and wine. The word “prohibition” can also refer to a period of time when a country had prohibition laws. Prohibition in the United States lasted from 1920 to 1933. It began because “Protestants,” a group of Christians, didn’t like people drinking alcohol.

Prohibition made it “illegal,” or against the law to make or sell alcohol, but many people did these things anyway. Many people started making alcohol in their own homes. They used very cheap “ingredients” (the things that food and drinks are made from) and mixed them together in large containers. Sometimes they made the alcohol in bathtubs, so the alcohol became known as “bathtub gin.” Bathtub gin had poor quality and didn’t taste very good, but people drank it because other types of alcohol weren’t available.

When alcohol was made illegal, the people who “smuggled” (illegally transported) alcohol were known as “bootleggers.” When alcohol is transported illegally, it is called “bootlegging.”

During Prohibition, alcohol was sold illegally in bars and restaurants known as “speakeasies.” “To speak easy” means to speak freely, without being afraid that other people will hear what one says, so a bar where it was safe to order alcohol was called a “speakeasy.” Sometimes the word “speakeasy” also refers to the places where the bootleggers lived. “Speakeasies” were often in the “basement” (below ground) level in a building, or in another place that is not easy for the police to find.



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 85.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast's English Café episode 85. 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 the United States census, what it is and how it is done. We're also going to talk about an article I saw recently called Driving While Texting, about a problem in some American cities with people who are driving their cars and trying to use their cell phone at the same time. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started!

Our first topic today is something called the “census” (census). A census is a way that a government tries to get information about everyone who is in the country. We would say they try to get information about every member or person in a population (population). A “population” refers to a group of people, usually everyone in a certain country or a certain part of a country; in the U.S., in a certain state.

In the U.S., when you hear about the census, or the population census, usually they're talking about what happens in the U.S. every ten years – in 2000, 2010, 2020, 2030, and so forth – where the government will try to find out how many people live in each state, in each city, and get some basic information about them.

We do a national census every ten years, and every household, that is every apartment and house – place where people live – has to fill out, or complete, a census form. The government mails you the form; you put the information down and you send it back.

Now, some people are lazy, and don't want to send the census form back, so the government finds out who did not return their form and they send a person out to your house. We call that person a “census taker” (taker). A “census taker” is someone who goes to a house or an apartment, knocks on the door, and asks the questions that are in the survey.

Now, the reason the census is so important in the United States is because the representatives in our national government – the House of Representatives, which is one of the legislative bodies, that is, one of the groups of people that



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make decisions about laws in the United States. The House of Representatives has 435 members. Each member represents a certain number of people in a state. So, a state such as California has many representatives because it has a large population. A state – a small state such as Rhode Island or Connecticut has very few representatives because they have a small population. Every state gets at least one representative, and there are some states that have only one representative because their population isn't very big. So we use these, what we would call, “counts” (counts), or numbers of people who are counted, to determine how many representatives that state gets. Each representative represents approximately the same number of people.

Another reason why the census is important is because the money that government – the federal government – gives states and cities often depends on the population – the number of people who live there. So it's very important for them to have an accurate count.

The questionnaire, which is the same as the survey – a questionnaire (questionnaire), usually has a small number of questions for most people. I think there are six or seven questions; they ask your name, your age, your address – where you live, how many people live in your household. Remember, the word “household” refers to anyone who lives in a certain place – an apartment or a house. You could have a family of five people in one household, or you could have just one person in the household.

The census form asks for information about everyone in the household. They also ask the gender (gender), which is the same as the sex – are you male or are you female, or something else. It also asks the ages of all the people, and it asks the race or ethnicity: are you black – African American, are you Asian American, are you Native American, or American Indian; are you white, and so forth. We have a special category for those that are Hispanic or Latino, people whose families originally came from Latin America. All of these are questions that you answer. It doesn't take very long, maybe 10-15 minutes to fill out, or complete, the questionnaire, and then you mail it back.

The census information is supposed to be secret, or private. The Census Bureau, which is the organization that takes care of and organizes the census for the federal government, we call it the “Census Bureau” (bureau). They have to keep the information private. Some people are worried that the Census Bureau will give other parts of the government that information. Legally, they are not supposed to do that. However, there has been a case where the Census Bureau did give information about people to other parts of the government, so some



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people are worried about that problem, the problem of privacy (privacy), keeping your information private or secret.

In the last census in the U.S., which was in the year 2000, there were about 280 million people. I think we now have estimated more than 300 million people in the United States. The very first census in the United States was in 1790, and then we had about four million people. Still, like most countries, we've grown a little bit in the last 200 and some years!

Our next topic is very different. It's a newspaper article that I saw in one of the newspapers I try to read every day, called The Wall Street Journal, which is our business newspaper. And this was an interesting article because it talked about something called Driving While Texting.

Now, “to text” (text) is to send a text message on your telephone. It's a – like a little email, but it goes to someone's telephone. People with mobile phones, or cellular phones, like to send text messages. Some people do; I don't, I don't think I have ever sent a text message, but it's very popular among many people.

The problem with people sending text messages is that sometimes they try to send these messages while they are driving, so they're trying to drive and they're trying to send a text message, or they're trying to text their friends. Obviously, this can be very dangerous if you are not watching where you are going; if you are not paying attention you can cause an accident. The police are finding that more and more people are getting into accidents because they are driving while texting.

I should tell you there's another expression, “driving while intoxicated.” “To be intoxicated” (intoxicated) is to drink too much alcohol, to be, we would say “drunk” (drunk). That's to be “intoxicated.” So, if you are driving while intoxicated, you can be arrested and put in jail or prison. The abbreviation is DWI.

Well, this is “DTW,” driving while texting. Although it isn't illegal, now there are some states in the U.S. that are trying to pass laws that would make it illegal. In one state, you would have to pay \$720 if you were caught, or seen, by the police while you were driving and texting at the same time. They want a crackdown (crackdown – one word) on people who are driving while texting.

The article talks about people who drive and text at the same time as being multitasking. This is a word you'll hear a lot of in talking young people nowadays.



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“To multitask” (multitask) means to do more than one thing at the same time. “Multitask,” which can also be pronounced “multitask,” means multiple or many different tasks – things that you are doing. Unfortunately, some people who think they can multitask can't really, and they end up causing an accident. So please don't drive while texting, at least while I am driving near you. After I get away from you, you can do whatever you want!

Now let's answer a few questions.

Our first question comes from Stefano (Stefano) in Italy. Stefano wants to know where and how you can use the expression “as well as,” and “as long as.” Let's start with “as well as.”

“As well as” means in addition to; including something and then adding something else. Often we use that expression at the end of a list. For example, “I like the colors blue and green, as well as yellow.” So I have a list of two things, and then I want to add a third thing. “As well as” – in addition to.

The expression “as long as” usually means if a certain condition or situation is there – is present – then something else will happen, or I will agree, or say yes, to do something. Usually we use this in a situation when something will happen only if there is another thing that is happening. For example, “I'd like to go for a long walk in the park this afternoon, as long as it doesn't rain.” So, if it doesn't rain, I will take a walk in the park; if it does rain, I won't. It's another way of saying “if,” in this case. “I'd like to go for a long walk in the park this afternoon if it doesn't rain” – as long as it doesn't rain.

Another example: you may have a friend who is moving from one house to another, and she asks you if you will help her. You might say, “I am happy to help you, as long as I don't have to lift any heavy boxes.” As long as – under the condition of, or only if this is also true. So, if you don't have to lift any boxes that are heavy, then you will help your friend move, that's what you're saying there.

Our next question comes from Huangyan (Huangyan). I'm not sure where Huangyan is from. But the question has to do with the difference among the following four words: “to change,” “to alter” (alter), “to modify” (modify), and “to transform” (transform). What is the difference among these four words: “change,” “alter,” “modify,” and “transform”?





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Well, they all have to do with making something different, or changing something from the way it is now. We use them in slightly different situations. Let's start with the verb "to change."

"To change" is the most general of these verbs; it can be used for almost anything. It could be something big such as "I changed my job." I got a new job is what you are saying, or I made my job different. Though normally, when you say "I changed jobs," you mean I got a new job – a different job. It could be for something very small as well: "I changed my hair, instead of having blond hair I have black hair." Well, I don't have any hair, but just an example!

The verb "to alter" usually means to change something in a very small way. So it would not be a big change, but a small change. Usually we use this, or often we use this verb when we are talking about changing your clothes. For example, you have a pair of pants, and the pant legs are too long – they're on the floor when you put them on – so you need to "alter" your pants; you need to change them so that they are shorter. In fact, the noun for that is "an alteration"; you bring it to someone for "an alteration." They change it so that it's a different size – smaller, bigger, however you want it. You can also use this verb in talking about changing your plans. For example, "Let's alter our plans by leaving at eight o'clock instead of nine o'clock tomorrow morning." That's a small change, so we could use the word "alter."

"To modify" also means to change in a small way, usually to make something better or to improve something. It's a little more formal than the verb "to change"; it's used a little bit more in business settings – in business situations. For example, "I like the new website design, but I want to modify the size of the font to make it a little bigger." I want to modify – I want to change it to make it better

The verb "to transform" means to change in a big way – to change something in a major or large way. To change something completely would be "to transform." You might say, "I'm going to transform my little house" – my one-bedroom house – "into a five-bedroom house with orange walls" – orange color on the walls. I'm going to transform my house – I'm going to change it completely. Of course, if I did that I would have to change my wife as well, since she would not like that! But that's "to transform" – to change something completely.

You might also say, "When the president was hired for our company, he transformed it from a small business to a large business." He made a very large and important change; that's "to transform."





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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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