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## TOPICS

McJobs; Robert's Rules of Order; in for a dime, in for a dollar; a police officer's beat, could versus would, center versus centre

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## GLOSSARY

**McJob** – a job that does not pay well, does not use one's skills, and does not offer opportunities for professional development

\* My parents keep telling me that if I don't finish high school, I'll have to work in McJobs for the rest of my life.

**low-prestige** – without respect or admiration from other people; unimportant

\* Katrina has a low-prestige car, but she likes it because it is inexpensive and it runs well.

**advancement** – promotion; moving up in one's career; moving to a position with more responsibility and better pay within the organization where one is currently working

\* What kind of advancement opportunities does your organization offer to new employees?

**dead end** – without hope of getting better; with no hope of moving ahead in one's career; with no hope of making more money or getting more responsibility

\* Jan was in a dead end career as an administrative assistant, so he decided to study for a degree in accounting.

**to be regulated** – to be controlled and monitored by laws or a government agency

\* Companies that make food and medicines are regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA).

**service industry** – the group of businesses that produce services for consumers; the part of the economy that does things for consumers, but does not make things for them

\* This country's economy is growing because of growth in the service industry.



## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98

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**turnover** – the frequency with which employees leave a company and new employees are hired; how often old employees leave and new employees come to a company

\* Companies with high employee turnover have to spend a lot of money hiring and training new employees.

**to polish** – to make something better; to change the details of something to improve it

\* Many U.S. presidential candidates try to polish their image by changing the way they dress and their hairstyles.

**McMansion** – very large homes that are not very interesting, beautiful, or artistic, and look like many other homes that are being built in the same area

\* All of the new homes in this city are McMansions. If you want an interesting home, you'll have to build it yourself.

**council** – a group of people who are chosen to make decisions, rules, or laws

\* The city council is creating a plan to make the downtown area safer.

**parliamentarian** – a person who makes rules or laws in a parliament, congress, or other official group

\* Wendy would make a good parliamentarian because she is a good speaker and knows a lot about the rules.

**to take roll** – to see who is and isn't in a classroom or meeting by reading a list of names and waiting for each person to respond

\* If you hear your name while the teacher is taking roll, raise your hand and say "here" or "present."

**minutes** – a written record of what was discussed during a meeting; a written description of what was talked about at a meeting

\* I wasn't able to go to last week's meeting, but I've read the minutes, and it doesn't seem like I missed anything important.

**to adjourn** – to end a meeting

\* The president adjourned the meeting at 5:55 p.m. so that we could go home for the evening.



**ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98**

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**motion** – a proposal or suggestion that is made during a meeting and then voted on

\* At the neighborhood association meeting, Paola made a motion to buy new benches for the community park.

**beat** – the area that a police officer is responsible for working in

\* Some police officers want to have the downtown beat because it's more interesting than working in residential areas.



## **WHAT INSIDERS KNOW**

### **Classic Fast Food Jingles and Slogans**

A “jingle” is a short song used in advertisements, and a “slogan” is a phrase used in advertisements. Good jingles and slogans are very easy to remember, and people often get them “stuck in their heads,” meaning that they can’t stop singing the jingles or repeating the slogans.

In the past, fast food restaurants have made very famous jingles and slogans. In particular, McDonald’s is very good at making “memorable” (easy to remember) jingles and slogans.

In 1975, McDonald’s “launched” (started using) this jingle: “Two all-beef patties, special sauce, lettuce, cheese, pickles, onions on a sesame seed bun.” The voice in the advertisement said this jingle very quickly, and people tried to copy it as a “tongue twister” (words that are difficult to say quickly). Although McDonald’s no longer uses this slogan, many people can still remember it.

Another popular fast food restaurant is Kentucky Fried Chicken (KFC). One of their slogans that most people know is, “Finger lickin’ good.” “Lickin’” is short for “licking” which is to pass your tongue over something, usually to taste it. This slogan means that Kentucky Fried Chicken is so good that you will want to lick your fingers after eating it with your hands to get all of the flavor.

Burger King is another popular fast food restaurant that has used a slogan that many people know and remember: “Have it your way.” This slogan means that a customer can make special requests about how their food is prepared and that is no problem for Burger King.



## **COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

You're listening to ESL Podcast's English Café number 98.

This is ESL Podcast's English Café episode 98. 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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In this Café, we're going to talk about the word, or term, "McJobs," what that means. We're also going to talk about something that most Americans know about; it's called Robert's Rules of Order. We'll talk about what that is and why most Americans know about it. And as always, we'll answer a few of your questions. Let's get started.

We begin this Café talking about the word "McJob" (McJob). It's a slang word, an informal expression, to describe a job that doesn't pay very much money, a job that has what we may call "low prestige" (prestige). "Prestige" is the respect or admiration that other people give you. For example, being a medical doctor is a "high prestige" job. People respect doctors; they think very highly of them, we would say. A "low prestige" job would be the opposite. Someone who cleans the streets for the city might be considered to have a "low prestige" job.

Usually, a McJob is one that does not require a lot of skills or education. You don't have to know a lot to get the job and do the job, but it's also a job that doesn't offer an opportunity for advancement. When we say, "you have an opportunity for advancement," we mean you can get a better job in the organization or in the company later. McJobs are what you may call, also, a "dead end job." A "dead end job" is a job that you can work at but will never get more money or get a better job at that company.

The term "McJob" comes from the American fast food restaurant, McDonald's. McDonald's is in many countries now, across the world. It is, however, a company that, at least, has the reputation of not paying very much to its employees. It's also a company that is very, what you might call, "standardized." It's a huge, big company that has very specific rules about everything that is done, so the people who work there are very closely regulated by the managers.



## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98

---

When we say someone is “regulated,” we mean they have to follow the rules that someone else gives them.

A McJob is usually in a service industry company. The “service industry” would include companies such as fast food restaurants, stores, what we might call “retail sales,” which is just like a store that you go into and buy something. The people who work at those stores, who work at those restaurants are sometimes said to have these McJobs.

So, a “McJob” is usually a negative description of someone's work – someone's employment. It is often used for companies with low prestige jobs that have a lot of turnover. When we say there is a lot of “turnover” in a company, we mean that people don't work there very long. They're there for two or three months, and they leave, and a new person comes. We could also say the “turnover is high,” meaning there's a lot of it – a lot of new people coming in and other people leaving. If the “turnover is low,” we mean that people stay at the job for a long time. So, “McJobs” tend to have a very high turnover.

Now McDonald's, the company, isn't very happy about this use of the word “McJob,” since it comes from their name, McDonald's. They've been trying to improve their image. We might say they've been trying to “polish” (polish) their image – their reputation. But unfortunately for McDonald's, there are now other words using “Mc” in English that you may hear. They don't mean exactly the same thing; in fact, some of these words usually mean something that is very big, just like McDonald's is very big. For example, people who build big houses – which has become very popular in many cities in the U.S., houses that are much bigger than houses 20 or 30 years ago – it has become popular to call these houses “McMansions.” McMansions – a “mansion” is a big house, so a “McMansion” is a huge house – a very, very big house. Again, it is intended as a negative description of something.

I, myself, never worked at a fast food restaurant. It's very popular for teenagers in school to work at these kinds of McJobs. I did work in a store, however, selling things. I worked at a store called Montgomery Wards, which is no longer around. It closed – probably because I worked there! I don't live in a McMansion; I live in the opposite of a McMansion. I live in a very small house, but I live next to a McMansion. My neighbor bought the house next to me and tore it down – destroyed it – and built a big, new McMansion next to me.

Most Americans know the word “McJob,” most Americans also knows something about Robert's Rules of Order. Robert's Rules of Order is an actual book that



## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98

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has rules for how to have, or conduct, a meeting in an organization that is democratic. For example, if you are at school, in high school or in college, and you join a student organization and the organization has a meeting, Robert's Rules of Order tells you how to “conduct,” or how to run the meeting – how you should manage the meeting.

This is a list of rules about how a meeting should be conducted that is used by most organizations – community organizations, or community groups, school groups and organizations. It might be used by the board of directors – the group of leaders of an organization. They are not rules usually used in a business situation such as a company meeting, because most companies are not democracies. So, Robert's Rules of Order is used for other democratic, we might say, organizations.

I said that most schools that have student groups use Robert's Rules of Order. I remember when I was in elementary school; we had what was called a “student council.” A “council” is a group of people who represent other people, who make decisions. The student council used Robert's Rules of Order, so you had to learn these rules.

The rules came from the late 19<sup>th</sup> century. They were created by a U.S. Army soldier, by the name of Henry Robert, and they were “based on,” or taken from the rules that were used in the United States Congress – in the United States House of Representatives – and they are simple forms of those rules.

Now, I say they're simple forms, but the rules can be very complicated. Many organizations have one person who studies the rules who knows them well, and when there's a question, they ask that person. We usually call that person the “parliamentarian.”

“Parliamentarian” comes from the word “parliament,” which is a group of people elected to represent certain areas in a country; they get together and make laws for that country. For example, in Great Britain – in the United Kingdom – they have the Parliament. We don't call our group of representatives a “parliament,” we call it a “congress,” but it's a similar idea. Parliaments are different, but we won't go into the differences here. A “parliamentarian,” however, is a person who knows the rules very well; in this case, Robert's Rules of Order.

What kind of rules are these? Well, they're rules about who can speak when, who should organize the meeting; they talk about how you vote on things – how you make a decision about things. Most meetings are usually, whether they are



## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98

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regulated by Robert's Rules of Order or not, conducted in a very similar order – similar fashion. You begin by taking roll; to “take roll” (roll) means to find out who is at the meeting. So, you ask who is at the meeting; you get everyone's name. Or, you have a list of names and someone “calls the roll,” they read the list and you say “present” if you are there. If you aren't there, you don't say anything!

After they call the roll, they approve the minutes. The “minutes” are a description of what happened at the last meeting. They say what the organization decided, what they talked about. It's an unusual term, but the “minutes” here is not related to the clock, it's just a description of what you did at the last meeting.

The meeting continues with what is called “old business.” These are things that you talked about last time but, perhaps, need to talk about some more, and more importantly, things that you need to make a decision about. After you do that, there is “new business,” these are new things you haven't talked about before. And then, the meeting ends usually with some announcements, if there are any, and the final thing you do in the meeting is adjourn. To “adjourn” (adjourn) means to end the meeting. To start a meeting, we usually use the expression “call the meeting to order.” If someone says, “I'm going to call the meeting to order,” they mean they're going to start the meeting – it's going to officially begin.

In Robert's Rules of Order there is a “chair,” a person who runs the meeting, who makes decisions; sometimes called a “speaker.” The speaker makes the decisions about what to do and not to do in the meeting, so they're in charge of the meeting.

When you want to vote on something, when you have a decision to make, we call that a “motion” (motion). It's what you are trying to decide, usually something that you express in a couple of sentences. A “motion” is an idea – a suggestion – that you are going to vote on, that everyone is going to make a decision on, and you can vote for the motion or against the motion.

In order to vote on something in a meeting, in Robert's Rules of Order, someone makes a motion, or they say simply, “I move that...” and then whatever you want to do. For example, “I move that we have a big party for ESL Podcast.” After you move something – that is after you propose it, after you say here's what we should do – someone else “seconds” the motion, they say, “Oh, I agree.” You usually have to have one other person to agree with you before you can, or at least agree to vote on it, before you can vote on it.





## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98

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Then, there is usually some discussion. Some people may want to change the motion so they can add what's called an "amendment." An "amendment" is a change to the motion – the idea that you are voting on. If there is a long discussion, and you want to end the discussion, you can vote to end the discussion; it's called "calling the question." If someone "calls the question," that means that they want to stop the debate – stop talking about it and vote on it. But, in order to do that, you usually need two thirds of the people to agree to call the question – to stop the debate.

If you think someone has made a mistake – if the speaker, the chairperson, didn't follow the rules – you can say, "point of order." You can raise your hand or stand up and say, "Point of order Mr. Speaker. We should not be voting on this amendment until we have a discussion about it." That's a "point of order," when you say the rules of order are being broken.

Finally, at the end, you usually adjourn the meeting, and there is a "motion to adjourn," there is a vote that is put: "I move that we adjourn." Someone else would say, "I second the motion." The speaker will then usually repeat what the motion is, and then you vote on it.

Some people love these rules and regulations, and they study them. There are even organizations where – in school, at least – you can study the Robert's Rules of Order, and they have competitions about who knows more about the rules than other people. Most people don't do that, however, but most Americans have heard of Robert's Rules of Order, though not all of them, necessarily, know all the rules.

Now let's answer a few of your questions.

Our first question today comes from Turkey. (Erdinc) Erdinc, I think, wants to know the meaning of the expression "in for a dime, in for a dollar." A "dime" is ten cents; a "dollar" is a hundred cents in U.S. currency – in U.S. money.

The expression "in for a dime, in for a dollar" means that you have "invested," or put in, an amount of money or time or something else, and you now need to put in even more. For example, you are starting a business and you spend \$1,000 to start your business, but then you find out that is not enough – that is not sufficient, you have to invest more money. You may say, "Well, in for a dime, in for a dollar" – I've already put in \$1,000, so if I want to continue, I need to put in some more.



## ENGLISH CAFÉ – 98

---

It's sometimes used when you are describing a situation where you have already “invested,” or put in, a lot of money or time, and you don't want to stop now, before you “complete,” or finish, what you started to do.

Jean-Daniel (Jean-Daniel), from France, wants to know what the expression “the policeman on his beat (beat)” means.

The “beat” of a policeman, or a policewoman, is the place where they are responsible for – it's the area – often used to describe, for example, the place where the policeman or woman walks around to protect. To say that the policeman or the policewoman – we'd probably call them a “police officer” – is out on his or her “beat” means that they are out protecting – out walking around or driving around the place where they are supposed to be – the place they are responsible for.

Hisashi (Hisashi) in Japan would like to know the difference between “could” and “would” when you are asking someone for something – when you are making a request.

You can use either “could” or “would”; “would” might be a little more formal. You might say to someone, for example, “Would you please give me that pen?” You could also say, “Could you please give me that pen?” The “could” would be a little less formal, but they are both acceptable.

Our final question comes from L-I-U-X-I-N-G-R-U-O – I'm sorry, I'm not exactly sure how to pronounce that – from China. The question has to do with the difference between the word “center” (center) and “centre” (centre).

These are the same word; they are spelled differently in U.S. English and in British English. In British English, you often see words that end in “re,” whereas in American English, they would end in “er.” For example, “theater” is spelled T-H-E-A-T-E-R in the US; in England, it's spelled T-H-E-A-T-R-E. And, there are a few other words like that, that have different spellings in English of the United States versus the English of Great Britain, but the meaning is the same.

That's all we have time for today. 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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