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A Day in the Life of Jeff
Episode 1 – Getting Up

GLOSSARY

to get up – to get out of bed; to leave one's bed

* This morning I got up very quickly because the baby was crying.

to wake up – to awaken; to stop sleeping

* She always leaves her curtains open so that she can wake up with the sunlight.

to handle – to manage; to deal with; to control

* Are you sure that you can handle taking six classes this semester?

covers – the layers of fabric that cover a bed; the cloth material that covers a bed and that keep one warm

* When my husband sleeps, he always steals the covers and then I get so cold at night!

comforter – the top-most, thickest cover for a bed, usually made of feathers or other warm material

* In the winter, they sleep under a very thick comforter, but in the summer they don't use it.

light blanket – a thin cover for a bed, made of wool, cotton, or other material

* When Marcos saw Maria sleeping on the sofa, he covered her with a light blanket so she wouldn't be too cold.

pillow – a soft cushion for one's head in bed, usually filled with feathers, cotton, or other material

* Why do people decorate their beds with so many pillows? I only need one to sleep on.

pillowcase – the fabric covering a pillow; the material that covers a pillow to keep it clean

* They bought new pillowcases to match the color of their bedroom walls.

sheets – two pieces of large, thin fabric placed on a bed – one to lie on and one to lie under

* How often do you change the sheets on your bed?

to match – to have the same color or colors that look good together; to make a good combination; to look good together

* Do you think that this sweater matches these pants?



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to go off – to make a loud noise very suddenly

* When my alarm went off at 6:00 a.m., I was in the middle of a very good dream.

jarring – irritating, unpleasant, or annoying to one's ears

* The children were fighting during the car trip and their arguments became very jarring to their parents.

buzzer – an electronic device that makes a long, continuous buzzing sound, similar to that of a flying insect like a fly

* Many TV game shows use a buzzer when participants answer a question incorrectly.

to drive (someone) nuts – to make someone angry, irritated, or crazy

* Please stop singing that song over and over again. You're driving me nuts!

wake-up call – a hotel service that calls guests at a time the guest wants to wake them up in the morning

* He missed his flight because the hotel forgot to give him a wake-up call.

early riser – a person who enjoys waking up early in the morning

* Because Samuel is an early riser, he usually makes breakfast for his wife so that she can sleep a little later.

to oversleep – to sleep too late; to sleep past the time that one is supposed to

* Sasha overslept and missed her biology exam. Do you think her professor will let her take it another day?

to sleep in – to sleep later than usual

* Teenagers love to sleep in on weekends. Sometimes they don't wake up until noon!



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A Day in the Life of Jeff Episode 1 – Getting Up

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

ESLPod.com presents "A Day in the Life of Jeff," a special 10-episode course to teach you everyday vocabulary in English.

This is Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California, and I'll be the host for this series. In this course, you'll learn the vocabulary for everyday actions, from getting up in the morning to going to bed at night and everything in between.

Each lesson has three parts: first, a story read slowly; second, an explanation of the story and the vocabulary we use; and third, the story read at a normal speed. Are you ready? Let's begin with lesson one: "Getting Up."

[Start of story]

The worst part of the day for me is definitely when I have to get up. Waking up, that I can handle. But getting up? That, I hate. The covers I have on my bed are heavy, mostly because I have a comforter as well as a light blanket. I sleep with two pillows, which for some reason have different color pillowcases. Well, at least the sheets match.

I sometimes wake up before the alarm goes off. I like to keep the alarm at a low volume, with some classical music, nothing too jarring. My old roommate used to like the terrible buzzer that you find on most alarm clocks nowadays, which always used to drive me nuts. As I was saying, I sometimes wake up before the alarm, usually because of some noise outside the house—a car door slamming, an alarm going off, gunfire—well, okay, not gunfire, but man, is my neighborhood noisy! Of course, when I'm staying in a hotel, it's usually easier to just get a wake up call from the hotel than set the alarm.

I'm not really an early riser, so I don't jump out of bed ready to take on the world. I get up very slowly, usually one foot on the floor at a time. Every once in awhile I'll oversleep, but not too often. I really love the weekends, when I can sleep in.

[End of story]

Our story begins by me describing how much I do not like getting up. To get up means to get out of your bed, to stand up after you have been lying down on a bed. I say that, "The worst part of my day is when I have to get up. Waking up, that I can handle." To wake up, "wake up," (two words) means that you are



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sleeping and you stop sleeping and now you are awake. The verb is to wake up. So, you can wake up while you are in bed, and then, you get up—you stand up after lying down.

I said that “waking up” is something “that I can handle.” To handle, “handle,” here means to be able to control—something that I can manage—something that I can accept; it's not a problem. Another expression would be something I can deal with. To deal, “deal,” with something is the same, in this case, as to be able to handle something.

I say that “getting up” is something that “I hate. The covers I have on my bed are heavy.” The covers, “covers,” are the things that you put over you to keep you warm. Usually, the covers include a blanket, sometimes a comforter and usually, what we would call the top sheet or flat sheet. A comforter, “comforter,” is a very thick blanket—a very heavy blanket. A blanket, “blanket,” is something that you put over you when you are sleeping to keep you warm.

Blanket is a general term; a comforter is a kind of blanket—a heavy blanket. The opposite of a comforter would be a light blanket. A light, “light,” blanket would be the opposite, and that is a blanket that will keep you warm, but if it gets very cold, it might not keep you warm—it might not be sufficient.

So, we have a comforter and we have a light blanket. Usually, there is a top sheet, “sheet,” that you put over you in between your body and the blankets, and this top sheet is sometimes called a flat sheet. The sheet that goes on the bed itself—that goes onto the corners of the bed—that's called a fitted sheet, a fitted, “fitted,” sheet. So, we have a fitted sheet on the bed that you sleep on top of, then we have a top sheet and then a blanket, sometimes, if it's very cold, a comforter as well.

I say in the story that “I sleep with two pillows.” A pillow, “pillow,” is what you put your head on when you sleep. Now, “for some reason,” I say I “have different colored pillowcases.” This is true, actually; I have a black pillowcase and a blue pillowcase for my two pillows. I think the reason is I am too lazy to go and buy a new pillowcase.

Well, the pillowcase, “pillowcase,” (one word) is the thing that you put over the pillow so the pillow doesn't get dirty; we call that the pillowcase. I say, “Well, at least the sheets match.” We already know what a sheet is. When we say the sheets match, “match,” we mean that they are the same color or two colors that



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look good together. We use that verb, to match, when we are talking about clothing as well, or anything where you have two colors.

“I sometimes wake up before the alarm goes off.” When we say the alarm goes off, we mean that the alarm starts to make a sound. Your alarm, “alarm,” is a machine that makes noise at a certain time; usually it has a clock. Well, “I sometimes wake up before my alarm” makes noise—my alarm goes off. “I like to keep the alarm at a low volume,” meaning not very loud, “at a low volume, with some classical music, nothing too jarring.” When we say a sound is jarring, “jarring,” we mean that it is loud and it causes you to jump or to be surprised. It's something that is not very nice—not very pleasant. A jarring noise would be one that bothers you, perhaps because it is very loud or it is not a very nice sound. So, I don't want my alarm to have a jarring noise, instead I play classical music.

Now, “My old roommate”—the person I used to share an apartment with—“used to like the terrible buzzer you find on most alarm clocks.” This, again, is true. I had a roommate that had a very loud and bad sounding buzzer; it was a terrible buzzer. The buzzer, “buzzer,” is when the alarm clock doesn't play music, but it just plays a sound. Sometimes it is like a bell ringing; that's the buzzer. Well, this buzzer “always used to drive me nuts.” To drive someone nuts, “nuts,” means to drive them crazy—to make them crazy—to make them go crazy.

I continue the story by saying, “As I was saying.” We use that expression, as I was saying, when we are talking about one thing then we start talking about a second thing, and now we want to go back and talk about the first thing again. So, when you interrupt yourself when you are talking, and then you change the topic—change what you are talking about—and then want to go back to your original topic, you say, “As I was saying.”

“As I was saying, I sometimes wake up before the alarm, usually because of some noise outside the house.” When we say there is some noise—some sound—outside the house or outside of the house—you can say either one—we mean that someone is making a noise that is very loud. Some of those noises are “a car door slamming.” The verb, to slam, “slam,” means that you close the door usually very quickly and you make a loud noise. Someone closes their car door very fast, it will make a noise; we call that “slamming the door.”

My mother always used to tell me when I was young, “Don't slam the doors,” meaning when I come in and close the door, I should close it slowly and quietly. Of course, I was not a good boy so I would sometimes slam the door.



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As I was saying, an alarm goes off, that's another noise that can wake you up outside and this would be a car alarm. Here, in Los Angeles, everyone has a car alarm, and sometimes those alarms go off at night. Another noise is gunfire; gun, "gun," fire, "fire." Gunfire is when someone shoots a gun and it makes a noise. This is, again, Los Angeles, so we sometimes have gunfire but of course, I'm joking. I say, "well, okay, not gunfire," meaning I'm just kidding—that isn't actually true, although, it is true sometimes.

I then say, "Man, is my neighborhood noisy!" That expression, "man," is just a way of expressing your emotion when you are saying something that you really mean or really want to emphasize. "Man, is my neighborhood noisy," that means my neighborhood is very noisy.

"Of course, when I'm staying at a hotel, it's usually easier to just get a wake up call from the hotel." A wake up call, "call," is when the hotel calls you on the phone to wake you up, so you don't have to set your own alarm. To set, "set," an alarm means to turn it on and to put a certain time that you want to get up. Well, sometimes people have problems with their alarm clocks and so, if they are in a hotel, they can ask the hotel to wake them up with a wake up call.

At the end of the story I say, "I'm not really an early riser." An early, "early," riser, "riser," means someone who wakes up and gets up very early in the morning. You could be an early riser; you could be a late riser. The word riser comes from the verb to rise, "rise," which, in this case, means to get up. Well, "I'm not really an early riser," I say, "so I don't jump out of bed." To jump out of bed means to get out of bed very quickly. "I don't jump out of bed ready to take on the world." "To take on the world," means I'm ready for the day. It's an expression we use to say that I am ready to go out into the world and do my best. "I'm not an early riser, I don't jump out of bed ready to take on the world." Instead, "I get up very slowly, usually one foot on the floor at a time." So first, I get up and I put one foot on the floor and then another foot on the floor, and then I stand up.

"Every once in awhile," I say, "I'll oversleep." To oversleep, "oversleep," (one word) means that you sleep later than you should. For example, you are wanting to get up at seven o'clock in the morning and you sleep until 7:30. You don't realize that you are sleeping too late; we call that oversleeping. To oversleep means that you sleep longer than you wanted to.

At the end of the story I say, "I really love the weekends," Fridays and Saturdays, "when I can sleep in." To sleep in means that you don't get up at your normal



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time; you sleep longer than you normally do. So, if you normally get up at seven, on Saturday or Sunday if you don't work, you may sleep in until nine a.m.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a native rate of speech.

[Start of story]

The worst part of the day for me is definitely when I have to get up. Waking up, that I can handle. But getting up? That, I hate. The covers I have on my bed are heavy, mostly because I have a comforter as well as a light blanket. I sleep with two pillows, which for some reason have different color pillowcases. Well, at least the sheets match.

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[End of story]

That concludes part one of "A Day in the Life of Jeff." In part two, we'll be "Cleaning Up."

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

This course was produced by Dr. Jeff McQuillan and Dr. Lucy Tse. Copyright 2006.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



A Day in the Life of Jeff
Episode 2 – Cleaning Up

GLOSSARY

sink – a kitchen or bathroom container that is attached to the floor and wall, holds water, and is used for washing dishes or brushing teeth

* When Lily came home, she was disappointed to see that the sink was full of dirty dishes.

medicine cabinet – a small, flat cabinet on a bathroom wall that is used to store medicines, toothbrushes, lotions, and other things, and has a mirror on front

* If you have a headache, take an aspirin. There're in the medicine cabinet.

toilet – a large bowl and pipe attached to the floor and wall in a bathroom, used to collect body waste

* Cleaning the toilet is my least favorite household chore.

tub (also **bathtub**) – a large, long container that you fill with water and then sit in to take a bath

* Marsha relaxes by filling her tub with hot water and taking a bath while listening to classical music.

mouthwash – a liquid that cleans one's mouth and makes breath smell better

* After eating foods with strong flavors like garlic and onion, you should use mouthwash because it covers the smell.

to swish (something) around – to quickly move a liquid around the inside of one's mouth without drinking it

* The dentist said that I should swish mouthwash around for at least 30 seconds every morning.

to gargle – to move a liquid into the back of one's throat without drinking it.

* Harry believes that the best cure for a sore throat is to gargle warm water with lemon juice and salt.

to spit – to push food or liquid out of one's mouth

* When Jack was six years old, he had trouble taking medicine. He didn't like the taste and would spit it out.

floss – a thread that is moved between teeth to clean them

* A toothbrush cleans the front and back of your teeth, but only dental floss can clean between teeth.



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shower curtain – a large piece of plastic or cloth that hangs from the ceiling to the floor in front of a bathtub or shower to keep water from entering the rest of the room

* This morning Uncle Kenny forgot to close the shower curtain, so there was water all over the floor.

to lather up – to cover oneself with soap or one's hair with shampoo

* We ran out of hot water immediately after I lathered up, so I had to wash off the soap in cold water!

shampoo – liquid soap made for cleaning hair

* People with long hair use more shampoo than people with short hair do.

to rinse off – to use water to remove soap from something

* Kelly's son cried when she rinsed him off because she accidentally got soap in his eyes.

to shave – to remove hair from the body by using a razor that cuts the hair near the skin

* In the United States, many women shave their legs to make them look smoother.

electric razor – an electronic device for shaving

* When I was a child, I always woke up to the sound of my father using an electric razor to shave his face.

hand razor – a plastic or metal tool for shaving, held in one's hand

* When he started shaving, he often has cuts on his chin because he didn't know how to use a hand razor.

shaving cream – a cream, foam, or lotion that is put on the skin before shaving

* If I shave without shaving cream, my skin becomes red and itchy.

disposable blades – the flat, sharp piece of metal in a hand razor that cuts the hair and can be thrown out and replaced

* Disposable blades are more expensive than traditional blades but they never need to be re-sharpened.



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Episode 2 – Cleaning Up

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "Day in the Life of Jeff." I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development.

In the first episode of "A Day in the Life of Jeff," I talked about how I get up every morning. In part two, we're going to talk about "Cleaning Up," what you do in the morning to get ready to eat and go to work. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

I go into my bathroom sometime around 6:45 a.m. My sink and medicine cabinet are on the left when you enter my bathroom. The toilet is next to that, with the tub in front. Anyway, I turn on the lights, and try to find the mouthwash in the medicine cabinet. I pour a small amount into a cup, swish it around for 30 seconds, gargle, and spit. Not pleasant, but necessary. Then I get out the floss. When I'm done flossing, I pull out the toothbrush and the toothpaste. I brush and then it's off to the shower.

I pull the shower curtain aside, step into the tub, and pull the curtain back. I turn on both the hot and the cold water, looking for the perfect temperature. I lather up with soap, put some shampoo in my hair, then rinse and dry off. Now it's shaving time. I used to own an electric razor, but I found it didn't shave close enough. So now I'm back to the old hand razor. I lather up with shaving cream, and I start to shave. I rinse the razor and throw the disposable blades in the trash. It's about 7:00 AM, and I'm on to breakfast.

[End of story]

In this episode, we are "Cleaning Up," or making ourselves clean.

"I go into my bathroom," I begin the story, "sometime around 6:45 a.m." Notice that we say a.m., but you could also say, "in the morning." 6:45 is also the same as quarter to seven. "My sink and medicine cabinet are on the left when you enter my bathroom." In your bathroom and in your kitchen there is usually a sink and a faucet. The faucet, "faucet," is where the water comes out, and normally you have hot water and cold water. The sink is where the water goes into. Usually, it is a round or a square white bowl, really, that has a hole at the bottom and we call that hole the drain, "drain." That's where the water goes down into the pipe—it's where the water goes out of the sink. If you want to fill your sink



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with water, you usually have to stop the drain. To stop a drain means to put something over it so that the water doesn't go down.

So, we have a faucet and we have a sink, and in your bathroom, you often have a small box, sometimes with a mirror on it so you can see yourself, that we call the medicine cabinet. A cabinet, “cabinet,” is like a small box where you put things, but it's a box that hangs on the wall—it is attached to the wall. You can have cabinets in your kitchen, where you put your dishes. So, they're containers—they're things that you used to put and store or keep things.

A medicine cabinet is a place where you have medicine, but also, it's a place where you put your other things that you use in the bathroom; things like mouthwash, shaving cream, razors and so forth. We'll talk about those in a second. So, that's your medicine cabinet.

In my bathroom, the “sink and the medicine cabinet are on the left” side when you walk into the bathroom, “the toilet is next to that to.” The toilet, “toilet,” is what you use to go to the bathroom—what you use to get rid of things from your body, we might say. When you are done using the toilet, you then flush the toilet. The verb, to flush, “flush,” is when you get rid of what's inside the toilet after you're done using it, usually with water.

There is a tub in my bathroom. A tub, “tub,” sometimes called a bathtub, is where you can take a bath. You can fill the tub up with water and you can get into the water.

“Anyway,” I say in the story, “I turn on the lights.” Notice the use of the word “anyway.” It's common in English to use that word when you want to get back to something you were talking about before. We can also say, “as I was saying,” it means something similar here.

“Anyway, I turn on the lights, and try to find the mouthwash in the medicine cabinet.” The mouthwash, “mouthwash,” (all one word) is a liquid like water, but it has something in it that helps clean your teeth—clean the inside of your mouth; that is mouthwash. So, you take the mouthwash and you “pour a small amount into a cup.” The mouthwash usually comes in, or is in, a bottle. This bottle, you take and you pour some mouthwash into a cup. To pour means to take something that is liquid, like water or mouthwash, and put it somewhere else. In this case, it's into a small cup.



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After I put it into the cup, I “swish it around for 30 seconds.” To swish, “swish,” something around means to move it around, and we use that verb usually when talking about something that is liquid like water or mouthwash that you move back and forth very quickly. So, when you put the mouthwash in your mouth, usually you take your sides of your mouth, what we would call your cheeks, “cheeks,” your cheeks and you move them back and forth, so that the mouthwash covers and cleans all of your teeth.

After “I swish it around,” I “gargle.” The verb to gargle, “gargle,” means to take water and to put it into your back of your mouth. I will have to demonstrate this; it's easier to understand if you can hear it. [Gargling sound] That's to gargle. That's just an extra little bonus for listening to this episode; you get to hear me gargle!

Well, after I gargle, I have to get rid of or remove the water from my mouth, and I do that by spitting. To spit, “spit,” means to take something that's liquid, like water, and to remove it from your mouth. Usually, you make a certain sound like [spitting sound]; something like that.

Well, now we've gargled and spit. I say these are “Not pleasant, but necessary.” Not necessarily something nice but something I have to do. After I use the mouthwash, “Then I get out,” or take out, “the floss.” Floss, “floss,” is a piece of string that you put in between your teeth to clean; we call that floss. And, there's a verb, to floss, which means to use that little piece of string.

“When I'm done flossing,” when I'm finished flossing, “I pull out,” or take out, “the toothbrush and the toothpaste.” The toothbrush is what you use to clean your teeth; the toothpaste is like the soap that you use to clean your teeth. But, we do not call it tooth soap; we call it toothpaste. It comes in a container that we call a tube, and the tube, “tube,” is where the toothpaste is, and you usually squeeze the tube, “squeeze,” to get the toothpaste out of the tube.

So, I put some toothpaste on my toothbrush and then I brush. We use that verb, to brush, to mean to clean my teeth. But, we don't say, “I'm going to clean my teeth,” usually, we say, “I'm going to brush my teeth.” That same verb, to brush, can also be used with your hair, when you are trying to put your hair in a certain place—a certain position. I don't brush my hair, of course, because I don't have any hair, but I used to, when I was younger, brush my hair.

I finished brushing my teeth, so now I'm going to take a shower. There's a difference between taking a shower, where the water comes from the top of the



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wall and goes over you, and a bath, which means to fill your bathtub with water and get in. Most American homes have the tub and the shower in one place. Some homes have a separate shower and a separate tub.

In the story, I say that “I pull the shower curtain aside.” The curtain, “curtain,” is what you use to keep the water in the shower from going onto the floor. It prevents the water from leaving the shower area. We use that word, curtain, also for the things that you can put over your window in your house or apartment, so nobody can see inside; that’s also called a curtain.

Well, “I pull the shower curtain aside,” meaning I put it to one side—the left side or the right side. I “step into the tub, and I pull the curtain back,” I put it back in its original position. “I turn on both the hot and the cold water.” To turn on means that I turn the faucet on so that the water comes out. Remember, the faucet is where water comes out for a sink; it’s also where the water comes out for a tub or a shower. Actually, for the shower—the top of the shower, we don’t normally call that a faucet, we call that a showerhead, “head.” So, the showerhead is where the water comes out when you’re taking a shower. And, if you are drawing a bath, meaning if you are putting water into your tub to take a bath—to draw a bath—then you use the faucet. The water comes out of the faucet spout, “spout,” that’s the part of the faucet where the water actually comes out of.

I step into the shower, I turn on “the hot and cold water, looking for the perfect temperature,” not too hot, not too cold. “I lather up with soap.” To lather, “lather,” or to lather up, means to take soap and put it on your skin and then put water on it, and you rub the soap and the water together until you make little bubbles—until the soap and water covers your skin. That is to lather or to lather up.

Well, “I lather up with” some “soap,” and then I “put some shampoo in my hair.” Shampoo, “shampoo,” is the soap for your head—for your hair, if you have hair. So, you take this special soap, usually it is a liquid soap, and you put it on your hair and that is called shampoo. You can also lather up your shampoo. You take your hands and you move them back and forth quickly, and that would lather up your shampoo.

Well, after you do that, then you have to get rid of the soap and the shampoo, and you do that by rinsing. To rinse, “rinse,” means to take water and get rid of the soap and the shampoo that are on your body. After you do that, then you have to dry your body off. To dry off means the same as to dry, but we use that expression, to dry off, to mean to dry, in this case, your body with a towel.



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Now, it is time for me to shave. To shave, “shave,” means to remove hair, usually from your face. If you are a man and you don't shave, you will grow a beard and a mustache; you will have hair on your face. Well, I don't like beards and mustaches, so I shave—I use something to get rid of the hair.

The thing I use to get rid of the hair is the razor, “razor.” A razor is like a knife, it has a blade, “blade,” and the blade is the thing that actually cuts the hair—that removes the hair. So, you have a razor that you use to shave the whiskers from your face. A whisker, “whisker,” is the name we give the hair on your face, at least for a man, we call those whiskers. So, you can have an electric razor, like I used to have, or you can have a hand razor. A hand razor is one that is not electric that you just take and you shave by moving the razor back and forth on your face.

Before I shave, I have to “lather up with shaving cream.” We already know that word, lather up, it means to mix the soap with water and make bubbles so that it spreads across your skin. Shaving cream, “cream,” is the special kind of soap or special kind of liquid material that you put on your face to make it easier for you to shave, so you don't cut yourself or hurt yourself when you are shaving.

“I rinse the razor” after I am done shaving, and I “throw the disposable blades in the trash.” The blades are the things that go on top of the razor that cut the whiskers, or remove the whiskers. Disposable, “disposable,” comes from the verb to dispose, “dispose,” which means to throw away—to put in the trash—to put in the garbage. That is disposable. If something is disposable, you use it once or twice and then you it throw away. Well, these are disposable blades.

Now it's seven o'clock, when I finish showering and shaving, and I am “on to breakfast,” meaning now I am going to have my breakfast.

Let's listen to the story again, this time at a native rate of speech.

[Start of story]

I go into my bathroom sometime around 6:45 a.m. My sink and medicine cabinet are on the left when you enter my bathroom. The toilet is next to that, with the tub in front. Anyway, I turn on the lights, and try to find the mouthwash in the medicine cabinet. I pour a small amount into a cup, swish it around for 30 seconds, gargle, and spit. Not pleasant, but necessary. Then I get out the floss.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff Episode 2 – Cleaning Up

When I'm done flossing, I pull out the toothbrush and the toothpaste. I brush and then it's off to the shower.

I pull the shower curtain aside, step into the tub, and pull the curtain back. I turn on both the hot and the cold water, looking for the perfect temperature. I lather up with soap, put some shampoo in my hair, then rinse and dry off. Now it's shaving time. I used to own an electric razor, but I found it didn't shave close enough. So now I'm back to the old hand razor. I lather up with shaving cream, and I start to shave. I rinse the razor and throw the disposable blades in the trash. It's about 7:00 AM, and I'm on to breakfast.

[End of story]

That concludes part two of "A Day in the Life of Jeff." In part three, we'll "Eat Our Breakfast."

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our web site at eslpod.com.

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Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff
Episode 3 – Eating Breakfast

GLOSSARY

coffeemaker – a machine that makes coffee by passing hot water through ground coffee beans

* Scott has a very small coffeemaker that makes only two cups of coffee each time.

filter – a thin piece of paper that allows liquid to pass through, but prevents the ground coffee beans from getting through

* This morning, his cup of coffee had a lot of small pieces of coffee beans in it because he forgot to put the filter in his coffeemaker.

the night before – the previous night; yesterday night

* I always choose my clothes the night before, so that I can get dressed more quickly the next morning.

cupboard – a wooden box with shelves and a door that hangs on a kitchen wall and is used to store plates, glasses, and other things

* Please dry the plates and put them back in the kitchen cupboard above the stove.

cereal – a food made from grains (wheat, oats, barley) that is eaten with cold milk for breakfast

* I've never known anyone who liked to eat cereal as much as he does. He eats it for breakfast and dinner!

to store – to keep; to put something in a place to use later

* Where should we store these bicycles? Do you have room in the garage?

ham and eggs – a traditional American breakfast of fried, salted pork and eggs

* I'm like to order some toast to go with my ham and eggs.

stack – a pile of objects resting on each other that goes up

* When her boyfriend saw that she was carrying a huge stack of books to her class, he offered to help her.

waffle – a square piece of thick, sweet bread with small square shapes on each side, usually eaten for breakfast with syrup, honey, or jam

* To make waffles, you will need flour, sugar, salt, eggs, and milk.



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skim milk – milk that has no fat

* She asked her assistant to get her a cup of coffee with a little skim milk and no sugar.

silverware tray – a container that holds forks, knives, and spoons

* Once the forks are dry, please put them in the silverware tray.

newspaper – large pieces of paper printed with news and advertisements, usually produced daily or weekly

* We get the Sunday newspaper delivered to our house so we don't need to go to the store to buy it.

to grab – to quickly take something with one's hand

* He grabbed the child's hand and pulled her away from the busy street.

slice of toast with jam – a crispy, heated piece of bread covered with sweet, mashed fruit

* I usually have a slice of toast with jam for breakfast, but today I didn't have time.

to rinse off – to use water to remove dirt or small pieces of food from an object

* She didn't have time to wash the dishes this morning, but she rinsed them off so that it wouldn't be too difficult to wash later.

dishwasher – a machine that washes dishes

* The dishwasher broke right before the party and we had to wash all of the dishes by hand.

thermos – a container that has a tight lid that keeps liquids warm or cold

* He always carries two thermoses to work, one for his coffee and the other one for his soup.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

A Day in the Life of Jeff Episode 3 – Eating Breakfast

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part three: Eating Breakfast.

I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development. On our previous episode, we went into the bathroom, shaved, showered, brushed our teeth; now, we are ready to eat breakfast. Let's get started with part three: Eating Breakfast.

[Start of story]

I walk into my kitchen and turn on the coffeemaker. I always put the coffee, filter, and water in the night before so it's ready to go. Next, I open the door of the cupboard where the cereal is stored. I would love to have ham and eggs for breakfast every morning, or maybe a stack of waffles, but the truth is that I just don't have the time to cook.

So, I pour myself a bowl of cereal and put in a glass of skim milk, making sure I take a spoon out of the silverware tray. I go outside and pick up my newspaper, and sit down at the kitchen table. I love reading the paper in the morning, though usually I just have time to read a few of the stories. When I've finished my cereal, I grab a banana and maybe make a slice of toast with jam. I rinse off my breakfast dishes in the sink and put them in the dishwasher. By that time, my coffee is ready so I pour myself a cup and put the rest in a Thermos for work.

[End of story]

In this episode, we are eating our breakfast. I begin by walking "into my kitchen and" turning "on the coffeemaker." Notice these verbs, to walk into or to walk in, to turn on. Those two word verbs are very common in English. So, I don't just walk to my kitchen, "I walk into my kitchen and" I "turn on the coffeemaker."

The coffeemaker, "coffeemaker," (all one word) is the machine that, you can guess, makes the coffee; that's the coffeemaker. Usually, a coffeemaker has water on the top—place where you put the water—and then, it has a place for the actual coffee. Now, you take the coffee and you put it into a piece of paper or a piece of plastic called a filter. The filter, "filter," is something that allows the water to go through it, but doesn't allow the coffee to go through it.

So, you put the coffee into the filter and the hot water goes through the coffee, it goes out of the filter and goes into the coffee pot, "pot," the coffee pot is on the



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bottom. So, you have the coffee, the coffee filter, and the coffee pot. After the water goes through the coffee, what you have to throw out—what you have to remove when you are done—are called the coffee grounds, “grounds.”

Well, I put in “the coffee, the filter, and the water the night before,” meaning, in this case, last night, “so that it is ready to go,” meaning when I walk into the kitchen, it is already ready, I just have to turn it on. Some coffeemakers have clocks that will automatically turn your coffeemaker on in the morning.

“Next, I open the door of the cupboard where the cereal is stored.” The cupboard—cupboard, which looks like the word “cup” and the word “board” put together, but is pronounced cupboard—a cupboard is like a cabinet. It’s a place where you store things—a place where you keep things. To store, “store,” as a verb means to keep something in a place—to keep something in a cupboard, or cabinet, or a box. Well, the cupboard is what we call the cabinets that are in the kitchen. They’re the like wooden boxes that have doors on them that you can put things in. Usually, if it’s a big cupboard, you have different shelves, “shelves,” the singular is shelf, “shelf.”

Well, I go into the cupboard and I get the cereal out. The cereal, “cereal,” is a very popular breakfast in the United States. It’s usually dry and you put milk in a bowl, with the cereal, and eat the cereal and the milk together. I love cereal in the morning. I really do; I have cereal every morning. Since I was, I think, five years old, I’ve been eating cereal.

I take the cereal out—where it is stored in the cupboard—and I prepare my breakfast. I say in the story that “I would love to have ham and eggs for breakfast every morning.” Ham is a type of meat that comes from a pig; it usually has a lot of salt in it. Another kind of meat that’s popular in the morning for breakfast is bacon, “bacon,” which is also meat that comes from a pig. It is long and thin usually; it’s cut to be long and thin. Eggs are the things that come from chickens—or does the chicken come from the egg? I’m not sure.

Anyway, we have ham and eggs, which is a very popular American breakfast. Many people in the United States eat what we would call a very heavy breakfast, meaning there’s lots of fat and there’s lots of food. In some countries, this is not done, but in the United States it’s very common for people to have eggs and ham for breakfast. My father used to have eggs every morning for breakfast before he went to work.



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Well, I say, “I would love to have ham and eggs for breakfast every morning, or maybe a stack of waffles.” A waffle, “waffle,” is something that is made from batter. Batter, “batter,” when we talk about cooking is a liquid, made usually with eggs, and flour, and perhaps milk, and you combine these things together and you get a thick liquid, which we call batter, and you take the batter and you put it into a special cooking machine, which we call a waffle iron, “iron.” And, a waffle iron has a certain shape, usually it's square, and when you put the batter in, you close the top of it and you cook it from both sides. And, when you take it out, it has little squares in it, and this is called a waffle. It's a kind of almost like a bread. And, after you make the waffle, you usually put some special type of liquid sugar, which we call syrup, “syrup.” Often, this comes from trees; the best syrup comes from maple leaf trees. It's called maple syrup; it's very good. And, you put that thick sugar liquid on top of the waffle. You can also put some sort of fruit on top of the waffle also; I just like the sugar, myself.

Something similar to a waffle is a pancake, “pancake,” (all one word), and a pancake is also made from this batter—this liquid—thick liquid—except it goes into a flat pan on your stove and you flip it over. So, it's completely flat, there are no squares in it, usually it's round, and that's called a pancake.

Both waffles and pancakes can be in stacks. A stack, “stack,” is when you have one long, thin thing on top of another. So, you can have a stack of paper, pieces of paper one on top of the other. The same is true with a waffle or with pancakes. You can have a stack of waffles, one waffle on top of another, or a stack of pancakes. Usually, we talk about a stack of pancakes. If you go to a restaurant and you order breakfast and you want pancakes, sometimes they will ask you if want a “short stack,” meaning just one or two, or you might have a regular stack, which could be four or five. Remember, Americans eat a big breakfast, that's why there's so many big Americans.

Getting back to our story, I am not having ham, eggs or waffles; I'm having a bowl of cereal. And, to prepare my cereal, I put it into a bowl and I pour skim milk on top. Skim, “skim,” milk is milk with no or very little fat in it. Milk comes in four different types: you have whole milk, which has the most fat; you have two percent milk, which has somewhat less fat; you can have one percent, which is even less fat; or you can have fat free, or skim, milk, which has little or no fat at all. Well, because I don't want to be a big American, I have skim milk.

In order to eat my cereal, I have to “take a spoon out of the silverware tray.” The silverware, “silverware,” (all one word) is the name we give the knife, the fork, and the spoon together. Sometimes those are called silverware even though



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they are not made of silver. Other people in a restaurant may call them utensils. Utensils, “utensils.” If you go to a restaurant and you sit down and you don't have a spoon or a fork or a knife, you would ask the waiter or waitress for some utensils, or you could just say, “I need some silverware.”

A silverware tray, “tray,” is a place where you put the silverware—you put the utensils, the forks, the spoons, the knives—in a drawer. And, usually a tray is like a little box that has holes in it for specific things. That word, tray, can also be used to describe a small, flat piece of plastic or wood that you use to carry things on, like your dishes.

Well, I get my spoon, and I go out and I get my newspaper, which, of course, is what has the news, the sports, and the international and national news. Many Americans like to read a newspaper in the morning, just like people all over the world do. I “sit down at the kitchen table” and I read the paper. Sometimes we call a newspaper just the paper. Someone says, “I read it in the paper this morning,” they mean the newspaper.

“Usually I just have time to read” a couple of stories, “a few of the stories. When I've finished my cereal, I grab a banana and maybe make a slice of toast with jam.” To grab, “grab,” means to take something, usually with your hand. To grab something with your hand means to pick it up—to take it with your hand. “I grab a banana,” which I like to eat, and “a slice of toast with jam.”

Toast, “toast,” is bread that you put in something called a toaster, “toaster,” and the toaster heats up the bread until the bread is brown on the outside. A slice of toast, “slice,” is a piece of toast. We use the words slice when we are talking about one piece of bread, or one piece of cake. You can have a slice of cake; you can also have a slice of pie.

This is a slice of toast, which is bread that we put in a toaster, and we toast the bread. We can use toast as a verb as well. And, after I toast the bread, I can put butter on it or I can put jam, “jam.” And, jam is made from fruit—such as strawberries—and sugar, and they put them together and it makes a thick liquid that you can put on a piece of toast. We would say we spread the jam on the toast. We use that verb spread, “spread,” to talk about putting butter or putting jam on a piece of toast, usually with a knife.

When I am done with my breakfast, “I rinse off my breakfast dishes.” To rinse means to clean something with water. To rinse off is the verb. You could just



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say, “I rinse my breakfast dishes,” but we like those two word verbs in English and so we would probably say, “rinse off my breakfast dishes.”

I rinse them off in the sink, and I “put them in the dishwasher.” The dishwasher, “dishwasher,” is a machine that cleans the dishes. Some families have dishwashers. The joke that we make sometimes in English is that someone—when someone says, “Oh, do you have a dishwasher,” and you say, “Yes, I am the dishwasher,” which means you don’t have a machine that washes your dishes; you wash your dishes by yourself. We would say you wash them by hand.

But the time I’m finished rinsing off my breakfast dishes, “my coffee is ready” and “so I pour myself a cup.” Notice the use of that verb, pour. We use that verb when we are removing liquid from a bottle and putting it into a cup or a glass. We also used that verb, pour, when I said, “I pour myself a bowl of cereal.” Now, cereal isn’t liquid, but it is something that you can put into another container, in this case, into a bowl, and it comes out of the bigger container and into the smaller container. So, it comes out of the cereal box and goes into the bowl. So, we use that verb usually when we talk about liquid things like water or milk, but you can also use it when we talk about cereal.

Well, “I pour myself a cup” of coffee and I “put the rest in a Thermos for work.” A Thermos, which is “Thermos,” is a bottle that keeps hot liquid hot and cold liquid cold. So, if you have hot coffee and you put it into a Thermos, the Thermos—this bottle—will keep it hot for a long time.

Now let’s listen to the story, this time at a regular speed.

[Start of story]

I walk into my kitchen and turn on the coffeemaker. I always put the coffee, filter, and water in the night before so it’s ready to go. Next, I open the door of the cupboard where the cereal is stored. I would love to have ham and eggs for breakfast every morning, or maybe a stack of waffles, but the truth is that I just don’t have the time to cook.

So, I pour myself a bowl of cereal and put in a glass of skim milk, making sure I take a spoon out of the silverware tray. I go outside and pick up my newspaper, and sit down at the kitchen table. I love reading the paper in the morning, though usually I just have time to read a few of the stories. When I’ve finished my cereal, I grab a banana and maybe make a slice of toast with jam. I rinse off my



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breakfast dishes in the sink and put them in the dishwasher. By that time, my coffee is ready so I pour myself a cup and put the rest in a Thermos for work.

[End of story]

That concludes part three of “A Day in the Life of Jeff.” In part four, we get dressed and go to work.

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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 4 – Getting Dressed & Ready for Work

GLOSSARY

closet – a very small room or a piece of furniture for storing clothes and shoes
* Kevin needs to stop buying so many clothes. He can't even close his closet doors!

dress shirt – a man's shirt worn for office work, with a collar, buttons, and long sleeves
* Do you think it's okay for a man to wear a pink dress shirt to work?

pants – clothing worn over the legs
* Jennifer couldn't decide whether she wanted to wear pants or a skirt, so she chose a dress instead.

tie – a long, narrow piece of fabric worn around a man's neck
* He doesn't like wearing ties because he says they make it hard for him to breathe.

sweater – a heavy, knitted shirt made of cotton or wool yarn (material that looks like a thick string)
* It's very cold outside, so you and your sister should put on your sweaters if you want to play at the park.

suit jacket – a piece of formal clothing worn over a shirt, with long sleeves and buttons on the front, usually worn in formal business settings
* The sleeves of his suit jacket are too short. He needs to buy a new one for his interview.

t-shirt – a comfortable, casual, short-sleeved cotton shirt with no collar, often with a design or picture on the front
* You don't have to dress up to come to my party. I plan to just wear a t-shirt and jeans.

socks – clothing worn on one's feet
* In the winter, I wear socks and shoes, but in the summer, I prefer to wear sandals without socks.

underwear – clothing worn next to the skin and under other clothing
* We have to do laundry today because I don't have any clean underwear!



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to color coordinate – to identify things that look good together because they have the same or colors that look good together

* Her bedroom walls, floors, pictures, and toys are all color coordinated. I have never seen so much green in one room!

buckle – a piece of metal used to connect two ends of a belt, shoe, or bag

* American cowboys often wore large belt buckles with images of their daily life.

to polish – to rub something to make it shine

* Before going to the wedding, I need to polish my black shoes so they'll look nice with my suit.

wallet – a piece of leather or heavy fabric with many pockets that is used to store money and credit cards

* He needed to clean out his wallet because it was too full of business cards and receipts to fit in his pocket.

to check (oneself) – to look at oneself, searching for something that looks wrong or is out of place

* I wish I had checked myself in the mirror before the big meeting because I had food between my teeth.

briefcase – a flat bag with a handle to carry documents, usually used by office workers to carry papers between their home and the office

* She forgot her briefcase at home and had to ask her husband to bring it to her at the office so she'd have her notes for the presentation.

garage – a room in a house for parking cars

* They have so many things in their garage that they almost don't have room to park their car!

to run late – to be delayed; to be behind schedule; to be in a hurry because one needs to be somewhere very soon

* I didn't have time to say goodbye to everyone at the lunch meeting because I was running late for my flight back to New York.

today is no exception – today is the same; today is not different

* I usually receive a lot of emails and today is no exception. This morning I had 238 messages in my inbox!



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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 4 – Getting Dressed & Ready for Work

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

You're listening to ESLpod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part four. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development.

Part four of our course is called "Getting Dressed and Ready for Work." Let's start.

[Start of story]

I go back into my bedroom and open up my closet door. I have about 30 dress shirts, 10 pairs of pants, a half-dozen ties, and some sweaters, suit jackets, and t-shirts. I pull out a clean pair of socks and underwear, and then decide which shirt I'm going to wear today. I'm terrible at color coordinating, so I usually bring my wife in at this point to help match my shirt and pants. I put on my belt with the silver buckle and polish my shoes. I put my cell phone and car keys in my front pocket, and my wallet in the back one.

I put on my glasses and check myself in the mirror to make sure I look okay, and then go into the home office to get my bag. I used to carry a more traditional briefcase, but now I just use my computer bag to hold my laptop and my papers. Now it's back into the kitchen to grab my Thermos on the way out the door. I lock the door and then hurry to my car in the garage. I'm usually running late and today is no exception!

[End of story]

Part four is called "Getting Dressed and Ready for Work." We began by me going into the bedroom and opening up my closet door. To open up means here to open the door. A closet, "closet," is a place, usually in your bedroom, where you put clothes—you store your clothing. You can also have a closet in other parts of your house, and it's usually a place where you keep things—you store things.

Well, I "open up my closet door" and I look at my dress shirts. My dress, "dress" shirts (two words) are the nice shirts, the shirts that I can wear to work. The opposite of a dress shirt would be a casual shirt, "casual." A dress shirt is a nice shirt; something that usually has a collar on it. A collar, "collar," is the top of the shirt, what goes around the neck.



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Episode 4 – Getting Dressed & Ready for Work

Well, I look at my dress shirts and I look, also, at my pants, “pants.” Pants are what you put on your legs. You can have different kinds of pants. Jeans is a type of pants. We might say dress pants for nice pants that you would wear to work. I also have ties. A tie, “tie,” is a long, thin thing that goes around your neck that men usually wear—often wear to work, and it comes in different colors, and that's your tie.

A sweater, “sweater,” is something that keeps you warm. It's like a shirt that's very thick. You usually put a sweater over your shirt so that you can be warm. Suit jackets, “suit jackets,” (two words) are jackets that you wear that are for a formal occasion. So, if you are going to work, especially if you were going to an interview, you would wear a suit jacket. The word suit, “suit,” refers to a formal set of clothing for, in this case, a man. For a man it would be pants and a, probably, white shirt and a suit jacket that goes over your shirt. Usually, you would also have a tie that you wear. That's a suit. Well, a suit jacket is part of a suit.

A t-shirt, spelled “t-shirt,” is a plain shirt that you usually wear underneath a dress shirt. So first, you put on a t-shirt—a white t-shirt—then you would put on your shirt, and then you would put on your jacket. T-shirts can also be used by themselves as your main shirt. It is usually an informal occasion that you would just wear a t-shirt. You probably wouldn't wear a t-shirt to your office, for example, though some people do. And, many people have t-shirts that have things on them—that say things on them. T-shirts usually do not have a collar like a dress shirt does.

“I pull out a pair of socks and underwear.” Socks, “socks” are the things you put on your feet before you put your shoe on. Socks can be dark, or they can be light or white socks. Normally you don't wear white socks with a formal suit; you would wear black or dark blue socks.

Underwear is the piece of clothing that you put on and it covers up all of the—how should we say—things that you want to cover so that you can keep your pants and shirt clean. Underwear is something that goes over your back of your body, your butt or your rear, as well as the front of the body, whatever you have there. Underwear can come for men in two basics styles usually. There can be boxer underwear, or boxer shorts, “boxer,” and that's a kind of short—or rather, a kind of underwear that it is loose on the bottom. So, it's almost like a pair of shorts. The opposite of that would be briefs, “briefs.” Briefs would be underwear that is not loose at the bottom; it's tight at the bottom of the underwear. Usually it's a little smaller as well.



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I “then decide which shirt I’m going to wear today. I’m terrible,” I say, “at color coordinating.” Color coordinating means you wear things that have similar or matching colors. So, if you wore a pink shirt you would probably not wear green pants because they don’t do together, we would say; they don’t look very good with each other. Color coordinating is finding the right colors that you wear on your—with your shirt, and your pants, and your tie, and your jacket, and your socks, and your shoes. All of those have to be color coordinated. The verb to coordinate, “coordinate,” means to put two things together so that they work well together, in this case.

Well, since I’m so terrible—I’m so bad—at color coordinating I usually bring in my wife, that is I go and ask my wife to come into the room. So, I “bring my wife in”—to the room—“at this point to help” me, meaning at this time, when I’ve already picked out some things, then I bring my wife to help me “match my shirt and pants.” I want them color coordinate.

“I put on my belt with the silver buckle and polish my shoes.” A belt, “belt,” is what you use to keep your pants from falling down. A buckle is the piece of, usually, metal in the front that connects the belt so it forms a circle around your body. I have a silver buckle that I put on with my belt.

I also “polish my shoes.” To polish, “polish,” means to clean and to make shiny, “shiny.” When we say something is shiny, we mean that it’s bright—it reflects light. So, when you polish your shoes, you want them to be clean but you also want them to look like they are bright—they are reflecting light. I polish my shoes and my head, so it’s very shiny!

“I put my cell phone,” my cellular or mobile phone, “and car keys in my front pocket.” You have front pockets and you have back pockets in a pair of pants. So, I put my keys and cell phone in the front pocket “and my wallet in the back” pocket. My wallet, “wallet,” is where I put my money and my credit cards and my driver’s license; all of those things go in my wallet.

“I put on my glasses,” because I cannot see without my glasses very well, and I “check myself in the mirror.” To check yourself means to look at yourself, usually in a mirror, and you can see how you look. I usually look pretty ugly. I “check myself in the mirror, and then” I “go into” my “home office,” or my office in my house and “get my bag. I used to carry a more traditional briefcase.” A briefcase, “briefcase,” (all one word) is not something that you put your underwear in—your briefs. A briefcase means the thing that you carry papers in



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when you are going from your home to your office. Usually a briefcase is square and it usually has hard sides on it, many times it has a lock on the top; that's a briefcase. A lot of people nowadays do not use a briefcase; they use a computer bag—a bag that they can put their computer and other information in, including their papers.

Well, I put my things into my computer bag, then I go “back into the kitchen to grab my Thermos,” to get or take my Thermos with my coffee in it “on the way out the door.” The expression, on the way out, means that you are about to leave or you are leaving your house, in this case. Somebody may call you on the phone and you are getting ready to go to dinner, you could say, “I can't talk right now, I'm on my way out the door,” means I'm just getting ready to leave.

Well, before I leave—before I'm going out the door—I “grab my Thermos. I lock the door,” to my house, “and then I hurry to my car in the garage.” The garage, “garage,” is the place where you keep your car.

“I'm usually running late and today is no exception!” When you are running late, you are behind your schedule; you're behind time that you want to be somewhere. To run late means the same as to be late or to be tardy, “tardy.” Usually that word, tardy, is only used in school. We say a student is tardy, we mean that they are late for school or late for class. To be running late means that you are not on the schedule that you want to be on—that you did not leave at the time you wanted to leave.

I say I'm “running late and today is no exception!” That expression, is no exception, “exception,” means that today is the same as every other day—it is not different. An exception is when something is different. Well, today is no different, that means today is no exception—it is not different.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a normal speed.

[Start of story]

I go back into my bedroom and open up my closet door. I have about 30 dress shirts, 10 pairs of pants, a half-dozen ties, and some sweaters, suit jackets, and t-shirts. I pull out a clean pair of socks and underwear, then decide which shirt I'm going to wear today. I'm terrible at color coordinating, so I usually bring my wife in at this point to help match my shirt and pants. I put on my belt with the silver buckle and polish my shoes. I put my cell phone and car keys in my front pocket, and my wallet in the back one.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 4 – Getting Dressed & Ready for Work

I put on my glasses and check myself in the mirror to make sure I look okay, and then go into the home office to get my bag. I used to carry a more traditional briefcase, but now I just use my computer bag to hold my laptop and my papers. Now it's back into the kitchen to grab my Thermos on the way out the door. I lock the door and then hurry to my car in the garage. I'm usually running late and today is no exception!

[End of story]

That concludes part four of "A Day in the Life of Jeff." In part five, we "Commute to Work."

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at eslpod.com.

This course was produced by Dr. Jeff McQuillan and Dr. Lucy Tse. Copyright 2006.

Contributors to this series are Jeff McQuillan, Lucy Tse, and Jessica Brown.



A Day in the Life of Jeff
Episode 5 – The Commute to Work

GLOSSARY

back seat – the rear (second row) seats in a car, where passengers (not the driver) sit

* On the long drive across the country, they took turns driving. While one person drove, the other slept in the back seat.

cup holder – a round hole on the inside of a car for holding cups or cans of soda

* He tried to put his can of soda in the cup holder while he was driving and ended up spilling it all over the floor.

ignition – a small opening near a steering wheel into which one puts a key to start the car

* They accidentally locked their car while the keys were still in the ignition!

gas pedal – a piece of metal that a driver pushes with his or her foot to give the car more gas and to make it go faster

* She pushed the gas pedal to the floor because she was in a big hurry.

rearview mirror – a rectangular mirror near the driver's head that allows the driver to see behind the car

* I stopped my car when I saw the police car in my rearview mirror.

side mirror – a small mirror outside the car near the front windows that allows the driver to see the side of the car and behind the car

* Grandma drove too close to the building and hit her side mirror against the wall.

drive-time traffic report – a radio announcement during rush hour (times of heavy traffic) that tells drivers where there are accidents and slow traffic

* According to the drive-time traffic report, there were three accidents on the freeway, so we drove home using Main Street instead.

transmission – the system that passes energy from the car's engine to its wheels

* I couldn't believe it when the mechanic said that I needed to replace my car's transmission and that it would cost more than \$2,000!

out of park – to take the car out of an unmoving position into a moving position

* I took the transmission out of park, but nothing happened because there wasn't any gas in the car.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff Episode 5 – The Commute to Work

reverse – backward motion; going back

* Driving in reverse is always more difficult than driving forward.

driveway – a short length of road leading from the main road to the entrance or garage of a house or office building

* When she gets home from work everyday, she walks down the driveway to pick up the mail from her mailbox.

drive – forward motion; going forward

* He put the car into drive and started to leave, but then he stopped because he remembered that he had left some important papers at home.

stick shift – manual transmission; a car in which the driver uses a lever to put the car in gears 1 through 5 or in reverse

* Driving a stick shift requires a lot of concentration for me because I'm always worried that I'll shift into reverse by accident.

automatic transmission – a car in which gears 1 through 5 change automatically without the driver needing to do anything

* Many people prefer driving automatic transmissions because it leaves them with one hand available to change radio stations or to hold a cell phone.

onramp – a short road for cars to speed up and enter a highway or freeway

* The first onramp was closed due to an accident so we had to drive to the next onramp to get on the freeway.

exit – a short road for cars to leave a highway or freeway and connect to other roads

* Do you know which exit we need to take to get to the beach?

parking garage – a large building with many floors for cars to park

* This parking garage only charges \$5 for three hours, so let's park here.

to swipe – to quickly pass a card through a machine that reads it

* I tried to swipe my credit card several times before realizing that it was broken.

key card – a plastic card that tells a machine whether a person has permission to enter a building

* When he lost his key card, he had to talk to security for two hours before they would let him into the building.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff
Episode 5 – The Commute to Work

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLpod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part five: The Commute to Work. I'm Dr. Jeff McQuillan, your host.

This part of our course is going to talk about going to work and vocabulary related to commuting. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

I open my car door and throw my briefcase in the back seat, and get comfortable for my drive. I put my coffee mug into the cup holder, put the keys in the ignition, find the gas pedal, and start the car. My wife drove the car last night, so I have to re-adjust the rear view mirror and the side mirrors. I turn on the radio to listen to the drive time traffic report. I take the transmission out of park and into reverse, back out into the driveway into the street, close the garage door, and put the car into drive. I used to drive a stick shift, but as I get older, I like my automatic transmission more and more.

I usually take the freeway to the office, so I get on the onramp for the freeway and drive to where I have to get off. My office is only a few miles from the exit. I pull into the parking garage, swiping my key card to get in. I park, grab my briefcase and coffee, and head toward the elevator. And that only took 40 minutes!

[End of story]

Part five is called "The Commute to Work." Commute, "commute," can be both a noun and a verb. It means to go from your house to your work. Usually, if you live a long distance from your work, you would say, "I have a long commute." Or, if you live close to work, you would have a short commute. If it's a very long commute with lots of traffic, you might say, "I have a terrible commute" - a very bad commute.

The story begins by me saying that "I open my car door and throw my briefcase in the back seat." So, I open my front door - the door that we would call the driver's side, where the driver gets in, and in an American car, that is on the left side. Cars in Britain are on the right side, is the driver's side. So, I get into the left side in the front door. If you have a car that has a back seat, you could have a two-door car or a four-door car. Four doors means that you have separate doors for the back seat.



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The seat, “seat,” is what you sit in. So, the back seat is where people can sit behind you - behind the driver and behind the person next to the driver. We call the seats the passenger seats and the driver's seat. The right side of the car is usually called the passenger side of the car.

I “get comfortable for my drive” - for my commute - notice we use drive there as a noun; it can be a verb and a noun. “I put my coffee mug into the cup holder.” A mug, “mug,” is just a big cup. We talk about coffee mugs, they're big cups that you put your coffee into. In many cars, there is a special place for a cup or a bottle, and that's called a cup holder, “holder.” It holds the cup so you can have your coffee in your car.

I “put the keys in the ignition.” The keys are, of course, what starts your car. It's the piece of metal that you open your car door with - you unlock it. Well, you also start the car with your keys, and you put them into something called the ignition. And, the ignition, “ignition,” is the part of the car that starts the engine. Usually it makes a certain sound - a certain noise, and once the engine starts, then you don't have to put the key forward, you just leave the key there, you take your hand off of it. The word ignition comes from the verb to ignite, “ignite,” which means to start a fire - to start something burning, and of course, a car burns gasoline, that's what the engine does in order to make the car move.

After I put the keys into the ignition, I “find the gas pedal.” A pedal, “pedal,” is something you use to control with your feet usually the speed of something. So the gas pedal is the pedal that you press down to go faster, it gives the engine more gas. That word, pedal, can also be used as a verb. If you are on a bicycle, in order to make the bicycle move, you have to pedal because the things that your feet are on on a bike, or a bicycle, are called pedals. Well, you don't pedal your car, but you do have a gas pedal.

I “start the car,” and because “My wife drove the car last night, I have to re-adjust the rear view mirror.” To re-adjust means to adjust again. That prefix re, means again in English, usually. To adjust means to move them so that I can see properly - I can see into the mirror. There are two types of mirrors on your car: there's the rear, “rear,” view, “view,” mirror, and that is in the front of the car, on the front window of the car. The front window of your car is called your windshield, “windshield,” the windshield. So, on your windshield, on the top in the middle, is your rear view mirror, and that allows you to see cars behind you. There are also mirrors on the side of the car, usually on both sides, and those are called the side mirrors.



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"I turn on the radio to listen to the drive time traffic report." Drive time is the time of day when most people are either going to work or coming back from work. So, in the morning the drive time in Los Angeles, for example, is 7:30 to 9:30. Most people are going to work during those hours. In other cities it could be different; in some cities, it's earlier than that. There's also a drive time at the end of the day, between 5:00 and 7:00 here in Los Angeles, that's when people are coming home from work.

So, the drive time traffic report is an announcement on the radio telling you if there are any accidents on the roads, if there is any construction - that is the government is fixing the road and it may be closed. And, it tells you if you are going to take a long time or not a long time. So, traffic reports tell you how fast the cars are moving on different, usually, freeways in American cities.

"I take the transmission out of park and into reverse." The transmission, "transmission," is the part of the car that determines how fast you go. It also determines if you go forward or backwards - if you're going straight ahead or behind; that's the transmission. Sometimes it's called a transmission box, "box," and inside of that box there are little wheels called gears, "gears," and depending on the gear you are in, we would say, depending on the gear you are using, you will either go very fast or not very fast, or you will go in reverse, "reverse." To go into reverse means to go backwards - the car moves backwards.

Well, before I go anywhere, I have to "take the transmission out of park," "park." Park is when the car is not going forward or going backwards. We say you put the transmission into park, and you take it out of park. And when you take it out of park, you either go forward or backwards. Well, here I'm going in reverse, and I "back out into the driveway." To back out means to go backwards. Usually that verb, to back out, is used when you are talking about a car or a truck that is leaving a garage, and it's going in reverse - you back out of the garage. I "back out into the driveway" onto the street, or "into the street." The driveway, "driveway," is what connects the garage to the street. It's the space that is in between your street and where your car is parked, your garage.

Some people actually don't have a garage, and so they park in their driveway. They drive off the street and they park their car in the driveway, that piece of land where you can put your car. I like to park my car on my neighbor's driveway so I have more room on my driveway. He doesn't like it though. So, I back out of the garage, and then I "close the garage door, and put the car into drive." Here's another use of that word, drive. In this case, it means I'm putting it in a gear that



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will take me forward. So, to put a car into drive means that you change the position of the transmission so that your car will go forward and not backwards.

“I used to drive a stick shift, but as I get older, I like my automatic transmission more and more.” There are two kinds of transmissions - two kinds of cars. One is what we call an automatic transmission, where you put your car either into reverse or into drive, and that's it. You don't have to change anything.

Another kind of car is called a stick shift, or a manual transmission. Manual, “manual,” is the opposite of automatic; it means by hand. So, if you have a manual transmission, or a stick shift, you have to move the transmission each time you want to go faster or slower. The word stick, “stick,” shift, “shift,” (two words) is the same as a manual transmission. Some people say, “I drive a stick,” they mean, “I drive a stick shift.”

The word shift is also a verb, to shift, and that means to change. So, if you have a manual transmission - a stick shift - you shift from one gear to another. If you want to go faster, you have to shift into a higher gear. Well, if you don't have a manual transmission, you don't have to worry about it.

If you have a stick shift, you have an extra pedal in the car. Remember, we said that a pedal can be a gas pedal - something that makes you go faster. You also have a brake pedal that will slow or stop your car. And, if you have a stick shift, you have a third pedal, which we call the clutch, “clutch.” And, in order to change from one gear to another, to go faster or slower or to go into reverse, if you have a stick shift, you have press on or put your foot on the clutch so that you can change, or shift, gears.

“I usually take the freeway to the office, so I get on the onramp for the freeway.” The onramp, “onramp,” is what connects the street to the freeway. So, just like a driveway connects the street to your garage, an onramp connects the street to the freeway. The opposite of an onramp would be, of course, an off ramp, and that's where you go off of the freeway and back to the street.

Well, I get onto the onramp, or “I get on the onramp and I drive to where I have to get off. My office is only a few miles from the exit.” The exit, “exit,” is where you leave the freeway. It can be a noun or it can be a verb. To exit means to leave, and normally, in a public building, a hotel or other areas, they have a sign that says, “exit,” so you know in case there is an emergency how to leave the room or leave the building. On an airplane, we have something called the emergency



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exits, and those are doors that you use if the plane is having problems. I hope you never have to use the emergency exits.

Well, this is an exit from the freeway, and “my office is only a few miles” after I get off of the freeway. “I pull into the parking garage,” the place at my work where you park or keep your car, and I swipe my key card to get in. A key card, “key card,” (two words) is like a credit card. It's an electronic card that the company gives you that allows you to get in and out of a garage, in and out of the building, maybe even in and out of your office, and it's an electronic card, like a credit card. To swipe is the verb we use when we talk about credit cards or key cards. To swipe, “swipe,” means to take the card and put it into what we would call a reader very quickly. So, for a credit card, the clerk will swipe the card - will put it through the machine very quickly. For a key card, you put it through the machine so you can get into somewhere. It's a key - an electronic key.

I “park my car,” I “grab my briefcase and my coffee” - very important, my coffee - and I “head toward the elevator.” To head toward something means to walk in that direction or move in that direction. So, I walk toward the elevator, and my whole trip “only took 40 minutes.”

Americans love to complain about how terrible their commutes are. In some cities, 30 or 40 minutes is considered a long commute, and in some cities, like Los Angeles, it's considered an average commute. In other countries, some people commute an hour or an hour and a half in order to get to their work.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a regular speed.

[Start of story]

I open my car door and throw my briefcase in the back seat, and get comfortable for my drive. I put my coffee mug into the cup holder, put the keys in the ignition, find the gas pedal, and start the car. My wife drove the car last night, so I have to re-adjust the rear view mirror and the side mirrors. I turn on the radio to listen to the drive time traffic report. I take the transmission out of park and into reverse, back out into the driveway into the street, close the garage door, and put the car into drive. I used to drive a stick shift, but as I get older, I like my automatic transmission more and more.

I usually take the freeway to the office, so I get on the onramp for the freeway and drive to where I have to get off. My office is only a few miles from the exit. I pull into the parking garage, swiping my key card to get in. I park, grab my



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briefcase and coffee, and head toward the elevator. And that only took 40 minutes!

[End of story]

That concludes part five of “A Day in the Life of Jeff: The Commute to Work.” In part six, we actually get to work and go to lunch.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at eslpod.com.

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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 6 – At My Desk, on Break, and at Lunch

GLOSSARY

agenda – schedule; calendar used to write down important dates or events

* Let me check my agenda to see if I have an afternoon free next week.

memo – a short document used in business to give information, usually within a company or organization

* She needs to write a memo to all the employees about the new vacation policy.

inbox – a container on one's desk or a place in an email program filled with messages or documents that needs to be read and responded to

* Don't you ever read the papers in your inbox? I put all the information you requested there last week.

to start in – to begin work on something; to begin to sort through something

* If you'll start in on making the salad, I'll get the chicken ready for baking.

project manager – a person responsible for a project

* Daniel isn't a good project manager because he doesn't understand how to follow a budget.

conference call – a phone call with more than two people

* In a conference call, it is sometimes difficult to know who is speaking. That's why people should always say their names before making comments.

head office – the main office building in a company that has offices in more than one location

* Jacob is happy about his promotion to the head office but his family doesn't want to move to Los Angeles.

to head down – to walk downstairs; to walk along a hallway

* Let's head down to the basement and find out why the water heater isn't working.

break room – a room where workers can relax, eat, and talk during their breaks from work

* In her company, the break room has free coffee and cookies all day.



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water cooler – a machine that stores drinking water and has two openings: one for cold water and one for hot water

* The water cooler is empty but the water containers are too heavy for me to lift. Can anyone help me?

on break – taking a short, relaxing pause (usually 5-15 minutes) during the workday

* I often take a short walk when I'm on break. The fresh air helps me think more clearly once I'm back in the office.

vending machine – a machine that accepts coins and dollar bills and gives out food, such as candy, cookies, chips, sandwiches, sodas, juices, and coffee

* This vending machine is full of cookies and chips. I wish there were some healthier foods in it.

bulletin board – a place on a wall where people can hang notices and announcements

* When she lost her dog, she put announcements on all the local bulletin boards asking people to call her if they found her dog.

to pack a lunch – to bring food from home to eat at the office or at school during the lunch break

* Ruth always packs the same lunch for herself: a turkey sandwich, an apple, and orange juice.

take-out – food that is bought at a restaurant but eaten at another place

* This restaurant has the best food in town, but it's too noisy to eat here. Let's order take-out.

lunch hour – an hour during the day when an employee eats lunch, often 12:00-1:00 p.m.

* I would like to eat during my lunch hour, but I often use the time to run errands like going to the bank and getting my hair cut.

casual Fridays – days when office workers are allowed to wear less formal clothing

* On casual Fridays, the bank lets its employees wear jeans and t-shirts, but shorts are never allowed.

to kick back – to relax

* After a busy week, all I feel like this doing is kicking back with a good movie.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 6 – At My Desk, on Break, and at Lunch

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLPod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part six: At my Desk, on Break, and at Lunch.

I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development. In episode five of our course, we commuted to work - we drove to work. Now, we are at work and we're going to go on break and go to lunch. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

On the way to the office, I was thinking about what I have on my agenda today. When I get to my desk, there is a stack of new memos and papers in my inbox. When I turn on my computer, I see at least two-dozen emails I need to go through. Just as I start in on the email, my phone rings. It's my project manager, Julie, asking me to come in for a conference call with our head office. I don't get back to my desk for nearly two hours. By that time, I was ready for a break.

At 10:30, I head down to the break room and get some hot water at the water cooler to make some tea. There were a couple of other people on break, having snacks out of the vending machine and reading the new notices on the bulletin board. I run into Sam, one of my friends at work, and we chat a little before going back to work.

Before long, it's time for lunch. I usually bring my lunch with me to work and eat it at my desk. If I don't have time to pack a lunch, I sometimes go across the street for some take-out. The only trouble is, it's always so busy during the lunch hour and I always have to stand in line. That's usually a pain. On Fridays, I usually go out to lunch with a few friends from work. On casual Fridays, we can kick back a little and take it easy.

[End of Story]

Part six is called "At my Desk, on Break, and at Lunch." Notice the use of those prepositions. Prepositions are very difficult to translate and many people get confused when you start learning another language trying to figure out those little words - which word should you use. There's a difference between "at my desk" and "on my desk" and "in my desk." Those all mean different things.

"On your desk" means something is on top of your desk, like your computer. "In your desk" means something is inside one of the drawers of your desks. "At your



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desk” means that you are sitting next to your desk - you are, we hope, working, like you’re supposed to be working right now, instead of listening to this episode.

“On break” is the expression we use when you are stopping work for a short time, usually ten, 15, maybe 20 minutes. “At lunch” means that you are going to lunch - you are eating. We don’t say, “in lunch” or “on lunch,” we say, “at lunch.” The best way to learn those little prepositions is just to read and to listen more and more, and eventually, you will know them without even having to study them.

Our story begins by me saying that, “On the way to the office, I was thinking about what I have on my agenda today.” Your agenda, “agenda,” means your plan for today - what are the things that you have to do today. This could include meetings; it could include phone calls; you could have many different things on your agenda.

There’s another expression, “to have an agenda.” To have an agenda means that you have a plan, sometimes a secret plan that you don’t tell anyone about that makes you want to do a certain thing. It’s like having an opinion and trying to get other people to do what you want them to do; that’s to have an agenda. But here, agenda just means a list of things that you’re going to do.

“When I get to my desk, there is a stack of new memos and papers in my inbox.” Stack, you’ll remember, is when you have thin things on top of each other. You can have a stack of pancakes; here we have a stack of papers and memos. A memo, “memo,” is short for memorandum, and it is usually like a letter that you send to someone in your company - in your office. Your inbox, “inbox,” can be a little box on your desk where people put things for you to do, your boss, for example. And, when you are done with them, you can put them in your out box. Those terms, inbox and out box, are also used for email programs now.

“When I turn on my computer, I” have “at least two-dozen emails I need to go through.” The expression, to go through, here means I have to read them and maybe respond to them. Someone may say, “I have to go through my email,” they mean I have to read my email, and I have to respond, sometimes, to my email. I have to do that everyday, just like you do, but most of my emails come from you.

“Just as I start in on the email, my phone rings.” The expression “to start in on” something means to begin to do something. So, I start in on my phone calls, that means that I have many phone calls and I start making them - I begin making them.



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There's a different expression, to start in on someone - on a person, and if you start in on a person - on your brother, on your wife - that means that you are criticizing them - you're saying something bad - something negative about them. When I was younger, if I didn't do my homework, which was often, my mother would start in on me, meaning she would criticize me. "Jeffrey, do your homework!" The only person who calls me "Jeffrey" is my mother.

Back to our story, I said that my phone rang and it was "my project manager, Julie." The manager is the person that is in charge of a certain group of people - someone who is the boss - and a project is just a set of things for you to do, usually related to each other. Well, my project manager, who's like my boss, "asked me to come in for a conference call with our head office." A conference, "conference," call is a telephone call with three or more people. And, that's very common in American business and in international business to have a conference call so more than one person can talk on the telephone. The head office, "head," is the same as the main office, and this is where the company has most of its important people who are working, it's sometimes called its headquarters. The head office is the main office. The opposite of head office would be a branch office, "branch." A branch office is a smaller office.

We were having a conference call with someone in our head office, and I didn't "get back to my desk" - I didn't return to my desk - for almost, or "nearly two hours. By that time, I was ready for a break. At 10:30, I head down to the break room." The break room, "break" room (two words) is a place in a building - in your office, where people can go and read and relax, perhaps eat their lunch, or eat some food, It's a place for you to stop work and to relax a little or to talk to other people. I use the verb to head down, that simply means to go to somewhere. We sometimes use that expression when we are talking about going to a different place. "I'm going to head down to the boss's office" - I'm going to go over to the boss's office.

Well, "I head down to the break room" - I go to the break room - "and get some hot water" from "the water cooler." The water cooler, "cooler," is a little machine that has water and you can get hot water or you can get cold water. That expression, the water cooler, is very common. When people say, "I heard it at the water cooler," or "around the water cooler," that usually refers to people who are gossiping - who are talking about things they probably shouldn't.

Well, I went to the water and I made myself some tea, because I love drinking tea. There are "a couple of other people on break," notice that we use that expression "on break" - people who have stopped working - "having snacks out



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of the vending machine.” A snack, “snack,” is a piece of food that you eat between breakfast and lunch, or between lunch and dinner, or between dinner and going to bed. A vending machine, “vending,” is a big machine where you can buy, usually, food. The verb, to vend, “vend,” means to sell. So, it's a place where you can sell food and you put your money in and you can press a button and you get things like cookies and potato chips, all the things that are not good for you in the vending machine.

Some people are also “reading the new notices on the bulletin board.” The bulletin board, “bulletin,” board (two words) is a big piece of usually wood or plastic where people put important messages for other people to read. You can have a bulletin board at your work; you can have a bulletin board in a school, and usually, it's a place where different people can come and read the news or new things or new announcements.

“I run into Sam, one of my friends at work.” The verb, to run into, means I meet him although I was not expecting to meet him. So, “I run into Sam, and we chat a little before going back to work.” To chat, “chat,” means to talk, usually about something not very important.

“Before long, it's time for lunch,” meaning after a short time, it's time for lunch. Before long means a short time or after a short time. “I usually bring my lunch with me to work and eat it at my desk.” Notice that use of “at my desk,” means I'm sitting by my desk and I'm eating my lunch. Sounds kind of lonely.

“If I don't have time to pack a lunch, I sometimes go across the street for some take-out.” To pack, “pack,” a lunch means to make your lunch at home - a sandwich, for example - and put that into a bag or a box that you take with you to work; that is to pack a lunch. If I don't pack a lunch, I usually eat take-out, “take-out.” Take-out is when you go to a restaurant but you don't eat at the restaurant - you don't dine in, we would say, “dine” in, you don't dine in, you do take-out. You could also have the restaurant deliver the food - bring the food to your house, or bring the food to your office, and we would call that delivery. So, you can dine in; you can do take-out, meaning you go to the restaurant, or you can have delivery - someone brings the food to you.

“The only trouble is,” I say, “it's always so busy during the lunch hour.” The lunch hour, in most American companies, is from noon to one or 1:30, or 11:30 in the morning to maybe one o'clock in the afternoon. It's usually longer than an hour, though in some companies, you only get one hour. Some companies, you only get 30 minutes to eat.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 6 – At My Desk, on Break, and at Lunch

“I always have to stand in line” because it's so busy. To stand in line means to wait behind other people. In England, they would say to queue; in the US we say to stand in line. I say, “That’s usually a pain.” When we say something is a pain, “pain,” we mean that it's very inconvenient or uncomfortable - something you do not like. People will also say a pain in the neck or a pain in the butt, “butt.” Those are the same basic meanings. Something that's a pain in the neck or a pain in the butt means it's not something that you like, it's very inconvenient.

“On Fridays, I usually go out to lunch” - I go to eat somewhere else - “with a few friends from work. On casual Fridays, we can kick back a little and take it easy.” Casual, “casual,” is the same as informal. In many companies in the United States, they have casual Friday, and that's a day where you do not have to wear as nice of clothing. Maybe you'll wear a t-shirt and not a suit jacket, or you don't have to wear a tie, and it's also a day where people feel a little more relaxed. Usually it has to do with what you can wear to work.

Well, in the story I say that “On casual Fridays, we can kick back a little and take it easy.” To kick back, “kick back,” (two words) means to relax. It's an informal expression that means that you are relaxing, and take it easy also means relax. Kick back is a little more informal; it's something that you might do, for example, with your friends. And, if you drink alcohol, you might have some alcohol and relax; that's to kick back.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a normal speed.

[Start of story]

On the way to the office, I was thinking about what I have on my agenda today. When I get to my desk, there is a stack of new memos and papers in my inbox. When I turn on my computer, I see at least two-dozen emails I need to go through. Just as I start in on the email, my phone rings. It's my project manager, Julie, asking me to come in for a conference call with our head office. I don't get back to my desk for nearly two hours. By that time, I was ready for a break.

At 10:30, I head down to the break room and get some hot water at the water cooler to make some tea. There were a couple of other people on break, having snacks out of the vending machine and reading the new notices on the bulletin board. I run into Sam, one of my friends at work, and we chat a little before going back to work.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 6 – At My Desk, on Break, and at Lunch

Before long, it's time for lunch. I usually bring my lunch with me to work and eat it at my desk. If I don't have time to pack a lunch, I sometimes go across the street for some take-out. The only trouble is, it's always so busy during the lunch hour and I always have to stand in line. That's usually a pain. On Fridays, I usually go out to lunch with a few friends from work. On casual Fridays, we can kick back a little and take it easy.

[End of story]

That concludes part six of "A Day in the Life of Jeff: At my Desk, on Break, and at Lunch." In part seven, we're going to go back home and run some errands.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at eslpod.com.

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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 7 – The Commute Home and Running Errands

GLOSSARY

quitting time – the end of the business day; time to leave work and go home

* At quitting time, they all turn off their computers, put on their jackets, and walk to the metro station.

to signal – to do something (make a movement or turn on a light) to let other drivers know what you plan to do

* The car's lights were broken so the driver had to signal where he was going by holding his arm out of the window.

to turn – to move right or left from one street onto another street

* Right-hand turns are not allowed here because the street is closed today.

to merge – to move your car into the flow of other, faster-moving cars

* Merging onto the freeway was one of the scariest parts of learning how to drive.

traffic – the flow of cars; the number and speed of cars

* Today there was so much traffic that driving home took almost two hours. Normally it's a 40-minute drive.

stop-and-go – traffic that moves very slowly, with lots of stopping

* Southern California is well known for its stop-and-go traffic in the morning hours.

to stall – a car that is not working and has stopped in the road

* Her car stalled in the middle of the street so she had to ask other people to help her push it to the side of the road.

fast lane – the far left lane of a highway or freeway, where cars drive the fastest

* Grandpa always gets frustrated when he sees a slow-moving car in the fast lane.

to back up – to block traffic so that cars are stopped or moving very slowly for a certain distance behind the problem

* The accident has backed up traffic for four miles. Hopefully the police will clear the accident soon so that cars can begin moving again.

surface streets – roads within a city, not highways or freeways

* Driving on surface streets is slower than driving on a freeway, but it lets you see more interesting things.



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fridge – short for refrigerator; a kitchen machine that keeps food cold

* Do we have any eggs in the refrigerator or do I need to buy more?

market – grocery store; a store that sells food and other household things

* Could you please buy some bread and milk at the market after work today?

cooked – food that has already been prepared; food that can be eaten right away or only needs to be heated to eat

* This meat is already cooked so it won't take long to make the sandwiches.

checkout stand – the place where one pays for food bought at a market

* Sir, this checkout stand is only for customers who have 10 or fewer items.

cashier – the person who takes customers' money and gives them receipts

* That store is hiring cashiers who are friendly and are good at math.

bagger – the person who puts a customer's purchases into a plastic or paper bag

* That bagger must be new because he's putting the milk on top of the eggs. They're going to break!

cart – a large container with wheels that is used to carry food purchases in a market and to one's car

* How did this bag of candy get into my shopping cart? My children must have put it there when I wasn't looking.

to load up – to put purchases or other items into a car; to put a lot of things into a space

* As soon as we load up the car with these suitcases, we'll be ready to drive to the airport.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 7 – The Commute Home and Running Errands

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLpod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part seven: The Commute Home and Running Errands. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development.

In part six, we were at work, we took a break, and we went to lunch. Now, our work is finished and we get to go home. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

It's five o'clock and it's quitting time. I put a few files into my bag, grab my mug, and say goodnight to the rest of the people in my area. I go to the parking garage and get into my car. I signal my turn onto the street and drive toward the freeway onramp. I merge as best as I can onto the freeway, which is always a bit of a hassle at this hour. Traffic is stop-and-go all the way from downtown. I hear on the radio that there's a stalled car in fast lane near La Brea, backing up traffic all the way to Hoover. I decide to get off the freeway and to take surface streets for the rest of the trip.

I need to make a stop on the way home. I know that the fridge is empty, so I decide to stop by the market. I get there and I pick up some French bread, a bag of apples, a few bananas, some pasta, tomato sauce, and a cooked chicken. Luckily, they have a lot of checkout stands open, and I get through the line pretty quickly. I thank the cashier and the bagger and push my cart to my car. I open the trunk and load everything up. Just then my wife calls me on my cell phone. She was going to be a little late getting home and asks me to make something for dinner. Tonight, I will be the cook.

[End of story]

This episode is called "The Commute Home and Running Errands." Commute, you know, means driving back and forth from your house to your work. To run an errand, "errand," means to do something, usually something outside of your house. For example, going to the grocery store, going to the drug store, stopping by the post office to mail a letter, these are things that you have to do that are not part of your work but that you need to do in your daily life. And, we call these things errands, and the verb is to run an errand.

Our story says, "It's five o'clock and it's quitting time." Quitting time is the time that you stop working. To quit, "quit," means to stop, so quitting time is the time



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that you stop working at the end of the day. “I put a few files into my bag,” I “grab my mug,” - my coffee mug - and I “say goodnight to the rest of the people in my area.” If you work at a big company, usually you are divided into smaller groups that work on the same topic - the same type of work. So, there is an accounting section and there is a sales section. One way to describe those smaller groups is an area, so people in your area would be people who work next to you on the same things that you do.

“I go to the parking garage and get into my car. I signal my turn onto the street.” To signal, “signal,” means to indicate, and in a car it means to turn on what we call the blinker, “blinker.” The blinker is what indicates whether you are going to turn left or right. So, when you are driving your car and you want to make a turn, you have to signal, are you going left or are you going right. And of course, in the back of the car, there's a little light that goes on and off, we would say it flashes, “flashes.” To flash means to go on and off quickly.

So, “I signal my turn” - left or right - “onto the street and drive toward the freeway onramp. I merge as best as I can onto the freeway.” To merge on the freeway or to merge when you are driving means that there are two lanes - two cars next to each other - but the road is getting more narrow. The road becomes smaller and now you only have one lane, so these two lines of cars have to go into the same lane, and we call that merging. To merge, “merge,” as a verb means to take two things and to put them together. We talk about companies that merge; one company buys another company and they merge - they come together. Well, in traffic when you are driving, to merge means to go from two lanes to one lane, and you have to go into and combine with another lane of traffic.

“I merge as best as I can, which is always a bit of a hassle at this hour.” A hassle, “hassle,” is the same as a problem. So, it “is always a bit of,” meaning a little bit - somewhat of a problem “at this hour. Traffic is stop-and-go all the way from downtown.” We use that word traffic, “traffic,” to mean the cars on the street or the cars on the freeway. You may ask someone, “How was traffic,” and they may say, “Oh, it was terrible. Traffic was really bad on the freeway this afternoon.” So, it refers to the number of cars and how easy it is to move on the freeway or the street. When we say traffic is stop-and-go we mean that cars are stopping then they go forward maybe ten feet, 20 feet, then they stop again. When there are too many cars on the freeway or on a road, you cannot just drive straight through, you have to stop, wait for the other car and then go, so stop-and-go traffic means that the traffic is moving very slowly.



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“I hear on the radio that there’s a stalled car in the fast lane near La Brea.” I’m listening to the radio - to the drive time traffic report, and they tell me that there is a stalled car. To stall, “stall,” means here to stop - to stop working. It doesn’t mean that the car will never run again - will never work again. Usually, when we use the verb stall, we mean that it is stopped for a temporary time because it has some problem. So, a stalled car is a car that has stopped working, and if you are on the freeway and your car stalls, you will, of course, cause a problem for the other drivers. Normally, you try to get your car onto the shoulder. The shoulder is the part of the freeway where you can stop your car and not get in the way of anyone else. It’s on the right hand side or the left hand side; you can have a shoulder on either side of the freeway.

The car that is stalled is in the fast lane. The fast lane on an American freeway or highway is the first lane on the left, what we would say the far left lane if there are more than three lanes or more than two lanes on the freeway. Here in Southern California we have freeways that have six or seven lanes, so if you want to go fast, normally you go to the lane that is in the far left - the first lane on the left; that’s the fast lane. Not everyone drives fast in the fast lane, but it’s the common understanding among drivers that if you are in the fast lane, you should go faster than the other cars.

Well, this car is “stalled in the fast lane near La Brea.” La Brea is a name of a street here in Los Angeles, and the car is “backing up traffic all the way to Hoover.” Hoover is another street here in LA. To back up traffic means that the cars are stopped behind you. When we say there is a backup on the freeway, we mean that the cars are moving very slowly or they’re stopped, usually because there’s an accident, there’s construction - they’re fixing the freeway and they have one of the lanes closed, or, in our story, it’s because a stalled car is in the fast lane. So, the traffic is moving very slowly, it is backed up “all the way to Hoover,” meaning that beginning at Hoover Street, the cars are stopped or are going very slowly, and all the way to La Brea.

“I decide to get off the freeway and to take surface streets for the rest of the trip.” Surface, “surface,” means the top of something, but when we say surface streets, we mean the roads and streets that are not the freeway or the highway. So, the regular roads and streets we would call the surface streets.

“I need to make a stop on the way home,” I need to go somewhere before I go home. “I know that the fridge is empty, so I decide to stop by the market.” Fridge, “fridge,” is another way of saying refrigerator - it’s a short way of saying refrigerator. The fridge is where you put food to keep it cold. So, my fridge is



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empty which means I don't have any food, so I decide to go to the market. The market here means the supermarket, a place where you can buy food, or it could be a smaller market, what we might call a corner market; that would be a small store. Often, they are located at the intersection - at the corner of two streets.

I get to the market and I pick up some food. "I pick up some French bread," which is a type of bread, I pick up "a bag of apples," I get a few bananas, some pasta," because I love pasta, some "tomato sauce," for my pasta, "and a cooked chicken." In many American supermarkets, you can buy a small chicken that is already cooked for you, so you can just take it home and eat it. If you are lazy, like me, this is a very good way to get some good food, and it is not very expensive. I think it's about maybe six or seven dollars for a cooked chicken. I like to take the chicken and put it into the pasta and tomato sauce and mix them all together.

"Luckily," the supermarket has "a lot of checkout stands open." A checkout stand is the place where you pay for your food. The verb, to checkout, "checkout," means to leave and to pay. We use that verb when we are talking about the supermarket. We also use it when we are talking about a hotel. "I'm going to checkout of the hotel," that means I'm going to leave the hotel and, I hope, pay. A stand, "stand," here just means the place where you pay for something.

Well, "I get through the" checkout "line pretty quickly" - very quickly. "I thank the cashier," "cashier" - the cashier is the person who takes my money - "and the bagger," "bagger" - this is the person who puts your groceries into a bag. In some stores they do not have baggers; you have to bag your groceries yourself. Notice we use the word bag, "bag," as a verb, meaning to put things into a bag. In American grocery stores you can have either a paper bag or a plastic bag.

Well, the bagger puts my food into my cart, and I "push my cart to my car." My cart, "cart," sometimes called a shopping cart, is what you use to move or to take your food to your car - what you put your food into when you are shopping. It's a little like a big box - metal box with wheels on it. So, it helps you move things, you don't have to carry them yourself.

"I open the trunk and load everything up." To load up means to put things into, in this case, your car. So, if someone says, "I'm going to load up my car," "load" up, they mean they're going to put the things that they need to put into their car. We often use that verb when we are talking about moving something in your car, or going on a trip.



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“Just then my wife calls me on my cell phone. She was going to be a little late” this evening. She says she is not going to get home at her normal time, and so she “asks me to make something for dinner.” This is not a good idea since I am not a good cook, but I, of course, say yes. “Tonight, I will be the cook” - the person making the food.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a regular speed.

[Start of story]

It's five o'clock and it's quitting time. I put a few files into my bag, grab my mug, and say goodnight to the rest of the people in my area. I go to the parking garage and get into my car. I signal my turn onto the street and drive toward the freeway onramp. I merge as best as I can onto the freeway, which is always a bit of a hassle at this hour. Traffic is stop-and-go all the way from downtown. I hear on the radio that there's a stalled car in fast lane near La Brea, backing up traffic all the way to Hoover. I decide to get off the freeway and to take surface streets for the rest of the trip.

I need to make a stop on the way home. I know that the fridge is empty, so I decide to stop by the market. I get there and I pick up some French bread, a bag of apples, a few bananas, some pasta, tomato sauce, and a cooked chicken. Luckily, they have a lot of checkout stands open, and I get through the line pretty quickly. I thank the cashier and the bagger and push my cart to my car. I open the trunk and load everything up. Just then my wife calls me on my cell phone. She was going to be a little late getting home and asks me to make something for dinner. Tonight, I will be the cook.

[End of story]

That concludes part seven of “A Day in the Life of Jeff.” On part eight, we're going to make dinner, eat dinner, and wash up.

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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 8 – Making and Eating Dinner, and Washing Up

GLOSSARY

counter – a long, flat surface in a kitchen or bathroom for putting things on

* Please don't forget to clean the counters after you wash the dishes.

groceries – food and drinks that are bought in a store

* I accidentally left some of the groceries in the car overnight and had to throw away the spoiled milk in the morning

to preheat – to heat an oven to the correct cooking temperature before placing any food inside the oven to cook

* This cake recipe says that we should preheat the oven to 425 degrees.

to bake – to cook in an oven

* Doug likes to bake cookies with his children on the weekends.

burner – the round part of a stove that produces heat under a pot or pan

* Does your stove have gas burners or electric burners?

to boil – to be at the point where a liquid that is being heated is very hot and there are bubbles in the liquid

* Don't put the eggs in the water until the water boils.

to chop – to cut a food into pieces with a knife

* Please chop the carrots so that I can add them to this soup.

to stir – to use a spoon to move a liquid around in a bowl or pot

* I'm supposed to stir this soup for 20 minutes without stopping, but my arm is getting tired.

to toss – to lightly mix vegetable or fruits in a salad

* If you don't toss the salad gently, you will damage the fruits.

place mat – a rectangular piece of fabric or plastic placed on the table in front of each person, to protect the table from hot items and falling pieces of food

* Look how much food is on these place mats! It's a good thing we used them for the kids.



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napkin – a small piece of fabric or soft paper used to clean one's mouth during or after eating

* Cloth napkins look nicer than paper napkins, but you have to wash them after a meal.

to set the table – to put placemats, napkins, plates, cups, forks, knives, and spoons on the table before a meal

* When you set a table, the fork and napkin should be on the left side of the plate and the knife and spoon should be on the right side of the plate.

dining room – a room with a table and chairs where people eat meals

* We can invite only two guests for dinner because our dining room is so small.

to do the dishes – to wash dirty plates, cups, forks, knives, spoons, pots, pans, and other things used for food

* They always do the dishes together: he washes them and she rinses them off.

leftovers – uneaten food that is saved for another day

* Last night we couldn't eat all of the chicken, so today my roommate took the leftovers to work for lunch.

Tupperware container – a plastic container with a lid that is used for storing uneaten food

* Which Tupperware container are the cooked vegetables in? The blue one or the green one?

plastic wrap – clear thin plastic that sticks to itself and is used to cover uneaten food

* At the picnic, he wrapped the potato salad in plastic wrap so that the flies wouldn't land in it.

aluminum foil – a shiny, flat piece of aluminum that tears easily and is used to cover uneaten food

* I often wrap food with aluminum foil before cooking it in the oven so that it doesn't become too dry.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 8 – Making and Eating Dinner, and Washing Up

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLpod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part eight: Making Dinner, Eating Dinner, and Washing Up. I'm your host Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In part seven of this series we drove home and we ran some errands. In this part, I'm going to make dinner, which should be very interesting since I am a terrible cook. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

When I get home, I start on dinner right away. I clean off the kitchen counter after putting away the groceries and decide to make pasta. I preheat the oven to 375 to bake the bread and to keep the chicken hot until my wife gets home. I put some water in a pan and turn the burner on high. When the water starts boiling, I put in the pasta and decide to make a salad. Just then, my wife opens the back door and yells, "I'm home!" She comes into the kitchen, and helps with chopping the tomatoes to add to the sauce. She stirs the sauce until it's done, while I finish tossing the salad.

I get out the place mats and napkins to set the table. I also make sure that there is a spoon, knife, fork, and plate for each of us. About 15 minutes later, we sit down at the table in the dining room and talk about our long day. My wife says she'll do the dishes, since I cooked, but of course I help out by drying them. First, I put some of the leftovers in a Tupperware container and some in plastic wrap and the rest in aluminum foil. Then I dry the pans, plates, glasses, and silverware.

[End of story]

In this episode, we are making dinner at the beginning, "When I get home, I start on dinner right away." Once again, we have one of those two word verbs in English, "I start on dinner," that means I begin to prepare dinner. So, "I start on dinner right away. I clean off the kitchen counter after putting away the groceries." The kitchen counter, "counter," is the place in your kitchen where you have a long, flat top or board where you can prepare food and you can put things on, it's like the table almost. But usually in a kitchen, you have cabinets or cupboards, where you store things, and on top you have a counter. A counter is a general word that refers to the top of something, usually somewhere where you



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do something on top of it. In this case, the kitchen counter is where you prepare food.

Well, “I clean off the kitchen counter after” I put “away the groceries.” The groceries, “groceries,” (plural) are the food that I buy at the market. We sometimes call a supermarket a grocery store - a place that you buy groceries - buy food that you bring home and prepare and eat at home.

I decided “to make pasta.” So, “I preheat the oven to 375.” To preheat, “preheat,” really means the same here as to heat, but if you look at the instructions for making food, what we would call the recipe, “recipe,” the recipe for making food, usually it begins, if you are going to cooking something in the oven, by telling you to preheat the oven. That just means to turn it on so that when you are ready, when it is hot, you can put the food in to cook. Pre, “pre,” means before or to do something before.

So, “I preheat the oven to 375,” in other words, 375 degrees Fahrenheit. I preheat it because I want “to bake the bread and keep the chicken hot until my wife gets home.” To bake, “bake,” is to cook something, usually in an oven. So, I open the oven door, I put in the bread, I put in the chicken, and then I close the door. My wife is going to be home late so I want to keep the chicken hot - I want to make sure that it stays hot.

“I put some water in a pan,” a pan is what you use to cook something in. So, “I put some water in a pan and I turn the burner on high.” The burner, “burner,” is on top of what we would call your stove, “stove.” Your burners are for cooking food, where you have the heat comes from the bottom and you put the pan on top of the heat. So, if you are going to boil some water - make the water hot - you would put it in a pan and then put it on top of a burner, and the burner is part of your stove. Usually, stoves and ovens are one machine, one - in one single piece in many American kitchens. In my kitchen, the stove is on top of the oven.

I'm going to boil some water. To boil, “boil,” means to make the one of very hot until you start to see bubbles. The average temperature is 212 degrees Fahrenheit, or 100 degrees Celsius, in order to boil water. Well, “when the water starts boiling” - when it starts to make bubbles because it is very hot - “I put in the pasta.” I take the pasta - the pasta noodles, “noodles” - the little pieces of pasta, we call those noodles - and I put them into the boiling water so they can cook.

Then I decide I want “to make a salad” because I'm very hungry. Well, just as I decide to make the salad, “just then, my wife opens the back door.” “Just then” -



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that expression means at that time - at that same time - “my wife opens the back door” - the door to the house in the back, the opposite would be the front door. She yells, “I’m home!” That’s what you would say when you come home to someone who is already there, you would say, “I’m home!” You wouldn’t say, “I’ve arrived,” or “I’m here,” you would say, “I’m home.”

My wife “comes into the kitchen and helps” me chop the tomatoes. To chop, “chop,” means to cut something into small pieces. We chop tomatoes - we make them into smaller pieces - and we add them to the pasta sauce that’s the red liquid that we’re going to put over the pasta. My wife “stirs the sauce until it’s done.” To stir, “stir,” when you are cooking means to take a spoon and put it into the pan and move the spoon back and forth so that you are mixing what is in the pan.

So, my wife is stirring the sauce - the pasta sauce - the tomato sauce “until it’s done” - until it is ready - until it is cooked, “while I finish tossing the salad.” So, she is stirring the sauce and at the same time, I am finishing the salad, and I finished by tossing it. To toss, “toss,” a salad means to mix the salad together. In a salad, you often have lettuce and maybe tomatoes, other food, other vegetables, and you want to mix them together. Often you put in a salad dressing, “dressing.” Salad dressing is a liquid, often made from some oil, that gives a better taste to your salad. So, you toss the salad in order to mix everything up.

That verb, to toss, can also mean to throw, usually to throw something to someone else. Someone may say, “toss me that pen,” they mean throw me that pen.

Well, I am “tossing the salad” here - mixing it up, “I get out the place mats and napkins to set the table.” The place, “place,” mats, “mats,” are things that you put underneath the plate and the spoon, fork, and knife so that the table doesn’t get dirty; we call those place mats. They can be plastic; they can be made out of cloth, and they are used to protect your table.

So, “I get out the place mats and the napkins to set the table.” A napkin, “napkin,” is like a little towel that you use. In case you need to wipe your face while you are eating, you can use your napkin, and it’s common in American restaurants and in houses for people to put the napkin on their legs while they are sitting - on the top of their legs, which we would call the lap - on your lap, “lap,” you put the napkin while you are eating. To set, “set,” the table means to



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put all of the things that you need on the table - plates, spoons, knives, forks, and so forth. That is to set the table - to make the table ready so you can eat.

“About 15 minutes” after I set the table, my wife and I sit at the table - “we sit down at the table in the dining room and talk about our long day.” The dining room, “dining,” is a place where you eat. To dine, as a verb, “dine,” means to eat. So, the dining room is the room in your house where you eat your meals. My wife and I “talk about our long day,” meaning we had many things happen today, and maybe we are very tired, so we had a long day.

“My wife says that she’ll do the dishes.” To do the dishes means the same as to wash the dishes. My wife offers to “do the dishes” because “I cooked, but of course,” since I am a wonderful husband, “I help out by drying” the dishes. To help out means the same here as to help. But if we are talking about helping another person do something, maybe something that we don’t have to do, but we want to be nice, we would say we help them out.

So, I helped my wife out by drying the dishes. “First, I have to “put some of the leftovers in a Tupperware container.” Leftovers, “leftovers,” (all one word) is extra food - food that you did not eat. At the end of your dinner - at the end of your meal - if you want to keep some of that food, we call it leftovers. And in this case, I’m going to put the leftovers into a small plastic box that has a top on it. We call that kind of little box a container, “container.” We usually refer to these plastic boxes that we put food in as Tupperware containers. Tupperware, “Tupperware,” is actually a company that makes these small plastic containers for food. Even if you don’t have a container made by that company, many people just call it “my Tupperware” - the Tupperware containers, that means the plastic boxes that you can put food into.

Well, some of the food, I put in a plastic wrap. A plastic wrap, “wrap,” is a thin, clear piece of plastic that I put food into, and we call it a wrap, “wrap,” because we put it around something. To wrap something is to put something around it, usually to keep it cold, or to keep it warm, or to keep it fresh when we are talking about food. We use that same word, wrap, for putting paper around a present or a gift that you are giving someone. The paper is called wrapping paper.

You can also put food in aluminum foil. Aluminum, “aluminum,” is a kind of metal. It’s usually a silver color. Foil, “foil,” is like a plastic wrap but it’s made from aluminum. It’s a - it’s like a long, flat sheet that you can put around something to keep the food in your refrigerator or in your freezer, where you have even colder temperatures.



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At the end of the story, I dry the pans, the plates, the glasses, and the silverware. The silverware, remember, is the spoon, knife, fork that you use when you eat.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a regular speed.

[Start of story]

When I get home, I start on dinner right away. I clean off the kitchen counter after putting away the groceries and decide to make pasta. I preheat the oven to 375 to bake the bread and to keep the chicken hot until my wife gets home. I put some water in a pan and turn the burner on high. When the water starts boiling, I put in the pasta and decide to make a salad. Just then, my wife opens the back door and yells, "I'm home!" She comes into the kitchen, and helps with chopping the tomatoes to add to the sauce. She stirs the sauce until it's done, while I finish tossing the salad.

I get out the place mats and napkins to set the table. I also make sure that there is a spoon, knife, fork, and plate for each of us. About 15 minutes later, we sit down at the table in the dining room and talk about our long day. My wife says she'll do the dishes, since I cooked, but of course I help out by drying them. First, I put some of the leftovers in a Tupperware container and some in plastic wrap and the rest in aluminum foil. Then I dry the pans, plates, glasses, and silverware.

[End of story]

That concludes part eight of "A Day in the Life of Jeff." In part nine we'll talk about relaxing, looking at your mail, and taking out the trash.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at eslpod.com.

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Episode 9 – Relaxing, the Mail, and the Trash

GLOSSARY

to chill out – to relax

* He chills out by listening to his favorite jazz CD and drinking a glass of wine.

national news – information about what happened in the country that day, usually found in a newspaper or on a TV news broadcast

* Did you know that the flooding in this area was on the national news last night? It must be more serious than I thought.

newscast – a news program on television or radio

* I heard in yesterday's newscast that price of beef will probably go up in the next few months.

to sort through – to put objects in order; to look for one object in a group of objects

* The team thought of many great ideas during the meeting. Now they need to sort through them and select the best ones.

junk mail – unwanted mail that will be thrown away usually without being read

* I never give my address to companies but I still get a lot of junk mail.

bill – an invoice; a piece of paper that states how much money one needs to pay for something (such as a credit card, electricity, gas, or phone)

* When I saw the phone bill for this month, I knew that there was a mistake. I never called Peru!

flyer – a piece of paper that advertises an event or product

* The soccer club put fliers all over the school to let people know when its next meeting would be.

stoop – porch and stairs; the area in front of a home's front door, with steps down to the sidewalk

* During the summer, their house gets really hot so they usually sit on the front stoop and drink lemonade in the evenings.

package – a box that contains a gift or something that one purchased

* His grandparents always send him Christmas packages that are full of cookies and gifts.



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reality show – a television show with real people (not actors) in their daily life or in a special situation that is part of the show

* MTV's "Real World" put strangers in a house to live together for several months and was one of the most popular early reality shows in the United States.

commercial – an advertisement on television or radio

* Although it was only a two-hour movie, it was on TV for three hours because there were so many commercials.

to thumb through – to quickly turn the pages of a book, magazine, or newspaper

* As I was thumbing through the magazine, I was surprised to see an article written by my cousin.

novel – a book with an imaginary story, such as a romance or a mystery

* He loves reading novels, but his wife only reads biographies.

trash day – a regular day of the week when trucks come to collect garbage from houses on a street

* I'm glad tomorrow is trash day since we have so much trash from moving over the weekend.

garbage – trash; waste; items that one doesn't want and should be taken away

* After the party, her parents were shocked to see how much garbage people had left on the floor.

recycling – treating used items so that they can be used again

* Does this city have good plastic and glass recycling programs?

trash container – a tall, plastic container for storing garbage, often on wheels

* Last night some dogs opened the trash containers and now there is garbage all over the street.

garbage trucks – trucks that come to collect garbage from houses

* I don't like driving behind garbage trucks because they are very slow and they smell bad.



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Episode 9 – Relaxing, the Mail, and the Trash

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLpod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part nine: Relaxing, the Mail, and the Trash. I'm your host Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In part eight of this series we prepared dinner and ate dinner, and then we washed up or cleaned the dishes. In this part, we're going to relax after dinner and watch a little TV. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

With the dinner dishes done, my wife and I each sit down on the couch to chill out and watch the national news which comes on at 6:30. During the newscast, I sort through the day's mail. Most of it is junk mail and bills. There are also several fliers for houses for sale in the area. I check the front stoop and see that there are no packages.

I like to watch TV and my wife likes to watch reality shows. One thing I hate is having to watch all of the commercials, so I turn the sound down when they come on. After the show is over, I thumb through the latest issue of the Atlantic Monthly, while my wife reads a novel by her favorite mystery writer.

At around 9, I remember that tomorrow is trash day, so I take the kitchen garbage out and dump the recycling bins as well. I roll the trash container out to the street ready for the garbage trucks, which come by early in the morning.

[End of story]

Part nine is called "Relaxing, the Mail, and the Trash." We begin with the sentence "With the dinner dishes done," the dinner dishes are the dishes we use to eat our dinner, and when I say they are done, I mean that they are washed and dried. So, "With the dinner dishes" washed and dried, "my wife and I sit down on the couch to chill out." To chill, "chill," out, "out," (two words) means to relax. Sometimes we use this expression as a command. If someone is very excited, you may say, "Hey, chill out," means relax, don't be so excited. You will also hear just the word chill. "Hey, chill," that's informal for relax, don't be so excited. You will also hear people say, "I'm just chilling." I am just chilling means I'm just relaxing. Again, that's very informal.



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Well, my wife and I are chilling, and we're watching the national news. The national news is the news broadcast on television, and in Los Angeles, this is at 6:30 in the evening - it comes on at 6:30. When we say a television show comes on, we mean that that is when it begins - that is when you can watch it. The national news can also be called a newscast, "newscast." A newscast is a news program. You could have a local newscast, with just news about Los Angeles, for me, or a national newscast.

Well, "During the newscast, I sort through the day's mail." To sort, "sort," through means that I am looking at today's mail and usually I am separating it so that I separate the different kinds of mail - the different kinds of letters - that I got that day.

Most of my mail - and this is true - is either junk mail or bills. Junk, "junk," mail is mail that you get that you don't want. Usually it is advertisements, people trying to get you to buy something; we call that junk mail. Most of my mail is either junk mail or it's bills, and a bill is a statement - a piece of paper from some company that you have to pay money to. You get a bill for your electricity, for your phone, for your Internet access. You have to pay your bills. Well, you should pay your bills; maybe you don't.

"There are also several fliers for houses for sale in the area." A flier, "flier," (the plural is fliers, with an "s") is an advertisement - it's an announcement or an advertisement. Usually it's one or two pages - one or two pieces of paper. Sometimes the advertisements, or the fliers, are folded up. And, it's very popular for people who are selling houses to use fliers that they mail you or they put on your house - outside of your house. These fliers are for houses that people are selling - "houses for sale in the area."

"I check the front stoop and see that there are no packages." "I check" - I look out at "the front stoop." A stoop, "stoop," is the stairs in front of your house. Often this word is used when we are talking about large buildings - apartment buildings or condominium buildings. In New York or Boston, some of the cities on the eastern coast of the United States, people talk about sitting on the stoop, that mean you're sitting on your stairs. But, you can also use the word to talk about your own stairs in front of your house. The top of those stairs is where you might find packages. A package, "package," is usually a box or something that is bigger than just a regular letter that you receive in the mail or that is delivered to you by some private company.



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Well, I look at my stoop and I see “there are no packages” - no one loves me; no one sent me a package. I then talk about how I like to watch television, and so does my wife. “My wife likes to watch reality shows.” A reality show, “reality,” is a type of television show where they have a competition or a contest. “Big Brother” and “American Idol” are two examples of popular reality shows. They take people - average people, they say - and they have a competition or a contest.

“One thing I hate” about watching television - something I don't like - “is having to watch all the commercials.” A commercial is the same as an advertisement on television or radio; it's an announcement from a company that wants you to buy what they are selling. Well, I don't like watching the commercials, “so I turn the sound down.” To turn the sound down means to lower the volume, to make it so that it is less loud - it is quieter. “I turn the sound down when” the commercials “come on.” Again, that verb, to come on, means that they are on the television - that they start.

“After the show is over,” - after the show is done - finished - “I thumb through the latest issue of the Atlantic Monthly.” The Atlantic Monthly is a monthly magazine in the United States. To thumb through something, “thumb” through (two words) means to look through something, but usually not to be paying too much attention. You're sort of looking but you're not necessarily reading very carefully. We use that expression - that verb - when we are talking about magazines in particular. You're looking at them, perhaps waiting in a doctor's office - in the waiting room of a doctor's office you thumb through the magazines. Well, I'm thumbing through the Atlantic Monthly, and my wife is reading a novel. A novel, “novel,” is a fictional book - a book that is not a true story.

“At around 9,” that is at nine p.m., “I remember that tomorrow is trash day.” Trash, “trash,” is anything that you are getting rid of - that you are throwing out - that you don't want anymore, and trash day is the day that the garbage trucks come by and take the trash away. Now, in Los Angeles we have a public trash service, so that the government has trucks that it sends out, and it picks up your trash - it takes your trash and puts it into the truck, and then takes it away. That is trash day. In my neighborhood it is on Fridays and every neighborhood is different, they do a different part of the city each day.

So, this is trash day and I need to “take the kitchen garbage out and dump the recycling bins as well.” The garbage, “garbage,” is just another word for trash. We sometimes talk about garbage that is trash in the kitchen in particular. This is



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the kitchen garbage, and I have to take it out, meaning I have to take the bag and put it outside so that the garbage truck can come by and pick it up.

In Los Angeles, and in many cities, we also have recycling bins. To recycle, “recycle,” means to use again, and in Los Angeles, we have a recycling bin where you can put your newspapers and other things that they can use again - they can recycle. A bin, “bin,” is just another name for a box, usually a plastic box.

In my city, we have trash containers that you can roll; they have little wheels on them. A container is like a big box that you put something in, and so a trash container is a big, in my case, plastic box that has wheels that I can then put it down on the street. You have to put your trash containers on the street.

Each container has a different color. In my case, black is the color for trash; blue is the color for recycling trash, so newspapers, for example; and green is where you put things like leaves and grass, things that you have in your - outside of your house that you want to get rid of, that are plants, that sort of thing.

I put the trash containers out on the street because the garbage trucks “come by early in the morning.” They come by, a two word verb, which means that they come to your house - they drive to your house. And, in my neighborhood, they come by very early, so at six o'clock on Friday morning I can hear the trucks outside my window. I don't like it, but I need to have my trash taken away, so one day of the week I wake up early because I can hear the garbage trucks outside.

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a native rate of speech.

[Start of story]

With the dinner dishes done, my wife and I each sit down on the couch to chill out and watch the national news which comes on at 6:30. During the newscast, I sort through the day's mail. Most of it is junk mail and bills. There are also several fliers for houses for sale in the area. I check the front stoop and see that there are no packages.

I like to watch TV and my wife likes to watch reality shows. One thing I hate is having to watch all of the commercials, so I turn the sound down when they come



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on. After the show is over, I thumb through the latest issue of the Atlantic Monthly, while my wife reads a novel by her favorite mystery writer.

At around 9, I remember that tomorrow is trash day, so I take the kitchen garbage out and dump the recycling bins as well. I roll the trash container out to the street ready for the garbage trucks, which come by early in the morning.

[End of story]

That concludes part nine of “A Day in the Life of Jeff.” In our tenth and final part, we get ready for bed and go to sleep.

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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 10 – Getting Ready for Bed and Going to Sleep

GLOSSARY

bedtime story – a story that adults read to children before they go to sleep at night

* Can you read me one more bedtime story before I have to go sleep?

ritual – something that is done repeatedly and in the same way every time

* His morning ritual includes drinking a cup of coffee, eating a banana, and taking the dog for a walk.

tap – faucet; the metal thing that water flows through into a sink

* Please turn off the tap while you're brushing your teeth. It's wrong to waste water.

towel – a soft piece of fabric that absorbs water and helps someone or something become dry

* Yuki always uses two towels when she showers: one for her body, and one for her hair.

beat – very tired; exhausted

* After working on the report for 14 hours, I was beat and I wanted to go to sleep.

undressed – without clothes; not wearing clothes; naked

* You should always close the bedroom curtains before you get undressed.

hamper – a container for dirty clothes

* Make sure you do the laundry when the hamper is full.

pajamas – clothes worn while sleeping

* My cotton pajamas are the most comfortable clothes that I own. I love sleeping in them.

slippers – soft, warm shoes that are worn only inside the house

* She often puts her slippers in front of the fireplace to warm them before she puts them on her feet.

to pull back – to fold back; to move back

* When she heard the doorbell, she quietly pulled back the curtains to see who was at the front door.



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covers – the layers of fabric that cover a bed

* Our cat likes to sleep in our bed under the covers, but we don't allow her to do that.

to fluff – to make something larger and softer by hitting or brushing it

* I can't sleep on a hard pillow so I always fluff my pillows at night.

overhead – on the ceiling; over one's head

* Overhead lights are good in living rooms and dining rooms, but in bedrooms I prefer a small table lamp so that I can read before falling asleep.

to lay down – to put something or oneself in a horizontal (sideways) position

* I laid down the book I had been reading and turned out the lights.

to fall asleep – to begin to sleep

* Drinking a glass of warm milk often helps Giacomo fall asleep at night.

to count sheep – to imagine sheep jumping over a fence and to count them as a way of falling asleep

* Do you ever try counting sheep when you have trouble falling asleep?

to nod off – to start to sleep, often without intending or wanting to

* He was so tired that he was nodding off during the meeting. His boss was not happy.

fast asleep – sleeping soundly; sleeping very well; sleeping and unaware of other things happening

* The little boy was fast asleep when they got home and he didn't wake up as his father carried him to bed.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 10 – Getting Ready for Bed and Going to Sleep

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to ESLpod.com's "A Day in the Life of Jeff," part 10: Getting Ready for Bed and Going to Sleep. I'm your host Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

In part nine of this series we relaxed, read our mail, and took out the trash. In this tenth and final episode, we're going to get ready for bed and go to sleep. Let's get started.

[Start of story]

At 10:30, I decide to get ready for bed. When I was little, my mother would read me a bedtime story. I'm looking forward to having that ritual with my own kids someday.

I go into the bathroom and turn on the tap. I wash my face, and dry it with my towel. I floss and brush my teeth. I have to admit that by this time, I'm beat, and so is my wife. She cleans up when I've finished up.

In the meantime, I walk into the bedroom and get undressed. I put my dirty clothes in the hamper and I put on my pajamas. Wearing my slippers, I go into the kitchen to get a glass of water to put next to the bed in case I need it during the night. I pull back the covers, fluff my pillow, and climb into bed. I set my alarm clock for 6:15, and turn off the overhead light. I lay my head down and pull up the covers, kissing my wife goodnight. Some nights I have trouble falling asleep, but tonight, I didn't need to count any sheep. I nod off right away and before long, I'm fast asleep.

[End of story]

This episode is called "Getting Ready for Bed and Going to Sleep."

"At 10:30, I decide to get ready for bed," to do the things I need to do so I can go to sleep. "When I was little, my mother would read me a bedtime story." Bedtime, "bedtime," (all one word) is, of course, the time that you go to bed - that you go to your bed so you can sleep. A bedtime story is a story you would tell a child to help them fall asleep. Many children like to be told a bedtime story. These are often what we would call fairy tales, "fairy" tales, "tales." A tale is just another word for a story, and a fairy tale is a story about something that isn't true, usually with imaginary characters.



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"I'm looking forward to having that ritual with my own kids someday." "I'm looking forward to having that ritual," a ritual, "ritual," is something that you do on a regular schedule or at a regular time every day or maybe every week or every month, and you do the exact same things in the exact same order. We also use that word, ritual, when we are talking about some religious ceremonies. Some religious events have certain rules - certain order - a certain order that they follow, and that is a ritual.

"I go into the bathroom and I turn on the tap." The tap, "tap," is the same as the faucet. Well, you turn on the tap so the water comes out, "I wash my face, and dry it with my towel." I dry my face - I make it dry using a towel, "towel," which is a cloth that you use to dry yourself or to clean yourself. I floss my teeth and I brush them.

"I have to admit that by this time, I'm beat." "I have to admit" is an expression that we use when you're going to say something that maybe you don't want to say - you don't want to tell the truth. In fact, there's also an expression, "to tell the truth." So, I have to admit means I have to say - to tell the truth. "By this time," meaning by 10:30 - "by this time, I'm beat." To be beat, "beat," means to be very tired. Someone says, "Oh, I'm beat," they've been working all day or they've, like me, been watching television all day, and now I'm beat - I'm tired. Of course, I don't watch television all day, just part of the day!

Well, my wife is also beat. In the story I say, "I'm beat, and so is my wife," meaning my wife is also very tired. "She cleans up when I've finished up." Once again, you see those two word verbs. To clean up is, in this case, to clean your face, to brush your teeth; to get yourself clean is to clean up. To finish up is really the same as to finish, but we love in English to use those prepositions as part of these two word verbs. So, I finish up, meaning I finish doing what I need to do, and then my wife goes into the bathroom and cleans up.

"In the meantime," meaning while my wife is doing that, "in the meantime," "meantime," (all one word) "I walk into the bedroom and get undressed." So, when my wife is in the bathroom, "I walk" - at the same time - "into the bedroom and I get undressed." To get undressed is the opposite of to get dressed. So, if you get undressed, you take off your clothes.

"I put my dirty clothes" - the clothes I was wearing - "in the hamper and I put on my pajamas." A hamper, "hamper," as a noun, is a place, usually in your bedroom or bathroom, where you put dirty clothes or dirty towels; we call that a



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hamper. To hamper, as a verb, means something different. To hamper someone means to get in their way - to prevent them from doing something. But as a noun, a hamper, or a clothes hamper, is a place, usually it's a big plastic box with a top on it, or it could be made of wood, and that's where you put your dirty clothes. And then, at some point during the week, I hope, you wash your clothes so you can have clean clothes again. Unless, of course, you're not married, in which case, if you are a man and single, you may not wash your clothes that much.

Well, I have "my dirty clothes in my hamper," and since I don't have any clothes on, remember I have undressed, "I put on my pajamas." Pajamas, "pajamas," are sometimes abbreviated as PJs, "PJ" PJs. Your pajamas, or PJs, are the clothes that you wear when you are going to bed. For example, I have pajamas that say Superman on it, and I wear my Superman pajamas to bed. Doesn't everyone?

Well, in addition to putting on my pajamas, I also put on my slippers. A slipper, "slipper," is a shoe that you wear usually just inside the house. So, when you are getting ready for bed and you want to walk around the house, you don't put your shoes on, you would put some slippers on. Some people wear slippers in their house, especially if the floors are cold, and they'll put the slippers on at night and have them on at night as they walk around in their house or in the morning.

Well, "Wearing my slippers, I go into the kitchen to get a glass of water," and I want to put that water "next to my bed in case I need it during the night." So, if I need to drink water at night, I have a glass of water next to me. "I pull back the covers." The covers, "covers," are the blanket, the comforter, and the top sheets. We take those things and we have to pull them back. To pull back means to take them and move them towards the bottom of the bed so that you can get in, and after you get in, you're going to pull the covers up. So, you pull back the covers to get into the bed, and then you pull them up to cover you again so you can stay warm.

"I pull back my covers," and I "fluff my pillow." The pillow is what I put my head on. To fluff, "fluff," means to make your pillow bigger by hitting it very softly on the sides. So, you take your pillow and you put one hand on each side of the pillow and you move your hands back and forth toward each other and away from each other, and that allows the pillow to be a little bigger - to be a little softer.



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A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 10 – Getting Ready for Bed and Going to Sleep

"I fluff my pillow, and I climb into bed." Notice that verb to climb, "climb," into bed. It means the same as to get into bed. We might use that particular verb, to climb into, if we are very tired, for example. You can also use it just to mean to get into bed.

So, I "climb into bed. I set my alarm clock for 6:15," - for 6:15 in the morning, of course - "and I turn off the overhead light." The overhead, "overhead," (all one word) is a light that is on the top of your room - on the ceiling of the room. The top of the room is called the ceiling, "ceiling." So, an overhead light is on the top of the ceiling - or on the ceiling, and I turn the overhead light off.

"I lay my head down." To lay, "lay," here means to put something down. Usually we use that verb when we are talking about people or a part of your body. "I lay my head down and I pull up the covers," so I am warm, and because I'm such a great husband, I kiss "my wife goodnight." To kiss someone goodnight means to kiss them and, in a sense, to say goodnight to them. "Some nights I have trouble falling asleep." To fall, "fall," asleep, "asleep," means to go to sleep - to start sleeping.

Sometimes "I have trouble falling asleep, but tonight, I didn't need to count any sheep." The expression to count sheep, "sheep," is used because we traditionally when we are trying to fall asleep, some people say that it helps if you try counting numbers, so you start with one, two, three, four. And, for some reason, I don't know why, it is traditional to count sheep. Sheep are a type of animal. A sheep is an animal that you take the hair off of, and you use the hair of the sheep to make clothing, for example. I don't need to count sheep because I'm very tired. If you are not tired or you have difficulty falling asleep, you might want to try counting sheep. One, two, three, four, and by the time you reach five million you should be asleep!

"I nod off right away." To nod, "nod," off (two words) means the same as to fall asleep. It's just another way of saying fall asleep, "I nod off." Sometimes people will use that expression when they're at a meeting and it is very boring at work, and you may say to someone, "I almost nodded off" - I almost fell asleep. That usually happens to my students when I am teaching.

"Before long," meaning in a very short time, "before long, I'm fast asleep." To be fast, "fast," asleep means to be completely asleep. There's a similar expression that means the same, to be sound asleep, "sound." To be sound asleep means that you are sleeping completely, it will not be easy to wake you up.



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English as a Second Language Podcast

A Day in the Life of Jeff

Episode 10 – Getting Ready for Bed and Going to Sleep

Now let's listen to the story, this time at a native rate of speech.

[Start of story]

At 10:30, I decide to get ready for bed. When I was little, my mother would read me a bedtime story. I'm looking forward to having that ritual with my own kids someday.

I go into the bathroom and turn on the tap. I wash my face, and dry it with my towel. I floss and brush my teeth. I have to admit that by this time, I'm beat, and so is my wife. She cleans up when I've finished up.

In the meantime, I walk into the bedroom and get undressed. I put my dirty clothes in the hamper and I put on my pajamas. Wearing my slippers, I go into the kitchen to get a glass of water to put next to the bed in case I need it during the night. I pull back the covers, fluff my pillow, and climb into bed. I set my alarm clock for 6:15, and turn off the overhead light. I lay my head down and pull up the covers, kissing my wife goodnight. Some nights I have trouble falling asleep, but tonight, I didn't need to count any sheep. I nod off right away and before long, I'm fast asleep.

[End of story]

That concludes part 10 of "A Day in the Life of Jeff," and it concludes this series. I want to thank you for listening. Remember to visit our website at eslpod.com for more special courses like this one.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening.

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