



ESL Podcast 1005 – Complimenting Your Host

GLOSSARY

to outdo (oneself) – to exceed expectations; to do better than anyone was expecting, including oneself

* Hamed always beats his sales goals, but last quarter, he really outdid himself.

spread – all the food placed on a table at a single time; a large meal

* Which buffet has the best spread on weekend mornings?

exquisite – very refined and elegant; extremely beautiful

* Debra had hoped their first kiss would be exquisite, but in reality, it was a little awkward and disappointing.

mouthwatering – very appetizing and appearing to taste very good, making one salivate (making one's mouth fill with a liquid in anticipation of eating)

* Their cakes and pies are mouthwatering. I can't wait to try a piece!

to surpass all expectations – to exceed expectations; to do better than what others were expecting; to excel

* Adrian's violin performance surpassed all expectations and left the audience members amazed at his skill.

to wow – to very favorably impress and surprise someone

* The last candidate really wowed the interviewers.

to compliment – to say nice things about someone or something, showing one's admiration for and appreciation of it

* Try complimenting the girl on her dress before you ask her out on a date.

to blush – for one's cheeks to become pink or red, usually because one is embarrassed or hot

* Justina is a nervous public speaker who usually blushes even before she says the first word.

vision – a beautiful person or thing; with an appearance that is ideal

* The Olympic athletes were a vision of youth and good health.

sack – a cloth or paper bag, or clothing that has little or no shape and looks like a bag

* The little girl dressed up like a ghost by cutting holes in a white sack and putting it over her head and body.



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ravishing – delightful, enchanting, charming, and attractive

* The clothing designer just released photographs of some ravishing new dresses.

to butter (someone) up – to say nice things to make another person feel special and well-liked, especially to put that person in a good mood so that one can deliver bad news or request a favor

* Try to butter up the boss before you request a raise and extended vacation time.

What gives? – an informal phrase used when one wants to know what is really happening or wants a true explanation, and thinks the other person is hiding something

* Why won't you answer my question about where you were last night? What gives?

suspicious – being distrustful; not believing another person

* The sales figures seem too high, and the division manager is starting to become suspicious that maybe sales representatives are lying.

candid – truthful, honest, and straightforward; not deceptive or dishonest

* Please give me your candid assessment of my book, not just praise and supportive comments.

to admire – to strongly like someone or something; to approve of something and think it is a good thing

* I really admire the way you handled such a difficult situation.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Anton mean when he says, “you could wear a sack and look ravishing”?
 - a) Jenny is too thin to wear such expensive clothing.
 - b) Jenny should wear more revealing clothing.
 - c) Jenny always looks great, no matter what she wears.
2. What does Jenny mean when she say, “Now I know you’re buttering me up”?
 - a) She thinks Anton is trying to make her fat by giving her too much food.
 - b) She thinks Anton is giving her extra compliments to put her in a good mood.
 - c) She thinks Anton is lying to her to avoid hurting her feelings.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

spread

The word “spread,” in this podcast, means a large meal, or all the food placed on a table at a single time: “They worked for hours to prepare the spread for the family’s Thanksgiving meal.” When talking about food, a “spread” is a soft food or a very thick liquid that is wiped over a piece of bread or a similar food: “Have you tried putting this garlic and cream cheese spread on a bagel? It’s delicious!” When talking about money, the “spread” is the difference between the purchase and selling price, or the difference in the interest rate between lending and borrowing: “The company has a great spread on its products.” Finally, a “spread” is the area where something is found: “The geographical spread of the sales regions is difficult to manage from headquarters.”

sack

In this podcast, the word “sack” means a cloth or paper bag, or clothing that has little or no shape and looks like a bag: “The girls complained that the school uniform looked like a sack and they asked the school to provide uniforms with a better fit.” The phrase “to hit the sack” means to go to bed: “Gregorio stayed up late working on a big assignment and he didn’t hit the sack until 3:00 a.m.” Finally, as a verb “to sack” means to fire someone, or tell someone that he or she no longer has a particular job: “If the company expands overseas, hundreds of domestic workers will be sacked.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Slumber Parties

Many young children and teenagers enjoy having “slumber parties” or “sleepovers,” which are special parties where small groups of people sleep in one person’s house. The guests usually sleep on the floor in “sleeping bags” (warm cloth tubes with a zipper on one side) that they’ve brought from home. But they usually don’t sleep for very long, as the focus on the party is usually on other fun activities.

Most slumber parties are only for girls or only for boys, although very young children might have “co-ed” (with boys and girls) sleepovers. Usually the children eat food that isn’t very healthy, but they might be involved in preparing the food. For example, an adult might help the children make their own pizzas and then make “ice cream sundaes” (large desserts with ice cream covered with sauces and “toppings” like nuts or small pieces of candy). The children usually spend much of the evening watching movies and eating popcorn, or playing video games.

Teenagers have similar parties, but they typically spend more of the time “gossiping” (talking about other people). Teenage girls might spend the time giving each other “makeovers” (changing the appearance of one’s hair, makeup, and clothing) or “manicures” (sessions of shaping and painting one’s fingernails). Sometimes teenagers play games like “truth or dare,” where they must take turns answering embarrassing questions or performing shocking actions when their friends ask them to.

In the morning, the parents of the host often make a special breakfast, like pancakes or “French toast” (bread that has been dipped in a mixture of eggs, milk and cinnamon, and then cooked) before everyone leaves to go home and “catch up on sleep” (get extra rest to make up for a time when one did not sleep enough).

Comprehension Questions Correct Answers: 1 – c; 2 – b



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1005 – Complimenting Your Host.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1005. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at ESLPod.com. You can also like us on Facebook at facebook.com/eslpod, and why not follow us on Twitter at [@eslpod](https://twitter.com/eslpod).

This episode is a dialogue between Anton and Jenny about saying nice things to a person who invites you over to their house for some party or event – the person we would call the “host.” Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Anton: Jenny, you've outdone yourself. This is quite a spread.

Jenny: Thank you. I'm glad you approve.

Anton: Approve? I think everything on this table looks exquisite and mouthwatering.

Jenny: That's nice of you to say. I wanted everything to be perfect.

Anton: You've surpassed all expectations. If this food tastes even half as good as it looks, you'll wow every guest.

Jenny: If you don't stop complimenting me, I won't be able to stop blushing.

Anton: I'm only just beginning, because you're a vision in that dress.

Jenny: Oh, this is nothing special.

Anton: Of course it's special, but you could wear a sack and look ravishing.

Jenny: Okay, now I know you're buttering me up. What gives?

Anton: Nothing, nothing at all. You're so suspicious. I'm just giving you my candid opinion.



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Jenny: If you say so. Where's the camera you borrowed from me for your trip? Did you bring it?

Anton: Ah, the camera. Did I mention how much I admire that necklace you're wearing?

[end of dialogue]

The title of this episode is "Complimenting Your Host." "To compliment" (compliment) means to say nice things about someone. "Oh, those are very beautiful shoes you have on," or "That's a really nice haircut." Those are compliments – when you say something nice about someone, or someone's house, or someone's car, or something that person owns. You might even compliment someone's children: "What a very smart young son you have."

A "host" (host) is a person who has some party or some event, and is responsible for running the event and usually talking to people and welcoming them to this party or event. You could also have a host just for a dinner at your house. You may have five or six of your friends over. You would be the host of the party, or the host of the dinner.

The host isn't always the person who organizes the event, but for a dinner or a small party it typically would be. Technically, the host is the person who is there to greet people as they come in – to talk to them, to make them feel welcome. We use the word "host" also in talking about television, radio, or podcasting. The person who is running the program, the person who is in front of the microphone, we might say, or in front of the camera – he or she is the host of the program.

Anton begins the dialogue by saying to Jenny, "You've outdone yourself. This is quite a spread." "To outdo yourself" means to do better than anyone expected you to do, to do better even than you expected to do. Anton says, "This is quite a spread" (spread). A "spread" is when you have a lot of food placed on a table. To say "it's quite a spread" means there's a lot of food or a lot of very good food there. Jenny says, "Thank you. I'm glad you approve." I'm glad you think so. Anton says, "Approve? I think everything on this table looks exquisite and mouthwatering."

These are both adjectives we might use to describe good food. The first is "exquisite" (exquisite). Something that is exquisite is something that is very refined, something that is perhaps – when not talking about food, at least – elegant. Here it means it tastes really, really good. Similarly, the term "mouthwatering" refers to something that tastes very good. It's very appetizing.



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“Exquisite” is a more general adjective that can be used in lots of different circumstances. “Mouthwatering,” however, refers specifically to food.

Jenny says, “That’s nice of you to say. I wanted everything to be perfect.” Anton says, “You’ve surpassed all expectations.” “To surpass” (surpass) means to go beyond something. “To surpass all expectations” means to do better than anyone expected you to do. It’s quite similar to the expression we had earlier, “to outdo yourself.”

Anton says, “If this food tastes even half as good as it looks, you’ll wow every guest.” Anton is saying that the food looks wonderful. If it tastes as good as it looks – or even half as good as it looks – “you’ll wow every guest.” “To wow” (wow) is an informal verb meaning to really impress or surprise someone. “We’re going to wow our clients” – we’re going to make them think this is wonderful. “Wow” is also what we would call an “interjection.” When we see something very surprising, whether it’s good or bad, we’ll often say, “Wow.”

I once brought my computer in to be fixed, and the person looking at it was looking at the computer, and about every 30 seconds or so she said wow. “Wow.” Now, that’s not what you want someone who’s fixing your computer to say, because she’s very surprised at something, and if the computer is broken, it means she’s surprised at something that’s very bad. And that’s not the kind of thing you want to hear. But “wow” is often used in a positive way to mean that you are surprised at a good thing. Here it’s definitely used, as a verb, to mean make a positive impression on people.

Jenny says, “If you don’t stop complimenting me, I won’t be able to stop blushing.” “To blush” (blush) means for your cheeks, your face, to become pink or red because you’re embarrassed. That’s the idea of blushing. You blush when someone says something you find embarrassing. Some people, when you compliment them a lot, may blush. They may blush because they think you are being too kind – too nice, perhaps.

Anton says, “I’m only just beginning, because you’re a vision in that dress.” Now Anton goes from complimenting her food to complementing her. He says, “You’re a vision in that dress.” If you describe someone as a vision, you’re describing them as a beautiful person, someone who has a wonderful appearance, we might say.

Jenny says, “Oh,” this is “nothing special.” Anton says, disagreeing with her, “Of course it’s special, but you could wear a sack and look ravishing.” A “sack” (sack) is like a bag that you would carry something in, made of paper or perhaps cloth.



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Anton is saying here that even if Jenny was just wearing something ugly – something that isn't even clothing, like a sack – she would still look ravishing. "Ravishing" (ravishing) means very beautiful. It's often used to describe a woman who is very beautiful, very attractive.

Jenny says, "Okay, now I know you're buttering me up." "To butter (butter) someone up" is a phrasal verb meaning to say nice things to someone because you want that person to do something for you. Jenny thinks Anton is buttering her up because he wants something from her. So, she asks him, "What gives?" This is an informal phrase we use when you want to know what is really happening when someone doesn't seem to be straightforward with you, when someone doesn't seem to be direct with you. You may say, "What gives?" What's really going on here?

Anton says, "Nothing, nothing at all. You're so suspicious." "To be suspicious" (suspicious) means to be distrustful, to not believe or not trust someone. Anton says, "I'm just giving you my candid opinion." "Candid" (candid) means truthful, honest, not deceptive. There was a television show on for many years called Candid Camera. There, "candid" referred more to not prepared, not posed. Candid Camera was actually a secret camera that they would put somewhere, and then the person who was the host of the show would do something crazy, or have people do something crazy, and then see how people reacted.

"Candid" when used in talking about photographs means that you're not stopping and looking at the camera and trying to look a certain way. It's when someone takes photographs of people who are not often aware that someone is taking a photograph of them. That would be a "candid." Here, however, it means really honest. When we talk about giving our "candid opinion," we're talking about giving our honest opinion.

Jenny says, "If you say so." She doesn't really believe Anton. "Where's the camera you borrowed from me for your trip? Did you bring it?" Now we learn that Anton had borrowed a camera from Jenny, and maybe something happened to the camera and Anton doesn't have it anymore. That's what Jenny thinks. Anton says, "Ah, the camera." Then he changes the subject. "Did I mention how much I admire that necklace you're wearing?" "To admire" (admire) means to really like something, to really approve of something, to think that it's great.

Anton admires her necklace – the thing she's wearing around her neck, a piece of jewelry she's wearing around her neck. He, of course, is trying to change the subject because Jenny is probably right. Something happened to the camera,



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and that's why Anton is being so nice to Jenny – so Jenny won't be mad at him for losing or perhaps damaging her camera.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Jenny: If you say so. Where's the camera you borrowed from me for your trip? Did you bring it?

Anton: Ah, the camera. Did I mention how much I admire that necklace you're wearing?

[end of dialogue]

Her wonderful scripts surpass all expectations. I speak, of course, of our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy.



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From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thank you for listening. Come back and listen to us again right here on ESL Podcast.

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