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**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

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**GLOSSARY**

**to put off** – to delay; to decide to do something later than originally planned  
\* They decided to put off opening a new location until they're generating \$300,000 in sales annually.

**pound** – an animal shelter; a place where abandoned animals are kept until a new home can be found for them or until they are killed  
\* How many dogs and cats were brought to the pound last month?

**to adopt** – to officially make a person or animal part of one's family  
\* Last year, we adopted a golden retriever that is really well behaved.

**breed** – a specific type of an animal, especially a type of dog or horse  
\* They want to find a dog breed that is friendly and doesn't bark very much.

**neglected** – not taken care of; not given enough food and shelter  
\* The social workers found that the children were neglected, often left sitting in an empty apartment without food for days at a time.

**abandoned** – left on one's own, without care or supervision from other people  
\* A lot of pet snakes are abandoned once they become too big to be kept inside the home.

**to turn down** – to reject or deny; to say no to someone or something  
\* We were shocked when she turned down such a generous salary.

**abuse** – mistreatment; physical, emotional, and/or sexual harm that is intentional  
\* Teachers are required by law to report cases where they suspect child abuse.

**to be moved to** – to be compelled; to feel strong emotions that make one want to respond in a particular way  
\* We hope that people will be moved to donate to our cause when they receive our letters about the good work we've done.

**to be put down** – for an animal to be killed, especially because it is too old, sick, or injured, or a home cannot be found for it and there is no more space in the animal shelter  
\* The veterinarian said our dog has cancer and will need to be put down within the next few weeks.



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**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

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**to pet** – to caress; to gently touch and stroke an animal with one’s hand, feeling its fur (hair)

\* Some doctors say that petting animals can help patients lower their blood pressure.

**animal shelter** – a pound; a place where abandoned animals are kept until a new home can be found for them or until they are killed

\* The animal shelter gives pets all their shots and vaccinations before it allows them to go home with a new family.

**humane** – showing compassion and kindness; refusing to harm or hurt others

\* How can we teach our children to be more humane to living creatures?

**stray** – a domesticated (tame and accustomed to living with people) animal that has been abandoned and does not have a home to live in

\* The city has so many stray dogs that they’ve become a safety problem.

**tragic** – very sad and distressful

\* Have you been reading the news stories about last week’s tragic accident?

**to push (one’s) luck** – to take things too far; to try very hard to make something happen, but at the risk that one might lose the good thing that one already has

\* Meghan’s dad agreed to let her use the car for the evening, but when she asked for \$50 too, he said, “Don’t push your luck.”



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. What information is on the card for each dog?
    - a) The age of the dog
    - b) The type of dog
    - c) The gender of the dog
  
  2. According to Rene, what will happen if they don't adopt the dogs?
    - a) They'll be put back on the streets.
    - b) They'll be sold to another family.
    - c) They'll be killed.
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**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**breed**

The word “breed,” in this podcast, means a specific type of an animal, especially a type of dog or horse: “Which dog breeds were traditionally used for herding sheep?” The phrase “a dying breed” describes a type of thing or person that is becoming increasingly rare or uncommon: “Gentlemen like Blake are a dying breed.” The phrase “a new breed of” describes a new type of something: “Scientists believe they have discovered a new breed of goats.” Finally, as a verb, “to breed” means to mate and reproduce, or to put animals together so that they mate and reproduce: “Their horse won many races and now they make a lot of money by breeding it with horses on other farms.”

**stray**

In this podcast, the word “stray” means a domesticated animal that has been abandoned and does not have a home to live in: “If you feed stray cats from your back porch, they'll keep returning.” As a verb, “to stray” means to wander away, or to move away from the spot where one should be: “The three hikers accidentally strayed over the border into the neighboring country.” When talking about a conversation, “to stray” means to get off-topic, or to begin talking about something that isn't the true focus of the conversation or meeting: “How did we stray into talking about everyone's vacation plans? Aren't we supposed to be talking about the new marketing strategy?” Finally, when talking about eyes, “to stray” means to look at something else: “Your eyes keep straying when I talk, so I guess you aren't interesting in what I'm saying.”



## **CULTURE NOTE**

### **Organizations Protecting Animals**

In the United States, many organizations have formed to protect animals. The Humane Society of the United States is one of the largest and best-known organizations, with state and local “branches” (smaller organizations of the same type) found throughout the country. The organization is best known for operating animal shelters, “rehabilitating” (making better or healthier) injured animals, and placing animals in new homes. But it also “engages in” (is involved in) other activities, such as “lobbying” (speaking with politicians to try to get them to vote a certain way) for laws that protect animals.

The Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (SPCA) was founded in England, but now is in the United States and many other countries. SPCA is similar to the Humane Society, but focuses more “broadly” (widely; generally) on many types of animals, not just “domesticated” (raised to live with humans) pets. SPCA is “sharply” (strongly) “critical” (not approving of) “factory farming” (ways of raising many animals for food in a small area).

Finally, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is best known as an “animal rights” organization that fights for animals to be treated in ways that are more equal to those of humans. PETA states that “animals are not ours to eat, wear, experiment on, use for entertainment, or abuse in any way.” PETA is best known for its “opposition to” (disagreement with and fight against) research laboratories that use animals for scientific experiments. PETA also has many advertising campaigns that oppose the use of “fur” (animal skin and hair used for clothing) and “promote” (encourage) “veganism” (following a diet with no animal products).

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



**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,030 – Adopting a Pet.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,030. 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](http://ESLPod.com). Become a member of ESL Podcast and download the Learning Guide for this episode. This episode is a dialogue between Rene and Gabe about doing something very strange: adopting a pet. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Gabe: Why are we here? I thought we decided to put off getting a dog.

Rene: I know that's what you'd like to do, but I thought a trip to the pound might convince you that this is the right time to adopt a dog. Look at this cute little dog. This card lists his breed and says that he was neglected and abandoned. How could you turn down a face like that?

Gabe: I don't think he's right for us. Let's move on.

Rene: Look at this one. It says on his card that when they found him, he showed signs of abuse. Poor baby. How can you not be moved to take this little guy home?

Gabe: Let's keep moving.

Rene: How about this little dog? I'd hate to see this little guy be put down. Here, pet her and look at her little face.

Gabe: This animal shelter isn't going to put down these dogs. It's a humane place.

Rene: They have no choice. They find so many strays that there's no room to keep them. It's so sad. It's tragic, really.

Gabe: Maybe . . .



**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

Rene: What did you say?

Gabe: I said maybe we could take one home, maybe two.

Rene: Really? Two would be great, but three would be better.

Gabe: Don't push your luck!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with Gabe asking Rene, "Why are we here? I thought we decided to put off getting a dog." The phrasal verb "to put off" here means to delay, to decide to do something later than you had originally planned. "I'm going to put off buying a new car until next year" – I'm going to buy a new car, but I'm not going to do it right now. I'm going to put it off until next year.

There's a very similar phrasal verb, "to be put off." "To be put off" is when you are discouraged by something or have a negative reaction to something in such a way that you decide not to do it. That's different from this use of "put off," which means simply to delay – to do something later than you had originally planned. Gabe thought that he and Rene had decided to put off getting a dog.

Rene says, "I know that's what you'd like to do, but I thought a trip to the pound might convince you that this is the right time to adopt a dog." Rene is saying that she doesn't want to put off getting a dog. She says that's Gabe's idea – and a good idea it is, if you ask me. Rene says, "I thought a trip to the pound would convince you that this is the right time to adopt a dog." A "pound" here means an animal shelter – a place where animals are kept until they can be put in another home, or sometimes until they put them to sleep. "To put a dog to sleep" means to kill a dog.

So, a dog pound would be a place where lost dogs, for example, would be taken. The police just don't walk around and shoot dogs who appear to be lost, although that might be a quick way of getting rid of them. Instead, the dogs are taken to a pound – an "animal shelter," as it's also called – until either someone comes and gets the dog or, as I say, until they run out of room at the pound, in which case the dogs will eventually be "put to sleep," as we like to say it nicely.

Rene wants to adopt a dog. The verb "to adopt" (adopt) means to officially make – in this case, the dog – part of your family. We use the same verb when we're talking about babies. If you adopt a baby, you make that baby, or that child, part of your family. We also use that same verb when we're talking about an



**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

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organization, such as the government, deciding to follow some new rule or to establish some new law. We talk about a government “adopting” certain laws. They approve them, and they put them into use.

Rene then says, “Look at this cute little dog. This card lists his breed and says he was neglected and abandoned.” The “card” is a little piece of paper, we’re guessing, that is attached to the dog’s cage, where they keep the dog. The card lists his “breed” (breed). The “breed” of the dog is the specific type of dog that it is. We actually use this word for a lot of different kinds of animals when we’re talking about a specific kind of, in this case, dog or cat or horse. We don’t talk about breeds when we’re talking about human beings, however – at least, not in the same way.

Rene says this particular dog has been “neglected and abandoned.” “To neglect” (neglect) means to ignore or not take care of something or someone. So, if the dog has been neglected, the dog has not been taken care of properly – perhaps he’s sick or doesn’t have enough food.

“Abandoned” comes from the verb “to abandon,” which means to leave something or someone and basically walk away from it, decide you’re not going to bother with it anymore. You don’t sell it. You don’t give it to someone. You just leave it somewhere and hope that someone else finds it and takes it – or not. You may not care. If a dog has been abandoned, the owner of the dog decides he doesn’t want the dog anymore and, I don’t know, puts them in a park and then drives away, I guess.

Rene says, “How could you turn down a face like that?” “To turn down” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to say no to something or to someone. “To reject” or “to deny,” are also possible definitions of this phrasal verb “to turn down.” “I asked the beautiful girl out on a date and she turned me down.” She turned down my invitation. She said no. That used to happen a lot to me. It doesn’t happen anymore, of course, because I’m married.

Rene is trying to get Gabe, of course, to adopt a cute-looking dog. Gabe says, “I don’t think he’s right for us, let’s move on” – let’s keep looking. Gabe doesn’t like this particular dog. Rene then says, “Look at this one. It says on his card that when they found him, he showed signs of abuse.” “Abuse” (abuse) is when someone treats you badly, or in this case, treats a dog badly. They may hit them. They may hurt them. They may do other things that harm them emotionally or physically. Notice that the verb is “to abuse” and the noun is “abuse.” The “s” is unvoiced in the noun form, for those of you who are interested in that sort of thing.



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## ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet

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Rene says, “Poor baby.” “Poor baby” is something you might say when you feel sorry for a young child, or in this case, a dog. You might also say it to an adult. “Oh, poor baby” – but when we do that, we are often being sarcastic. We’re making a joke. Rene says, “How can you not be moved to take this little guy home?” How can you not be moved to take the dog home? “To be moved” to do something means to feel a very strong emotion that makes you want to act or behave in a certain way. In this case, Rene is trying to get Gabe to bring the dog – “the little guy,” as she calls him – home.

Gabe again says, “Let’s keep moving.” Rene then says, “How about this little dog? I’d hate to see this little guy be put down.” “To put down” an animal means the same as to put an animal to sleep. It means to kill the animal. Once again, Rene refers to the animal by saying “this little guy.” “Guy” is normally a word we use for human beings, and perhaps that’s why Rene uses it here. She’s trying to get Gabe to feel sorry for this dog.

She then says, “Here, pet her and look at her little face.” Now she talks about her as a “her.” The word “guy” is usually used to refer to a boy or a man, unless it’s plural. If you say “guys,” you could be referring to a group of men or boys, or a group of both men and women, or boys and girls.

But in any case, Rene is inviting Gabe to pet the dog. “To pet” (pet), as a verb, means to gently touch the dog with your hand, usually on the top. That’s “petting.” Notice that as a noun, the word “pet” (pet) refers to an actual animal that you keep usually in your house, like a dog and a cat. Here it’s used as a verb, and it means to caress or to gently touch an animal with your hand, usually touching its “fur” (fur), which is its hair.

Gabe says, “This animal shelter isn’t going to put down these dogs.” He’s saying that the pound – the animal shelter – will not kill the dogs. “It’s a humane place.” The word “humane” (humane) means not harming other people, or in this case, dogs. The word obviously comes from the word “human,” but we use it in talking not just about humans and being nice to humans, being kind to humans, but also when talking about animals. In fact, there is something called, I think, the Humane Society. This is a group of people who are not interested in humans, but interested in animals and making sure people are not cruel or mean to animals. People like me.

Rene says, “They have no choice,” meaning the animal shelter will not have a choice about putting the dogs down. “They find so many strays that there is no



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**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

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room to keep them.” A “stray” (stray), as a noun, is an animal like a dog or a cat that has been abandoned and doesn’t have a place to stay or a place to live.

Rene says, “It’s so sad. It’s tragic, really.” The word “tragic” (tragic) means very sad, something that is very “distressful,” we might say. Once again, Rene is trying to convince Gabe that they should adopt a dog. Gabe says, “Maybe.” Rene says, “What did you say?” Gabe replies, “I said maybe we could take one home, maybe two.” So, he’s saying it’s possible for us to adopt one or even two dogs.

Rene says, “Really?” She’s very surprised. “Two would be great, but three would be better.” Rene is saying that adopting two dogs would be wonderful, but what would be even better, what would be even more wonderful, is if they adopted three dogs. Remember, Gabe didn’t even want to adopt one dog when the dialogue began. Gabe says to Rene, “Don’t push your luck.” “To push (push) your luck” means to try very hard to make something happen after you’ve already achieved something good. It means to take things too far.

So, when your son or daughter asks to use the car, perhaps because they don’t own their own car, you say, “Okay, you can use it, but you have to return it by ten o’clock tonight.” Your son or daughter might say, “Oh, can I stay out until midnight?” Can I return it at midnight? You might say to them, “Don’t push your luck,” meaning you’ve already been lucky. You’ve already gotten something you want. Don’t try to get more than that because you might lose both things. You might have the favor that was granted, or given you, taken away.

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

[start of dialogue]

Gabe: Why are we here? I thought we decided to put off getting a dog.

Rene: I know that’s what you’d like to do, but I thought a trip to the pound might convince you that this is the right time to adopt a dog. Look at this cute little dog. This card lists his breed and says that he was neglected and abandoned. How could you turn down a face like that?

Gabe: I don’t think he’s right for us. Let’s move on.

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**ESL Podcast 1030 – Adopting a Pet**

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Gabe: Let's keep moving.

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Gabe: Maybe . . .

Rene: What did you say?

Gabe: I said maybe we could take one home, maybe two.

Rene: Really? Two would be great, but three would be better.

Gabe: Don't push your luck!

[end of dialogue]

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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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