



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

GLOSSARY

to sort – to organize items by dividing them into smaller groups or piles that will later be stored somewhere else

* Let's sort this clothing, putting baby clothes in the cardboard box and toddler clothes in that plastic bin.

intern – a person, especially a university student, who is working in a temporary position, receiving little or no pay, in order to get experience in a particular industry or job

* Interns should be getting hands-on experience in their field, not just getting coffee and making photocopies.

confidential – referring to information that should not be shared because it is private or proprietary in some way

* All new bank employees receive training on how to keep their clients' financial information confidential.

security – the safety of something and its protection from being accessed by people who should not have access to it

* The President of the United States requires a lot of security when traveling from one place to another

breach – a break in security; an opening in a wall; an opening or weak point in a line of defense

* The website breach allowed thousands of credit card numbers to be stolen.

authorized – allowed; permitted; with permission and authority to do something

* Only authorized personnel are allowed to enter the laboratories where we're researching viruses.

to purge – to get rid of something; to throw something away

* Let's purge the fridge and cupboards of any expired food.

outdated – no longer modern or current; old-fashioned; related to the past and no longer applicable or useful

* Saving files on a floppy disc is really outdated. Now most people use a memory stick or thumb drive.

retention – keeping something, not throwing it away

* The accountant recommends a seven-year retention period for all tax documents.



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

destruction – the act of ruining something so that it can no longer be used or accessed

* These new weapons are strong enough to cause the destruction of an entire city.

further – more of something, or more extensively or deeply; referring to a continuation of something

* Any further violations of the law will be punished severely.

recycling bin – a large container used to store trash that can be reprocessed and used to create something new

* Please put all paper, cardboard, metal cans, and plastic bottles in the recycling bin.

to shred – to use a machine to cut paper into very small pieces so that the information cannot be read

* They keep their bank statements for three years, and then shred them before recycling them.

honor – a privilege; something that one gets to have, do, or be recognized for due to the admiration of others or the significance of one's accomplishments

* It's an honor to speak before such distinguished guests.

to safeguard – to protect something; to keep something safe

* Why did you trust Hannah to safeguard your secrets?

bonfire – a very large campfire, especially on a beach

* They built a huge campfire on the beach and spent the evening signing songs and roasting marshmallows on sticks.

to extinguish – to put out a fire; to make a fire stop burning, usually by covering it or by pouring water over it

* Make sure you extinguish those candles before you fall asleep.

wildfire – a very large fire that burns through a forest or another natural area uncontrollably

* Are more wildfires started by lightning or by people?



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Who would Rebecca like to assign the project to?
 - a) A student worker
 - b) A consultant
 - c) An administrative assistant
2. Why do Marcus and Rebecca have to sort the documents?
 - a) Because they're the only ones who are available.
 - b) Because they're the only ones who understand the content.
 - c) Because they're the only ones who have permission to read them.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to sort

The verb “to sort,” in this podcast, means to organize items by dividing them into smaller groups or piles that will later be stored somewhere else: “Let’s sort the garage sale items into three piles: free, \$1-\$9, and more than \$10.” The phrase “sort of” means kind of, or that something is partially true: “That paint color is really unusual, but I sort of like it.” The phrase “out of sorts” describes feeling unusual, possibly sick, and not like one normally feels: “Charles felt out of sorts for a few days after he had to fire some employees.” Finally, the phrase “all sorts” means many different types: “They like all sorts of restaurants: Chinese, Mexican, Thai, Ethiopian, French, and more.”

to purge

In this podcast, the verb “to purge” means to get rid of something, or to throw something away: “We need to purge our files of any customer credit card information.” The verb “to purge” can also mean to get rid of something when it isn’t needed anymore: “How often do you purge the spam folder in your email program?” The phrase “to purge (something) of (something)” means to remove an undesirable part of something: “How can we purge society of dangerous criminals?” Or, “Can this software really purge my computer of all viruses?” Finally, the verb “to purge” can also mean to force oneself to throw up, especially to lose weight: “Shannon ate a whole pizza and two dozen cookies, and then purged.”



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

CULTURE NOTE

Disposing of Digital Information

When people want to “dispose of” (get rid of) “digital” (electronic; stored in a computer) information, they often simply “delete” the file from their computer, but this is not a “permanent” (lasting forever) solution, as it is very easy to “retrieve” (get back; have access to something again) those files from the “trash” folder on the computer. Even deleting those files from the “trash” folder may not be enough, because many computers create “temp” (temporary; intended to last for only a short period of time) folders and/or have “automatic backups” (scheduled times when a computer makes copies of files and stores them in another place) either “on the hard drive” (on the computer itself) or “to the cloud” (online; on the Internet).

Because deleting files is “insufficient” (not enough), many people “turn to” (decide to use) “physical methods” (ways of doing things that involve real-life movements and actions, not just on a computer screen), such as “pattern writing” (writing digital “patterns” (repeating series) over the sections of memory where data was stored), “magnetic wiping” (moving a magnet back and forth over the surface of a piece of electronics), “abrasion” (scratching the surface of something), and “incineration” (burning something in a hot fire).

Some less “tech-savvy” (very familiar with technology and understanding it well) people might try other methods, such as driving over a hard drive with a car, hitting it many times with a “hammer” (a tool used to put nails into a surface) or “screwdriver” (a tool used to put screws into a surface), or “submerging it” (putting something into a liquid so that it is surrounded) in water. However, these methods are often not recommended and does not destroy information completely.

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



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,060. 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. Become a member of ESL Podcast and download the Learning Guides for our recent episodes. This episode is a dialogue between Marcus and Rebecca about disposing of, or getting rid of, sensitive documents – pieces of paper or files that have information you would not want other people to know. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Marcus: All right, let's get started. These documents won't sort themselves.

Rebecca: I really don't think sorting through documents is the best use of my time. Can't the company find an intern to do this?

Marcus: We have confidential information in these files, and unless we want a security breach, only people who are authorized to see it are allowed to do this job.

Rebecca: Lucky us.

Marcus: Okay, we need to purge these files of outdated material. Let's start by sorting them into two piles for either retention or destruction.

Rebecca: And then what?

Marcus: Then we have to further sort the destruction pile, either for disposal in the recycling bin or to be shredded.

Rebecca: And who are the lucky people who get to do the shredding?

Marcus: We get that honor, too.

Rebecca: You're kidding! I'm all for safeguarding confidential information, but couldn't we just burn it all in a giant bonfire?



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

Marcus: And who do you think would be responsible for doing that, and for extinguishing the wildfire we start?

[end of dialogue]

Marcus begins our dialogue by saying to Rebecca, “All right, let’s get started.” “All right” here means, “Okay, let’s begin.” “These documents won’t sort themselves.” “To sort” (sort) is to organize a group of items or things, dividing them into smaller groups or putting them in some sort of order. For example, if you had a bunch of books, you could put the books in alphabetical order. The books that begin with an “A” would go first, the books that begin with a “B” would go second, and so forth.

You can sort things into many different kinds of orders. This is what Marcus and Rebecca are doing, but they’re sorting “documents,” which is a general term for either pieces of paper or possibly electronic files on your computer. Rebecca says, “I really don’t think sorting through documents is the best use of my time.” Rebecca is saying that she’s an important person – she has more important things to do than this rather simple task, this rather easy job of sorting documents.

“Can’t the company find an intern to do this?” she asks. An “intern” (intern) is a person, often a college student, who is working in a temporary position, usually receiving little or sometimes no pay, no money, in order to get experience in a particular job or a particular kind of job. An “internship” is a job where you work as an intern, either paid or unpaid (meaning you don’t get any money).

Marcus says, “We have confidential information in these files, and unless we want a security breach, only people who are authorized to see it are allowed to do this job.” “Confidential” (confidential) means information that is secret or private or that you don’t want anyone else to have. Marcus is saying that there is confidential information in these files, and “unless we want a security breach,” only people who are supposed to see this information should be allowed to sort the documents.

A “security (security) breach (breach)” is when you have a – I guess we could describe it “break” in security, when somehow something that is secret is no longer secret. Someone finds a way of getting that information. This is, as you know, a huge problem nowadays on the Internet. When companies have a security breach, people – thieves – come in and steal the information, often credit card numbers, from the company.



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

So, security breaches are very serious, or at least they can be very serious. That's why Marcus is saying that we don't want to let just an intern get access to this confidential information. He says, "Only people who are authorized to see it are allowed to do this job." "To be authorized" (authorized) means to be allowed, to be permitted, to have permission to do something. That's the meaning of the term "authorized."

Rebecca says, somewhat sarcastically – somewhat jokingly – "Lucky us." I say "sarcastically" because she doesn't really believe that it's lucky that she and Marcus have to do this sorting. She's making a joke. To say something that has the opposite meaning is to use "sarcasm," or to be "sarcastic." Marcus says, "Okay, we need to purge these files of outdated material." "To purge" means to get rid of something, to throw something away. "Outdated" refers to something that is no longer current – something from the past, often something that no longer works or is no longer useful.

Marcus says, "Let's start by sorting them" – meaning the files – "into two piles for either retention or destruction." A "pile" (pile) is the same as a "stack" (stack), which is a group of things placed one on top of the other. You could have a pile of papers on your desk like I have. I'm looking at a pile of papers that I have to look at. I don't want to look at them, but it's part of my job.

Well, Marcus is dividing these documents into two piles. One pile is for the files that they are going to keep, or retain. The word "retention" (retention) comes from the verb "to retain," meaning to keep something. The opposite, in this case, of "retention" is "destruction." "Destruction" (destruction) comes from the verb "to destroy" (destroy), which means to get rid of something, to throw something out, possibly even to rip it up or to burn it.

Rebecca asks, "And then what?" What do we do after we put these documents into these two piles? Marcus says, "Then we have to further sort the destruction pile either for disposal in the recycling bin or to be shredded." "Further" (further) means to do more of something, to continue doing something. In this case, they have to continue sorting the destruction pile into two groups: one for files that they will put in the recycling bin and another for files that need to be shredded.

"Recycling bins" (bins) are containers where you put usually paper that is going to be reprocessed. It's going to be used again somehow. You can dispose of documents in one of two ways. "To dispose" (dispose) means to get rid of. You then get rid of the documents or dispose of them by putting them in a recycling



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

bin where they're not destroyed, Somebody could, for example, go into the recycling bin and read one of the documents, or you can shred the document.

“To shred” (shred) is to rip the document up, the piece of paper up into small little pieces so nobody can read what was on the piece of paper. We use this verb “to shred” when we're talking about paper. A “shredder” is a machine that shreds things. Rebecca says, “And who are the lucky people who get to do the shredding?” “Shredding” is not a very interesting or exciting job, so Rebecca is once again being sarcastic here when she says “lucky people.” She means just the opposite: “unfortunate people.”

Marcus says, “We get that honor, too.” An “honor” (honor) is, in this case, a privilege – something that you are given because you've done something well, or in recognition of some accomplishment that you have. Once again, though, sarcasm is at work here. Marcus isn't saying that this is really an honor. He's saying the opposite. Rebecca says, “You're kidding,” meaning “You're joking.” “I'm all for safeguarding confidential information, but couldn't we just burn it all in a giant bonfire?” “To safeguard” (safeguard) – all one word – means to protect something, to keep something safe.

Rebecca is saying that she wants to keep this confidential, secret information safe, but she doesn't think that they have to go through and shred every single piece of paper. Instead, she proposes, or suggests, another idea which is to burn the paper in a giant bonfire. A “bonfire” (bonfire) is basically a large fire that's outdoors, often in an area in the woods where the fire won't damage anything around it.

When I was a child growing up in Minnesota, especially out in the areas outside of the city, you would often see bonfires, especially in the fall, in the autumn – in September, October, and November. People would burn the leaves from the trees in a giant bonfire. I think they don't allow that anymore, or at least in most areas that's not allowed. But that was certainly something that we did when we were growing up. Well, that's what Rebecca wants to do. She wants to create a big fire and just burn all of this paper.

Marcus says, “And who do you think would be responsible for doing that and for extinguishing the wildfire we start?” Marcus is reminding Rebecca that to create a bonfire would still be work, and more importantly, it would be dangerous. A “wildfire” (wildfire) is a very large fire that burns through a forest or other areas in ways that you can't control very easily. We have wildfires here in California – Southern California – quite frequently, and many times these fires burn down homes. They can be quite dangerous.



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

What do you do with a wildfire? Well, you have to put the fire out, and the verb we use for that concept is “to extinguish” (extinguish). “To extinguish a fire” means to make the fire stop burning – “to put the fire out,” we would say. Marcus is reminding Rebecca that if they create a bonfire, they’ll probably start a wildfire, and then they would have to put the fire out. So, it wouldn’t really save them very much.

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

[start of dialogue]

Marcus: All right, let’s get started. These documents won’t sort themselves.

Rebecca: I really don’t think sorting through documents is the best use of my time. Can’t the company find an intern to do this?

Marcus: We have confidential information in these files, and unless we want a security breach, only people who are authorized to see it are allowed to do this job.

Rebecca: Lucky us.

Marcus: Okay, we need to purge these files of outdated material. Let’s start by sorting them into two piles for either retention or destruction.

Rebecca: And then what?

Marcus: Then we have to further sort the destruction pile, either for disposal in the recycling bin or to be shredded.

Rebecca: And who are the lucky people who get to do the shredding?

Marcus: We get that honor, too.

Rebecca: You’re kidding! I’m all for safeguarding confidential information, but couldn’t we just burn it all in a giant bonfire?

Marcus: And who do you think would be responsible for doing that, and for extinguishing the wildfire we start?

[end of dialogue]



ESL Podcast 1060 – Disposing of Sensitive Documents

There's nothing outdated about the English that you learn here on ESL Podcast. That's thanks to the wonderful scripts written by our wonderful scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you, Lucy.

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

English as a Second Language Podcast was written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2014 by the Center for Educational Development.