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**ESL Podcast 1081 – Personal Grooming**

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**GLOSSARY**

**to bathe** – to wash one’s body; to use soap and water to clean one’s body

\* When Narjes was a baby, her parents bathed her in the kitchen sink.

**to exfoliate** – to remove dead cells from the surface of the skin, usually by rubbing it with a rough substance or by using a chemical

\* Every morning, Nancy exfoliates her face with a cream that contains ground-up walnut shells and apricot pits.

**to depilate** – to remove hair, usually from one’s body

\* How often do you depilate your legs?

**to shave** – to use a razor blade to cut hairs very close to the skin, so that the hairs cannot be seen or felt

\* Even though Gerald shaves every morning, he still has dark hairs on his chin and cheeks by the late afternoon.

**to wax** – to remove hairs by the root by covering the hairs and skin with a hot, sticky substance, waiting for it to cool, and then tearing it so that it pulls the hairs out

\* Many women wax their eyebrows to have an arched shape.

**armpit** – underarm; the part of the body below the shoulder, between the side of the torso and the upper arm, where hairs grow

\* How old were you when you began using deodorant on your armpits?

**bikini area** – the parts of a woman’s upper legs that are seen when she is wearing a bikini (two piece, small) swimsuit, immediately next to the fabric

\* The skin in the bikini area is sensitive, so shaving there might result in irritation and redness.

**nail clippers** – a small tool used to cut one’s fingernails and toenails

\* Oh, my nail just broke. Do you have some nail clippers I can use to cut this piece off?

**nail file** – small tool with a rough surface on one side, rubbed repeatedly against the tip of a nail to change its shape and make it smooth

\* Did the manicurist use the nail file before or after she soaked your nails in soapy water?



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**tweezers** – a small tool with two small ends joined at the opposite end, used to pick up and/or pull very small objects, like hairs and splinters

\* You should be able to get that splinter out with a good pair of tweezers.

**nails** – fingernails and toenails; the hard, flat surfaces at the end of each finger and toe

\* Betty painted her nails to match the color of her dress.

**to pluck** – to pull out one hair, usually by using tweezers

\* Nikita has a few long hairs that grow on her chin, so she always plucks them.

**eyebrows** – the thin row of hair that grows above each eye, at the base of the forehead

\* Ingrid raised her eyebrows in surprise.

**the ins and outs** – detailed information about something; characteristics of something

\* Within a few weeks, you'll be an expert on the ins and outs of our billing procedures.

**personal grooming** – how one takes care of one's personal cleanliness and appearance, especially regarding hair care, skin care, and makeup

\* How can we tell a co-worker that he needs to improve his personal grooming if he wants to work directly with clients?

**high-maintenance** – requiring a lot of work to keep something at a good level of performance or appearance, especially to maintain one's physical appearance

\* Jack knew that Brittany was high-maintenance when she took two and a half hours to put on make-up and dress to go to dinner.

**high-strung** – very tense; nervous and worried; easily upset

\* Randall is really high-strung before he has to make a presentation. It's better not to talk to him.



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**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1. Shaving is an example of \_\_\_\_\_.
    - a) Bathing
    - b) Exfoliating
    - c) Depilating
  
  2. Which tool is used for plucking?
    - a) Nail clippers
    - b) A nail file
    - c) A pair of tweezers
- \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?**

**to shave**

The verb “to shave,” in this podcast, means to use a razor blade to cut hairs very close to the skin, so that the hairs cannot be seen or felt: “Gretchen cut her ankle while she was shaving her legs this morning.” The verb “to shave” also means to use a sharp tool to remove the top layer of something: “The waiter shaved some parmesan cheese onto our pasta.” Or, “How did the woodworker shave the curvy legs of this table?” When talking about prices, “to shave” means to lower the price of something: “Are the salespeople allowed to shave a few dollars off the price to make a sale?” Finally, the phrase “a close shave” is a close call, or a situation where someone barely escaped an accident or danger: “The road was icy and the car almost hit a tree. That was a close shave!”

**to pluck**

In this podcast, the verb “to pluck” means to pull out one hair, usually by using tweezers: “Is it more painful to pluck your eyebrows one hair at a time, or to use wax to rip many hairs out at once?” The phrase “to pluck (someone) out of (something)” means to rescue someone quickly from a dangerous situation: “The teacher plucked the student from a group of bullies.” Or, “The rescue helicopter plucked people from rooftops during the flooding.” Finally, the phrase “to pluck (something) out of thin air” means to guess, or to pick a number or answer without first thinking about it carefully: “Are those sales figures based in reality, or did you just pluck those numbers out of thin air?”



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**CULTURE NOTE**

**New Beauty Treatments**

“Beauty salons” (businesses that provide beauty services and treatments, especially for women) are always “innovating” (coming up with new ideas, products, and services), trying to find new ways to serve their customers. For example, in recent years “eyebrow threading” has become a popular “alternative” (another way of doing something) to eyebrow waxing. In eyebrow threading, a long cotton string is “doubled” (folded in half) and “twisted” (with two pieces wrapped around each other), and then rolled against unwanted hairs. This pulls out a thin line of hairs all at the same time, “whereas” (while in contrast) eyebrow waxing pulls out a large area of hairs, and plucking pulls out only one hair at a time. Threading gives “beauticians” (people who provide beauty services) more control in shaping their customers’ eyebrows.

“Blowout bars” are also becoming very popular. A “blowout bar” is a hair salon that offers only one service: Hair professionals wash and “blow dry” (dry using a hair dryer) a woman’s hair with “beauty products” (chemicals and other substances) that make the hair straight or “wavy” (with very large, open curls), “smooth” (without little pieces of hair going in many directions) and “voluminous” (not flat).

Other beauty salons are innovating by bring their beauty services to the office. In New York City, where there are many “affluent” (wealthy) professional women, beauticians go into the workplace to offer “manicures” (fingernail treatments), “pedicures” (toenail treatments), “blowouts” (hair styling using a hair dryer), makeup applications, and even “spray tanning” (the process of spraying a colored chemical onto skin to make it appear tanned from sun exposure).

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,081 – Personal Grooming.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,081. 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. When you do, you can download the eight- to ten-page Learning Guide we provide for each and every episode of our current episodes. The Learning Guide contains a complete transcript of everything I say, so if there's something you don't understand, you can look at the Learning Guide. Isn't that great?

This episode is a dialogue between Giorgio and Anna. Giorgio and Anna are talking about personal grooming – things you do to keep yourself clean and good-looking. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Giorgio: I'll pick you up tonight at 7:00, okay?

Anna: You'd better make it 8:00. I need time to get ready.

Giorgio: You just need to go home, take a shower, and throw on some clothes. How much time do you need?

Anna: You have no idea what a woman has to do to look her best, do you? Not only do I have to bathe, I need to exfoliate and depilate.

Giorgio: "Depilate"?! What's that?

Anna: That's shaving and waxing to you. I have to shave and wax my legs, my armpits, and bikini area.

Giorgio: Whoa! That's way too much information. I didn't need to know that.

Anna: After that, I'll need my nail clippers, nail file, and tweezers to do my nails and my plucking.

Giorgio: I don't even want to know what you pluck.



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Anna: Just my eyebrows and my . . .

Giorgio: Stop! I don't need to know the ins and outs of your personal grooming. Is all that really necessary?

Anna: You are going to introduce me to your brother, aren't you? Your very handsome brother?

Giorgio: I was until I heard all that. I don't know if I want my brother dating a woman who's so high-maintenance.

Anna: High-maintenance? High-maintenance?! Who are you calling high-maintenance?

Giorgio: And high-strung!

[end of dialogue]

Giorgio begins our dialogue by asking Anna, "I'll pick you up tonight at 7:00, okay?" "To pick someone up" means usually to drive to their house and to take them somewhere in a car. Anna says, "You'd better make it 8:00. I need time to get ready."

Giorgio says, "You just need to go home, take a shower, and throw on some clothes." Giorgio says that it shouldn't take Anna long to get ready to go. She just needs to "take a shower" – to wash herself – and to "throw on," or put on, some clothes. "Throw on" is a phrasal verb used informally the same way we would use the phrasal verb "to put on" when we're referring to clothes. Giorgio says, "How much time do you need?"

Anna says, "You have no idea what a woman has to do to look her best, do you?" I don't, either. Anna says, "Not only do I have to bathe, I need to exfoliate and depilate." Anna is complaining that Giorgio, being a man, doesn't understand all the things that a woman has to do, and quite honestly, I as a man don't understand them either, but I'll try to explain as best I can.

Anna starts by talking about bathing, and that's the one thing I do understand. "To bathe" (bathe) means to wash yourself, either in a shower or in the bathtub. "Exfoliate" (exfoliate) means to remove the dead skin cells from the surface of your skin, usually by rubbing your skin with either a rough, tough substance or



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using some sort of chemical. This is something I've never done, and I don't know how it's done, but I am told by women, including my wife, that it is in fact done.

Something else women apparently do is "depilate." Now, I'm so unfamiliar with this concept that I actually had to look up the pronunciation of that word. Absolutely true. Anyway "depilate" (depilate) is when you remove hair from your body. Now I understand why I didn't know the meaning of it – and neither does Giorgio, because he says, "Depilate'?! What's that?" Exactly right, Giorgio.

Anna says, "That's shaving and waxing to you." "To shave" (shave) is something I do understand, because men – many men – shave their faces. I shave my face every couple of days when I'm not feeling too lazy. "Waxing" (waxing) is removing hairs from your body by putting on a hot, sticky substance called "wax." Wax is what we usually make candles out of. It sounds very painful. I'm told it is very painful, and it's not something that most men would probably do, but apparently some women do this.

She says, "I have to shave and wax my legs, my armpits, and bikini area." Well, I understand shaving and waxing your legs, but apparently Anna also has to do that to her armpits. Your "armpits" (armpits) are the areas below your shoulder, between where your arms come into your body and the main part of your body – the torso or center part of your body.

Most people have hair under their arms in their armpits. I know I do. But Anna is going to remove that hair, which is again something apparently women do. Anna also needs to do something with the "bikini area." A "bikini" (bikini) is a kind of swimsuit that is in two pieces that a woman wears. One piece covers the top – her breasts. The other piece covers the bottom. The things that you don't want other people to see, let's say.

So Giorgio says, "Whoa! That's way too much information." "Too much information" means you're telling someone things that are too personal, that they don't need to know. We abbreviate this now in English "TMI." If someone is giving you information about their personal life that you don't want to know or don't think you should know, you might say "TMI," especially if it's something that is embarrassing to either you or to the person. Giorgio, in fact, says, "I didn't need to know that." But Anna continues.

She says, "After that, I need my nail clippers, nail file, and tweezers to do my nails and my plucking." Your "nails" are the parts of your hand and foot that are on the very ends of your fingers and your toes – the hard substances that grow out of the ends of your fingers and toes. Those are your "nails" (nails). So, a "nail



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clipper” would be something that cuts your nail. The verb “to clip” (clip) means to cut. A “nail file” (file) is a small tool, usually a flat little stick that is rubbed against the nails in order to make them smooth after you cut them, I guess.

“Tweezers” (tweezers) are small instruments that look like little pliers – like scissors, sort of, but they don’t cut things. They are used to grab onto something that’s very small and remove it. If, for example, you pick up a piece of wood and the wood is rough, you might get a little piece of the wood in the skin of your finger. To remove that little piece of wood – what we would call a “sliver” (sliver) – you would use a very small tool called the “tweezers.” Well, that’s what Anna is using.

Now, why is she using the tweezers? Well, apparently in order to do her “plucking” (plucking). “Plucking” comes from the verb “to pluck” (pluck), which means to pull out hair from your body, usually using a tweezers. Once again, it sounds rather painful. Giorgio, upon hearing this, says what I think most men would say: “I don’t even want to know what you pluck” (what kind of hairs you’re pulling out).

But Anna tells him – “Just my eyebrows and my . . .” “Eyebrows” (eyebrows) are the thin rows of hair that grow above your eyes. Women sometimes pluck the hairs out of their eyebrows, I’m told, in order to make them look better. This is not something that most men do. I certainly would not do that. I cut my eyebrows sometimes, but I don’t pluck them. Once again, I’m not used to that kind of pain the way women are, I guess.

Giorgio doesn’t want to know what other hairs Anna plucks. He tells her “Stop! I don’t need to know the ins and outs of your personal grooming.” The expression “the ins (ins) and outs (outs)” refers to the detailed information about something, the specific information about something. In this case, it’s the ins and outs of personal grooming. “Grooming” (grooming) comes from the verb “to groom,” which means to take care of something in terms of the physical cleanliness and appearance of it.

So, “personal grooming” would be taking care of yourself – washing yourself, cutting your hair, shaving, and so forth. All the crazy things that women do. Anna says, “You are going to introduce me to your brother, aren’t you? Your very handsome brother?” Anna is explaining why she needs to do all of this personal grooming. It is apparently because Giorgio is going to introduce her to Giorgio’s brother. “To introduce someone” to someone else means to take someone and have them meet someone that you know.



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So, if you have a new girlfriend and you decide to introduce your girlfriend to your parents, you take your girlfriend home with you and you let your parents meet your girlfriend. That's usually considered somewhat of a serious step in a relationship, when you meet the parents – when you meet the parents of your boyfriend or your girlfriend. Well, Giorgio has a brother who Anna thinks is very handsome, very good-looking. Giorgio says, "I was," meaning I was going to introduce you to my brother, "until I heard all that," meaning until I heard about all the things that you do in doing your personal grooming.

Giorgio says, "I don't know if I want my brother dating" – going out romantically with – "a woman who is so high-maintenance." The expression "high-maintenance" (maintenance) is used to describe something that requires a lot of work. It's often used in a negative way to describe a woman who is very demanding, who requires a lot of attention. I'm not sure if that's what Giorgio is referring to here. He does think that Anna takes an awful long time in order to get ready, and perhaps that's why he thinks she's high-maintenance.

Anna considers this an insult, a negative thing to say about her. She says, "High-maintenance? High-maintenance? Who are you calling high-maintenance?" She's very upset. Giorgio, however, doesn't apologize. Instead, he says, insultingly, "And high-strung!" Someone who's "high-strung" (strung) is someone who is easily upset, someone who gets mad at the smallest little thing, or someone who's just very nervous and very tense (tense) – someone who's always very worried, perhaps.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Giorgio: And high-strung!

[end of dialogue]

Our scriptwriter understands all the ins and outs of the English language. I speak, of course, of the wonderful, not high-maintenance Dr. Lucy Tse.

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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