



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

GLOSSARY

to carry – to sell something at a store; to have an item in the store to buy

* None of the stores in town carry Sakira's make-up, so she's going to buy it online.

selection – variety; the number of different types of something

* This store has a large selection of radios, so we should be able to look at all of the different models and pick one to buy.

latest – most recent

* According to the latest corporate report, the company is going to open three new offices next year.

in stock – available; in the store and waiting to be sold

* This store has six kinds of baby food in stock, but not the one I'm looking for.

back order – something that a customer wants to buy but that the store has ordered from a factory but is still waiting to receive it

* In December, stores often have a lot of toys on back order because too many parents are buying the most popular toys for their children.

to put (someone) on hold – to temporarily stop a telephone conversation, putting down the phone for a short period of time while the other person waits

* I hate calling the bank because they always put me on hold for at least ten minutes.

copy – one book, newspaper, CD, movie, or something else

* She sold 75,000 copies of her book last year!

left – remaining; still available; not sold

* We sold nearly all of the new cell phones that came in last week, and only have two left.

How much is (something)? – How much does (something) cost?; How much money do I have to give you to buy this thing?

* How much is this sweater?

price – how much something costs; the amount of money needed to buy something

* The price of gasoline gets higher every day!



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

to hold – to keep something at a store and not sell it to anyone else

* Keanu wanted to buy that jacket, but he didn't have enough money, so he asked the store to hold it for him so that he could get more from home.

to reserve – to keep something for someone and not let anyone else buy it or use it

* Jenn called the restaurant and reserved a table for six people for Friday night.

customer service – the department in a business or store that works to satisfy the people who shop there, taking care of their problems

* When my camera broke, I called the customer service department and they said they would repair it or give me a new one.

store hours – the times (days and hours) when a store is open

* The store hours are Monday through Friday from 10:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m.

weekdays – Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday; not the weekend

* They often eat at a restaurant on weekdays, but on Saturday and Sunday, they always cook at home.

to pick (something) up – to go to a store and buy something

* Can you please pick up some milk and eggs before you come home tonight?



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which statement is true about the CD that Ariel is looking for?
 - a) It is on back order.
 - b) It is available for only 24 hours.
 - c) It is in stock.

2. Why does Ariel give the clerk her name?
 - a) Because she wants to be his friend.
 - b) Because he needs to know who to hold the CD for.
 - c) Because he is going to call her later.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

copy

The word “copy,” in this podcast, means one unit of a book, CD, or movie: “The library doesn’t have a copy of that book, so you’ll have to buy it at a bookstore.” A “copy” can also be something that is made to be the same as something else: “Is this painting an original or a copy?” The word “copy” also means a photocopy: “Please make five copies of this report before the meeting this afternoon.” As a verb, “to copy” means to make a photocopy: “Please copy this report.” “To copy” a paper or an exam means to cheat: “The teacher saw that Maggie was copying the answers to the test from the open textbook.” The verb “to copy” can also mean to behave the same way as somebody else: “His younger brother copies everything he does.”

reserve

In this podcast, the verb “to reserve” means to keep something for someone so that no one else can use it: “At the graduation ceremony, please reserve the seats in front for the speakers.” The verb “to reserve” can also mean to ask for something to be made available for you at a future time: “That’s a very popular hotel, so we should reserve a room as soon as possible.” As a noun, the word “reserve” means an area of land that is protected for animals, plants, or people: “This nature reserve is the best place to see lions and elephants.” Finally, if someone is “reserved,” it means that it is difficult for him or her to speak with other people about his or her thoughts and feelings: “Miranda is so reserved that it’s hard to know what she really thinks about her new roommates.”



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, if you go to a store and you are not able to find what you want to buy, the store's customer service department will usually help you get what you want.

Let's take the shoe store as an example. If a customer wants to buy a pair of shoes, but the store doesn't have the right size or color, the customer service department will usually call other store "locations" (the same store in other cities or other parts of the city). If one of the other stores has the shoe, it will mail them to the first store. Then the store lets the customer know that the shoes are available, and the customer can return to the store to buy them.

If the customer has large feet, the stores might not have shoes in his or her size. When this happens, the customer service department may "place a special order," meaning that the store will call the "factory" (the place where the shoes are made) and buy one pair of the larger shoes. When the shoes arrive, the customer service department calls the customer, who then buys the shoes at the store.

Sometimes a store has a big "sale" with special low prices for a product. If a shoe store has a sale, there might be so many customers that want the product that the store "runs out" of the product, meaning that it sells all the shoes that were on sale. When this happens, some stores will give customers a "rain check." A rain check is a small piece of paper that lets the customer return to the store later to buy the shoes at the sale price, even if the sale has ended.

Customer service is very important in the United States. If you can't find what you're looking for, try asking. The customer service department may be able to get you what you want.

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



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 243: Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 243. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. How are you today?

Remember to go to our website to download the Learning Guide for this podcast. You can go to www.eslpod.com. While you are there, you can take a look at some of the new things we have on our website including the ESL Podcast Store, where you can download some special courses to help improve your English.

Our dialogue in this episode is a phone call between a person looking for some music and the clerk - or the person who works at the music store. Let's take a listen!

[start of story]

Clerk: Hello. Levin's Music.

Ariel: Hello. I was wondering if you carry classical CD's.

Clerk: Yes, we have a pretty large selection. What are you looking for?

Ariel: I'm trying to find the latest Reunion Island Ensemble CD.

Clerk: I'm not sure we have that in stock. We have a lot of CD's on back order. Can I put you on hold while I check?

Ariel: Sure.

Clerk: Okay. We have one copy of their 2005 CD left. Is that the one you're looking for?

Ariel: Yes, it is. How much is it?

Clerk: Let me check the price. It's \$17.95.

Ariel: That's great. Could you hold that for me?



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

Clerk: We can reserve it for you for 24 hours. When you come in, just go to the customer service desk. What's your name?

Ariel: It's Ariel, A-R-I-E-L. What are your store hours?

Clerk: We're open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and 9:00 to 6:00 on weekends.

Ariel: I'll be in later today to pick that up. Thanks a lot for your help.

Clerk: It's no problem. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Ariel: No, that's all. Thanks, again.

Clerk: You're welcome and thanks for calling Levin's.

[end of story]

We heard a telephone conversation between Ariel and the clerk. The clerk answers the phone by saying, "Hello. Levin's Music." Most businesses, when someone answers the phone, give the name of the business.

Ariel says, "Hello. I was wondering if you carry classical CD's." When you call a store and ask if they carry, "carry," something, you're asking if they have that item or that product in their store. You're asking if it is something that their store normally sells. Ariel asks if Levin's Music carries - or has for sale - classical musical CD's - or compact discs.

The clerk says, "Yes, we have a pretty" - or very - 'large selection." A selection, "selection," means here a variety of something. Selection has a couple of different meanings. Selection can be the process of choosing someone - of selecting someone. But in this case, the noun, selection, means a number of different types of a certain thing. You could have a selection of coats or shirts; you could have a selection of computers. This means you have different kinds of coats, shirts and different kinds of computers.

The clerk asks Ariel what specific CD she's looking for. She says, "I'm trying to find the latest Reunion Island Ensemble." Reunion Island Ensemble is the name of the group, and Ariel is looking for their latest CD. The latest is the most recent CD. The latest ESL Podcast is the one that is the most recent, that was just released - just published.



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

The clerk says, “I’m not sure we have that in stock,” “stock.” When a store says something is in stock - or out of stock, which is the opposite - they mean it's available, or if it's out of stock, not available. You may call a store and say, “Do you have this computer in stock,” that means do you have one at your store that I can come and buy and take with me. If it's in stock, they have it; if it's out of stock, they don't.

The clerk says that “We have a lot of CD’s on back order.” The expression back, “back,” order, “order,” is something that a customer wants to buy but that the store doesn't have, and so they have to get it from the place that makes it - the factory or the company that produces that product. So, if a product or an item is out of stock, they can order more, and when they order more that's called a back order.

The clerk asks Ariel if he can put her “on hold” while he checks. To put someone on hold, in the telephone, means to stop a telephone conversation, to put the phone down for a short time while the person checks on or investigates something. If you call a store and they're very busy, they may say, “Hello. Levin’s Music. Can I put you on hold,” meaning can I make you wait and I will come back to talk to you when I have the opportunity - when I am finished with whatever I am doing.

Ariel says, “Sure” - you can put me on hold.

The clerk then comes back on the telephone and says, “We have one copy of their 2005 CD left.” A copy, “copy,” is the term we use for a book or newspaper, CD, a DVD, that is usually something that is published. So, “We have five copies of Jeff McQuillan's new book, “How to Sing and Dance” - that would be five individual books that a store would have. In this case, they have a copy of their 2005 CD left, “left.” When we use the word left here, we mean remaining - not sold or still available. Left is the opposite of right, but here it means something different; it means that we have something remaining. You may say, for example, to your husband or wife “How much milk do we have left in the refrigerator,” meaning how many more bottles or cartons of milk do we have.

Ariel says that that is the one she is looking for, and asks, “How much is it?” To ask how much is something these means how much does it cost - how much money do I have to give you. The clerk says, “Let me check the price” - “price,” the amount of money - of this particular item. He says, “It’s \$17.95.”

Ariel says, “That’s great,” meaning that's good news. “Could you hold that for me?” Here, the verb to hold, “hold,” means to keep something at a store, and not



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

sell it to anyone else so that you can have time to go into the store and buy it. Some stores will hold certain products for you for one day, or maybe two days, to give you time to drive or to go to their store to buy it. You ask a store to put something on hold for you, or to hold something for you, if you are afraid that other people may come and buy it before you have a chance to get there.

The clerk says, “We can reserve” the CD “for you for 24 hours.” To reserve, “reserve,” means pretty much the same as to hold - to keep something for someone, and not let anyone else buy it or use it. There are several meanings of this word reserve; take a look at the Learning Guide for additional definitions of this word, as well as the word copy, which we mentioned earlier.

The clerk says that “When you come in” - when you come into the store - “just go to the customer service desk.” Customer service is the part of the business - the department of a business or a store that works to make people happy who shop there. Usually it's a place to take care of problems. If you have to return something or you have a problem with something you brought, you would normally call, or go and visit in a store, the customer service department.

Ariel spells her name for the clerk, and asks, “What are your store hours,” meaning what hours are you open - when is the store open. From 10:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., that would be an example of store hours - the hours a store is open for you to come in.

The clerk says, “We’re open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and 9:00 to 6:00 on weekends.” Weekdays, “weekdays,” (one word) are the days Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. It's not the weekend. The word weekend can mean Saturday and Sunday, but sometimes people use it to refer to Friday, Saturday and Sunday. If, for example, they have a vacation day, they may say, “I have a three-day weekend.” Normally, however, the weekend is just Saturday and Sunday.

Stores in the United States are generally open from 9:00 or 10:00 in the morning to, maybe, 6:00 or 7:00, sometimes 9:00 at night. Unlike in some countries, where the stores close in the middle of the day for lunch, in the US the stores are almost always open continuously; meaning if they open at 10:00 and they close at 5:00, the store will be open that entire time.

Ariel says that she'll “be in later today to pick that up.” To pick up something, or to pick something up - either way is correct - means to go to a store and to buy something - to go somewhere and to get something.



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

The clerk says, “Is there anything else I can help you with?”

Ariel says, “No.”

The clerk says, “You’re welcome and thanks for calling Levin’s.”

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

[start of story]

Clerk: Hello. Levin’s Music.

Ariel: Hello. I was wondering if you carry classical CD’s.

Clerk: Yes, we have a pretty large selection. What are you looking for?

Ariel: I’m trying to find the latest Reunion Island Ensemble CD.

Clerk: I’m not sure we have that in stock. We have a lot of CD’s on back order. Can I put you on hold while I check?

Ariel: Sure.

Clerk: Okay. We have one copy of their 2005 CD left. Is that the one you’re looking for?

Ariel: Yes, it is. How much is it?

Clerk: Let me check the price. It’s \$17.95.

Ariel: That’s great. Could you hold that for me?

Clerk: We can reserve it for you for 24 hours. When you come in, just go to the customer service desk. What’s your name?

Ariel: It’s Ariel, A-R-I-E-L. What are your store hours?

Clerk: We’re open weekdays from 9:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., and 9:00 to 6:00 on weekends.

Ariel: I’ll be in later today to pick that up. Thanks a lot for your help.



ESL Podcast 243 – Speaking to a Store Clerk on the Phone

Clerk: It's no problem. Is there anything else I can help you with?

Ariel: No, that's all. Thanks, again.

Clerk: You're welcome and thanks for calling Levin's.

[end of story]

The script for this dialogue was written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

If you have a question or comment about our podcast, you can email us. Our email address is eslpod@eslpod.com.

From Los Angeles, California, I'm Jeff McQuillan. Thanks for listening. We'll see you next time on ESL Podcast.

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. This podcast is copyright 2007.