



ESL Podcast 314 – Buying a Digital Audio (MP3) Player

GLOSSARY

MP3 player – a device that plays digital music in MP3 files

* This is a very popular MP3 player, but there are many other players that are less expensive.

selection – the variety of things to choose from at a store; the different types of something that is being sold

* This bookstore has a great selection of books in foreign languages.

portable – small, not heavy, and easy to carry wherever one goes

* This notebook computer is very portable because it is small and weighs only two pounds.

to rip – to copy music from a CD to one's computer or another device

* Thanks for lending me these CDs. I'll return them to you as soon as I rip them onto my computer.

to download – to copy music or other files from the Internet to one's computer or another device

* Please download the form from our website and complete it before you come to the office for your appointment.

to watch out for – to be careful about something; to be aware of something that might be a problem

* Watch out for their dog. It's not very friendly and sometimes bites people.

proprietary – belonging to a specific person or company; made, owned, and sold by a person or company

* This file is proprietary and can only be opened in a program made by the same company.

file format – the way that information is stored electronically; a type of electronic file, such as .doc, .xls, .txt, .mp3, .jpg

* I wasn't able to open the file format that you sent me. Can you please resend it as a different file?

compatible – able to be used with something else; with the same technology; able to be used together

* Is Microsoft Office compatible with Apple computers?



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open-source – free for anyone to use; software that is available for anyone to use or change

* Many software engineers like to work together to make open-source software better.

FM tuner – the part of a radio or other device that allows one to choose a radio station to listen to

* The FM tuner on my car radio is broken, so I can only listen to CDs.

built-in battery charger – the part of a device that allows one to put electricity into an empty battery without using another piece of equipment

* I wish my cell phone had a built-in battery charger because I don't like traveling with the separate charger.

headphones – a device worn over the head or around the neck with two small pieces to put in one's ears, so that one can listen to music or the radio without letting other people hear it

* I saw a news story that said listening to loud music through headphones may be bad for your ears.

storage capacity – the amount of space that a device has to save or store files; the number and size of files that a device can hold

* My email account has a large storage capacity of almost 3,000 megabytes.

charge time – the amount of time needed to put electricity into an empty battery so that it is full again

* Their new camera has a charge time of about two hours.

playback – the act of playing something that has been recorded before; the act of listening to music, a phone message, or anything else that has been recorded previously

* Carlie spent all afternoon listening to playbacks of her professor's lectures to study for the test.

backlit – with light from behind; a screen that is illuminated from behind, so that it can be seen in the dark without turning on another light

* This watch is backlit so you can see what time it is in the dark by pushing this button.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. What does Sandy want to be able to do with her new MP3 player?
 - a) She wants to be able to listen to music wherever she goes.
 - b) She wants to be able to listen to music at home.
 - c) She wants to be able to listen to music on the Internet.

2. Which of these statements is not true about the MP3 player?
 - a) It has a four-hour charge time.
 - b) It can be used to listen to the radio.
 - c) It can play music only from proprietary sites.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to rip

The verb “to rip,” in this podcast, means to copy music from a CD to one’s computer or another device: “Ripping friends’ music is illegal, but many people do it anyway.” The verb “to rip” also means to tear, or to be torn into two or more pieces: “After paying the bill, Shelly ripped it into small pieces.” Or, “The flag was ripped by the strong winds.” The phrase “to rip (something) off” means to remove a piece of clothing very quickly: “Yasmin came home, ripped off his suit, and quickly changed into shorts for the soccer game.” The phrase “to rip (someone) off” means to cheat someone, or to make someone pay too much money for something: “The tourist was ripped off at the market, paying \$20 for a painting that normally costs \$5.”

charge

In this podcast, the phrase “charge time” means the amount of time needed to put electricity into an empty battery so that it is full again: “The charge time for our portable DVD player is six hours.” As a verb, “to charge” means to fill an empty battery with electricity: “Don’t forget to charge the camera before your trip!” The verb “to charge” also means to ask for a certain amount of money when selling something: “How much are you charging for these cakes?” Or, “The lawyer charges more than \$200 per hour.” Finally, the verb “to charge” can mean to move forward very quickly to attack someone: “The army charged up the hill.” Or, “Every year, large bulls charge through the streets of Pamplona, Spain.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Any radio station that gets most or all of its “funding” (money) from the public is known as “public radio.” Public radio funding can come from the government, individual listeners, universities, or private companies. Usually public radio does not have “commercials” (paid advertisements) like private radio stations do. Many Americans “get their news” (listen to the news) from public radio. Two popular public radio stations in the United States are NPR and PRI.

“National Public Radio” (NPR) is a national “network” (group of related organizations) for public radio that has many regular programs that are “broadcast” (shared with the public through radio or TV) by radio stations around the country. Its most popular news programs, Morning Edition and All Things Considered, are among the most popular radio programs in the country. “Public Radio International” (PRI) is another American-based public radio organization that has programs that are similar to those of NPR.

NPR and PRI receive only a small percentage of their funding from the U.S. government, so they have to “raise funds” (ask for money) from their listeners. Many companies choose to make a “donation” (give money to an organization) and, in return, they get to “underwrite” (sponsor) a public radio program, meaning that the company’s name is said several times during the program. This is a type of advertising for the company, but it isn’t as strong as a regular commercial on non-public radio.

Several times a year, NPR and PRI have “fundraising drives” where they “interrupt” (temporarily stop) their regular radio programs to ask the listeners to make donations to the public radio organization. Many “foundations” (large, rich organizations that give money to other organizations) also give money to public radio.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 314: Buying a Digital Audio (MP3) Player.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 314. 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; there you can download a Learning Guide for this episode that will help you improve your English even faster. You can also take a look at our ESL Podcast Store, which has some additional daily English and business courses you may be interested in.

This episode is called "Buying a Digital Audio (MP3) Player." It's a conversation between a man who works at a store and a woman who's looking to buy (who's interested in buying) an MP3 player. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Clerk: Can I help you?

Sandy: I'm looking for an MP3 player, but I don't know a lot about them.

Clerk: We have a large selection, as you can see.

Sandy: Wow, I really don't know where to begin.

Clerk: What do you want to be able to do?

Sandy: I just want something small and portable that I can use to listen to music that I rip from CDs. I also want to be able to download songs off the Internet.

Clerk: Most of the players you see here can do that. One thing you have to watch out for is that some music websites are proprietary. That means that you can only listen using certain types of players.

Sandy: That's what I'm worried about.

Clerk: Well, this one plays music in a lot of different file formats and is compatible with most of the major music download sites, both proprietary and



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open-source. It comes with an FM tuner, a built-in battery charger, and good quality headphones.

Sandy: What about its storage capacity and charge time?

Clerk: It has 30 gigabytes of memory and can hold about 7,500 songs. You get about 15 hours of music playback on one charge and it charges up in about four hours. It has a nice screen, too, that's backlit.

Sandy: It looks like what I've been looking for. I'll take it.

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with the clerk (the employee at the store) saying, "Can I help you?" Sandy responds, "I'm looking for an MP3 player, but I don't know a lot about them." An "MP3 player" would be something you can use to listen to MP3 audio files. The audio files on this podcast (and most podcasts, for example) are MP3 files. There are many different kinds of MP3 players: the iPod is an MP3 player, Microsoft's Zune is an MP3 player; there are many others as well.

The clerk says, "We have a large selection (of these players), as you can see." A "selection" of something is a variety of things to choose from, usually at a store. You may say, "They have a good selection of televisions." (They have many different kinds of televisions.)

Sandy says, "Wow, I really don't know where to begin." (I'm confused; I'm lost; I don't know how to start the process of selecting just one of them.) The clerk says, "What do you want to be able to do?" (What are you going to use your MP3 player for?)

Sandy says, "I just want something small and portable." "Portable" means small, not heavy, and easy to carry with you. A laptop computer is portable; it's easy for you to pick up and carry with you somewhere. Sandy wants an MP3 player that's portable that she "can use to listen to music that I rip from CDs." The verb "to rip" (rip) in this context means to copy music from your CD onto your computer or some other device; that's to "rip a CD." The verb "to rip" has a couple of different meanings; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Sandy goes on to say, "I also want to be able to download songs" from the Internet. To "download" means to take certain files and put them on your computer, taking them from the Internet. You download this podcast, for example, onto your computer.



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The clerk says, “Most of the players you see here can do that. One thing you have to watch out for (one thing you have to be careful about) is that some music websites are proprietary.” (The files they have are proprietary.) The word “proprietary” means it belongs to a specific company or a specific person; it is made or owned by a particular person or company. For MP3 files, or Internet files in general, when they are proprietary that usually means you can only use them on the machines that are approved by that company. Podcasts are mostly MP3 files, they are not proprietary, but if you download music from, for example, the iTunes Music Store, those files are proprietary; you can only play them on an iPod or a computer that has iTunes software. Of course, you can put them on a CD, but that’s the general idea about proprietary formats.

The clerk explains that proprietary means “you can only listen (to those files) using certain types of players.” Sandy says, “That’s what I’m worried about.” (That is what I’m concerned about.) The clerk says, “Well, this one plays music in a lot of different file formats.” The “file format” is the way information is stored and transmitted electronically. For example, audio files can be MP3, a picture can be a JPG (.jpg), a Microsoft Word document would be .doc; that’s the file format.

The clerk says that one of the players plays “a lot of different file formats and is compatible with most of the major music download sites.” To be “compatible” means you can use it with something else with the same technology. To be able to use two things together means that they are compatible. The iPod is compatible with iTunes; you can use them together.

The clerk says that the players he is showing Sandy can use both proprietary files and open-source files. “Open-source files” are ones that are free for anyone to use; it can also be software that is available for anyone to use or to change, you don’t have to pay for it.

The clerk says that the MP3 player “comes with an FM tuner, a built-in battery charger, and good quality headphones.” An “FM tuner” would be something that allows you to listen to radio stations on the MP3 player. A “built-in battery charger” is a part of the device (the machine) that allows you to recharge (or put electricity back into) a battery that is used for the equipment. So, you usually take it and plug it into a charger so that the battery can be recharged (have enough electricity to use to power the device – the machine). “Headphones” are the things you put over your head or around your neck, and you put them to your ears so you can hear the music or the sound coming out of something.



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Sandy says, “What about (the player’s) storage capacity and charge time?” “Storage capacity” is the expression we use to describe the amount of space that the device has to save or store files. Your hard drive on your computer could have a storage capacity of 100 gigabytes; that’s storage capacity. “Charge time” is the amount of time it takes to recharge the battery so that the battery is, we would say, full again – at full charge. The word “charge” has a number of different meanings in English; again, take a look at the Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

The clerk says that this MP3 player “has 30 gigabytes of memory and can hold about 7,500 songs.” (7,500 songs) He says, “You get about 15 hours of music playback on one charge.” “Playback” is when you are listening to something – you are listening to the audio file – so, 15 hours of listening time on one charge of the battery. The battery “charges up,” he says, “in about four hours.” So, it will be at full capacity in four hours after you start to charge it. The MP3 player “has a nice screen,” also, “that’s backlit.” “Backlit” (one word – backlit) is when the light comes from behind something; the screen is, we would say, illuminated from behind so that you can see it in the dark without having to turn on another light.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Sandy: It looks like what I've been looking for. I'll take it.

[end of dialogue]

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

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

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