



ESL Podcast 402 – Buying Back-to-School Supplies

GLOSSARY

junior high – middle school; a school that one goes to after elementary school and before high school, usually for grades 7 and 8 or 6, 7, and 8

* We studied American history in junior high.

supplies – things that one needs to have and use in order to do something; things that one needs to get something done

* - What supplies do we need for this project?

- A pair of scissors, some paper, and tape.

backpack – a thick cloth bag with many pockets and zippers that has long, narrow pieces of fabric that are worn over one's shoulders so that the bag rests on one's back, often used for carrying books to and from school

* If your backpack is too heavy, you might hurt your back.

folder – a large piece of thick paper that is folded so that it makes pockets to protect other pieces of paper that are put inside it

* He has a folder where he keeps all of his credit card bills.

three-ring binder – a large piece of plastic that is folded like a large book and has three metal rings in the middle to hold and protect pieces of paper that each have three holes cut in them

* Kamisha has a very well-organized three-ring binder where she keeps all of the papers that her teachers give her.

pen – a small tool used for writing with ink; a small tool made of plastic or metal that has ink inside and is held in one's hand and moved to make marks on a piece of paper

* I couldn't find a pen to write down her phone number.

glue – a white or clear liquid or paste that is used to make things stick together; a white or clear, thick liquid or paste that is put between two objects so that, when it dries, the two objects cannot be pulled apart

* Sharon accidentally broke a plate, but she used glue to put the pieces back together.

crayon – a small, long piece of colored wax, similar to a pen or pencil, that is used to draw or make other marks on a piece of paper

* Marion was mad when she saw that her son had drawn on the walls with crayons.



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construction paper – large, thick pieces of paper that are sold in many colors and are used by children for art projects

* Heather made a heart-shaped present for her mom with red and pink construction paper.

pencil – a small tool used for writing with graphite; a small tool made of wood that has graphite inside and an eraser on top that is held in one's hand and moved to make marks on a piece of paper

* He likes to use a pencil instead of a pen, because that way he can change what he has written.

eraser – a small piece of rubber or plastic, often pink, used to remove the marks that one has made with a pencil

* Paulina used the eraser so much while she was doing her math homework that she accidentally made a hole in the piece of paper!

highlighter – a pen with a brightly colored ink inside so that one can draw a thick line over the words on a page and still be able to read those words, finding them more easily the next time one wants to read them

* As you read, use a highlighter to mark the most important parts of the text.

ruled – paper with horizontal (side to side) lines showing where one should write, so that the writing is straight

* If I don't have ruled paper, my writing isn't straight on the page.

notebook – many pieces of paper that are held together at one end, so that one can easily tear one page out after writing on it

* Wendy wrote a note on a piece of paper and then tore it out of her notebook to give it to her friend.

index card – a small piece of thick paper, usually 3 inches x 5 inches and usually white with blue lines, that is used to write down information, especially when one is doing research or preparing to give a speech

* Whenever he has to make a presentation, he writes down what he wants to say on index cards and looks at them while he is speaking.

calculator – a small electronic machine that one types numbers into and can be used to add, subtract, multiply, divide, and do other mathematical things

* She used a calculator to figure out how much she needed to pay.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these would be used with an eraser?
 - a) A pencil.
 - b) A crayon.
 - c) A highlighter.

 2. Which of these might be put inside a three-ring binder?
 - a) Construction paper.
 - b) Ruled paper.
 - c) Calculator.
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WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

construction

“Construction paper” in this podcast, means large, thick pieces of paper that are sold in many colors and are used by children for art projects: “Becky used a big piece of construction paper to make a birthday card for her best friend.” Normally the word “construction,” means the process of building something: “There’s a lot of construction downtown because the city needs more office buildings.” Or, “I don’t like the design for that construction project.” The phrase “under construction” means being built: “How long has the airport been under construction?” Finally, the word “construction” can refer to the thing that is being built: “Their new home is a very traditional construction, unlike most of the new homes in their neighborhood.”

ruled

In this podcast, the word “ruled” is used to describe paper with horizontal lines showing where one should write, so that the writing is straight: “Which is cheaper: ruled paper or paper without any lines on it?” As a verb, “to rule” means to govern: “When was Russia ruled by Ivan the Terrible?” When talking about laws, the verb “to rule” means to make a legal decision about something, or to decide whether something or someone is right or wrong: “The judge ruled that the man was not guilty.” Or, “The court ruled that Marianne had broken the law.” Finally, the phrase “to rule the roost” means to be the most important person in a group: “Jacob clearly rules the roost when he’s with his friends.”



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CULTURE NOTE

Every August and September, millions of American families begin their back-to-school “rituals” (or things that are done the same way every time). Many stores have back-to-school “sales” (periods of time when things cost less than they usually do) where they “mark down” (reduce the price on) clothing. Parents buy new clothes for their children who have “outgrown” (become too bit to wear) their old clothes. When schools require that students wear “uniforms” (the same type of clothing is worn by all students), the families need to buy new uniforms for their children. If the children will play on the school’s sports teams, they will need uniforms for that, too.

The schools usually give parents of a list of the school supplies that the child will need. Parents take this list to the store and with their children they “pick out” (choose) three-ring binders, notebooks, pens, pencils, backpacks, and more. Back-to-school shopping can be very expensive. Fortunately, most students don’t need to buy books because the books are usually owned by the schools and just “lent” (given for a short period of time) to the students for the “academic year” (the period of time when there are classes, usually from September to June).

Another back-to-school ritual is getting “vaccinations” (an injection that prevents one from getting a bad disease like polio or tuberculosis). Most U.S. schools will not let children study there unless they can “prove” (show that something is true) that they have had all the “standard” (normal) vaccinations.

Finally, many families have a back-to school ritual of going “camping” (spending the night outside in a natural area) or doing another outdoor activity on “Labor Day weekend” (the first weekend in September, immediately before school begins). This is a way for the family to spend time together and say goodbye to summer.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 402: Buying Back to School Supplies.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 402. 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. You can download a Learning Guide for this episode, an 8 to 10 page guide we provide for all of our current episode that will help you improve your English even faster.

The topic for this episode is buying things for your children that they will need for school. We'll go over some common vocabulary for things that you would use in school. We'll listen to a dialogue between Svetlana and Quinn. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Svetlana: Tomorrow is the first day of junior high. Are you ready?

Quinn: Sure, it's not that big a deal. I already put some supplies in my new backpack.

Svetlana: Let's see. You have some folders, a three-ring binder, and a pen. Is that all you're bringing to school?

Quinn: I don't have my books yet. I'll get those tomorrow morning. What else do I need? I'm not in the second grade. I don't need things like glue, crayons, and construction paper.

Svetlana: No, but you're missing a lot of stuff. I should know. You have a pen, but no pencils. You have no erasers or highlighters. You have a three-ring binder, but you don't have any ruled paper or a notebook.

Quinn: I don't need all of that stuff on the first day!

Svetlana: You want to be prepared, don't you? Where are your index cards? Don't you have a calculator? You'll need it for your math class.

Quinn: Are you kidding me?! If I carry all of that plus my books, who will carry me to class?



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[end of dialogue]

Let me begin by explaining a little bit about the title for this episode, “Buying Back-to-School Supplies.” We could just say, “Buying School Supplies.” We say here “Back-to-School” to emphasize that these are children who went to school last year and are going to school again this year; they are what we might call “continuing students.” Each August, all of the stores have Back-to-School sales, things that they are selling parents and students, things that they will need for school – new clothing for example, new school supplies, etc.

Our dialogue begins with Svetlana saying, “Tomorrow is the first day of junior high. Are you ready?” “Junior high” is sometimes called “middle school.” In the United States, we have most schools divided into “elementary,” which is grades one, two, three, four, five, and usually six. We have “middle school,” which is typically grades seven and eight, or six, seven, and eight. This used to be called, when I was in school, “junior high,” and in some places it is. Some people call it “middle school,” some people call it “junior high.” The grades after that – 9, 10, 11, and 12 – are called “senior high.” Every city in the United States is a little different. It sounds strange, but every city – every local area has its own school organization, but generally speaking, junior high is for those children who are ages 12, 13, maybe 14.

Quinn says that he is ready; he says, “Sure, it’s not that big a deal,” meaning it’s not that important or it’s not that big of a change for him to worry about. He says, “I already put some supplies in my new backpack.” “Supplies” is a general word for things that you need to have to do something. You may need supplies to build a house; you’ll need supplies to run your office – you’ll need all sorts of things. That general term is called “supplies,” things you use in order to accomplish another task. A “backpack” (one word) is a thick cloth bag; usually it has many pockets. These are used by school children and by college students to carry their books and their school supplies. They’re called a “backpack.” You can also have a backpack if you are, for example, going camping. You have a big bag, basically, on the back of your shoulders that you use for all of your clothing, your sleeping bag, and so forth.

Svetlana says, “Let’s see. You have some folders, a three-ring binder, and a pen.” A “folder” is a large piece of thick paper, like cardboard, that is folded so that you can put papers inside of it. A “three-ring binder” is a large piece of plastic that looks like a book. It has three metal rings – three circles – inside of it that you can use to put paper into, and hold paper. It’s called a “three-ring



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binder.” A “pen,” you probably know, is a small tool we use for writing. Usually it has a liquid inside, which we call “ink” (ink).

Quinn says, “I don’t have my books yet.” Svetlana asks him, “Is that all you’re bringing to school?” meaning are you bringing anything else, and Quinn answers, “I don’t have my books yet. I’ll get those tomorrow morning. What else do I need?” He says, “I’m not in the second grade.” Remember, he’s in junior high, so he’s in sixth, seventh, or eighth grade. He says, “I don’t need things like glue, crayons, and construction paper.” These are three things that you might buy for a child in elementary school – a younger child. “Glue” is a white or clear liquid that you use to make things stick together. Children often use glue in making projects at school, making things – young children do. A “crayon” is a long piece of colored wax, basically. It’s similar to a pen or a pencil; it’s used by children to draw things on a piece of paper. Finally, “construction paper” are large thick pieces of usually colored paper that children use for things like their art projects at school; again, something you would find in an elementary school for younger children. The word “construction” has a couple of different meanings; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations.

Talking about crayons, there was, and still is, a maker of crayons here in the United States called Crayola (Crayola). And this company made different sets of crayons: you had a very small set that had eight colors, then you could get a 16-color set, and, I think, the biggest was a 64-color set. Of course, all the children wanted to have the 64-color set; my parents just got me the eight-color set. It’s something that I still think about, many years later!

Svetlana, whose name I’m sure I’m going to mispronounce at least once during this dialogue, says, “No (you don’t need those things), but you’re missing a lot of stuff (a lot of things). I should know,” she says, meaning I have the experience or the intelligence to know something. “You have a pen, but no pencils.” A “pencil” is like a pen, except it uses something called “graphite” instead of ink; usually it’s made of wood. With a pencil, you can easily erase the marks that you make; you can get rid of them with something called an “eraser,” which is a small piece of rubber or plastic, often in the color pink here in the U.S., that’s used to remove the marks you make with your pencil. Many pencils have an eraser on the opposite end, the end that you don’t use to write with.

So, Svetlana says that Quinn has no erasers or highlighters. A “highlighter” is a pen that has a very bright, very easy to see color, and you can take it and you can put this pen on a piece of paper to mark a certain section, to write over those words, but you can still see the words underneath the color. The verb is “to highlight,” to put a line over the words so that people will see them more easily.



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She continues, “You have a three-ring binder, but you don’t have any ruled paper or a notebook.” “Ruled paper” (ruled) is paper that has “horizontal” lines, from side to side, that indicate where you should write. Ruled paper is used in many – perhaps most schools to help children and adults to write more clearly. A “notebook” is a small book of paper that you can write on. It’s blank; that is it doesn’t have anything on it other than the lines usually. In a notebook, you can take a page out one at a time, and the rest of the pages stay in the notebook.

Quinn says, “I don’t need all of that stuff on the first day!” His friend says, “You want to be prepared, don’t you? Where are your index cards?” An “index card” is a small piece of thick paper, usually three inches by five inches, and it has blue lines on it. It’s white paper with blue lines that you use to write down pieces of information on. They’re useful in that you can organize your index cards if you are taking notes on a particular subject. This is what teachers always tell their students to do, although I never, myself, actually used index cards that way, and I don’t know anyone who did. Some students use index cards to try to memorize things, to study certain facts for example. This is usually a pretty inefficient way of learning something for the long-term, but it will help you pass the test.

She also says, “Don’t you have a calculator?” A “calculator” is a small electronic machine that adds, subtracts, multiplies, divides, does other mathematical operations. “You’ll need it for your math class,” she says.

Quinn says, “Are you kidding me?!” meaning “are you joking with me?” “If I carry all of that plus (or in addition to) my books, who will carry me to class?” suggesting that that’s too much, that it’s so heavy that he won’t be able to carry it.

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

[start of dialogue]

Svetlana: Tomorrow is the first day of junior high. Are you ready?

Quinn: Sure, it’s not that big a deal. I already put some supplies in my new backpack.

Svetlana: Let’s see. You have some folders, a three-ring binder, and a pen. Is that all you’re bringing to school?



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Quinn: I don't have my books yet. I'll get those tomorrow morning. What else do I need? I'm not in the second grade. I don't need things like glue, crayons, and construction paper.

Svetlana: No, but you're missing a lot of stuff. I should know. You have a pen, but no pencils. You have no erasers or highlighters. You have a three-ring binder, but you don't have any ruled paper or a notebook.

Quinn: I don't need all of that stuff on the first day!

Svetlana: You want to be prepared, don't you? Where are your index cards? Don't you have a calculator? You'll need it for your math class.

Quinn: Are you kidding me?! If I carry all of that plus my books, who will carry me to class?

[end of dialogue]

The script for this episode was written by Dr. Lucy Tse, who was always ready for school when she was a student, I'm sure!

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

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