



GLOSSARY

directions – instructions about how to go somewhere, especially when driving
* When we mail out the party invitations, should we include directions to our house?

cross street – the closest street that touches the street where one’s home or office is
* The pharmacy is at 5839 Main Street, and the nearest cross street is Division Avenue.

exit – a road that lets cars leave a freeway or highway, slowly decreasing their speed before they go onto slower-moving roads
* Take Interstate 5 north until you reach exit 268.

to head – to go in a particular direction; to travel in a specific direction
* They left town about two hours ago, heading south.

bend – a curve in the road; a part of the road that lets one change direction without stopping first
* Our house is just past the third bend in the road.

to veer – to change direction without stopping; to move toward the right or left from a main road
* Go through the intersection and then veer to the left to get to the museum.

dead end – a street that ends with no other connecting streets, so that a car has nowhere to go and must turn around
* Many people want to live on a dead end because there’s less traffic, and it’s safer for kids to play near the street.

one-way street – a street where all the cars must move in the same direction
* You can’t turn right here because it’s a one-way street. You need to go up to the next street and turn right there instead.

light – traffic light; a box that hangs over the street with three lights: red, yellow, and green to control traffic
* Even though we were in a hurry, we had to stop because the light was red.



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street parking – the act of parking on the edge of a street, between the moving cars and the sidewalk

* It's almost impossible to find street parking in this part of downtown Los Angeles.

valet parking – the act of stopping one's car in front of a business and giving one's keys to a person (valet) who then drives the car away and parks it, bringing it back when one is ready to leave

* The city's most expensive restaurants offer valet parking for their customers.

to validate – for a business to put a mark on a piece of paper, showing that it will pay for a customer to park in a specific location

* The store validates up to one hour of parking for anyone who makes a purchase.

meter – a machine next to a street that one can put coins (metal pieces of money) into to buy a certain amount of time when one will be allowed to park in a particular spot

* Did you put enough coins into the meter? We're going to be inside for at least 50 minutes.

side street – a street that is connected to the main street, but has less traffic and is less important

* Rent for stores is less expensive on side streets than on the main street.

to circle the block – to go around a group of buildings by making three right turns or three left turns

* They couldn't find a parking spot, so he circled the block slowly while she was inside the store, making her purchase.

to count on – to assume or believe that something will happen; to rely on something

* You can count on me to help you clean up after the conference. I won't forget.

to hunt – to seek; to search; to look for

* She spent all afternoon hunting for a book that she's been wanting to read.



COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these would have the least traffic?
 - a) A cross street.
 - b) A dead end.
 - c) A one-way street.

2. What does the receptionist mean when she says, “we don’t validate”?
 - a) The company won’t pay for Asha’s parking.
 - b) The company thinks \$12 is too much to pay for parking.
 - c) The company doesn’t recommend street parking.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

bend

The word “bend,” in this podcast, means a curve in the road, or a part of the road that lets one change direction by turning slowly without stopping first: “Don’t cross the road at a bend! The cars might not see you there.” A “bend” can also describe a wide turn in a river: “They built a vacation home next to a beautiful river bend.” The phrase “to bend over” means to move one’s upper body at the waist so that one is closer to the floor: “He bent over to pick up the clothes on the floor.” Finally, the phrase “to bend the truth” means to not tell the whole truth: “Are you really only 29 years old, or are you bending the truth?”

to count on

In this podcast, the phrase “to count on” means to assume or believe that something will happen, or to rely on something: “It’s nice to know I can count on you to help me in difficult times.” The phrase “to count (one’s) blessings” means to feel thankful or happy for all the good things in one’s life: “You should count your blessings! You have a good job, a beautiful home, a loving wife, and two healthy children.” The phrase “to count (one’s) chickens before they hatch” means to believe that something good will happen and make plans for it, even though it might not happen: “Don’t count your chickens before they hatch! It might be months before your house sells, or it might sell for a lower price than you expect.”



CULTURE NOTE

In many American cities, it can be almost impossible to find street parking. If you do see an “empty spot” (a space without a car) along the side of a street, be sure to look for “signs” (large, painted pieces of metal or wood with written information) about parking “restrictions” (limitations).

Most city streets have signs “indicating” (showing) whether parking is allowed and, if so, at which times. Obviously you cannot park in a “fire lane” (space that fire-emergency vehicles need for fighting fires), which are indicated with red color paint; in front of “driveways” (short routes leading from a street to a building or garage); or any place where there is a painted yellow line on the “curb” (the raised piece of concrete next to a road).

Where parking is allowed, parking signs indicate the “time limit,” or the amount of time a car can be parked there without getting a “ticket” (a piece of paper showing that one has done something against the law) and having to pay a “fine” (money paid because one has done something wrong). Some signs indicate “permit-only parking,” which means that the driver must have a special “permit” (written permission) to park there, usually because he or she works or lives nearby.

Sometimes there are “exceptions” (times when a rule does not apply) to the regular parking restrictions. When there are parades or other special events, parking usually isn’t allowed on certain streets. Parking is also restricted during “street cleaning” (when a large truck puts water on the streets to clean them).

Some parking signs state that “violators” (people who do not follow a law) will be “towed” (with one’s car being pulled away by a special truck). If you park in one of those areas, you’ll have to pay money to get your car back from the towing company!

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 520: Getting Directions and Parking Instructions.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast number 520. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

Our website is eslpod.com. Go there to download a Learning Guide for this episode to help you improve your English even faster. To download the Learning Guide, you can become a Learning Guide member of ESL Podcast. Your membership helps support this podcast. Or, if you'd prefer to make a donation, you can do that on our website as well.

This podcast is a dialogue between a "receptionist" (somebody who answers the phone at a business) and Asha. It's about giving someone "directions" (how to arrive at a certain place), as well as instructions on parking. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Receptionist: So the meeting is set for 2:00 on Thursday. Do you know how to get to our offices?

Asha: No, I don't. Could you give me directions?

Receptionist: Certainly. We're located on Main Street. The cross street is Udall. If you're taking the freeway, the best exit to take is Udall East. Once you're on Udall, head east for about two miles and when you reach the bend, veer right. If you veer left, you'll run into a dead end. After you veer right, you'll be on Monroe Avenue and it's a one-way street. Our building is on the right-hand side, past the light. If you pass Elm Street, you've gone too far.

Asha: Okay, I think I've got all that. Is there parking available?

Receptionist: Unfortunately, there's only street parking. There is valet parking for the building next door, but they charge \$12 and we don't validate. There are meters on the street and on the side streets, but you may need to circle the block a few times to find an available meter.

Asha: All right, and thanks for the information. I guess I need to leave early to have plenty of time to find the building and to find parking.



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Receptionist: I tell everybody to count on getting lost and having to hunt for parking.

Asha: Thanks for the heads up!

[end of dialogue]

Our dialogue begins with the “receptionist,” the person who answers the telephone at a business, saying to Asha, “The meeting is set for 2:00 on Thursday.” To say it is “set for” means it is planned for 2:00. “Do you know how to get to our offices?” Asha says, “No, I don’t. Could you give me directions (can you give me instructions on how to get there)?” “Directions” can mean instructions on how to do something, but when we’re talking about location it’s instructions on how to arrive at a certain place.

Asha doesn’t know how to get to the building, so she asks for directions. The receptionist says, “Certainly (meaning yes, of course). We’re located on Main Street. The cross street is Udall.” A “cross street” is the closest street that intersects with the street that your home or office is on. So, if you have your offices on Main Street and the street that runs perpendicular – that crosses that street that is closest to you is Udall, that would be the cross street. Udall is the cross street. “If you’re taking the freeway, the best exit to take is Udall East.” An “exit” on a freeway is where the cars can get off of the freeway; it’s sometimes called the “off ramp.” The “on ramp” is how you get onto the freeway.

So the nearest or best exit is Udall East. “Once you’re on Udall, head east for about two miles.” “Head,” here, is used as a verb: “to head (somewhere).” “To head (somewhere)” means to go in a particular direction, to travel in a specific direction, usually north, south, east, or west. So, the receptionist tells her to “head east,” that means drive toward the east on Udall for about two miles and when you reach the bend, veer right. “Bend” (bend) here means a curve in the road. When you have a road that suddenly starts to go in a different direction, that’s called a “bend.” Not necessarily 90 degrees, in fact, a bend is usually less than 90 degrees. The word “bend” has a couple of different meanings in English however, so take a look at the Learning Guide for some more explanations.

So, the receptionist tells her that when she reaches the bend she should veer (veer) right. “To veer” means to change directions without stopping, usually to go either right or left on the main road. So in this case, the road has a bend in it, but it may also have a continuation – it may be continuing going straight and then part of the road, really another road, goes off in another direction. So, he’s telling



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her to veer right – go toward the right when she reaches the bend, not left. If she veers left – if she goes left, in the opposite direction, she'll run into a dead end. "To run into (something)" means to encounter something, to arrive somewhere where you weren't expecting – something that you didn't expect perhaps, or something that is a negative influence or an obstacle, something that prevents you from doing what you want to do. In this case, you'll run into a dead end. A "dead end" is a street that ends with no connecting streets, so you would have to turn around and go out.

So the receptionist continues, "After you veer right, you'll be on Monroe Avenue and it's a one-way street." A "one-way street" is a street where cars can only move in one direction, not in two directions like most streets. He says, "Our building is on the right-hand side, past the light." "Past" means beyond. The "light," here, means the traffic light; the "traffic light" is the box that has three lights: red, yellow, and green. At least in the United States red means stop, green means go, and yellow means caution, usually between the red and the green, when the light is "changing," we would say. So, when someone says it's "past the light," they mean you have to go past the traffic light and it is beyond it, it is farther than that. He says, "If you pass Elm Street (if you go past Elm Street), you've gone too far."

Asha says, "Okay, I think I've got all that (I think I understand all of that). Is there parking available?" The receptionist says, "Unfortunately, there's only street parking." "Street parking" is when you have to park on the street, not in a parking lot or in a parking garage. He says, "There is valet parking for the building next door." "Valet parking" is when you have somebody who parks your car for you. So you drive up to the front of the building, you get out, you give your keys to someone (who we call a "valet"), and that person drives your car and parks it somewhere else so you don't have to park it. This is very popular here in Los Angeles; there are lots of restaurants that have valet parking. In fact, there's even a grocery store here that has valet parking! Of course, valet parking isn't free normally, and you have to pay extra money. In this case, the valet parking charge is 12 dollars, which is not unusual if it were a business, like a business building.

The receptionist says that we don't validate. Often when you go to a business that has valet parking you don't have to pay because the business will say that you are there for their purposes, and therefore they will pay your parking. So you bring in your parking ticket – little piece of paper they give you with the time that you entered, and they'll put a little stamp on it, they'll put a mark on the ticket to show that they will pay for it. That's to "validate." But unfortunately, the receptionist says they don't validate for the valet parking for the building next



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door – the building next to theirs. The receptionist says, “There are meters on the street and on the side streets.” A “meter” is a machine that you put money into, usually coins, to buy a certain amount of time so you can park there. So, “parking meters” are very common, especially in busy places. You have to pay usually a dollar, maybe two dollars an hour to park in a particular place. Parking meters are usually on the street, but you can also find some public parking meters in “parking lots,” in separate areas just for parking cars. The receptionist says that there are meters on the street – the street where the building is located, and on the side streets. A “side street” is a street that is connected to a main or larger street. So you may have a big street, and then you have small streets that are near it; those smaller streets are called “side streets.” Often side streets are places where houses are located, but not always.

The receptionist says that you may need to circle the block a few times to find an available meter. “To circle (something)” means to go around something. “To circle the block” means to go around the streets that are surrounding a certain building. You have to turn right and then go down the street, and then turn right again and go down that street, and then turn right again, go down that street, and turn right again and go down that street – you’re circling the block. The “block” is the space that is like a square; the streets go on all four sides.

Asha says, “All right, and thanks for the information. I guess I need to leave early to have plenty of time (to have enough time) to find the building and to find parking.” The receptionist says, “I tell everybody to count on getting lost.” “To count on” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning to assume or believe that something will happen, to depend on or rely on something. “Count” has several different meanings in English however, so take a look at our Learning Guide for some more explanations of that word.

The receptionist says that he tells everybody to count on getting lost, meaning you’re probably going to get lost, so you should give yourself extra time. You should also count on having to hunt for parking. “To hunt” means to search, or to look for in this case. “To hunt for parking” means to have to look for a place to park your car, because it’s so crowded in that area. Asha says, “Thanks for the heads up!” meaning thanks for the warning.

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

[start of dialogue]

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Receptionist: I tell everybody to count on getting lost and having to hunt for parking.

Asha: Thanks for the heads up!

[end of dialogue]

You can always count on good quality scripts when they're written by Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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