



ESL Podcast 581 – Reading a World Map

GLOSSARY

map – a piece of paper with drawings and text showing the location of places

* Noah hung a large world map on his office wall and circled all the places he has visited.

globe – a round ball that rotates in a special stand and represents the world, with drawings of the continents, oceans, countries, and major cities

* Why does Greenland look so much larger on a map than on a globe?

postcard – a small, rectangular piece of paper sent through the mail with a picture or photograph on one side and a message, address, and stamp on the other side, used to send brief messages to other people, usually when traveling

* Today we received a postcard that Sebastian sent while he was relaxing on the beaches of Tahiti.

adventurous – looking for adventure and excitement; wanting to do new and unusual things that most people don't do

* Troy is a really adventurous eater. He's even tried roasted ants, frog legs, and raw beef.

compass – a small, flat, round device with an arrow that always points north, no matter which way the device is held

* The hikers lost the trail, but they were able to use a compass to find their way back into town.

continent – one of the seven large areas of land: Africa, Antarctica, Asia, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America

* How many continents have you visited?

geography – the study of the earth's surface, especially of the location of natural features, countries, cities, and the people who live there

* This week, our geography class is focused on African mountains and rivers.

equator – an imaginary line around the planet, separating the northern and southern hemispheres (halves)

* As you move further from the equator, days become longer or shorter depending on the season.



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latitude – one of many imaginary lines around the planet, parallel to the equator, used to talk about how far north or south something is

* Areas at extremely high latitudes have cooler temperatures because they get less sunlight.

longitude – one of many imaginary lines around the planet, perpendicular to the equator, used to talk about how far east or west something is

* How many miles separate each degree of longitude at the equator?

sort of – kind of; somewhat; a little bit; to a certain extent

* Even though it was difficult to spend so much time living with my in-laws, I was sort of sad when it was time for us to leave their house.

to make heads or tails of (something) – to be able to understand something

* I can't make heads or tails of this physics lesson. Do you understand it?

to scale – with a constant (unchanging) ratio between the actual distance between points A and B and the distance between points A and B on a map

* This map is drawn to scale, so one inch represents 10 miles.

legend – a small box on a map with words that explains the scale and what different symbols mean

* According to this legend, a small drawing of a tree represents a park and a yellow star represents a police station.

place name – a word on a map showing what a country, city, or other place is called

* Almost half the place names on this map are misspelled, and the other half are in the wrong spot!

vital statistics – detailed information, especially information represented in numbers

* The doctor wrote down all of her patient's vital statistics in the patient's official file.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these things would be used for navigation on a long walk?
 - a) A globe.
 - b) A compass.
 - c) An equator.

2. What does Greg mean when he says, “I can’t make heads or tails of this map”?
 - a) He doesn’t know which side is the top.
 - b) He doesn’t like the drawings on the map.
 - c) He can’t understand the information on the map.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

map

The word “map,” in this podcast, means a piece of paper with drawings and text showing the location of places: “Where can I find a map of the city’s subway system?” Or, “Their wedding invitation included a small map showing how to get to the hotel from the freeway.” A “road map” shows the location of roads and streets and is used while driving. A “political map” shows the borders between countries: “This political map won’t help us drive across the country. We need a road map.” The phrase “to put (something) on the map” means to make a place famous or well known: “Making an important discovery would help to put our university on the map.” The phrase “to wipe (something) off the map” means to destroy something completely, so that nothing is left “In the 1980s, people worried that a nuclear war could wipe the country off the map.”

to scale

In this podcast, the phrase “to scale” means with a constant (unchanging) ratio between the actual distance between points A and B and the distance between points A and B on a map: “It’s difficult to illustrate the solar system to scale, because the distances between the planets are so large compared to the size of the planets themselves.” When talking about animals, a “scale” is one of the flat, small pieces covering the skin of a snake or fish: “Look how colorful those fish scales are!” A “bathroom scale” is a device that one steps on to find out how much one weighs: “After eating so much food over the holidays, I’m scared to



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step on the bathroom scale!” Finally, the word “scale” refers to the amount or level of something: “The earthquake caused large-scale damage.”

CULTURE NOTE

Google has an “impressive” (surprising in a good way) map service called Street View. It lets Internet users type in an address and see photographs taken from the street. This can be helpful when people want to know what a neighborhood looks like, but it has also “raised” (caused; brought up) “concerns” (worries) about “privacy” (people’s right to not have their business and secrets shared with others).

The images “captured” (recorded) on Street View are very detailed. People can see which windows are open and which cars are parked in front of a home. Some of the pictures also include the people who were standing in front of – or even inside – the buildings when the Street View cameras “passed by” (drove in front of a building).

Some Street View images have become very popular because they capture unusual sights. One image shows two women “sunbathing” (relaxing in the sunshine to get a tan) in their “bikinis” (two-piece swimsuits) at Stanford University. Another image shows a man climbing the “gate” (fence) in front of an apartment building in San Francisco – “perhaps” (maybe) because he was “locked out” (forgot or lost his key), or perhaps because he was “breaking in” (entering a building without permission).

Some people are worried that Street View “invades their privacy” (takes away their privacy). Google argues that Street View provides only public images, and that anyone can see those same things simply by walking or driving down the street. However, in response to the “controversy” (something people feel strongly about and cannot agree on), Google does allow Street View users to request that an image be removed “due to” (because of) privacy concerns.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 581: Reading a World Map.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 581. 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. Download a Learning Guide for this episode. The Learning Guides contain all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, cultural notes, comprehension questions, and a complete transcript of every word we say on this episode. All that can be found on our website, eslpod.com.

This episode is called "Reading a World Map." We're going to talk about vocabulary related to maps. This is a dialogue between Greg and Julianna. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Greg: What are you doing with that map and that globe?

Julianna: I'm trying to keep track of Carmen as she travels from country to country. I just got another postcard from her today.

Greg: I'm not sure I like the idea of my daughter traveling around the world with a group of people for three months. It's not safe.

Julianna: She can take care of herself. You know she's the adventurous type. Give her a compass and she can find her way around anywhere. Help me find Nauru on this map. I don't even know what continent it's on. I was never any good at geography.

Greg: All right. You look above the equator and I'll look below it, but couldn't you just look it up on the Internet? It would be easy to find the latitude and longitude of this place.

Julianna: This is more fun. I sort of feel like I'm on an adventure myself.



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Greg: I can't make heads or tails of this map. It's not to scale and this legend is all wrong!

Julianna: It doesn't matter. We just need to find the place name, and then I can put a pin in this map showing where's she's been.

Greg: I have a better idea. I'll look it up on the Internet and get you all of the vital statistics you'd want, like its location, okay?

Julianna: Forget it. Sometimes it's more fun doing things the hard way.

[end of dialogue]

Greg begins by asking Julianna (or Julianna, I think she prefers Julianna), "What are you doing with that map and that globe?" A "map" is a piece of paper with drawings on it that shows the location of places. "Map" actually has a couple of different meanings in English however. To find those take a look at our Learning Guide for this episode. A "globe" (globe) is a round ball that has a special stand, and it goes around, and on this ball is a map of the world so you can see where all of the countries are in the entire world.

Greg says, "What are you doing with that map and globe." Julianna says, "I'm trying to keep track of Carmen as she travels from country to country. I just got another postcard from her today." A "postcard" (one word) is a small rectangular, typically, piece of paper that you send through the mail. It usually has a picture of the place you are visiting, and on the back you write a message, something like "Wish you were here," meaning I wish that you could be with me. Usually not though, usually you – you don't want other people with you on vacation. But you say that, right?

Julianna says, "I just got another postcard from Carmen today." Greg says, "I'm not sure I like the idea of my daughter traveling around the world with a group of people for three months. It's not safe." So, Greg and Julianna have a daughter who is going around the world with a group of people. Julianna says, "She can take care of herself. You know she's the adventurous type." Someone who is "adventurous" is someone who is always looking for excitement, wanting to do new and unusual things. I am not the adventurous type. I prefer to sit in my chair, drink some tea, and read my book. I'm kind of a boring person basically!

Julianna says, "Give her (meaning give Carmen) a compass and she can find her way around anywhere." A "compass" (compass) is a small, flat, round device



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that has an arrow in it, and the arrow always points north no matter which way you hold it. It's something that a traveler would use to know what direction they should go in, especially if you are, for example, out in the woods, or away from anything that would give you a good indication of which direction was north, at nighttime for example.

She says that Carmen can find her way around anywhere with a compass. She then says to Greg, "Help me find Nauru on this map. I don't even know what continent it's on." Nauru, of course, is a country. A "continent" is one of the seven large areas of land in the world. We talk about seven continents in the U.S.: we talk about Africa, Asia, Antarctica, Australia, Europe, North America, and South America. In some places they talk about five continents, but in the United States we have seven, or at least that's what we say. Julianna is trying to find what continent the country of Nauru is on. She says, "I was never any good at geography." "Geography" is the study of the surface or the area of somewhere on Earth, especially where things like countries and cities are located; that's part of geography.

Greg says, "All right (okay). You look above the equator and I'll look below it." The "equator" is an imaginary line around the middle of our planet, Earth. It separates the north half from the south half. We call these halves "hemispheres." So there's the northern hemisphere, where I live, and the southern hemisphere, where perhaps you live. That's what the equator is. So, Greg is going to look in the northern hemisphere, and Julianna will look in the southern one. He says, "couldn't you just look it up on the Internet?" Greg says, "It would be easy to find the latitude and longitude of this place." "Latitude" refers to imaginary lines that go around the earth from east to west, you might say. "Longitude" are lines that are "perpendicular," they're at a right angle to latitude lines. Longitude lines go, if you will, from north to south. If you know the latitude – if you know how far north or south something is, and longitude, how far east or west something is, then you can find a place. Every place on Earth has a specific latitude and longitude. Latitudes are sometimes called "parallels," so we talk about the 45th parallel. These latitude lines are sometimes used, for example, in dividing countries or areas.

Julianna says, "This is more fun. I sort of feel like I'm on an adventure myself." "I sort of" means I somewhat, I kind of, to a certain extent: "I sort of don't want to go and see my brother-in-law." I sort of don't want to go, I kind of, it's not something that I – I love to do. I'm not completely against the idea, but I sort of don't want to go. Well, Julianna says she sort of feels like she's on an adventure.



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Greg says, “I can’t make heads or tails of this map.” The expression “to make heads or tails (tails) of (something)” means to be able to understand something. The word “heads and tails” comes from a coin; there are two sides. A front of a coin we call the head, and the back of the coin called the tail. So the expression “to make heads or tails of” means to be able to understand. We use it in talking about anything that seems very confusing to us. Greg says, “It’s not to scale and this legend is all wrong!” Greg is saying that the map is not to scale. “To scale” means that the actual distance on the map between two points – between, say, one city and another city – the distance on the map is the same in proportion to the actual distance. That is, if you look at a map on the United States that is to scale, you’ll see that 500 miles from Los Angeles to the north is perhaps two inches. Well, two inches on anywhere in the map equals 500 miles. That’s a map that is drawn to scale. A “legend,” sometimes called a “key” (key), is a small box on a map that explains what the different colors or symbols mean on that particular map. They often also tell you what the scale is: one inch equals one mile, or one inch equals 200 miles.

Julianna says, “It doesn’t matter (it’s not important if it’s not to scale and the legend is all wrong). We just need to find the place name.” The “place name” is the word on a map that indicates the country or city or other place where this thing is. “Then,” she says, “I can put a pin on this map showing where’s she’s been.” A “pin” is a small piece of metal, like a small little stick, but you use it to attach, say, a piece of paper to the wall.

Greg says, “I have a better idea. I’ll look it up on the Internet and give you all the vital statistics you’d want, like its location, okay?” “Vital (vital) statistics” in this case means detailed information, numerical information. Technically, it usually refers to how many people are born, how many people die, coming from the Latin (vita) “vita,” or “vita,” referring to life. But here, it just means the specific details. Julianna doesn’t want to look it up on the Internet however. She says, “Forget it. Sometimes it’s more fun doing things the hard way,” doing things in the most difficult way possible.

Where’s Nauru? Well, I looked it up on the Internet; I didn’t look on a map or a globe. It’s actually a small island nation in the South Pacific. Maybe I’ll go there one day and visit!

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

[start of dialogue]



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[end of dialogue]

The scriptwriter for this episode is an adventurous type, 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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