



ESL Podcast 656 – Ordering Business Stationery

GLOSSARY

investor – a person who gives money to a project or business to help it grow, with the expectation that he or she will receive that money back plus additional money once the project or company is successful

* Without investors, we never would have had enough money to open this restaurant on our own.

to postpone – to delay; to decide to do something later than originally planned; to extend the deadline for something

* They've decided to postpone their wedding until the summer, so that they can have a sunny, outdoor ceremony.

in that case – if whatever has been said previously is true; if that is the current situation; a phrase used to introduce one's ideas for what should be done in a particular situation

* - I didn't have time to cook anything for dinner.
- In that case, let's eat at a restaurant tonight.

stationery – paper, notepads, cards, and envelopes that have been printed with an organization's logo, name, address, telephone numbers, and/or website URL, used for correspondence (sending written messages)

* We want our website and stationery to have very similar colors and designs.

to be taken seriously – to be treated as important, deserving respect and consideration

* Len told Michael that if he wants to be taken seriously in the business world, he would need to stop dying his hair pink and start wearing business suits.

to project – to convey; to present oneself in a particular way so that other people have a particular opinion

* Quincy is a great public speaker who projects confidence even when he's actually very nervous.

image – the way one appears to other people; the opinion people have of a person, business, or organization

* After the financial scandal, many companies hired communications professionals who could help them improve their image.



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business card – a small piece of paper that has a person's name, job title, company name, address, telephone, and email address, given to other people to stay in contact

* Here's my business card. Please call me if you'd like to learn more about our services.

correspondence – written messages that are sent and received by mail, email, or fax

* I'm saving all my correspondence with you, because someday when you're rich and famous, everyone will want to read it!

letterhead – a piece of paper that has a company's logo, name, and contact information on the top, bottom, and maybe one side, with most of the page blank (empty) so that one can write or print a letter on it

* Please send us an invoice on your company's letterhead.

envelope – a piece of folded paper that is glued into a shape like a pocket, so that one can put a letter or other correspondence inside it and then close it, sending it through the mail

* Did you remember to put a stamp on the envelope before you sent it?

embossed – a raised surface on a piece of paper or a book cover in the shape of a logo or words

* The diplomas are embossed with the name of the university.

greeting card – a folded piece of paper with a printed photograph or drawing and text, sent to thank or congratulate someone, or to celebrate a holiday

* How many greeting cards do you send out for Christmas?

promotional – used to raise awareness of a product or service and encourage people to buy it

* The first 100 customers tomorrow will receive a free promotional t-shirt.

postcard – a small piece of thick paper that has a photograph on one side and a blank (empty) area on the other side where one can write a message and the address of the person to whom one wants to send it through the mail

* Grace sent us postcards from almost every place she visited last summer.

notepad – many pieces of paper that are attached at one end, so that one can write something on one piece and then tear it off, leaving the other pieces still attached to each other

* Reporters quickly wrote in their notepads as the president spoke of her plans.



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to jump the gun – to do something too early; to do something before it is appropriate; to do something before it is really necessary

* Don't you think you're jumping the gun by looking at wedding rings already?
You and Rick have gone out on only two dates.

if you build it, they will come – a phrase used to mean that if one creates something, people will want to use it, even if they didn't know about it before

* - Do you think this town is big enough to support such a large shopping center and keep the stores in business?
- If you build it, they will come.

precisely – exactly; correct; a phrase used to show that one fully agrees with what another person has said

* Jan knew precisely what to cook for a child who doesn't like to eat vegetables.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these types of stationery would probably have the most contact information?

- a) Letterhead.
- b) Greeting cards.
- c) Notepads.

2. Why does Jermaine think Teresa is "jumping the gun"?

- a) Because she's starting to get violent.
- b) Because she's ordering stationery too soon.
- c) Because she's jamming the printer.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

to project

The verb "to project," in this podcast, means to convey, or to present oneself in a particular way so that other people have a particular opinion: "Our advertisements use a large, colorful font to project youthfulness and energy."

The verb "to project" can also mean to forecast or to anticipate how much of something there will be in the future, based on historical data: "Based on the past three years, we can project that energy consumption will continue to increase."

Finally, the verb "to project" can mean to use light to make a picture or image appear on a wall or screen: "We'll project PowerPoint images onto the screen behind the presenter while she's speaking."



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to jump the gun

In this podcast, the phrase “to jump the gun” means to do something too early, before it is really necessary: “They jumped the gun by buying their four-year-old daughter a really expensive violin before they even knew whether she would enjoy playing it.” The phrase “to stick to (one’s) guns” means to continue to believe that one’s own opinion is correct and not change it, even though other people think one should: “Everyone else likes Option B, but I’m sticking to my guns. I still think Option A is best.” Finally, the phrase “with all guns blazing” means with a lot of energy, noise, and excitement: “The team members did their work with all guns blazing.”

CULTURE NOTE

A “monogram” is a small design that uses one’s “initials” (the first letter of one’s first, middle, and last names) and is sewn onto a piece of fabric to identify it as belonging to a particular person. Some people like to monogram their “property” (things one owns), either to identify things so that they don’t get lost, or because they see the monogram as a sign of “prestige” (something special that only rich or powerful people have).

“Embroidery” (fancy stitching used to put an image on a piece of fabric) stores can monogram almost anything. Many “malls” (shopping centers) have embroidery “stands” (small businesses that have a table in the mall, but not a full store) where people can take their new purchases to be monogrammed before they are taken home.

Some parents monogram their children’s “backpacks” (bags worn on the back with two straps that go over the shoulders, used to carry books to school). It is also “common” (normal, ordinary) to see monograms on “matching” (with the same color and design) towels and “bathrobes” (warm, thick robes worn after showering) in the bathroom. Often towels and “sheets” (bedding) are monogrammed before they are given away as wedding presents.

Companies, universities, and sports teams often buy shirts, hats, or other items of “apparel” (clothing; things that are worn on one’s body) for their employees and supporters to wear. These items are often monogrammed with the company’s name and/or logo.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 656: Ordering Business Stationery.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 656. 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 that will help you improve your English even faster.

This episode is about the exciting world of paper – yes! Business stationery, the kind of paper that has your name on it or your company's name. It's an exciting topic, just wait and see! Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Jermaine: How did the investor meeting go?

Teresa: That meeting has been postponed until next week. One of the potential investors is out of town.

Jermaine: In that case, can you help me with some of this work?

Teresa: I would, but I'm busy ordering stationery right now.

Jermaine: Stationery? You're ordering stationery?

Teresa: Yes, of course. For us to be taken seriously as a new company, we have to project a professional image. Having good stationery is part of that.

Jermaine: I'm not sure...

Teresa: Look, we can't go to business meetings without good business cards, right?

Jermaine: I guess so...

Teresa: If we have any correspondence with our potential investors, we need letterhead and envelopes, right?



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Jermaine: I suppose...

Teresa: Okay, so I'm ordering those things. In the process, I'm ordering some embossed greeting cards and some promotional postcards. We'll also need some notepads and...

Jermaine: Whoa! Aren't you jumping the gun?

Teresa: Why do you say that?

Jermaine: First, we need to establish a company, and then we can start behaving like one.

Teresa: That's where you're wrong. If you build it, they will come.

Jermaine: You mean if we start behaving like a company, then the investors will come?

Teresa: Precisely!

[end of dialogue]

Jermaine begins our exciting dialogue by asking Teresa, "How did the investor meeting go?" An "investor" is someone who usually gives money to a company to help it grow or to start it. Of course, this person wants to get their money back plus additional money if the company is successful.

Teresa says, "That meeting has been postponed until next week." "To postpone" means to delay, to decide to do something at a later time. Teresa says, "One of the potential investors is out of town." Jermaine says, "In that case (meaning in that situation or because that is true), can you help me with some of this work?" Here we go, Jermaine trying to get someone else to do his job! Teresa says, "I would, but I'm busy ordering stationery right now." "I would" means if I could I would; I would do it under certain conditions, however those conditions are not present because I'm busy. If I weren't busy then I would help you, that's another way of saying that – with a lot more words!

Jermaine says, "Stationery? You're ordering stationery?" "Stationery" could be paper, it could be cards, it could be envelopes, all of which have your organization or your company's or your personal name, address, phone number, other information, nowadays email and perhaps a website. Teresa says, "Yes, of course. For us to be taken seriously as a new company, we have to project a



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professional image.” “To be taken seriously” means to be treated by other people as important, to be considered deserving of respect. If you want to be treated seriously, you should not go to a job interview looking like a clown or dressed in a bikini; the employer won’t take you seriously. However if you are a clown in a bikini, then maybe! Teresa says that their new company, in order to be taken seriously, has to project a professional image. “To project” means to convey. What does “convey” mean? It means to present yourself in a particular way so people have a certain opinion about you. You could say, “She projects confidence,” meaning you get the impression – you get the idea that she has a lot of confidence. This word, “project,” can be used and pronounced differently; take a look at our Learning Guide for some additional explanations of that word.

Teresa is projecting an image. The “image” is the opinion; it’s the way that other people will think of you. If you want to project an image of a rich person, you might buy a nice car and wear nice clothing and eat at a nice restaurant. That might project the image of a rich person, advice to those of you looking for a girlfriend – well, a certain kind of girlfriend anyway!

Teresa says that having good stationery is part of projecting that professional image. Jermaine says, “I’m not sure...” Teresa interrupts and says, “Look (meaning pay attention), we can’t go to business meetings without good business cards, right?” A “business card” is a small card – a piece of paper that has your name, address, phone number, the name of your company, perhaps a little picture or what we would call “logo,” symbol of your company on it. Jermaine agrees and says, “I guess so,” meaning okay, I guess that’s true; I believe that’s true. Teresa says, “If we have any correspondence with our potential investors, we need letterhead and envelopes, right?” “Correspondence” is written communication, written messages that are sent and received usually by mail – by paper, but nowadays, of course, more commonly by email; it could also be faxed. That’s correspondence: any letters or notes between two people or two companies. Teresa says that if they have any correspondence with potential “investors,” people who might want to give the company money, we need letterhead and envelopes. “Letterhead” (one word) is a piece of paper that has your company’s logo or symbol, the name, usually contact information – that is, address, phone number, email, website. This information is often on the top of the page; sometimes it’s on the left side of the page. But the page – the piece of paper is mostly blank; you use it to print a letter out on or, in the old days, to use a typewriter to type on it. That’s letterhead. “Envelopes” are, of course, the things that you put the letter in to mail it, and the envelope will also have your company’s name on it.



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Jermaine says, “I suppose,” meaning he agrees with Teresa that they need these things, but he isn’t agreeing very strongly or very enthusiastically. Teresa says, “Okay, so I’m ordering those things. In the process (as she’s doing this or since she is doing this), I’m ordering some embossed greeting cards and some promotional postcards. We’ll also need some notepads.” “Embossed” means that the paper, when you feel it, has a what we would call raised surface. So if you put the paper on a table and you take your fingers and you go over the name of the company and the logo with your fingers you can feel it. That’s embossed (embossed). She had ordered some embossed greeting cards. A “greeting card” is the sort of thing that you would give someone for their birthday, perhaps for an anniversary. It’s a little card that has a message on the front, and usually you open it up and you sign your name inside of the card. Greeting cards can be sent for birthdays, they could also be sent for Christmas or a holiday celebration.

Normally companies don’t have a lot of greeting cards that they use, but Teresa thinks they need them. She also ordered some promotional postcards. “Promotional” is anything that is used to get people to find out more about your company, it’s sort of like advertising. A “postcard” is a small piece of thick paper that usually has a photograph on one side, and then you write on the back of the card. When you go on vacation, when you take a trip to a new place, you could buy a postcard with a picture of that place and send it back home, saying here is what you are missing for not coming with me even though I invited you. Something like that!

Teresa also ordered some “notepads” (notepads – one word), which have many pieces of paper that are attached or connected to each other so that you take one and you remove it, and then you have a bunch of them underneath it. You have notepads to write on; you may have a small one or a large one. They’re usually the size of a regular piece of paper, but all the paper is connected – it’s attached so that you can keep it all in one place. It’s different from a “notebook.” With a notebook, usually the paper is attached or connected at the side, on the left side, whereas a notepad usually it’s on the top. Also, a notebook usually has wire that goes through small holes in the papers so that it stays there. A notepad doesn’t have any wire or holes, it just has typically glue that attaches the papers to each other.

Jermaine says, “Whoa (meaning wait a minute, slow down)! Aren’t you jumping the gun?” “To jump the gun” means to do something too early, to do something before it is really necessary. The expression comes from racing, when you have men or women running in a race – in a competition. Usually the beginning of the race starts with a gun being shot – not a gun with bullets – and that indicates that



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the runners can start to run. If you start running before the gun is fired, we say you have jumped the gun; you've gone too early.

Teresa says, "Why do you say that (why do you say that I have jumped the gun)?" Jermaine says, "First, we need to establish a company, and then we can start behaving like one." Jermaine is saying we don't even have our company started, and you are worrying about things like stationery. Teresa says, "There's where you're wrong," meaning you are wrong about that thing. She says, "If you build it, they will come." This expression, which originally I think was from the movie Field of Dreams about baseball with Kevin Costner, means that if you build something – if you construct something people will come. You don't have to worry that people won't be interested if you, for example, start a company people will come and buy your product. Of course, this isn't really true, and many companies think that people will come and buy their product, and they waste a lot of money on things like stationery before they really have any customers. It's a very common problem with small businesses.

Jermaine says, "You mean if we start behaving like a company, then the investors will come?" meaning we'll get people to give us money to start and continue our company. Teresa says, "Precisely!" meaning exactly, correct. When you agree with everything the person has said you would say "precisely."

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

[start of dialogue]

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Jermaine: You mean if we start behaving like a company, then the investors will come?

Teresa: Precisely!

[end of dialogue]

I won't postpone thanking our scriptwriter; I'll thank her right now. Thank you Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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