



---

## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

---

### GLOSSARY

**battle** – the act of two or more people or groups fighting each other; one fight in a war; one of many fights

\* How many soldiers and how many innocent people died in the battle?

**holiday travel** – the period of time in November and December around Thanksgiving, Christmas, and other holidays, when many people traveling by plane, train, and car, so it is difficult to travel and there are many delays

\* I'd love to spend Christmas with my parents, but I don't want to deal with the holiday travel.

**peak** – the highest part of something; the period of time when something is very busy and/or needed by many people

\* Peak candy sales occur in the weeks before Halloween.

**at all costs** – no matter what is required; regardless of how difficult, challenging, or expensive something will be.

\* Ahmed doesn't understand chemistry very well, but he is determined to pass the course at all costs.

**to arm** – to prepare oneself for something by having all the necessary resources, especially to prepare oneself for a fight by having all the guns and other weapons one may need

\* Before you go to that boring lecture, make sure you arm yourself with coffee!

**to book** – to make a reservation; to make arrangements to have or do something at a future time

\* Did you remember to book a hotel room in Detroit for next week?

**flight** – a trip on one airplane from one place to another

\* Flying from Portland to Dallas required two flights.

**seat assignment** – the letter and number indicating where one should sit, especially in an airplane, train, or bus

\* My seat assignment is for a window seat, but I'd rather sit in the aisle seat.

**boarding pass** – the official document that one shows to an airline employee while getting on an airplane that proves one has purchased a ticket and has permission to travel on the airplane

\* The airline can't give travelers their boarding passes until their identification has been checked.



---

## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

---

**flight status** – information about whether an airplane has already arrived, will arrive on time as scheduled, or will be late

\* If you check this box on the airline's website, the flight status will be sent to your phone automatically.

**tight connection** – a very short layover; a short period of time between when one's first plane lands at an airport and when one must get on a second airplane leaving that airport to go to one's final destination

\* We have a really tight connection in Minneapolis, so we'll have to run through the airport to get to the second plane.

**to change planes** – to get off of one airplane at an airport and get onto another plane at the same airport to reach one's final destination

\* If we have to change planes in Miami, let's try to get a long layover so we can have a few hours to explore the city.

**snowed in** – unable to leave a building or airport because the weather is bad and there is too much snow on the ground

\* When we heard a big storm was coming, we made sure we had lots of hot chocolate and good books to keep us entertained in case we were snowed in.

**to cancel** – to change plans so that something will not happen as originally planned

\* Class was canceled today, because Professor Hathaway got sick.

**to think (something) out** – to spend a lot of time thinking about something, considering all the different possibilities and options

\* Did you hear that Marjorie is considering dropping out of school? I hope she really thinks it out before she makes any final decision.

**worst-case scenario** – the worst possibility; the most negative option with the worst consequences; of all the possibilities, the one that is least pleasant

\* Gregory is very nervous about showing his book to an editor, but even in the worst-case scenario, all that will happen is that it might be rejected for publication.

**forewarned and forearmed** – a phrase meaning that one is aware of the bad things that might happen and one is prepared for them

\* Jose Luis is really worried that the banks might run out of cash, so he has put all his cash in a box underneath his bed. When other people tell him he's crazy, he simply says, "Forewarned and forearmed."



---

## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

---

**to catch (someone) napping** – for something to happen while a person is not expecting it and is completely unaware of it and unprepared for it

\* Last year's hurricane season caught us napping, but this year we have plenty of bottled water, canned food, flashlights, and a battery-powered radio.

---

### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why doesn't Sabrina want to fly during the peak travel season?
    - a) Because it is very expensive.
    - b) Because the flights are too crowded and unpleasant.
    - c) Because her family lives nearby.
  2. What does Sabrina mean when she says, "I hope you don't have any tight connections"?
    - a) She hopes Ying doesn't have to sit next to overweight passengers.
    - b) She hopes Ying has enough money to buy a flight ticket.
    - c) She hopes Ying has enough time to board his second airplane.
- 

### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **at all costs**

The phrase "at all costs," in this podcast, means no matter what is required, regardless of how difficult, challenging, or expensive something will be: "Sharon is determined to make the business successful at all costs, even if it means working 80 hours a week." The phrase "at cost" is used when someone sells something for the same price he or she paid for it: "When Jodi was learning to decorate cakes, she sold them to her friends at cost, but now she has her own business and sells the cakes for profit." The phrase "to bear the cost" means to be responsible for paying for something: "If we increase the number of teachers at the school, who is going to bear the cost of their salary and benefits?"

#### **to think (something) out**

In this podcast, the phrase "to think (something) out" means to spend a lot of time thinking about something, considering all the different possibilities and options: "I wish we'd thought it out more before we decided to buy that luxury car." The phrase "to think (something) through" has the same meaning: "Take a few days and think it through before making a decision." The phrase "to think (something) over" means to spend a lot of time thinking about something, but not necessarily



---

## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

---

to reach a decision or conclusion: “They’re still thinking over our offer.” Finally, the phrase “to think (something) up” means to have a new, creative idea that no one has thought of before: “Who thought up that new marketing campaign?”

---

### CULTURE NOTE

#### Airport Lounges

An “airport lounge” is a special room or “suite” (group of rooms) in an airport that only certain people have access to. Most lounges are owned by the airlines, and “frequent fliers” (people who fly often on a particular airline) can receive access to those lounges, which provide special services to make travel more enjoyable.

Typical lounges have comfortable chairs, large television screens, and Internet access. Some offer an “open bar” where travelers can get “complimentary” (free) drinks and snacks. A few lounges have large bathrooms where the travelers can take a shower, or beds where travelers can rest comfortably.

“These days” (recently), airlines are competing with each other by offering more “luxurious” (fancy; meeting people’s needs and desires) lounges. Some of these lounges include full “gourmet” (very nice food) restaurants with “celebrity chefs” (very famous cooks). Other “high-class” (fancy, special, and expensive) lounges offer “full” (complete; comprehensive) “spa services” such as massages, “manicures” (services to improve the appearance and health of one’s hands and fingernails), pedicures (services to improve the appearance and health of one’s feet and toenails), and “facials” (services to clean one’s face and improve the skin).

Other lounges offer “business centers” where business travelers can access printers, faxes, and other tools they need to “stay connected” (continue to communicate) with their office while traveling. The nicest lounges even offer their travelers “private offices” (offices with a door that closes). Lounge staff members can also help travelers make arrangements, such as restaurant reservations, “shuttle services” (transportation to and from the airport), and hotel reservations, as well as tours.

---

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



---

**ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays**

---

**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 746: Traveling Over the Holidays.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 746. 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 and take a look at some of the other courses we have on our website.

This episode is called "Traveling Over the Holidays." It's a dialogue between Sabrina and Ying using vocabulary that we might use in talking about traveling during a busy season such as Christmas or Thanksgiving. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Sabrina: You look like you're getting ready for battle.

Ying: In a way, I am. I'm flying home next week to be with my family over the holidays and you know what holiday travel is like.

Sabrina: I've flown during peak travel season before, and now, I try to avoid it at all costs.

Ying: Well, I can't this year, so I'm arming myself for the experience. I booked my flights back in September and I have my seat assignment. I'll print out my boarding passes before I head for the airport, and I'll keep checking the flight status to make sure the flight is on time.

Sabrina: I hope you don't have any tight connections.

Ying: I change planes in Chicago, but I have two hours in between flights. I'm hoping that'll be enough.

Sabrina: What's in that huge bag?

Ying: Those are my supplies. If I get snowed in or if my flight gets cancelled, I'm ready to spend the night in the airport.



## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

Sabrina: Wow, you really thought this out. You're ready for the worst-case scenario.

Ying: Forewarned and forearmed. You won't catch me napping!

[end of dialogue]

Sabrina begins by saying, "You look like you're getting ready for battle." "Battle" (battle) is when two people, or usually two groups of people are fighting, such as two different armies from different countries; it's a big fight. Sabrina says that Ying looks like he's getting ready for battle. Ying says, "In a way, I am." "In a way" means in some manner; sort of I am. "I'm flying home next week to be with my family over the holidays (that is, during the holidays) and you know what holiday travel is like." Holiday travel in the United States usually refers to the months of November and December. In late November we have the Thanksgiving holiday, and in December it's the Christmas and Hanukkah holidays. So when people refer to holiday travel, they're usually talking about one of those two events.

Sabrina says, "I've flown during the peak travel season before, and now, I try to avoid it at all costs." "Peak" (peak) is the highest part of something. We can talk about the peak of the mountain. There's a famous peak in Colorado called Pikes Peak. Well, this is the peak travel season, so it's the busiest travel time, and that is what Sabrina is talking about. She says that she's flown, meaning she has flown in an airplane – "flown" (flown) is the past participle of the verb "to fly." "I fly," "I flew," in the past, "I have flown." Well, Sabrina has flown during the travel season – the peak travel season – and now she tries to avoid it – get away from it – at all costs. "At all costs" means no matter what is required, regardless of how difficult or challenging it is. "I'm going to make sure I pass my test tomorrow at all costs." I'll do anything – well, almost anything – to pass my exam.

Sabrina tries to avoid traveling during the peak travel season at all costs. Ying says, "Well, I can't this year, so I'm arming myself for the experience." "To arm" (arm) as a verb means to prepare yourself by having all the necessary things you need. Usually, it refers to someone who is going to be fighting, and "to arm yourself" means to have a gun or perhaps a sword or a knife. In fact, we call things that you can use to harm other people – weapons – we often call them "arms," in the plural. The verb "to arm," then, means to have, to get yourself one of these weapons. Of course, Ying isn't actually bringing a gun on the plane; that's not allowed in most airlines. However, he is getting himself ready. He says, "I booked my flights back in September and I have my seat assignment." "To book" (book) means to make a reservation, to make arrangements. "I





## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

booked a flight,” that’s a very common expression meaning I made reservations on an airplane to go somewhere. “Flights” (flights) are trips on an airplane from one place to another. “Be careful you get to the airport on time so you don’t miss your flight.” That is, you don’t miss your airplane that is going to be leaving. So, “flight” can mean the travel between one place and another. Sometimes it’s used informally to mean simply the airplane that you are getting on. Of course, you can’t go somewhere unless you get on the airplane, so they’re related. Ying booked his flights back in September. “Back in” means way back, several months ago. Now it’s November or December; if he’s speaking about something that was a long time ago or a while ago, then you can use this expression “back in.” Back in the 1960s, when I was born, there were no podcasts. True!

Ying says that he has his seat assignment. In most airplanes they give you a specific seat to sit in. A “seat” is like a chair on an airplane. The airplane has different “rows,” lines of seats. Each row has a number, and each seat typically has a letter. So if you’re in 22A, you’re probably sitting in row 22; A is usually a window seat, a seat next to the window, and so forth. Ying says, “I’ll print out my boarding passes before I head for the airport.” A “boarding pass” is an official document, usually a piece of paper, although now some airlines – some companies have cell phone apps that you can use, but a boarding pass is sort of like your official ticket to get onto the plane. It’s not the same as the ticket, but it’s basically your permission to board the plane. “To board” means to get on an airplane. So, Ying has his boarding passes and he’s going to check his flight status to make sure the flight is on time. The “status” of something is the state or condition, the situation involving that thing. “Flight status” would be whether the plane will be leaving at the time it’s supposed to leave – on time – or whether it’s late.

Sabrina says, “I hope you don’t have any tight connections.” A “connection,” when we talk about airplane travel, is when you fly to one airport, you get off your plane, you get into a different plane, and travel to the next airport. So, it’s stopping in one airport on the way to another airport. So, if you’re flying from Los Angeles to New York, you may make a stop in Chicago, and you may have to change planes. That would be called “making a connection.” A “tight connection” is when you don’t have very much time to get the next flight. Let’s say you fly into Chicago at 12 o’clock noon, and you have to be on another plane leaving for Atlanta at 12:30. Well, you only have 30 minutes to get to your next plane; that would be a very tight connection.

Ying says, “I change planes in Chicago, but I have two hours in between flights.” So, he has lots of time before his next plane will leave. “I’m hoping that’ll be enough.” I’m hoping that will be enough time. Sabrina says, “What’s in that huge



## ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays

bag?” What’s in that huge piece of luggage, we might also say. Ying says, “Those are my supplies.” “Supplies” are the things you need to do something else; often it relates to food. Ying says, “If I get snowed in or my flight gets cancelled, I’m ready to spend the night at the airport.” If you are “snowed in” you are unable to leave the airport because it is snowing so much the planes can’t take off or land; they can’t leave the ground because there’s too much snow. “To have your flight canceled” means that the airplane will not go; the airline says no, we’re not going to fly that plane today. That is having your flight canceled. It’s a terrible thing; it happens, then you have to find a new plane to get on – a new flight to take.

Sabrina says, “Wow, you really thought this out.” “To think (something) out” is a phrasal verb meaning to spend a lot of time thinking about something: a problem, and how you’re going to solve it. Sabrina says, “You’re ready for the worst-case scenario.” A “scenario” is a possible situation, something that might happen. “Worst-case” would be the worst possible thing that could happen. So for example, if you are flying and you get snowed in and you can’t leave the airport for two days, that might be considered a worst-case scenario, a situation that would be the worst possible one you could have.

Ying says, “Forewarned and forearmed.” “To be forewarned” means that you know about something bad that’s going to happen before it happens; someone tells you, someone warns you. “Forearmed” means to be armed or to be prepared before it happens. The more common expression is “forewarned is forearmed,” if you know about it, then you can prepare for it. But it’s also possible to say, as Ying says, “forewarned and forearmed,” he’s both of those things. He knows something bad might happen and he’s prepared. He says, “You won’t catch me napping!” “To nap” (nap) means to sleep a short time usually some time in the middle of the day. In the afternoon, perhaps, you nap for 10 or 15 minutes. You go into a chair or lie down on a couch and you fall asleep. “To catch (someone) napping,” however, means to find someone who is sleeping and therefore unprepared. So the expression “to catch me napping” would mean to find me unprepared, to be in a difficult situation and I wasn’t ready for it. Ying says, “You won’t (you will not) catch me napping!” He will be, in other words, prepared.

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

[start of dialogue]

Sabrina: You look like you’re getting ready for battle.





---

**ESL Podcast 746 – Traveling Over the Holidays**

---

Ying: In a way, I am. I'm flying home next week to be with my family over the holidays and you know what holiday travel is like.

Sabrina: I've flown during peak travel season before, and now, I try to avoid it at all costs.

Ying: Well, I can't this year, so I'm arming myself for the experience. I booked my flights back in September and I have my seat assignment. I'll print out my boarding passes before I head for the airport, and I'll keep checking the flight status to make sure the flight is on time.

Sabrina: I hope you don't have any tight connections.

Ying: I change planes in Chicago, but I have two hours in between flights. I'm hoping that'll be enough.

Sabrina: What's in that huge bag?

Ying: Those are my supplies. If I get snowed in or if my flight gets cancelled, I'm ready to spend the night in the airport.

Sabrina: Wow, you really thought this out. You're ready for the worst-case scenario.

Ying: Forewarned and forearmed. You won't catch me napping!

[end of dialogue]

You won't catch our scriptwriter napping! She's always prepared with a wonderful script, the wonderful Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

English as a Second Language Podcast is written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan, copyright 2011 by the Center for Educational Development.