



GLOSSARY

clueless – unaware of what is happening; having no understanding or ability to deal with the world around one

* Marcus is clueless about what is happening with his employees while he is out of the office.[www.irLanguage.com]

permission – approval to do, have, or use something

* All of the students need their parents' permission before they can go on the field trip.

curfew – the time in the evening after which one must be home; the latest time that one is allowed to be outside of the home in the evening

* Does 10:00 p.m. seem like a reasonable curfew for a 16-year-old girl?

overprotective – taking care of someone too much; being too responsible for another person's safety and wellbeing, especially making decisions for that person

* Gregor is overprotective of his girlfriend. He won't let her walk anywhere alone at night.

unbelievable – impossible to believe; extremely unlikely; a word used to show one's shock and disapproval of another person's behavior or attitude

* Did you see that driver throw a big bag of trash out of the window? That's unbelievable!

to get on (one's) case – to bother someone by talking about what he or she is doing wrong; to nag

* My mother always gets on my case about how I dress just because I like to wear torn jeans and t-shirts with holes in them.

to nag – to repeatedly ask or remind someone to do something, in an annoying way

* Why do so many wives nag their husbands about putting down the toilet seat?

to complain – to express displeasure with something; to say that one is dissatisfied with something

* Several customers have complained about the loud music in our restaurant.

to pick out – to select; to choose

* Could you help me pick out a good paint color for the baby's bedroom?



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to compare – to consider how two things are similar or different; to determine which of two things is better

* You can't compare our house to theirs. The two houses are in completely different styles!

disappointment – a feeling of dissatisfaction when something is not as good as one hoped it would be

* We left the restaurant with a feeling of disappointment. The food had not been as good as we expected from reading the reviews.

to come up short – to not meet expectations; to disappoint

* That new employee seemed so well qualified, but her job performance really came up short.

satisfied – pleased, content, and fulfilled because something met one's expectations

* Were you satisfied with the service you received from our company?

attitude – outlook; perspective; how one views the world and reacts to it

* Miranda's attitude about her work and her life has gotten a lot worse. Do you think she's depressed?

to embarrass – to make someone feel self-aware and ashamed

* Brandon's parents embarrassed him by kissing him good-bye in front of his friends.

in public – in the presence of other people; where one can be seen by others; not in private

* Do you think it's appropriate to kiss and hold hands in public?

to suffer – to experience physical or emotional pain or discomfort

* Everyone suffers from the poor air quality in this factory town.



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COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Why does Winnie have to be home by 11:00 p.m.?
 - a) Because the busses don't run later than that.
 - b) Because she is very tired.
 - c) Because that is her parents' rule.

2. What does Finn mean when he says, "I'm always coming up short"?
 - a) He's disappointed that he isn't taller.
 - b) He isn't able to meet his parents' expectations.
 - c) He never has enough money to cover his expenses.

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

permission

The word "permission," in this podcast, means approval to do, have, or use something: "I can't believe my sister wore my new dress without my permission!" Or, "It's illegal to copy these files without permission." The phrase "express permission" means permission that is very clear and official, usually in writing: "The musician gave us her express permission to use her music at the political campaign event." The phrase "to apply for permission" means to officially request approval for something: "You'll need to fill out these forms to apply for permission to build on that lot." Finally, a "permit" is an official document giving permission to do something, usually given by a governmental office: "To post signs along the street, you'll need a permit from the city." [www.irLanguage.com]

to come up short

In this podcast, the phrase "to come up short" means to not meet expectations or to disappoint: "We had high hopes for the new salesperson, but his performance really came up short." The phrase "to come up short" also means to not have enough money: "We try to follow our budget, but we usually come up short at the end of the month." The phrase "to sell (someone or something) short" mean to underestimate or to believe that someone or something is worth less than he, she, or it really is: "Don't sell yourself short! You're a valued employee and you deserve a raise." Finally, the phrase "to fall short of (something)" means to be less than what one needed or wanted: "Unfortunately, our sales performance fell short of expectations."



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CULTURE NOTE

Emancipation of Minors

The word “emancipation” means setting someone free and is often used to talk about the end of “slavery” (a system in which people are bought and sold, and required to work without receiving payment). But we also use the term in the “emancipation of minors,” which is the process by which a “minor” (a child; someone under the age of 18) legally becomes independent and “beyond” (not affected by) the control of his or her parents. At the same time, the parents of an “emancipated minor” no longer have any “legal responsibilities” (legal requirements to care for someone) for the child.

In most states, a child who wants to be emancipated must “file” (submit) a “petition” (an official request) “demonstrating” (showing; proving) why the emancipation is in his or her “best interest” (will help the child and presents the best possible solution to a problem). The minors often have to demonstrate that they are “financially self-sufficient” (have enough money to pay for the things they need, without needing their parents’ money).

Emancipation sometimes happens when there is “child abuse” (repeated, damaging behavior and mistreatment of a child). In other cases there isn’t abuse, but the child believes that the parents’ rules are unfair and “harmful” (causing damage).

Some of the best-known cases of emancipation of minors are “celebrities” (famous people, especially actors and musicians). Child actors sometimes “seek” (look for; try to get) emancipation if they believe their parents are “stealing” (taking money without permission) from them. And other child actors seek emancipation so that “child labor laws” (laws that limit how many hours children may work) won’t apply to them, so that they can work more hours.

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



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COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,302 – Complaining about Parents.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,302. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California.

This episode is a dialogue between Winnie and Finn, who are both complaining about their parents. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Winnie: I can't believe it. My dad is so clueless.

Finn: What did he do now?

Winnie: He gave me permission to go to Gabi's party, but I have to be home by 11 p.m. because of my curfew.

Finn: At least he's letting you go. My mom is so overprotective that she won't let me go to any parties.

Winnie: Unbelievable! Do your parents get on your case all the time like mine do?

Finn: Yeah! My mom is always nagging me to do my homework and then complains that I spend too much time by myself in my room rather than with the family.

Winnie: At least your parents don't tell you what you can wear. My mom still wants to pick out my clothes! What am I, five?

Finn: My parents are worse. They're always comparing me to my smarter brothers. I'm a huge disappointment to them. I'm always coming up short.

Winnie: My parents are never satisfied either. They're always saying that my grades aren't good enough and my attitude needs improving.

Finn: At least your parents don't embarrass you by fighting all the time, even in public.



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Winnie: We have such hard lives. Nobody understands us.

Finn: I know. Nobody in history has ever suffered as much as we have!

[end of dialogue]

We begin our dialogue with Winnie saying, “I can’t believe it.” “I can’t believe it” is something we say when we are surprised or when something seems strange to us. Winnie says, “My dad” – my father – “is so clueless.” “To be clueless” (clueless) means not to understand the world around you, not to be aware of what is happening. Someone who is either not very intelligent, not very smart, or who isn’t paying attention could be described as clueless, especially when he does something that would indicate he doesn’t understand what is happening around him.

Finn asks Winnie, “What did he do now?” – what did her father do. Winnie responds, “He gave me permission to go to Gabi’s party, but I have to be home by 11 p.m. because of my curfew.” “Permission” (permission) is approval to do something or to have something. “Approval” means someone says, “Yes, you can do that.” Parents may give permission to their children to do certain things. Children, of course, are supposed to “obey” (obey) their parents – that is, do what their parents say. Not all children do that, I am told.

Winnie has been given permission by her father to go to Gabi’s party, but she has to return home by 11:00 at night because she has a “curfew” (curfew). “Curfew” is a time, usually in the evening, before which you have to be home. Parents often give their children, especially their teenage children, a curfew – a time at which they must return home so that they don’t get into trouble. Sometimes a government will have a curfew for its citizens, telling people they must be at home before a certain time.

Winnie has a curfew of 11 p.m., meaning she must be back at her house by 11:00 at night. We’re not sure how old Winnie and Finn are, but we’re guessing they are teenagers – somewhere between the ages of, say, 13 and 17. Finn says, “At least he’s letting you go,” meaning at least Winnie’s father is letting her go to this party. “To let someone go” is a phrasal verb meaning to give the person permission or approval.

Finn says, “My mom is so overprotective that she won’t let me go to any parties.” “To be protective” of someone means to try to take care of someone, to make sure that a person isn’t hurt in any way. “To be overprotective” (overprotective)



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means to go too far, to be too protective of someone, so much so that you are preventing that person perhaps from doing what he wants to do. The prefix “over” always means too much of something. So, “to overfill” your glass with water is to put too much water in your glass. “To overprotect” means to protect too much.

Winnie then says, “Unbelievable.” Something that is “unbelievable” could be something that is impossible to believe. However, Winnie is using this word to show how surprised she is by something, especially in a way that indicates that she disapproves or thinks it’s wrong. Winnie says, “Do your parents get on your case all the time like mine do?” “To get on someone’s case” (case) means to bother someone by telling him all the things he’s doing wrong. Another term for this is the verb “to nag” (nag), which comes up in the very next sentence.

Winnie that her parents “get on her case all the time,” meaning constantly. They’re always criticizing her or telling her what she is doing wrong. Finn says the same thing happens to him. Poor Finn. Finn says, “Yeah! My mom is always nagging me to do my homework.” “To nag” is similar to “to get on your case,” however, “to nag” usually has the meaning of to be reminding someone all the time about something he is supposed to do.

A wife may “nag” her husband to do the dishes. If the husband doesn’t do them when she asks him to do them, she may say, “Could you please do the dishes now,” and then 10 minutes later, “When are you going to do the dishes?” and then 20 minutes later, “How come you haven’t done the dishes yet?” That would be “to nag.” Of course, a husband can nag a wife as well, though he won’t remain her husband very long if he does. [www.irLanguage.com]

In any case, Finn is complaining about his mother nagging him to do his “homework” – that is, the work that he is supposed to do from the classes he takes at school. Finn says his mother nags him to do his homework and then complains that he spends too much time by himself in his room.

Finn says his mother “complains.” “To complain” (complain) means to show that you are unhappy about something, to say what you don’t like about a certain person or a certain thing or a situation. Finn’s mother complains that Finn spends too much time by himself in his room rather than being with his family, although she also tells him he is supposed to do his homework. So, he’s a little confused and I understand that.

Winnie says, “At least your parents don’t tell you what you can wear. My mom still wants to pick out my clothes!” Winnie complains that her mother “wants to pick out,” or select, or choose her clothing. “To pick out” is a two-word phrasal



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verb meaning to select. She then tries to be funny by saying, “What am I, five?” meaning “Does she think I’m five years old and I need for her to pick out my clothing?”

Finn says, “My parents are worse. They’re always comparing me to my smarter brothers.” “To compare” means to show how two different things are similar, although we would sometimes use this also to mean to show how they are different. Some people use a different verb, “to contrast” (contrast), to mean to show how two things are different. “To compare” would mean to show how they are similar, but in conversational English, we often use “to compare” to mean either to show how things are the same or how they are different.

Finn’s parents compare him to his more intelligent or “smarter” brothers. “I’m a huge disappointment to them,” he says. “To be a disappointment” means to not do as well as someone hopes that you will do, or to not be as smart, in this case, as your parents hoped that you would be. Many of us are disappointments to our parents, I’m sure, just as our parents were probably disappointments to their parents.

Finn says, “I’m always coming up short.” The expression “to come up short” means to disappoint, not to be as good as someone expects you to be. It can also mean to get fewer points than you need to win a game. If we say that the Los Angeles Dodgers tried very hard to win their game but “came up short,” we mean they didn’t have a high enough score to win the game.

Winnie says, “My parents are never satisfied either.” “To be satisfied” (satisfied) means to be happy. It’s the opposite of “disappointed.” It means that you are happy because someone met your expectations. You are pleased, or we might say you are “content” (content). Winnie says that her parents are always saying that her “grades,” her marks at school, “aren’t good enough” and that her “attitude needs improving.” “Attitude” (attitude) means how you view the world or how you react to things. Teenagers often have a poor attitude in the minds of their parents.

Finn says, “At least your parents don’t embarrass you by fighting all the time, even in public.” Notice that several times in this dialogue, our characters say “at least.” This is often used as a way of introducing a statement that will be even worse than the situation that you just described. For example, someone may say, “I’m really tired and I have to work all day.” Someone else will say, “Well, at least you get to go home to a nice house when you’re done working. I have to work all day and I have to go visit my mother-in-law when I’m done working.” He’s saying that his situation is even worse than your bad situation.



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Finn says that his situation is worse than Winnie's because his parents "embarrass" him. "To embarrass" (embarrass) means to make another person feel strange or ashamed or self-conscious. People often talk about "being embarrassed," meaning that they feel strange because they're in a situation where perhaps they are shown to be unusual or uncomfortable. Finn's parents embarrass him by fighting, by disagreeing, "even in public," meaning when other people they don't know are around or are present in the same room.

Winnie says, "We have such hard lives," meaning we have very difficult lives. "Nobody understands us." Finn says, "I know. Nobody in history," meaning no one ever before this time, "has ever suffered as much as we have." "To suffer" (suffer) means to experience some pain, either physical or in this case emotional. Winnie and Finn, like many teenagers, believe that their lives are the most difficult lives anyone has ever had to live.

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

[start of dialogue]

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[end of dialogue]

We're hoping you're satisfied with the wonderful scripts written by our scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

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