



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

GLOSSARY

to recruit – to get someone to enroll or participate in an organization, company, or activity

* How did you recruit so many qualified applicants for the high school science teacher position?

puny – very small and weak

* He has the puniest arm muscles I've ever seen!



humungous – extremely large; huge; gigantic

* That's a humungous serving of pasta! There's no way one person could eat all that.

massive – very large; very big and heavy

* The interviewers sat behind a massive marble desk as each applicant entered the room to be interviewed.[www.irLanguage.com]

size – a measure of how large or small something is

* Is this shirt available in a medium size?

to crush – to destroy and ruin; to beat very badly; to win by a lot

* Our team was crushed in last year's tournament, but we're hoping to play better this year.

teeny-tiny – very small; extremely tiny

* This teeny-tiny pill is extremely powerful. Be careful to only take one within 12 hours.

to break a sweat – to work hard; to exert a lot of effort

* Sheila can run 10 miles without breaking a sweat.

gigantic – very large; huge

* The city bought a gigantic statue of Abraham Lincoln and placed it in front of the state capitol.

to not smell right – to seem suspicious; to give the impression that something is wrong or dishonest

* Those sales figures seem too high. Something doesn't smell right. Can you check them for me?



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

to come down to – to be as simple as; a phrase used when presenting something as a simple explanation

* A lot of people have detailed theories about picking numbers, but winning the lottery comes down to luck.

ringer – an athlete used to substitute for another player to gain an advantage against the rules

* The coach was tired of losing every game and decided to put two ringers on the team who are older than is allowed.

to gravitate toward – to be attracted and drawn toward something; to be very interested in and to want to have or do something

* As the speaker ended her talk, everyone gravitated toward the buffet.

coaching – training, especially in athletics; instructions in how to play a sport or perform some other physical activity

* When Ivan won a gold medal, Jennifer felt that all of the years she spent coaching him was worthwhile.

to be schooled – to be taught a lesson; to be punished and/or shown in an aggressive way how one has been wrong in the past

* Remember to change your passwords regularly, or you're going to be schooled by hackers and identity thieves.

pep talk – a short, encouraging, motivational speech before an important game or competition

* The coach ends all his pep talks by saying, "Now go out there and win!"

to bolt – to run away very quickly and suddenly

* The bride stood outside of the church when suddenly she bolted and ran away.

to throw up – to vomit; for the contents of one's stomach to come up and out through one's mouth when one is sick or very nervous or frightened

* I think I would throw up if I tried to eat insects.



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS



1. Which of these are the biggest?
 - a) Puny players
 - b) Teeny-tiny players
 - c) Gigantic players

 2. Why does Shannon need to give a pep talk?
 - a) Because some of her players are scared and want to leave
 - b) Because some of her players are starting to cry
 - c) Because some of her players are too tired to play
-

WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

size

The word “size,” in this podcast, means a measure of how large or small something is: “An apartment of this size should offer more than enough space for a family of four.” The phrase “to size (something or someone) up” means to assess or judge something or someone: “Within a few moments of entering the room, Jake had already sized up the situation and decided what to do.” Food that is bite-size can be placed in one’s mouth without first cutting it with a knife or with one’s teeth: “Make sure all the appetizers are bite-size so that guests won’t have to cut anything while they’re standing with their plates.” Finally, the phrase “palm-size” means able to fit on one’s open hand: “The government agency says that an appropriate serving of meat is palm-size.”

to bolt

In this podcast, the verb “to bolt” means to run away very quickly and suddenly: “The horse was frightened by the loud noises and bolted across the field.” The phrase “to make a bolt for it” means to try to escape: “When the prison guard looked away, the criminal made a bolt for it.” A “bolt of lightning” or a “thunderbolt” is a line of white light in the sky during a storm: “Wow! Did you see that bolt of lightning hit the tree?” Finally, the phrase “to sit bolt upright” means to sit with a very straight back and a tall neck, especially when one is afraid: “The teacher spoke sternly and angrily, making even the laziest students sit bolt upright.”



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

CULTURE NOTE

Clothing Stores for Large or Small People

Most “department stores” (large stores that have for sale clothing and household items, usually within a shopping mall) carry clothes for “standard” (typical; the most common) sizes. But people who are larger or smaller sometimes have to shop at specialized stores that offering clothing in their sizes.

For example, large men often need to shop at a “big and tall store.” These stores “carry” (have in stock; sell) clothing that is designed for very large and/or very tall men. Their clothing typically has sizes up to 10X (XL is extra large, XXL is extra extra large, etc.). Men shop here knowing that they’ll be able to find shirts that don’t “end shy of” (stop before) their “wrists” (the part of the body between the hand and the arm).

Large women might choose to shop at “plus size stores” where all the clothing is size 18 and above. Some women choose to shop in these clothing stores because they feel embarrassed shopping “alongside” (next to) smaller women at department stores and other clothing stores. But other women simply like knowing that everything they see in the store is available in their size.

Other specialty stores “cater to” (are intended for use by; serve a particular audience of) women who are “petite” (very small, with small bones). Some of these stores are only for women who are 5’2” (five feet, two inches) tall or less. These boutiques often have a “tailor” (a person who sews) who can “alter” (change the fit of by sewing) clothing to make it fit better or more attractively.

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



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 1,301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 1,301. 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 Ian and Shannon about describing the size of something. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Ian: Oh, look at your team. How cute! You've recruited the puniest players you could find.

Shannon: Are those your players? They're humungous!

Ian: My players are the best around. They're massive in size and massive in talent. They'll crush your teeny-tiny team without breaking a sweat.

Shannon: Our teams are supposed to have players from the same age group, so why is it that I have normal-size players and yours are gigantic? Something doesn't smell right.

Ian: It all comes down to recruitment. I recruited the best players.

Shannon: Are you sure you don't have a few ringers on your team, some who are a few years older than they're supposed to be?

Ian: Of course I don't. I can't help it if the best players gravitated toward my team and to my better coaching. Ready to be schooled?

Shannon: I think I'd better give my team a pep talk first. A few of them look like they're ready to bolt – or throw up!

[end of dialogue]

Ian begins our dialogue by saying to Shannon, "Oh, look at your team. How cute!" Normally the word "cute" is used to mean attractive in some way, but here Ian is using it sarcastically – that is, he's using it in the opposite way we normally



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

do in order to be funny. He says, “You’ve recruited the puniest players you could find.” We soon learn that Ian and Shannon are coaches, or managers of some sort of sports team.

Ian says to Shannon that she has “recruited the puniest players.” “To recruit” (recruit) means to get someone to participate in an organization, a company, or – as is the case in our dialogue – a team. “To recruit” someone means to go and try to persuade that person to join your group. Ian says that Shannon has “recruited the puniest (puniest) players.” “Puniest” is the superlative form of “puny” (puny), which means very small and weak. “Puny” would describe a person or perhaps an animal who was, or that was, very small and weak.

Shannon asks, “Are those your players? They’re humungous!” “Humungous” (humungous) is a funny sounding word that means extremely large. We might also say “huge” (huge). A “humongous player” would be someone who’s very tall and perhaps muscular or strong. Ian says, “My players are the best around,” meaning the best anywhere. “They’re massive in size and massive in talent.” Something that is “massive” (massive) is something that is very large, very big, perhaps also very heavy – something that weighs a lot. [www.irLanguage.com]

Ian says his players are “massive in size,” meaning how big they are, “and massive in talent,” meaning how good they are at what they do, how good they are as players of this game. He says, “They’ll,” meaning his players, “crush your teeny-tiny team without breaking a sweat.” “Crush” (crush) as a verb means to destroy or to ruin something. In this case, however, it means to win a competition by a large score, or to beat another team very badly so that you win with a much higher score than the other team.

Ian says his players will crush Shannon’s “teeny-tiny team.” “Teeny (teeny) – tiny (tiny)” means very small. The word “tiny” by itself means extremely small. So, “teeny-tiny” means really, really, really small. It’s not a common term, “teeny-tiny,” but you will hear people use it to describe something that is very, very small. Ian is describing Shannon’s team as “teeny-tiny.”

He says his players will beat them “without breaking (breaking) a sweat (sweat).” “Sweat” is the water or the liquid that comes out of your body when you are very hot, perhaps because you are working a lot. “To break a sweat” means to start sweating because you are working a lot, you are working hard. Ian is saying that his team will beat Shannon’s team “without breaking a sweat,” meaning that they won’t have to work very hard because they are so much better than Shannon’s team.



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

Shannon says, “Our teams are supposed to have players from the same age group,” meaning about the same age. “So why is it that I have normal-size players and yours are gigantic?” “Gigantic” (gigantic) means very large, huge. It means the same in this case as “humungous” or “massive.” Shannon is wondering why, if the players on their teams are supposed to be about the same age, why Ian’s players are so much bigger than hers.

She says, “Something doesn’t smell right.” The expression “Something doesn’t smell (smell) right” means something is suspicious. The verb “to smell” is normally used to talk about the ability to detect or to sense the odor of something using your nose. Your nose smells; your eyes see. But when someone says, “Something doesn’t smell right,” he means there’s something wrong with this situation. There’s something suspicious about what is happening here, something isn’t right.

Ian says, “It all comes down to recruitment.” The expression for something “to come down to” something else means it is a simple explanation, or the main reason something is true is because of this or that. We could say, for example, “Doing well at school comes down to studying hard,” or doing all of the reading required. That would be the simplest explanation for why or how something is successful.

Ian says his success, the reason he has such big players, “comes down to recruitment.” “Recruitment” is the noun that comes from the verb “to recruit.” He means that he went out and got the best players. He says, “I recruited the best players.” Shannon asks, “Are you sure you don’t have a few ringers on your team?” A “ringer” (ringer) is usually an athlete, someone who plays a sport, who is not eligible or shouldn’t actually be on that team, usually because the player is too old to be on that team.

If you want to play basketball with your friends and you brought a professional basketball player with you as a member of your team, the other team would say, “Well, he’s a ringer.” He doesn’t belong here. He’s, in this case, not qualified because he’s obviously not the same level or he’s not at the same level as the rest of the players. Ian says, “Of course I don’t,” meaning I don’t have any players here who are ringers.

It does happen in American sports – in amateur sports, especially for children and teenagers – that some teams try to get players who are actually too old to be on that particular team. Ian says he’s not doing that. He says, “I can’t help it,” meaning it’s not my fault or I’m not to blame, “if the best players gravitated



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

toward my team and to my better coaching.” The expression “to gravitate (gravitate) toward” something means to be interested in and want to have something to do with – or in this case, want to join this team.

He says the best players went to his team and to his “better coaching.” “To coach” (coach) means to give instructions to another person to help that person do something better. That’s often used to describe the leader of the team – that’s the coach. He or she is the person who doesn’t play on the team but helps the team be a better team, tells the team what to do.

Nowadays we use this term “coach” outside of the world of sports. You could have a “business coach” or a “podcast coach” – someone who helps you do better what you want to do. Ian says then to Shannon, “Ready to be schooled?” “To be schooled” means to be taught a lesson. Often it is used to mean to be shown in a somewhat aggressive way how you are wrong, or to be proven wrong.

Shannon says, “I think I’d better give my team a pep talk first.” A “pep (pep) talk” is when you talk to your team to try to get them more excited about playing, to motivate them. In American high schools, often before a big game, an important game such as a football game, the entire school will come together and have what’s called a “pep rally” (rally). [www.irLanguage.com]

My high school used to have these every year. The pep rally would be all of the students coming together in the gym and the athletic team would be there and we would all yell and shout and try to give the team motivation to play well in that game, whatever it was. It sounds a little silly, but it is quite common in American high schools, or at least it used to be. Also quite common is a coach giving a pep talk to his team to get them motivated.

Shannon wants to give a pep talk to her team. She says, “A few of them look like they’re ready to bolt – or throw up!” “To bolt” (bolt) means to run away quickly and suddenly. Perhaps Shannon’s players are afraid of Ian’s team’s players. She says some look like they’re ready to bolt, and some look like they’re ready “to throw up.” “To throw up” is a two-word phrasal verb meaning here “to vomit” – for the contents or what’s inside of your stomach to come out through your mouth. If you’re very scared, of course, that might happen.

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

[start of dialogue]



ESL Podcast 1301 – Describing Very Large and Small Sizes

Ian: Oh, look at your team. How cute! You've recruited the puniest players you could find.

Shannon: Are those your players? They're humungous!

Ian: My players are the best around. They're massive in size and massive in talent. They'll crush your teeny-tiny team without breaking a sweat.

Shannon: Our teams are supposed to have players from the same age group, so why is it that I have normal-size players and yours are gigantic? Something doesn't smell right.

Ian: It all comes down to recruitment. I recruited the best players.

Shannon: Are you sure you don't have a few ringers on your team, some who are a few years older than they're supposed to be?

Ian: Of course I don't. I can't help it if the best players gravitated toward my team and to my better coaching. Ready to be schooled?

Shannon: I think I'd better give my team a pep talk first. A few of them look like they're ready to bolt – or throw up!

[end of dialogue] [www.irLanguage.com]

If you want a massive vocabulary, I suggest you listen to the wonderful scripts written by our wonderful scriptwriter, Dr. Lucy Tse.

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

English as a Second Language Podcast was written and produced by Dr. Lucy Tse, hosted by Dr. Jeff McQuillan. Copyright 2017 by the Center for Educational Development.