

Transcript - Episode 1

Introduction

Welcome to Sozo Exchange, the place where professional adults can learn practical English for free. My name is Sarah MacKay, and I am your host.

We have a lot of fun things to learn in today's show. First of all, we have a very special featured guest, Martin Durazo, a talented visual artist from Los Angeles. As we watch his interview footage, we will learn new English expressions as he talks about his art. After we talk with Martin, we'll discuss body language, American slang, and pronunciations. Then we'll finish off with a flash card exercise so you can review some of the key English expressions we'll learn today.

Interview

Host: We interviewed Martin at the Harris Gallery at the University of La Verne where his artwork was exhibited. First, let's ask Martin our question.

Slide: If you were to choose one adjective to describe your artwork, what would that be and why?

Guest: I think of the word, "exploratory". Uhm, my work is meant to be examined and looked at. And, ultimately, I want to suggest to people...to live life like that... discover, constantly look, and examine, and enjoy what they see.

Host: "Exploratory," I like that. This adjective may not be something people use often in their daily casual conversations, but it's a good word to remember for professional or more sophisticated conversations. It comes from the verb "explore." If you explore an area, you travel around it to discover what is there. You might remember from your history class, Marco Polo was an explorer who traveled the Silk Road to China.

In addition to exploring physical locations, you can also explore ideas. For example, you may explore possibilities for improvement by closely examining an existing situation. In this case, the word "explore" means to think about new ways to improve. You can also explore other intangible things such as the meaning of life, emotions, spirituality or other abstract ideas.

Let's ask Martin another question.

Slide : Could you choose a verb that best describes yourself?

Guest: I would have to say the word, "run". Uhm, for me... I am always working on something or thinking about something. So, either mentally or physically, I am always on the run.

Host: I really like the phrase "on the run." I am a bit like Martin in the sense that I'm always working or thinking about something. So, either mentally or physically, I'm always on the run.

Generally, people have positive associations when they hear that phrase. In other words, people usually think of good, upbeat things when they hear the phrase “on the run.” However, that phrase can easily become a negative thing when the word “from” is added to the end of the phrase. That one word, “from,” completely changes the entire phrase’s meaning. For example, my former boss was on the run from the law after they discovered he had embezzled ten million dollars from the company. If you are running from something, it usually means you’re in trouble. We have one final question for Martin.

Slide: Do you have a favorite saying or proverb?

Guest: Uhm... It's a poem, by Muhammad Ali. It's very short. It's only two words. And it goes like this. “Me, we.” I think it's great because it suggests unity with universe.

Host: As you all probably know, Muhammad Ali is a famous, retired American boxer. He used to be a world heavyweight champion in the sport, and is greatly respected as one of the best athletes of all time.

Ali’s poem, that Martin quoted, is very short yet profound. The word “profound” means deeply insightful or understanding. In this case, it means that the poem goes beneath the surface and penetrates deeply into the subject. My interpretation of the poem’s meaning is that we are all one. We, all people, are unified because we live on this planet. When there is unity, people are joined together by something, or agree on something and act together for that particular purpose.

In his work, Martin uses manufactured objects to depict the ephemeral nature of our materialistic world. The phrase “manufactured objects” refers to things that are already made by companies, such as tires, lights, glass panes, speakers and so on. So, again, Martin utilizes these objects to highlight the ephemeral nature of our materialistic world. “Ephemeral” means short-lived or fleeting, so when we describe something as “ephemeral” it means it only lasts for a short period of time. “Temporary” and “ephemeral” are synonyms, but “ephemeral” has a more poetic and emotional tone than the word “temporary.”

Body Language

Speaking of materialism in the world, today’s body language lesson is about money. In the United States, people rub their thumb against their middle and index fingers, like this, to mean “money.” I know in some Asian countries, when people make a circle with their thumb and index finger like this, it means money. But, in the U.S., this gesture usually means “okay” as in “okay, that sounds good” or “okay, I understand what you mean.”

Slang of the Day

We’ll continue with the money theme in our next segment, Slang of the Day. In American English, there are many slang words for money such as buck, dough or moolah. You’ll hear these slang words a lot, but today, I would like to introduce you to a more modern slang word for money, “Benjamin.” “Benjamin” usually means a \$100 bill. As you may know, our \$100 bill has a picture of Benjamin Franklin on the front. He is a former president of the United States. While “Benjamin” usually means a \$100

bill, it is sometimes used to describe money in general, regardless of the denomination.

How To Pronounce It

Host: The next segment is called "How To Pronounce it". We are gonna practice the pronunciations of certain English words which many non-native speakers find difficult. Today's word is 'Exploratory'. This word is difficult to pronounce because it consists of a plosive 'P' sound, immediately followed by 'L' and 'R' sounds. Please pay close attention to how I use my lips, teeth, jaw, tongue, and facial muscles to say the word, 'Exploratory'.

[Demonstration: Exploratory]

Flash Cards

We covered a lot of new expressions today. In this Flash Card segment, you will have a chance to review what we've learned in today's show. We'll show you a series of flash cards with definitions on them. You can then say your answer, the word or phrase, out loud. So, all you need to do is listen to and read the definition on the flash card and then say your answer, okay? If you're a little confused and don't understand how it works yet, don't worry. Once you do this flash card exercise once, you'll understand.

Flash Card 1:

Q: To travel over an area to discover what is there

A: Explore.

Flash Card 2:

Q: Always on the go; constantly doing something, either physically or mentally

A: On the run.

Flash Card 3:

Q: Deeply insightful or understanding; beneath the superficial level

A: Profound.

Flash Card 4:

Q: Joined together by something; acting together for a particular purpose

A: Unified.

Flash Card 5:

Q: Lasting a short period of time; fleeting or short-lived

A: Ephemeral.

Flash Card 6:

Q: To rub your thumb against your index and middle fingers is the body language symbol for:

A: Money

Flash Card 7:

Q: American slang word for a \$100 bill.

A: Benjamin

All right, great job with those flash cards! The artwork pictures shown between the flash cards were created by our talented featured guest, Martin Durazo.

Ending

Before we go, I have a fun assignment for you. Spend some time thinking about your adjective, the adjective that best describes you as a person. I bet this exercise is going to be both fun and difficult. I actually spent some time thinking about it beforehand. My adjective is "curious" because I'm always looking to explore new ideas, projects and areas of life.

Don't forget to visit our website at www.sozoexchange.com where you can download a complete transcript of today's show as well as audio exercises and a study guide. You can also participate in our online survey right there at our website.

Thanks for spending time with us today, and remember to think about your adjective. See you next time!