



**Using English at Work**  
Lesson 1 – Arriving at Work

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**SCRIPT**

I woke up this morning and thought, “TGIF!” I have been looking forward to the weekend and all I need to do is to get through one more day of work.

I drive to work and pull into the parking lot next to my office building. I stop at the security gate. I put my key card into the card reader and the security arm goes up. I drive into the parking structure and find a parking spot. I make sure that my parking permit is showing in the windshield and I lock up. I get my briefcase out of the back seat and walk toward the building. It’s a short walk and I’m there in no time.

When I get there, I take out my badge and put it around my neck before I go through the main entrance of the building. Employees are supposed to wear their badges at all times at work so that the security guards know that we belong there. One day last week, I forgot my badge at home and I had to get a visitor’s pass for the day. My coworker made fun of me all day. He kept asking me if he could get me some coffee and when I was leaving. What a joker!

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**GLOSSARY**

**TGIF** – “thank goodness it’s Friday”; a phrase used on Fridays to show that one is happy that the weekend is coming

\* This week has been difficult, but this weekend should be a lot of fun. TGIF!

**parking lot** – a paved area near a building where cars can be parked

\* The parking lot next to the office was full, so I had to park two streets away.

**security gate** – a metal bar or door that stops cars and people from entering an area unless they have permission

\* The U.S. president lives in the White House, which has security gates at all of the entrances.

**key card** – a small, rectangular piece of plastic for identification that electronically tells a machine whether the person should be allowed to do something

\* At the World Bank, people must have their key cards with them all the time, so they wear them on strings around their necks.



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**card reader** – a machine that electronically “reads” plastic cards and decides whether a person should be allowed to do something

\* If you pass your card through the card reader too quickly, it might not read it correctly.

**security arm** – a long and heavy metal or wooden bar that blocks a road, but can be moved up to let people drive by if they have permission

\* The driver didn’t see that the security arm was down, so she drove into it and broke it.

**parking structure** – a concrete building with many floors for cars to park on

\* Whenever Gisela parks in a parking structure, she always forgets which floor her car is on.

**parking spot** – a place for one car to be parked, usually marked with painted white or yellow lines

\* The president of the company has a private parking spot near the building’s entrance, but the rest of us have to drive around looking for a spot.

**parking permit** – a piece of paper or plastic that gives a person permission to park his or her car in a specific area

\* At many universities, students have to pay more than \$50 per month to get a parking permit.

**windshield** – the glass window in the front of a car that lets the driver see where the car is going

\* A small rock hit Kayla’s windshield while she was driving behind a large truck yesterday, but fortunately the glass didn’t break.

**to lock up** – to lock the door on one’s car or home; to close the locks on the doors to one’s car or home so that other people cannot get in without a key

\* Did you remember to lock up your house before you came to work this morning?

**in no time** – very quickly; with very little delay; right away

\* If you work hard you can finish your homework in no time.

**badge** – a piece of identification, usually with a photograph, that shows that a person works at a specific organization or business

\* If you have a question about something at a museum, you should look for an employee who’s wearing a badge.



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**main entrance** – the front door to a building; the primary place for people to enter a building

\* National Geographic's main entrance is on M Street, but you can enter through 16<sup>th</sup> Street or 17<sup>th</sup> Street, too.

**at all times** – all the time; always

\* When you are in a big city in another country, I suggest paying attention to what is happening around you at all times.

**security guard** – a person who decides who can and cannot enter a building for safety reasons

\* The security guard lost his job because he fell asleep while he should have been watching the entrance.

**visitor's pass** – a piece of paper or a badge that lets a visitor enter a building where he or she does not work, usually because he or she has a meeting there

\* Please give your visitor's pass back to the guard when you leave the building.

**to make fun of (someone)** – to laugh at someone or to make other people laugh at someone in a way that isn't very nice

\* When Jeremiah gave the wrong answer, his classmate made fun of him and all of the other students laughed.



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**COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT**

ESLPod.com presents “Using English at Work,” a special 10-episode course to teach you the English that people use in a typical day at work. I’m Dr. Jeff McQuillan, from the Center for Educational Development in beautiful Los Angeles, California. I’ll be your host for this series.

In this course, each lesson has three parts. First, we will hear a story read slowly, talking about a part of my day at work. Second, I will explain the vocabulary we used in the story, providing examples of how the new words should be used. Third, we will hear another version of the story, this time at a normal pace – a normal speed. To give you a chance to hear different voices speaking English the voice used in the stories is not my voice, although it is a story about me and my day at work.

Are you ready? Let’s begin with lesson one: Arriving at Work.

[start of script]

I woke up this morning and thought, “TGIF!” I have been looking forward to the weekend and all I need to do is to get through one more day of work.

I drive to work and pull into the parking lot next to my office building. I stop at the security gate. I put my key card into the card reader and the security arm goes up. I drive into the parking structure and find a parking spot. I make sure that my parking permit is showing in the windshield and I lock up. I get my briefcase out of the back seat and walk toward the building. It’s a short walk and I’m there in no time.

When I get there, I take out my badge and put it around my neck before I go through the main entrance of the building. Employees are supposed to wear their badges at all times at work so that the security guards know that we belong there. One day last week, I forgot my badge at home and I had to get a visitor’s pass for the day. My coworker made fun of me all day. He kept asking me if he could get me some coffee and when I was leaving. What a joker!

[end of script]

I began by saying that when I woke up, I thought, “TGIF!” “TGIF” is an “acronym,” meaning that each letter is the first letter of another word. “TGIF” (all capital letters) means “Thank goodness it’s Friday.” Some people also say “Thank God it’s Friday.” People say “TGIF” on Fridays to show that they are



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happy that the weekend is coming. I said that I have been looking forward to the weekend and that all I need to do is get through, or to be able to finish, one more day of work. So the day I am talking about must be Friday.

Then I drive to work and “pull into,” or enter, a parking lot. A “parking lot” is a flat, area where cars can be parked, usually if the driver pays a little bit of money. In the United States, many businesses have parking lots in front of or behind their buildings. In this case, the parking lot is next to my office building. I stop my car at the security gate. A “security gate” is a metal bar or a door that goes across a road and stops cars and people from entering an area unless they have permission to do so. There are security gates in front of most military buildings, for example, so that only soldiers or members of the military can go in. Most areas that charge for parking (where you have to pay for the parking) have some sort of security gate to stop you from going in without paying or without permission.

When my car is stopped in front of the security gate I put my key card into the card reader. A “key card” is a rectangular piece of plastic, like a driver’s license or a credit card, which is used for identification and electronically tells a machine when someone should be allowed to do something. Many businesses have key cards instead of the normal metal key to get into rooms or buildings. In this case, the key card lets me pass through the security gates. A “card reader” is a machine that electronically “reads” the key card and decides whether a person should be allowed to do something. The card reader is able to look at the electronic information on the card and determine if I should be let in (if I can go in or not). We use card readers for many things; when you buy food or groceries with a credit card, in many American supermarkets you have to put your credit card into or through a card reader at the store. When I put my key card into the card reader at work, the security arm goes up. A “security arm” is a long, heavy metal or wood bar that blocks a road, but it can be moved up to let people drive by if they have permission. So, it’s a kind of security gate. In the movies, bad people sometimes drive quickly so that their cars will break through the security arms, but in usual life we usually wait for the guard or the machine to lift the security arm and let us drive into the parking lot.

Next I drive into the parking structure. A “parking structure” is a large concrete building with many floors (or levels) for cars to park on. Large cities have many parking structures because there are many cars that need to park on a small piece of land. Many people don’t like parking structures, because it’s difficult to find your car if you forget which floor (or level) you are parked on. I do this all the time! I drive into the parking structure and I find a parking spot. A “parking spot” is a place for one car to be parked; it’s usually marked with white or yellow



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painted lines. Sometimes it is very difficult to find a parking spot in the city and people have to drive for a long time until you find one. But I don't have that problem, so I pull in, or drive into the parking spot.

I make sure that my parking permit is showing in the windshield. A "parking permit" is a piece of paper or plastic that gives a person permission to park his or her car in a specific area. A "permit" allows you to do something; the verb is "to permit." Notice when we use it as a noun, the accent is on the first syllable: "permit," when we use it as a verb, the accent is on the second syllable: "permit." So, this is a parking permit that permits me to park in a certain place. Many universities have one color of parking permit for professors and another color for students. This way, the universities can let the professors park closer to the buildings and the students have to park farther away. I hated this when I was a student, but of course I loved it when I worked as a professor. I said that my parking permit is showing in the windshield, this means you can see it in or through the windshield. A "windshield" is a large glass window in the front of a car that a driver looks through to see where he or she is going. My parking permit has to be seen through the windshield so that if a guard walks by, he or she will know that I have permission to park my car there. If I don't have permission, my car may be towed (towed). If your car is "towed," the company brings a truck and they take it away, and then you have to pay extra money to get it back, so you don't want to do that. Next I take my briefcase out of the back seat, the second row of seats in the car is called the "back seat." A "briefcase" is a small container or bag that people use to carry their work papers in.

Then I lock up the car. "To lock up" means to use a key to close the locks on the doors of one's car or home so that other people cannot get in without a key. You probably lock up your house before you go to sleep at night. Well, I am locking up my car before I go into the office so no one steals it. Here I could also just say "lock" – I "lock" my car, but we often say "lock up" (two words) to add more emphasis to the sentence. After I lock up my car, I walk toward the building. It's a short walk and I'm there in no time. The phrase "in no time" means very quickly, right away, or with very little delay. If you listen to ESL Podcast premium courses like this, you'll learn new vocabulary in no time, or very quickly.

When I get to the office building, I take out my badge and put it around my neck. "To take out" means to remove from something, such as remove it from my briefcase. A "badge" (badge) is a piece of identification, usually or often with a photograph, that shows that a person works for a specific organization or business. A badge is something that you wear so people can see it. In this case, I put it around my neck; it is hanging from my neck. Usually, there's a piece of string or some other fabric that holds the badge. Police officers always



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have badges that they keep in their pocket. If someone knocks on your door and they say that they are police officers, you may ask them to show their badge before you allow them into your house.

I put my badge around my neck so that people can see it and then I go through the main entrance of the building. A “main entrance” is the front door of a building, or the primary place where people enter a building that has more than one entrance. A main entrance is usually bigger and perhaps nicer or more beautiful than the other entrances. Where I work, the employees (or the people who work at the company) are supposed to show their badges at all times. The phrase “at all times” means always or all the time. For example, parents want to know where their children are at all times. At my office, people are supposed to wear their badges at all times so that the security guards know that we belong there. A “security guard” is a person who decides who can and cannot enter a building for safety reasons. Security guards are popular at many U.S. companies, to protect the employees. They usually wear uniforms, they look a little like police officers but they are not; they are private guards. Sometimes in American businesses security guards will have guns.

I said that one day last week I forgot my badge at home, meaning that I forgot to bring it to work. That day, I had to get a visitor’s pass. A “visitor’s pass” is a piece of paper that lets a visitor enter a building where he or she does not work, usually because he or she has a meeting there. A pass is similar to a permit; it allows you to do something, to enter somewhere. To get a visitor’s pass, you usually walk into the building and tell the security guard that you have a meeting with someone. The security guard calls that person to confirm that you do, in fact, have a meeting, and then gives you a visitor’s pass, which might be a sticker that you put on your clothes or a badge to wear on your shirt. When I had to get a visitor’s pass, my coworker made fun of me all day. “To make fun of someone” means to laugh at someone or to make other people laugh at someone in a way that isn’t very nice. If I use the wrong word in Spanish, French, or Italian and someone laughs at me and begins to copy my mistake, he is making fun of me. It’s not a very nice thing to do. My coworker made fun of me by asking whether he could get me some coffee and asking when I was leaving, because those are the types of things that you would ask a regular visitor; to be nice, you may offer to get them some coffee. I wasn’t angry, though. I said, “What a joker!” meaning that my coworker is always making funny jokes like that; he’s a joker.

Now that we’ve talked about the new vocabulary, let’s listen as I describe the first part of my day again. This time, I’m going to speaking more quickly, at the speed that a native speaker would use.



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[end of script]

I hope that listening to me talk about arriving at work has taught you some new vocabulary that you can use in your own workplace. Our first lesson has ended, and in the next lesson I’m going to talk about checking my mail, email, and voicemail.

This course has been a production of the Center for Educational Development, in beautiful Los Angeles, California. Visit our website at [eslpod.com](http://eslpod.com).

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