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## ESL Podcast 497 – Shopping for Bedding

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### GLOSSARY

**to decorate** – to make something more beautiful by changing it or adding things to it, often by making something a different color, covering something, or hanging something on a wall

\* They decorated their living room with beautiful artwork.

**bedding** – the fabric and other things put on a bed

\* We'll need to get some warmer bedding for the winter.

**sheets** – the large, thin pieces of fabric placed over a bed that one lies between while sleeping

\* How often do you wash the sheets in your guest room?

**pillow** – the large, soft thing that one rests one's head on while sleeping

\* If your husband or wife snores at night, try putting a bigger pillow under his or her head.

**blanket** – a large, warm, thick piece of fabric used to keep one warm, usually put on a bed

\* They use a cotton blanket during the summer and a wool blanket during the winter.

**thread count** – the number of strings in a given area of fabric; a measure of how tightly a fabric is made, where high-quality fabrics have a higher thread count

\* The best hotels in the world use sheets with a thread count of 800 or higher.

**fitted sheet** – the large, thin piece of fabric that one lies on while sleeping and that has elastic at the corners so that it doesn't move off the bed

\* Yesinia didn't buy the right size fitted sheet for her new bed, and it's too big.

**flat sheet** – the large, thin piece of fabric that one lies under while sleeping

\* Ali's wife always rolls over in the middle of the night, taking the flat sheet with her.

**pillowcase** – the rectangular piece of fabric that is open at one end so that a pillow can be placed inside it, used to protect a pillow and keep it clean

\* Becca forgot to wash her face before going to bed, so in the morning, there was make-up on her pillowcase.



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**comforter** – a large piece of fabric that is filled with feathers or a manmade material, placed over a bed and used to keep one warm at night

\* I'd like to use a warmer comforter, but I'm allergic to goose feathers.

**duvet cover** – the large, rectangular piece of fabric that is open at one end so that a comforter can be placed inside it, used to protect a comforter and keep it clean

\* You don't need to buy a new comforter to re-decorate your bedroom. Just buy a new duvet cover in a different color.

**bed skirt** – the large piece of fabric that covers the bottom mattress and hangs down to the floor, used for decoration

\* They use a bed skirt to hide the boxes that they keep underneath the bed.

**mattress** – the large, soft, padded surface that one lies on; usually one of two on a bed

\* Foster's back hurts whenever he sleeps on a mattress that is too soft.

**exposed** – shown; visible; able to be seen or touched

\* While she was working in the garden, her lower back was exposed whenever she bent over, so she got sunburned.

**tacky** – ugly and unpleasant to look at; without good style, taste, or fashion

\* Lynn says it's tacky to wear socks with sandals.

**canopy** – a large piece of fabric that hangs high above the bed, used for decoration and/or to keep insects away

\* Canopies are good for beds in castles and palaces, but not in regular homes.

**to draw the line** – to identify the limit of something, indicating that one will not do or have any more than that amount of something

\* I've listened to you complain about your job, house, and friends for hours, but I draw the line at listening to you complain about your husband.



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### COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1. Which of these are not bedding?
  - a) Sheets.
  - b) Pillowcases.
  - c) Mattress.
  
2. What does Xavier mean when he says, “that’s where I draw the line”?
  - a) He’s going to draw a line on the canopy.
  - b) He doesn’t want to buy a canopy.
  - c) He wants the canopy to hang from where he has drawn a line.

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### WHAT ELSE DOES IT MEAN?

#### **sheetsw**

The word “sheets,” in this podcast, means the large, thin pieces of fabric placed over a bed that one lies between while sleeping: “Franklin changes the sheets every two weeks.” A “sheet” is also a single piece of paper: “Could you please put a sheet of paper in the fax machine?” A “sheet” can refer to any large, flat surface: “How much does a sheet of glass cost?” A “baking sheet” or a “cookie sheet” is a large, rectangular, flat piece of metal or glass that is used for baking things in an oven: “Please put 12 cookies on each baking sheet and then put them in the oven for 8-10 minutes.” Finally, a “timesheet” is a piece of paper or an electronic file where one writes down how much time one has spent working: “The timesheet shows that Mariana worked 32 hours last week.”

#### **blanket**

In this podcast, the word “blanket” means a large, warm, thick piece of fabric used to keep one warm, usually put on a bed: “She spent the evening sitting on the couch with a warm blanket and a good book.” An “electric blanket” uses electricity to make a person stay warm: “Aren’t you worried about getting electrocuted if you sleep under an electric blanket?” A “security blanket” is something (usually an old blanket) that a child likes to hold because it makes him or her feel safe: “Their little girl never goes anywhere without her security blanket.” Finally, a “wet blanket” is a person who ruins other people’s fun or makes it impossible for other people to have fun, usually by refusing to join their activity: “Oh, stop being such a wet blanket and dance with us!”



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### CULTURE NOTE

In the United States, mattresses and bedding are available in five sizes: twin, double, queen, king, and California king.

A “twin bed” (also known as a “single bed”) is most often used for children. It “measures” (has a particular length, width and/or height) 39”x75” (39 inches by 75 inches). “Dormitories” (buildings where college students sleep, especially during their first year at a university) often have “extra-long twin beds” that measure 39”x80”, but it can be difficult to find extra-long sheets for them.

A “double bed” (also known as a “full” bed) is slightly bigger, but is still usually used only for children. Two people can fit in the bed, but it is very “crowded” (without very much extra space). A double bed measures 54”x75” and may be too short for very tall people to sleep comfortably on it.

A “queen bed” is very common for married couples, because it provides enough “room” (space) for two people. A queen bed measures 60”x80”. However, some people think a queen bed is too small, so they might put a queen bed in a “guest room” (a room where visitors sleep), but choose a larger bed for themselves.

A “king bed” measures 76”x80” and has plenty of room for two people. It is the same size as two extra-long twin beds that are “pushed together” (placed next to each other).

Finally, a “California king bed” is made for very tall people. It measures 72”x84”, meaning that it is wider and longer than a queen bed.

Many people prefer to sleep on bigger beds, because they have more room to “toss and turn” (move while sleeping). However, the bigger the bed is, the more difficult it is to move, and the more expensive the bedding is.

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



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### COMPLETE TRANSCRIPT

Welcome to English as a Second Language Podcast number 497: Shopping for Bedding.

This is English as a Second Language Podcast episode 497. I'm your host, Dr. Jeff McQuillan, coming to you from the Center for Educational Development in the beautiful City of Los Angeles, in the State of California, here in the U.S. of A.

We have a website – oh, yes we do! It's eslpod.com. On it, you can download a Learning Guide for this episode. What's in a Learning Guide? Well, you get all of the vocabulary, definitions, sample sentences, additional definitions, cultural notes, comprehension questions, and a complete transcript of this episode.

This episode is a dialogue between Xavier and Crystal. It's about two people who are going to buy things they need for their bedroom; in this case, bedding. Let's get started.

[start of dialogue]

Xavier: Thanks for helping me decorate my new apartment. Hey, where are you going?

Crystal: I'm going to the bedding department. Now that you have a new bed, you'll need new bedding.

Xavier: Right, okay, but can't I just get some sheets, a couple of pillows, and a blanket?

Crystal: That's only the beginning. Oh, feel these sheets. No wonder they're so soft. They have a very high thread count.

Xavier: Thread count?

Crystal: You'll need a fitted sheet, a flat sheet, and pillowcases. Did you get a queen- or a king-size bed?

Xavier: It's a full-size bed.

Crystal: Okay, you'll need a comforter and a duvet cover, too, and this bed skirt will make your bed look really nice.



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Xavier: Bed skirt?

Crystal: Of course! You can't leave your mattress exposed. That would look so tacky.

Xavier: If you say so...

Crystal: Wow, look at these canopies. Don't you think...?

Xavier: You want to put a canopy over my bed?! No, that's where I draw the line.

[end of dialogue]

We begin with Xavier saying to Crystal, "Thanks for helping me decorate my new apartment." "To decorate" means to make something more beautiful by changing it or adding things to it. Usually we're talking about a room in your house: "I'm going to decorate your room." Sometimes we use this when we are talking about preparing for a special event, putting things on the walls or putting other things in the room to prepare for a special event such as Christmas: "We're decorating the tree (the Christmas tree)," we're putting things on it to make it look nice.

Xavier is decorating his apartment. Crystal says, "I'm going to the bedding department." "Bedding" refers to things that you put on your bed, things like sheets and pillows and blankets; we'll talk about all those in a minute. "Bedding" is spelled (bedding). There's a word that's pronounced, in most cases, almost exactly the same – in fact, exactly the same, which is "betting" (betting). In English, in normal conversation the "D" and the "T" if they are in between two vowels in a word are pronounced the same. Although, if someone doesn't quite understand you they may over-pronounce it or hyper-pronounce it, they may say "bedding" versus "betting." "Betting" refers to when you go the Las Vegas and lose all your money, because you think you are good playing cards or whatever. But in normal conversation: "bedding" – "betting," same pronunciation. Some English teachers try to tell you otherwise, but really they're the same pronunciation in normal conversation.

Anyway, Crystal says, "Now that you have a new bed, you'll need new bedding." Xavier says, "Right, okay, but can't I just get some sheets, a couple of pillows, and a blanket?" "Sheets" are large, thin pieces of material – of fabric, that you put on your bed and you lie on top of these sheets when you are sleeping. When you are lying on the bed, you want to keep the bed itself clean, and also it's usually not very comfortable unless you have some sheets on there. Xavier says



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he also wants to just get a couple of pillows. “Pillows” are the large, soft things that you put your head on when you are sleeping. Finally, Xavier mentions getting a “blanket,” which is a large, thick piece of fabric that keeps you warm. The sheet you put on top of the bed, then you lie on the sheet, and then you put the blanket over you to keep you warm. “Sheet” and “blanket” have a couple of different meanings in English however, so please take a look at our Learning Guide today for some additional explanations.

Crystal says, “That’s only the beginning.” The sheets, the pillows, the blankets – that’s just the beginning. “Oh,” she says, “feel these sheets. No wonder they’re so soft. They have a very high thread count.” When you’re buying bedding, especially sheets, the sheets are sometimes very high quality, sometimes very low quality. The good sheets – the high quality ones have a high “thread count.” The “thread” are the strings of the fabric that make up the sheet, and if there are a lot of these in a small area, then the quality is usually higher. It’s a better sheet if it has a high thread count. “Thread” also refers to, for example, when you have a piece of clothing and there’s a hole in it, you want to close that hole, you use thread – little, tiny, thin, long piece of fabric. You also used thread if you are going to the doctor and having surgery and they put a hole in your body, you’ll need surgical thread to close that. But here, we’re not putting any holes in your body; we’re just buying some sheets!

Xavier says, “Thread count?” He, of course, is a little confused, as most men are – about many things, I should say! Crystal says, “You’ll need a fitted sheet, a flat sheet, and pillowcases.” A “fitted sheet” is a special kind of sheet that has elastic in each corner. This is like a rubber band that helps keep the sheet on the bed so that it stays on the bed; it doesn’t move around, it is tight on the bed. A “flat sheet” is a sheet that doesn’t have elastic in it; it’s a sheet that will move around easily. Some people put a fitted sheet and then, on top of that, they’ll put a flat sheet, then, on top of that, they’ll put a blanket. You go in between the fitted sheet and the flat sheet. The flat sheet is especially useful if the blanket is a little rough on your skin.

Crystal says that Xavier will also need pillowcases. “Pillowcases” are rectangular pieces of fabric that have an opening on one end, and you put the pillow inside of it, so it covers the pillow. It’s a “pillow cover,” we also could call it, but more commonly, a “pillowcase.” Then Crystal asks Xavier, “Did you get a queen- or a king-size bed?” A queen bed is smaller than a king-sized bed. Xavier says, “It’s a full-size bed,” which is smaller than a queen bed. The things that you sleep on, called “mattresses,” come in different sizes; the king is the largest. Actually, larger than a king is what’s called a “California king.” I guess we people here in California need big beds – maybe because we’re so fat, I’m not sure!





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Crystal says that Xavier will need a comforter and a duvet cover. A “comforter” is like a blanket; it is used to keep you warm at night. Usually, though, it is filled with feathers or other man-made material. It’s a little bigger, usually a little thicker, or can be, than a regular blanket, which might be a little thinner than a comforter. A “duvet cover” is a large, rectangular piece of fabric – of material that is open at one end so that you can put the comforter inside of it. So basically it is like a pillowcase except it’s a pillowcase for the comforter – for this large, thick blanket so that it doesn’t get dirty. Many people have comforters without duvet covers, however.

Crystal also says that Xavier will need a bed skirt to make the bed look nice. A “skirt,” normally, is what a woman wears on her hips that go down to her thigh, in the middle of her leg – unless it’s a miniskirt, in which case it goes down not very far at all! But here, we’re talking about a “bed skirt.” It’s a piece of fabric that goes along the bottom of the bed so that you can’t see underneath the bed, basically. Usually this is something you’ll find in a hotel or in a very fancy house; it’s not something that many people have, but it is possible to get one, these bed skirts.

Xavier says, “Bed skirt?” Crystal says, “Of course! You can’t leave your mattress exposed.” The “mattress,” remember, is a large, thick surface that you lie on; it’s what you put the sheet on – the fitted sheet. “Exposed” means visible, shown, usually in talking about something that shouldn’t be shown or should not be visible. So she says, “You can’t leave (you can’t have) your mattress exposed,” you don’t want people to be able to see the mattress, “That would look so tacky.” “Tacky” (tacky) means ugly, unpleasant to look at, something that isn’t very fashionable, something that is not in good taste.

Xavier then says, “If you say so,” meaning you’re the expert. Then Crystal says, “Wow, look at these canopies.” A “canopy” (canopy) is a large piece of fabric (material) that hangs above the bed, sometimes – usually – for decoration, although it also helps keep insects away, if you have insects in your house, little flies, for example, mosquitoes. But it’s something you would usually, again, see only in a very formal setting; not even a hotel would have that, in most cases. That’s a “canopy.”

Crystal says, “Don’t you think...?” suggesting perhaps that Xavier get a canopy, and Xavier says, “You want to put a canopy over my bed?! Now, that’s where I draw the line.” The expression “to draw the line” means to limit something, to indicate that you are not going to do that thing, that that is too much. For example, you may be going shopping for clothing with your wife, and she says,





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“Hold my purse,” the bag that she keeps her personal things in. So you hold her purse, and then she says, “Hold my jacket,” and so you hold her jacket. And then, she picks up a dress and says, “Hmm, I wonder how this looks. Put this dress on.” Then, the typical husband would say, “Wait a minute, I draw the line at putting on a dress,” meaning I’m not going to do that; I did these other things, but I’m not going to put a dress on. Seems reasonable to me!

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

[start of dialogue]

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Crystal: Okay, you’ll need a comforter and a duvet cover, too, and this bed skirt will make your bed look really nice.

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Xavier: You want to put a canopy over my bed?! No, that's where I draw the line.

[end of dialogue]

Our script was written by someone who's never tacky, Dr. Lucy Tse. Thank you Lucy.

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

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