

Elevator Stories

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THIS LESSON IS AIMED AT STUDENTS WITH AN INTERMEDIATE LEVEL OF ENGLISH.

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Listening

Listen to the story and answer the questions.

1. What are elevators called in the UK?
 - a. Modes
 - b. Lifts
 - c. Transport
 - d. Elevators

2. What problem does Paul have with elevators in Japan?
 - a. They are crowded.
 - b. They are in constant use.
 - c. They break down a lot.
 - d. They aren't clean.

3. What does he think is weird about elevators in Japan?
 - a. They are always crowded.
 - b. They are always perfect.
 - c. They are in department stores.
 - d. They often have elevator ladies.

4. Which of these is not a problem with elevators in England?
 - a. They overshoot floors.
 - b. They don't move when you press the button.
 - c. There are no elevator ladies.
 - d. The doors sometimes don't open.

5. Which elevator problem most surprised him in England?
 - a. When the elevator doors wouldn't open.
 - b. When a very loud message played in the elevator.
 - c. When the elevator overshoot it's floor.
 - d. When the elevator wouldn't go up.

Listen to the middle part of the again story and write in the missing words.

The one weird thing **a.**[] elevators here – again in department stores – is that they often contain elevator ladies. This is a young woman, smartly **b.**[] in uniform, who manages the elevator. Her job is to operate the buttons, greet people getting on and off the lift and make **c.**[] that everyone gets to their required destination. Why there is a job like this is a constant mystery to me, **d.**[] after 20 years in this country.

On the **e.**[] hand, my experiences with elevators in England have been a lot more interesting. I don't know why, but I can't seem to get on a lift there without **f.**[] going wrong. The last time I visited was the worst. It started at the hotel. I packed my wife, son, suitcase and myself into a **g.**[] small lift and pressed the button for the fifth floor. After about two minutes the door opened and we **h.**[] out to find ourselves on the ground floor – the lift hadn't moved. We tried again and the same thing happened. Eventually, we found that holding the button in for ten seconds **i.**[] get the lift to work.

Words and Expressions

Read the sentences below and for the words in bold write in the meaning from the list a ~ k. The first has been done for you.

- [**e**] The trains were **jam packed** today. I wish I had a car to get to work.
- [] This camera has a lot of different **modes**. I like this one for taking photos at parties best.
- [] If the plane's brakes fail, it will **overshoot** the runway and crash.
- [] **Immediately** he arrived home he put on the TV to see the news.
- [] If we keep on taking fish out of the seas without limit, **eventually** there will be none left.
- [] This program is really **interesting**. You should come and watch.

- [] Jane **tends to** cry if she doesn't get her own way.
- [] If you squeeze it hard there, it should **pop out**.
- [] The TV's broken. I've called the electrician to come and **repair** it.
- [] I suffer from **constant** stress at work and at home.
- [] Do you know how to **operate** this DVD player. I've no idea how to get it started.

- a. Different ways of using something.
- b. An inclination. Something that you are likely to do
- c. At once, now.
- d. Always or continuously.
- e. Completely full.
- f. To fix a broken thing.
- g. To make something work.
- h. The opposite of boring.
- i. To come out suddenly after pressure.
- j. At last.
- k. To go past your goal.

- **It struck me ...** *Expression used when something makes an impression on you. Examples are;*

It struck me recently how much warmer this winter is than last year. Do you think this is another sign of global warming.

The thing that struck me most about him is that he has a lot of self confidence.

- **Why/What on earth ...** *Expression used when you are puzzled by something. For example;*

Graham! Why on earth are you still here so late in the evening? I thought you were a burglar!

I don't know what on earth to do now we've lost the key. Do you think we can force the lock to get in?

- **By the way ...** *Use this expression when you want to make an aside to the main topic of conversation. Examples are;*

That was a good meeting. By the way, what did you think of Mr. Jones presentation?

Well, I'm glad we got all that work finished. We can relax now. By the way, are you going to Bob's party tonight?

- **In addition ...** *Use when you want to extend the information about the topic you are talking about. Examples are;*

This car has anti-lock brakes, power steering and leather seats. In addition, it will do 0 ~ 100kph in 7 seconds.

This job has lots of benefits, including health coverage, life insurance and a good pension scheme. In addition the holidays are great – seven weeks a year.

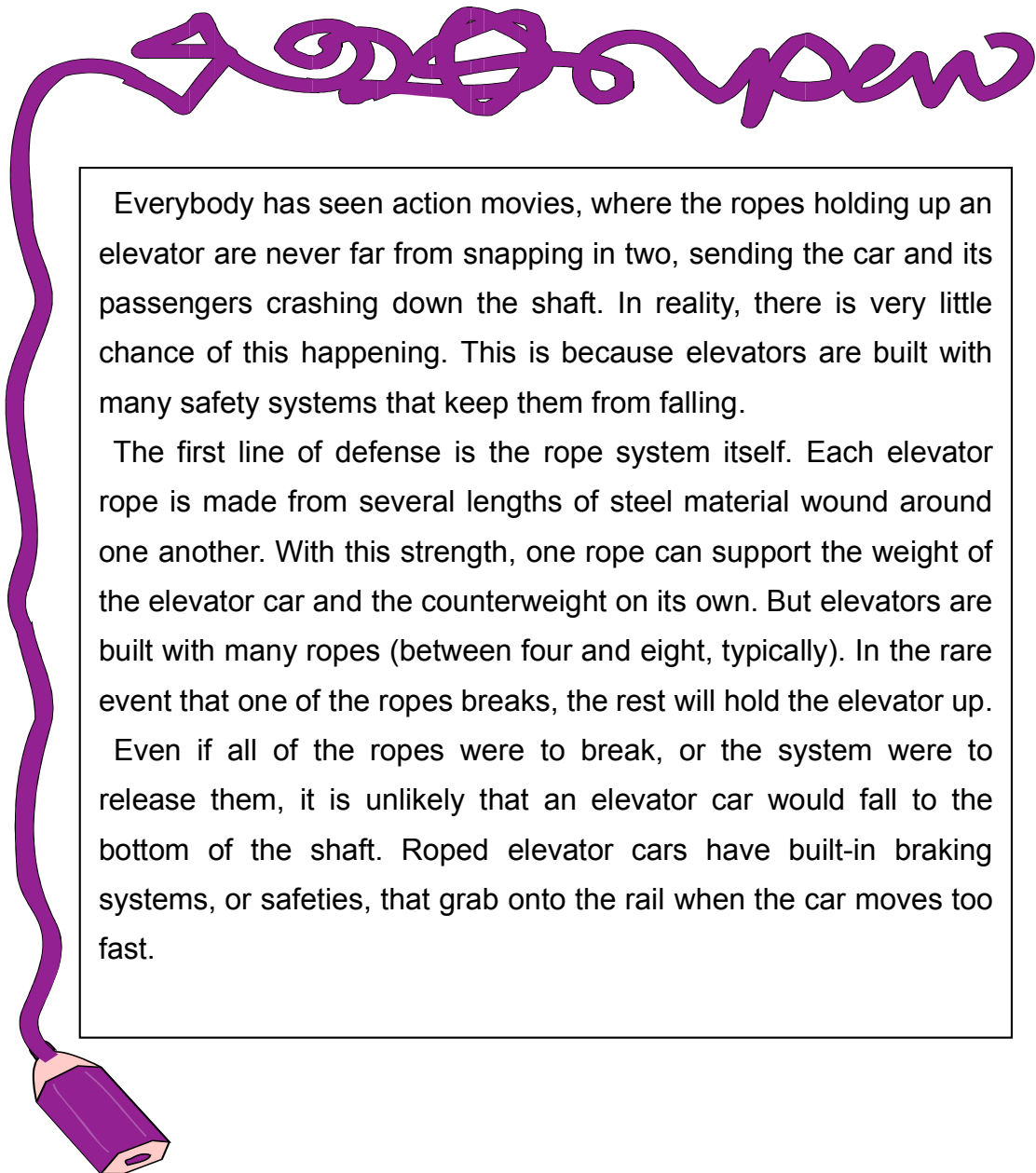
- **On the other hand ...** *Used to compare two options, usually with 'On the one hand.... For example;*

On the one hand he has excellent qualifications. On the other hand he has little experience in this kind of work.

London's a bit noisy and dirty. On the other hand it's a really exciting place to live.

Reading

Read the section below and answer the questions.



Everybody has seen action movies, where the ropes holding up an elevator are never far from snapping in two, sending the car and its passengers crashing down the shaft. In reality, there is very little chance of this happening. This is because elevators are built with many safety systems that keep them from falling.

The first line of defense is the rope system itself. Each elevator rope is made from several lengths of steel material wound around one another. With this strength, one rope can support the weight of the elevator car and the counterweight on its own. But elevators are built with many ropes (between four and eight, typically). In the rare event that one of the ropes breaks, the rest will hold the elevator up.

Even if all of the ropes were to break, or the system were to release them, it is unlikely that an elevator car would fall to the bottom of the shaft. Roped elevator cars have built-in braking systems, or safeties, that grab onto the rail when the car moves too fast.

1. What sometimes happens to elevators in action movies?
2. In real life do elevators often fall?
3. What are elevator ropes made from?
4. What happens if one rope breaks?

5. If all the ropes break, what stops the elevator falling?

Transcript

For this transcript I have highlighted the words and expressions I think are difficult for this level. Students can look them up in a dictionary or review the lesson.

Welcome to Lesson 26 of ESLpodTV. In today's mp3 only lesson I'm going to talk about elevators. Why on earth does he want to talk about elevators you might ask? Well, it struck me the other day what a big difference there is between Japan and England when it comes to this **mode of transport**. By the way, we call them lifts in the UK.

As you probably all know by now, I live in Japan and here machines of all sorts **tend to** work **perfectly**. If something **breaks down** it is **repaired** or replaced almost **immediately**. In addition, things in **constant use**, like elevators, are always clean and safe – though in places like department stores they are nearly always **jam packed!**

The only problem I have with elevators here is getting on one. Very often the door will open onto a small box that is **crammed** with people so you have no chance of **squeezing on**.

The one weird thing about elevators here – again in department stores – is that they often contain elevator ladies. This is a young woman, smartly dressed in uniform, who manages the elevator. Her job is to **operate** the buttons, greet people getting on and off the lift and make sure that everyone gets to their required destination. Why there is a job like this **is a constant** mystery to me, even after 20 years in this country.

On the other hand, my experiences with elevators in England have been a lot more **interesting**. I don't know why, but I can't seem to get on a lift there without something going wrong. The last time I visited was the worst. It started at the

hotel. I packed my wife, son myself and suitcase into a very small lift and pressed the button for the fifth floor. After about two minutes the door opened and we **popped out** to find ourselves on the ground floor – the lift hadn't moved. We tried again and the same thing happened. **Eventually**, we found that holding the button in for ten seconds would get the lift to work.

There followed a long list of elevator problems. From lifts that would shake. Others that would **overshoot** the floor so you had to climb down from them. Doors that wouldn't open or floors that couldn't be stopped at. Perhaps the one that struck me most was the shiny, new department store elevator we got on in London. We were the only passengers. The doors closed and in a very, very loud voice a recorded message said – ALL PASSENGERS FOR THE FIFTH FLOOR USE THE OTHER ELEVATOR. We got out and ran!

Teacher Notes

You can find the answers to the exercises on this page with a few guidelines for teachers.

VIDEO AND LISTENING

- There are 1001 ways to use the audio in a classroom setting. The important point is to not let students go in cold. Pre-teach the vocabulary and some of the expressions.
 - Play the audio. Students are asked to answer the first set of questions a ~ g.
- Answers; b a d c b**
- Listen again to the middle portion of the story. Fill in the gaps with the words you hear.

**Answers; a. about b. dressed c. sure d. even e. other
f. something g. very h. popped i. would**

WORDS AND EXPRESSIONS

- As well as the exercise here I might practice the words introduced in this section by use of short quizzes or vocabulary games. There are many. Two of my favorites are; Back writing – where students in pairs write the words on each other’s backs using their fingers. or, The miming game – Teacher mimes a word without vocalizing it. Students guess the word by reading the teacher’s lips.

Answers; e a k c j h b l f d g

READING

- The reading text expands the lesson to include cross culture experiences. For my own classes, depending on the level, I ask the students to read the text first without a dictionary. They then answer the questions and then we will come back to the text and go through it again with the aid of a dictionary to cover any new words or expressions.

Answers;

- 1. The ropes holding the elevator break.**
- 2. No.**
- 3. Steel.**
- 4. Nothing.**
- 5. The brakes on the sides.**

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