

ELI Weekly

The Weekly Newsletter of the English Language Institute

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Hurricane Season

In the recent past, hurricanes have been a serious concern for many living in the Southern United States. This year's hurricane season begins on June 1st, and—though Gainesville is more inland than many of the areas hardest hit—it's important to prepare a few things, just in case.

First, have a few gallons of drinking water stored in your apartment. Second, have some non-perishable food, like baked beans or soups, that don't need to be heated; if you have an electric stove, once the power goes out, you won't be able to cook. Third, have a flashlight and make sure to have extra batteries. You should also have a battery-operated radio. Finally, take the weather alerts seriously. If a hurricane **watch** is issued, it means that weather conditions may worsen within the next 36 hours, and you should begin to prepare. If a hurricane **warning** is issued, it means that weather conditions will worsen within 24 hours. Once this happens, you should brace for the worst—sometimes it happens, and most times it doesn't.

Of course, the ELI office will let you know if you need to make any extra preparations. Hurricane season in Florida is a serious but manageable experience if you prepare well.

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Entering the University

Many students at the ELI are hoping to eventually enter the university. Generally the only way to enter the university as an international student is to take the Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL) exam.

If you hope to attend the University of Florida, most departments will accept the institutional TOEFL offered by the ELI at the end of every semester; contact the department to which you wish to apply. If you would like to study at a university other than UF, you should contact them directly to see if they will accept the ELI's institutional TOEFL, or if they require the TOEFL exam offered by ETS (ets.org). Students are generally not admitted to the university without taking the TOEFL exam, regardless of how long they've studied at the ELI.

Best of luck to everyone!

Birthdays

Happy birthday wishes this week to:
May 29: Kwang Sung
June 7: Chien Sung

Food, Friends, and Fun

This Saturday, **June 3**, the Cultural Immersion Program is sponsoring **Volunteer Day**, a time to give a little back to our community...and practice English! You can build houses, run in a race, chat with the elderly, or work with animals. Check out the activities board for specific information.

Q: When I pay with a debit card at the grocery store, the cashier asks if I want “cash back.” What does this mean? Where does the cash come from?

A: When you get cash back from a grocery store cashier, you are getting money from your own checking account, but with the convenience of not having to stop at the ATM. In other words, if you ask for \$20 cash back, the amount you owe for groceries, plus \$20 for your cash back, will be deducted from your checking account. Depending on your bank, there may or may not be an additional fee for using this service.

Q: Why do people in the U.S. use debit cards more frequently than cash?

A: Good question, but I’m not sure that this is more common in the U.S. than it is in any other country where many stores offer this option. In general, I think people use plastic because it’s safer and more convenient. It used to be that people also often used checks, but now with the fear of fraud, many businesses will only accept cash, debit, or charge.



Q: Why do people in Gainesville tend to have their MP3 player and headphones on most of the time?

A: In part, this may be because MP3 players are a newer trend in the U.S., and many people are excited to use them. However, what might be more generally true is that these headphones make a person feel like they have a little more privacy. People here like to have their privacy and, although it’s important to be cordial to strangers, we don’t often have long conversations with them so as not to intrude.



*Thanks for the questions this week! Keep sending them in. If you have a question about U.S. manners and culture, please email our ELI Weekly editor, Nora Spencer, at noraspencer@gmail.com, or put questions in her mailbox (marked **Spencer** in the ELI Main Office).*



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