



New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

Hello, and welcome to the vocabulary lesson for the conversation “New School Year.” In this conversation, Joe is talking with Richard. Richard is mine and Joe’s neighbor. He lives in the same building where mine and Joe’s apartment is. Richard is a first grade teacher and his new school year has just begun. So this is what he and Joe are talking about.

Okay, let’s begin with the conversation.

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Joe first says, “How’s the...”

Now how’s here... This is short for how is.

Joe says, “How’s the, uh...”

Uh. This is a filler word. It really has no meaning. It’s not needed in the sentence.

Joe goes on to say, “How’s the new school year goin’?”

Now goin’... This is short for going.

And Joe says, “I know you just started it up again.”

Started it up. This means to begin something. Started it up. For example: I started up my degree in teaching in 2003. Started it up.

And then Richard says, “Uh, yeah...”

Yeah is casual or slang or informal for yes.

And then Richard goes on to say, “It’s off to a rough start.”

Off to a rough start. Now this means a difficult or challenging beginning, not an easy beginning. Off to a rough start. For example: After I locked my keys in the car, I knew my day was off to a rough start.

And then Joe says, “Really?” And Richard says, “Yeah.” And Joe says, “Why so?” And Richard says, “Uh, we have a new reading program, um...”

Now um... This is the same as uh. It’s just filler. It has no meaning. This um and uh are said a lot of times in conversations when people are maybe thinking of something else to say.

New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

And Richard goes on to say, "It's called Reader's Workshop, um, and a new math program, Everyday Math, so a lot of prep work."

Now prep... Prep is short for preparation. Prep. An example of prep would be: When you make vegetable soup, the prep work is cutting up onions, carrots, celery, etc., etc. Cutting up vegetables. That's the prep work.

And then Richard goes on to say, "Yesterday I was at school from about 9:00, 9:00 until 2:00." And Joe says, "Gosh."

Now, this is just showing emotion, uh, emotion. For example: I don't believe you have so much work to do to get ready for a new school year.

And then Richard says, "Yeah, getting stuff ready."

Or, getting everything ready.

"There is just a lot of preparation for launching the math program."

Now launching... This is beginning or starting something. Launching. Can also be used to describe the start of a website. For example: We are launching our website in October. Launching.

And then Joe says, "It sounds like you're probably starting from scratch because..."

Starting from scratch. What Joe is saying here is it sounds like you're probably starting at the beginning with no preparation. Starting from scratch. For example: Let's say that you were in college and you were studying science. You have been studying it for three years. Then you decide that you want to study something different. Maybe you want to study English. You will be starting from scratch because you will be starting to study English from the beginning. Starting from scratch.

And Richard says, "It is." Joe says, "You're used to teaching the..." And Richard says, "Yeah." Joe says, "same methodologies before."

Now methodologies or methodology... This is a way of doing something. For example: Teachers use different methodologies depending on the subject they teach. Methodologies.

And Richard says, "Right."

So he's saying that's correct. Or Richard is agreeing with Joe.



New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

And Richard says, “So...”

And so is just filler. It's not really needed here. It has really no meaning in this sentence.

So Richard says, “So, we, the last math series...”

Or the last math program.

“that we had, we had for, um, four years.” And Joe says, “Uh-huh.”

Now, this doesn't really mean anything. Joe is just letting Richard know he is listening.

And Richard says, “And so, y'know...”

Y'know. This is short for you know. You won't see this in written English but you'll definitely hear y'know and other shortened words in conversational English.

So Richard goes on to say, “It was like, easy to teach.”

Like, easy to teach. Now like is... You probably know like is usually, um... Or it has a meaning of when you have positive feelings for someone. You like someone. But here it's just filler. It really has no meaning. It's not needed in the sentence.

Then Richard goes on to say, “Y'know, I didn't need to do any prep stuff...”

Or I didn't need to do any prep work.

“for it, y'know.” And Joe says, “Right.” And then Richard says, “I knew what I was going to do from day to day.”

Day to day. This means happens every day or most days. Day to day. For example: When I was in school I would go to the library day to day to study. Day to day.

And then Joe says, “Mm-hm.”

Now this doesn't really mean anything. Again, Joe is just letting Richard know he is listening.

And Richard says, “And now, tomorrow's Monday.”



New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

Tomorrow's. This is short for tomorrow is.

And Richard goes on to say, "And we're launching the program. So it's lesson one and I don't know what I'm doing." And he laughs. And Joe says, "If it's not enough to keep your eyes on the kids the whole time..."

Or all the time.

"now..."

Keep your eyes on. This means to watch closely. Keep your eyes on. For example: When you drive a car, you can say that you keep your eyes on the road because you do not want to hit another car or a person crossing the street. Keep your eyes on. So Joe is saying if it's... You know you already have to watch the kids, or the children, all the time. And now here you have this new teaching methodology that you have to get ready for.

And then Richard says, "Exactly."

So what Richard is saying here is he is just agreeing with Joe. Exactly. You're right.

And Joe says, "You gotta also be wondering..."

Gotta is short for got to. So you won't see gotta in written English but you'll definitely hear it in conversational English. So what he's saying is, "You have got to also be wondering or thinking."

"oh, you know, am I, am I delivering this new methodology correctly?"

Now when Joe says, oh, that's just filler. It really has no meaning. It's not needed in the conversation. When he says delivering this new methodology, he's saying teaching. Teaching this new methodology correctly.

And Richard says, "Right, because I, because I want to, I want to teach it as though I know what I'm doing." And Joe says, "Yeah." And Richard says, "So I don't want to come across..."

Or I don't want to look like.

"as I'm stumbling for, y'know, my words, or stumbling for what comes next, so..."

Stumbling for. Stumbling for means, in this situation, to be unsure of. Stumbling for. For example: I did not want to be stumbling for words when I gave a speech at school. Stumbling for.

New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

And then Joe says, “Have the kids...”

Or have the children...

“been into it so far?”

Into it. This means to be excited about. For example: Tim is really into football. He watches football whenever he can. Into it.

And Richard says, “So far, yeah.”

So far. That means until now.

And then Richard says, “Um, right now...”

Or at this moment.

“We’ve just been doin’ a lot of...”

Just. This is just filler. It has no meaning. It’s not really needed. It’s just put into the conversation but it doesn’t have to be there.

Richard goes on to say, “um, exploration.”

So, he’s saying exploration, or they’re trying... trying it. Trying this new method.

Richard goes on to say, “So there’s a lot of math tools that we just give them time to play around with...”

Play around with. This means to use. It usually means that you are not very familiar with the thing you are playing around with. Or that you do not use it very often or very much. For example: Todd likes to play around on motorcycles. He only rides them two times a year. Play around with.

Richard goes on to say, “so that when we actually teach the lesson...”

Or when we teach the lesson. Actually is not really needed in the conversation. It’s filler. It has no meaning.

Richard goes on to say, “um, they’re focused...”

Or they’re thinking.

New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

“on what we’re doing and not focused on, y’know, that they have counting bears in front of them or coins in front of them, so...”

Counting bears and coins. These are two examples Richard is giving Joe of the math tools that he was talking about.

And then Joe says, “Right.” And Richard says, “So, they just need a lot of time to play around with the tools. We call them tools, I mean...”

Or what I’m trying to say is.

“they think of them as toys but...” And Joe says, “Games.” And Richard says, “Exactly. So, and, but they need that.”

Now but... You’ll hear this in a lot of, used in a lot of conversations. And it, here, it has no meaning. It’s just put in but it really is not needed.

And Richard goes on to say, “Y’know, it’s the same with like a new book, y’know. I just give them time to page through it.”

Page through. This means to turn the pages. For example: To turn the pages of a book. I like to page through the newspaper in the morning. That’s an example of page through.

And Richard goes on to say, “Otherwise, if I’m on Page 2, they’re on Page 102, looking at, y’know, something completely not related...”

Or something, something very different.

“to what we’re, what I’m teaching, so.” And Joe says, “Right, yeah.” And Richard says, “But, y’know, it’s the same with me. When I think about myself being in a class, if I have a book in front of me, I’ve already seen the page that I’m on.”

Now the page that I’m on... This is if you were looking at a book or a magazine. It’s... it refers to the page that you are looking at. The page that I’m on.

And Richard goes on to say, “I’m gonna flip, y’know, forward in the pages and look for what’s coming next.”

I’m... I’m gonna flip. Gonna. This is short for going to. Again, you wouldn’t see this in written English but



New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

you would definitely hear it in conversational English. Flip forward. Flip forward means to move ahead. For example: When I read a book that has pictures in it, I like to flip forward. Flip forward.

Then Joe says, “Especially...”

Or he’s saying most importantly.

“if the kids have pictures to look at and it...” And Richard says, “Yeah.” And Joe says, “it draws their eye.”

Draws their eye or draws my eye. What Joe is saying here is to get their attention. Draws their eye. For example: Bright colors draw my eye.

And then Richard says, “Yeah, and they’re constantly...”

Or they’re always.

“y’know... Like I’m teaching one lesson they’re on completely different page saying...”

What he’s saying is they’re on another page.

“saying, hey look at this, look at this, and it has nothing, y’know... It’s a future lesson.”

Or what he’s saying is it’s a lesson that hasn’t been taught yet.

And Joe says, “Yeah, once they’ve made up their mind to do something.”

Now made up their mind... This means to decide. Made up their mind. For example: My dad made up his mind that I could not buy a car until I was eighteen years old. Made up their mind, or in this example, made up his mind.

Joe goes on to say, “It’s, y’know, whether it’s looking at a page ahead of the, y’know, ahead of the teacher or not, it’s, y’know, it’s difficult to get them to change.”

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Okay, this is the end of the conversation. I would like to say that in real English conversations you’ll hear words that have been shortened. For example, “gonna” which is short for going to. Or “goin’ “ which is short for going. Or “gotta” which is short for got to. You’ll also hear words that don’t really have a meaning in the sentence. For example, “like”, “uh”, “um”, “so”. They’re just kind of put in as filler but they really have no



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New School Year Vocabulary Lesson

meaning. You could take them out and the sentence would still make sense. You would still be able to understand the sentence. And then you'll hear in conversations some slang such as "yeah". You'll hear in this conversation and many of the other conversations, "yeah", which is just short, or not really short, but it's casual or informal for yes. Or slang for yes. And then you'll hear words showing the emotion of "I don't believe it", for example, "gosh". And then in conversations you'll hear sounds where one person is agreeing or just letting the other person know that they are still listening. For example, "uh-huh", or "mm-hm".

Okay, this is the end of the vocabulary lesson for the conversation "New School Year." Now if you need to, go back and listen to this lesson a few times until you have a basic understanding of the vocabulary. But make sure that you're staying relaxed, you're not getting too worried or too stressed if you're not understanding. Always stay relaxed. When you're ready, then go to the mini-story. See you next time. Bye-bye!