

EPISODE 387

Awkward Travel Moments

Full transcript · speaking practice · vocabulary review

Hi, everybody! I am Georgiana, your English teacher and founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com.

Today, we are going to talk about **awkward** travel moments and, more specifically, what to say in English when they happen.

Travelling can be exciting, but it can also be a little uncomfortable. Sometimes you are tired, **in a hurry**, or surrounded by noise, and suddenly even a simple sentence seems difficult.

Maybe someone is sitting in your seat. Maybe you do not understand an **announcement**. Maybe the hotel cannot find your **reservation**.

In those moments, you do not need perfect English. You need clear, simple, useful English.

Let's start with one very common situation.

You get on a plane or train, find your seat, and discover that someone is already there.

A good sentence is:

"Excuse me, I think you're in my seat."

This is much better than saying, "You are in my seat!" because "I think" sounds softer and more polite.

Another useful sentence is:

"Sorry, could you say that again?"

This is perfect when an announcement is too fast, too noisy, or simply impossible to understand. Airports are full of mysterious **loudspeaker** voices. Sometimes even native speakers have no idea what was said.

You can also use this expression when a receptionist, driver, or airline employee gives you too much information at once.

Another excellent sentence is:

"**Would it be possible to...?**"

For example:

"Would it be possible to change rooms?"

“Would it be possible to **check in** early?”

This is a polite way to ask for help or for a different option.

If something seems wrong, you can say:

“I think **there’s been a mistake.**”

This is useful at a hotel, restaurant, airport, or **ticket counter**. It sounds calm, polite, and practical.

And finally, one of the most useful questions of all is:

“**What are my options?**”

If a flight is cancelled, a reservation disappears, or a plan falls apart, this question helps you **move forward**.

So remember: when travel gets awkward, keep your English short, clear, and polite.

Now, let’s continue with a Mini-Story about a woman named Emma who wanted a relaxing trip to Rome.

Naturally, her relaxing trip becomes slightly ridiculous.

Mini-Story

Speaking Practice

Answer each question out loud. Then listen to the answer and respond quickly. Don’t worry about mistakes.



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There’s a woman named Emma. She lives in England and wants a relaxing trip to Rome.

Does Emma want a stressful trip or a relaxing trip?

A relaxing trip. Emma wants a relaxing trip to Rome.

Where does Emma want to go?

To Rome. She wants to go to Rome.

At the airport, Emma gets on the plane and walks to seat 12A.

Does Emma walk to seat 99C?

No. She walks to seat 12A.

Is seat 12A empty?

No, it’s not. A man is sitting there.

Emma says, “Excuse me, I think you’re in my seat.” The man checks his boarding pass and moves to seat 12B.

What does Emma say?

She says, “Excuse me, I think you’re in my seat.”

Does she tell him to sit?

No. No. She says, “Excuse me, I think you’re in my seat.”

Then another passenger arrives and says to Emma, "Excuse me, I think you're in my seat." Emma checks her boarding pass again. Her seat is not 12A. It is 21A.

Who is in the wrong seat now?

Emma! Emma is in the wrong seat now.

Is that a little awkward or completely normal?

A little awkward. Very awkward, in fact.

Emma apologises and moves to seat 21A. A few minutes later, a flight attendant makes an announcement, but Emma cannot understand it.

Can Emma understand the announcement?

No, she can't.

Thankfully, the passenger next to her repeats the announcement: the flight has been cancelled.

Has the flight been delayed for ten minutes?

No. It has been cancelled.

Is Emma now flying to Rome?

No, she's not. She is still at the airport.

Emma goes to the airline desk and asks, "What are my options?"

What does Emma ask?

"What are my options?"

Does she ask, "What are my onions?"

No! Not her onions. Her options.

The airline offers her a hotel for the night and a new flight the next morning. Emma arrives at the hotel very late, very tired, and very hungry.

Is Emma cheerful and full of energy?

No. She is tired and hungry.

At reception, the clerk cannot find her booking. Emma says, "I think there's been a mistake."

What does Emma say at reception?

"I think there's been a mistake."

Does she order a steak?

No, no. She doesn't order a steak. She says: "I think there's been a mistake."

Does she scream, "You ruined my life!"?

No, no. She doesn't scream. She stays calm and polite.

Finally, the clerk finds the booking and gives Emma a key card for room 305.

What room does the clerk give her?

Room 305.

Emma goes upstairs, stops in front of room 205, and tries to open the door.

Does Emma stop in front of room 305?

No. She stops in front of room 205.

Is that the correct room?

No, it's not. It's the wrong room.

Emma looks at the door, looks at the card, and looks at the door again. Then she laughs.

Why does Emma laugh?

Because she has made another mistake.

After that long day, does Emma need a holiday from her holiday?

Yes! She needs a holiday from her holiday.

And that's the end of the mini-story.

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Thanks for listening, and I'll see you in the next episode.

Review

Vocabulary from This Episode

Review the most useful words and expressions before listening again.

01 awkward uncomfortable or embarrassing.	07 would it be possible to...? a polite way to ask if something can be done.
02 in a hurry needing to do something quickly.	08 there's been a mistake something has gone wrong or is incorrect.
03 announcement information spoken publicly.	09 ticket counter a desk where tickets or travel problems are handled.
04 reservation an arrangement to keep a room, seat, etc. for you.	10 what are my options? what choices or solutions are available?
05 loudspeaker equipment that makes a voice louder.	11 fall apart stop going according to plan.
06 check in register when arriving at a hotel or airport.	12 move forward continue and deal with the next step.
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