EPISODE 396

What If You Lose Access?

Stay Safe Online · Part 4

Full transcript · speaking practice · vocabulary review

Hi! I'm Georgiana, and I'm back with a new episode.

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By the way, I also teach private **English conversation classes**. **Would you like to practice speaking English with me**? Visit **SpeakEnglishPodcast.com** to learn more.

This is Part 4, the final episode in our Stay Safe Online series.

Today's problem begins with a very ordinary question: Where is my phone?

Nina arrives home and reaches into her pocket. No phone. She checks another pocket, her bag, and then every pocket again—as if the phone might appear the second time.

But it is still missing.

Nina feels **caught off guard**. She opens her laptop and tries to sign in to her email. Her **password manager** helps her enter the right password. Then the account asks for the normal second step on her phone.

That second step is part of **two-factor authentication**. But Nina does not have her phone.

"Great," she thinks. "My phone is gone, and now my email wants my phone."

For a moment, she worries that she is completely **locked out**. Then she remembers that she prepared another way to sign in.

She goes to the real account page she normally uses. This is a **trusted source**. She checks the address carefully to **verify** that she is in the right place. Then she chooses an available **backup method**.

Nina has an unused **recovery code** stored safely away from her phone. Some services provide this private code as another possible way to sign in.

Keeping the only copy on the missing phone would be like keeping a spare key inside the locked house. It would not be very helpful.

Nina enters the code and manages to **regain access** to her email. Then she checks the account activity to see whether anything looks **compromised**. She does not see any unfamiliar activity.

Other services may offer a **recovery email** you can still use. Some may offer a **passkey**, a sign-in option on a device already set up for it, often using your fingerprint, face, or device code. It is not simply another password.

Different services offer different choices, and no single method always works. Learn what your important accounts offer before you need it.

And remember: recovery codes are private. Store them somewhere safe, away from the device they may need to replace.

Point of View

Grammar Practice

Now, let's practice with a Point of View lesson.

POINT OF VIEW 1 — "I" IN THE PAST

I arrived home and reached into my pocket, but my phone was not there.

I checked my other pockets, my bag, and then the same pockets again, just in case.

No. My phone was still missing.

I felt **caught off guard**, and for a moment, I did not know what to do.

I opened my laptop and tried to sign in to my email. My **password manager** entered my password, but the account asked for the normal second step on my phone.

I had **two-factor authentication** on my account, but now the phone I needed for the second step was gone.

“Great,” I thought. “My phone is gone, and now my email wants my phone.”

I thought I might be **locked out**. Then I remembered that I had prepared another option.

I went to the real account page I normally used. It was a **trusted source**, and I checked the address to **verify** that I was on the correct page.

The service offered a **backup method**.

I had an unused **recovery code** stored safely in a different place. I had not saved the only copy on my phone. That would have been like leaving my spare key inside my locked house.

I entered the recovery code, and I was able to **regain access**.

Once I was inside my account, I checked the recent activity. I wanted to see whether anything looked **compromised**. Everything looked normal.

I also checked that my **recovery email** was still one I could use.

On another device, I had a **passkey** as another possible sign-in option.

I still needed to deal with my missing phone, but at least I could use my email again. Preparing a backup had turned a frightening problem into a problem I could manage.

POINT OF VIEW 2 — “YOU” IN AN IMAGINED PRESENT

Imagine this. You arrive home and reach into your pocket, but your phone is not there.

You check your other pockets, your bag, and then the same pockets again. Perhaps the phone has returned quietly.

No. It is still missing.

You feel **caught off guard**. Your stomach drops a little, and you wonder what to do first.

You open your laptop and try to sign in to your email. Your **password manager** enters the right password, but the account asks for the normal second step on your phone.

You have **two-factor authentication** on your account, but today the phone needed for the second step is the thing you cannot find.

“Great,” you think. “My phone is gone, and now my email wants my phone.”

Are you completely **locked out**? Maybe not. You remember that you prepared another option.

You go to the real account page you normally use. It is a **trusted source**. You check the address to **verify** that you are in the right place.

The service offers an available **backup method**. Your choices may be different from Nina’s because each service has its own options.

You have an unused **recovery code** stored safely away from your phone. The only copy is not inside the locked house, so to speak.

You enter the code, and you **regain access** to your email.

What do you do next? You check the recent account activity. You want to know whether anything looks **compromised**. You see nothing unfamiliar.

You also make sure that your **recovery email** is still available to you.

Perhaps an account offers a **passkey** on a device already set up for it. Whether you can use it depends on the service and device.

Your phone is still missing, so the day is not perfect. But you are calmer now. You had another way back into an important account.

Listen again and notice how the situation feels different when Nina says “I” and when you imagine “you.”

Before we finish, let’s remember the four habits from this series.

Slow down when a message tries to rush you.

Use a different password for each account.

Check links and files before you trust them.

Prepare another way back into your important accounts.

And that brings us to the end of our Stay Safe Online series. I hope it helps you feel a little calmer, more prepared, and more confident online.

Thanks for listening and learning with me.

And I’ll see you in the next episode.

Review

Vocabulary Review

Review the 12 key words and expressions before listening again.

01 **caught off guard** surprised and not prepared for something.	07 **locked out** unable to enter or use an account.
02 **verify** check that something is real or correct.	08 **recovery code** a private code that may help you sign in when your normal method is unavailable.
03 **compromised** no longer fully safe because someone may have access.	09 **backup method** another available way to prove who you are or enter an account.
04 **password manager** a tool that creates, stores, and remembers passwords.	10 **recovery email** another email address that may help you recover an account.
05 **two-factor authentication** a sign-in method that requires two ways to prove who you are.	11 **passkey** a sign-in option connected to a device, often using a fingerprint, face, or device code.
06 **trusted source** a person, page, app, or contact method you already know is reliable.	12 **regain access** become able to enter or use something again.

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