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Episode #099

Renting a Car (RE)

Hi, everyone!

I'm Georgiana, founder of SpeakEnglishPodcast.com. My mission is to help YOU to speak English fluently and with confidence.

- Today I'll be teaching you **how to rent a car in English**. The lesson is simple and to the point so it'll save you a lot of time when you really need to **rent a vehicle**.
- And in the next section, you'll practice your **English speaking** with a funny mini-story. Today's story is about Brian, a middle-aged man who wants to go out with hot chicks. :)

It's summer again, and many of you are seeking a holiday getaway. So today I'll be teaching you **how to rent a car**.

First of all, you should start by **comparing prices online**. Consider doing your research by checking travel websites like Expedia, Kayak or Hotwire.

Some of the most popular **car hire agencies** are Alamo, Avis, and Hertz.

Before deciding on an agency, ask about the **additional charges** because these charges will help you figure out which is the best deal. Some common rates include:

Underage-driver fees: it means that the agency charges an additional fee for a driver under 25.

Airport surcharges: This charge will make a big difference in the total amount. Basically, the agency will charge you a supplement for **picking up a rental car at the airport**.

Additional charges per driver: You'll need to pay extra for having more than one person driving the rental.

It's also a great idea to **book a flight and rent a car together**. Doing so will often save you money, since you'll get better deals.

Making a reservation:

When you're **renting a car**, you can either pay in advance or just make the reservation and pay when you **pick up the vehicle**. Many **rental car companies** will hold your reservation without any form of payment, whereas others will demand a credit card number.

Pay for the rental.

If you didn't pay in advance online, then you'll have to **make the payment** when you get to the **pick-up point**. Be ready to provide your reservation number as well as your driver's license and credit card.

Leaving the parking lot

Before leaving the **parking lot, inspect the vehicle** carefully. You want to make sure that whatever problems you encounter are well documented so that you don't take responsibility for them when you return the car.

You want to **look for major and minor problems**. Check that the windows are working properly. Make sure there are no loose or malfunctioning parts, leaks, or any other damages. Should you find any anomalies, record and take a picture or a video of them.

Fill the car with gas.

Don't forget to **fill up your gas tank**. Although some agencies give you the option to return the vehicle without a full tank, they will usually charge you extra.

Clean out the inside of the car.

Before leaving the vehicle at the **drop-off point**, be sure to check the front and rear seats carefully and remove all your belongings to avoid being charged an extra fee.

Returning the car to the rental agency

When you **return the car** to the **rental agency, don't be late** because some agencies will charge you for another business day if you return the vehicle even 30 minutes after the scheduled date and time.

Also, be careful because some **car hire agencies** will even charge a fee when you return the vehicle too early.

The last step is to **hand over the keys** and wait for your receipt. If you want to pay with a different card or with cash, make sure they take the **charge off the card** you initially used.

I really hope that you're enjoying yourself. Now it's time to move on to the next section.

Mini-Story

(Improve your Speaking)

This week I've created a funny mini-story about a guy named Brian. He wants to go out with hot chicks, so he's got a brilliant idea! All he needs to do is drive a luxury car! I'm sure you're getting excited about the story.

Let's see how a mini-story works:

- I'll start by giving you some information. (A phrase or two).
- And then I'll ask simple questions.
- After each question, there will be some seconds of silence: now it's your turn to answer the question! Just give an easy and short answer, not a complex one.
- And after you answer, I'll give you a correct answer.

This process will continue, and I'll gradually tell you a story with questions and answers.

Let's get started!

Brian is an unattractive short, middle-aged accountant who wants impress hot chicks.

Brian, are you a middle-aged man?

Yeah, I'm a middle-aged man. I just turned 47 yesterday.

Are you a tall, attractive man?

No. No. I'm not tall or attractive. In fact, I'm a short, unattractive man.

What do you do for a living? Are you a doctor?

No. No. I'm not a doctor. I'm just an accountant. I wish I were a doctor!

Do you want to impress hot dogs?

No! Not hot dogs. I don't want to impress food! What I want is to impress hot chicks.

Brian is convinced that he can go out with hot chicks if he drives a new luxury car.

Brian, are you convinced you can go out with grandmothers?

No. No. Not with grandmothers! I wanna go out with hot chicks!

Do you wanna drive a car from the junkyard?

No! Not from the junkyard. I can't find any new luxury cars out there!

Would you like to drive an old used car?

No. No. I don't wanna drive an old used car. I wanna drive a new luxury car.

Brian dreams of driving a red Ferrari or at least a yellow Lamborghini reaching 220 miles per hour.

Are you dreaming of driving a Ford Fiesta?

No. No. I'm not dreaming of driving a Ford Fiesta! I wanna drive a Ferrari or at least a Lamborghini!

Brian, do you dream of driving a Harley-Davidson?

No. I don't dream of driving a Harley-Davidson. I'm too scared to drive a motorcycle.

Is your dream to drive a red Lamborghini?

No. No. I don't dream to drive a red Lamborghini. I wanna drive a yellow Lamborghini or a red Ferrari.

And would you like to drive a Ferrari at 220 miles per hour?

Yeah! I'd like to drive a Ferrari at 220 miles per hour. That would be awesome!

Anyway, Brian has a big problem. He can't afford to buy a car. Not even a second-hand one.

Brian, do you have a small problem?

No. My problem isn't small at all. I have a big problem.

Can you afford to buy ten cars?

No. No. I can't afford to buy ten cars. As a matter of fact, I can't even buy one car!

Can you buy a brand-new car?

No. I can't buy a brand-new car. I can't even buy a second-hand car.

So, let me get this straight. You can't afford to buy any cars. Right?

Yeah, you're right. I can't afford to buy any cars.

Now Brian intends to rent a Ferrari and is checking prices at the most reliable car hire agencies.

Do you intend to rent or to buy a Ferrari?

No. No. I can't buy a Ferrari! But you know that already! What I intend is to rent a Ferrari.

Brian, will you rent a Ferrari or a Ford?

No. I don't wanna rent a Ford. I'll rent a Ferrari, of course!

Are the car hire agencies unreliable?

No. No. The car hire agencies aren't unreliable. They are in fact the most reliable agencies.

Where are you checking prices? Is it at a real estate agency?

Not at a real estate agency. I'm not looking for a house. I check out prices at the car hire agencies.

Sadly, Brian can't rent a Ferrari either, so he gets pissed off.

So, Brian, can you rent a Fiat?

Yeah. I can rent a Fiat. But I wanna rent a Ferrari. Remember?

Are you happy knowing that you can't hire a Ferrari?

No. No. I'm not happy at all! In fact, I'm pissed off! I'm furious!

Are you pissed off right now?

Yes! I'm pissed off!

Brian gets so mad that he robs a bank to buy 98 Ferraris!

Brian, are you mad, right now?

Yes! I'm mad! I'm pissed off or furious, however you wanna call it!

Are you robbing a bank?

Yeah! Right now, I'm in a bank and I'm robbing plenty of money!

What do you want to do with the money you rob? Will you buy a house?

No. No. I'm not robbing a bank just to buy a house. I wanna buy 98 Ferraris!

How many Ferraris do you wanna buy? 99 Ferraris?

Let's not push it. I'm not gonna buy 99 Ferraris. I'm just gonna buy 98 Ferraris.

And that's the end of this funny mini-history. I guess that Brian is really mad! By the way, when we say that someone is mad we may understand that this person is angry or that they are crazy. In this case I think Brian's gone crazy! Brian has gone completely mad! Who buys 98 Ferraris? Would you buy 98 Ferraris?

I really hope that you have enjoyed today's mini-story. Can you see how many questions you can answer? It's like having a conversation with another person in English. So, now imagine a whole story told this way. It's amazing how much you can learn by using this technique.

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