



## Quick Chat: Episode 002

### *What are you reading?*

Study Guide & Transcript

<https://atozenglishpodcast.com>

#### Vocabulary

<b>Science Fiction</b>	<i>Futuristic stories based on actual scientific principles</i>
<b>Nightstand</b>	<i>A small table next to a bed</i>
<b>fantasy</b>	<i>A genre based on mystical stories often containing mythical creatures</i>
<b>alert</b>	<i>Wide-awake; focused and paying attention</i>
<b>theology</b>	<i>Related to religion</i>
<b>terraforming</b>	<i>Changing the atmosphere of a planet so that human beings can live there</i>

#### Discussion Questions

Have you ever had a bad roommate experience?

What was your first roommate experience?

Do you prefer to live alone or with a roommate?

## Quick Chat 002: What are you reading?

### Transcript written by Layla

Welcome to A to Z English Podcast quick chat. We are going to surprise each other with the topic for the day and see where the discussion goes. Check our website for a study guide with vocabulary notes and discussion as well as links to our Whatsapp or Facebook page where you can join in the conversation.

Kevin: So Jack, I've been reading a little bit recently, I was curious how many books do you read a year these days?

Jack: Oh boy, um, that's a good question. Well, my new New Year's resolution for January, the was to read 50 books in a year.

Kevin: It's a very ambitious. Jack: Yes, that was one a week. That's I wanted to read one book a week and I'm not talking about, you know, children's books. Of course, I'm talking about real books. It was a total failure, just like an absolute failure. I've aimed way too high with ambitious and so.

Kevin: It's not a realistic goal really to start with.

Jack: So in the last, so this year I properly have only read and it's July right now I think I've read maybe two or three books so far this year.

Kevin: Ok, I'm actually at a pretty similar amount. I'm trying to read more this year. Last year, I was bad at reading. I was just surfing the web and spending way too much time on the internet and not probably reading anything. This year, I've probably read, yeah I'm about the same I'm at two or three. I'm curious when you read books, how do you read them these days?

Jack: Ah, that's a good question, so yeah. Kevin: For me, I'm always I'm in the middle of two books at a time. I never just read one and finish and read one and read one and finish and read one and finish. I always have two or three going both on my bookshelf or on my nightstand and it's like, okay, what do I want to read now? Right, like what's my mood at this point in the day or before bed. So how do you read? Do you take notes? Do you read like details?

Jack: No, so bad, yeah, so you asked me how many books that I've read so far. This year, and I've only read, you know, when I think of having read a book, it only counts if you go from cover to cover. You got to read the whole thing. Kevin: You got to finish it.

Jack: If you asked me how many books have I started this then I probably I'm 20 or 30 books. Where I read 20 or 30 pages, and then I just bailout and start a different book. And how I read, I never take notes, I just read. I just read it and try to retain as much as I can. I only read non-fiction. I don't read fiction only. Yeah, I don't really like fiction. Yeah, I haven't read fiction for more than ten years, I had since I've read novel probably. Kevin: Not at all.

Jack: That's nothing, yeah.

Kevin: I'm in the middle of two books right now. I'm in the middle of one non-fiction and one fiction book. I do quite like novels. I like fantasy and sci-fi stories quite a bit. And my reading these days is the non-fiction book on breathing and exercise because I'm into Yoga a lot these days. Yeah, and how to breathe properly, so I'm reading that more during the day when I can really focus because it's informative books. And then before bed, I'm reading my non-fiction book because that's kind of a story. I just kind get into it and relax, you know, read a few pages before going to sleep, yeah. For me, reading at night is difficult because I fall asleep very easily. And so like you said reading in the day time is important. I think if you're going to finish a book you've got to carve out some when you're kind of alert and so for me, like, the reason I don't read novels used to love novels in my early 20s. I read all of the books by Ernest Hemingway. I loved the Sun also Rises and For Whom the Bell Toll and things like those kinds of books from that era like the early 1900s. Kevin: Classic literature. Jack: Yeah, yeah. Scott Fitzgerald. You know, those kind of era is my favorite for novels, um, however something kind of switched to me when I, don't know, turned 30 or in my mid-30s. I just found non-fiction much more interesting

because it just gives you a lot of understanding of difficult concepts, so, for example, like politics. If you just watch the news to understand politics, it's not enough information. You have to read about it to really understand it. And I think that's true for just about any topic you have to read about it to really, it gives you depth and understanding instead of just, you know, watching Netflix or something.

Kevin: I never really read about it. Politics is really tough one, um, I recently finished the book, though I do agree in some ways I recently finished a book about physics, actually because I quite like physics, but I'm not, I don't understand math, I'm terrible at all of that, but I love space travel. And how physics works. I think it's cool, yeah, and so I found basically what was the name of the book. I think it's physics for busy people and it's just a book physics and dark matter and, you know, yeah, gravity and things, but for people who don't understand physics.

Jack: There are some authors that are very good like Neil DeGrasse Tyson is an example of the person who wrote the book that I just read. Yes, that I know that's why I mentioned that because I know that you wrote that book, but he can write it. He can describe physics in a way that, uh, we could say like a normal individual, just you know, right a non-expert could understand. And, uh, those are the kinds of non-fiction books that I love where the authors are good at explaining difficult concepts in ways that I can understand. Because I'm not, you know, I don't have a deep understanding of too many things. I mean maybe, uh, my deepest, uh, level of understanding is probably in education, you know, is to specifically English education, but, uh, aside from that, yeah I need authors that are able to explain things in ways that I can understand. So I agree yeah. That's why I love non-fiction. I just find it so much more interesting than reading a novel.

Kevin: What non-fiction topics are you reading a lot about these days?

Jack: Okay, um, so when I read non-fiction I really am interested in American politics. Um, I'm also interested in theology, so I read some theology books and, um, I would say I'm also I within the realm of politics I'm really interested in, like activism or topics like racism um.

Kevin: Okay, things like a lot of social issues then.

Jack: Yes, exactly social issues, I find very, you know, fascinating and so. I like to be on top of those issues and understand what's happening and so, um, and I supplement a lot of the reading with, like podcasts. And uh, yeah YouTube channels and things like that, so I'm always kind of listening to podcasts and I'm reading books at the same time. I'm kind of getting information from different types of media. Amazing question.

Kevin: What about... yeah, so I guess the types of books mine for non-fiction they're very random because I just was reading physics books not too long ago that I finish, you know, like a few weeks back and now I said I'm reading about breathing which is, you know, physiology and how human body can adapt and change with breath. So those are not very connected at all. I do read other, like I recently read uh, sapiens which is kind of about, like human culture and things, like that I like culture books, I guess, um. And then for non-fiction because I still like fiction quite a bit. And I probably try to read more fiction than non-fiction, but it's a 50 50 almost. But I read a lot of Science Fiction and Fantasy Books, so it's my favorite book of all time. And I'm going to ask you this as well either fiction or non-fiction, but my favorite fiction book is the Dune series.

Jack: Oh yes, okay.

Kevin: They recently made a film about Herbert. Actually I think is, yeah exactly, yeah. And I love those books because he talks, like what I love about science fiction books is that they very often bring social issues into the story, you know, even science fiction TV shows and movies, if you're seen the Star Trek. You know, any Star Trek film or TV show from a long time ago. They deal with a lot of social issues and how those issues have evolved in, you know, 500 years in the future or something like that.

Jack: Yes,

Kevin, And so, I quite like sci-fi science fiction books because of that. It's like the same social issues that you like to deal with, but from a different lens.

Jack: I'm with you too. I like realistic science fiction, um, where it is not necessarily realistic.

Kevin: It's like 10,000 years in the future.

Jack: That's true, I mean it's more of, like uh, world creating, you know, like he Frank Herbert's imagination is just um, amazing, like how do you come up with the world that seems so, uh, plausible yet, so fantastical that's right.

Kevin: It's very not realistic in terms of what science they have.

Jack: Um, but a book that I actually, I lied on the podcast today. I just remembered that I read a fiction book, uh. Well, I haven't finished it. Again, I started, you said sapiens, I started that book., didn't finish it.

Kevin: Um, actually, yeah, I'm most of the way done, but noy all the way. It's fascinating. It's, I mean it's a good book. Un, another book is called the Mark series and the name of the authors escapes me. I apologize, I can't remember, but there's Red Mars, Blue Mars, and Green Mars, so it's a Trilogy and basically it talks about terraforming Mars, like the people go to Mars and how we begin to colonize that planet and then eventually change the atmosphere, so that it's a livable planet for human being. So it's all based in, like real science, but it's Way Beyond what we're capable of doing right now.

Kevin: Did you read or see movie the Martian a few years ago?

Jack: Yes.

Kevin: Which one book or movie?

Jack: Um, I saw the movie, um I know, that it's based on a book that was written on Reddit, I think.

Kevin: I'm not sure 100 on that. Anyway, I haven't seen the film, but actually I did read the book and that book was amazing because it was partially written online and he did an amazing amount of research for it. So while it is a fiction story someone who gets stuck on Mars. It's based on completely real physics and what actual astronanuts would be able to do or not able to do or the things that they actually have with them and things like that. So it's as close to realistic science fiction as you can get I think and it was also just a great book. It was just a really fun read.

Jack: I mean again, a guy that can explain really difficult concepts in ways that normal people can understand. And you mentioned Neil DeGrasse Tyson. He likes to watch science fiction movies and then kind analyze the physics whether, you know, how possible accurate the physics are in certain science movie. And I've be curious to read what he said about, uh, the Martian because, like you said he did so research before writing, while writing that. And I think I'm going online and asking professors and things like that. Please tell me what the science is behind this and then he put it into his fictional story, yeah that's really cool.

Kevin: yeah yeah it's quite interesting. It's a fun book. Definitely, I do recommend it. So how many books now, what's your goal for this year? What's your realistic goal now?

Jack: I've got to pick a realistic goal, um, I would say I think, like 10 books a year is actually really good. That's, like a little bit less than once one a month, but I think, you know, if you read ten books a year, you're pretty well informed. You're exercising your brain.

Kevin: I would agree, I mean if I could read more than 10 a year, that's fantastic, but even 10 a year, I think, is a pretty good number. If I can get through, like almost a book a month for normal busy people. That's a decent amount of reading. That's what you're sitting down to do. And that's great, but as always any reading is better than no reading.

Jack: Well, and also I do a lot of reading online, so it's, you know, I also think sometimes we are hard on ourselves because we don't read books, but you know, I'm reading articles and things like that. So yeah, I also listen to a lot of podcasts and, so I try. That's another way to get information, but there is something special about reading. I think reading a book and really doing a deep dive into a topic.

Kevin: Something I think, although we'd have to save it for another time, but I'm curious to hear what you'd have to say about audiobooks as well. Maybe our, actually audiences can tell us

about what they think about audiobooks because I've never gone to audiobooks. My brother loves them. Yeah, he loves listening to books as opposed to sitting down and reading. And I think that there's, yeah it can have some similar benefits as well.

For anyone listening, come and tell us what you think?

We've got a Whatsapp group and our Facebook where you can come and link. Also, go to our webpage where you can check out PDF files and see some vocabulary and additional discussion questions there. So Jack, I'll see you next time.

Jack: Alright, see you next time.