

Real Talk #050 – How to check into a hotel

AD-FREE

Episode description

Everyone deserves a nice vacation from time to time. If you are not comfortable checking in to a hotel speaking English, don't worry. In this Real Talk episode, you will learn useful expressions you can use at the check-in counter.

Real Talk is a series designed to teach you practical real-life English. In this episode, we teach you how to check in to a hotel and how to respond to the most common questions receptionists ask.

Fun fact

Checking into a hotel should be easy, right? How about checking in to the First World Hotel & Plaza in Malaysia, which has a world record 7,351 rooms? After listening to this episode, you'll have no problems at all.

Expressions included in the study guide

- Under the name
- To pull up [something]
- Make and model
- To be all set
- Complimentary
- Enjoy your stay



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Real Talk #50. Hello, everyone. My name is Andrew.

Suzanne: Hey, guys. I'm Suzanne.

Andrew: And this is the Culips English Podcast.

Hello, friends. Welcome back to Culips. This is a Real Talk episode. Real Talk is the series where we teach you the English expressions that you need to know for real-world situations. And today, my co-host Suzanne and I are going to teach you how to check into a hotel. A very valuable skill if you want to travel in the future.

Suzanne: Oh, yeah, it's really important, right? So now that the pandemic is winding down, there will be a lot of people traveling, and this would be a perfect episode for you.

Andrew: OK, Sue, could you break down and let our listeners know what the plan for this episode is?

Suzanne: Absolutely, Andrew. Today, we are going to learn some practical expressions that you can use when checking into a hotel. So first, we're going to listen to an example conversation between a receptionist - so someone who works at reception in the front of the hotel - and a guest checking into the hotel.

Andrew: Perfect. So, why don't we start by listening to the example conversation now.

Receptionist: Good afternoon. Welcome to the ABC hotel. What can I do for you today?

Jeff: Hello. I have a reservation **under the name** Jeff Richardson.

Receptionist: All right. Wait one moment while I **pull up** your reservation.

Jeff: OK, thank you.

Receptionist: OK, we have you in room 302. Could I see your ID and the credit card you used to make the reservation?

Jeff: Sure. Here you go.

Receptionist: Are you parking your car here during your stay?

Jeff: Yeah, I'm gonna park my car, yeah.

Receptionist: OK, great. So what is the **make and model** of your car? And oh, can you please tell me the license plate number?

Jeff: Yeah, for sure. So I have a red Ford Focus and the license number is CUL 123.

Receptionist: All right. **You're all set.** Here's your key card and a brochure about the hotel. You'll find the Wi-Fi password for your room in there. And the elevator is on your right.

Jeff: Great. Thanks. Oh, and I had one question too.

Receptionist: Sure.

Jeff: I saw on the website, that breakfast is included. So where can I go to find that in the morning?

Receptionist: Yes, there is a **complimentary** continental breakfast for all of the guests. So the breakfast lounge is on the second floor. And dining hours are between 7:00 and 10:00am.

Jeff: Awesome. Thanks.

Receptionist: Yeah, you're welcome. If you have any further questions, the phone number for reception can be found in your brochure. All right, enjoy your stay at the ABC hotel.

Andrew: Great, everyone, we just listened to an example conversation where a guest at the ABC hotel, Jeff Richardson checks in with the receptionist. And so now what we're going to do, is go back through that example conversation one more time, and break down the key expressions that we heard in that conversation. And Suzanne, why don't we begin by talking about how Jeff checks into the hotel. So when he goes to the reception desk,

the front desk at the hotel, what does he say? And how does he communicate that he is there to check in?

Suzanne: So he states that he has a reservation and he says it's **under the name** Jeff Richardson, right? Under the name. So what does that mean Andrew, under the name?

Andrew: Yeah, so when you check into a hotel, the expression that you want to use is I have a reservation under the name, blah, blah, blah. You can say your name there. I have a reservation under the name Andrew, for example. However, you could also say for, right? I have a reservation for Jeff Richardson. I have a reservation for Andrew. But I think that sounds not quite as good, really, to my ears when I hear I have a reservation under it sounds best.

Suzanne: Yeah, I even think sometimes from working in a hotel, people would sometimes not even say the name. Like sometimes you would say, I have a reservation, under Suzanne Cerreta. Or we have a reservation under Smith.

Andrew: Or you may even say, I have a reservation. Right? I'd like to check into the hotel, I have a reservation, and then the front desk would ask you oh, OK, what is your name? And you could go from there.

Suzanne: Yeah. Or what's the name that you made the reservation with? Or what's the name that the reservation is under? That's something that they might say. So under is a common phrase used to find your reservation.

Andrew: Exactly.

Suzanne: To be under a name, the reservation is under a name. Or with I made a reservation with the name. These are both prepositions, right? And so these are both prepositional phrases under the name of, with the name of, or with the name, Jeff Richardson. And these can be tricky in English. I mean, that's something that most of my students have problems with.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely, prepositions are a challenge for many learners. So just knowing which ones go in the correct situations is something to pay attention to. And in this specific situation, for making a reservation, then we often use the word under, the preposition under. Perfect. So why don't we go to the next part of the conversation and the

receptionist says, OK, Jeff Richardson, just wait a moment while I **pull up** your reservation, pull up. Speaking of prepositions and phrasal verbs, we have a good one here, pull up your reservation, and to pull up means to access some information on a computer, right? You can pull up some information, pull up a reservation, pull up a file. So it's just like another way of saying search for, or access. And then continuing into the conversation, the receptionist says, OK, we have you in room 302. We have you in room 302. Which I thought was another interesting way to express this information, because when you think of it, you know, when you make a reservation, in a hotel, Suzanne, you can sometimes choose, like the area of the hotel, maybe you want to be on the upper floor, or the lower floor, or near the pool, or have an ocean view or mountain view, or something.

Suzanne: Totally.

Andrew: But not often, can you pick the specific room, right? You don't usually book a hotel and say, oh, I want room like 201 it doesn't often work that way. So, that is why the receptionist says we have you in room 302 it's because the hotel made the decision about where that guest will be staying in the hotel based on, you know, the occupancy and how busy the hotel is, and other factors like that. So that I thought was just an interesting way to express that. And that's why you might hear a hotel front desk person say something like we have you in room 302.

Suzanne: Yeah, absolutely. And then the receptionist asked, could I see your ID and the credit card you used to make the reservation? So, many times it's very customary for someone to have to give their credit card, in I would say North America for sure at check in because they want to make sure that the credit card that you used online to make the reservation matches you, right? So that there isn't a credit card theft scenario happening. Also, sometimes they take a hold amount on your card, so they might charge your card for like \$100 just to make sure that there's some money on the card, available for things that, you know, happen while you're staying there. Like maybe you buy some sodas or something in the gift shop, and you want to sign it to your room or you eat some snacks from your mini fridge. They just want to make sure that that's covered for you. So they might take a charge on your card, as well. But for sure, presenting your card with an ID at the beginning of your trip is very common.

Andrew: Yeah, absolutely. So this is a good piece of information for our listeners to know, I think because I've traveled to many countries. And when checking into hotels and

other countries, sometimes they don't ask me for ID, or the credit card that I used to make the booking. In fact, in South Korea, where I live now, usually when I check into a hotel, I just say my name and they say, OK, we have you in room 302. And I can just go right in. So yeah, if you're traveling from a different place to North America, you can expect to have to show your ID, to provide your credit card, and often Suzanne, just like you said, you might have to pay a deposit that you can get back once you checkout. Just in case, you know, you want to eat a snack from the mini fridge and they often load them up with lots of tempting snacks. Further in the conversation, the receptionist at the hotel, asks the guest Jeff, if he will be parking his car. And he says yes that he will be parking his car in the parking lot of the hotel, or the parking garage. And so the receptionist asks, what is the **make and model** of your car? And also could you please tell me the license plate number. So what does this mean make and model, make and model? It's very common phrase isn't it, make and model?

Suzanne: Yes, it is. I think it's, it feels very old fashioned. But it is something that is used all the time. Make is like who made it. The make of your cars like Chrysler, Toyota, Subaru. Yeah, Honda. That's the make. Then the model, is the kind. So it's like a Ford Focus, or it's a you know, Volkswagen Tiguan or it's a Subaru Outback, or is it a Forester. So that's what they need to know. They just need to know, OK, it's a Subaru Impreza, and this is our license plate number. And why is that so important Andrew, like, why do they need all of that information when you're parking the car at the hotel?

Andrew: For several reasons, I think. The first reason is that they may want to keep an eye on your car. Many hotels have big parking garages or maybe even underground parking or a big parking lot. And it's not only guests that can park there but sometimes just visitors can park there as well. Other people can use that parking lot, especially because hotels are often located in convenient locations, maybe downtown or near a tourist attraction. So, if other people pay to enter the car parking lot, then they can park there as well and hotel security might keep an eye out on your car just to make sure that nothing happens. And the other reason is that if you are a guest, then maybe free parking is included with your stay. Now this is not always the case. Last time I was in Canada, I had to pay for parking, even though I was a guest at the hotel I stayed at in Vancouver, it was very disappointing. But it's possible that you could have free parking. And this way, if they know the make and model of your car, they won't charge you twice. So I think it's just for those reasons why they want to know about your car.

Suzanne: Yeah, maybe who knows. But I'm sure that it's partly for your safety and for their liability as well to make sure that they're, you know, keeping your car safe and not charging you more than they need to.

Andrew: Well, another reason is that often these parking lots, you can't just park there for like days on end, right? Usually you have to leave by like the gate will close at 3:00am or something and if your car is still in the parking lot after the gate is closed, then they might tow the car or that could be a problem. So they wouldn't want that situation for, you know, people who are just using the parking lot for the day. But for guests, it would be okay to park in the lot overnight as well. So that could be an issue that could happen. And that could be another reason why they would want to know the make and model of your car. So moving on Suzanne, to the next expression, the check in process is finished. And we hear the receptionist, say a very, very useful expression. **You're all set**, you're all set. And this just means everything is finished, we're done. OK, check in is done, you can go and enter your room now. And I said this was a really useful expression. And that's because we don't just use it when talking about checking into a hotel, but so many other situations in our daily lives as well. Suzanne, could you brainstorm maybe a few situations where you would say, you're all set?

Suzanne: Yeah. Anytime you're about to use any kind of facility, any entertainment, enter a sporting event, a show, something you're going to consume, usually, something you need to buy tickets to, they're going to say, you're all set. Like, you wouldn't do that at a grocery store for example, if you go to a grocery store, you pay, you're like, OK, have a great day, bye. You're not all set, because you're not about to enjoy something more at that location, you got your stuff, and now you're leaving, it's usually when you arrive somewhere that you're going to then enjoy the benefits of that establishment or the benefits of the show, the benefits of the casino, the benefits of maybe the park, or you know, a spectacle, then you need to be set up to do it, right? So this means that everything is in order for you to now enjoy yourself at this location.

Andrew: Yes, Suzanne, I completely agree with that. And I would like to add one other element to it. And that is not only in that situation where you're getting ready to enter somewhere, like into a movie theater or into a gym, you could use you're all set. But also at the end of receiving a service, then the person who is giving that service to you could say you're all set, meaning like you're all finished, you're all done. So maybe you are getting your hair cut, and the hair cut is finished. And the hairdresser says, oh, OK, you're all set, you can go home now, you're finished. Or, you know, to use your grocery store

example, it would be weird for the cashier to say you're all set, at the end of the checkout. But maybe there is like somebody working at the grocery store, who takes your bags out to your car for you and loads them into your car. And then after loading the bags into your car, that person could say, oh, OK, you're all set. You can go home now. You can leave the grocery store.

Suzanne: Exactly, Andrew. That's true.

Andrew: Yeah. So I think that's the core meaning. If our listeners keep that in mind, you're all set means something is finished and done. And you're ready to go on to the next stage. Maybe that's the important part, you're ready to go to the next stage because the initial part has been finished, then we can use you're all set. So I think we're all set to continue on with the conversation. And the next key part of it is when the receptionist gives the room key card and a brochure about the hotel to the guest. And a brochure is just a small information pamphlet. Usually it's just one piece of paper that is folded into three parts. And you can open it and find information inside. And usually lots of hotels and tourist attractions, maybe restaurants, will make brochures and you can find them sometimes in the lobby of a hotel or at a tourist information stop or information center. These kinds of places you can find many brochures and so the receptionist gives a brochure about the hotel to the guest, just so that he has information if he needs it.

Suzanne: Yeah. And then the guest asked about having breakfast included in their stay. So that's interesting, right? There's breakfast included, Andrew. So what did the reception answer exactly? It's an interesting kind of breakfast, right?

Andrew: Exactly. So, the guest noticed that they offer a free breakfast to guests, the hotel. And this is not like extremely common, but also not extremely rare. So it really depends it's kind of case by case for hotels in North America about whether they do this or not. But it was pretty easy to find a hotel that offers a **complimentary** continental breakfast, just like this ABC hotel does. So let's break this down, complimentary continental breakfast. This is a very common kind of hotel breakfast. So complimentary, just means free. If something is complimentary, it's free, or it's included in the price. So let's say this guy is paying \$100 for the hotel room, he doesn't have to pay any additional money for the breakfast. It's included in that \$100, so it's complimentary. And continental breakfast means a kind of light breakfast, that usually includes bread, maybe, you know, toast and peanut butter or a bagel, maybe some cereal, coffee, orange juice.

Suzanne: In my experience, it's not a hot food. It's not cooked, hot food that you order. It's maybe a buffet of pastries and breads that you can warm up, and some fruit, and maybe yogurt. But that's basically it. So it's a lighter breakfast.

Andrew: Exactly. No bacon and eggs and pancakes and waffles, unfortunately. If you want that you're going to have to pay that's not complimentary. And the receptionist continues to say that the breakfast lounge is on the second floor. And the dining hours are between 7:00am and 10:00am. So here, dining hours just means the eating time, the time when breakfast is served. So dining hours, although dining seems similar to the word dinner, which is what we eat in the evening. In this context, it just means eating time, the time when you can eat.

Suzanne: Yeah. Or when it's being served, right? Sometimes they could say that, too. They might say breakfast is served between 7:00 and 10:00am.

Andrew: Yeah, sometimes, I actually ask for a wake-up call at the hotel because I find that usually when I'm on vacation, I don't like to wake up too early. And I could maybe sleep through the continental breakfast or the free breakfast. When I traveled to Scotland a couple of years ago, my hotel served a full Scottish breakfast every day, and I didn't want to miss it. But it was between like 6:00 and 8:30am or something, which was kind of weird so early in the morning, at least when you're on vacation, it's early in the morning. So I requested a wake-up call. And a wake-up call is when the receptionist will call your room to make sure that you wake up in time for your appointment, or in my case for eating the full Scottish breakfast.

Suzanne: That sounds delicious.

Andrew: Yeah, it was it was interesting. It's very different than a complimentary continental breakfast, I have to say.

Suzanne: The receptionist, Andrew, says at the end, **enjoy your stay**, your stay? What does that mean, enjoy your stay?

Andrew: This is just a very polite thing that you will hear a receptionist or really any staff members at a hotel, say to guests. So, you know, instead of just saying goodbye, they will probably say, oh, enjoy your stay. Just have a good time at our hotel.

Suzanne: All right, well, we're almost at the end of today's episode. But before we go, why don't we summarize what we've covered? So we can get an idea of all of those expressions.

Andrew: Yeah, so we covered a lot today. And we learned about how to check into a hotel.

Suzanne: Yeah. And so we learned what things that you'll need when checking into a hotel, such as the name that the reservation is under. A form of ID and the credit card that you use to make the reservation and also the make and model and license plate number of your car if you're going to be parking your car at the hotel.

Andrew: That's right and we learned a lot of really useful expressions such as, could I see your ID and credit card you used to make the reservation? And what's the make and model of your car? These are really common questions that you'll probably be asked when checking into a hotel.

Suzanne: Yeah, and we also learn the expression, complimentary, right? Or free to describe things like breakfast that are included in the price of your stay, right? The complimentary breakfast.

Andrew: And finally, we learned the expression enjoy your stay, which is a phrase that is used to wish guests have a great time while staying at a hotel.

All right, listeners. Well, that brings us to the end of this episode, we hope you learned a lot with this one. Talk to you next time.

Detailed Explanations

Under the name

Phrase

At the beginning of the example conversation about checking in at a hotel, the guest tells the receptionist that he has a reservation **under his name**. This is a common way of saying there is a reservation that is associated with your name. To search for it, the receptionist needs to find the file classified **under his family name**.

You can also use the variations **under the name of**, **to the name of**, and **with the name**. The receptionist might also ask you, “**Under what name** is your reservation?” or “**What name is it under?**”

Here are a couple more examples with **under the name**:

Maria: Hello. I’ve reserved concert tickets and I’m here to pick them up. My name is Maria Perez.

Receptionist: Let me see. I’m sorry, ma’am. I don’t see your reservation in my computer.

Maria: Oh, it’s probably **under the name** of my husband. His name is Peter Kline. K-L-I-N-E.

Receptionist: OK, I found them. Can I have your credit card, please?

Charles: Hello. I made an appointment with Dr. Smith last week.

Receptionist: OK. Let me check. What **name is your reservation under?**

Charles: Woods. Charles Woods.

Receptionist: OK. I see it here. Please have a seat.

Charles: Will it take long?

Receptionist: Not long at all. We’ll call your name shortly.

To pull up [something]

Phrasal verb

In the example dialogue, after the guest offers his name, the receptionist says she will **pull up the reservation**. **To pull up [something]** is to access it. This involves a small degree of searching effort. While it is not a complex process at all, **pulling up [something]** usually involves a few simple steps, like clicking on your mouse a couple of times.

Think of an old filing cabinet full of files. When you found the file you were looking for, you literally pulled it out of the drawer to access and use it. It is in that sense that we still use **to pull up [something]**, even though most of the information we access is now digital.

There are two different ways we can use this phrasal verb. The object, or the **[something]** that we pull up can be placed before or after the word *up*. For example, **pull [something] up** or **pull up [something]**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to pull up [something]**:

Gianni: Are you ready to go to the hotel?

Sofia: Yup.

Gianni: Good. Actually, wait. Before we go, can you **pull the reservation number up** on the computer?

Sofia: Don't need to. I have a screenshot of it on my phone.

Gianni: Good thinking. All right, let's go.

Jihee: Look at what I **pulled up**.

Lucia: Oh no! How did you find that old picture of me?

Jihee: Your mom let me search through your family photo albums.

Lucia: I can't believe she let you do that. I'm going to have a talk with her.

Jihee: This picture is just the tip of the iceberg. I found so many more. Get ready to be embarrassed!

Make and model

Phrase

When talking about the parking situation in the example dialogue, the receptionist asks the guest for his car's **make and model**. A car's **make** is its manufacturer, for example, Ford, Hyundai, or Honda. The **model** is the type of car the manufacturer produces, for example, Ford makes a Ford Taurus and Hyundai makes a Hyundai Sonata.

There are several reasons why a receptionist would ask you for your car's **make and model**. It could be for security reasons, in order to keep your car safe. It could be to differentiate between your parking rights as a hotel guest and the parking rights of outside customers using the same parking lot.

You can also use **make and model** when referring to other machines, such as a coffee machine, a stereo system, or a laptop.

Here are a couple more examples with **make and model**:

Winston: When I check in to the hotel, do you think I need to give them my license and registration papers?

Nadia: I don't think so. Nobody has ever asked me that. Just give them the car's **make and model** and license plate number, and you'll be fine. Do you know those?

Winston: Not at all.

Nadia: You should take a picture of your car. That way you won't have to remember.

Fareed: I heard you know a lot about smartphones. Can you help me pick one out?

Suzy: Sure. What kind of **make** do you like?

Fareed: I'm not sure. Samsung, I guess.

Suzy: Would you buy the newest **model** or does an older one interest you?

Fareed: Again, not sure. It depends on the price.

To be all set Idiom

Near the end of the check in, the receptionist says that the hotel guest is **all set**. In this situation, **to be all set** means that the guest has finished some preparations and is ready to go to the next phase. The preparations are the checking in, and the next phase is going to his room and beginning his stay at the hotel.

To be all set usually involves some kind of preparations. For example, if you spent a few weeks planning and packing for an overseas trip, once you are ready to go to the airport, you can say you're **all set**. It is also common to say you're **all set and ready to go**.

Here are a couple more examples with **to be all set**:

Chad: I'm a bit nervous to be driving in front of your for the first time.

Barry: Don't worry. We'll take it easy. Did you check your mirrors?

Chad: Yes.

Barry: Did you adjust your seat properly?

Chad: Yes.

Barry: OK. Turn on the engine and we're **all set** to go.

Chad: Cool. Let's go.

Mona: OK. I got my wallet, my mask, my bathing suit, my hat, and my sunscreen. I'm ready. How about you? Are you **all set and ready to go**?

Franny: I've been **all set** for an hour. I'm waiting on you.

Mona: Oh, wait. I forgot something. Can wait a minute?

Franny: Geez. Sure.

Complimentary Adjective

In the example dialogue, the receptionist informs the guest that there is a **complimentary** continental breakfast available for all guests. **Complimentary** means that it is free or already included in the initial price. The guest will be able to eat a continental breakfast, which is a light style of breakfast, at no additional cost.

Complimentary can be used in many other situations. For example, you can go to a music concert and find out that there is a **complimentary** drink with your ticket. That means you can have a free drink once you are there. **Complimentary** is an additional free benefit that goes along with something you have already purchased.

Here are a couple more examples with **complimentary**:

Receptionist: Hello, Ms. Jones. Is there a problem with your room?

Harriet: No, not at all. But I noticed two bottles of water in the fridge. Did I have to pay for those?

Receptionist: No, you don't. You are entitled to two **complimentary** bottles of water per day, as well as **complimentary** packets of tea and coffee.

Harriet: That's sounds great. Thank you.

Vera: Where are you going?

Olive: I'm heading over to Z-Mart.

Vera: Really? You never go there.

Olive: I know. But I read that they're giving out **complimentary** coffee mugs if you spend over \$50.

Vera: That's not a bad deal. Do you mind if I join?

Enjoy your stay

Phrase

Near the end of the example dialogue, the receptionist says goodbye to the guest by saying **enjoy your stay**. This is a very common expression that receptionists and general staff members of the hotel say to guests. It is a polite and friendly way of hoping the guests have a pleasurable experience during their time at the hotel.

Enjoy your stay is the short version. You can always add more to it. For example, you can say **I hope you enjoy your stay** or **please enjoy your stay here at the ABC Hotel**.

Similarly, flight attendants will often say **enjoy your flight** to passengers while boarding. Waiters often say **enjoy your meal** after serving food at restaurants.

Here are a couple more examples with **enjoy your stay**:

Receptionist: Here is your key card. Is there anything else I can do for you?

Isabelle: I'm think I'm all right for now.

Receptionist: Very well. We here at the Angel Hotel truly hope you **enjoy your stay**.

Isabelle: I'm sure I will. Thank you.

Flight attendant: Welcome.

Christopher: Excuse me. Where is seat 32-G?

Flight attendant: Your seat is on the left side of the plane. Just continue until your hit row 32. It will be a window seat.

Christopher: That's great, thanks.

Flight attendant: You're welcome. **Enjoy your flight**.

Quiz

1. What does to be all set mean?

- a) to be ready to go
- b) to need more time
- c) to be unsettled
- d) to win a set at tennis

2. True or false? A reservation under your name is associated with your name.

- a) true
- b) false

3. What does to pull up [something] mean?

- a) to do exercise
- b) to access something
- c) to drag something behind you
- d) to delete something on the computer

4. True or false? There is an additional fee for things that are complimentary.

- a) true
- b) false

5. Which of the following is NOT a good example of a make and model?

- a) a Ford Focus
- b) a Honda Civic
- c) an iPhone 10
- d) a blue Hyundai

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What do you like and dislike about checking in at a hotel?
2. In your experience, do you usually have to check in at a hotel under your name or do you simply pay with no questions asked?
3. What is a complimentary item that makes you the most happy to find when you walk into a new hotel room?
4. How important are the make and model to you when buying a household appliance?
5. How long does it take you to get all set in the morning?

Quiz Answers

1. a 2. a 3. b 4. b 5. d

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