

English at the Train Station

Ask before you board — from the board to the right seat

EPISODE 29 • LEVEL B1-B2

Episode summary

- The board says platform four. You run, you sit, you smile — and the train carries you to the wrong city. It happens to good travellers every day, not because their English is bad, but because nobody taught them station English.
- Move one: read the board. Time, city, platform, always in that order. Depart means leave, delayed means late, cancelled means the train never comes. Know your first train and your last train home.
- Move two: buy the ticket. Single means one way; a return takes you there and brings you back, usually cheaper than two singles. Three short sentences at the window: where, single or return, and when you come back.
- Move three: find your train. A platform can hold two trains, so never trust the platform alone. Read the small board, read the side of the train, and ask the one question: is this the train for the city centre?
- Move four: ride calm and fix problems. Delayed, missed, lost, cancelled, wrong train. Stay early, stay honest, stay polite, and ask for help in five short words. A question at the platform costs ten seconds. The wrong train costs a whole day.

What's inside this PDF

18 key words • the board order • window frames • Say It Better upgrades • 3 practice exercises

Key Vocabulary

18 words from this episode — learn them, then use them this week

1. platform

the long floor beside the train, where you stand and wait.

> Your train leaves from platform four.

2. departure

the leaving of a train.

> The departure board shows every train that leaves today.

3. single

a ticket for one way only.

> A single to the airport, please.

4. return

a ticket that takes you there and brings you back.

> A return is cheaper than two singles.

5. change

to leave one train and take another.

> You change at the big station, then ride one more hour.

6. delayed

late, but coming.

> The train is delayed by twenty minutes.

7. cancelled

the train does not travel at all.

> My train is cancelled. Which train can I take?

8. inspector

the person on the train who checks tickets.

> Show the inspector your ticket and smile.

9. carriage

one part of a train, one car.

> Carriage two, seat thirty one.

10. board

the big screen that shows times, cities, and platforms.

> Read the board in order: time, city, platform.

11. depart

to leave.

> The ten twenty departs at ten twenty.

12. arrive

to come in, to reach a place.

> The train arrives at nine.

13. miss

to be too late for a train.

> I missed my train. Is there another one today?

14. railcard

a card that makes tickets cheaper for a year.

> Is there a cheaper ticket with a card?

15. luggage

your bags.

> Big bags go in the rack near the door.

16. timetable

the list of all train times.

> The timetable says the last train is at eleven.

17. terminates

ends here; everyone gets off.

> This train terminates here.

18. quiet carriage

a carriage with no calls and low voices.

> In the quiet carriage, music stays in your ears.

Ask Before You Board

read in order, buy in three sentences, ask one question, ride calm

Move one: the board

"Time, city, platform. Always in that order."

Move two: the ticket

"A return to the city centre, please. Which platform is it?"

Move three: the train

"Excuse me, is this the train for the city centre?"

Move four: problems

"I missed my train. Is there another one today?"

The rule

"Ask before you board. A question costs ten seconds; the wrong train costs a day."

Say It Better — 10 upgrades

☐ "I want a ticket for go to the city."

☐ "I want a ticket to the city."

☐ "How much costs the ticket?"

☐ "How much is the ticket?"

☐ "The train leaves on ten twenty."

☐ "The train leaves at ten twenty."

☐ "I lost myself in the station."

☐ "I am lost."

☐ "Give me one ticket."

☐ "One ticket, please."

☐ "This train goes to where?"

☐ "Where does this train go?"

☐ "I will descend at the next station."

☐ "I will get off at the next station."

☐ "The train is late twenty minutes."

☐ "The train is twenty minutes late."

Practice Time

3 exercises — do them today, not “someday”

Exercise 1 — Fill in the blank

Word bank: platform • return • inspector • delayed • change

1. Your train leaves from _____ four.
2. A _____ is cheaper than two singles.
3. Show the _____ your ticket and smile.
4. The train is _____ by twenty minutes, so we wait.
5. You _____ at the big station, then ride one more hour.

Exercise 2 — Say it like a local

Upgrade each station-English line (answers below):

1. “How much costs the ticket?” > Ask it clean:
2. “The train leaves on ten twenty.” > One small word:
3. “I will descend at the next station.” > The natural verb:

Exercise 3 — The platform drill

Before your next journey, say the whole game out loud: read a board in order (time, city, platform), buy a return in three sentences, and ask the one question. Practise these three lines until they feel boring — boring means ready.

- The board: The train for the airport departs at nine fifteen from platform two.
- The window: A return to the city centre, please. I come back this evening.
- The question: Excuse me, is this the train for the city centre?

Answer key

Ex 1: 1 platform • 2 return • 3 inspector • 4 delayed • 5 change

Ex 2: 1 “How much is the ticket?” 2 “The train leaves at ten twenty.” 3 “I will get off at the next station.”