



All Ears English Episode 228:

Meet Michelle, the 'New York Radio Girl'

Lindsay: This is an All Ears English Podcast, Episode 228: "Meet Michelle, the 'New York Radio Girl'."

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Welcome to the All Ears English Podcast, downloaded more than 5 million times. We believe in connection, not perfection. You'll finally get real Native English conversation with your American hosts, Lindsay McMahon, the 'English Adventurer' and Michelle Kaplan, the 'New York Radio Girl' coming to you from Boston and New York City, USA.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: She is a New Yorker. She's a singer. She's a songwriter, a traveler and a dog lover. She eats peanut butter and cheese sandwiches and sometimes she even dunks her popcorn in milk. She is our delightful new co-host, Michelle Kaplan and she is finally here to join us on the All Ears English podcast. Let's welcome Michelle to the show.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: In today's episode, you will meet our new, permanent co-host Michelle and you'll learn how to get to know someone naturally in English.

[Instrumental]



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[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Hey, Michelle. How are you doing today?

Michelle: Hi, Lindsay. I'm doing great. I'm so excited to be here.

Lindsay: Oh, well, we are so happy to have you. I'm so excited to announce, to show, to bring you to our audience today. Thank you so much for joining us here on the All Ears English Podcast.

Michelle: Oh, thank you so much. It's my pleasure.

Lindsay: Guys, we have our new, permanent co-host here. And today, you're gonna (going to) get to know Michelle. I'm so excited. Michelle, so let's go – let's do this today, Michelle. So we wanna (want to) have a little conversation to get to know each other. And what we wanna (want to) do is we wanna (want to) show our listeners here what it's like to get to know someone, for example, if you're at a party and you know, maybe you know a few things about someone, but you're just having a little chat. Does that sound good Michelle?

Michelle: That sounds perfect.

Lindsay: All right. So let's do it. So Michelle, you're from Washington, D... did you... where are you from by the way? Where are you from originally?

Michelle: (Uh), yeah, well, I'm originally from Washington, DC. And, yeah, I grew up there, (uh), and moved to New York several years ago.

Lindsay: Awesome, awesome. So what was it like moving to New York from DC? (I mean), how was that?



Michelle: (Um), it was, it was a scary experience a little bit. Not to use, (you know), such an intimidating word. But, (you know), New, New York is a scary place and I always wanted to live in New York. It was my dream to move to New York. So I just decided to go ahead and do it. And at first, to be honest, when I arrived, I thought, 'Oh, my gosh. I made the biggest mistake.' And I thought I can, I'll never be able to do this and I really, I really thought about moving home, but this is something I, (you know), I'm really proud of that I didn't move home and that I stayed. And, (um), (you know), now I can say that I'm a New Yorker, I guess after (uh), maybe...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...four or five years. And I...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...I'm really happy here.

Lindsay: Awesome. I would say four or five years gives you that official label as being a New Yorker. It is hard, (right), Michelle, when you first move to New York. (You know), it's an intense city and you don't know anyone and you're rent is expensive, well, (I mean), that's awesome that you go through that.

Michelle: Thank you. Thank you. No, it's not easy, but I had a, (you know), a lot of, (you know), support from my family and they were, they really helped me through it and yeah, here I am today.

Lindsay: Awesome. So is your family still in the DC area or where are they now?

Michelle: Yep, yep. (Um), they live, (uh), in or around DC.

Lindsay: Oh, okay. In or around DC. Very nice. Do you get to see them a lot or, or do they come up and visit you in New York?

Michelle: (Um), yeah, I see them maybe (hmm), once a month or so. So I'm, I'm very, I'm very...

Lindsay: Wow.



Michelle: ...close with my family and so I try to see them as often as I can. It's not, (you know), it's not so easy, but it's, it's also, it's not that far. It takes about four hours.

Lindsay: Awesome, awesome. So what are you into, like what do you, what do you like to do on the weekends? What are you, what are your hobbies and what, what are you, what are you into?

Michelle: Okay. (Um), well, I love music. (Um), I love to sing. I used to be in a band actually in college. And I...

Lindsay: Aw, cool.

Michelle: Thanks. And I like to play some instruments. I'm not so great at them, but I like to use them to (um), to accompany myself and I do a little bit of music writing. I also love exploring New York and take ...

Lindsay: Oh, wow.

Michelle: ...going to restaurants and trying to cook. Key word 'trying'.

Lindsay: Trying. I struggle with that too.

Michelle: Really? [crosstalk] Are you a good cook?

Lindsay: No. I think our listeners on the show know that I don't cook. I just – (you know), I never learned how to cook.

Michelle: Yeah, it's not easy. (Me-), I don't think I did either really, but I, I try, but it's not... I'm not so successful.

Lindsay: Yeah. It's really tough. So what kind of music do you play? Like – what... you said that you're into music, you write your own songs. What kind of songs do you write?

Michelle: Well, I think that it depends who I'm writing with. For example, when I was in a band, I was in a band with four boys. So, So...

Lindsay: Okay.



Michelle: ...it was a little bit, (you know), more, (uh), more like rock in that situation. But when it's just me, it's (like), (uh), pop music, girly pop, almost like a folk music type.

Lindsay: Oh. Cool. So kind of like sentimental stuff. That sort of thing a little bit.

Michelle: Yeah, definitely. Like, (kind of) like a diary. It's almost embarrassing.

Lindsay: Oh, really. So you (like) reveal (like) thoughts and stuff in these songs and it gets kind of personal.

Michelle: Right. But I try to hide them as much as possible in metaphors.

Lindsay: Ooh. Very cool, very cool.

Michelle: Yeah.

Lindsay: So maybe at some point, you can write a song for the All Ears English podcast for our listeners.

Michelle: Absolutely.

Lindsay: That would be fantastic. That would be fantastic. And so did you, did you go to college in New York or did you go to college down in DC or where'd you go to school?

Michelle: (Mm-hmm), I went to the University of Maryland in College Park, Maryland. Yeah, so, (um), and I loved it. What school did you go to?

Lindsay: Oh, actually I went to the University of Mary Washington in Virginia...

Michelle: Ah.

Lindsay: ...so, so close to Maryland.

Michelle: Not too far.

Lindsay: Right.

Michelle: Yeah, for sure.



Lindsay: I know. I know. I actually had a lot of classmates who, (um), who (ha-), who grew up in Maryland.

Michelle: Really?

Lindsay: Yeah. How did you like (uh) – so you went to a huge school? How did you like going to such a large university?

Michelle: I enjoyed it. I think it was scary at first because...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: It's similar to moving to New York, right. You don't know anybody and you walk around and it's, (you know), a little intimidating, but as you become comfortable with the campus, you know where you're going 'cause (because) it is so big, it's hard to [crosstalk].

Lindsay: Yeah, how many students, how many students go to (um), College Park, Maryland?

Michelle: Oh, gosh. I'm terrible at these questions. (Um), I don't know. Like 15,000 or more.

Lindsay: Yeah, it's massive. My god.

Michelle: I think it's around that much, but I could be completely wrong. But yes, it's a huge, huge school, and – but it's funny. After you become comfortable and you know where you're going, (um), you start to realize that as you walk to class, you're waving 'hi' to so many people and in the beginning you knew no one and it's just surprising because there *are* so many people, you wouldn't think that you would, (um), run into so many people just as you're walking to class.

Lindsay: Does that happen to you in, in New York, (als-), as well? 'Cause (because) I found that that often happen in New York when you don't wanna (want to) run into someone (right). Maybe you're in an awkward situation with the person and then, (ohp), there's the person you run into.



Michelle: I have definitely had that experience. It's shocking because, again, it's such a big place you wouldn't imagine that you just, (ohp), you just bump into somebody, but it happens all the time.

Lindsay: Yeah, it's so funny. So funny. Wow. Yeah, so when I chose my college, I looked for a pretty small school, (you know), so that's why I went to Mary Washington because there were only about 5,000 people. But you didn't have a problem going to such a massive place?

Michelle: No, I think, again, I think that at first, it was intimidating definitely. I'm, I'm not (like) the best person with change and especially as – (you know), I was 17 when I started college.

Lindsay: Wow.

Michelle: So, (you know)...

Lindsay: So you were young.

Michelle: Right. Being young and, (you know), it's (kind of), you walk – I, I walked around a little bit frightened, but after... after a while, I would say it took a few months to get adjusted, but after I got adjusted, I was very happy there and then you develop a small community...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...rather than just a big school. Instead of seeing it as this gigantic place, it becomes very small once you have your friends and maybe you join some organizations and student groups, it's great.

Lindsay: Awesome. So yeah, you get your community and so you're not just (kind of) lost in the crowd.

Michelle: Absolutely, absolutely. It doesn't seem so big after a while.

Lindsay: Yeah, and there's some perks to going to a big school right. You probably had some cool football games, (you know) the typical American college experience, (right). Did you go to the football games in school?



Michelle: (Uh), yes I did. I-i-it was really fun. That part I enjoyed. That's, that's actually one of the reasons I chose, (um), a big state school because I, I was looking for that typical, (you know), American college experience. (Um)...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...so I, it's not that I'm a big football fan because I'm not at all, but I, I thought that it would be fun to go to a school where there's a lot of (spi-), school spirit and things like that. So, (um), yeah, I loved going to the football games. And, (um), it was a lot of fun. I don't know anything about football. I don't understand it. I don't even try. (Um), but...

Lindsay: Me neither.

Michelle: You don't, you don't watch football either?

Lindsay: Oh, my gosh, no. (I mean), I tried in high school going to some games because I was hanging out with some of the football guys...

Michelle: Oh.

Lindsay: ...(you know), but, but (you know), I could never figure out the rules.

Michelle: Yeah. People have explained it to me so many times and I just, I don't think I'm interested. I know that it's interesting to people and obviously there's a reason it's so popular. But to me, my favorite sport is basketball.

Lindsay: Oh, cool, cool. That's fun to watch too.

Michelle: Yes.

Lindsay: And, (uh), so, so what's the big team in New York? Is that the New York Knicks?

Michelle: That's right.

Lindsay: Oh, and do you go to the game sometimes?



Michelle: I do sometimes. I go to the games. This is the only sports team that I really, really care about and it's a shame because they're not a good team at all.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: But, I, I know a lot about the Knicks. When I was little my brother, (um) – my, my parents are originally from New York, so I always had kind of a New York, an attraction to New York. And my brother...

Lindsay: Oh, yeah.

Michelle: ...decided to like the Knicks and so I was maybe like a seven or eight years old when I started watching the games and I would cry when they lost. (Like), I was so...

Lindsay: You got so emotionally attached.

Michelle: I was so emotionally attached and actually, just a couple of years ago, I cried again when they lost and, and, and they lose a lot, and it can be embarrassing when you cry in front of people about sports.

Lindsay: Th-that is a little embarrassing, even if, (I mean), especially if you didn't feel like you could hold back the crying, you just had to...

Michelle: Oh, no. well, I did go in another room.

Lindsay: Okay. Oh man. [crosstalk]. Wow, well this has been cool. I feel like I've learned a lot about you here. Thank you for, for telling us about that stuff.

Lindsay: Hey, guys. We're gonna (going to) take just a minute here to thank our sponsors.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: You guys know that I speak Spanish, but my level in Spanish is intermediate. And that means that there're many things that I don't know how to say and sometimes when I'm speaking in Spanish, I'm afraid that people think I'm not smart. And it creates insecurities for me. Maybe you



have the same problem with your English. Well, I've found a solution for my Spanish. I like to practice online using a Native English tutor. And I do that at iTalki. So you can do it too, if you sign online to AllEarsEnglish.com/iTalki. You can book your first lesson and then you'll receive a free gift of ten US dollars just for All Ears English listeners to book your next lesson. So go right now to do this to AllEarsEnglish.com/i-T-a-l-k-i.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: Michelle, let's jump into (kind of) going back and recapping for our listeners this conversation that we've just had because not only is this our first awesome opportunity to meet you and to bring you on the show, but this is also such a cool opportunity to show our listeners what it's like to have that first conversation with someone that you meet at a party or at a networking event and I thought this was a pretty realistic conversation. What do you think Michelle?

Michelle: Absolutely. One of the things that I thought was very realistic was how we transitioned from one topic to another.

Lindsay: Absolutely.

Michelle: Right because you said something – you asked me an initial question, something to start off with and that – we said, (you know), it snowballed. It led to every other topic.

Lindsay: Yeah. Exactly. So go 'head (ahead)...

Michelle: No, it's all right.

Lindsay: ...go 'head (ahead).

Michelle: (Um), yeah, so I thought, I felt that it was very natural before this reason. (Um), (I mean), there are other reasons as well, but I felt, "Okay, we're talking about one thing," and then I mentioned cooking. Then we start talking about cooking. Then we start talking about – and somehow at the end we are talking about basketball. And...



Lindsay: Yeah, we, we went...

Michelle: And it was just very, a very natural conversation. Instead of being rigid, it was very loose and natural. That's my opinion.

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: What did you think?

Lindsay: I thought so too. And I wanna (want to) just highlight a couple of the key, (kind of) questions that I asked you to get that conversation going, (right). So, so in order to make this natural, we wanna (want to) recommend to our listeners to have some of these questions (kind of) in your back pocket, (right).

Michelle: (Uh-hmm).

Lindsay: What does that mean Michelle, when we say 'have them in your back pocket'?

Michelle: (Um), when you say you'll have something in your back pocket, it means that these are ready, (right). These are some questions that you know before going into any conversation that you can use these questions as a good conversation starter.

Lindsay: Yeah, they're like your secret weapon.

Michelle: Right.

Lindsay: Exactly. So one of them – wh-what I said was, (you know), "Where are you originally from?" Right. That – something along those lines. I asked you where you were from or I said, "Are you from Washington, DC?" So that's a very common first question, right. Especially if you live in a place like New York, you're meeting someone at a party in New York and people are from all over the place.

Michelle: That's right. Everybody, yeah. A very – there are definitely a lot of people from New York, but so many people have moved to New York, and so you can never assume that everybody's just originally from New York.



Lindsay: Exactly. And I just wanna (want to) go back to one previous episode that we had a few weeks ago with Kristy, our temporary co-host, who's also in New York and we learned the word 'transplant'.

Michelle: Ah.

Lindsay: Right. So to be a transplant, to, to be moving – someone who's moved between different cities or, (you know), west coast to east coast transplant. So, so that's a good example of this, (right). People – a lot of transplants in New York.

Michelle: Oh, absolutely.

Lindsay: And then I went into – I asked you, (you know), "Is your family still in the area?" So that's always a good topic to jump into. (You know), it's pretty safe. (You know), you're not asking about something, hopefully not something too sensitive. (You know), "Oh, is your family still in the area?" or they, (you know), "Are they in your hometown," (right). Do you remember what else I asked, Michelle?

Michelle: Sure. (Um), yeah, I think you asked me "Do I visit them a lot?" (Um),"How often do I see them?"

Lindsay: (Uh-huh).

Michelle: And that led me to talk about being close to my family. (Um), you asked me, (uh) – oh, you asked me, "What are you into?" like my, my hobbies – that type of a question.

Lindsay: Yeah, exactly. And I also wanna (want to) highlight guys – I also said, "What are your hobbies?" But actually, I don't think that's very natural.

Michelle: (Uh-hmm).

Lindsay: Because I think that's actually more textbook talk, hobbies, (right), what are your hobbies. Do you actually say, Michelle, when you're out talking with other Americans, what are your hobbies?

Michelle: I don't...



Lindsay: Do you use the word 'hobby'?

Michelle: I don't think I ever use that word really. Yeah, I agree. It's very textbook. It's really good for the classroom, but when you're actually out, I don't think anybody uses that word.

Lindsay: I agree. So what's a good alternative? "What are you into?" Can you think of any others Michelle that you might use to ask that question?

Michelle: I think you might just say, "What do you like to do?" Or, "What do you do..."

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...for fun?"

Lindsay: Yeah. Totally. "What do you do on the weekends?"

Michelle: (Uh-hmm). Definitely.

Lindsay: Absolutely. Absolutely. (Um), yeah and so then I went into talking about, asking you about where you went to college. (You know), "Oh, did you go to college in New York?" or "Did you go to college back in your hometown," right. Good conversation topic. We talked a little bit about sports. Anything else that sticks out in your mind about this conversation about why it was natural, and why it was, (you know), real.

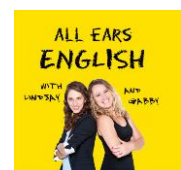
Michelle: (Uh-huh), (um), yeah, we talked about sports. (Uh), how did we – I don't even know how did we get into sports. Oh, because – yeah, I thought it was so natural because we were talking about college.

Lindsay: (Uhn).

Michelle: You asked me a lot of questions about school, which I think is – people love to talk about their college experience.

Lindsay: Yeah, the good ol' (old)...

Michelle: Right.



Lindsay: ...days, right.

Michelle: Exactly. It brings back a lot of – it's filled with a nostalgia and people love talking about it and so I think that that – you asked me about going to a big school and how it is to go to a school where there's a lot of sports and that made me think, "Oh, yeah, I don't know anything about football," and somehow it, it, it led me to, (you know), think, 'Oh, what other sports do I like.' It kind of got me excited. "Oh, I don't know anything about football, but let me tell you something I do know. Maybe we share this interest." Also, we talked about how you said you aren't into football either. So we realized – I think it was...

Lindsay: Right.

Michelle: ...special because we shared some things in common, like that we can't cook...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...that we don't like football or know anything about it and we both lived in New York. (Um)...

Lindsay: Yeah.

Michelle: ...so I think it, I think that that is exciting when you're talking to somebody and you realize like, "Oh, my gosh, we share these things in common." Because originally when you start talking to them, you have no idea and all of a sudden when you find things in common, it gives you new things to talk about, even, I think.

Lindsay: Absolutely. That's a really good point and I think that the conversation becomes more interesting when you realize that you're talking to someone you have things in common with. (You know), you just become more interested in that conversation. So I think as much as you can show the commonalities, guys, with the person you're talking with, (you know), let them know, "Oh, I'm the same. I also don't know how to cook, right." Or, "Oh, (you know), I used to live in New York, too." That's a really good



way to build that relationship right from the beginning of that initial conversation.

Michelle: Yeah, I completely agree.

Lindsay: Awesome. Well, this has been fantastic. What a cool way to kick off our new co-host and thank you so much for joining us today Michelle. And we're, we're excited to have you on the show and this is just fantastic. I hope you guys have enjoyed this episode and feel free to drop us a message at AllEarsEnglish.com/228 and let us know what you thought about today's conversation.

Michelle: Thank you so much. I'm so excited to be here.

Lindsay: Thanks Michelle. See you soon.

Michelle: Thank you.

[Instrumental]

Lindsay: If you believe in connection, not perfection, *and* you wanna (want to) put your ears into English more often, please subscribe to our podcasts in iTunes, on your computer or on your Smartphone. And hey, if you liked today's show, please let us know with a review in iTunes. Thanks so much for listening and see you next time.

