

Talking About Home Technology: Want and Need

The words 'want' and 'need' are often confused. . . even by native speakers. The reason, I think, is that marketing tells us that the things we want are really 'needs.'

What do the words mean?

Normally, *something we need is something we cannot live without*: air, water, food, shelter. . . and a fast Internet connection. (Can you guess which of those was a joke?) Of course, there are more contexts for needing something than just living.

If you use a preposition, you can explain *why* you need something. "I need a laptop *for* my work." We use the preposition '*for*' with '*need*' when we're talking about a noun. "I need a GPS system *for* my car." "I need a fast Internet connection *for* Bite-Sized-English.com." *If you want to talk about a verb, you use the preposition 'to.'* "I need a cell phone *to* call my wife." "I need a laptop *to* read my email at breakfast." "I need a new digital camera *to* photograph the baby."

It's important to remember that when you use the word 'need' like this, it doesn't mean you can't live without the thing you're talking about. It means only that you can't do one thing, without the other. "I need a computer to write email" only means that I can't write email without a computer.

The word '*want*' means only that you would like to have something. Maybe it will make your life better, maybe it won't. But, you would like to have it. "I want a new car." Is a good example, so is "I want a new notebook computer."

And you can use 'want' with prepositions the way you use 'need.' "I want a GPS *for* my car." "I want a faster car *for* my work." "I want wireless Internet *for* my apartment." "I want a faster computer *to* play computer games." "I want a game system *to* relax in the evening."

What do you think? Do you *need* **technology** these days. . . or is it something that you simply *want*? What things do you need to do your job? What technologies could make doing your job easier?