

Paris: In A Nutshell

I can't think of any topic that's as boring as talking about someone else's vacation. Too bad: today—and this whole week, really—we're going to be talking about *my* vacation.

But it won't be a normal vacation report. Instead, we're going to do some listening to the way I'd describe my vacation in just a few minutes to someone like my mother. . . and we'll talk about the vocabulary I used.

You can decide if you want to listen before you read this, or after. What I have here are explanations of a few of the words and phrases I used in my “vacation report.”

I said we felt “**recharged and energetic**” when we came back. What does that mean? You might know that 'energetic' means we had energy. That's all it means: 'with energy.' If you play tennis with a lot of energy, you're an *energetic* tennis player. If you argue with a lot of energy, you argue *energetically*.

For 'recharged,' it's best to think of your cell phone. You can carry it with you and it works with no wires, but not forever. Eventually, the battery will have no more energy left, and then you'll need to plug it into the wall to 'fill it up' with energy. You *recharge* your battery. If you feel 'recharged,' then it means you had no energy, but now you're filled back up. After the weekend, I usually feel *recharged* enough to go back to work.

I can't **recommend** Paris as a place to go. What does that mean? It means that I won't tell you to go there. Think about restaurants: When your best friend is thinking about a good place to take his girlfriend on a romantic dinner, can you tell him the name of a good restaurant? You can *recommend* a restaurant to him. To 'recommend' something is simply to say that you think it's good.

In Germany, I said, people are more **willing** to speak English. 'Willing' is a word you don't hear very often, but it's not a difficult concept to understand. There are some things that I'm able to do: speak English, drive a car, speak German, wash the dishes and, yes, even jump from a bridge.

It sounds crazy to say I'm able to jump from a bridge—I never *would* do it—but I have all the muscles I need to walk onto a bridge and jump off. But, even if I can jump off a bridge, I won't. I never will. I'm just not *willing* to jump from a bridge. When I say that Germans are more *willing* to speak English, I don't mean that they speak English better than the French, I mean that the French don't speak English with tourists. . . and Germans will. '*Willing*' has nothing to do with if you can do something or not. It has everything to do with if you'll say 'no' or not.

Do you have any questions on what I said in the recording? Feel free to ask them, any time! Did I

speak too quickly? Too slowly? How well did you do?

I have a few questions for you:

1. Have you been to Paris? What did you think? Was my description good, or not so good?
2. Do you think I liked the city? Or did it sound more like I didn't like the city?
3. How would you use these words in sentences of your own? Don't 'just' make sentences.
Think about how you can use these words in your life!