

Elementary Podcasts Series 4 Episode 19

Adam

Hello and welcome to Episode 19 of Series 4 of LearnEnglish Elementary Podcasts. My name is Adam and my colleague Jo will be here later to talk about some of the language from the podcast.

Last time, Carolina and her friends were at the end-of-year university party. Things were going well until someone told Jamie a joke about orang-utans and said 'Let's have a night out before you go'. Go where? To Borneo?! Carolina wasn't laughing, but it was a funny orang-utan joke. So we asked you to send us in some jokes that make you laugh.

Selviferawaty from Indonesia sent this one. A husband is very mean with money – 'stingy' as Selviferawaty says – and before he dies he tells his wife to put all his money in his coffin with him. At the funeral, the wife's friend asks her 'Did you put all his money in the coffin?' and the wife says 'Yes'. The friend says 'Are you crazy?!' and the wife says 'No. I took all his money to the bank and put a cheque in his coffin.'

Manasset from Cameroon wrote that a man found his child standing in front of the mirror with his eyes closed. When the father asked him what he was doing, the child said 'I want to see what I look like asleep.'

Some of you sent some very clever jokes in which play with words, maybe a word with two different meanings. Ayat Hasan from Bangladesh says 'I was always the most outstanding student at school – you could

always see me standing outside the classroom.' And Farkhanda Bashir sent this joke: 'Employer: We need someone for this job who is responsible. Applicant: Your search ends here, sir. In my previous job, whenever anything went wrong they said I was responsible.' I like that one.

I know that some of you have listened to Series 1 and 2 of Elementary Podcasts. So you must remember Gordon, who used to come along and tell a joke in every episode. Lolachannel from Saudi Arabia sent in her favourite Gordon joke from Series 2 – it's one of my favourites, too.

A man goes into the library. People are sitting at tables reading and studying. He walks up to the desk and says to the woman (In a loud voice) 'I'd like a train ticket to Manchester, please.' The woman looks shocked and says 'I'm sorry, sir, this is a library.' The man looks confused and then says 'Oh, I'm terribly sorry. (Whispering) I'd like a train ticket to Manchester, please.'

And Lydouch from France remembers Gordon's joke about a chicken who went into a library and said 'Book, book, book'. Not all Gordon's jokes were about libraries – have a listen to some of them if you haven't heard them before.

NewAgeEnglish sent in some funny stories from a Chinese newspaper about mistakes that English learners sometimes make. I like this one – A man went to an airport and asked where his check-in desk was. The man at the information desk asked him who he was flying with (meaning which airline). The man didn't understand and said 'By myself!'

Muhamad Ali from Syria has some interesting things to say about jokes in different cultures. Maybe a joke that's funny in Arabic wouldn't be funny translated into English – or any other language, because of differences in culture. I think that's probably true – I know that some people think the British have a very strange sense of humour – something for Tess and Ravi to discuss, maybe.

And as usual, let me remind you about the Elementary Podcast app, which has a lot of helpful features for you. You can follow the link from the LearnEnglish website or you can find it in the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store.

And now it's time to join Tess and Ravi again, talking about things that people think are typically British. Today they're in a philosophical mood – what does 'typically British' really mean? Let's listen.

Tess and Ravi

Tess: Hello again. I'm Tess.

Ravi: And I'm Ravi. And welcome back for the last time in this series.

Tess: Have we really been here twenty times already?

Ravi: Yep – we've talked about nineteen things that you – our listeners – think about when you think about Britain. This is the twentieth, and we're going to take a look back.

Tess: So here are some of the things we talked about – some of the things that are 'typically British' – fish and chips, bad

weather, drinking tea, a country full of animal lovers ...

Ravi: ... bad food, good music, big red buses, Big Ben, the Loch Ness Monster, polite but reserved people ... You know, Tess, none of this really sounds like me.

Tess: Me neither. I don't drink tea, I hardly ever eat fish and chips.

Ravi: You are an animal lover though. But, yeah, some of it is true – I do think the weather here is terrible.

Tess: No, it isn't. Anyway – it's not about what is true about Britain, it's about stereotypes – things that people think are true. The truth is always more complicated than the stereotype.

Ravi: So – people think British food is terrible but it's actually easy to eat really well here and loads of people are really interested in food and cooking.

Tess: And there's what you said about football fans – lots of people think British football fans are all hooligans causing trouble, but that's not actually true, is it?

Ravi: No – it takes longer for the idea of Britain and the British to change than it does for the reality to change. So when people think about Britain, they might be thinking about twenty years ago or thirty years ago.

Tess: Like the London buses – we don't really have those 'typical' London buses any more but people still think about them when they think about London.

Ravi: So do you think people's ideas about Britain will change, then?

Tess: Well, I think most people already know that real life is more complicated. They know that not all British people are really polite or reserved but it's just a, kind of, traditional idea.

Ravi: Yeah. And the world's getting smaller, isn't it? It's easier to find out what is and isn't true and to meet people from different countries. I chat online to people from all over the world.

Tess: I think that sounds like a good place to finish. Maybe you're right – the world's getting smaller and maybe these ideas about Britain will change in the future.

Ravi: And we'll come back and tell you about them then. Well, that's all for now – it's been great – I've learnt a lot about Britain!

Tess: Me too – thanks for listening. Bye!

Ravi: Bye!

Jo and Adam

Adam: And here's Jo again.

Jo: Hi Adam! It's nice to be here again. So that was the last Tess and Ravi of this series.

Adam: Yes, that's right. The time has passed really quickly, hasn't it?

Jo: It has. And they've talked about such a lot of different topics.

Adam: Which was your favourite?

Jo: Ooh, I don't know. I liked the one about Shakespeare – I like it when I learn something I didn't know before.

Adam: Like the one about shopping and Covent Garden Market? The pineapples?

Jo: Yes, I liked that one too.

Adam: I hope all of you enjoyed the topics too. Which ones were your favourites? Write and tell us. And we'd like you to tell us what topics you'd like Tess and Ravi to talk about if we make another series.

Jo: I'm sure you've got lots of good ideas.

Adam: The address is www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish.

Register and leave a comment. And now, as usual, it's time to look at some of the language from this podcast.

Jo: Listen to Tess and Ravi. What does the word 'actually' mean?

Ravi: *So – people think British food is terrible, but it's actually easy to eat really well here and loads of people are really interested in food and cooking.*

Tess: *And what you said about football fans – lots of people think British football fans are all hooligans causing trouble, but that's not actually true, is it?*

Jo: 'Actually' means 'in fact' – 'in reality'. We use 'actually' when we want to give the true information about something.

Adam: For example – 'People sometimes think Celine Dion is American, but actually she's from Canada'.

Jo: 'Actually' doesn't mean 'nowadays' or 'at the moment' in English. In a lot of languages – like Portuguese, Spanish, German or Czech, for example – there's a word that sounds like the English 'actually' but has a very different meaning. There are

a lot of words like this, in a lot of different languages.

Adam: For example 'gimnazjum' in Polish sounds like 'gymnasium' in English. But in English a gymnasium is where you go to do exercise – a gym – but in Polish gimnazjum is a type of lower secondary school. Very different.

Jo: We call these words 'false friends'. They look the same as a word in your language, but the meaning is completely different. And you have to be careful with them.

Adam: As always, there are some exercises on the website to help you with the language from the podcast – including some common false friends. So take a look.

Jo: And perhaps you could write and tell us about false friends in your language. I'd be interested to hear them.

Adam: And that's all for today. Next time, we'll hear the last episode about Carolina, Emily and Jamie.

Jo: Will Jamie go to Borneo?

Adam: Will Emily go to France? See you next time.

Adam/Jo: Bye!