

Adam and Rob

Rob and Adam: Hello!

Adam: Welcome to Episode 15 of the LearnEnglish Elementary Podcast. I'm Adam.

Rob: And I'm Rob and it's nice to be back here with you.

Adam: We're going to hear from Tess & Ravi today; they'll be talking about a city – the biggest and most famous city in Britain – I'm sure you know where we're talking about.

Rob: First though, as usual, we'll look at some of your comments on the last podcast. In that podcast we talked about social networking and online friends. We asked you to tell us about your online friends and how you feel about social networking and, as usual, you gave us some very interesting answers.

Adam: The first thing that interested me was how many of you live in different countries – not the country that you're from. So, for example, Ladna is from Somalia, but she lives in Alaska in America. And Mariami is from Georgia but she lives in Germany. Or Tonya – she's Russian but she lives in Germany too. I'm interested in what takes you to other countries. Are you working? Studying? Something else? If you're living in a different country, why not write and tell us what you're doing there.

Rob: Anyway, someone else who lives in a country that isn't where she's from is Umi, who's from Indonesia but lives in Hong Kong, and she had a lot to say this time about social networking. She's not a fan. She says:

Firstly, since we can make new friends very easily on networking sites, it makes us lazy about making an effort to socialise in real life. Secondly, we spend extra time on the computer and it eventually leads to a lack of movement, which also leads to obesity.

Adam: Umi also mentions risks to our relationships and our privacy. Some of you disagreed with Umi and some of you agreed. It was a really interesting discussion and we enjoyed reading it.

Rob: Now, we've already mentioned Tonya from Russia who lives in Germany. She says:

There are not so many Russian people in Germany I can communicate with. I talk online with my internet friends, some of them I've known for many years and these friends know me better than some of my real friends in Germany. With some of my internet friends I have an intense relationship and we write almost every week.

Adam: So, online friends can help you when you're away from home. And they can help you get in touch with people all over the world – Amanda Clemente from Brazil has friends "from Argentina to Kazakhstan. It's awesome how knowledge of other languages, especially English, can connect you to different people."

Rob: That's true. Some of you did mention that you have online friends that you don't know in real life. Laia in Spain (whose username is 'ahappylearner' - nice user name, Laia!) says "I have lots of "friends" on Facebook, but I don't even know half of them. I know most of them only by sight, I see them around high school but at the most we say hello, how's it going and bye! And then with some of them on Facebook we talk for hours, but face to face we only greet each other!

Adam: That's strange, isn't it? In real life you just say 'hello, how are you?', but online you chat like old friends. Maybe it's a difference between younger people and older people.

Rob: Anyway, thanks for all your great comments. Sorry we don't have time to read out more of them. It's always good to hear what you think so remember you can write to us at www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish.

Adam: I also noticed this week that we have a listener called... Ravi!

Rob: Welcome Ravi, and now let's listen to the original Ravi, along with Tess, talking about a special British city.

London

Tess: Hello again, everyone. I'm Tess.

Ravi: And I'm Ravi.

Tess: And we're here again to talk about the things you think you know about Britain and the things that you think are very British.

Ravi: We've talked about British food, British weather, drinking tea – and lots of other things, but today is a little bit different. We noticed that lots of you, when you talked about British things, talked about places in London – places you've visited or would like to visit or just places that you think are very British – and we're going to take a look at some of them. What do you think people chose, Tess?

Tess: Big Ben?

Ravi: Good guess. Yep, the first one was Big Ben. If you don't know it, Big Ben is the name given to the really big clock tower right in the centre of London – next to the Houses of Parliament. It was finished in 18...

Tess: How do you know that? Have you been studying?

Ravi: Research, Tess, research. It was finished in 1859 and it's over ninety-six metres high. Actually, Big Ben is really the name of the bell that rings every hour to tell you what time it is, but everyone says Big Ben for the clock and the tower as well.

Tess: Why do you think it's so famous?

Ravi: Well, it's sort of the symbol of London, isn't it? New York has the Statue of Liberty, Paris has the Eiffel Tower... and London has Big Ben.

Tess: It's nice, isn't it, when you hear the bells ringing for the hour, because you hear them on TV or the radio, on the BBC? What other places did people talk about in London?

Ravi: Well, Buckingham Palace is another place lots of people mentioned.

Tess: Ah, the Queen's home. Yeah, that's a really popular place for tourists to visit and see the changing of the guard and things. What have you learned about Buckingham Palace? How old is it?

Ravi: The oldest part was built in 1705, but new bits were added after that. It's got two hundred and forty bedrooms, I think, and seventy eight bathrooms and ..

Tess: Do you know what it means when you see the flag flying above Buckingham Palace? It means that the Queen is there, in the palace. She's got lots of different homes, hasn't she?

Ravi: Hmm. Are you sure, Tess? I don't think it does. I think the flag is flying all the time these days. Anyway, when was the last time you went to Buckingham Palace?

Tess: Inside the palace? Never. Actually, it's a real tourist attraction, isn't it? Lots of tourists go there, but if you live in Britain you don't go there very often.

Ravi: No, not really. There's always a big crowd there though for big royal events, like a wedding in the royal family or Princess Diana's funeral, isn't there?

Tess: Yeah. It's sort of a *symbol*, isn't it? A symbol of the royal family.

Ravi: Yeah. Actually, the royal family is another thing on our list – another thing that people said is typical of Britain. Let's talk about that next time.

Tess: OK. What other things in London did people say were typically British?

Ravi: Let's have a look. The London Eye, shopping in Oxford Street, the Houses of Parliament, the London underground... I think we might have to come back to this one another time, OK?

Tess: OK, then, let's do that.

Adam and Rob

Adam: It's true that Big Ben is sort of a symbol of London, isn't it? Ravi said that 'Paris has the Eiffel Tower, New York has the statue of liberty and London has Big Ben.' How about you Rob - do you have a favourite sight in London? Or somewhere you take visitors when you're there?

Rob: I do like Big Ben, I think it's a great symbol for London. But when I go there with friends, I usually take them to a place called 'Borough Market'. It's just in the centre, south of the river.

Adam: Why do you like it?

Rob: Well, it's a really authentic place with lots of great, great food from all over the world. And you can have something to eat, you can have something to drink; it's just got a really good atmosphere.

Adam: Sounds great. I'll have to go there next time I'm in London. How about you, listeners? Have you been to London? Did you like it? Write and tell us what you know or think about London. We love hearing from you and you can contact us at www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish.

Rob: Right, that's almost all we've got time for. But first, we'll remind you about the exercises you'll find on our website. As usual, there are some useful tips to help you with your English. Listen to this:

Ravi: It was finished in 18...

Tess: How do you know that? Have you been studying?

Ravi: Research, Tess, research. It was finished in 1859 and it's over 96 metres high.

Adam: Ravi gave two years: 1850 and 1859. If you ever have problems saying the year in English, then the exercises on the LearnEnglish site will help.

Rob: You'll also find exercises on the different kinds of sights you can see in cities, on passive sentences, heights, weights and measures and lots, lots more.

Adam: Do go to the website and try the exercises and write and tell us what you think. We're going to meet our LearnEnglish colleagues in London next week, so we'll be back in three weeks with more from Carolina. Until then...

Rob and Adam: Bye!