

English for Life in the UK

Episode Eleven: Leisure in the UK

Welcome to episode 11 of the podcast English for Life in the UK. This podcast is for intermediate level learners of English and is produced by a group of volunteer teachers from the St Augustine's Centre in Halifax, Yorkshire, where we provide a range of support and advice to those in need and particularly to asylum seekers, refugees and migrants. This podcast follows and supports the course we are teaching at the centre but we hope it will be helpful to anyone wanting to improve their English and at the same time learn more about life in this country. We believe that one of the most effective ways to learn any language is to listen to a range of native speakers talking about different subjects. Recently we have started producing transcripts. That is a written version of what is in each podcast episode. These are available through the Centre's website at www.staugustinescentrehalifax.org.uk. We recommend that you listen to the podcast without the transcript at first and then listen again using the transcript to help. It is quite normal not to understand everything in each episode but over time you will gain a greater understanding and also become more confident at speaking the language yourself.

Today's episode is brought to you by Christine, John and Mark.

... MUSIC...

- C: Well this week's topic was leisure in the UK and we started by saying what leisure meant. I was surprised that quite a few people didn't know. ... and leisure is what we do in our free time, the time we spend that's not work and not sleeping. The rest of the time is leisure time, or not travelling to work as well. So ... what do you ... how do you like to spend your leisure time? ... John, how do you like to spend your leisure time?
- J: I like to watch football, ... I like to play chess and I like to prepare lessons for the students at St Augustine's. (laugh)
- M: And for me ... golf is probably my main leisure activity but I do lots of other things, cycling, swimming, I like reading, I like listening to music, watching TV ... What about you Christine?
- C: Well it's interesting, since I've retired I've been so busy. I mean I do voluntary work but I also do lots of leisure activities. I go to art.. I go to an art class and I go to a pottery class. I really like those. And I love cycling and sea kayaking and of course, because I'm old, I need to do exercises to make sure my body, my old body can still cycle and sea kayak so I go to the gym and do other classes.
- M: And what about the students today? What .. do we remember that they came up with as their main leisure activities?
- J: We had some very interesting ones didn't we? The young lady was doing Tae Kwon Do so we talked about martial arts. We had quite a few football fans ...which you would expect and ..
- M: Both playing and watching
- J: And one of the things that we talked about later, hiking or rambling, quite a lot of our students like to walk in the hills and moors around Calderdale.
- C: And there were some people, I think all the girls there like dancing.
- M: Yeah, that was interesting, wasn't it?
- C: And they also, all the girls there, like running. I'm saying 'girls' but of course they're adults.

- J: And, of course, going to the cinema was popular so we've organised some trips to the cinema for our students in Halifax. .. and yeah, quite a lot of them enjoy going to the theatre and to the cinema.
- M: Watching TV, music, that came up as well, didn't it? (Yeah, yeah) Quite a wide variety and actually not significantly different from one culture to another that was interesting in a way wasn't it.
- J: Syrian ... a Syrian snooker player and a Sudanese martial arts expert, so there you go. (laugh)
- C: And somebody said Aikido. (yeah) I don't know that one.
- M: No, it's another martial art, isn't it? (yeah..)
- J: I thought it were nice it tied in with when we covered sport a few weeks ago. So we looked at, as Mark says, the international nature of a lot of sports. So things like darts, snooker, football, very popular in this country but obviously very popular in the countries where a lot of our students come from as well.
- M: And then we went on and I focused particularly on cycling as .. as a leisure activity and I talked a bit about .. the 'Tour de Yorkshire.'
- C: Yes, yes. It was very interesting and you started by talking about the name the 'Tour de Yorkshire' (I did) which is not standard English.
- M: No. So the most famous bike race, cycle race, in the world is the Tour de France. It happens every year been running for .. about 100 years now, I think possibly more than a hundred years and ... they cycle over a three week period all around France. But the race very often starts in a different country, not France, and a few years ago it started in England and it started in Yorkshire. And it was a hugely successful event, thousands of people were out on the streets cheering the cyclists as they came through. It helped that the weather was good as well and it was just a really good occasion. And as a result of the success of that, ..since then, every year, there has been an event called the 'Tour de Yorkshire' and of course the language in that is amusing in a way because 'Tour de France' is obviously French and it means the tour of France but instead of calling it the 'Tour of Yorkshire' they decided to stick to the French and call it the 'Tour de Yorkshire' which I always think is quite amusing. Anyway the event is happening in a few weeks' time, as we record this, in.. its happening in May, at the beginning of May. There are four stages, over four different days for the men's race. There's a women's race as well. ... And .. the .. one of the stages, the final stage of the race this year starts in Halifax where we are recording this, at the .. at the Piece Hall in Halifax and finishes in Leeds. And it should be a spectacular event again .. And you can go out on the streets and watch it if you're, if it's coming past you and it's also always on television as well these days.
- C: And also if you're a keen cyclist, there is the option of cycling the route before the race itself. When I looked online for information about this year's tour, that's all I found, was how I could cycle it myself. I don't think I will though. So then we went on to talk about one of the other main leisure activities in this country. Another one that can be free, which was walking.
- J: Yeah so we .. we looked at specifically ... so we explained the difference.. we introduced some new vocabulary, so the words 'rambling' and 'hiking' really mean the same thing, really walking in the dales, or in the mountains and the hills for a leisure activity. And we examined some history and some geography. I thought it was interesting a number of our students ... we have hiking groups that go from St Augustine's and we walk round the hills in the Calder valley. .. So we looked at the history of .. and we brought a new expression into their vocabulary,

- ‘the right to roam’, which is basically the right that it might be private land, might be owned by private landowners but we as hikers from Halifax are allowed to go and as long as we obey a code of conduct ... we are legally allowed to walk and ramble across the hills and the dales. So we looked at the history of the right to roam. We examined .. some events that happened in the 1930s in Derbyshire, a place called Kinder Scout. So..so the famous place that people from Sheffield and Manchester **used to like** to hike in but at the time it was owned by a private landowner and they wanted to stop working people going up onto the moors and the hills because they wanted to use it for grouse shooting, which is another leisure activity. (laugh) Not a leisure activity that most people in Halifax would be engaging in. (No) So we looked at the conflict between the land owners who wanted to keep the land for their own activities and the people from the towns and cities who wanted to spend their recreation time in the mountains above the cities.
- M: We perhaps ought to just explain that a grouse is a .. is a wild bird, (yes) like a pheasant is a variation of that. (yes) One of the more, you might call it, ‘upper class sports’ in (yeah) this country historically has been shooting those wild birds (yeah, yeah)
- J: So the people were very determined to exercise as they saw it, their rights to walk across the mountains .. despite the landowners not agreeing with it, so they organised what was called a ‘mass trespass’. Now a trespass is where an individual or a group of people go on to somebody else's land or private land without the permission of the landowner. So 400 people walked up from Sheffield and Manchester and organised a mass trespass in 1932. Some of these people actually went to prison because they were breaking the law at the time Several of them were sent to prison ... Anyway, this became very popular amongst the public. People were very supportive of this cause. See...as we said the incoming Labour government in 1945 passed the National Parks and Countryside Act and this led to the creation of the National Parks, the first of which being, fittingly, in Derbyshire where the mass trespasses had occurred to, in order to pass the law.
- C: Is that.. was that the Peak District?
- J: That’s right, the Peak District in Derbyshire, yeah. So it was the opinion of the Labour government after World War II that these areas of outstanding beauty should be open to all the public in the UK to enjoy during their leisure time. So we went on then to a geography exercise and we listed the 15 National Parks. They are the Brecon Beacons, the Broads, the Cairngorms in Scotland, which Christine told us about, Dartmoor and Exmoor, the Lake District, which is also a World Heritage Site, Loch Lomond and the Trossachs above Glasgow, the New Forest, Northumberland, the North York Moors, the Peak District, the Pembrokeshire coast in Wales and Snowdonia also in Wales, the South Downs, close to where Mark’s from in London and last but not least the Yorkshire Dales. So we had an interesting exercise, we had the map of the UK and we got the students to read out a brief description of each of the parks and we placed the relevant pictures on the ... on the map and so ...some very good geography from some of our Iranian students today. The seemed to know the UK very well so that were.. that were enjoyable as well.
- M: And I guess anybody listening to this you would be able to search on the Internet for those names and .. and find where they were ... on a map.
- J: Its nationalparks.uk is the website and it is a really nice brief introduction and an explanation of where the parks are and what sort of leisure activities you can engage in when you visit them

C: Very interesting.

... MUSIC...

Language support

This is the part of the podcast where I provide a bit of additional support. A few weeks back we did an episode where I talked about some of the **past tenses**. We did both past and future tenses but we talked a bit about different **past tenses** and we particularly looked at the **simple past tense**. So for example:

I worked yesterday

So **worked** is the past tense of the verb **to work**. That's the **simple past**.

Then we talked a bit about the **continuous past**, where I could say

I was walking in the hills last week.

I was walking so that is the verb **to be** with the **in g** part of the verb. But I noticed in today's episode that John used a third type of past tense which is using **used to**. He said of the people who were wanting to go walking in the hills around Derbyshire and Sheffield he said:

They **used to like** to hike.... They **used to like** to hike

And this is another past tense and it simply is used where there is something you did in the past but you don't do it now. So these walkers that John was talking to.. talking about .. were .. this was historically .. back in the early part of the 20th century. So this **used to**, they used to walk in the hills but they don't now, partly because they're not alive anymore, those people who were doing that at that time. But **used to** is quite common so I might say:

I used to live in London but now I live in Yorkshire.

I used to teach in a school but now I'm retired.

So those are things that I **used to do** but I don't do now. And the construction is simply from the verb **to use** in the past tense so **I used to** and then another verb so

I used to work,

I used to live.

You may noticed that in pronunciation **used to**, although it is spelt **u s e d** and then a separate word **t o to**, **used to**, those two are contracted together so that we say 'usetoo', 'usetoo'. It sounds like one word without the 'd' and just with the 't' so 'usetoo' but it's actually spelt **u s e d** used and then separate word **to**. This also brings in the fact that there is a verb '**to use**' but that's quite different so I might say:

I use an iPhone or **I use** a pen to write

That's about making use of something and this is a separate use of that verb. There is also another use where you can say **to get used to**. If you **get used to** something that means you become familiar with it, you adapt to a new situation so you might say:

I'm **getting used to** the English weather

I'm not sure whether you are, those of you that are here, but you might say:

I'm **getting used to** the English weather.

It is also perhaps just worth pointing out that when we are saying **to use** something the **use** has a Z 'zzz' sound 'uze', whereas when we are saying **used to** or **get used to** then it's more of a 'sss' sound: 'usseto' as opposed to 'uze', although they are spelt the same. If you want to know more about the use of the verb 'to use', see what I've done there, there is... there are a few good .. videos on YouTube... The one I came across is called **e n g v i d** engvid, **e n g v i d** and had a specific lesson on the verb **to use**. I hope that's been helpful.

That's it for this week just a reminder that the transcript of this episode including this language support element will be available in a few days' time on the website. That's www.staugustinescentrehalifax.org.uk Thank you and join us again in a few days' time.