
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Joe Bloggs



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NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hi Finn. What's that you're reading?

Finn

Oh, it's just a really interesting article about a man who made a fortune by selling shoes, Feifei. You know, he's a billionaire!

Feifei

A billionaire?! I guess the shoes must be very expensive – for the upper classes...

Finn

Well. No, not at all. The shoes are just for Joe Bloggs.

Feifei

Joe Bloggs? He made all that money making shoes for just one man?

Finn

No. What I mean is, the man made a fortune selling shoes for the average person. In English, when we want to refer to the average person we can use the name 'Joe Bloggs'.

Feifei

Ah, I see. So, Joe Bloggs could be anyone of us.

Finn

That's right. Any Tom, Dick or Harry.

Feifei

Oh! Who are they?

Finn

This is another expression in English we use when we want to talk about lots of people in general; nobody in particular: Tom, Dick or Harry.

Feifei

Ah. I see... They're short, common names. Thank you for the explanation, Finn. You know, I love reading these American news websites... Oh! Finn! Tragedy in Miami!

Finn

Really? What happened?

Feifei

It's here in this article... a policeman said he found the body of John Doe in a popular nightclub. He was stabbed! Poor Doe family!

Finn

Feifei, this is sad news, especially for this man's family. But they are probably not called Doe. They're not the Doe family.

Feifei

Why not? Do you know them?

Finn

Well, in American English, John Doe is a name often used when referring to the victim of a crime whose body hasn't been identified.

Feifei

Ah! I've heard this name before... in crime TV shows.

Finn

Yes. In the US they use John Doe when the victim is male and Jane Doe when the victim is female. Let's hear some examples of these expressions used in today's The English We Speak.

INSERT

A: Bright purple jacket? Sparkly blue skirt? Who wears such outrageous clothes?

B: Well, this fashion designer is popular among the very trendy. These clothes are not for Joe Bloggs!

Listen, this is a very exclusive party I'm inviting you to. Don't go around talking about it or every Tom, Dick and Harry will end up there.

Detective: The John Doe found at the scene is in the morgue right now. We're waiting for the DNA test results to identify the body.

Feifei

So Joe Bloggs, Tom, Dick and Harry and John Doe and Jane Doe are not real people.

Finn

No.

Feifei:

What a crowd!

Finn

Indeed.

Feifei

That's a very interesting lesson. Thank you, Finn.

Finn

You're welcome, Feifei. Time to go. Bye!

Feifei

Bye!