BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
The English We Speak
Killing time

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

Neil
Hello and welcome to The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil and with me today is Helen (crashing noises). Um, Helen what are you doing?

Helen
Oh I'm just stamping on this clock.

Neil
Yes, I can see that you are really… destroying that clock. My question is… why?

Helen
Well, don't you remember you told me that you were going to be a little late for the recording session?

Neil
Yes, I had to delay things by an hour.

Helen
And I asked you what I should do while I was waiting.

Neil
Yes that's right.

Helen
And you told me that I should just kill time. So that's what I'm doing… killing time. (more crashing)

Neil
Well I did tell you to kill time, but I didn't mean destroy a clock. In English, when you say you are 'killing time', it means you are doing something that isn't really important just to occupy yourself before the start of your next plan or arrangement.

Helen
Yeah, that's right. Killing time has nothing to do with violence towards clocks. It's an

expression which means to do something which isn't really important just to keep you occupied until the start of your next plan or arrangement. Here are some examples.

Examples

I turned up an hour early for my flight, so I just looked at the duty free to kill some time.

I had an hour between work and meeting my friends so I killed some time in a department store.

I always arrive hours early for job interviews. I'd rather have to kill time than deal with the stress of being late!

Neil
So Helen, you can stop smashing up that poor clock now.

Helen
But you know what? I'm quite enjoying it.

Neil
It looks like you are enjoying it… and it looks quite fun. Do you mind if I…

Helen
Not at all… join me. (smashing)

Neil
Actually, this is the most fun I've ever had killing time!

Helen
Me too! Join us again soon for The English We Speak.

Neil
Bye! (smash)