
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Wow factor

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

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei and joining me is Harry.

Harry

Hello there! And the expression we are going to look at in this programme is 'wow factor'.

Feifei

We'll look at what it means and when you can use it. So anyway Harry, how's the flat hunting going?

Harry

Oh, don't ask! Not very well, really. I mean, I've seen a few places so far, but they didn't really appeal to me.

Feifei

So none of them were any good?

Harry

They were OK. Adequate I suppose. I could live in some of them if I had to, but none of them had the wow factor. Do you know what I mean?

Feifei

Not really. The wow factor? What is that?

Harry

The wow factor? Something that makes you go 'wow' when you walk in. 'Wow' is something we say in English when we're surprised. So, you know, a sun deck, a view of Big Ben, a steam room, a granite cocktail bar, a shared swimming pool – that kind of thing. My friend who teaches English in Indonesia has his own swimming pool and I was hoping ...

Feifei

Yes, but this is London. It's quite hard to get any of those things unless you spend a lot of money. What else can have the wow factor?

Harry

You hear it a lot on TV. On cooking shows, when someone creates an exciting tasty dish they say it's really got the wow factor.

Feifei

Yes, I heard that. 'It's just an omelette, but the chillies give it a real wow factor'.

Harry

That's right. And in singing competitions, if the singer delivers an exciting performance, the judges say they really had the wow factor.

Feifei

So, you can apply it to anything or anyone that is surprisingly good or impressive?

Harry

That's right. Let's listen to some more examples.

Examples

He's just bought a new Italian sports car – it's really got the wow factor.

We're going to completely re-decorate the restaurant so there's more of a wow factor when you walk in.

Your CV looks OK. Your work experience is solid, but there's no real wow factor that will impress employers.

Feifei

So, do you think you'll find a place to live with the wow factor?

Harry

I'm not sure. But if I don't, I might spend my money on a 72-inch 3D TV. That way people will still get the wow factor when they walk in.

Feifei

That would certainly have the wow factor, and I want to come round and watch some cookery shows and singing competitions.

Harry

No problem! Join us again soon for The English We Speak.

Both

Bye!