
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Test the water



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Li

Hello everyone, I'm Li. Welcome to the English We Speak. With me today is Neil.

Neil

Hello everyone.

Li

Hi Neil, you look very happy today, what are you up to?

Neil

I'm quite excited about my website: greatmindsshakehands.com. I've been designing it for months and it's nearly complete.

Li

Wow, I like the sound of it. I didn't know you could design websites, Neil.

Neil

Well, it's for fun really. My website will be a public site where people can share ideas, you know, like-minded people. I want to launch it next week but first I must test the water.

Li

Test the water, test what water? Does your website depend on water? I'm very confused!

Neil

No Li, to test the water means to test the idea, try it out and see if it works.

Li

I see. 'Test the water' is the phrase for the English We Speak today. Let's hear some examples of how people use it.

Examples

Woman A)

Have you started on your new book?

Woman B)

Yes, I've written three chapters and I've sent it to the publishers to test the water.

Woman A)

Oh, what perfume are you wearing? It's lovely.

Woman B)

Oh thanks. It's just a sample a company sent me. They're testing the water to see if people like it.

Woman A)

How is your Shakespeare project going?

Woman B)

It's early days; we're still testing the water.

Woman A)

Well, good luck with it.

Woman B)

Thanks.

Li

So Neil, how much testing have you done, have you got good feedback?

Neil

Well, my wife loves it, but most other people say they don't understand how to use it.

Li

It sounds like it's not user-friendly.

Neil

You're right. I think I need to make a few changes and then I'll test the water again.

Li

I'm happy to be your guinea pig when you're ready.

Neil

'Guinea pig', I think that's an expression for another programme. For now, it's goodbye from both of us.

Li

Bye.

Neil

Goodbye.