
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

It's on the cards



This is not a word-for-word transcript

(Rob and Feifei are playing cards)

Rob

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Rob and I've won yet another card game! Yes!

Feifei

Hello everyone. I'm Feifei and I've just lost to him again...

Rob

It's not surprising. You've been very distracted all morning.

Feifei

There's a promotion coming up and I wonder if I'll get it.

Rob

Well, you work hard Feifei. I'm sure a promotion is on the cards.

Feifei

(sudden interest, surprised) It's on the cards?! But I haven't been paying much attention to them! Which cards?

Rob

No, it's not actually written on any cards. It's an expression. In British English, we say something 'is ON the cards' - or 'IN the cards' in American English - when we mean that something is likely to happen.

Feifei

So you mean that it's possible and even likely that I'll get a promotion because I work hard?

Rob

Yes. Here are some examples of how this expression is used:

Examples

Wage rises are on the cards in the UK. There are now signs that things are getting better for ordinary British workers.

My son might be ready to settle down. He's had lots of girlfriends but now he's going steady with a colleague and a wedding might be on the cards.

Feifei

Great! So I'm likely to get that promotion. It's on the cards!

Rob

Yes. And there's something else on the cards today.

Feifei

Oh really, what is it?

Rob

I'm going to win another round of this game! Look, I've got three aces now!

Feifei

OK. You deserve it. You are a good player and have luck on your side. Another win is definitely on the cards!

Rob

Great! I'm on a roll!

Both

Bye!