
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Off the hook



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello, Feifei. Already here, I see, to present The English We Speak.

Feifei

Actually, I haven't left the studio for a while, Neil. I need to go and eat something. Could you let me off the hook please?

Neil

Come on, Feifei, you have to present the programme with me. And today's expression is...

Feifei

I need to go to the toilet. Could you let me off the hook?

Neil

In English, to let someone off the hook means to free them from an obligation. You want to be let off the hook, don't you? You don't want to present the programme today.

Feifei

It can also mean to release someone from a difficult situation. I do need you to let me off the hook.

Neil

Let's hear some examples of how the expression 'to let someone off the hook' is used.

Examples

I haven't studied much but my teacher let me off the hook today. She's decided to postpone the test as long as I hit the books this week.

The team's supporters didn't let them off the hook. They booed the players off the pitch after they were beaten four-nil.

Neil

That's it then Feifei. You're off the hook now.

Feifei

No, I'm not.

Neil

Why not?

Feifei

My woollen jumper is caught on this hook on the wall just behind me and if I move I'll ruin it. Could you...

Neil

Yeah! Why didn't you say? Let me help you.

(Neil moves to release Feifei's jumper.)

Feifei

Oh be careful. I don't want it ripped!

Neil

I am being careful here... ah... yep, there you go now you're free. You're off the hook in every sense!

Feifei

Thanks, Neil.

Both

Bye!