
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

The coast is clear



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ENGLISH

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello, I'm Neil...

Feifei

... and I'm Feifei and this is The English We Speak.

Neil

So do you want a cup of coffee then, Feifei?

Feifei

Yes, but you know the rules – no drinking coffee in the studio!

Neil

Well that is the rule but nobody's looking so maybe we could sneak two cups in?

Feifei

Sneak? Yes ok, you keep an eye out for the boss and I'll grab the coffee from the kitchen.

Neil

...ok, **the coast is clear!**

Feifei

Eh? **The coast is clear** – how do you know that? We're nowhere near the seaside.

Neil

We don't need to be – it's just a saying. **The coast is clear** means it's safe to do something because nobody is watching – so we won't get caught.

Feifei

Ah, got you! So we're being a bit naughty, Neil?

Neil

Yes, that's right – hopefully nobody will ever find out what we're doing! Let's hear some more examples of this phrase...

Examples

I really wanted to know what my birthday present was, so when **the coast was clear**, I unwrapped it – I guess I've spoilt my surprise now!

The coast is clear so make a run for it before you get caught!

Feifei

Ok – so that's **the coast is clear** which means it's safe to do something which isn't allowed while nobody is watching. Right Neil, is the coast still clear?

Neil

Yes, but quick before someone comes. Quick... someone's coming!

Debbie

Oh hello Feifei... are you making coffee for the team? Thanks - I'll take those from you shall I? You wouldn't want to be caught drinking those in the studio now, would you? You know the rules! See ya.

Feifei

Err, see you later, Debbie. Oh dear Neil, it looks like **the coast wasn't clear**.

Neil

I think we got away with it. Anyway, that's the end of the programme. What shall we do now?

Feifei

Coffee?

Neil

Yeah. Good idea, let's go.

Both

Bye.