
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

All that jazz



BBC
LEARNING
ENGLISH

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei.

Neil

And I'm Neil.

Feifei

And Neil – we have a musical expression... Do you like rock music?

Neil

Rock. Yeah I love it.

Feifei

Really?

Neil

When I was younger I was in a rock band – we had it all: long hair, loud guitars, even louder drums, leather... all that jazz!

Feifei

Jazz? Hang on, was it a jazz or a rock band?!

Neil

Aha – very funny – 'all that jazz' is our phrase today. And it has nothing to do with jazz.

Feifei

Indeed, it simply means 'and so on', or 'and other similar things'.

Neil

You often use it after listing things. For example: I love Christmas dinner – you've got turkey, Brussels sprouts, roast potatoes, gravy, all that jazz. It's just great.

Feifei

You're not wrong. I love all that jazz too. And now you've made my mouth water, so let's take a break and listen to these examples.

Examples

I had a super lazy weekend. I woke up late, got some coffee, went for a walk, watched a couple of movies, all that jazz. It was great.

I don't read celebrity gossip. You know: who's going out with who, who got plastic surgery, all that jazz. I'm just not interested!

Feifei

It's often used – in a list of unpleasant or boring things.

Neil

For example: This morning I cleaned the whole house – washing, scrubbing, vacuuming, all that jazz!

Feifei

Yes, by using “jazz” to describe dull things, it's ironic and brings some humour.

Neil

It does, Feifei. Especially when we compare it with the phrase to “jazz up”. You can 'jazz up an outfit' or 'jazz up a meal', for example – which means to make something more interesting and even glamorous.

Feifei

Before we go, we should of course mention the phrase is also the name of a song from the 1975 Broadway musical, Chicago. Fancy singing it for us, Neil?

Neil

I really couldn't. After all, I was in a rock band. Not a jazz band! What about you, Feifei?

Feifei

Maybe next time. I can't remember the words!

Neil

Excuses, excuses! Bye for now.

Feifei

Bye.