
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Do a runner



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Welcome to The English We Speak, I'm Feifei...

Rob

And I'm Rob. Quick Feifei, shut that door.

Feifei

OK, calm down Rob, what's the problem?

Rob

Well there's something going on in the office – everyone's shouting and arguing about who broke the computer – you know, the new one with all that fancy software on it.

Feifei

Oh yes, that really expensive one. So you've run away from the situation – that makes you look very guilty.

Rob

That's true – but the problem is, I am guilty. But the boss seemed so angry; I thought it best to... well... sort of...

Feifei

Do a runner!

Rob

If you mean to leave a place in order to avoid a difficult or unpleasant situation – then I suppose you're right.

Feifei

I am!

Rob

Oh no, is someone coming? I'll just hide under the desk while we hear some examples of this phrase in action...

Examples

The new trainee did a runner after the first day – I don't think he could cope with the high-pressure environment.

When they started to blame me for the mistake, I felt it best to do a runner and keep out of the way.

Feifei

So that's the phrase, to do a runner, which means leave a place quickly in order to avoid a difficult or unpleasant situation. But Rob, this phrase has another similar meaning too?

Rob

Yes. You can 'do a runner' from a place to avoid paying for something.

Feifei

Like a restaurant. Have you done that Rob?

Rob

Of course not! You know how honest I am.

Feifei

Honest? Is that why you are hiding in this studio, rather than admit you broke the new computer?

Rob

Well, it was an accident. Oh no... the boss is heading straight for the studio. I had better dash... see ya.

Feifei

Bye Rob. It looks like he's done a runner... again. Bye.