
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Out of your depth



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

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

Rob

...and hello, I'm Rob. Feifei, why's your hair wet – it's not raining, is it?

Feifei

No, Rob. I've just been for my swimming lesson. It was a bit scary, actually.

Rob

Why's that?

Feifei

Well, for the first time, I swam into the deep end and couldn't stand up. The lifeguard had to jump in and save me.

Rob

Oh dear, Feifei. It sounds like you were out of your depth!

Feifei

Yes, I suppose I was.

Rob

Well, I'm out my depth too.

Feifei

What - you're learning to swim too?

Rob

No, no, I'm struggling to complete this project about statistics that the boss has asked me to do. I know nothing about statistics and numbers – it's just too difficult and I just can't do it. So I am out of my depth.

Feifei

Ah, I've got it. When you are out of your depth, it can mean you are in a difficult situation that you cannot cope with – it could be because a task exceeds your knowledge or ability. So it's a bit like drowning in a situation – but not literally.

Rob

Exactly. Let's hear some examples....

Examples

I'm so out of my depth in this new job. I haven't got a clue what to do!

When everyone started talking about politics I knew I was out of my depth, so I politely made my excuses and went home.

He was clearly out of his depth in the match – he lacked any skill and couldn't even pass the ball!

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the phrase 'out of your depth'. It describes a situation that is too difficult for you, and you do not have the knowledge or ability to cope with it. Well, Rob, I may be able to save you! I love statistics and can help you out.

Rob

Oh that's great! And I can help you improve your swimming.

Feifei

Oh yes? How can you do that?

Rob

You can borrow my arm bands so you'll never sink, even in the deep end. You'll never be out of your depth again!

Feifei

Thanks, but I think I should learn to swim properly. Anyway, when do you need to complete this project for the boss by?

Rob

Errr... now.

Feifei

Oh. Come on then. We had better go and get on with it, otherwise the boss will throw you in the deep end! Bye.

Rob

Bye.