

---

# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### A shock to the system



BBC  
LEARNING  
ENGLISH

*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

---

**Feifei**

This is The English We Speak. Hello, I'm Feifei...

**Rob**

And hello! I'm Rob.

**Feifei**

Hey, Rob. How was your holiday?

**Rob**

Absolutely fantastic - a whole week sitting around, relaxing, doing nothing. Perfect!

**Feifei**

It sounds great, so why are you looking so grumpy today?

**Rob**

Well, it's my first day back at work and it's been a shock to the system.

**Feifei**

A shock?! Did you get a shock in the office?

**Rob**

Well, no. Not something dangerous, like an electric shock. I mean experiencing 'a sudden and unpleasant change from what you have been used to'. For me, it's a change from relaxing and doing nothing on the beach to suddenly being back in the office, sitting at my desk, working hard – with you!

**Feifei**

That does sound like a shock!

**Rob**

Well, here are some other people who've experienced a shock to the system...

**Examples**

After such a long and hot summer, this cold weather has come as a shock to the system.

I hope they can fix my car quickly. Walking to work has been a bit of a shock to the system.

My daughter has found starting secondary school a real shock to the system. She gets so much homework!

**Feifei**

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. We've discovered that 'a shock to the system' means experiencing 'a sudden and unpleasant change'. It's what Rob's experienced coming back to work today. So, I guess your holiday is already a distant memory Rob.

**Rob**

Yes, it is.

**Feifei**

All that relaxing and doing nothing, hey? But I'm still confused.

**Rob**

Why's that?

**Feifei**

'A shock to the system' is 'a sudden change' – but you did the same thing on holiday as you do in the office. There's no change!

**Rob**

Very funny. But, hold on. If that's what you think, I might as well wear these.

**Feifei**

Oh no! Swimming shorts and a hat! Please, go and cover up!

**Rob**

OK. See ya!

**Feifei**

Bye-bye!