
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Fat chance



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

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

Rob

And I'm Rob. Have I told you about the competition that I've entered, Feifei?

Feifei

No, Rob. What is it?

Rob

It's a singing competition! You have to perform a popular song from your favourite band – and I'm going to win!

Feifei

You? Are going to win? No offence, Rob, but I've heard your singing voice, and, well, I'm not sure...

Rob

What are you trying to say, Feifei?

Feifei

All I'm saying is that there is fat chance of you winning the competition!

Rob

Right! So first you make fun of my singing and now you're calling me fat! How cheeky!

Feifei

No Rob, no. I'm not calling you fat – I'm saying that the likelihood of you winning the competition is very small.

Rob

Oh right, yes. 'Fat chance' is an English phrase to say something is not very likely – I remember now.

Feifei

Right, well while you calm down, let's hear some other examples of this phrase.

Examples

A: I bought a lottery ticket for tonight's draw – and these are my lucky numbers! I'm definitely going to win!

B: Fat chance!

A: I hope it's warm this weekend – I want to go fishing.

B: Well, fat chance of that. It's the middle of November!

I auditioned for a role in a movie, but there is fat chance of me getting the role – I saw loads of famous actors auditioning too.

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the phrase 'fat chance'. This is a noun phrase that means a small chance, or possibility, of something happening. It can be used in a full sentence, and also as a standalone phrase. For example, when Rob said he was going to win the competition, I could have just said 'fat chance'!

Rob

Hey! I think I've got a really good chance! I've been practising hard and I've even taken a few lessons!

Feifei

OK, Rob. Well... good luck? I suppose...

Rob

Well Feifei, when I win the £5000 prize money, there's fat chance of you getting any of it.

Feifei

Wait, £5000? Rob, hold one! I didn't mean it!

Thanks for joining us – I've got to go and apologise to Rob. Hopefully he'll share his winnings! Bye!