
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Savage



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Jiaying

Hello, and welcome to The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. I'm Jiaying...

Neil

...and I'm Neil.

Jiaying

Today, Neil, I wanted to talk about the adjective 'savage'.

Neil

Oh right. You mean something that is cruel or violent – like a wild tiger.

Jiaying

Well, a tiger is savage, but I was thinking of another meaning.

Neil

What are you on about? You're wasting my time with all this silly animal talk. Don't you know what savage means?!

Jiaying

I do – you're demonstrating it very well. When someone criticises others severely and cruelly, we could say that they are savage.

Neil

You mean being brutally honest – saying the truth - is savage! But I was only joking Jiaying, just to illustrate the point!

Jiaying

Thanks, Neil! Shall we hear some examples now...

Examples

The feedback on my homework was savage – I thought I had done a good job.

Selina stood up to the bullies in her class! Now no one dares to pick on her or her friends. She's savage!

Did you watch that comedy show last night? The guest speaker was hilarious when she was poking fun at her celebrity friend. She was savage!

Jiaying

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the word 'savage' – which can be used to describe someone who is brutally honest.

Neil

Right, I've got to be savage with the boss now.

Jiaying

Oh really, how come?

Neil

I'm working too much and he hasn't even noticed. I'm going to tell him, right now!

Jiaying

Now we have another meaning of savage – We can also say 'someone is savage' if we think they're cool for being brave and honest. So, I'm impressed, Neil!

Neil

Oh, really? Thanks. But, err, maybe I'll tell him tomorrow – I don't want to come across as too savage.

Jiaying

If you say so, Neil. Bye for now.

Neil

Bye.