The English We Speak
Quote... unquote

This is not a word-for-word transcript

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

Neil
….and hello, I'm Neil. So, what English phrase shall we talk about today?

Jiaying
Well, Neil, earlier you said "quote 'leave it with me, I'll sort out a phrase' unquote."

Neil
Did I? I don't remember saying that.

Jiaying
Well, Neil, don't worry because I've already got one – quote… unquote. 'Quote' means to repeat the words that someone else has said or written.

Neil
Yes, and we use quotation marks before and after what someone has said when it's written down. So, when you *say* quote… unquote, it's like you are quoting what I said. You can use the phrase before you quote someone or around what they are saying.

Jiaying
Exactly, Neil. When we say 'quote… unquote' we are repeating what someone has said, sometimes because we don't like or agree with it. I knew you wouldn't find a phrase for us even though you said you would – that's why I am quoting exactly what you said!

Neil
Hmmm. Well, don't quote me, but I'm sure I said, "I'm too busy, I'll leave it to you".

Jiaying
Well, we have our phrase now, so let's hear some examples of it being used…

Examples
She told me, quote, unquote "they're just good friends" – but they look more than that to me!

You told me, quote "this car will last you a lifetime" unquote, but after a few months, it's already broken down!

The company said, quote "staff will get a pay rise in August" unquote – but it's September and we're still waiting.

Jiaying
This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. We're talking about the phrase 'quote… unquote' which people say when they are repeating something someone has said, often when they don't agree with it. So, have you got it, Neil?

Neil
So, you're saying, quote, "I didn't do what I said I'd do" unquote?

Jiaying
Exactly – but that's a great use of the phrase.

Neil
Oh, thanks very much.
To quote a famous writer: "Using a phrase is better than finding one."

Jiaying
Oh, which famous writer said that?!

Neil
Me! I just wanted to get the word 'quote' in the script one more time.

Jiaying
Well done, Neil! It's time to go.

Neil
Bye.

Jiaying
Bye.