
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The Grammar Gameshow

So and such

Will

Hello and welcome to today's Grammar Gameshow! I'm your host, Will! It rhymes with thrill! And of course, let's not forget Leslie, our all-knowing voice in the sky.

Leslie

Hello everyone!

Will

Tonight we're going to ask you three questions about...

Leslie

'So' and 'such'! Those two little intensifiers that allow us to modify adjectives and nouns!

Will

OK! Now, let's meet our contestants!

Mark

Hi all. My name's Mark!

Will

And contestant number two?

Selene

It's nice to meet you. I'm Selene! It's nice to meet you Mark.

Mark

Oh... thanks. It's nice to meet you too. I love your blouse.

Selene

Oh thanks! It's really... kind of you to say.

Will

Yes, yes... alright. Enough fraternising. Nice to see you again Mark. OK. Let's get going and don't forget you can play along at home too. Our first round is a find-the-mistake round.

Look at these sentences and tell me why they are incorrect! How was your holiday? It was such sunny! It was so a sunny place!

Selene

Oh... I'm sorry... after you.

Mark

No, no, no, no... after you.

Selene

No... after you.

Will

Good grief! Mark. It was you.

Mark

They're the wrong way around. Don't we use 'so' with adjectives and 'such' with noun phrases?

Will

Leslie?

Leslie

Well done! We can use 'so' and 'such' to emphasise something that we are talking about. We use 'so' to emphasise an adjective and 'such' to emphasise a noun phrase. It was so sunny. It was such a sunny place.

Will

Good job. Here's a bonus question: If the thing we emphasise using 'so' and 'such' causes a reaction, what structure do we need to add?

Selene

We use a 'that' clause.

Will

Leslie?

Leslie

Absolutely right! We can add a 'that' clause to a 'so' or 'such' phrase to say that the thing we are emphasising is the reason that something happened!

Will

Well done, Selene. OK. It's time for a quick-fire round. Complete these 'so' and 'such' phrases with a 'that' clause. The day was so sad...

Selene

...that I couldn't believe it when I met Mark.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Err... OK. She's such a kind person

Mark

...that you can always ask her for help.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Yes... quite. I met someone so attractive...

Selene

...that I can't resist how I feel.

Leslie

Correct!

Will

Focus on the game, please! There was such chemistry...

Mark

...that I couldn't control myself.

Leslie

Correct.

Will

Alright, stop it now. You're making everyone ill! Two points each. OK. On to our second round. How can we use 'so' and 'such' to emphasise a great quantity of something?

Mark

Please, after you...

Selene

I couldn't possibly...

Mark

As if I could go before you, Selene.

Will

Selene!

Selene

We combine them with 'much' and 'many'.

Will

How about an example?

Mark

Selene has such many points that I could never win.

Will

That answer was totally wrong.

Mark

Was it? I'm sorry I seem to have lost focus.

Will

Stop it! Leslie?

Leslie

When we want to emphasise the quantity of something we can combine 'so' with 'much' or 'many'. 'Much' is used for uncountable nouns – so much love - and 'many' is used for countable nouns – so many hugs. However, we cannot combine 'such' with either 'much' or 'many'. That form does not exist.

Will

Alright loverboy. Minus eight points to you. Mark! Selene! Oi! Look at me! On to our last question. Look at these two short dialogues and tell me what the difference is between 'so', 'such' and 'very'.

Leslie

You are very late. I'm sorry I'm so late. I missed the bus. We had a very good time. Why do you think you had such a good time?

Selene

Oh, third time! I'm sorry.

Mark

It must be destiny.

Will

You're making the audience sick! Selene, you go!

Selene

Well, all three are being used to emphasise something, so... I'm not sure. Maybe Marky knows...he's so clever.

Will

His name's Mark!

Mark

Thanks Seleney. In the first line of each dialogue, the speaker introduces a new idea. In the second, the person emphasises the same idea...so it's something to do with new information and known information.

Will

Leslie?

Leslie

Well done...Marky. 'So', 'such' and 'very' can emphasise, but we usually use 'very' when giving new information and 'so' or 'such' to emphasise information that is already known.

Will

Well done. Have seven points between you.

Mark

Oh, no. You can have them Selene.

Selene

No, you can have them Mark.

Mark

No, you.

Selene

No, you.

Will

Oh, let it end already. Well, that brings us to the end of today's Grammar Gameshow. Let's count out the points. And the winner is... up to you. Mark... Selene... one of you has to lose. Who's it going to be?

Mark

I'll lose... let her win.

Selene

No... Mark you can't!

Mark

My darling... it is a far better thing I do, than I have ever done before.

Will

Alright. You chose. Watch out for the elephants! It looks like we'll need another contestant. And Selene, well done to you. Here's what you've won.

Leslie

It's a tandem bicycle! Perfect for taking long rides with your lover.

Selene

I'll never love again!

Will

That's the spirit. We'll see you again next week, where you can play for another prize. Thanks for joining us. Say goodbye Leslie

Leslie

Ciao, Leslie

Will

See you next time. Wave Selene. Wave and smile!