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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The White Elephant

### 14: Clever



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

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#### **Ceilia**

So, we need to talk about the restaurant. As you know business isn't great so I'm looking for some good ideas to make us more efficient and help us save money. Please have a think and let me know.

#### **Gordon**

It's obvious. Peter, we'll have to let you go. Mary, you can serve the food AND wash up afterwards.

#### **Mary**

Hold on Gordon. That's not fair. Peter's a hardworking waiter. And besides, I've got too much to do here. No, we need to think 'out of the box', so to speak.

#### **Peter**

Yes, good idea Mary... Sorry, what box?

#### **Mary**

It means we need to think a bit differently, not just assume we need to cut people's jobs.

#### **Gordon**

Come on then clever clogs, what are we going to do? Get cheaper ingredients, turn the gas down a bit?

#### **Peter**

I know, we can stop putting salt and pepper on the table – nobody uses it anyway.

#### **Gordon**

What a brainwave – we'll save millions! You idiot.

#### **Mary**

Oh, I know! We could buy organic ingredients and charge a bit extra for them – plus we could offer a set menu to attract new customers and hopefully they'll tell their friends about how great it is here.

**Peter**

Yes! It's the best idea since sliced bread!

**Gordon**

Is it? Sliced bread's the only thing we'll be serving with that ridiculous idea. Mary, you're too clever by half. Organic food, honestly, it's so 'last year'.

**Mary**

Have you got any better suggestions Gordon?

**Peter**

Ceilia... Mary's come up with a great idea. Organic set menu and...

**Mary**

Right, we offer a set menu, to attract new customers, serving organic food that we charge a bit extra for.

**Ceilia**

That's a great idea Mary. I knew you were a smart cookie when I employed you.

**Gordon**

But... but... I'm going to have to change suppliers and come up with new stuff for the set menu. How is that a clever idea?

**Ceilia**

Well, extra customers means extra money and that means an extra bonus for us all at the end of the year.

**Gordon**

Oh well... yes... organic food – that is a very clever idea of mine. I'll just go and make some calls, shall I?

## Vocabulary

### **to think out of the box**

to think freely, creating new and unexpected ideas

### **clever clogs**

someone who is annoying because they think they know more than other people

### **a brainwave**

a sudden good idea

### **the best idea since sliced bread**

an excellent idea

### **too clever by half**

annoying because someone appears more intelligent than other people

### **a smart cookie**

a very clever or intelligent person

## Questions

1. How does Mary plan to bring more customers and money into the restaurant?  
(Hint: She mentions a kind of food which doesn't use artificial chemicals.)
  - a) Using organic ingredients and charging a little bit less
  - b) Having a set menu and offering sliced bread to go with it
  - c) Charging a little bit more and using organic ingredients
  
2. When Gordon said Mary was "too clever by half", what did he mean?  
(Hint: It's not a positive meaning.)
  - a) He meant: "You're so clever!"
  - b) He meant: "Your intelligence is very annoying."
  - c) He meant: "What's a stupid idea!"
  
3. How does Ceilia persuade Gordon to support Mary's new idea for the restaurant?  
(Hint: It's related to money!)
  - a) She told him he would lose his job if he didn't support her
  - b) She suggested they might get paid some extra money later in the year
  - c) She told him he was 'a smart cookie' and congratulated him on the idea

## Answers

1. How does Mary plan to bring more customers and money into the restaurant?

a) Using organic ingredients and charging a little bit less

(Wrong. She doesn't want to charge less.)

b) Having a set menu and offering sliced bread to go with it

(Wrong. Not correct, try again. The 'best thing since sliced bread' means a good idea!)

**c) Charging a little bit less and using organic ingredients**

**(That's correct. Well done.)**

2. When Gordon said Mary was "too clever by half", what did he mean?

a) He meant: "You're so clever!"

(That's not right. He wasn't being nice!)

b) He meant: "Your intelligence is very annoying."

**(That's right. He thought she was being too clever and it annoyed him!)**

c) He meant: "What's a stupid idea!"

(Wrong. He didn't mean that. But it sounds like something Gordon might say!)

3. How does Ceilia persuade Gordon to support Mary's new idea for the restaurant?

a) She told him he would lose his job if he didn't support her

(Wrong. I'm sure she would like to do this... but she didn't.)

**b) She suggested they might get paid some extra money later in the year**

**(That's right. She said that it "could mean an extra bonus for us all at the end of the year.")**

c) She told him he was 'a smart cookie' and congratulated him on the idea

(Not correct. It wasn't his idea anyway!)