
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The White Elephant

3: Broken



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Peter

I've got an order from table 3...

Gordon

Amazing, he wants the 'chef's special' - duck a la plum. Now this should be good.

Ceilia

Duck a la plum!?! Shouldn't it be duck a l'orange Gordon?

Gordon

This is my 'chef's special' - just leave it to me.

Peter

I'll go and tell him it's on its way.

Ceilia

...and give him a glass of wine - on the house.

Ceilia

Problem Gordon?

Gordon

The oven won't light - the cooker's **on the blink!** Where did you get this piece of junk from?

Ceilia

I bought it second hand. It was in good working condition.

Mary

Try pressing that button there.

Gordon

What do you know about cookers, huh? Can't you see it's kaput - **knackered!** We're going

to lose yet another customer now. I was really looking forward to cooking my duck a la plum!

Mary

Have you tried the gas connections?

Gordon

Don't be ridiculous - I have worked in some of the world's top restaurants - and I know when a cooker has **packed up** - and this one has completely **had it**.

Peter

Oh... I'll go and tell him the duck's off shall I?

Mary

Wait a minute Peter. If I just press this knob here - now try that a try.

Gordon

Ah... well...

Celia

Well done Mary.

Peter

So we're '**cooking on gas**' then! I'll go and give the customer the good news. Mary you're brilliant!

Vocabulary

on the blink

not working correctly

knackered

(here) old and broken

packed up

stopped working

had it

no longer useful

cooking on gas

the situation is going well

Questions

1. What did Ceilia mean when she asked Peter to give the customer a glass of wine 'on the house'?

(Hint: She is trying to stop the customer from leaving.)

- a) Give him a glass of cheap 'house' wine.
- b) Give him a glass of wine free of charge.
- c) Give him a glass of wine to take home.

2. How does Mary manage to fix the cooker?

(Hint: It's simple!)

- a) She kicks it.
- b) She connects it to the gas.
- c) She turns a knob on the back.

3. What does Peter say at the end to mean that everything is going well?

(Hint: It's something to do with cooking.)

- a) We're on the blink
- b) We're cooking on gas
- c) The gas is cooking!

Answers

1. What did Ceilia mean when she asked Peter to give the customer a glass of wine 'on the house'?

a) Give him a glass of cheap 'house' wine. Wrong. Try again.

b) Give him a glass of wine free of charge. Correct, well done. 'On the house' means free of charge.

c) Give him a glass of wine to take home. Wrong. The wine is for drinking at the restaurant. Try again.

2. How does Mary manage to fix the cooker?

a) She kicks it. No she doesn't do that!

b) She connects it to the gas. No, the gas is already connected.

c) She turns a knob on the back. That's right! She turns the knob and it starts working again!

3. What does Peter say at the end to mean that everything is going well?

a) We're on the blink. Wrong! 'On the blink' means something is not working correctly.

b) We're cooking on gas. Correct. 'Cooking on gas' means the situation is going well.

c) The gas is cooking! Not correct. That's not quite the right phrase. Try again.