
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Friends in high places



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

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

Rob

...you are, and I'm Rob.

Feifei

Rob, a question – is it right you have a friend who lives on top of a mountain?

Rob

Errr no.

Feifei

What about a friend who lives in La Paz – one of the highest cities in the world?

Rob

Strange question, but no.

Feifei

OK, how about a friend who lives at the top of a very tall tower block?

Rob

Definitely not. Why are you asking about my friends anyway?

Feifei

Well, someone in the office said you have friends in high places – and I just wondered why it was useful to know people who lived high up.

Rob

OK, well if you have friends in high places it has nothing to do with their physical location – they are people you know who are powerful and in an important position and are able to help you.

Feifei

So these are useful people to know then?

Rob

They certainly are. Let's hear some examples of other friends in high places...

Examples

Wang managed to get a promotion but I'm sure it's only because he knows people in high places.

Thanks to his friends in high places, my boyfriend managed to get tickets for the sold-out rock concert. Yeah!

Despite failing her exams, Jane still managed to get a place at university – I'm sure she has friends in high places.

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the phrase 'friends in high places'. These are powerful and important people we know and might be able to help us in some way. So Rob, you know some very important people then?

Rob

Well, yes a few – although not the Queen. Why do you want to know?

Feifei

Well I have to renew my passport and I need someone important to witness my application.

Rob

Oh come on Feifei, you know I could do that.

Feifei

Err sorry Rob. You may be a friend but you're not in a high enough position to do this! Look, it needs a doctor, lawyer or policeman to sign it.

Rob

Great! So how high am I?

Feifei

About this high.

Rob

That low. Oh dear. Time to make some new friends. Bye bye.

Feifei

Bye.