Expressions

It's OK.
I can take it or leave it.
I don't mind it.
So-so.

Pronunciation - Consonant to vowel linking

Most of the phrases from this programme have consonant to vowel linking.

It's OK.
• It's-OK.

I can take it or leave it.
• take-it
• it-or

I don't mind it.
• mind-it.

Pronunciation - Weak forms

I can take it or leave it.

In this phrase, the word can is not stressed. When it is stressed, its pronunciation is:
/kæn/

When it isn't stressed its pronunciation is:
/kan/
This is called a weak form. Weak forms are very important to the natural rhythm of English.

TRANSCRIPT

Callum
Hello, I'm Callum Robertson and this is How To, the series from bbclearningenglish.com that shows you how to do things in English.

In this programme we're going to be looking at different ways of talking about things you neither like nor dislike. In earlier programmes we've looked at simple ways of saying that you like or don't like something.

But sometimes you don't have a strong feeling about something: you neither like it nor dislike it.

How do you express this? Well, let's have look at some simple expressions and we'll also see how important pronunciation is to meaning.

In the earlier programmes we've used the situation of someone trying to arrange a dinner party and trying to find food which everyone likes.

Let's stick with that and hear different answers to this question:

EXAMPLE
Do you like French food?
It's OK.

Callum
It's OK. This doesn't mean he likes it, or dislikes it, but we do get the impression it's maybe not a favourite. However, the way you say it - your tone of voice - is very important in showing the strength of feeling. Compare these two; in one the response is positive, and in the other not so positive. Can you tell which is which?

EXAMPLE 1
Do you like French food?
It's OK.
EXAMPLE 2
Do you like French food?
It's OK.

Callum
Did you hear the difference? Listen again.

EXAMPLE 1
Do you like French food?
It's OK.

EXAMPLE 2
Do you like French food?
It's OK.

Callum
The first one was a positive response:

EXAMPLE 1
It's OK.

Callum
The second was not so positive:

EXAMPLE 2
It's OK.

Callum
There is another feature of pronunciation we can hear in this short sentence: the linking of it's to OK.
Remember that if a word ends in a consonant sound and the next word begins with a vowel sound they can link together smoothly. It's OK - It's OK.

EXAMPLE
Do you like French food?
It's OK.

Callum
Of course, this isn't the only way of saying you don't have a strong feeling about something.
There is a very useful phrase in English which expresses this clearly. Listen out for it: how many words do you hear in the expression?
EXAMPLE
Do you like French food?
I can take it or leave it.

Callum
Let's listen to the phrase again, by itself. How many words are there?

EXAMPLE
I can take it or leave it.

Callum
There are seven words in this expression. It may not sound like that many but there is a lot of consonant to vowel linking which makes the phrase flow smoothly and naturally.

EXAMPLE
I can take it or leave it.

Callum
Let's now look at a couple more simple expressions for saying that you don't have a strong feeling about something.

EXAMPLE
Do you like French food?
I don't mind it.

Callum
I don't mind it. Again, this means you can have it, but it's perhaps not something that is a particular favourite.
We also have an example of consonant to vowel linking in the phrase: can you hear it?

EXAMPLE
I don't mind it.

Callum
Mind links to it - I don't mind it. And we have one more expression to look at in today's programme.

EXAMPLE
How do you feel about French food?
So-so.
Callum

So-so - a very simple expression meaning you don't really like something, but you don't really dislike it.

Let's now recap the words and expressions we've heard today. I'm going to say each one and then give you time to repeat. Try to match the pronunciation, particularly the linking.

It's OK.
It's OK.
I can take it or leave it.
I don't mind it.
So-so.

And now to end, here is a short dialogue. Helen is still trying to arrange a dinner party but it's not easy. She's been very kind in asking her guests what they like to eat, but so far they can't agree. Listen now as she invites one final guest. You'll hear some of today's expressions: which ones? And what final decision does Helen make about her dinner party?

EXAMPLE

Helen
Hi, Will.

Will
Hi, Helen.

Helen
I'm trying to arrange a dinner party. Neil and Finn are coming: would you like to come too?

Will
Yes, sure. It sounds like fun. What are you cooking?

Helen
Well, it's a bit of a problem, as everyone likes different things. How do you feel about French food?

Will
It's OK.
Helen
But you don't really like it?

Will
Well, to be honest, I can take it or leave it.

Helen
And what do you think of Italian?

Will
I don't mind it.

Helen
And Chinese?

Will
So-so.

Helen
Oh, this is impossible! You know, I think I'll have a party, but not a dinner party. If you want to eat, bring your own food.

Callum
Well, poor Helen is a little frustrated. She decided not to have a dinner party, just a party: people can bring their own food. And the expressions we heard: it's OK, I can take it or leave it, I don't mind it and so-so.

That's all from this How To. We've looked at different expressions to use when you don't have strong feelings about something and we focussed on some pronunciation features of everyday speech.

You can find more on this topic as well as quizzes and downloads at bbclearningenglish.com.