

15 Simple Phrases to Help You Sound More British

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Why Try and Sound British?

If you want to sound more British, then these 15 phrases, typically only used by British people, will help you.

Now just to be clear, you actually don't need to try and sound like a British person.

You can be an effective and confident English speaker using a mix of American, British, Irish, Canadian and Australian phrases and accents.

You can even have a local accent (from your country) and still be a great communicator in English.

That said, these phrases can be extremely useful if you are living in, or going to live in, Great Britain.

They will help you better understand the local people.

Also, because many of these phrases are what we call slang (informal expressions used in a certain place), they can be used to surprise, create humour and build a connection with local people.

What's more, these phrases will help you understand British films and TV series like Killing Eve, Sherlock, After Life, The Split and many more.

Warning: If you are preparing IELTS, do not use these phrases in the IELTS Speaking test. They are slang. You should use informal speech, but not slang!

How Do You Greet People in British English?

The most common greetings in English are

A: Hello!

B: Hi!

But, in many parts of Britain, we also use the following with friends and family

A: Hiya

B: Hiya

This is pronounced the same as 'higher'

A very common greeting is 'alright' and is actually used as a question, and the response is the same word! It probably means 'are you alright?' but we just use it to mean 'hello'.

A: Alright?

B: Alright?

After saying 'hello', most people then ask the following, which is probably the most common greeting;

A: How are you?

B: Fine, thanks

In addition, in very informal situations we often use the following instead,

How's it going?

How are you doing?

How's tricks?

And the answer in British English is often very calm and underwhelming, such as,

Not bad

Can't complain

Mustn't grumble

Same old, same old

To grumble = to complain

How to Invite Someone in British English

Of course the most common way to invite people to something or to do something is to say,

Would you like a _____?

Would you like to _____?

For example,

Would you like a coffee?

Would you like to go out for a drink?

In British English, we also use the word 'fancy' which can mean to like someone (and find them attractive) and also to feel like something or doing something. In this case of inviting, we are using the second meaning.

Fancy a coffee?

Fancy going out for a drink?

Notice: We often drop 'do you' in questions like this. This is a form of **ellipsis**

Different Ways to say 'Easy' in British English

We have the following great idiomatic expression in English, to say something is easy;

It's a piece of cake

A more slang word used in Britain is 'a **doddle**'. This is often used to talk about an activity such as an exam, or a skill.

That exam was a **doddle**, I am sure I have passed.

I find cooking an absolute **doddle**

Expressions to Talk About Being Happy

When it comes to being happy, there are so many words and idiomatic expression for this, especially to say you are **very** happy. The more common ones are,

I'm delighted

I'm over the moon

I'm thrilled

I'm thrilled to bits

A British slang word for this is '**chuffed**' or '**chuffed to bits**'. For example,

I'm **chuffed** that I passed that exam

I am **chuffed to bits** that you have come to visit me

Joking in British English

Likewise, there are many ways in general English to say you are joking. Here are the common ones;

I'm joking,

I'm kidding

I'm pulling your leg.

A more British phrasal verb for this is 'to **have someone on**'. For example,

I am not really getting married. **I'm just having you on.**

Phrases to Say You Are ‘Unhappy’

We have talked about being happy and joking, but what about the opposite?

Well, common synonyms of being unhappy about something are,

I’m upset

I’m down

I’m down in the dumps

A common British slang word for being unhappy and also disappointed is ‘**gutted**’. For example,

I failed my exam. I was so sure I would pass, so I’m really **gutted**

Sometimes, the reason we are unhappy is that we have made a mess of something, such as an exam or even cooking a dish, or indeed any activity that hasn’t gone well.

A nice idiomatic and slang expression for this is ‘to **make a pig’s ear** of something’, as in the example below,

I was trying to paint a sunset, but it looks terrible, I **made a pig’s ear** of it.

Why Do British People Say ‘Bob’s Your Uncle’?

This British expression means, ‘it’s that easy’ or ‘there you are, it’s done!’

When people are faced with problems we are often quick to give them a solution. After giving the solution we typically say,

There you are!

There you have it!

Voila!

‘Voila’ as you might guess, is actually a French word that we use in English, meaning, ‘there it is’ or ‘there you are’.

British people like to get a bit creative, and we also use this confusing, but funny expression, ‘**Bob’s your uncle**’.

It has nothing to do with members of your family, it just means ‘and there you are’. Here’s an example, giving some advice to a friend who failed their exam.

So, don’t worry, next time, just study hard, be patient, and **Bob’s your uncle**.

Different Ways to Say 'I'm Tired' in British English

There are many ways of saying you are tired in general English. You may know the following,

I'm exhausted

I'm beat

I'm worn out

In Britain, we often use the word '**knackered**' which is slang, and is quite strong and should only be used with close friends. It actually has two slang meanings, 'to be tired' or 'to be broken'.

I don't really want to go out tonight, I'm too **knackered**. I think I will stay at home.

Of course, if you are tired, you need to rest. These are common expressions and synonyms for this;

To get some rest

To have a rest

To have a sleep

To have a siesta

In Britain, the following are also all very popular ways of saying this,

To have a nap

To have a kip

To have forty winks

To have a snooze

To get some shuteye

How Do the British Say Goodbye?

In general English, you can say goodbye with any of the following phrases,

See you later
Catch you later
Bye
See you now
Take care

In Britain, we also use the following more slang expressions.

Cheers
Cheerio
Ta ra
Ta ta

So there you are, lots of expressions that British people use, and that can help you better understand British people as they really speak.

Which was your favourite expression, or do you know any other British expressions?

Watch the full video here:

<https://keithspeakingacademy.com/simple-english-phrases-help-you-sound-more-british/>