
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

A close shave



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak with me Feifei...

Rob

...and me Rob. Hello.

Feifei

Erm, Rob, are you OK? You've got some cuts on your face.

Rob

Oh well, yes, I've had a bit of a bad morning.

Feifei

I'm sorry to hear that. What happened?

Rob

I was cycling into the office and some idiot ran out in the road, right in front of me.

Feifei

Crikey – did you hit him?

Rob

No – but it was a close shave.

Feifei

A close shave? Did he have a razor?!

Rob

No Feifei – that would have hurt. This is an expression that describes a dangerous or unpleasant situation that has only just been avoided. It almost happened... but it didn't.

Feifei

Lucky for you! So you're saying you nearly had an accident but you didn't?

Rob

Exactly. Let's hear some more examples of this phrase...

Examples

We ran to catch the train – it was a close shave but we just managed to get on.

I had a close shave when a fast car just missed me as I was crossing the road.

It was close shave but I don't think my mum saw us smoking.

Feifei

So, a close shave describes a situation where you have a narrow escape from something bad. So you had a narrow escape this morning Rob?

Rob

I did. Why don't people look when they cross the road?! I could have ended up falling off my bike and being hit by a bus.

Feifei

But hold on Rob – if you didn't fall off your bike, why have you got those cuts on your face?

Rob

Oh... these! Well, I had a shave this morning and used a blunt razor.

Feifei

Ouch! So you really did have 'a close shave'!

Rob

Ha ha. You're as sharp as a razor Feifei! I mean intelligent or sharp-witted.

Feifei

Unlike your razor.

Both

Bye!