BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
The English We Speak
Social media words

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Li

Hello, this is The English We Speak, with me Li…

Neil

… and me Neil. Hello! What's the matter with you, Li? You are upset, I can tell.

Li

It's about my social media profiles, Neil. Some people keep posting negative messages all the time on my pages no matter what I write. It's not that they disagree with what I post. They just criticise everything - even when they don't give a proper reason.

Neil

Ah… Don't worry, Li. They might be what people are calling 'haters'.

Li

'Haters'. Yes, I've heard this word before… the verb 'to hate' means to strongly dislike something, doesn't it?

Neil

Yes. And the word 'hater' has been used to describe someone who says or writes unpleasant things about others or criticises their achievements, especially on the internet.

Li

That's right. And I've also heard 'troll'. Is that some kind of creature?

Neil

Well, language evolves and old words can take on new meanings. A troll is an ugly creature from folk tales who often behaves in an antisocial way. But these days we call people who leave deliberately annoying or upsetting messages on the internet - while hiding their true identity – 'trolls'.

Li

'Troll' and 'hater' are today's expressions in The English We Speak. Let's hear some examples of how they are used.

Examples

Joan is fed up with a troll who posts comments on her cooking blog saying that she is fat and should only eat lettuce.

Haters will always have something negative to say. As I read in a comment on Pinterest: "Haters will see you walk on water and say it's because you can't swim."

Neil
You shouldn't bother about 'haters', Li. As singer Taylor Swift says in her song Shake It Off, "haters are gonna hate".

Li
Yes, I like a good debate but 'haters' and 'trolls' don't want a debate. All they want is to annoy people.

Neil
That's more like it. Now let me go and update my Facebook status and check my Twitter account.

Li
Me too. Bye bye!

Neil
Bye!