
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH
The English We Speak
Jiggery-pokery



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ENGLISH

This is not a word-for-word transcript

Neil

Hello, I'm Neil...

Feifei

...and I'm Feifei, and this is The English We Speak.

Neil

Today I thought I'd impress you with an old Chinese phrase that we use in English now.

Feifei

Oh yes – go on then, impress me!

Neil

The phrase is jiggery-pokery.

Feifei

Jiggery-pokery! Oh come on, that's not Chinese!

Neil

It is – everyone in China uses it – apparently.

Feifei

I don't think so. What does it mean anyway?

Neil

Jiggery-pokery refers to dishonest behaviour that is intended to trick people.

Feifei

Oh hold on... were you trying to trick me just to illustrate this phrase?

Neil

Yes! I almost tricked you, didn't I?

Feifei

Hmmm. I think we had better hear some better examples of this phrase in action.

Examples

The company is being investigated after some shareholders accused it of jiggery-pokery. I was surprised that the businessman got away with so much jiggery-pokery before he was finally caught and sent to prison.

Feifei

That's 'jiggery-pokery' which describes dishonest or secret behaviour – but it is definitely not a Chinese phrase, Neil!

Neil

OK, I know. Now before I forget, don't you owe me ten pounds?

Feifei

No! I bought you lunch, remember. Honestly, jiggery-pokery in action!

Neil

Well at least you won't forget the phrase now.

Feifei

True. Bye.

Neil

Bye.