
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

A sticky situation



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Feifei

Welcome to The English We Speak with me Feifei and... Rob... Rob?
Where's Rob?

Rob

(Door opens) Oh hi Feifei... you couldn't lend me £10, could you?

Feifei

Rob! You're supposed to be presenting this programme. Anyway, what do you need £10 for? And what's that stuff all over your clothes?

Rob

Well, I was running to get to the studio and I bumped into a woman.

Feifei

Right... So, what do you need £10 for?

Rob

Well, you see, she dropped a big box she was carrying and said I would have to pay for the damage – and if I didn't, her daughter would be really upset!

Feifei

Oh! Rob, you are in 'a sticky situation'.

Rob

Well, that's true. You mean I'm in a situation that is difficult to get out of?

Feifei

Exactly! Rob, here's £10 - now you can go and un-stick the situation!

Rob

Thanks Feifei. I think we should hear some examples of this phrase while I go and pay the woman...

Examples

I'm in a sticky situation: I said I'd go to the cinema with Pete but I've also promised to go for a drink with John.

It was a sticky situation – neither side would agree on who caused the accident.

We're in a sticky situation – we've got to catch the train but we haven't got enough money to buy a ticket.

Feifei

So a sticky situation is a difficult, awkward or sensitive situation. (Door opens again) Ah, Rob, you're back...

Rob

...yes. She's happy now and is going back to the bakery again.

Feifei

The bakery? Why? What was in the box she was carrying?

Rob

It was a big birthday cake for her daughter.

Feifei

Oh no - you were in a sticky situation in more ways than one!

Rob

I suppose I was.

Both

Bye.