
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Part of the furniture



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Helen

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Helen and joining me today is Neil.

Neil

Hello everyone.

Helen

Neil, guess who I met yesterday?

Neil

No idea. Anyone I know?

Helen

The name is Jonathan Kendall - he said you guys worked together a long time ago.

Neil

Oh yes, we did. Gosh, it must have been nearly 15 years ago if my memory is right.

Helen

Wow, that is a long time ago.

Neil

So what's he doing now?

Helen

He works at Radio Melody. He's now the station manager.

Neil

Is he still there? Wow, he really is part of the furniture.

Helen

What do you mean 'he's part of the furniture'? He is a person, not a sofa or a table.

Neil

Oh, I don't mean it literally. It's an expression we use to describe someone or something that's been in the same place for a very long time. You almost think that they'll be there forever. Let's listen to a few examples.

Examples

John has been the school caretaker for nearly twenty years. He's become part of the furniture.

We come here so often, it's almost as if we are part of the furniture.

She's had a seat in parliament for over 50 years – she's part of the furniture in the House of Commons.

Helen

Right, I've got it. So how long have you been at the BBC?

Neil

I've lost count. Let me see, I left school at 18, did an apprenticeship for 2 years and then I joined the BBC in 1995.

Helen

That's twenty years. My goodness! So you are part of the furniture at the BBC!

Neil

Yes, you are absolutely right. Where have all the years gone?

Helen

Will you be here for the next twenty years?

Neil

Who knows? Let's wait and see.