
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Six of one, half a dozen of the other



This is not a word-for-word transcript

Finn

Hello, I'm Finn.

Feifei

Hi, I'm Feifei. Sorry I'm late - Peter and Dave are having an argument in the kitchen. I was trying to calm them down.

Finn

Oh, really? What are they arguing about?

Feifei

Something about who spilled the milk - it was getting very heated.

Finn

Oh, no. Who started the argument?

Feifei

Hmm, I don't really know, I think it's six of one, half a dozen of the other.

Finn

Good expression, Feifei.

Feifei

Thank you, Finn. I learnt this phrase just the other day. I think I can use it in this situation, can't I?

Finn

Yes, indeed you can. We normally use 'six of one, half a dozen of the other' when we think there is very little difference between two choices. We also use it when two people are equally responsible for something. Now, let's hear some examples.

Examples

A: I don't know whether to give my mum flowers or chocolates for Mother's Day.

B: It's six of one, half a dozen of the other.

A: Do you think we should take the third ring road instead of the second ring road?

B: Oh, I don't know, it's six of one, half a dozen of the other.

A: They keep blaming each other - whose fault was it really?

B: Oh, it was six of one, half a dozen of the other.

Feifei

So remember you can use 'six of one, half a dozen of the other' when two choices are very similar and it doesn't really matter which one you choose.

Finn

Yes, that's right. Ah, sorry Feifei, wait a sec, I need to go now.

Feifei

Where are you going?

Finn

I'm going to dinner with Sophia. Quick, help me decide – should I wear this blue shirt? Or this pink one?

Feifei

You know what I am about to say, don't you?

Finn

The pink one?

Feifei

No, they are very similar. It's six of one, half a dozen of the other...

Finn

Oh, you're not helping! I'm off, bye.

Feifei

Wait...