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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### Bumper-to-bumper



*This is not a word-for-word transcript*

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**Helen**

Good to see you, Rob. How was your holiday in sunny Spain?

**Rob**

It was fantastic: the sun, the beach, the sea, the food and the people... It was perfect! How about you? Did you manage to get away for the weekend?

**Helen**

We had a good start to our weekend at the seaside, but it was just awful on the way back.

**Rob**

Oh dear, what happened?

**Helen**

We decided to drive down instead of getting the train.

**Rob**

Good idea. Well with a car you can explore the coast easily. But the train can be less stressful.

**Helen**

The return journey was absolutely crazy. So many people going back to London after the weekend!

**Rob**

So the traffic was bumper-to-bumper?

**Helen**

Bumper-to-bumper? No we weren't that close to the car in front. I know my Highway Code, at least a two-second gap between cars.

**Rob**

Well, I didn't mean it literally! When there is a lot of traffic on the road and it's moving very slowly or not at all, the front of one car is almost touching the back of another one, so it's bumper-to-bumper.

**Helen**

Oh I see. Well it was like that. We were not moving at all on one stretch of the motorway. A 90-minute journey in the end took us five hours.

**Rob**

Oh poor you! It's so frustrating, isn't it? The expression bumper-to-bumper is heard a lot in travel reports on the radio. Here are a couple of examples:

**Examples**

Traffic on the northbound A12 near Greenwich Junction is bumper-to-bumper. Best to avoid the area if you can.

The approach to the Dartford Tunnel southbound entrance is bumper-to-bumper. Expect severe delays.

**Helen**

Thanks for explaining this. So it was bumper-to-bumper for us all the way home.

**Rob**

You got it. Maybe you will take the train next time?

**Helen**

I think I might. Or I might try to avoid the rush hour traffic.

**Rob**

Or you could stay at home.

**Helen**

Good advice Rob.

**Both**

Bye!