
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

To go around the houses



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

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak, with me Feifei...

Rob

...and me, Rob. Hello!

Feifei

Err Rob, I've been meaning to ask... you've got a car haven't you?

Rob

Yes, Feifei, I have.

Feifei

Is it a quite special car? You know, a valuable, expensive one?

Rob

No no, it's just an old car – but it gets me around. Why are you asking?

Feifei

Oh no reason... you don't use it much do you?

Rob

No... Feifei there's no need to go around the houses – just say what you want to say.

Feifei

OK... can I borrow your car please? But don't worry, I won't go around the houses – I just want to go to the supermarket.

Rob

Ha! Feifei when I said there's no need 'to go around the houses'; I wasn't referring to where you drive my car. I mean, you don't have to waste time saying lots of unimportant things before you actually say what you want to say.

Feifei

I see! So I should just say what I want to say - I should get to the point?

Rob

Yes, that's another way of putting it. Basically it means you take a long time to say or do something, when in reality it can be done or said a lot quicker. Let's hear some examples of the phrase 'to go around the houses' in action...

Examples

Don't go around the houses; just tell me straight, what have you done?

He went all around the houses talking about the match but all I wanted to know was who won?

I didn't know how to tell him he'd failed his exams so I went all around the houses before I let him know.

Feifei

So, to go around the houses means you go a long way round before asking what you want to ask. Rob, you haven't answered *my* question yet.

Rob

Oh yes, what was the question?

Feifei

Can I borrow your car... please?

Rob

Oh well, erm, I need to fill it up with petrol...

Feifei

Oh right...

Rob

And I need to drive to work...

Feifei

But that's not until Monday!

Rob

It's not very tidy inside...

Feifei

Rob – don't go around the houses – your answer is 'no' isn't it?

Rob

Yes Feifei. You can't borrow it. I crashed it last week – nobody can drive it!

Feifei

You certainly won't be going around any houses then Rob!

Rob

Very funny Feifei!

Both

Bye!