
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Like turkeys voting for Christmas



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

Rob

Hello and welcome to *The English We Speak* where we teach you English words and phrases which you might not find in your dictionary. I'm Rob.

Feifei

... and I'm Feifei. Hello.

Rob

I am getting very excited, it's nearly Christmas.

Feifei

I love Christmas! All the food, the presents, the silly games and the...

Rob

Oh, Feifei, did you hear the boss wants us to agree to work on Christmas Day?

Feifei

Really? Why? I would never agree to that!

Rob

I don't know, but he wanted us to agree to it. So I told him us agreeing to work on Christmas Day would be like turkeys voting for Christmas.

Feifei

'Like turkeys voting for Christmas'? Rob, I know you like your turkey dinner but what's this got to do with turkeys?

Rob

Let me explain, Feifei. As you know, lots of people eat turkeys at Christmas. So, do you think if the turkeys had a choice, they would vote for Christmas?

Feifei

No, of course not, it would be crazy for them to vote for Christmas because they get eaten.

Rob

That's right. So in English, we use this idiom 'like turkeys voting for Christmas' as a metaphor when someone accepts a situation which will have a negative outcome for them.

Feifei

Ah, so in our case, if we agree to work on Christmas Day then we can't have the food, the presents or the drinks; more importantly, we can't spend time with our family which will be really disappointing for us.

Rob

Exactly! It will be 'like turkeys voting for Christmas'. Let's hear some people using this phrase.

Examples

Workers agreeing to pay cuts would be like turkeys voting for Christmas.

It would be like turkeys voting for Christmas if people asked for a tax rise.

Rob

Remember this is an informal saying so do take note of the context it's used in.

Feifei

Thank you Rob for teaching us this humorous idiom. All this talking of turkey is making me very hungry.

Rob

Me too, maybe we should just skip work today and go find some turkey to eat?

Feifei

Now Rob, if I said yes to that, it would really be like turkeys voting for Christmas.

Rob

Ha ha...

Feifei

Do join us again for another *The English We Speak*. We wish you a very Happy Christmas!

Rob

Merry Christmas!