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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### Duck



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

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**Neil**

*(Makes sound of a duck)*

**Feifei**

Welcome to The English We Speak...

**Neil**

*(Makes sound of a duck)*

**Feifei**

Shh... Let me finish! Welcome to The English We Speak, the programme where we...

**Neil**

*(Makes sound of a duck)*

**Feifei**

Ok, ok – you win, Neil. You start the programme.

**Neil**

OK – welcome to The English We Speak. Today we bring you a way to say hello to people that involves... ducks.

**Feifei**

Finally. English is, of course, a rich and diverse language, and different regions use different expressions. In the English Midlands – the area around the city of Nottingham - you'll hear this. Imagine I'm in a shop, and Neil is the shopkeeper:

**Neil**

Hello duck, how can I help you?

**Feifei**

Hello duck – 'duck' here is a form of address – a word you use when politely speaking to someone.

**Neil**

And 'duck' is an affectionate term for another person. So if you hear it – please don't be offended – it's a friendly thing to say.

**Feifei**

Some think that it comes from the word 'duke'! Let's hear a few examples:

**Examples**

Come over here and tell me what the problem is, duck.

Don't you worry about that broken glass, duck. I'll sort it out.

**Neil**

'Duck' is generally used by people talking to those younger than or the same age as themselves. In some ways it functions like the word 'dear'.

**Feifei**

But it's not a phrase that all native English speakers use. When Hollywood actress Angelina Jolie used it when presenting an award to an English actor from the East Midlands, Jack O'Connell, it confused a lot of people around the world!

**Neil**

And what's more, 'duck' is not the only form of address based on animals. For example, where might someone call you... hen?

**Feifei**

'Hen' is used in Glasgow – but only when talking to women.

**Neil**

Alright hen? And then we have 'pet'...

**Feifei**

'Pet' is used in the North East of England – around Newcastle people call each other 'pet'.

**Neil**

Thanks, pet. So – listen out for these different regional ways of being friendly – just don't be surprised if you confuse people when you use them yourself! Thanks for listening.

**Feifei**

*(Makes sound of a duck)*