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# BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

## The English We Speak

### Donkey's years

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white capital letters, all on a teal background.

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

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**Feifei**

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Feifei...

**Rob**

And I'm... Rob.

**Feifei**

Errr... sorry Rob. What did you say?

**Rob**

I said, I'm... Rob.

**Feifei**

Right, and why have you brought a donkey into the studio?

**Rob**

To help with today's authentic English phrase – which is... donkey's years.

**Feifei**

So is this about age and how I look like a donkey?

**Rob**

Not exactly Feifei. The phrase comes from rhyming slang – donkey's years rhymes with donkey's ears, yes?

**Feifei**

Yes. 'Donkey's years' does rhyme with 'donkey's ears' – so you're saying my ears are like a donkey's?

**Rob**

No. Unlike your ears, donkey's ears are long and when we say we haven't done something for 'donkey's years' we mean we haven't done something for a long time.

**Feifei**

Right. Good, so it's got nothing to do with me looking like a donkey?

**Rob**

Absolutely not. Let's hear the phrase in action...

## **Examples**

I'm so bored; I've been doing this job for donkey's years!

I haven't driven a car for donkey's years; I hope I can remember what to do.

We've got to go to Lily's party; I haven't seen her for donkey's years so it'll be great to catch up.

## **Feifei**

That's 'donkey's years' – when we haven't done something for donkey's years, we haven't done it for a very long time. So Rob, I could say we haven't been to the cinema for donkey's years?

## **Rob**

Yes and you'd be correct. We haven't. Shall we go now?

## **Feifei**

OK. But does your donkey have to come too?

## **Rob**

Oh look, he's very excited!

## **Feifei**

Yuk! I can see.... What's that on the floor?

## **Rob**

Ooooh yes! Perhaps we'll leave him shall we, clear that up later. Perhaps he could present some more programmes while we're away.

## **Feifei**

Ha – that is donkey work! Bye

## **Rob**

Bye.