
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

At the drop of a hat

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

Feifei

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

Rob

And I'm Rob. So Feifei, have you got any holiday plans?

Feifei

Yes I have actually. Three weeks in Australia.

Rob

Australia – wonderful! If I had the money, I'd go there **at the drop of a hat**.

Feifei

What? **At the drop of a hat**? Here, take my hat.

Rob

Your hat?

Feifei

Yes, you said you'd go **at the drop of hat**, so here's my hat, now drop it – and then you can go.

Rob

I wish it was that simple. When I said **at the drop of a hat** I meant 'immediately'. If I had enough money, I would go to Australia immediately – without delay.

Feifei

I see. So in other words, you would go to Australia without hesitation.

Rob

Exactly. Let's hear some more examples...

Examples

My husband just can't stop spending – he buys clothes **at the drop of a hat**!

If I knew what to do next, I'd quit my job **at the drop of a hat**. Until then, I'll stay where I am.

My wife's expecting a baby so I might have to rush to the hospital **at the drop of a hat**.

Feifei

To do something **at a drop of a hat** means to do something immediately without even thinking about it. Well Rob, I'll send you a postcard when I get to Australia but it may take a while.

Rob

Why's that?

Feifei

Well I'm going skiing in France first.

Rob

Oh, well that's somewhere where you really don't want to drop your hat – it'll be freezing!

Feifei

So you don't fancy coming with me then?

Rob

Skiing? No, that's something I wouldn't do **at the drop of a hat**. I'll think about it. But have fun.

Feifei

Thanks.

Both

Bye!