

Elementary Podcasts Series 4 Episode 5

Jo and Adam

Hello and welcome to Episode 5 of Series 4 of LearnEnglish Elementary Podcasts. My name is Adam and, as usual, my colleague Jo will be joining me later to talk about some of the language in the podcast. We're so happy that you're listening to us and don't forget that there's an Elementary Podcasts app with lots of helpful features – you can read the transcript at the same time as you listen and you can even slow down the audio speed if you find it difficult to understand. There's a link to the app on the LearnEnglish website or you can download it from the Google Play Store or the Apple App Store. Happy listening!

Today we're going to hear from Tess and Ravi. In the last episode, Carolina and Jamie were in the pub discussing some good news about Jamie's band, when they saw Emily's boyfriend Cameron kissing another woman! Cameron didn't see them though, and they didn't say anything to him. Carolina wanted to tell Emily, but Jamie thought that was a bad idea. Hmm, difficult.

So we asked for your opinion. What should Carolina and Jamie do? Talk to Emily? Talk to Cameron? Talk to the other woman? And what would you do if you were in a similar situation? Some of you had a lot to say about this topic, but you didn't all agree with each other about what to do.

Chercher from Taiwan wouldn't hesitate to tell Emily what she saw because she

wouldn't want her best friend to be hurt. She also thinks that Carolina should have spoken to Cameron in the pub, just so that he knows that she saw him. Good point, but it's quite a scary thing to do.

Truongpham9 from Vietnam, Tangel from Colombia and Ngoc Mai from Vietnam all agree that Carolina should tell Emily exactly what she saw because it's important to know the truth in a relationship – and friends should tell each other the truth, too.

Englishlover2015 from Yemen isn't so sure. Yes, the truth is a good thing, but if they tell Emily, then the relationship might end, which may be a bad thing. But is keeping the truth a secret the same as telling a lie? I'm not sure. And what if Emily found out later? She might be very angry.

MarinaStudent from Brazil thinks Carolina could tell Emily some of the truth, but not everything, depending on Emily's reactions and Foufasweet from Algeria agrees. I think you might be right. Carolina shouldn't hurt Emily by telling her all the details if Emily doesn't want to know them.

Nader Rashid from Syria says they can't tell Emily because Jamie has to work with Cameron in the band and he understands Jamie's problem. But is that a good enough reason for Carolina to stay quiet?

And so far, Sarfrazalimemon is the only person who thinks that Carolina and Jamie shouldn't do anything because it's a personal matter for Cameron to decide and they shouldn't interfere. Does anyone else agree with him?

Thanks to everyone who gave us their opinions and, please, keep sending them in.

Now it's time to hear from Tess and Ravi again. And, as usual, they're going to talk about something that people think is typically British, like drinking tea, or those big red buses. But it isn't a 'thing' this time – it's something about the British personality. What do you think it might be?

Tess and Ravi

Ravi: Hello again. I'm Ravi ...

Tess: And I'm Tess. And we're here again to talk about Britain, and things that you think are typically British.

Ravi: And the topic today is a big one. It's something that foreigners nearly always say when they visit Britain. It's 'Why are the British so cold?'

Tess: And they're not talking about the weather.

Ravi: No. It's a different sort of cold. They're talking about the British personality – the famous British 'reserve'.

Tess: Aah. Perhaps we need to explain what 'reserve' means?

Ravi: It means that we aren't very friendly, we aren't very open.

Tess: So do you think it's true, Ravi?

Ravi: It's a difficult one. I think I'm a really friendly person. But so many people who visit Britain say that it's difficult to make friends with British people. They say we're cold, reserved, unfriendly. I don't know ...

Tess: I think it's true. Look at Americans or Australians. They speak the same language, but they're much more open. And you see it when you travel, people –

strangers – speak to you on the street or on the train. British people never speak on the train. Or the bus. Never. Not in London, anyway.

Ravi: Aah. 'Not in London'. That's it. Capital cities are full of tourists and are never very friendly. People are different in other parts of the country. The north of England, Scotland, Wales, for example.

Tess: Not completely. I met a woman once, an Italian. She was working in Manchester – your part of the country, Ravi, up north – and she'd been working there for two years, and no one – not one of her colleagues – had ever invited her to their home. Not once in two years. They were friendly to her at work, but nothing else. She couldn't believe it. She said that would never happen in Italy.

Ravi: Did you invite her for dinner?

Tess: No.

Ravi: OK, yeah, I'm not surprised. It's true. When I was a kid, the only visitors to our house were family – uncles and cousins and stuff. My parents never invited friends or colleagues.

Tess: The same in our house.

Ravi: You know what they say – 'an Englishman's home is his castle'. And it's true. It's really difficult to get inside.

Tess: Yeah. It's about being private. You go home to your house and your garden and you close the door. It's your place.

Ravi: Yeah. That's why the British don't like flats. They prefer to live in houses, houses with gardens. Houses are more private. You

don't even have to talk to the neighbours if you don't want to.

Tess: True.

Ravi: We like to be private but I still don't think that we're 'unfriendly' or 'cold'. I think we take a long time to get to be real friends with someone. But when we are friends, then we're good friends, and we stay friends for life.

Tess: That's true too.

Ravi: Anyway, Tess, we've been working together for a very long time now. So I would like to formally invite myself to your house for lunch on Sunday. Don't go to too much trouble. Roast chicken will be just fine. What about if I come round at about ...

Jo and Adam

Adam: And hello again to Jo ...

Jo: Hi Adam. That was interesting. What do you think about it? Are the British reserved? Are you a reserved Englishman, Adam?

Adam: Well, I do shake hands with my mother every time I see her. No, only joking! Like Ravi, I think I'm friendly. But I'm also a bit shy, so I might seem reserved to some people. But that's me, I don't think it's because of my nationality. Do you think there are differences between countries?

Jo: Well, maybe. I used to live in Brazil, and I have to say the people I met there were really warm and inviting. It was really easy to make friends. I think people who spend time in the UK sometimes find it a bit more difficult. But I don't think the British are as cold and as reserved as people imagine.

Adam: And what do you think, listeners? Are the British more reserved than other nationalities? How would you describe people in your country? Write and tell us about your experiences. The address is www.britishcouncil.org/learnenglish.

Jo: You know that we really enjoy reading your comments.

Adam: And I'll read some of them out next time. Now it's time to look at some of the language from the podcast.

Jo: Let's look at words that describe people's personalities. Listen to Tess and Ravi.

Tess: *Aah. Perhaps we need to explain what 'reserve' means?*

Ravi: *It means that we aren't very friendly, we aren't very open.*

Tess: *So do you think it's true, Ravi?*

Ravi: *It's a difficult one. I think I'm a really friendly person. But so many people who visit Britain say that it's difficult to make friends with British people. They say we're cold, reserved, unfriendly ...*

Jo: 'Friendly', 'cold', 'reserved' ...

Adam: And 'unfriendly'.

Jo: 'Unfriendly' is the opposite of 'friendly'. We make 'friendly' negative by adding 'un' to the beginning. 'Un' is a negative prefix.

Adam: Like 'happy' and 'unhappy'.

Jo: There are other negative prefixes too – 'organised' is the opposite of 'disorganised'.

Adam: And 'patient' is the opposite of 'impatient'. But what's the opposite of 'reserved', Jo?

Jo: Hmm. It's 'open'. Tess says the Americans are more open than the British.

Adam: And the opposite of 'cold' is 'warm'.

Jo: There are exercises on the website about adjectives to describe personality – positive and negative words. And other exercises too.

Adam: And if you want more practice with negative prefixes, you can look at Episode 13 from the last series – Series 3. There are some exercises about prefixes and opposites there too.

Jo: So is that everything for today, Adam?

Adam: I think so. Don't forget to send your comments about the famous British reserve. See you next time.

Adam/Jo: Bye!