
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

English at University

6: Lectures begin



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This is not a word-for-word transcript

LANGUAGE FOCUS: Learn phrases about saying you don't understand and need something explained – and vocabulary about nerves

Narrator

Hello and welcome to English at University - the series that teaches some English phrases to help you through your first year of study abroad. Mary's a new student who has just arrived at the University of Studies and now after settling in, her studying can finally begin.

Mary, it's time for your first lecture – but you look like **a bundle of nerves...**

Mary

...well I am a bit **nervous**, I couldn't sleep last night.

Narrator

Don't worry, you're not alone – everyone's in the same position. Everything will be fine - good luck!

Mary

OK, well it's time to go in....

Prof. Not

Ah Mary - we meet again. How's your head today?

Mary

Better thanks – I see you managed to err... clean your shoes.

Prof. Not

Yes, I did – they still smell a bit but I'll survive. Shall we get down to business - Business Studies – now that *most* of us are here?

Mary

Yes, of course.

Daniel

Oh... err... sorry I'm late. I went to the wrong room.

Prof. Not

Hmmm... the first rule of business is punctuality. As T.C.Haliburton once said "Punctuality is the soul of business." Now, what is business and why do we study it? Business is an economic system... A company transacts business activities...

Mary

Daniel, what's he talking about?

Daniel

Haven't a clue... have you got a spare pen by the way? Look, you're going to have to ask him to explain.

Mary

Me!?

Prof. Not

What was that Mary?

Mary

Oh, nothing. Sorry.

Narrator

I think Daniel's **a nervous wreck** – he's not going to help you so I will! If something doesn't make sense, put your hand up and say 'excuse me, could you say that again please?' or 'I don't understand, can you explain that again please?' – or maybe 'could you explain that in a different way please?'

Mary

OK.

Prof. Not

Errr, yes Mary, what is it?

Mary

Prof. Not... it's all very interesting but could you say that again please? Sorry, I don't understand what you mean....

Prof. Not

Oh!

Mary

I'd appreciate it if you could explain it in a different way... please?

Daniel

I think what Professor Not means is you have to have a soul to be in business.

Prof. Not

No...Daniel isn't it? What I mean is...

Narrator

Daniel's **got a nerve**, pretending he knows it all – perhaps it's just **nervous energy** that makes him such an idiot! Anyway, well done Mary – you spoke up and asked for clarification. It's a good idea to ask if you don't understand something. Don't pretend you know something when you don't – like Daniel did! Here's a reminder of the questions Mary asked...

Could you say that again please?

Sorry, I don't understand what you mean.

Could you explain that in a different way please?

You can practise these phrases, pick up a few more plus learn some top tips for studying in the UK on our website at bbclearningenglish.com. Now, the lecture is over, I wonder if things are a bit clearer for Mary?

Mary

Thanks Professor. Everything's much clearer now.

Prof. Not

Well I recommend you get my book from the library – 'Mind Your Own Business' – oh and Mary... I hold a seminar every Monday at the local pub should you wish to join us sometime?

Mary

Yes Professor... thanks, I will.

Prof. Not

You can call me Robert.

Daniel

Ok Robert! It's a date!

Prof. Not

Oh, it's you. Well, don't forget to bring your notes.

Daniel

Oh no, my notes! I left them in the classroom.