

# Hello!

I begin this episode by speaking spontaneously (not from the PDF) about the title of the episode, the spring equinox and the clocks going forward 1 hour because of daylight saving time.



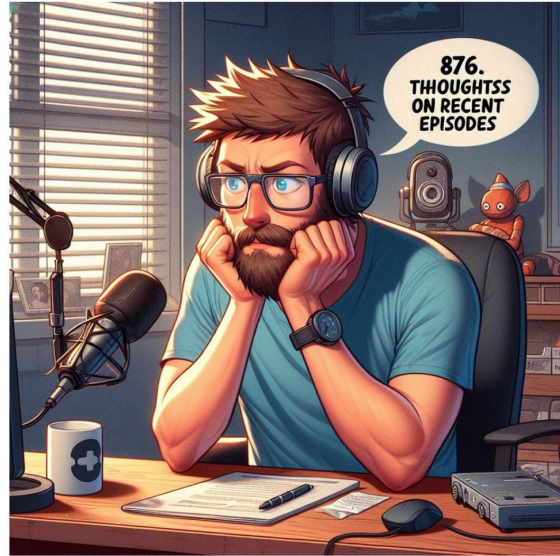
At about **10 mins 40 seconds** I start talking about **AI-generated images for this episode** that I created using *Microsoft Copilot*, which is similar to ChatGPT.

I asked Copilot to “Make an image for an episode of Luke’s English Podcast called 876. Thoughts and comments on recent episodes”.

It came up with some interesting images.

Here are the **AI-generated images** I talk about. 🖱️🖱️🖱️

Look closely - they’re ... *weird*.



What is going on with those strange body parts on the floor in the first image?





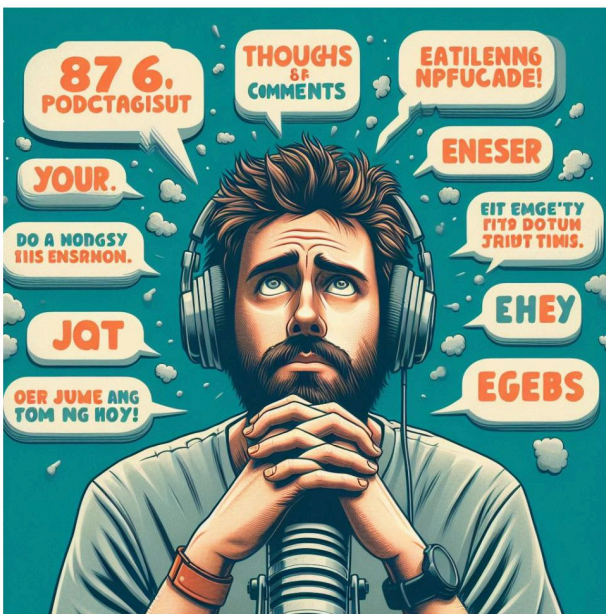
I asked Copilot to “Make it more British”.  
It did this.  
Does British mean sad?



They're quite sad and serious. This guy 🙌 is crying, the guy in the top right pic is too handsome to be me, and take a look at the strange faces in that world map in the bottom left pic.



# Why do I have so many shoes? And why do I seem so worried?



Do those look like English words? Look again. That's not English. In fact, it's not *any* language.



I said to Copilot, “Make it nicer” and it did this



Why do I have this hat, suddenly?



**WTF??**

**LUK'S ENGLISH PODPOAST???**

**LUKE'S ENGLISH PODCAAST?**



I asked Copilot to draw a picture of me recording an episode while “rambling in the countryside of listener comments”.

It did this. Not bad. But now I’m a girl with 3 hands, no eyes, or I’m Indian maybe.



This is what happens if you take mushrooms and go for a walk while listening to my podcast.



I asked it to make the image more realistic.

The first one here is the best, but what is wrong with those plants?



A strange microphone, hovering in the air and an old couple gossiping about me in the background, and why am I a cowboy?

???



Copilot suggested that I could add some British wildlife in my image, like some squirrels or foxes. I thought, “OK, why not?”

But some of the animals seem a bit... *mutated*.



Basically: AI-generated images are impressive, but quite disturbing! 🤖 😞





## 876. Thoughts & comments on recent episodes / A Spring Equinox Ramble

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Hello listeners! Welcome to this new episode, in which I am going to ramble for a while, in English (of course) mostly about recent episodes, including comments from listeners and my responses to them.

At some points during the episode I will be reading from notes I wrote earlier, and at other times I'll be speaking spontaneously. You'll be able to find these notes and transcriptions on the page for this episode on my website.

The main aim in this episode is to give some thoughts and reflections on recent episodes and respond to some listener comments, maybe from you.

I will also let you know the latest from LEP Premium, including a little "heads up" for premium subscribers about what I have



published recently and what's coming up over the next few months.

So this is all going to be fairly self-absorbed stuff where my podcast eats itself a bit. A podcast in which I talk about my podcast.

But I suppose since you are all listeners to this podcast and I'm the one who makes this podcast, it is in fact this podcast which we all have in common and so it seems natural for me to make an episode about it, because we are all on the same page and we're invested in the subject matter of the episode, right?

## **Thoughts and reflections on recent episodes, and listener comments**

This is going to include some comments on the things I've done in episodes recently, the methods I'm using, my rationale for doing the things I do, as well the general attitude and approach you can have as a listener.

When I publish episodes I see all the comments coming in on the various platforms. It's like a train station and the comments are the trains and the platforms are the platforms.

To be clear, by platforms I mean different sites, apps, streaming platforms: YouTube, Spotify, my website, my email inbox.

Comments and messages come in via those platforms and I read them, in spare moments during my day, like when I'm in the queue at the supermarket and I should be thinking about whether I have



enough dairy products in my shopping basket and how to ensure that my family and I consume at least 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day.

Most comments come from YouTube these days, mainly because the platform really makes it easy to leave comments. The comment section is right there and it's a big part of the YouTube experience, isn't it?

In fact, if you are currently on YouTube watching this, go ahead and leave a comment right now.

Tell us who you are and how many portions of fruit or vegetables you've eaten so far today, and what they were.

For example, my name is Luke and I have eaten two portions of fruit so far today - half a banana and half an apple.

Does that count as two portions, or is that one portion?

I also ate some bread.

Does bread count as a vegetable?

So, most comments come from YouTube these days. Audio listeners are more ninja-ish because there isn't always an easily-accessible comment section available, although you can leave comments on Spotify now and my website is always there for your comments. Don't forget about my website - it gets lonely.





Anyway, I read all the comments - for better or worse - usually better. The majority of comments are fab and everyone's cool, but then some comments are not, and people can be weird, but anyway the less said about that the better.

So, comments come in and naturally I want to respond to these comments.

Imagine - you put some work into something - like for example a podcast in which you say loads of things and put your heart into it and then you publish it and then other humans actually respond. It

feels like a dialogue and I often want to respond to the responses, to certain things especially if it's something I feel I want to say, like I want to clarify something that someone has misunderstood or just show my appreciation for the comment, or even to defend myself or something ("No, I'm not growing a beard - it grows itself! What do you think I'm doing, putting it in a plant pot at night and giving it water and little drops of beard fertilizer and putting it in the sun?")

- but I can't do that. I can't reply because I'd end up spending all my time doing that and obviously I have to try to manage my time carefully etc. Life is short and time waits for no man, so I have to be wise about how I spend that time. I am only human and I have basic obligations and needs to attend to, not least my basic bodily functions, followed by my other responsibilities such as family and work, in that order. There's a little glimpse into my priorities - bodily functions first, then family, then work.

In an episode like this I can try to somehow gather together all the things that sort of fly through my mind in those in-between moments when I have a look at comments or when my brain is digesting the comments I've read, or when I wake up in a cold sweat with something profoundly important on the tip of my tongue and then promptly go back to sleep and forget all about it.

I can do episodes like this to try to consolidate all those thoughts and and say all the things I want to get off my chest, if I can. Then I can move on more comfortably, to new things.

So, I'm going to talk about the MBTI Personality Test episode, the Birthday Party story episode, the Walk & Talk in Paris episode and the Aepyornis Island episode, and respond to some of the main points made by listeners about those episodes.



## A (brief) mention of LEP Premium

First, before I come on to those recent episodes, allow me to talk for a few minutes about recent premium offerings and also upcoming premium episodes. Non-premium listeners at this point you have two options (probably more)

1. Just feel bad for not being a premium subscriber (sad music)
2. Go ahead and sign up and find out what you've been missing out on all this time → [www.teacherluke.co.uk/premiuminfo](http://www.teacherluke.co.uk/premiuminfo)

So I am now talking to premium subscribers - and that includes the ones who have signed up to LEP Premium on Acast+ and who have added LEP Premium to their podcast app of choice (not Spotify) and actually listen to the episodes. If that is you, nice one! Now, there's also a whole load of people who have signed up to LEP Premium but who don't actually listen to the content. If that is you, I want to say "Hello! What's going on? Why aren't you listening to the premium episodes? Is it, perhaps, because you don't really know how to get them? You don't know where they are and how it works?"

I think some people have been baffled by the process (that just means confused by the way) but it's quite simple really.

When you sign up you get a new subscription to Luke's English Podcast which includes all the premium episodes as well as the normal ones. But you have to add your new premium subscription to a podcast app on your phone (not spotify).

Just sign into your Acast+ account and then you can manage your subscription and add the show to a podcast app. Most people use Apple Podcasts. I recommend PocketCasts which is free on both iOS and Android. PocketCasts lets you make a playlist of “favourited” episodes and also it has a search function which lets you search for premium episodes - they’re all marked with a P, starting with P01 all the way up to the most recent one which is P58. Most of those are in multiple parts.

When you have added your new premium subscription to your podcast app of choice (not Spotify) you can find the links for PDFs and video versions in the show notes of each episode!

Sign into your Acast+ account at [www.teacherluke.co.uk/account](http://www.teacherluke.co.uk/account). If you have any issues, try contacting [support@acast.com](mailto:support@acast.com)

## **Recent premium episodes - P57 and P58**

Premium subscribers (I’ll keep this brief) did you notice the vocabulary episode I did about the conversation with Lindsay that I did a few weeks ago (868)?

In episode 868 Lindsay and I talked about social issues, economics, politics and how things in the USA and UK have changed over the last few years and decades. I went through the conversation and made a big list of vocabulary, and in P57 I broke it all down, clarified and explained it in one epic monologue which I recorded in my living room while a tiny fly kept trying to land on my head. You can find it in your episode list if you are a premium subscriber. P57 - available in the list just after episode 868.



I also uploaded a 2-part story episode for premium listeners, a few weeks ago. This is P58 parts 1 and 2. PLEPsters, you will find it in your list just after episode 872. It's a re-telling of a classic fairytale, but done with a lot of tongue-in-cheek humour. You can listen to me read the story, I explain the vocabulary as usual and then there's a special focus on pronunciation because the story is full of rhyming words - so there's a lot of practise with vowel sounds, and also the usual listen & repeat practice with the story. P58 parts 1 and 2.

So that's that's P57 and P58 - available now for premium listeners.

As always - there are PDFs for each episode and also video versions.

If you want to sign up to LEP Premium just go to [www.teacherluke.co.uk/premiuminfo](http://www.teacherluke.co.uk/premiuminfo) for more premium info.

There's nearly 200 premium episodes now - you can access them all if you're a PLEPster, and it costs about the same as a nice coffee from you to me, once a month.

In some countries you can't sign up because there are sanctions in place that affect your banks and credit cards - I'm afraid there's nothing I can do to help there, so you'll just have to take that up with your country's president. Good luck with that.

## **In the pipeline for LEP Premium**

Language reviews for the MBTI Personality Test episode, the Walk & Talk Paris episode and the Aepyornis Island episode.

I have vocabulary lists for all of them and I plan to go through them and use my particular set of teaching skills to remind you of the words and phrases you heard. This is a tried and tested system of repetition, reviewing, clarification, giving examples and giving you memory tests and chances to practise with the language. Support from premium episodes can make a huge difference to your ability to pick up, use and remember English with my podcast, long term, forever.

## Thoughts & comments on recent episodes

Let me now, as promised earlier, give some thoughts in response to recent episodes, and some general listener reactions too.



### 872. The Birthday Party (Learn English with a Short Story)



As usual, this was a popular episode, as these short story episodes usually are. I understand why - stories are a compelling and vivid way to learn language.

People write very positive and encouraging things in response to these episodes and I think they work very well.

I particularly enjoy reading out stories, performing them with my voice and generally the more acting I get to do, the happier I am. Also, I really enjoy going through the vocabulary and explaining it and finding ways to help you understand the language. This is my bread and butter as an English teacher. I will continue to do short story episodes as long as I can find appropriate stories to share.

What is interesting about the response to this one is the way different people had different interpretations of the events of this story, which again is another great thing about literature (it is also true for films). Different people take different interpretations.

I think this was a particularly well-written story because the writer was very economical with language - just giving us enough details to make it vivid but also not telling us how we should be feeling or giving us too much specific information about the two people she was describing.

She just said what she saw, quite plainly, and let us try to put it all together. What's definitely clear is that there is a strong emotional kick to the story when we suddenly realise that something is deeply wrong between these two people and we get a brief but very profound glimpse into their world.

## Different interpretations

Some people, like me, felt sympathy for the woman, assuming that her husband is selfish and self-important and her sweet gesture was met with an unnecessarily harsh and cruel response, and that she's a victim.

@Olga-te7kd

2 weeks ago

Hi Luke! Great story and sad at the same time. I love it! And open for different interpretations. I think, your interpretation is close to what the narrator was trying to say. This sentence is a kind of evidence: You looked at him and you saw this and you thought, "oh, don't be like that" But he was like that....

Basically I agree with your point of view. From my understanding the story portrayed a typical couple, where the man is always more important than the woman. Unfortunately it happens in many marriages...

@wilsontavares8427

9 days ago

This is a sad story about a couple that probably were living a long and harsh time together which ultimately damaged and destroyed their romantic and lovely affair. The poor wife trying to recover the best moment of their life together planned to give her husband a very special birthday surprise that could bring back these good feelings that she had felt for him. But the surprise turned out to be a big disaster and disappointment broke her heart deeply, making her cry tears of sorrow with herself. The writer, who was watching this



scene in front of the couple, captured and described perfectly all their emotions, and body language, making us feel profound sorrow for the wife's feelings.

I'm sorry for my poor English.

I would like to thank you very much for your teachings

@vivianayacar3041

2 weeks ago

If my husband did something like that to me I wouldn't show anything at the same moment, but surely my face would show how angry I was and when we were on our own I would definitely say something to him.

Other people decided that in fact the wife was at fault here, and that after more than 10 years of marriage, she should know her husband well enough not to organise a surprise for him, and therefore this is all her fault.

@hugok.2783

2 weeks ago

Hey I'm a bit surprised about the fact that the wife decided to make this kind of surprise. If it's a married couple, they should know each other pretty well and she should have guessed the guy wouldn't have appreciated this kind of surprise... Maybe they don't know each other that well any more or they've changed over time. Anyway thanks for the story and the explanation. Good episode as always. Cheers

@vishnesvetlana

2 weeks ago (edited)

If I were him, I wouldn't be happy, either. I don't like personal things being demonstrated in front of others, strangers, particularly. And if a woman is unaware what her husband likes and dislikes after years of marriage life, she's a kind of not very clever. Why show it to people around? Why make yourself look so stupid and unhappy being surrounded by strangers? What did she expect the reaction from her husband to be?

Maybe, but still - in my opinion, the husband doesn't have to react like that, and why is he so self-important that just a nice little cake and a birthday song make him feel so small, and is it really necessary to be so vindictive and cruel to his wife for trying to do something sweet? I think the writer reflects this when she writes "You saw this and you thought 'oh don't be like that!' But he was like that'.

Another comment (website)

6 days ago

"This is my first time here. I really enjoyed your way of teaching; time went by fast. It felt like 15 minutes rather than 42. ❤️❤️ The husband seemed embarrassed maybe. Personally, I feel this way when my husband does something in public; I don't like having other people's attention 🙄🙄🙄 I prefer to have this kind of celebration in private, but of course I wouldn't hurt my husband this way. Thanks teacher for this lovely story 🌹🌹🌹

Maybe there's more going on here than we realise, which is possible. Maybe the wife is actually the cruel one, although the writer gives no indication of it as far as I can tell. I think that if we come to this conclusion it's because we are adding something of

our own to this story and perhaps projecting ideas onto the story, but who knows.

Here are some more possibilities.

The single pink candle is significant and represents something. One or two listeners speculated that perhaps the man is actually gay, and this is the wife's way of telling him that she knows this.

@zzlx

8 days ago

Is there any chance that the author wanted to imply that the husband was gay? As the word gay was used, though with a different meaning.

No, I don't think so. The word "gay" had an entirely different meaning in the 1940s.

More interpretations

A website comment from Olaf

The birthday story was really great and gorgeous how you interpreted it, although your interpretation is absolutely wrong :- ) ( I hope you don't mind my saying so)

Did it ever occur to you that the man was not the mean one but the wife?

Here is what I think happened on this special day : Because there was a pink candle on the cake , just one conclusion seems to be logical ... The wife is pregnant and she wanted to announce it to her



husband on his birthday in that very restaurant. So, she placed one PINK candle on the cake and told the head waiter to bring it to the table.

Everything would have been fine if it wasn't for the fact that the husband is infertile and can't have children. So he knew instantly that his wife must be pregnant from another man. And that's the reason why the evening was messed up.

Luke, I hope you don't mind this little bit of fun. Just wanted to thank you for the great work you do and combine it ( or try to do so) with my own interpretation of the story.

CU soon in LepsterLand  
Best wishes from Germany  
Olaf

A response from Pierre

I don't think it has anything to do with the color of the candle, it's usually the responsibility of the restaurant. I read Olaf's comment and I think it doesn't hold water. A PINK candle on the cake, supposed to announce the arrival of a little girl. Well in the 1940s, the invention of ultrasound had not yet been discovered and the only way to know the sex of the baby was to wait 9 months. So I think he would have had time to notice his wife's pregnancy.

But I did judge the behaviour of the husband, which I shouldn't have done. We don't know the history of that couple. But hey, I followed the bias of the writer, with all the clues she left us against the husband... Ha! Ha! I release myself from all responsibility.

What's definite is that this marriage has problems and it would require a lot of patience, generosity, compromise and understanding to rescue it.

@user-ec7qv5su3q

12 days ago (edited)

This episode shows how different women's and the men's worlds are and how much work should be done to accept and understanding each other's perceptions of this world. We can see that they are much too different. These two haven't managed the apology, acceptance and understanding necessary for their happiness, and, probably, true love.

@nico\_niconi

2 days ago

I couldn't imagine myself in that kind of situation, but you're right, a lot of married couples feel alone because they can't express how they feel with their partner.

@xxxxneoxxxx

3 weeks ago

This story was heartbreaking. Also, you can really relate because all of us have either seen or probably even experienced something like this. Apart from good listening practice, it's a great writing model, too!

One listener was reminded of a real experience that was very similar

@Su-op3xb

3 weeks ago

The story reminds me of a situation, many years ago, when we spent 2 nights in a B&B in Dartmoor, on a small farm in the middle of nowhere. The hosts were a couple in their forties, a shy wife and a grumpy husband and while we were having breakfast we heard the husband reprimand his wife saying "I was just asking you a sensible question" and we heard the wife crying quietly. It was embarrassing for us and certainly for her and we were glad to leave the scene.



## 873. Luke takes the MBTI Personality Test

The aim in this episode was to go through this popular personality test, read out each question, give my answer, and discuss the validity of the test, and in the process highlight some of the descriptive language we use for describing personality traits, behaviour and ways of thinking. It was a way to teach you English



related to psychology, in what I hope was an interesting and personal way.

Actually I pretty much said what I had to say about this during the episode itself.

But here is just one comment which gives a pretty balanced view and seems to incorporate some of the various opinions I got from listeners. A lot of people essentially said that although the MBTI test is not really valid as a predictor of behaviour and might even give inaccurate readings of someone's personality, it can still be an enjoyable way to talk about and consider your own personality and behaviour.

**OsHa**

*4 days ago edited*

*Hi Luke! :) This was an interesting episode! I think that the 16 personalities website is very commercialised, but there are other free MBTI/Jung tests, such as similiar minds dot com, which must have existed for two decades(!) where I took the test a long time ago. If I retake those tests, or other tests (such as the one on 16 personalities) I always get the same result. ENFP, but I'm almost 50/50 on the extroversion/introversion scale (52/48 I guess). My husband is an INTJ, and we found this out maybe 15 years ago, and it has helped us understand each other as we are so different, yet complement each other, especially after having learned about our differences.*

[If you look more carefully at the results - including the specific percentages of your score in each category, it can be more revealing of your character and maybe taking the test again and

again will eventually result in an average or median score, which I suppose could be close to your real character - ish, although maybe I'm being a bit kind to the test here - a more unforgiving critic would say the test is just hogwash and that's that]

*I disagree that it's like astrology, because the ENFP description doesn't describe my husband at all, and the INTJ description doesn't describe me. Yet it gets more interesting when reading about Jung's functions which these types are based on, I think.*

[I wonder if this was tested in properly controlled conditions you would feel the same, because confirmation bias could definitely be involved here.]

*Yet I do agree that it is simplistic, and that there is more to people than these 16 types. The 7 bad "types" you described in the beginning of your episode aren't really personalities as much as personality disorders (sociopath, narcissist and so on).*

[But you have to agree there is a certain amount of flattery going on in these descriptions - to say someone is "unparalleled at managing people", that's just hyperbole]

*I think MBTI can be an OK tool for understanding yourself and your partner, but I don't think it should be used in the workplace. I also don't think people should be boxed into the types. And I do think we change. Even though I still type as an ENFP in my late thirties, I feel far more introverted than I did in my youth. I need a lot of time to myself, and I feel energised by spending time alone. Yet compared to my super introverted INTJ husband I need to interact more with the world around me.*

*As long as it's seen as an interesting and fun tool, I don't think there's anything wrong with the MBTI/Jung personality type inventory. And I do feel it's a bit unfair to compare it to astrology, which is complete nonsense to me.*

[Yes, fair enough 😊]

*That being said, I enjoyed this episode, and I hope you will do the big 5 some time as well ;)*

*- Hannah from Norway (I'm half English!)*

Thank you Hannah for your thoughtful and measured response to my episode. I appreciate that very much!

I was talking about the MBTI Personality Test episode and I think I can move on now. I am preparing a premium episode about vocabulary from that, and in that episode I'll also give some more comments including a message from Jiaqi whose comment I read out at the beginning of the episode.

She heard the episode and replied on my website, which was nice. You can hear that in the premium episode, plus get a nice reminder of a lot of the useful vocabulary that was involved in the episode.





## 874. Walk & Talk: PARIS

This was the first of what should become a series of episodes in which I walk around in my current home city of Paris and talk about a specific topic.

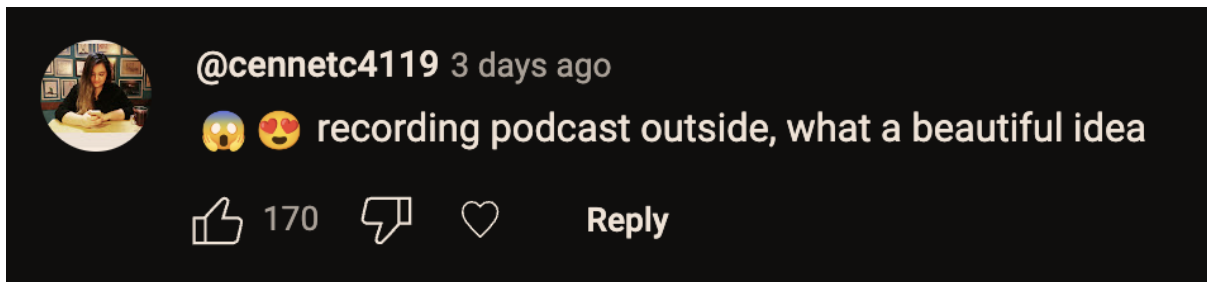
In this episode the topic was Paris itself, because of course Paris is a fantastic place that people are very interested in, and it's on my doorstep so I should definitely take advantage of that.

Also, I have been influenced by GeoWizard and his outdoor adventures and have noticed that there is something very compelling about following someone's first person perspective videos. It's like a computer game or something.

So I bought an action camera and a wireless microphone and recorded an outdoor episode. Not the first walk and talk episode I've done, but basically the first I have done with a camera.

It has proven to be a popular episode, particularly on YouTube which I suppose is not a surprise when you think about it.

Here is a summary of the main things people have said in response to this.



Other responses were along these lines...

**This is great. Please do more!**

I will, but not all the time - just occasionally and when possible.

**You don't need to be shy or self-conscious!**

I talked a lot about being self-conscious while filming myself outside, surrounded by strangers walking next to me or standing near me.

Really, I am not overly shy, but there is something quite awkward about doing that.

If you have never tried it, you might not know how embarrassing it can be - even though there is nothing wrong with it, and it's a free country and not a crime or anything. I generally like to keep a low profile when I am just walking around.

**How can someone who spends their time on stage doing comedy, doing videos on YouTube, teaching classes of adults - how can that person feel self-conscious or uncomfortable walking down the street talking into a camera (and if we take this a bit further) this is stupid and absurd what is the matter with you?**

I'll come on to that in a moment.

**Paris is beautiful.**

Yes, it is - especially in the areas I showed you, and especially when the weather is nice, like it was. I'd like to show you some of the more "realistic" sides of the city too - maybe I can take you on a walk through Chatelet

Station some time - Chatelet "Les Halles" or some areas which are less touristy but which I often find myself in.

**This is a great way to see the city.**

Yes, I should take advantage of all this stuff on my doorstep!

**The image quality is nice and smooth - how do you walk like that?**

It's not really my walking - it's the camera. It has very good image stabilisation - so the bouncing of my footsteps is smoothed out and there's no jerking or sudden movements - nice isn't it?

**You walk very fast**

Yes, I still walk at London speed and I was walking slowly while filming actually.

I'm normally about twice as fast as the people around me, who clearly want to take it easy and enjoy the journey. On the other hand, I just can't stand walking slowly and prefer to pace along at top speed.

**Luke can you tell us what camera you are using?**

*Insta360 Go3* - the one with the removable camera capsule.





The image stabilisation is fantastic. Image quality is great. It's all good. Battery life is the only downside - when the capsule is removed from the main body of the camera, it lasts for about 40minutes, so I have to regularly put it back into the body in order to recharge it a bit. So my recording time is limited, which is not a bad thing I suppose. Limitations can be good.

But if you were wondering why I was regularly changing the viewpoint (pointing it in front of me, pointing at my face) I was putting the camera capsule back into the main body at regular intervals in order to charge it up a bit. I also felt that I should still be in the video, talking to you - but then again, maybe you don't need to see my face (distorted by the camera, with my eyes squinting in the light) You would probably rather just see the views I am seeing. Perhaps I will get a harness so that I can strap the whole camera to myself, with the capsule in the camera body, and then not worry about battery life so much.

## **More listener comments coming in a moment**

The episode seems to have been a success (relatively speaking) but before I published it I was a bit anxious because I didn't know what people would think and I was sure I would get comments from people who are quite preoccupied by my appearance (the wind was blowing my hair around and the camera distorted my face a bit). I was sure I'd be getting a lot of comments that would irritate me while I was trying to think about other things.

I also thought that perhaps people would want something different from the episode - like more of a tour-guide experience, with lots of historical facts about all the things on my walk, but that wasn't really the idea of the episode.

But the episode got a way better response than I thought actually! That's great. I will do more, but not all the time. Like story episodes or Amber & Paul episodes, these Walk & Talk episodes will be a regular feature, but not all the time. It's good to know I have this option though - to record outside and to be mobile. However, this episode type has its drawbacks, which I will mention.

One thing I always want to ensure when I make my episodes is that they work equally well as audio and video episodes. You should be able to enjoy the audio version and video versions equally. Naturally I was a bit concerned that this wouldn't work so well for audio listeners, because I ended up referring to visual things. When I've done outdoor episodes before they've always been audio only and so I've known to paint a picture with words, but when you know there is a camera capturing what you can see, you subconsciously start to think of things in visual terms rather than aural terms - which probably affects the way I talk about them. But I think it's ok. I got enough responses from audio listeners who said that they enjoyed the episode, and I think it was much the same experience for them as it would be if I'd done it without a camera running, like I've done in the past

[205. Summer in London \(Part 1\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

[206. Summer in London \(Part 2\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

[358. Fête de la Musique / World Music Festival in Paris | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

[753. Visiting the Louvre Museum with Amber & Paul | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

[759. Life is what happens while you're busy making other plans | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

[793. Rambling Through the Streets of Paris at Night on a Bike \(with a VERY SPECIAL GUEST?\) | Luke's ENGLISH Podcast](#)

And they seemed pretty popular.

But having said that...

## **Background noise**

One or two audio commenters said they couldn't listen because of the noise, which is a big pity because I want to make sure the audio podcast is as good as possible. I really don't want to alienate audio listeners, because that is still the foundation of what I do.

So, I must make sure that those walk and talk episodes work both for audio and video viewers.

That episode was about Paris, so naturally I described things I could see but the original idea is to talk about something completely different (various topics), while walking or riding a bike. On the video you would be able to see my POV but I wouldn't be talking about the things in front of me - and therefore it would still work as an audio episode.

In fact - I could even record the audio and video separately and then put them together later, or I could record various walks/rides around town (with no mic) and then use them for visuals on the top of audio-only episodes.

Whatever I do, there will always be some people who find an issue with it, right? It's very frustrating.

The fact is - I will continue to try different things sometimes and will stay open to experimentation as long as it is convenient and eventually I will find a system that probably works best, even if it's not completely perfect.

Ideally I want the video and audio to match up, but I don't want the audio podcast to suffer in any way - I want the audio still to make sense.

Other quick thoughts

## **Safety**

A number of people raised their concerns, especially when riding the bike. I'll wear a helmet the next time I use a bike.

## **Crossing the street**



A few people pointed out that I crossed the street “in the wrong place” or “not at a crossing”. In Paris this is fine and normal. There’s no law against jaywalking, and the culture is that people generally will cross the street wherever they want. In some cultures this is not the done thing (did I mention that I used to live in Japan?), but in Paris it’s fine. There are pedestrian crossings with green man / red man and lights where cars (in theory) stop for pedestrians. There are also zebra crossings without lights, which cars generally ignore and in fact they seem to work like speed pads in Super Mario Kart - they actually make the cars go faster, haha (that joke is © Alexander Van Walsum from episode 391).

Actually, by law, pedestrians have the right of way here, so cars are legally obliged to stop for you wherever you are - so basically, if you’re walking on foot, in theory, you can just stride out into the road wherever and whenever you want, preferably while smoking a cigarette and wearing a trench coat, looking as cool and chic as possible, and if a car beeps at you you can just ignore it or you can say « Et la priorité !? » or « connard ! » .

So - basically, crossing the street when not at a crossing is fine, as long as you’re looking both ways and paying attention.

### **Show us some other interesting places in Paris**

I should ask Amber to join me, and then she can give us some real insights and history as she is a registered tour-guide here.

### **Do this with other people**

Yes, that’s a nice idea, especially with Amber or maybe Oliver Gee who also knows quite a lot about the city now.

### **Luke - don’t worry about feeling embarrassed and self-conscious!**

So many people said this, probably because I made quite a fuss about feeling awkward walking around with a selfie stick and camera pointing at my face.

I would just say that it’s easier said than done. In reality, when you’re actually in a crowded area, it does suddenly feel very obvious and quite attention grabbing to do that. I thought I’d be less self-conscious. And I even pretended to speak on the phone - which a lot of people found amusing, and

some people found ridiculous and they couldn't help telling me how absurd it was that I was doing that, which seemed a bit humourless and perhaps even insensitive as a thing to point out. Anyway, the point is that, ok, I shouldn't be concerned by what people think and should just carry on without worrying. I think I will get used to it. I'm not even that shy you know - I teach, do a podcast, do stand-up on stage and I'm ok, but I think vlogging like that is new to me and so it felt strange. I will get used to it and won't worry about it, ok everyone. Thanks for your encouragement!

### **Use headphones or air-pods and people will assume you're on the phone - no need to hold the phone to your ear**

Yes, good point. I've done this trick before when doing audio episodes while walking in London and Paris. I'll remember to do it again. The camera on the end of a selfie stick pointed at my face might give the game away.



### **It's difficult to follow because of background noise.**

### **I couldn't listen to this because the noise was too distracting and made me feel weird.**

This affects some people more than others and it's not always because of English. Some people just get a bit disoriented by atmospheric sounds, including the noises of the street, cars, busses, pedestrians etc. So, if that is you - and it made you feel a

bit dizzy or uncomfortable - then I'm afraid these episodes might not be for you, but that's ok because I'll only be doing them sometimes.

For other people it's the opposite - the atmospheric sounds create an immersive feeling of being in a real, living situation and it all makes it more exciting and interesting to listen to.

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## **END OF AUDIO**

**This is where I had to stop recording the episode. The audio stops here.**

**But you can keep reading my episode notes/transcript below.**

**This is the stuff I didn't have time to say in the episode. 🙌**

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## **The notes/transcript continue (without audio)...**

For most people I would say that it is actually still very important to practise listening to English in less than perfect conditions - with background noise, natural sounds going on. In the real world you rarely get the luxury of perfect studio silence while you are talking and listening to people. There's almost always some kind of noise to make things tricky - background sounds, other people talking, street noise, a bad signal on the telephone, a dodgy connection or someone on a Zoom call with a terrible microphone. These

conditions are the reality of every day communication and you should be prepared for them!

So, although for the most part I want to give you audio which is clear, clean, fully audible and free from irritating background sounds, I also think it is important to give you audio that reflects the real situations in which you will be using English. Again - variety is important.

The same is true, by the way, for subtitles. I understand why you want to read subtitles or read every single word of my podcast transcribed, and I understand the value of that. It can help you notice vocab, connect the written and spoken words, confirm what you are actually hearing and so on, but watch out because again, in the real world there are no subtitles and you need to be prepared for that. When you listen and read subtitles you are not really developing and practising your listening skills, you are doing a lot of reading. So, listen without subtitles - you don't need them as much as you think, and it's ultimately very good practise to learn to survive without them. Your true listening skills will develop properly and when you have to listen without the aid of subtitles, you will be stronger and better.

It depends on your purpose for using my content, but if you want to improve your listening skills, spend time listening without the aid of subtitles - or at least check the subtitles / transcript later on to check that you understood what you thought you understood.

So anyway, the Walk & Talk episode was very well received and I will do more of that kind of thing in the future, in various ways. I might even just sit in a quiet outside spot and record my podcast, rather than being in my pod room every time. I can record anywhere after all. I just have to make sure it's a safe, convenient



and not too crowded area. Watch this space for more similar episodes in the future.

875. Aepyornis Island by HG Wells 🌴🥚 (Learn English with a Short Story)

This was the longest episode to-date and I expected that some people would have instantly conclude that it was too long, but actually I haven't received many comments like that - just one or two. The episode is performing very well and for the most part the comments are really positive.

Some people have said that they listened to the episode over a few days, which is great. This is what I was thinking - no need to listen in one single go. You can stop and come back to the episode and your podcast app or YouTube will remember where you stopped.

Let me just give a few comments (again) about my rationale for doing these story episodes, and how this one ended up being so long.

As I've mentioned before, there are various ways to do a story episode.

1. Just read it from start to finish without explaining or summarising
2. Read it in sections and stop to summarise as I go (like the Sherlock Holmes one and the Christmas Carol one)
3. Read the whole thing in one go and then summarise, and then go through it again and explain vocabulary (this is

normally what I do when the episode is much shorter - The Mountain, Doppleganger, The Invitation, The Birthday Party)

For this one, I took the third approach. I wanted to let the story breathe and wanted you to be able to enjoy it without interruption, but also explain all the details in case you missed things but because it was a 5000 word story, this ended up taking over 3 hours. I didn't know it would be that long, but that's what happened. People who just want the story can just listen to the first 40 minutes and can skip the rest if they want, but of course they will not realise that and might just skip the entire episode because it feels too long.

Perhaps I should have just published the story + summary (about an hour or so) and then published the vocabulary explanations as a separate episode (premium). Actually, I should have done that, shouldn't I? (You live and learn)

But it's all swings and roundabouts, which basically means there are different options and you can do things in different ways but ultimately it all ends up being the same end result and you what you gain in one area you lose in another, and what you lose in one area you gain in another, and so on.

There's no perfect way to do this. If I had just published the story without vocabulary explanations, it would have been shorter, but I would have had people saying "It would be better if you'd explained the vocabulary" and if I'd paused the story to summarise it at regular intervals, some people would have said "The summaries interrupt the flow of the story!", and yet publishing it without regular summaries people have said they couldn't keep up, and so on.

## Swings and roundabouts.

By the way, this is what Copilot says about the phrase:

The phrase “swings and roundabouts” has an interesting origin. It hails from the fairground, where it was commonly used by carnival workers. The full saying is: “What you lose on the swings, you gain on the roundabouts.”

Here’s the backstory: Imagine a fairground with both swings (those delightful seats that sway back and forth) and roundabouts (those spinning platforms). Fairground owners would sell tickets for both attractions. Sometimes, they’d make a profit on the swings, but perhaps not as much as they’d hoped. However, the roundabouts would compensate by bringing in more revenue.

In essence, the phrase conveys the idea that gains and losses balance out. If you’re feeling a bit down about one aspect of life, remember that there might be something positive waiting around the corner—just like the swings and roundabouts at the fair! 🎡🎠

So, next time you encounter a situation with ups and downs, you can say, "Well, it's all swings and roundabouts!".

Back to Aepyornis Island.

I actually think this works best as an audio episode. With the video version you can see me reading the story, and you can see the text on the screen, but personally I think the best way to experience this is to just listen to the audio version and let your imagination get carried away by the story.

You could even close your eyes while you listen and I honestly think it will help to bring it to life. I reviewed the video version while editing it, and then listened to part of the audio version while walking home from work, and it was surprisingly better with just the audio version. So that's my recommendation.

And there is a lot of vocabulary you can learn from the episode. Listen to the rest of it and consider downloading the PDF to follow along, and perhaps to keep a written record of the vocabulary that comes up. Take your time, go at your own pace. No need to listen all in one go as I always say.

I've got a premium episode in the pipeline about that vocabulary too - another express one.

## **Upcoming episodes?**

Well, I don't like to give away too many details of what's coming next because I enjoy having the element of surprise, and because things often change and I sometimes can't publish something I have said I'd publish, or I end up not recording something, so it's better not to make any promises.

But I will say that I have more conversation episodes in the pipeline (they come in waves) including stories of learning English successfully, an interview with an expert on communication which is full of really useful practical advice and I'm hoping to do another music episode with James, and I just have loads of other episodes in the pipeline in various states of preparation, including stories, rambles and other assorted interesting bits and pieces.



I am also planning more walk & talk episodes, on various topics, but also I will try to incorporate some guests on my walks as well. I saw Amber & Paul just a few days ago and they are both really up for doing a walk & talk with me - maybe a visit to an interesting cultural spot, or just a walk through certain parts of the city.

**This is the end of the PDF. Thank you for  
continuing to read this far!**

**You just read about 8384 words in English.**

