



## 908. Bits & Bobs / Questions of English (Part 2) *Listener Comments*

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**Have you heard part 1 of this series?**

This is where I am going through various bits and pieces (or “bits and bobs” as we say in UK English) which I have saved over the years for episodes of this podcast.

These bits and bobs include various questions of English and other things which should be of interest to you, my audience of learners of English around the world.

In part 2 here we are going to focus on various listener comments and questions which I have received over the years, relating to various episodes from the archives of LEP.

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**The following bits of listener correspondence have been sitting in a Google Drive folder for years.**

I discovered them recently and decided, finally, to talk about them on the podcast.

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## Getting a TEFL Certificate

Dear Luke,

I'm one of the listeners who stay in the shadows. In fact, I've been starting the day with your effective voice since I came across your podcast, which was 2 months ago.

Thanks from the bottom of my heart for every single word you save for us.

I'm an English language teacher and I work at a secondary school.

However, I'm not happy with the country I live in, so I'm planning to work abroad. I need your help with TEFL certifications. I'm sure I have to get one in order to teach English abroad, but which is the best certificate and where can I start?

As a location, Europe is the most convenient one. But which country and which institution? Any idea about cheaper courses which are still good?

Hope you can reply.

best wishes

Zuhal

**Luke**

There are various TEFL qualifications out there, but the industry-standard entry-level teaching qualifications are the CELTA (run by Cambridge) and the CertTESOL (run by Trinity College London).

## Details

Cambridge Certificate in English Language Teaching to Adults 🖱️

<https://www.cambridgeenglish.org/teaching-english/teaching-qualifications/celta/>

The Trinity Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages 🖱️

<https://www.trinitycollege.com/qualifications/teaching-english/CertTESOL>

I did the CELTA and I think it is a bit more widely recognised than CertTESOL, so I'll talk about that.

First of all, you should find out about it on the Cambridge website (link above).

To get the certification you need to do a course, which includes assessment. You get training and also if you are successful you get the teaching qualification at the end.

You can do it online or in person.


If you want to do it in-person, there are various teaching centres around the world where you can take the course and the assessment.

(read from the Cambridge CELTA page - link above)

It's for native or non-native speakers (they don't use these terms on their website).

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## A voice message from Kazakhstan

 New Recording 16.m4a

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### /r/ sounds in English

#### Linking /r/ sounds

#### Intrusive /r/ sounds

Name: Rafael

Message: Hi,

I'm a listener from Spain. I've heard your episode about tricky pronunciation issues, and here's one I often wonder about:

some British people (you included, I think) pronounce an "r" after some words ending with "a" when the next word starts with a vowel; for example:

"China(r) is facing a difficult situation nowadays".

Could you expand on that? Is it a particular accent?

Best,  
Rafael

## **Luke**

Actually, I deal with this topic in some detail in a recent premium series → P63 part 2, including other forms of connected speech. Check it out!

But I will now talk about “Intrusive /r/ sounds” and “linking /r/ sounds”.

## **Intrusive /r/**

What Rafael is talking about is known as the "intrusive R" or "linking R."

This occurs in some varieties of British English, particularly in non-rhotic accents (most of them), especially Received Pronunciation (RP).

## **Non-Rhotic Accents**

In non-rhotic accents, the /r/ sound is typically not pronounced at the end of words unless it is followed by a vowel sound.

For example, in RP, "car" would be pronounced as /kɑː/ without the final "r" sound.

Here are some other examples of when /r/ is not pronounced in words.

Basically it's when the sound is at the end of the word, or in the middle and it's followed by a consonant sound.

**At the end of words (when the /r/ is not followed by a vowel)**

- **car** /kɑ:/
- **teacher** /'ti:tʃə/
- **far** /fɑ:/
- **mother** /'mʌðə/
- **father** /'fɑ:ðə/
- **near** /nɪə/
- **power** /'paʊə/
- **hear** /hɪə/

**In the middle of words (when /r/ is followed by a consonant sound)**

- **cart** /kɑ:t/
- **card** /kɑ:d/
- **hard** /hɑ:d/
- **form** /fɔ:m/
- **horse** /hɔ:s/
- **market** /'mɑ:kɪt/
- **first** /fɜ:st/
- **born** /bɔ:n/
- **start** /stɑ:t/
- **fork** /fɔ:k/
- **park** /pɑ:k/
- **word** /wɜ:d/

## Linking R

Linking R occurs when a word that ends with an "r" in the spelling (and is followed by a vowel sound in the next word) actually includes the "r" in pronunciation.

For instance:

"The car is red" would be pronounced as /ðə kɑ:r ɪz rɛd/.

- **car engine** /kɑ:r 'ɛndʒɪn/
- **far away** /fɑ:r ə'weɪ/
- **near a lake** /nɪər ə leɪk/
- **her arm** /hə 'rɑ:m/
- **for example** /fə rɪg'zɑ:mpəl/
- **there is** /ðeə rɪz/
- **over it** /'əʊvə rɪt/
- **better off** /'betə rɒf/
- **after all** /'ɑ:ftə rɔ:l/
- **your idea** /jɔ:r aɪ'dɪə/
- **here it is** /hɪər ɪt ɪz/

Try repeating these sentences after me.

- *The **car engine** wouldn't start, and we were stranded **far away** from home.*
- *We stopped **near a lake** to rest after the long drive.*
- *She raised **her arm** to point at the mountains in the distance.*
- ***For example, there is** a park you can visit nearby.*
- *He threw the blanket **over it** and said we were **better off** staying inside.*
- ***After all, your idea** of leaving early was a good one.*

- Look, **here it is!** I found the missing key.

### Intrusive R

Intrusive R is similar to linking R but occurs even in words that do not end in "r" in their spelling. It typically happens when a word ends in a vowel sound, and the next word begins with a vowel sound. For example:

"China is" might be pronounced as "China(r) is" (/ˈtʃaɪnə r ɪz/).

"China is a very big country."

This intrusive R makes the transition between the two vowel sounds smoother and more fluent. It is particularly common in RP and other Southern British English accents.

- **law and order** /lɔːr ənd ɔːdə/
- **India and China** /ˈɪndiə r ən ˈtʃaɪnə/
- **the idea of it** /ði aɪˈdɪə r ɪv/
- **media event** /ˈmiːdiə r ɪˈvɛnt/
- **soda and ice** /ˈsəʊdə r ən aɪs/
- **saw it** /sɔː r ɪt/
- **data analysis** /ˈdeɪtə r əˈnælɪsɪs/

Try repeating these sentences after me.

- *The **idea of** traveling next year sounds amazing.*
- *The new government promised to restore **law and order** in the city.*
- ***India and China** have a long history of trade relations.*
- *I love **the idea of it**, but I'm not sure how practical it is.*
- *The election debate turned into a huge **media event**.*



- *Could you get me some **soda and ice**, please?*
  - *I **saw it** happen right in front of me.*
  - *The team is working on the **data analysis** for the report.*
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## A “fly on the wall” at LEP HQ

### [847. RANDOM TOPIC GENERATOR \(A 1-Hour Rambling Episode\)](#)

Luke from Poland  
(recently)

One day, before going to bed, I decided to listen to one of the episodes of Luke's English podcast - Random Topic Generator.

I listened to the podcast for about a dozen minutes. At one point I found myself sort of high up on a wall in a dark room.

Down there I noticed a large bed and two people lying under the covers. The faces were very blurred because my field of vision was divided into many octagons.

Then I heard a voice. "My bed is the place where I feel most relaxed." I realised I was a small insect - a fly or a mosquito - and I was in the bedroom of the famous Luke from Luke's English Podcast.

I was very excited to hear his voice live and made a low buzzing sound. That was enough for Luke to notice me.

He immediately jumped out of bed, grabbed a fly swatter and started chasing me.

I was shocked. My favourite podcaster was probably trying to kill me. What could I do?

At the last moment I escaped and sat down on the edge of a small table. Luke spotted me immediately. My only chance was an open window. I threw myself in that direction.

Luke swung his paw in my direction and the force of the air made me lose my balance and fall to the floor.

Luke came towards me, lifted his foot and tried to step on me. I thought - it's over - I'm going to die miserably here trying to learn some Real British English.

Then I woke up and heard Luke's familiar voice in my headphones. Thankfully it was just a dream. Now I know what they say about wanting to be a fly on the wall - I don't think I want it :-)

From [dictionary.cambridge.org](https://dictionary.cambridge.org) 🙌

To be a **fly on the wall**

*idiom*

If you say that *you would like to be a fly on the wall*, you mean that you would like to hear what will be said or see what will happen while not being noticed:

*I'd love to be a fly on the wall when those two get home!*

Think twice about wanting to be a fly on the wall in my home! I will hunt you down, I will find you, and I will kill you.



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## Singular “They”

Hi Luke,

My name is Marcos and I'm from Spain and a LEPster. I've written to you on one occasion, but I suppose you don't remember it (all too normal, truth be said).

Today I write to you in order to ask you if you have made an episode on the "singular they".

I've started my professional career recently and I've already had to write an email in English to a designer in the UK.

Given that I'm a programmer and that I have to write about users, I don't want to be always writing "the user can do X, but if he or she...".

This way, I prefer using the "singular they", but I'm not sure if I'm using it well, because I was never taught it and only have seen it in literature.

If you haven't recorded an episode about this matter, would you be so kind as to mention something about it in a future podcast?

Even if it's in a Premium episode, given that I'm surely going to be one of the "Premium Ninjas" ;).

Thanks in advance and cheers,

Marcos García

### **Singular "They"**

When you are talking about one person, but you don't know if the person is male or female, then we use "they" and it has plural grammar.

## **Gender Neutrality**

Of course some people prefer to be referred to as “they” because they don’t identify as either male or female.

Normally in this situation the person will state that their preferred pronouns are “they/them”. This is fairly new.

## **Singular “they” is very old**

Using “they” as a gender neutral pronoun is relatively new, but for hundreds of years, “they/them” has been used as the personal pronoun when we are talking about one person, but it’s not clear if the person is male or female.

Let’s look at a load of examples.

Here’s one from Kate Billington in her short British Council “mini-English lesson” video about this subject.

*“A good boss explains what he wants so his employees can understand him.”*

This makes it sound like bosses are always men, which isn’t true.

*“A good boss explains what they want, so their employees can understand them.”*

Kate Billington explains it in a British Council Mini-English Lesson  
 He, she ... or they? Pronouns in English - a Mini English Lesson

They/them still takes ‘plural’ grammar.

They are  
They want  
Etc

Even if this feels strange when referring to one person, this is correct and normal.

Let's see an example following what Marcos mentioned - giving instructions on how users can use an online service.

This is a step by step guide for how to sign up to LEP Premium, but it is written in the 3rd person.

**“How can a user sign up to LEP Premium?”**

Just as Marcos mentioned, we don't want to state if the user is male or female, because it could be either, so instead of using “he/him/his” throughout, we use “they/them/their”.

I'm providing this example to demonstrate this and show how natural and normal it is.

**How to sign up to LEP Premium - a step-by-step guide for users**

First, the user should open their browser and go to [teacherluke.co.uk](http://teacherluke.co.uk).

Then they click on PREMIUM and several options will be available.

The user can choose the tier that best suits them.

Then they have to create an acast+ account.

Once they have done this, and have entered their payment details, they can confirm the subscription.

When this is done the user will have access to all the premium episodes, but they should add the subscription to a podcast app on their phone.

They can do this by either scanning the QR code with their phone, or by signing into their acast+ account on their phone and choosing “Add show to app”.

Then they follow the steps to add LEP Premium to their favourite podcast app on their phone.

The user will now see a new list of episodes which includes all the premium ones.

Free episodes will have ads removed too.

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## ***Antique and vintage***

Name: Jun Horiuchi

Message: Hello! This is Jun from Tokyo. Thank you for uploading nice podcasts. I have a question.

What is the difference between "antique" and "vintage". Please let me know! Thank you!!

Jun

**Antique:** Items at least 100 years old, often valuable due to their rarity, craftsmanship, and historical importance.

- A table made in 1850 would be considered antique.
- Furniture from the 19th century or older - very valuable, and possibly even kept in a museum.

**Vintage:** Items typically between 20 and 100 years old, valued for their style and cultural significance, often associated with a specific era.

- A dress from the 1970s would be considered vintage.
- Vintage clothing shops sell old jeans, t-shirts, shirts, jackets, sunglasses etc.

When I was a teenager, I bought all my vintage clothes from the indoor market in Birmingham, and a lot of it was from the 70s and 80s. These days, vintage clothing shops sell a lot of stuff from the 90s!

- A vintage car would be something like an 80s VW Golf, or a Jaguar from the 1960s.
- A vintage guitar could be a Fender Stratocaster from the 1970s.

**Value:**

- **Antiques** are usually more valuable than vintage items because they are so rare, historical significant, or because of the quality of materials or craftsmanship. Antiques are often collectibles, and their value may increase with age.



**Quality:**

- Antique items are often associated with high-quality craftsmanship, perhaps hand made and designed by a historically significant maker. Antiques might be fragile and delicate, and might not be used in everyday life.
- Vintage items could be mass produced (like vintage toys or musical instruments) and would probably still be useable today. I have a vintage original 1989 Game Boy which still works, and some other vintage Nintendo stuff including an original “Game & Watch”.

**Historical & cultural significance:**

- Antique items are often associated with specific historical periods (Victorian, Georgian) and they are sold at auction or private sales.
- Vintage items are more associated with pop culture and can often be bought in markets, specialist shops or online.

**So are these things vintage or antique?**

The Chippendale Commode which Boggis discovers in an old farmhouse in the story “Parson’s Pleasure”. Boggis is shocked to discover this extremely valuable item of furniture, and tricks the owners into selling it to him for an unfairly low price.

A friend of mine makes his living from dealing cars from the 50s, 60s and 70s. He finds the cars, repairs them, displays them at conventions and drives them in the French countryside as part of special weekend events. He sells them to private buyers who want to have a cool old car in their collection. In the past he’s shown me

awesome 70s Porches and plenty of very nice British cars including Triumphs and Jaguars, which are his favourites.

My wife has a pair of Ray-Ban sunglasses which her dad bought in the 80s. They're much nicer than the ones you can buy today.

I like metallic Casio digital watches with simple minimal design. They're the same as the models made during the 80s, when digital watches first became available.

Go to any town in the UK and you'll probably find shops which sell old, dark furniture and decorations from the Victorian era and beyond. The items are very valuable and can be extremely expensive. Sometimes these shops are owned by auction houses, who will tell you where and when the item is going to be auctioned off. If you're interested, you can enter the bidding.

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## **See - saw - seen**

Dear Luke,

I am a long-standing follower of your podcast, I greatly appreciate the works you have done, they are beneficial meanwhile entertaining.

Today I really need your help here, there is a question has been perplexing me for a long time, I have always come across a phrase involving "See(saw)" which I guess probably the meaning is about happening or witnessing.

For example, Today when I was reading the news, it said "More heavy rain could see water levels rise and threaten the air pocket where the group has taken refuge."

**Rescuers will take no risks in freeing the 12 boys and their football coach trapped in a flooded cave in Thailand, an official said.**

They have received their first food and medical treatment in 10 days.

Seven divers, including a doctor and a nurse, joined the group inside the caves in the north of the country after they were discovered alive on Monday.

Rescuers are now considering how best to bring the group to safety.

"We will not rush to take the lads out of the cave," the governor of Chiang Rai, Narongsak Osoththanakorn, told reporters, adding: "Whoever has zero risk first can leave the cave first."

- How will the boys cope underground?
- What are the rescue options?

**More heavy rain could see water levels rise and threaten the air pocket where the group has taken refuge.**

The boys were found nine days after they entered the caves in Chiang Rai province following a football training session and became trapped by rising waters from heavy rainfall.

On Tuesday, Thai officials told reporters that rescuers were providing health checks and treatment, and keeping the boys entertained, adding that none of those trapped were in a serious condition.

"They have been fed with easy-to-digest, high-energy food with vitamins and minerals, under the supervision of a doctor," Rear Admiral Apagorn Youkonggaew, head of the Thai navy's special forces, told reporters.

There was a lot of this kind of use of the word "see", (I cannot find an example here, but they are always put together with day or history, such as

"Yesterday saw a..." or "History saw...".,

I cannot recall them exactly) therefore, I think a detailed explanation would be more than helpful.

Thank you and I will keep following your podcast till you quit the job ;)

Yours sincerely  
Yanzhu Zhang

Sent from my iPhone

Yes, here the word “saw” (past of see) does not refer to seeing things with your eyes. Instead it’s a way of referring to things which happen, and expresses a sense that within the context of one thing, something else happens, perhaps as a consequence.

### Examples

1. *The pandemic **saw** a surge in online shopping as people stayed at home to avoid the virus.*

Within the context of the pandemic, there was a surge in online shopping.

If you like you can consider it like this. Within the context of the first event, we “witness” or “see” the other thing happening, but we say that the first event “sees” or “saw” the second event.

2. *New law **sees** decrease in crime rates in major cities.*

This is from a newspaper headline, hence the reduced

grammar.

The new law has created a context in which crime rates have decreased.

3. *The economic downturn **saw** many businesses closing their doors for good.*

The economic downturn is the context, and this has caused many businesses to close their doors for good. (permanently)

4. *The success of the movie **saw** the lead actor become a household name.*

After having big success in a movie, the lead actor became a household name.

5. *Implementation of new safety regulations **sees** a decrease in workplace accidents.*

The new regulations caused a decrease in workplace accidents.

**End of part 2! Thanks for listening!**

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