



RAMBLEMANIA 3+ Hours of English Listening & Learning with Luke [976]

Coming up in this episode → Some responses to recent episodes, listener comments, stories & other ramblings, including:

- Learning English with TV and Radio
- All fingers and thumbs
- How I became a taxi driver on the streets of Paris
- What happened to my face? And other comments about my appearance
- How to speak English like Yoda (The Grammar of Yoda)
- Are you aware of the existence of my other podcast?
- What books do I have on my shelf behind me?
- LEPster haikus

All of that in one episode. Feel free to listen to this in stages. If you get to the end you'll get a special certificate from me and 100 bonus points.

PDF notes available - link in the description.

Like & Subscribe. Let's go.

Using TV and Radio series for learning English

Here is a comment thread about using BBC Radio or TV series for learning English.

@KkKk-t2c7d

Hi Luke, is BBC Radio 4 good for daily English listening?

@LukesEnglishPodcast

Yes

That's not the end of the conversation by the way.

I should just point out here that there are various BBC Radio stations that you can listen to.

Do you ever listen to BBC Radio?

Do you know how to listen to it?

You can listen to them on the BBC website but the best way is via the app BBC Sounds, which is an app you can download on your phone.



That's where you can find all the BBC Radio stations and listen to them - there are various stations - not just for music, but also for talking.

You can also listen to all the BBC Radio stations on the BBC website.

All BBC radio stations  <https://www.bbc.com/audio/stations>



Radio 4 is one of the stations on which you can mostly hear people talking - quite high level stuff - a news report every hour but also discussion about the news and current affairs, documentaries, interviews, factual content and more.

KkKk is asking whether Radio 4 is good for daily English listening.

My quick reply is simply yes.

But KkKk is wondering if the English you can hear on Radio 4 is the kind of normal English people use every day.

@KkKk-t2c7d

@LukesEnglishPodcast I watched your episode “Stand-Up Comedy / How BBC News Reporters Speak.”

@KkKk-t2c7d continues... In the episode, you said that learners should not follow BBC News because news presenters do not speak like normal people, and if someone copies their way of speaking, it can sound strange.

Luke: To be fair, that's not a podcast episode but a bit of stand-up comedy and the main aim of it is to just make people laugh, rather than make a very serious point about learning English with the BBC, although I do sort of believe it.

The English you hear in the news is not exactly the same English you hear from people in everyday conversations, or conversations at work.

► Luke Thompson Stand-Up Comedy / How BBC News reporters sp...
https://youtu.be/IbZVfz0tv_I?si=dU4qBd-36OKRzoV3

@KkKk-t2c7d continues...

So my question is:

Do people on BBC Radio 4 also speak in an unnatural or unusual way, different from how British people speak in everyday life?

I ask because, even though their speech is very clear to me, I am not sure if it reflects real daily British English.

Luke: We will continue the comment thread in a moment, and I will answer the question as best I can.

KkKk makes a very good point and asks a good question.

- What are the various BBC radio stations and how can you listen to them?
- What different kinds of speech can you hear on the BBC?
- Does BBC radio represent the kinds of English you will hear from British people in everyday situations?
- What radio stations should you or could you listen to?
- Why would you want to do this when you have Luke's English Podcast? (just kidding)

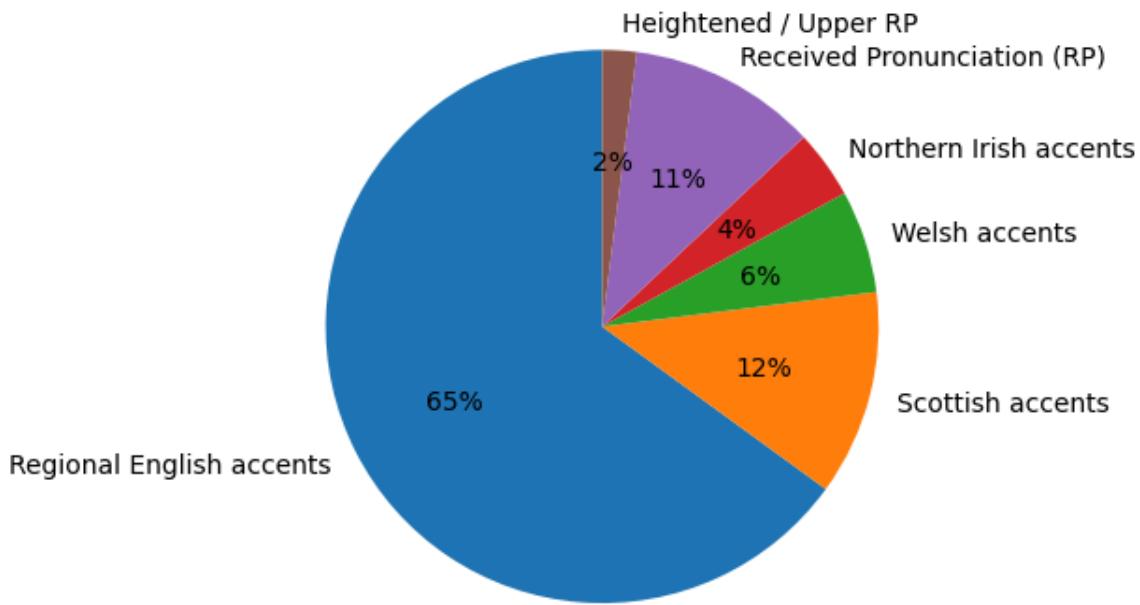
Back to KkKk's question...

Do people on BBC Radio 4 speak in an unnatural or unusual way, different from how British people speak in everyday life?

@LukesEnglishPodcast

Well most people on BBC4 speak RP and not everyone speaks like that. (accent)

Approximate Distribution of Accents in the UK



Note: The numbers here are estimates based on various sources, but not official census data.

Internationally, it seems that most non British people are familiar with RP as the standard form of English pronunciation - this is what people hear in most language learning materials, coursebooks, pronunciation guides etc, and as a result people find the different regional accents to be more difficult to understand probably because they are less familiar.

But on BBC Radio 4, most people speak RP because this is that kind of middle or upper-middle class English that we associate with the world of news, serious media broadcasting, formal English, university educated people, the world of politics etc.

You are more likely to hear that kind of everyday English on other channels, like maybe Radio 5 Live (more chatty, conversational, more informal, a lot of conversation about sports and current affairs) Radio 1 (young pop music), Radio 2 (pop music for a more middle aged audience) and Radio 6 (alternative music).

But going back to Radio 4 - it is mostly RP, but I think this is fine.

I mean, even though only about 10% people in the UK speak with RP, there is no one single accent that dominates. I think any accent is only going to have up to 10% of the share of the chart.

E.g. a Lancashire accent (from the Greater Manchester area for example) might take up less than 10% of the entire UK population.

So you might as well pick RP as the accent that you listen to and copy. Why not? It's up to you of course, but it makes sense to listen to RP.

Actually, the best thing is to try to hear all different accents and not be too narrow in what you listen to. I always try to bring guests on my show in order to expand the range of accents you can hear in my episodes, and I must continue to do that.

But, going back to my comment “YES” Radio 4 is good for daily listening practice. You do get news reports there every hour and the way they speak is a bit particular, but there are various different types of programme on Radio 4. It’s not all news.

Some of those programmes do involve quite specific or “unnatural” modes of speaking (e.g. the news reports, or perhaps politicians making speeches, or interviews with politicians that sound like the way people talk in the world of business) but a lot of programmes on R4 are more conversational and therefore reflect natural speech patterns.

My final point about radio stations and accents is this. You should explore the different radio stations, listen to them all, see which ones you like and ultimately listen to what you enjoy. There is no one single universal best radio station, because different things will appeal to different people.

But you should listen to *something* and you should listen to *something involving people speaking in English* and ideally you should listen to a *variety of accents* but ultimately - *listen to something that you actually enjoy listening to* so that you actually do it.

But also - *just listen to Luke's English Podcast*. I've got you covered.

Now we switch our attention to TV series.

Understandably you might want to watch British TV series to improve your English, but just like finding the right radio station, finding the right TV series can be difficult, especially if you are looking for that elusive “best show for learning English” which might actually not exist.

@KkKk-t2c7d

9 minutes ago

@LukesEnglishPodcast I watched The Office (UK), and I found it very unclear. It made me feel that the British accent is hard to understand.

Then I watched Friends, and it was very clear to me. Because of that, I thought the American accent is clearer.

However, I also watched Downton Abbey and The Crown, and their accents were the clearest for me — even clearer than Friends.

So my questions are:

Why is there such a big difference between the accent in The Office (UK) and the accents in Downton Abbey and The Crown?

And in daily life, do British people speak more like Downton Abbey and The Crown, or would I sound strange if I spoke like that — similar to the issue with BBC news presenters?

@LukesEnglishPodcast

3 minutes ago

@KkKk-t2c7d Most people speak like they do in The Office I'm afraid.

Downton and The Crown are about the most privileged elites in the country (and mostly set in the past - over 100 years ago in the case of Downton) and even super posh people today don't speak exactly like that, they also speak quickly.

There is also a stylistic difference between the shows which is important.

The Office is supposed to be a very naturalistic documentary and is filmed as though we are quietly observing people, sometimes from across the room. As a result, the dialogue is unclear.

The Crown and Downton on the other hand are filmed traditionally and the dialogue is much louder and clearer.

So, even though most people speak like they do in The Office, it is not just the accents that make it difficult for you - it is the sound design of the show, the way it is scripted, the way the script is delivered and the way the show is directed - the style of the show might make it hard to understand.

There isn't really such a thing as *The British Accent* - there are many different ones. You might watch Downton Abbey and understand it and think "The British accent is easy" but then watch "The Office" and think "Oh the British accent is difficult". The fact is, these are different accents, and also different styles of TV show.

Listen to these two samples and compare the difference.

They are both British, but have different accents and different styles of TV show.

The Office

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IkYUDQCYGHA>

This is supposed to be highly realistic and so things are sometimes unclear.

The director is trying to make it seem like we are observing the scene from distance.

The camera is often far from what is happening and moving around.

The dialogue is not clearly spoken and is usually mumbled - reflecting real life office interactions. It is supposed to look like you are sitting at one of the desks in the office, observing what is happening on the other side of the room and eavesdropping.

Also, the humour is not clearly signalled. It is subtle. It's about reading between the lines.

I have said before actually that the UK Office is not a comedy, but a tragedy and it should be watched like that.

If you expect something like Friends - full of bright saturated colours, beautiful people with clearly defined personalities and obviously hilarious situations, very obvious points of laughter and good teeth, The Office is not for you.

The characters speak with modern everyday English accents - speaking spontaneously in a group, so they have to be quick. I think some of this was improvised too.

So, it's not difficult because it's British, but because of other reasons. For learners of English - this can be a very difficult show to understand.

Downton Abbey

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sAnsGZCahlU>

This is also British but everything is much clearer. It's all scripted. The characters give each other time, the camera is static (not moving too much).

Things move more slowly. It's old fashioned English - they speak louder, and clearer in heightened RP (which hardly anyone speaks these days - although RP is similar).

For learners of English this is much easier to follow, but probably not a very accurate reflection of how most people speak today.

Friends

This is modern everyday American English, but again it's not supposed to be very realistic.

The characters say their lines quite quickly but really clearly. There is pausing for laughter. There's a laughter track which signals where the funny things are. Generally the comedy is much more obvious and easier to follow. It's still a good show - very good writing and performances by the actors.

This isn't because it's American, it's because of the style of the show.

The American version of The Office is somewhere between Friends and the UK version of The Office in terms of style.

Podcasts are the best though, aren't they?

I still think radio or podcasts are better than TV or films for learning English, but everyone has different tastes and some people just prefer watching Netflix than listening to a podcast.

The visual element of a TV series can be an advantage because it gives you context and people just enjoy looking at moving images don't they, but it can also be a disadvantage because in my experience the dialogue (speaking) in TV series and films is often more difficult to hear and therefore understand, because shows prioritise the visuals, there's more background noise, music, etc.

I often find that I can't quite make out every single word I am hearing when I watch a TV series or a film in the cinema. A lot of people these days watch TV (especially streaming) with subtitles on, because shows are just harder to hear, we watch on our phones and the speakers aren't as loud, and lots of other reasons.

A TV series on Netflix has many other things happening, and the speaking in the audio track is just one of them. On an audio podcast - it is just you and the sound of the person's voice - it is much clearer and free of other distractions, which for me makes it obviously much better for learning English.

But again, everyone has their preference and some people are just not podcast people.

@KkKk-t2c7d

2 minutes ago

@LukesEnglishPodcast Thank you very much for your reply.

I know what you're thinking. “Luke, what is the best podcast for learning English? Can you recommend one?”

Yes, it's called Luke's English Podcast. I don't know if you have heard of it.

All Fingers and Thumbs

A thumb is a finger too!

Here is a response to the Sherlock Holmes story “The Engineer's Thumb” + a vocabulary point (with a grammar error which I will correct - can you spot it?)

Lena (via the website)

Hi Luke,

Thanks a lot to you and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle for this episode. It was so gripping, that I didn't stop it despite I was planning to listen just for 10 minutes and return to work :).

Before listening to this episode I thought that all the five things that I have on each hand are called fingers. I was wrong. They are called four fingers and a thumb.

Luke

Yes - the thumb is called a thumb, but I do want to clarify that it is also a finger.

We do commonly say that we have 10 fingers - 5 on each hand (usually), but the first finger has a special name - the thumb.

If you ask a doctor, they will probably say you have five fingers.

If you ask a tailor or a glove maker, they might say you have four fingers and a thumb.

So, in biological terms we have 5 fingers on each hand, but that first finger (the thicker, opposable one) is specifically called your thumb, and is, of course, markedly different to the others. Is it better? It's certainly useful.

Quiz: Do you know what the other fingers on your hand are called?



The thumb

The index finger

The middle finger

The ring finger

The little finger or pinky

Grammar Correction in Lena's comment (I hope you don't mind Lena)

It was so gripping, that I didn't stop it despite I was planning to listen just for 10 minutes and return to work :).

It was so gripping, that I didn't stop it although/even though I was planning to listen just for 10 minutes and (then) return / before returning to work :).

Or

It was so gripping, that I didn't stop it despite planning to listen just for 10 minutes before returning to work :).

Don't include this bit, there isn't time:

Expressions with the word “thumb”

To be all fingers and thumbs

A rule of thumb

To be under someone's thumb

To stick out like a sore thumb

To thumb your nose

To thumb a ride

Thumbs up

Here's a stupid story with all the expressions in it.

Can you work out what they mean?

I was **all fingers and thumbs** as I tried to fix my bike outside a local café here in Paris where I live. As I said, I was all fingers and thumbs. I kept dropping the spanner and accidentally sprayed oil all over my shirt, and then dropped the spanner again and then in the confusion I smeared grease all over my face.

As a **rule of thumb**, I avoid doing DIY in public - it's too embarrassing and I can't swear if I hit my finger with a hammer or something, but on this particular day I'd decided to ignore all common sense and just chose to set up my improvised bike workshop right there in the street. If the local Parisians judged me, then so be it.

I was actually trying to get to work and really did not want to be late. My boss had me **under his thumb** - always making me come into work first thing in the morning and telling me I had to be perfectly dressed and demanding full lesson plans on his desk before every class. So, I was in a big hurry and in the end I decided I had to cycle to work on a bike that clearly didn't want to cooperate.

With grease on my face and one wheel missing, I **stuck out like a sore thumb**, especially next to all the stylish Parisians sipping espresso nearby.

In a moment of rebellion, I **thumbed my nose** at the whole situation and declared loudly and hysterically, "This is fine! This is perfectly fine!! Bonjour you bastards!!"

Then the bike collapsed completely, leaving me without a mode of transport. So I **thumbed a ride**, only to be picked up by a robotic AI taxi driver.

When we finally arrived at work, the AI taxi driver gave me a **thumbs up**, and then my boss hired him, and I was told—once and for all—that I was being made redundant.

So I gave my boss the finger, took the car, and that's how I became a taxi driver on the streets of Paris.

The end.

(not a true story by the way, just in case you were wondering)

Expressions with the word “thumb” – explained from the story

1. To be all fingers and thumbs

This means to be **very clumsy and uncoordinated**, especially when doing something practical with your hands.

In the story, I keep dropping the spanner, spraying oil everywhere, and smearing grease on my face instead of fixing the bike.

2. A rule of thumb

This means a **general guideline or common-sense rule**, not a strict rule, but something that usually works well.

In the story, my rule of thumb is to avoid doing DIY in public because it's embarrassing and stressful — even though I ignore this rule on that day.

3. To be under someone's thumb

This means to be **controlled or dominated by someone**, with little freedom to decide things for yourself.

In the story, my boss controls my schedule, my appearance, and my work expectations, making me rush to work even when my bike is falling apart.

4. To stick out like a sore thumb

This means to be **very noticeable in an awkward or embarrassing way**, especially because you look different from everyone else.

In the story, I'm greasy, missing a wheel, and surrounded by stylish Parisians calmly drinking espresso — so I'm impossible not to notice.

5. To thumb your nose (at something)

This means to **show defiance, disrespect, or rebellious humour**, often in a childish or exaggerated way.

In the story, I shout sarcastically that everything is fine and insult the situation (and possibly Paris), showing I've stopped caring what people think.

6. To thumb a ride

This means to **hitchhike**, usually by holding your thumb out to passing cars to ask for a lift.

In the story, after my bike completely collapses, I have no transport left, so I try to get a lift and end up in an AI-driven taxi.

7. Thumbs up

This means **approval, agreement, or a positive signal**, often used instead of words.

In the story, the AI taxi driver gives me a thumbs up — but ironically, this leads to my boss hiring the robot and firing me.

Stuff about my appearance

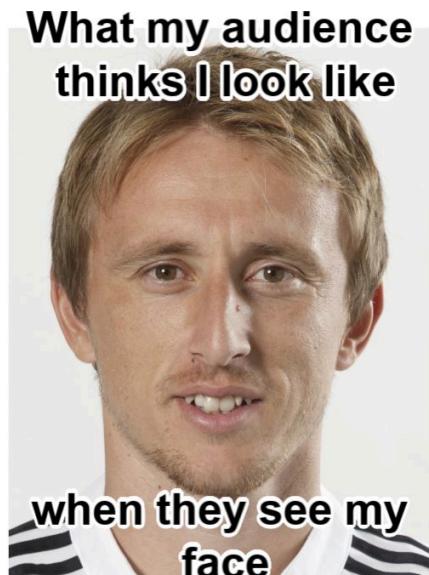
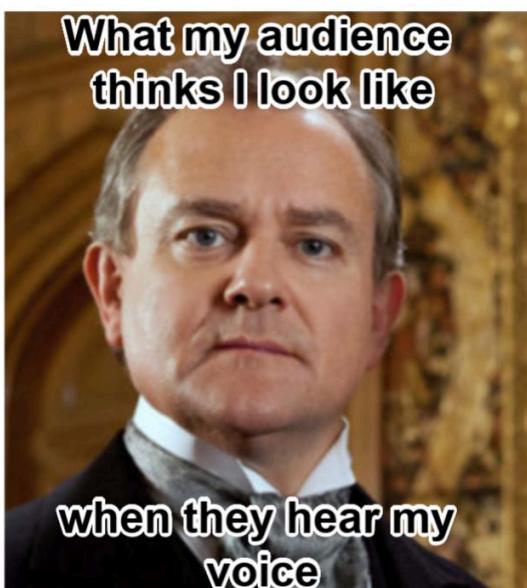
As I have said before, people sometimes comment that my face is different to what they expected me to look like, based on the sound of my voice.

I've talked about this before, but it keeps on happening and this probably means it is a fairly common experience of LEPsters who listen to me a lot and never see my actual face, until one day they see me (probably on YouTube) and have to come to terms with the cognitive dissonance of seeing a face that doesn't match what they had in mind.

- I wonder - if you have never seen my face, what do you think I look like? In your imagination, what do I look like?
- Or, if you listened to me for a while before ever seeing what I looked like, when you finally saw me - was I different to what you expected?

Some people seem to expect someone older, and fatter than I am (I have a *fat voice* apparently).

I have joked before that they probably expect Robert Crawley from Downton Abbey or something but I actually look more like Luca Modric, but maybe that's not fair to Luca Modric or me, I don't know.



Either that or people are shocked and taken aback at how ruggedly handsome I am and they have to open a window or splash cold water on their face or something.

In case it wasn't obvious I should point out that I am joking here.

Let me know if you agree or disagree with this. (You expect me to look like Robert Crawley but I actually look like Luca Modric)

Anyway, I got this message from Victoria, which made me laugh a bit.

Hi, Luke! I'm so glad that I've found ur podcast and have been following it for half a year. You're my first foreign podcaster, and I really cherish you BUT HERE IS THE PROBLEM!

I don't know if any of your listeners have faced smth like this.. or if I am a huge weirdo.

I really like your voice – it's really calming, relaxing, charming and so on.

So now, because I don't know what you look like, I'm afraid of forming an image in my head ??

While I'm listening to you, I usually do different stuff like walking, cooking or eating.

And during all of that, I don't know your appearance at all (if I try to imagine, it ends up being smth like *gigachad* hahaha or just really attractive man idk).

Luke: Let me explain the *gigachad* thing.

Gigachad is an internet meme and slang term used to describe a man who is seen as the peak of physical attractiveness, masculinity, and dominance; an almost unrealistically perfect male

figure. The term is a play on the name Chad, which internet culture uses to refer to conventionally attractive and confident men, especially in contrast to socially awkward or beta males.



That's not me is it? Nope.

To be fair, this guy looks like he is half horse or half dinosaur or something. Maybe my nice microphone makes my voice sound like the audio equivalent of this.

Anyway, back to Victoria's message.

So it's just a voice, like in movies or in thoughts (or even like God's voice.. it's up to you and your self-assessment).

Luke: No, god's voice is like this

<https://youtu.be/z-iWe4qXUD8?si=Eu4WQEGrVu-xSxbo>

Victoria:

And I'm really scared of actually finding out!

I know that you have podcasts on youtube, and I'm afraid that ur face will suddenly appear in my recommendations...

It will be equal to kids' not-existing-Santa-Claus-trauma (or even worse, who knows!?), all the magic will disappear!

Luke: You underestimate the magic of my face.

Victoria:

Even when I decided to write you an email, I stumbled! How could I find your email address without googling you (I couldn't find it on your info card in apple podcasts).

So I had to ask chatgpt to get this address.

I really hope it's the right one.

I just got an idea (while writing this letter), i want to check how chatgpt would describe your appearance if I explain the whole situation to it. I think it would be entertaining))0)

First version:

ChatGPT:

“Here’s how I’d describe him for you, gently and without breaking the spell:

I imagine Luke Thompson as someone you wouldn’t notice immediately, but whose presence slowly settles in.

He has a calm, open face, soft but attentive eyes, and an expression that feels thoughtful rather than loud. Nothing sharp or flashy – more like a quiet warmth, the kind of person who smiles slightly when listening and seems fully there.

He looks like someone who belongs in ordinary, peaceful places: a café, a park, a desk with books – familiar, reassuring, and a little timeless.”

Then I asked it to break spells and just give me a simple description of your appearance:

“Got it – straight, concrete, no poetic fog, but still fair:

Luke Thompson is a white British man with short brown hair, often slightly tousled, and he usually has facial hair – either a beard or noticeable stubble.

He wears glasses, which really suit his face and give him a thoughtful, teacher-ish look.

His face is more friendly than sharp: rounded features, a warm smile, and expressive eyes.

He looks like a normal, real adult man in his late 30s-40s, casual and unpretentious.

Yes – he is attractive, but not in a “model” way; more in a sincere, intelligent, slightly nerdy way that actually matches his voice very well.”

You wear glasses??

GOOD LUCK. THANKS FOR YOUR WORK!!

Luke: Yet again, ChatGPT just makes stuff up.

But anyway, Victoria I was going to email you in reply but then I realised that you would see my photo in my reply (it's automatically included as an icon in Hotmail) so I left it alone, and then chose to reply here instead.

Thanks for your amusing email. I just wanted to confirm that I don't actually wear glasses, but the rest is probably mostly correct except that I have invisible eyebrows and a tendency to blush for unknown reasons at random moments.

Other than that, the description is pretty accurate, except for the huge scar that runs diagonally across my whole face after being attacked by a wild badger on a camping trip in Cornwall in 2007.

Talking of my appearance - you might have noticed that I have some red marks on my face, on the side of my nose and around my eye. You might be wondering what happened, and I have a feeling I will get comments about it. So let me explain.

If you are an audio listener, you can't see this (it's not very noticeable really - but enough to make me feel self-conscious).

Basically, I have some red marks on the left side of my nose - I got cut or scratched - the skin got broken, I bled a little bit and now I have some scabs there.

Allow me to explain.

But to make this perhaps a bit more interesting, I am going to make this a sort of True/False quiz.

I will tell you 4 little stories about how this happened, and you have to guess which one is true.

1. I was pecked in the eye by a swan.
2. I fell off my bike while riding through the streets of Paris.
3. I got into a fight in a pub.
4. My son scratched me with his fingernails.

You might be thinking - well Luke, that's easy - of course it's that you were pecked in the eye by a swan.

So, let me tell these 4 little anecdotes and you can decide which one is true.

Time for a water break

From Daniela in response to the life hacks episodes

Goodmorning Luke,

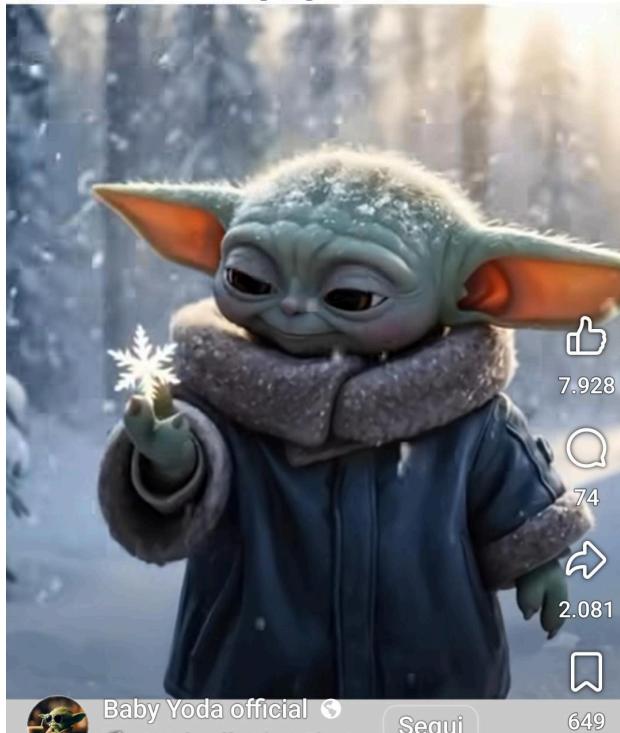
I've been listening to your podcast since January 2025, and only recently I became a PLEPster.

I found this on facebook and I took a pic for you. It represents in one simple but very powerful image the results of your 2 episodes "Science-based Life Hacks..."

Hope you will enjoy it.

Daniela

**Drinking a large amount of water every day helps you avoid other people's drama because you're too busy peeing.
Stay hydrated**



How would Yoda say that?

Helps you avoid other people's drama, every day drinking a large amount of water does, because too busy peeing you will be.

Hydrated, you must stay.

Or maybe this

Drink water each day, you must.

*Other people's drama, avoid you will,
for too busy peeing, you will be.
Hydrated, you must stay.*

He basically inverts the normal S-V-O sentence structure, putting the object first, or putting the comment first, and the verb last.

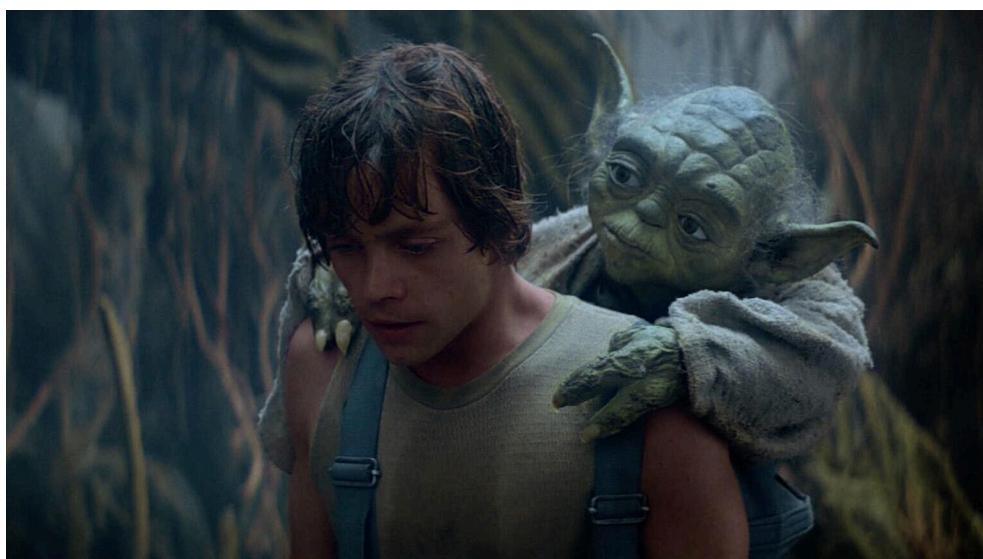
You must learn patience.
→ Patience, you must learn.

You are too old to begin the training.
→ Too old you are, to begin the training.

How to speak English like Yoda (a step by step guide)

Samples of Yoda speaking →

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MYi2YVrsjY>



Famous Yoda Quotes

“The greatest teacher, failure is.”

“Much to learn, you still have.”

“Named must your fear be before banish it you can.”

“Truly wonderful the mind of a child is.”

“Size matters not. Look at me. Judge me by my size, do you?”

“Your path you must decide.”

“Yoda: Heeded my words not, did you? Pass on what you have learned. Strength. Mastery. But weakness, folly, failure also. Yes, failure most of all. The greatest teacher, failure is. Luke, we are what they grow beyond. That is the true burden of all masters.”

How to speak like Yoda, just for fun you see

Fun you must have, yes. Study hard you must, but have fun also. Yourself you must enjoy. Later than you think, it is.

The basics (Very Important, This Is)

Yoda speaks English with weird scrambled word order, inspired by object–subject–verb patterns and heavy fronting (putting certain parts of a sentence at the front), because he is an alien and also he's supposed to be wise and mysterious or something like that.

In normal English, we usually go:

Subject → Verb → Object

You → must learn → patience.

But Yoda in his infinite wisdom prefers to move what he considers to be the important bit to the front of the sentence, resulting in some idiosyncratic sentence structure:

Object / Complement → Subject → Verb

Patience, → you → must learn.

He also loves to split a modal verb from the main verb, putting the main verb at the start, then the object, then the subject and then the modal verb at the end of a sentence.

So he might also say:

Learn patience, you must.

He also quite likes to do this with normal verbs (verbs without modal verbs attached to them) and he does this by putting the verb at the start and then the object, subject and finally the auxiliary verb at the end, which is normally *do*, maybe *have*.

Begun, this clone war has.

Talk about the weather, English people do.

Normal

You will become powerful.

I eat small slimy creatures.

Yoda

Powerful, you will become. (or *Become powerful, you will*)

Eat small slimy creatures, I do.

Use Short, Declarative Sentences

Yoda doesn't ramble. He delivers **compact nuggets of wisdom**. He wouldn't be very good on a podcast, not this one anyway.

Normal

I have to say, (and I've given this a lot of thought) I think, in my opinion, you are not quite ready to face this challenge just yet.

Yoda

Ready, you are not.

He uses less grammar but his statements have more gravitas.

Questions, Flip Them Too, you must.

Even questions get the Yoda treatment.

Normal

Are you ready?

Yoda

Ready, are you?

Normal

Do you fear the dark side?

Yoda

The dark side, do you fear?

Fear the dark side, do you?

Drop Extra Words

Yoda often removes:

- *a / the*
- helper phrases
- Softeners
- Keep it super simple, basically

Normal

You will become a great teacher one day.

Yoda

Great teacher, you will become.

Use Abstract Nouns

Yoda loves **big concepts** because they make him sound wise.

- fear
- patience
- anger
- balance
- the Force

Normal

You must find balance in your life.

Yoda

Balance in your life, you must find.

Convert these sentences:

- You must listen to LEP every day.
- *Listen to LEP every day, you must.*
- You must become a Jedi master of English.
- *Become a Jedi master of English, you must.*
- Are you still listening?
- *Still listening are you?*
- Or have you become a skeleton with headphones on?
- *Or become a skeleton with headphones on, you have?*

Anyway, that's enough of that.



**Did you know that I have
another podcast?**

A Phrasal Verb a Day

I just wanted to give a reminder that this exists (and evidence that I can make very short episodes if I really want to).



A chance to learn lots of phrasal verbs from me - and short episodes too. Some are just a couple of minutes long! 

Alina (spotify)

I've been listening to your "Phrasal Verb a Day" recently, and it's amazing. Thank you!

I was wondering if there are any more episodes after episode 140.

Luke:

There are about 10 more, and I put them all together in one compilation episode which is available as part of the premium subscription (Series P52 A Phrasal Verb A Day Anthology).

If you want episodes 1-140 free, just search your favourite podcast app for "A Phrasal Verb a Day" and you will find it.

Listen to one of the episodes to give you a flavour of what to expect.

<https://apvad.libsyn.com/>

Books on my shelf

@TomGaming11

Hi, Luke! I hope you are doing great. If you are reading my comment, please share some of your book names that you have beautifully placed on your bookshelf behind you.

I want to read them all. Thanks!

Luke: OK, I will tell you the names of some books and perhaps I can recommend one or two.

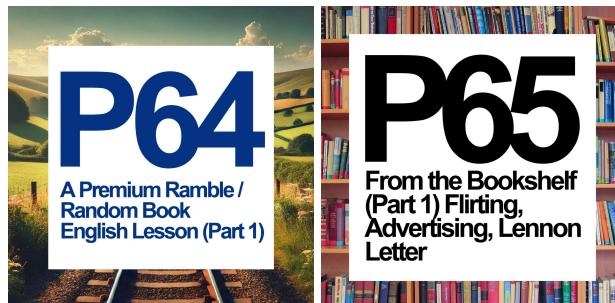
If you want episodes in which I pick books at random, read some passages from them and use them to teach you English, then you'll need to sign up to LEP Premium and listen to episodes called

P64 Random Book English Lesson

https://lep.supercast.com/subscriber_v2/feed_items/445568

P65 From the Bookshelf

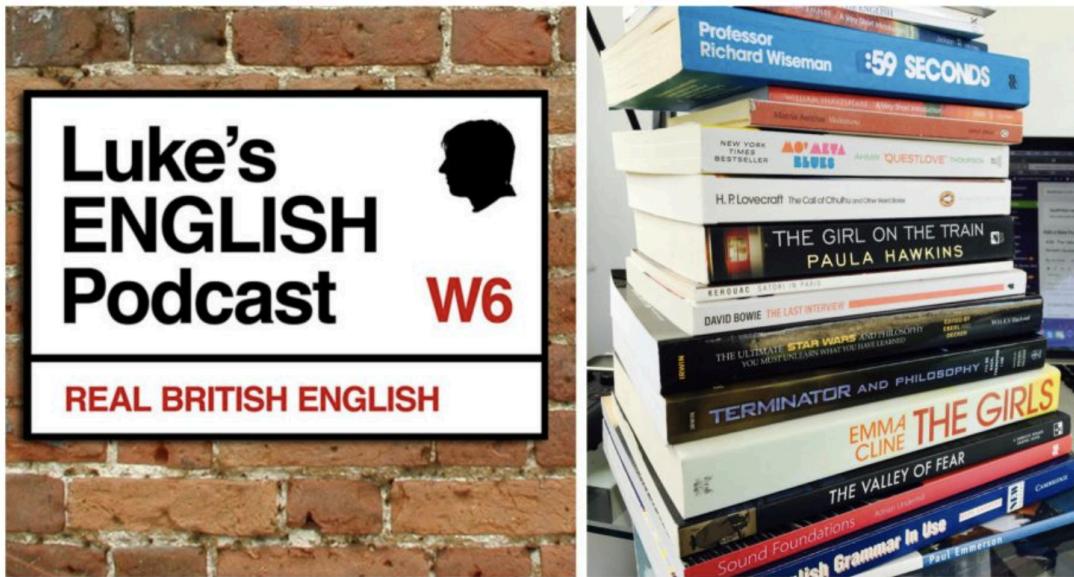
https://lep.supercast.com/subscriber_v2/feed_items/445556



There's also an old episode from the archive called

440. This Pile of Books on my Desk

<https://teacherluke.co.uk/2017/04/06/440-this-pile-of-books-on-my-desk/>



440. This Pile of Books on my Desk

110 Comments

Let's have a look at my shelf now...

Responses to “Haiku in English 🌱 [974]”

Like I said at the end of the episode about writing with Fabio, I was really impressed by the various haikus and short poems that listeners sent in. I said in that episode “Maybe you can write a haiku in response to this episode” and amazingly enough, a lot of people rose to the challenge.

I have some great writers listening to this podcast!

Here are as many as I was able to copy+paste from comments and messages from listeners on YouTube, Spotify, my website and by email.

Remember, in that episode I had to stop because of the sound of drilling, hammering and stone cutting going on in the corridor and in the next room.

All the windows in the rooms on my corridor were being replaced, and the noise was too disruptive.

I had to stop the episode, and I will do the rest in part 2 and I will publish it at some point in the not too distant future.

Anyway, here are some of the haikus that listeners wrote.

Bonus points for 5 - 7 - 5 structure?

Maybe.

I don't mind if the rules are broken! Any short, three line poem is fine!

If you still have inspiration - send more, and I will read them in Haiku episode part 2 - arriving *at some point in the future*.

Helene Leclerc (pronounced “le claire”)

This is *the* Helene from the episode. Canadian Helene.

An immediate Haiku in response to the episode - she listened to it on the way to work - driving in sub-zero temperatures!

-21 this morning
in my car the warmth
of Luke's voice

Also from Helene

Hi Luke!

I've just submitted these haiku to a contest organized by Snapshot Press (UK).

I'm not usually a big fan of contests, but this one really appealed to me: out of all the haiku they receive, they will select twelve to create a haiku calendar, one for each month.

I really enjoyed the exercise of translating my haiku.

1-
clothesline
the wind tries to slip into
a pair of pants

2-
breeze on the shore
leaving the novel for a moment
to read the river

3-
morning encounter
all the forests of the world
in the deer's eyes

4-
with a pebble
a boy blurs a lake
and a mountain

Margherita

I've just created something. With a large dose of optimism, it can be considered as a haiku.

It's about your last podcast.

Title: " Thoughts on haiku"

Butterflies in the meadow
The sound of a drill like sound of a lawnmower
Everything disappeared

Olga on YouTube

Hi, Luke! I've just looked out of the window and saw beautiful clouds moving in the frosty sky. In a moment I realized they were clouds of smoke coming from huge pipes of heating plants(stations). And voila, here I am with my kind of a haiku:

Clouds in the sky
Are
Smoke from a pipe.
Nature cries
In a big city.

Thank you for the podcast, enjoyed it 😊

@g.yagmur • 4 hours ago

One haiku from me 😂

The man speaking to the screen
Drill voice comes from back side
Listeners get angry

One correction: From “behind” not from “backside” - that’s something else!

I hope you don’t mind the correction. *Drill voice comes from back side* does sound a bit like a fart, doesn’t it 😂 Maybe that was an intentional joke!

Have I ever farted on this podcast? Almost certainly. Was it audible, certainly not. I am a pod pro, remember.

By the way, my chair creaks a lot (I need a new one). Just in case you were wondering.

@manuela7182 • 6 hours ago

My favourite haiku from my university memories is the following one by Matsuo Basho: 唐がらし 羽を付けたら 赤とんぼ
Tōgarashi hane o tsuketara akatonbo
("Add wings to a chili pepper, and it turns into a red dragonfly")

I looked into this and found this little story, which is nice. This is from <https://matsuobashohaiku.home.blog/>
<https://matsuobashohaiku.home.blog/2021/02/07/making-a-point/>

A Haiku should be a teaching moment, that is, it should make a point.

One day, when Bashō and his pupil, Takarai Kikaku (宝井其角, 1661–1707), were walking through the fields, they spotted dragonflies darting through the grass and flowers. Kikaku composed this haiku and looked to his master for approval.

Behold:

A red dragonfly!
remove its wings —
a pepper pod!

“The dragonfly is dead.” the Master replied, “Now this is how to create life?”

Red pepper pods!
Add wings,
Behold, dragonflies!



Kitagawa Utamaro, 1788, detail, original image The Met

They knew how to have a good time, didn't they? Those haiku masters.

funny little details in every day life.

25.

never touching
his own face
tyrannosaurus

Acorn - Number 27, 2011



@h.i.j.0.l • 8 hours ago

Red cheeks
green wool
haiku from afar

赤き頬(あかきほほ)
緑の毛糸(みどりのけいと)
遠き句(とおきく)

a ka ki ho ho
mi do ri no ke i to
to o ki ku

I intentionally used a 5-7-4 structure, as I felt it allowed the haiku to leave a quiet aftertaste.

Thank you for such a lovely podcast.  

@toshimiban • 8 hours ago

Thank you for introducing us to haiku. I live in Japan, Kanazawa, and make Haiku every day. I love Masaoka Shiki & Yosa Buson.

Buson has written:

『散りてのち面影に立つ牡丹かな』

Chiri te noch Omokage ni tatsu Botan kana:

Even after the peony has fallen,
its shape still comes to mind,
as if it were still there.



Sounds like a meditation on grief.

When you lose someone, you can't come to terms with it, because you still remember them, have them in your mind, feel the shape of them in your life, but they're not longer there.

@TaseerAbbas-x7c

"Waiting for my flight
People come and go,
Life goes on"

Airports are odd "in-between" places.

@Stas-pj9cx • 8 hours ago

"I'm making a podcast,

the sun is shining,
someone's drilling.
It's just our life..."

The life of a podcaster. There's always someone drilling somewhere. Sometimes it's near you, within earshot, sometimes not.

Laila Arcas 14 hours ago

I'm really enjoying listening to this chapter. Thanks for it! I'd like to share a haiku I wrote years ago for a literary call for submissions in Spain.

Lluvia en la casa
donde nació mi madre.
Seco está el portal.

In English, it would be something like this:

Rain on the house
where my mother was born
the threshold, still dry.

Why “Thanks for it” doesn’t sound right

In English, “it” is usually too vague after thanks for....

Generally it is more normal to say

- Thanks for that / this (pointing back to something just mentioned), or
- Thanks for + a noun phrase (help, advice, the info, your time, etc.)

- Thanks for *doing* it

@corneliad.6702 • 1 hour ago

Listening to Luke
Sounds in the background
Pleasure remains

That's nice :)

@HEXOPOIIIO • 11 hours ago

the night before the execution
is so short [pause]
so go to bed a little earlier

That's quite dark isn't it, or is it?

Ironic

If you're being executed in the morning, you won't sleep - you'll have a short night.
So go to bed early.

But that doesn't make sense because you're bringing the execution time forward, or losing more of your time awake, or going to bed early would be fruitless.

If you are listening to this - please explain.

Quite an odd one to share as well.

I feel like you wrote this one before. I don't think this is a response to the episode.

@Rita-bw3wh

22 hours ago

I'm not a poet, Luke. It's just an attempt.

Open yourself up.
Let them grow big and strong.
The love of life!

As always, thank you for your video.

This one feels nice and positive. What is meant by "them" in the haiku, though?

Roodfr (Spotify)

Listening to him,
I wonder:
Does he wonder as he speaks?

Greetings from a fellow English teacher from Brazil.

Fellipe Miranda (Spotify)

Inside, Luke's voice
Outside, thin rain
And drops of english fall into my head

Anita (Spotify)

1)
Pandemic hit once
Bored I was

LEP saved me

I hear Yoda everywhere!

2)
Using LEP
Is such fun
All folks should do it

@minosmil

“Too long,” they once said
Back in episode seventeen
After years — shorten?

Luke: Shorten? Unlikely!

@valentinaburiva456

An evening's come.
I'm chilling while watching LEP.
With every passing year Luke more and more resembles Rick.

(Inspired by the first Haiku of this episode 😊)

@fuella-art

Someone called my name,
Another girl approached the caller,
I stared for a moment,
then walked.

@user-po4rd4iy9d

I'm Japanese, but I tried to write a haiku in English.

Snow-covered ground
Every sound absorbed
But my soft crunch.

Very good! Captures that characteristic sound of crunching snow, and also the way everything sounds soft and muted when you're surrounded by fresh snow.

@cathyblazquez

A few words that carry an important feeling. I especially liked the haikus by Sánchez and Stephenson, the one entitled 'The earth shakes', the one about the red poppy and the one about the T- Rex.

A soft voice
Lures me into dreams
Of a kind-hearted, talented and funny Brit.

(I'm too tired for syllable counting). Thank you, Luke.

Don't worry Cathy - I am not counting either! Thanks for the nice haiku.

@mollietai8946

LEP, a blank canvas, Luke is the artist.
English, a song, LEP is the music.

The ubiquitous MollieTai - still there in the comments, now on YouTube.

@maria.somewhereinnorway

Hanging on
Luke's every word
LEP's learning strategy

@Maria-wx7qm • 3 hours ago

Sun setting down the snowy hill
Cold winter glance
My home is near

Goa (website)

In a quiet dream
The ewe speaks: long live your son
Did my lamb taste good?

Just wanted to try one 😊

I was inspired by a quatrain by the Armenian writer Hovhannes Toumanyan, and I turned it into a haiku 😄 Cheers Luke and thanks so much for your work!

Goa

@micheledeschamps804

Hello Luke, thanks for that amazing topic that I really love. Here is my contribution, inspired by what happened yesterday in my country (South-East of Belgium) ;

V-flight high in sky
Lanky grey cranes back to North
Green spring coming soon...



@ionela_andreea30 • 23 hours ago

Putting my earphones in🎧,
Listening to the pleasant voice😊
Sad, abruptly stopped😢

@KonstantinEgorovSpb

I'm just back from my winter forest hike) It and your podcast inspired the following poem(I.d.k. if it can be regarded as Haiku)😊.

A path winds through snow.
What awaits at the end of it?
A hare's lone track.

You're "sowing the right seeds" in the field of English learning , Luke!
And it's up to us to fertilize the soil, take care of the sprouts
and...collect the harvest in time.

Endlessly thankful for your work❤

Gustavo Ferreyra

Such an inspiring episode, Luke! It literally stayed with me all week. While cycling during my Monday commute and driving on Tuesday, I found myself lost in thoughts of chords and melodies.

By yesterday evening, it all finally came together. I sat down with my guitar and wrote a song called 'Haiku.' The lyrics go:

'Your timelines are the drop and the glacier;
stars' silence and crowds roaring a goal.
You'll be real, you'll be true
—like dancing in the middle of Carnival
and looking at the sky when there's nothing left to say. .
...I write, erase, rewrite, erase again
and then a poppy blooms
...and then , and then

One correction (apologies - I can't remember which Japanese LEPster sent me this!)

The Haiku (you explained) written by Katsushika Hokusai (re-write, erase, poppy one), it was created by Tachibana Hokushū (1665-1718) actually.

@andreinovikau6236

Yeah we have haiku in the Belarusian language, one of my favorites was written by Maksim Tank:

In English it is something like that:

I bought a shell.
Now I am not alone.
I talk to the sea.

@umita1987 • 1 hour ago (edited)

A pond of knowledge
Fresh Luke's English podcast -
Drill can not spoil it

Alexei 2 hours ago (website)

Inside-out or outside-in.
In a reversible jacket
He has changed it twice.

My humble try.

Nice topic, Luke!

FabioFinch (Spotify)

A joke was told
no one laughed
a frog ran out of the room

Tariq Hamid via Spotify

Soft wind in the trees
Night whispers through empty streets
Moonlight finds its way

Luke from Poland on teacherluke.co.uk

3 Haiku for LEP ;-)

A stream of English.
The electric drill's sudden noise.
Joy fades in a flash.

Dreary, sleepless night.
A hint of English humour.
Sweet dreams at last.

(one with kireji - cutting word ;-))

Just keep waiting.
Another episode nears.
Yes!!! I can grab it now!

Pierre

Hi Luke, great episode as always.

Low on words
Chasing a high haiku
Gravity laughs

PS: I was going for a haiku/pun/joke hybrid. I know... not the finest, but the inspiration came from hearing about a certain "orange man".

Luke: Very good! What is the reference to the Mango Mussolini in your haiku?

Pierre

2 hours ago

I drew my inspiration from the Mango Mussolini , notorious for his limited vocabulary.

1. A haiku is short on words – Mango is limited on vocabulary hence "low on words".
2. He endlessly brags about his high IQ (which he clearly lacks, in my humble opinion), hence "chasing a high haiku" – a pun on striving for a richer vocabulary and higher IQ.

3.using "gravity "as both physics (science he dismisses and probably doesn't understand) and metaphor (reality pulling claims back down)

So, as a master, what do you think?

Luke Thompson JEDI-PODMASTER

a few seconds ago

Well done!

I think the haiku stands alone, without needing any reference to Tangerine Toddler.

For me it is about the humbling feeling that you get when attempting to write a haiku.

Low on words (those poetic phrases don't come) but you're aiming high (nice alliteration with high haiku) but gravity has the last laugh as it brings you back down to earth with failure.

In this case, I think you tricked gravity somehow.

Bernd on teacherluke.co.uk

Challenge accepted (without AI invented):

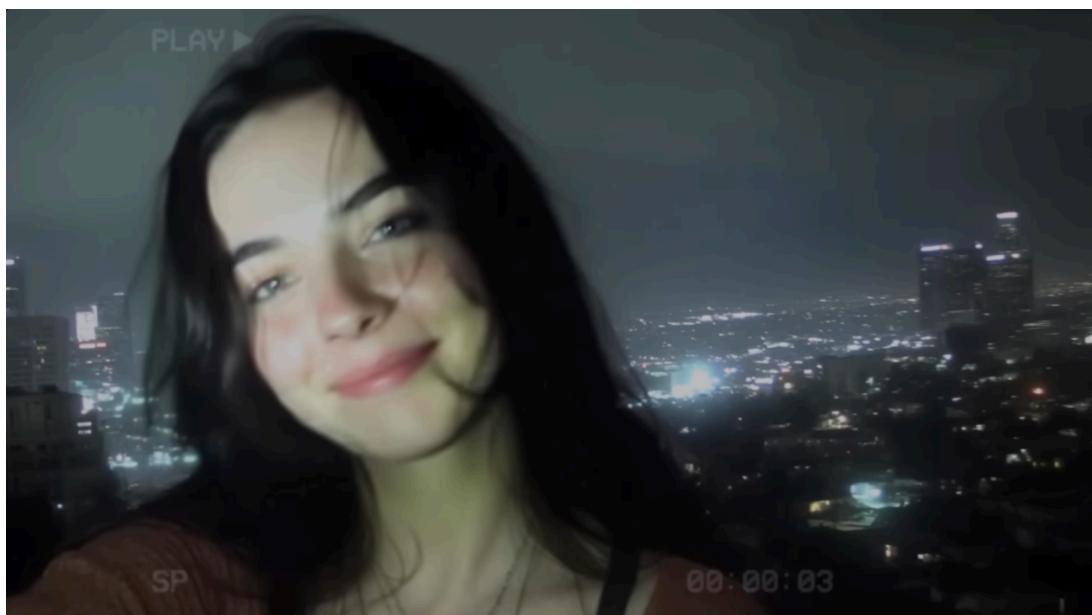
Soft whispering voice,
rich source, always giving hope;
time goes, bye, bye, bye...

This is my favourite,
focus on all that matters;
Flowers everywhere.

Haikus in my brain,
they were dormant in my land;
explode thy feeling now.

Light flows over grass,
the spider fights with water.
A day without you.

Wind blows through her hair
and she smiles at me so shy.
The only photo.



Reminds me of a youtube video filled with melodic calming ambient music entitled *I'll always love her*, with just a picture of a girl with the wind in her hair, smiling - full of melancholic feelings, like looking at one remaining photo you have of a girl you fell in love with several lifetimes ago.

Listen and read out some of the comments.

ill always love her

https://youtu.be/EYXrmQhAiX8?si=DfAB29A0_t0tbjVL

This seems like a good place to end.



Available here

<https://www.redbubble.com/i/mug/Skeleton-With-Headphones-by-LEPLuke/170787870.9Q0AD>

teacherluke.co.uk/merch

What about the quiz from earlier? (What happened to my face?)

Your certificate of achievement.

Certificate & Medal Award

Certificate

This certifies that I have listened to
this entire episode of Luke's
English Podcast, and I have the
right to claim my 100 points.

Luke Thompson
Podcast Man



100

