

20 BRITISH QUIRKS

LISTENING LESSON

 [YOUTUBE.COM/ENGLISHWITHLUCY](https://www.youtube.com/englishwithlucy)

1 We put carpet in our bathrooms!

Okay. So the first one is that we put carpet in our bathrooms. Not everyone does this, but I am currently living in a house that has a carpeted bathroom. And I will let you know that yes, we have had an overflow situation with that toilet and in a carpeted bathroom, it wasn't pretty. So this is quite an old fashioned thing to do. We don't tend to do this anymore, but if you go to a house that hasn't been renovated or updated in a long while, or you go to the home of somebody who is very traditional then yes, you might find carpet in your bathroom. We've got it here. It wasn't my choice, but it's here. My grandparents have got carpeted bathrooms as well.

2 We say 'Waheeeey' when someone breaks a glass in public!

Number two is, "Waheeeey"? Okay. And this is something that we shout in a very, very specific situation, which is this. When somebody smashes a glass in a pub, the whole pub should shout, "Waaay." Sorry. I had to rerecord that. That was so loud. Now I worked as a waitress for three years. I dropped a fair few glasses. We had to carry these drinks on tiny round trays that you had to balance. I couldn't do that. So I've had my fair share of, "Waaays" in my lifetime. Now my mother's best friend forgot where she was once. And she did the, "Waaay" in Portugal. A restaurant in Portugal, some poor, poor waiter dropped a load of glasses. They smashed everywhere and there was just my mom's best friend there on her own shouting, "Waaay."

**3**

We get overexcited about letting off fireworks on Bonfire Night!

The next one is number three, which is excitement over fireworks on Bonfire Night.

So on the 5th of November, all around the UK, we have bonfires. We let off fireworks and we do this because it's the anniversary, the 5th of November of a failed attempt to blow up to explode the Houses of Parliament. On this event we burn guys. And these are dummy men used to represent the man who was going to blow up the Houses of Parliament. He was called Guy Fawkes. So sometimes we call it Guy Fawkes Night as well. Now on this night or on the evenings surrounding this night, depending when it falls, if it falls on a Monday, then you might have it on the Saturday before, for example, people who have, no experience or business dealing with explosives, get incredibly excited. They go to firework shops, they do them in their garden, and it's just really dangerous. My dad always really enjoyed setting up the fireworks and setting them off in a neighbour's garden. And my mother was always absolutely petrified. She was so scared he was going to get hurt and rightly so. And one day they played this terrible prank on my mother and all of the other worried wives, they let off a load of fireworks and then they came screaming covered with soot, with black ashes all over their face as if they had had the explosion in their face. And the women went crazy and they were not best pleased to find out it was all a joke.

4

We think a cup of tea will cure any bad situation.

Number four, we think that a cup of tea will cure or help at least any bad situation. And a lot of us genuinely believe this. When something bad happens, our first response is, "Okay, I'll put the kettle on." If somebody told you some devastating news and you don't know what to say, you can just say, "That's awful. Do you want a cup of tea?"



5 We say 'Oh, go on then!' when we are offered something 'naughty'.

Number five is the phrase, Oh, go on then. Okay. Said like this, "Oh go on then." This is something that we say when we are offered something that we know we shouldn't have, for example, a very unhealthy food or maybe a cigarette or a drink of alcohol. When somebody offers you something naughty or considered to be naughty, "Go on then, go on then." I wonder if you have a similar phrase in your own language, I would love to hear it. Because I think that's just such a key phrase in our vocabulary.

6 We get very excited about 'Colin the Caterpillar' cakes.

Number six, Colin, the Caterpillar Cake. Need I say more. Yes, I need to say more so that my viewers understand. Any British person watching this will understand Colin, the Caterpillar Cake. They will probably feel excitement running through their veins. Okay? A Collin, the Caterpillar Cake is a long chocolate roll. I think that's what you call it. It's a roll of cake, covered in chocolate with the face of a caterpillar on the end. And if it was your birthday at school, your mum would buy you a Colin the Caterpillar Cake. It was very easy to slice and lots of slices for all of the children. And if it was your birthday, you got to eat the face. I remember my first Colin, the Caterpillar Cake. I remember being served the face of this cake, and I remember it being disgusting, but I ate it anyway because it was my birthday and because I'd earned it and I'd spent the whole year watching everyone else eat their caterpillar faces. These are typically sold in Marks & Spencers, a shop here, food shop here, quite a posh food shop here as far as I'm aware. And if you ever go to a British person's birthday party, I really think you should bring one. It will make them so excited, probably.

7 J20s are also very exciting!

Number seven, something else we find ridiculously exciting, way more exciting than it should be, J20's. I don't know if you have these in other countries, but they are a non alcoholic



juice drink. Not juice, juice drink. That means it's not 100% juice. The most famous flavour is orange and passion fruit. But the thing is they came in glass bottles that were the same size as beer bottles. So when you're a child and you were at a party, an adult party, you could feel like an adult with a similar beer bottle. Very exciting. I remember taking it a step too far when I was younger and taking my parents beers bottles that were green, Stella Artois always and refilling them with Apple juice and carrying that around with me and completely confused when my parents were so angry with me and saying, "No, Lucy you don't do that. Don't do that." We also had another drink called Schloer, which was alcohol free, like a sweet grape juice, fizzy as well. And I felt like such an adult when I had a glass of Schloer at Christmas. Do you have any drinks that you used to have as a child that made you feel grown up? I bet there are.

8

We use 'to pop + preposition' a lot!

Number eight is the phrase to pop. Okay? Sounds a bit random. But we use pop in many phrasal verbs and it's a very warm way of asking somebody to come or go somewhere. Do you want me to pop over? Do you want me to come over? It implies a short amount of time. Why don't we pop down the road for a coffee? Why don't we just quickly go down the road for a coffee? I remember one of my Spanish students in London, they were appearing for a British family and they were so confused by the word pop because you can pop around, pop up, pop down, pop over, just treat it as come and go.

9

We are obsessed with the price of a frog-shaped chocolate bar.

Number nine, British people like to base the entire country's economic state on the price inflation of a frog shaped chocolate bar called a Freddo. Yes, you heard that correctly. We base our economics on a frog shaped chocolate bar called a Freddo. When we were young, Freddos were known to be the most affordable chocolate bar. They were a little frog and they were typically, I think 10p when I was young, I remember being given a pound to spend on sweets at a party. I could have one big packet of sweets or I could have 10 Freddos.



The logical answer is to go for all of the Freddos. However, every time I see the price of a Freddo rise, I am outraged and the rest of the nation is too. I'm going to search now, current price of Freddos. 25p, 25p. So what... That means I could have bought 10 and now I can only buy four. That is outrageous.

10 Pigs in blankets make our day!

Okay. Number 10, pigs in blankets, we get so excited about this particular food called a pig in blankets. It is a little cocktail sausage wrapped in bacon. And typically we only have them at Christmas. There's no reason for this. We could have them every Sunday, but if you go to a pub and your Sunday roast comes with a pig in blanket or some pigs in blankets, it's the best roast ever. We absolutely love them. Oh, we only have them at Christmas, why is that?

11 We watch a tv show of other people watching tv shows.

Number 11 one of our most popular TV shows is a TV show of people watching TV shows. It's called Gogglebox. I imagine this concept has arrived in other countries now. They basically film families, watching the TV highlights, and then they compile their witty remarks and then we watched them. It's a very good programme. It's very meta.

12 We post pictures of dog poo in local community Facebook groups.

Number 12 dog poop in Facebook groups. Okay. In the UK. And I imagine in lots of places in the world, we have Facebook Groups for our local community. So I'm in quite a few of the surrounding villages and towns. And there is a new phenomenon and it is the people that are getting so frustrated with people not picking up their dog poop, especially if it's on someone's property or on their front lawn. People are taking to taking pictures of the dog poop and posting it in these community groups. I don't know about you, but I normally check my phone for the first time in the morning when I'm about to take my first bite of breakfast, normally porridge, and to have porridge approaching my mouth, opening my phone and seeing a massive dog poop, it's just not ideal.



So now people are rebelling against the dog poop posters and there is just, Oh, there's just huge civil unrest online at the moment. Those who want to shame the dog poop leavers and those who want to shame the dog poop posters. It's very complex. I hate dog poop, it's absolutely horrendous, but I also don't want to see it all over my Facebook Timeline. I've seen enough. We know it's a problem.

13 We passive-aggressively drink in rounds

Number 13, drinking in rounds. When we go on a night out with a group of friends, we drink in rounds, which means if there are five of us, instead of everyone buying their individual drinks, one person will buy five drinks and the next person will buy five drinks. I'm sure many of you are aware of this concept. I'm sure it has a different name where you're from, but the very British thing to do is to shout, "Whose round is it?" When you know exactly whose round it is, and you just are trying to make them actually buy their round. Because there are a lot of people who will participate in rounds, wait till last and hope that they won't actually have to buy that round, thus escaping with a lot of free drinks and a very full wallet. And it's very annoying. Now we can be considered quite passive aggressive. So instead of saying, "It's your round, go and buy your round," just shouting, "Whose round is it?" Is a much easier way to avoid confrontation. However, my fiancé, he said at university, there was one guy who was so bad at buying or paying for his fair share of drinks that they actually grabbed him, marched him to an ATM, a bank, took his card out and forced him to take out the money. Some people are adjust what we would call here, tight. If somebody's tight, they don't like spending a lot of money.

14 We often can't be bothered to use an umbrella.

Number 14 is we can't always be bothered to use an umbrella. It rains so often, and not unless it is absolutely pummeling it down, I didn't mind getting a bit wet. I remember when I was in Spain, the minute the first drop hit anyone's hair, they would whip out their umbrella. Everyone had it. Everyone knew the weather. I just never knew how people kept track of



whether it was going to rain that day or not, but it was more of a rare occasion there. And it's very, very common here. So I did use to walk into my classrooms, soaking wet sometimes just normal.

15 We don't keep eggs in the fridge.

Number 15, we don't put fridges in the eggs, wrong. Number 15, we don't always put our eggs in the fridge. I don't know if this is weird for you. I remember going abroad and seeing fridges in the eggs, fridges in the eggs. I remember going abroad and seeing eggs in the fridges. I remember some fridges arriving with egg holders. I thought that was so weird. Now, I like a nice room temperature, egg. Oh, yes. Why does that sound like an innuendo?

16 We are obsessed with the weather.

16, this one goes without saying we are obsessed with the weather, even if it's so boring, "Oh, it's slightly grand windy today." We will tell you that, "Oh it's a bit grand windy. Isn't it?" It does change so much that it is quite entertaining. We've got, sometimes we don't have that much in our lives to talk about. So the weather is just a really good one to go for.

17 We fight a lot about scones.

Number 17 scone or scone. Okay. This is the conundrum. And actually there's a part two to this conundrum as well. That is a baked good, which I call a scone as in gone, but other people call it a scone as in cone. And there's a big fight, a big divide in the UK about whether it is a scone or a scone. I don't want to get involved in that. I'm not going to say scone is wrong, but I do prefer scone (as in gone). The other part of this conundrum is the order in which you put toppings. Typically we serve scones or scones with jam and clotted cream. They are absolutely to die for. If you come to the UK, make sure you have an afternoon tea with scones or scones. Now I always put clotted cream first, then jam. But some people will swear you have to put the jam first, then the clotted cream. I'm not going to tell you, which is right. You're just going to have to try it out for yourself. But I think logistically cream first, then jam.



18 We are awful at ending conversations.

Number 18. We are terrible at ending conversations. Honestly, this is the most annoying thing ever. There is a huge culprit of this, and this is my fiancé, Will. Typically, when we want to end a conversation, we will say, "Right," and kind of, "I need to be heading off." Or, "I must get a move on." Or, "I need to get going." But for some reason, some people really struggle with this. And when you have two people that struggle with ending conversations coming together, you could just go on for eternity. It's really, really troubling.

19 We overuse the word 'sorry'.

Number 19, we really overuse the word, sorry. This was further solidified in my mind last night. We watched Bridget Jones and there was the scene where Mark Darcy or Colin Firth and Hugh Grant were fighting and they were knocking over things on people's tables, in a restaurant and they were still apologising. We just can't help it. I find myself apologising for apologising too much.

20 We eat a lot of pre-made sandwiches

The final weird thing that British people do is consume a lot of pre-made sandwiches. It's a bit of a random one, but there is something very exciting about going on a short car journey and stopping off for lunch. And lunch will be a pre-made sandwich in a box. You can get them from petrol stations or you can get them from supermarkets. I know Tesco does something called a meal deal, where for a certain amount of money, you get a sandwich, a snack and a drink, and people absolutely love it. And they try to get the most value from that meal deal. They say, you can tell a lot about a person from what they choose for their meal deal, but I've travelled to a couple of countries and I've never seen the sheer amount of options for pre-made sandwiches that we have in the UK. It's crazy. Every flavour, every feeling so creative as well. Prawn is my favourite, Prawn Mayonnaise. I absolutely love it. The Christmas range is in full swing at the moment. We have turkey and stuffing sandwiches. Awesome. I saw a duck l'orange sandwich the other day. I wouldn't say it's something I recommend. Actually, if you want to have a British experience, when you come over to the UK, go to a petrol station, buy a sandwich, then you will feel like a Brit, right?