
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Ate



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak, where we explain phrases used by fluent English speakers so that you can use them as well. I'm Feifei, and I'm joined by Beth. Hello Beth!

Beth

Hi Feifei. Did you watch the awards show last night?

Feifei

With that singer? Yes. Incredible. The vocals, the outfit, her confidence - she ate.

Beth

When you say 'ate', you're not talking about food, are you?

Feifei

No, no. In modern slang, 'ate' means someone did something very well. It's often used for performances and fashion.

Beth

Ah, OK. So, if someone gives a motivating speech with loads of confidence, I could say they 'ate'?

Feifei

Absolutely. So I went to this fancy dress party the other night. My costume ate. It was fantastic.

Beth

Oh, I want to see pictures.

Feifei

Let's listen to more examples of 'ate'.

Examples

Georgie had such a cool hairstyle yesterday. It absolutely ate.

Did you see the Women's Euros football final? Chloe Kelly's winning penalty ate.

We went to do some karaoke the other night, and Beth chose a big musical song to sing. She got up there, and she ate and left no crumbs.

Beth

Now, we just heard an example with 'ate and left no crumbs'. We can add 'and ate no crumbs' to mean something is completely faultless – nothing was left behind or is negative. So, it's an even bigger compliment!

Feifei

Yes, and another word that has a similar meaning to 'ate' is 'slay'. You can use them in the same way, but remember they're both informal slang.

Beth

You ate that definition, Feifei. What an episode!

Feifei

Right? We'll be back next time with another useful English phrase. See you soon!

Beth

Bye!