
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Neck of the woods



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Feifei

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak, where we explain expressions used by fluent English speakers so that you can use them too. I'm Feifei.

Phil

And I'm Phil. What have you been up to, Feifei?

Feifei

Well, I just had an old friend visit. I told her, 'Drop in if you're ever in my neck of the woods', and she did!

Phil

Wait, Feifei, you live in the woods?

Feifei

No, no, it's just an expression – 'my neck of the woods' means my area.

Phil

Oh, yes. And I think that's the expression we should learn in this programme – 'neck of the woods'.

Feifei

OK. Yes, so, when someone is talking about 'their neck of the woods' or 'that neck of the woods', they are talking about an area, or part of an area. It's quite an informal expression. If someone recommends a great restaurant, for example, you might say, 'I'll have a look when I'm in that neck of the woods'.

Phil

When someone talks about something that's near where you live, you might say, 'Oh, that's in my neck of the woods'.

Feifei

Let's listen to these people using the expression 'neck of the woods'.

Examples

I'm going to be in your neck of the woods next week. Shall we go for a coffee?

I live in the suburbs of the city. Nothing exciting happens in my neck of the woods.

I'm not really familiar with this neck of the woods but I do know a few good shops around here.

Feifei

We've been learning the expression 'neck of the woods' to talk about an area or part of an area.

Phil

We've already said that it's quite informal, so it's most likely to be used in speech, rather than in writing. It's also really common to use a possessive pronoun to relate it to a person – we often talk about 'my neck of the woods' or 'your neck of the woods'.

Feifei

Well, I need to get back to my neck of the woods now – see you next time!

Phil

See you then! Bye!

Feifei

Bye!