

Chatterbox #301 – Queen Elizabeth II

AD-FREE

Episode description

Queen Elizabeth II was an important figure both in Britain and around the world. She was the longest-reigning monarch in British history and died at the age of 96 on September 8th, 2022. In this episode, Andrew and Anna talk about the Queen's life and her legacy. Tune in to learn more about one of the most famous women in the world!

Chatterbox is a series for intermediate and advanced English learners in which native English speakers have natural conversations about interesting topics. Learning with our Chatterbox series will help you improve your English listening and speaking skills and expand your vocabulary.

Fun fact

Royal funerals are planned out in advance, but did you know that Queen Elisabeth's funeral had been in preparation since the 1960s? The plan was called "Operation London Bridge", and the code phrase for the Queen's death was "London Bridge is down".

Expressions included in the study guide

- Well-off
- Fair share
- By no means
- The dust settles
- Top Trumps
- Down to a T/tee



Transcript

Note: The words and expressions that appear in **bold text** within the transcript are discussed in more detail in the Detailed Explanations section that follows the transcript. The transcript has been edited for clarity.

Andrew: Chatterbox episode 301. Queen Elizabeth II featuring Anna and Andrew.

In today's episode, we're going to learn about the life and legacy of one of the most iconic figures of our time, Queen Elizabeth II. We'll do a deep dive into her life story and talk about her early days as a princess, her role as a queen, and her passing and her funeral. And at the same time, we'll also improve our English skills as we explore key events and historical moments that took place during her reign. A little later on in the episode, I'll be joined by my cohost, Anna, and we'll chat together about the Queen's legacy and what she meant to British people.

For many Britons, and indeed for many around the world, Queen Elizabeth II was a cherished figure, known for her dedication to public service and her remarkable longevity. She ascended to the throne in 1952 and ruled until her death on September 8th, 2022. That means that she was the queen for over 70 years, which makes her the longest reigning British monarch and according to Wikipedia, gives her the record of having the longest verified reign of any female monarch in history. Queen Elizabeth II was born on April 21st, 1926, and her full name was Elizabeth Alexandra Mary Windsor. She was the first child of the Duke and Duchess of York, and had a younger sister named Margaret. Elizabeth was educated privately at her home by her mom and her governess. Now, the word governess isn't used very much these days. But it's what we used to call a woman who tutored **well-off** students in their homes, usually in the subjects that we nickname, the three R's. And those subjects are, reading, writing, and arithmetic, arithmetic is math. Even though only one of those words actually begins with the letter R, we call them the three R's because they all have that strong, R sound in their pronunciation, right? Reading, writing, and arithmetic. Importantly, a governess has a very different job than a nanny. That's another word that you might be familiar with. Now a nanny is someone who takes care of the physical needs of children. While on the other hand, a governess was a woman who was responsible for their education. I think these days while you may hear the term used occasionally, it's much more likely to use the word tutor.

And while researching for this episode, I learned that Queen Elizabeth II's governess was actually a French native speaker. And as a language teacher myself, I became curious about this, and I went down an internet rabbit hole to learn more. I found a YouTube video of Queen Elizabeth speaking French while making a speech to the French Senate. One of the comments on the video said, "I'm French, and I can safely say that even though you can hear a strong accent, her French is quite impressive." So, I guess that means the governess did a good job at helping Queen Elizabeth II to learn French.

Anyways, let's get back to the life story of Queen Elizabeth. And we're going to skip forward a little bit in time to when Elizabeth was a teenager. Now World War II started in Europe in 1939 and at that time, Elizabeth was moved from her home in London, to Windsor Castle, which is a royal castle that's located outside of London around 30 or 40 kilometers outside of the city. In fact, during the war, millions of British children were evacuated from their homes in major cities and moved to safer places like the countryside or even other Dominion countries. Dominion countries are countries that have a historical relationship with Britain. So, countries like Canada, Australia, or New Zealand. And the children were moved to these places because of the dangers of falling bombs from airplanes, or even the threat of an invasion from enemy forces from the sea.

It was during the war that, Elizabeth, who was a teenager at the time, began her public life. When she was 14 years old, she made her first public radio appearance on the BBC, the British Broadcasting Corporation. And she gave a speech to the children of the nation who, like her, had been evacuated to a different place. I want to play a part of that audio for you so you can hear her posh British accent. And to my ears at least unique way of speaking. I don't know if this is true in your native language, but it's true in English, at least it is for me, when I hear an old audio clip, or watch an old video from maybe 60 or 70 or 80 years ago, the way that people spoke back then was different than the way we speak now. So, I really found this audio clip very interesting. So, let's take a listen, remember, at the time of this recording, Elizabeth was just a princess, and she was only 14 years old. And in this clip, she is giving her first ever radio address by saying goodnight to the children of the country. So, let's take a listen.

Princess Elizabeth: We know, every one of us, that in the end, all will be well, for God will care for us and give us victory and peace. And when peace comes, remember it will be for us, the children of today, to make the world of tomorrow a better and happier place. My sister is by my side, and we are both going to say goodnight to you. Come on, Margaret.

Princess Margret: Goodnight children.

Princess Elizabeth: Goodnight and good luck to you all.

Andrew: Toward the end of the war, Elizabeth joined the Auxiliary Territorial Service, which was the woman's branch of the British army. There she had some freedom away from her family for the first time in her life. And she was trained as a driver and a mechanic, interestingly enough—and I saw some photos on the internet of her standing beside some trucks. So, I'm guessing that maybe she worked on trucks. The war in Europe was finally over on May 8th, 1945. That day is called VE Day or Victory in Europe Day. And as you can imagine, there was quite the party when it was announced that the war was over and the streets of London are filled with people linking arms, singing, and celebrating. As the story goes, Elizabeth couldn't stand to stay inside and not participate in the celebrations. She asked if she could go out and her parents said no. So, Elizabeth and her younger sister, Margaret, put on disguises and snuck out so they could celebrate the

end of the war with the crowds on the streets. I don't know if that is true or not but that's what I read when researching for this episode.

Let's fast forward a couple of years later, the year is 1947 and Elizabeth was 21 years old. She fell in love and married Prince Philip, the Duke of Edinburgh and a former Prince of Greece and Denmark. And Prince Philip actually also happened to be Elizabeth's third cousin. I think in most modern situations getting married to a family member, even someone who's distantly related like a third cousin, this would be off-limits. But as I'm sure many of you know, the royal families of Europe tend to not follow the rules in this kind of situation and it's not too strange for them to do. So, with their parents' consent the couple married and later went on to have four children. Charles, who is the current King of England, plus a daughter, Princess Anne, and two other sons, Prince Andrew, and Prince Edward. At the time of her wedding, Elizabeth was still a princess. But eventually she became queen, right? And the way that Elizabeth became the queen is fascinating and serves as a reminder that much like in anyone's life, there can be a significant difference between our expectations and reality.

You see, it was unlikely that Elizabeth ever thought she would be queen. She was third in line for the throne. The first successor was her uncle, Edward the eighth. And then next in line was Elizabeth's father and then, Elizabeth was third. Now Elizabeth grandfather died in 1936 and at that time, her Uncle Edward then became the king. And when Edward became the king, he was a young bachelor, and was expected to reign for a long time. But this turned out not to happen and because of this, Elizabeth was able to become the queen. King Edward fell in love with an American woman named Wallis Simpson and he intended to marry her. But this was extremely controversial and caused a huge stir in the UK, not only because Simpson was an American, which was the first no-no, but also because she had been previously married and divorced twice. Now, these days getting divorced is really common, and doesn't carry too much of a stigma, especially in English speaking countries. But in those days, remember this was 1936—and in those days, it was a big deal.

Now, you may not know this, but the monarch of England, the monarch means the king or queen, right? So, the monarch of England is also the leader of the Church of England. And it was decided that it would be immoral for the leader of the Church of England, to get married to a woman who had been divorced. So, Edward had a decision to make, he could either give up being the king, follow his heart and get married to Wallis Simpson, or instead, he could keep being the king but without the possibility of marrying his true love. What a decision to have to make. But Edward decided to follow his heart and after only less than a year of being the king, he abdicated the throne. Abdicate means to give something up forever. It's a word that we don't use too often in English, but we do use it in this context, when monarchs or emperors quit their positions forever.

So, Edward abdicated the throne, and decided to marry his true love, and this meant that Elizabeth's father was now the king. By the way, when you hear me use the term the *throne*, I'm not talking about the fancy gold chair that the king or queen gets to sit in. That's

not what I'm talking about. Instead, I'm talking about the state of being the king or the queen. So often, we use this phrase, the throne, to talk about the position of being the king or queen.

So, Elizabeth's dad became the king in an unexpected turn of events. I bet in Elizabeth's mind, she probably thought that the likelihood that she would actually become the queen got a lot more realistic after this interesting turn of events. So now Elizabeth's father is the king. And Elizabeth is just living her life as the princess, she got married to Prince Philip and they moved abroad after their marriage. Philip was in the Navy and his work brought them to various places. I think they spent some time in Malta in the Mediterranean, and they also toured around the world as monarchs too. And then in 1951, the couple plan to go on a trip to Australia and to New Zealand. But before going there, they plan to visit Kenya, which at the time was a British colony. So, they go to Africa and while they were in Kenya, Elizabeth's father died, and she was proclaimed the queen. So, Elizabeth and her husband rushed back to London for the funeral, and to assume this new position of the Queen of England, and they also moved into Buckingham Palace, the Royal Palace in London, at this time.

Queen Elizabeth's reign was marked by several significant events, both in the UK and also around the world. She saw 15 prime ministers come and go, including some very well-known ones like Winston Churchill, Margaret Thatcher, and Tony Blair. She also witnessed some of the most significant global events of the 20th and 21st centuries, like the Cold War, the decolonization of Africa, the breakup of the Soviet Union, and also, Brexit. She also saw major social changes in the UK itself, such as increased racial and gender equality. Throughout her reign, Queen Elizabeth II was a symbol of continuity and stability for her country and the Commonwealth. Now, for those of you who don't know, the Commonwealth is a political association of 56 countries, most of which are former territories of the British Empire. So, countries like Canada, Australia, and India are all members, for example. Now as for the Queen's actual job, well, she's not in charge of creating any laws or passing any laws, that's not really what she did. Instead, she undertook many official engagements including visiting countries and addressing national and international events, and she also addressed the citizens of the nation every year on the radio or TV at Christmas time.

Aside from her public duties, Queen Elizabeth was also known for her love of animals. She was a horse lover, and had a passion for dogs as well, especially corgis. And apparently, she owned more than 30 corgis during her life. Despite her lengthy reign, Queen Elizabeth remained popular with the British public and her diamond jubilee celebration back in 2012, which marked her 60th year on the throne, was widely celebrated both in the UK and throughout the Commonwealth. In my home country of Canada, there were celebrations there as well. The jubilee was marked by a series of events and celebrations including a concert at Buckingham Palace, featuring performances from some of the biggest names in music, including Elton John, Paul McCartney, and Stevie Wonder.

Of course, not everything was easy for Queen Elizabeth and her reign also saw its **fair share** of controversies and challenges. One of the most famous and significant was the breakdown of her son Charles' marriage to Princess Diana. And this led to a great deal of public scrutiny and criticism of the royal family. And then more recently, the monarchy has been facing criticism for the way that it's handling the allegations of sexual misconduct against Prince Andrew, who is Queen Elizabeth's second son.

As you may have heard on September 8th, 2022, Queen Elizabeth II died at the age of 96. She passed away peacefully at her summer residence Balmoral Castle, which is located in Scotland. The passing of a monarch and the ascension or the rise of a new one, are significant events in the UK, and there are many traditional ceremonies and speeches that take place during that time, as the late monarch is honoured, and the new monarch is crowned.

So as news of her death spread around the world, many mourned the loss of Queen Elizabeth II, but I also think it's important to mention that not all views on the monarchy are positive. Some individuals may hold negative views of the monarchy due to historical events such as colonization and imperialistic actions by the British Empire. And as a Canadian, I can report that this feeling is really strong among many of my generation, and also people who are younger than me in Canada. The Queen's funeral happened on September 19th, 2022, at Westminster Abbey in London, England.

So that brings us up to date about who Queen Elizabeth II was and gives us a little bit of insight into the kind of life she led. Joining me now to talk about the life and the death of Queen Elizabeth is Culips' very own British expert, Anna. Anna, can I call you a British expert? Is that fair? I guess compared to me you are.

Anna: Well, OK. All right. I can be the resident British expert. But **by no means** does that mean I know everything—but, well... Hi, Andrew, how are you?

Andrew: I'm good, Anna. And Queen Elizabeth passed away now, a little while ago, kind of **the dust has settled** since her death. And I thought now it would be a good time to sort of look back and reflect on her life and, also, react to the news of her death. And yeah, so Anna, why don't we get into it? I guess maybe we'll start just with like a general question. And what about your personal thoughts about the Queen while she was alive? Were you a queen fan? Were you not a fan of the queen? Were you indifferent and just didn't really care at all? Like, what was your kind of opinion of the woman?

Anna: Well, I mean, number one, I think she is iconic really across the world but in—our country, she's really an iconic figure. And I really liked that expression that you used there, Andrew, **the dust has settled**. And that means like returning to normal, things are getting back to how they were before because obviously when she died, there was a huge, you know, press coverage and its kind of dominated things for a few—a few weeks. But yeah, I mean, I think I wouldn't really put myself in any category. But I would say that I have an enormous amount of respect for the Queen because—purely from the basis of, I

really do feel that she sacrificed a part of her life in order to be the Queen. And she didn't expect that, it was a series of quite unexpected events that led to her actually being Queen.

And I think I can't imagine what it would have been like for somebody who was in their 20s to then take on this huge responsibility. And not only that, but you are just in the limelight, you are just in the public eye all the time. And you have to sacrifice some of yourself for that. So, I have a huge amount of respect for her. And I wouldn't say I was one way or the other. I mean, the royal family is like any other family, which is kind of hard to imagine that but they're the same as other families, they've had problems. They've had issues, there have been things that maybe they've done well, things that they haven't done well, they're still normal people at the end of the day. But I do think a lot of people—not just myself, I think a lot of people even though maybe they're not like "I love the royal family"—I think they have a lot of respect for the Queen. I mean, she was very, very well loved by people in the UK. So, as far as I'm concerned, obviously, this is my opinion.

But, I mean, just looking at the coverage that it got and, you know, people's reactions after that, like people were sad, like people were crying in the street, people that have never—never even met the Queen personally, you know. I find that a little odd. You know, I felt sad, I felt like it was, you know, a shame. But ultimately, I mean, this was always going to happen. I mean, you know, it wasn't like, you know, she was gonna live forever, so.

Andrew: Right, she was 96, I believe.

Anna: Right. Right, right. So, kind of the similar thing that happened when Princess Diana passed away, and the public were like, crying, and it's kind of a very emotional thing. So, I don't know, everybody has their own way of dealing with it. But it was funny, because somebody actually asked me after when the kind of news broke, they were like, "Are you OK?"

Andrew: Oh, really?

Anna: I was like, well, yeah, yeah, I'm all right. I mean, I'm sure probably Prince Charles and well, King Charles now, I'm sure they're probably feeling a lot worse than I am. But, you know, so, you know, I don't know, I felt OK. But yeah, a huge amount of respect.

Andrew: In a way, did people in the UK maybe kind of see her as like a mother figure or a grandma figure for the country? And so maybe that's why it feels like, you know, we kind of lost like, some kind of maternal power in the country or something like that. Is there that kind of connection at all?

Anna: I'm sure there is probably some of that. She was a constant in our country for... well, 70 years. Coming back to the idea of respect is that she was working two days before she died. Two days before she died, she met the new Prime Minister, Liz Truss. And she was working! She was working. I feel like she hung on right until that moment, because

she knew that was an important time for the country. So, she was like, I just want to hold on a couple more days. I'll meet Liz, and then, you know, I just thought she was working two days before she died. I mean, I don't know. I just think that she really gave her life to serving the country, that's for sure. I really believe that. I personally believe that. And I think that shows a tremendous amount of, you know, work ethic.

And yeah, so I'm sure you're right. I'm sure there's an element of that, you know, that she was this maternal figure, and as I'm sure you know, as well, guys, people don't like change, people get anxious about change. And people are like, OK, what's going to happen now? What's it going to be like with a new king? And, you know, we have her on our coins and on our money. She's not just like, she's physically represented in so many things, tourism. And so, I think it's all of that, like anxiety about change as well. So, yeah.

Andrew: Yeah, that's interesting. Like you said, she was a constant, right? For the last 70 years. And, you know, for anybody under 70 years old, that's all they know, in terms of a monarch. So that's most people, right? Yeah, I think that's very well put that change is uncomfortable, and we never know what will happen with change. So, having stability, having a constant is really nice and comforting. And when you lose that, maybe you do feel anxious about the future. So, I watched the funeral on TV, but I didn't watch the whole thing because it was like an all-day event. It was a really big formal event. And I watched like 30 minutes of it, which was cool. I mean, not that a funeral is cool. But the once in a lifetime formality that you got to see, I think was really cool. There were pipe bands playing, you had world leaders from around the globe attending the funeral. And so that was just really unique to see. I guess maybe that's a better way to put it. Anna, what about you, did you tune in at all to the funeral?

Anna: Well, actually, I didn't. But there is a reason for that. I would've, I would've tuned in. And here guys, I'm using a third conditional, because this is something I can't change in the past, I would've tuned in if I hadn't had work. But I had to work, unfortunately. But in the UK, it's actually a day off. So, it was a day off for the day of her funeral. So, we know is a mark of respect, or I'm not really sure how that works. But it was a day off for her funeral. But unfortunately, in Spain, it was not so I was working. So, I didn't have a chance to watch the funeral live. But I remember as well, the wedding of Catherine and William. Wow, that was like such a big deal. We also had the day off for that which was great obviously because this is a little bit more somber, obviously. So, it's not like, "Yay day off." You know? It's a bit of a different vibe. But that was like, "Yay, day off. Let's get the beers in, let's watch the wedding. And then let's go out." So, that was kind of a more of a celebratory vibe. But I remember that as well and that just being this huge thing.

And like you said, with all the commentary and all the formalities, and it's something that you don't get to see—see very often. And whenever I see these types of events, like the funeral, for example, or the wedding, I just think, who is managing that event, because they must be the most stressed person or I don't know, I just think, wow, the management and organization of those types of events must be insane. But yeah, I didn't—I didn't watch the funeral. But I know what you mean. It's an incredible show of formality and all these

different people that are involved, and the outfits, and the, you know, it's—it's really incredible.

Andrew: I heard that it is planned well in advance. So, whoever is in charge of that event, like they have rehearsed it, and they have a plan in place for years, because you never really know when the monarch is going to pass away, right? Like it could be a sudden death when they're young. And yeah, they have a plan in place already. So, I guess it's just carrying out that plan. Another thing that kind of was interesting is between the death and the funeral, I think there was like 10 or 11 days. So, they do have a little bit of time to get organized. It's not like it happens within, you know, a day or two. So, there is some time to organize that. But when I was watching the funeral, there was a group of new Navy cadets, and they had this very important role of carrying where the casket would be laid on. So, it was kind of like this cart, I don't know exactly what to call it. But they were carrying this cart, and they were brand new Navy cadets who had only enlisted in the Navy like a month ago. So could you imagine how nervous they were feeling. They have to all march in order, right? All step at the same time and move their arms in sequence with each other. And I thought, those guys probably didn't have too much time to practice marching even and now all of the cameras are on them. The whole world is staring at them. And it's this really official, somber event and you don't want to make a mistake. So, I kind of felt like second hand stress for all of them. But they did a good job. They were OK.

Anna: Yeah, I think they probably win **Top Trumps** on the worst first week at your job, right? You're like, "OK, so we're just going to do a very quick induction. And by the way, tomorrow, you're going to be at the front of the parade doing the Queen's funeral if you don't mind." Yeah, you're like, "OK, sure, no problem." You know, and it's always funny, isn't it because you think well, what if one of them has like an itch? Or what if one of them sort of just falls over slightly then they've got to get back into it? They're like, oh, you know? So, it must be quite difficult. But yeah, you're right. I mean, they plan all this stuff. They're super trained, they know how to do these things. And well, even if they were new, but you know, they're—they're planned **down to the tee**, these types of events. And another thing I was going to mention Andrew as well, if you don't mind, is that a lot of people went to see the Queen actually. So, you could go and see the coffin and pay your respects because that's what we say in English, we say, to pay your respects, especially if it's an important figure like this we'll say, to go and pay your respects to somebody.

Andrew: And that means to go and either greet with the family, which obviously in this case, you can't, but to go and kind of say a last goodbye, right? Or to go and see, it could be a closed casket or an open casket, I'm not sure if the Queen was open or closed, but you just go to the place. And maybe you could lay some flowers down or kind of, say a prayer or something like that, kind of say your final goodbye.

Anna: It was interesting because the queues were insane. I mean, there were people at one point, I think the queue time to see her or to pay your respects was 24 hours or something like this. And people were queuing all over London, and you weren't even allowed to bring a chair because, you know, you think, "Oh, I'm gonna go and queue but

no worries, I'll just take one of those little fold out chairs, and I'll just sit on that when I'm in the queue." But no, no chairs, you're in the queue, you're standing up, I think some people did stand up for like 11 hours or 13 hours to go and pay their respects. So, I mean, if that doesn't tell you what the kind of sentiment is about the queen, then, you know, it's a real indication of that. But it was funny because I did watch some of that. And people were kind of very British, and they didn't really know what to do, because you kind of walk next to the coffin, and some people would sort of bow their head and some people would curtsy and there was all kinds of confusion because nobody really knew what to do, you know? Some people would sort of curtsy and then the next person would think, oh, well, I better curtsy as well, so they'd curtsy. And then, you know, so it was all just very British, and we didn't really know what to do and so it was quite funny to watch actually.

Andrew: And for listeners who don't know, and correct me if I'm wrong, Anna, but for women, if you actually meet the queen, or maybe even the king as well, I'm not sure, that is the formal greeting, right, is you do a curtsy, which is where you bend your knees and you kind of lower your body a little bit. But you don't really bow, right? It's kind of like you just sort of make your body lower for a moment and then you come back up. Do I have that correct?

Anna: Yeah, I think so that type of stuff is called like royal protocol. So that's kind of how you should behave. And when you meet people, like, from the royal family, like there's all different types of protocol. And if you were ever to meet them, like they go and meet charities and NGOs and things like this, and they get trained in the correct protocol and things but yeah, I think it's a curtsy, which is just kind of like you kind of bend your knees and you just nod your head slightly, you just bow it slightly. And that's kind of the thing, but I'm not 100% sure if that's when you have to do it, because there's lots of different protocols and things and, you know, and whatnot, but it's certainly one of them.

Andrew: Anna, I have two questions quickly here for you before we wrap up. And the first one is, what do you think the legacy of Queen Elizabeth II will be going forward? How will people remember her?

Anna: I think her legacy is maybe the way that I would talk about this is what I think people can learn from the Queen and the way that she was. And I think for me, it's about you know, she dedicated her life to something, her entire life pretty much. And I think that kind of level of dedication—and also, she was—tended to be—the way that she was publicly was she was very calm. You know, we would always say stoic, and she would never really express a lot of emotion. So, she didn't smile very much, especially in her in the later years. She was very kind of deadpan, and deadpan that's a really weird expression. But that means, like, no expression, like, not smiling.

Andrew: No animation to the face, right? Another word that you just said, is stoic, so I think of like a statue, right? Where you're just kind of like you're made out of stone and your face isn't moving very much. And I think the Queen, she had, like, a kind of friendly

vibe. But you're right that she you know, you didn't see her like laughing a lot or smiling a lot very, very much. She was rather deadpan, like you said.

Anna: Yeah. And I think there's something to take away from that. I mean, obviously, maybe it's not everybody's cup of tea. And I think sometimes maybe it would have been nice to see her be a little bit more animated and like she was kind of enjoying herself because I think sometimes it looked like she was having the worst time of her life, maybe she was, I don't know. But you know, so I think getting on with things and dealing with difficult things and just that type of personality, I think is something to take away from all the work she did. I mean, there's loads of things, I'm not doing it any type of justice here. I'm really not an expert on the Queen or this is just my kind of viewpoint. So, I'm sure there's many more things that people would say are her legacy, but for sure she's had an incredible impact on our country. But not only our country—on around the world. I mean, she really was one of the most well-known people around the world, I imagine.

Andrew: Yeah, definitely. I think seeing all of the guests at the funeral that really put it into perspective for me, because, you know, there are other monarchs around the globe. But when they die, I don't think all of the world leaders go to the funerals like, that was a really interesting thing to see that really put it in perspective about how influential she really was. Anna, my final question is about the King. So now, Queen Elizabeth, has passed on the crown to King Charles III. What do you think about King Charles? It feels a little weird for me to say King Charles. Did you think that way when you heard it for the first time, because we've known him our whole lives as Prince Charles but now, he's the King.

Anna: Yeah. And they have to change the song as well, the national anthem, they have to say, "God save the King" rather than "God Save the Queen." So, they change that immediately afterwards. I really don't know. I think Charles is definitely a different person. He's definitely a different character. He's much older, becoming the monarch, than Queen Elizabeth. I mean, Queen Elizabeth was, I think, in her 20s and obviously, Charles is much, much older. So obviously, that brings a level of experience with it. But I mean, public opinion on him, I would say is more divided. I think people have got to give him a chance and see what happens. This is the definition of, he's got big boots to fill or shoes to fill, which is kind of where you've got somebody who's either really good at something or whatever, and you've kind of got to follow that. I mean, imagine how he must feel? Like, how do you follow the Queen really? I mean, it's a hard gig, right? So, I think he's gonna put his own stamp on it. He's gonna to do his thing. And I think, let's see what happens. What do you think, Andrew?

Andrew: Yeah, I have no idea. You know, he's led a very controversial life, as opposed to the Queen where it was kind of constant and stable. But yeah, Prince Charles, when he was younger, and the whole Diana phase of his life, you know, there was a lot of controversy back then. So, we'll just have to see how it plays out. And time will tell, Anna, but let's hope for good things, right?

Anna: Sure. Exactly, yes.

Andrew: So that will bring us to the end of this episode, everyone. Thank you for listening. Congrats on doing some English listening practice. And we hope you enjoyed this episode. And of course, now we would like you to contribute to the conversation. And you can do that by leaving a comment on our website. So, if you have any feedback or questions for us, please don't be shy, and get in touch. We'll be back soon with another brand new episode, and we'll talk to you all then. Goodbye.

Anna: Bye, everyone.

Detailed Explanations

Well-off Adjective

Well-off means rich. If a person is **well-off**, they have a lot of money and can afford to live a comfortable life; they're financially secure. Usually, **well-off** people come from wealthy families, where money is passed down from generation to generation. The word **well-off** is often used as a polite alternative to the word rich, which in some certain situations and contexts, can sound a little too direct.

In this episode, Andrew says that Queen Elizabeth was educated by a governess. Then he explains that a governess is a woman who tutors **well-off** students in their homes. In other words, the families of these students have enough money to afford a governess to educate their children.

We talk more about this expression in Catch Word #183. Check it out to learn more.

Here are a couple more examples with **well-off**:

Isabella: What are you watching?

Emmett: It's a YouTube blogger. She's travelled to every country in the world by the time she was 21!

Isabella: No way! Does she have, like, super rich parents?

Emmett: I don't think so. She says she's been working and saving up since she was 12. I guess you don't have to be **well-off** to travel the world!

Emma: I met such an awesome guy at work today! I think I'm in love.

Miles: Really? Tell me more about him, will you?

Emma: He's smart, handsome, and quite **well-off**. He showed me some pictures of his house and it's like a castle! He even has a chauffeur, can you imagine?

Miles: Wow, okay, I see why you like him so much now. I hope he's a nice person, too.

Fair share Idiom

Fair share literally means the amount of something that someone deserves, or thinks is reasonable. For example, if two people split money they earned working together, half would be a **fair share** for each of them.

However, **fair share** is often used to emphasize a big enough amount of something. If someone has their **fair share** of something, it means they have a lot of it. This expression is used to talk about both positive and negative things that happened to a person. For example, a **fair share** of problems, a **fair share** of good luck.

In this episode, Andrew says that Queen Elizabeth and her reign saw its **fair share** of controversies and challenges. He means the Queen had to deal with a lot of problems and criticisms during her reign, brought on by the actions the monarchy and the UK.

Here are a couple more examples with **fair share**:

Charlotte: I just had a huge fight with Chris again. I don't know, it's like he doesn't listen to me, he just keeps doing the same thing over and over again.

Dylan: It happens, couples fight. What matters is how you deal with it. You need to learn to communicate effectively and listen to each other's perspectives.

Charlotte: Why can't we have a perfect relationship like you and Denise? I've never seen you two fight, you're always so sweet to each other.

Dylan: Well, we've had our **fair share** of problems like every couple. But we learnt to work on our problems together. It takes time and patience.

Mia: I can't believe you're selling your company!

Owen: I wouldn't be doing it if I had a choice.

Mia: Is there really nothing you can do to stay in business?

Owen: I'm afraid not. But don't worry, I'm okay with that. We've had our **fair share** of success, it's time to move on.

By no means Idiom

By no means is an expression used to emphasize a negative statement. It means “not in any way”, “not at all”, or “absolutely not”. You can hear a variation of this expression “not by any means”, which has the same meaning.

It’s important to note that if this expression is used at the beginning of a sentence, we change the word order and put the auxiliary verb before the subject. This is called inversion. For example, “**By no means** do I want to argue with you.” It means I absolutely do not want to argue with you.

In this episode, Andrew calls Anna a British expert. She replies by saying that even though she is British, **by no means** does it mean that she knows everything about Britain. In other words, just because she’s British, it doesn’t in any way make her a British expert.

Here are a couple more examples with **by no means**:

Walt: I’m not feeling well. I’m afraid I can’t go to the concert with you guys.

Ruby: You poor thing! Do you want me to stay home with you?

Walt: **By no means** do I want you to miss the show because of me! You should go, I know how you’ve been looking forward to it. I’ll be fine.

Ruby: Okay. Get better! I’ll check on you tomorrow.

Rob: This steak is so good! Do you want a bite?

Julie: I don’t eat meat, remember? I became vegan last week.

Rob: Right. So, how is this whole vegan thing working out for you?

Julie: I’m feeling much better if I’m honest. It was the best decision I’ve ever made.

Rob: I just don’t understand why somebody would be willing to give up eating meat. It’s so delicious! I’d never do that.

Julie: I’m **by no means** saying that you should become vegan, I’m just sharing my experience.

The dust settles

Idiom

The dust settles literally means dust particles in the air slowly move down to the ground. For example, if a car drives through a dusty road, it leaves a cloud of dust in the air. But after a while the dust comes back down or *settles*.

However, this expression is commonly used when talking about things getting back to normal, the way they were before something unusual or serious has happened. In this episode, Andrew says **the dust has settled** since the Queen died. This means things are back to normal, they've calmed down since news of the Queen's death shocked millions around the world.

This expression is used with conjunctions like when, after, as soon as, etc. For example, "I'm dealing with a crisis at work now, but I'll call you later when **the dust settles**". Another common phrase you might hear is to let **the dust settle**. It means to wait until things are back to normal.

Here are a couple more examples with **the dust settles**:

Employee: Is Harry in his office? I was going to ask for a day off tomorrow.

Secretary: He's just off the phone with the client, I think they had an argument or something. He looked very annoyed. I wouldn't do it now if I were you. Maybe wait until he calms down a bit.

Employee: Yeah, I'll **let the dust settle** and ask him a little later.

Leo: So, when are you coming to visit me in Germany? Now that you live in Europe, we're so much closer!

Sofia: We only just moved; we haven't even unpacked yet. It's been a crazy week. Our bags were lost first, and then the landlord said we couldn't move in straight away. I would love to come and see you, but right now is just not a good time. I'll give you a call **when the dust settles** a bit, okay?

Leo: Sure, no problem!

Top Trumps

Noun

Top is an adjective that means best and most successful of something. *Trump* means the suit in a card game, like the spades, with the highest value that will beat the other suits—the hearts, clovers, and diamonds—in the game. **Top Trumps** is a name of a popular card game in the UK. The way the game works is the players compare their cards' values, and the person with the highest value wins.

In this episode, Andrew talks about the Queen's funeral and mentions the new Navy cadets that were carrying the casket. Anna says that they win **Top Trumps** on the worst first week of work. What she means is, if there were a game comparing people's worst first weeks of work, they'd win, because theirs is the worst.

Although to win **Top Trumps** isn't a standard expression, this reference would likely be understood in the UK as a lot of people are familiar with the game. However, as the game isn't a part of North American culture, this expression isn't common in North America. A similar expression would be "to win a prize for something". For example, if you say that a restaurant should *win a prize* for the worst food, you mean that their food is really bad.

Here are a couple more examples with **Top Trumps**:

Lucy: I'm sorry I'm late! I saw a bird that was stuck in the bushes, and I went to help it to get out. Then I brought it to the vet, but he wasn't there, so I had to wait for another hour.

Sam: Okay, you win **Top Trumps** for the most original reason to be late. Now get to work, please.

Sebastian: I just had the worst date of my life!

Violet: What happened?

Sebastian: She was half an hour late, and then when she finally came, she kept texting someone throughout the entire date!

Violet: Oh, trust me, it could be worse. I once had a date with the guy who brought his ex-girlfriend with him. I was sitting there feeling so awkward. And on top of that, they left when I was in the bathroom! And I had to pay the bill too.

Sebastian: No way! That's awful. You sure win **Top Trumps** for the worst date ever.

Down to a T/tee

Idiom

Down to a T/tee means exactly or completely correct, down to the smallest detail. If something fits you **down to a T/tee**, it fits you perfectly. If you have a skill **down to a T/tee**, it means you've mastered it, and you do it exactly right every time. If you plan your day **down to a T/tee**, it means you have every single step and every little detail of your day planned.

When talking about Queen Elizabeth's funeral, Anna says that these events are planned **down to the T/tee**. She means important events like the Queen's funeral are planned down to the smallest detail, very precisely. Every single step of such events is planned, so that nothing can go wrong.

The origin of this idiom isn't certain, but according to one theory, *to a T/tee* is a shortened version of the old phrase "to a tittle". A *tittle* means a very small part of something.

Here are a couple more examples with **down to a T/tee**:

Logan: What's this smell?

Chloe: I baked a cake! The problem is that it didn't rise. It looks bigger in the picture.

Logan: Maybe you did something wrong.

Chloe: Let me check. Oh. It says pre-heat the oven and then put the cake in. I forgot to do that!

Logan: There you go. When baking, it's important to follow the recipe **down to a T**. Don't worry, you'll get it right next time.

Grace: You're not going to believe this! I met a psychic today.

Matthew: You what?

Grace: My friend's sister is a psychic and I talked to her today. She is a real deal! She knew all about my life **down to a tee**! It was incredible.

Matthew: Are you sure she didn't just ask your friend about all that stuff?

Grace: Oh. I didn't think about that.

Quiz

1. If a person has enough money to afford a comfortable life, they're _____.
 - a) off-well
 - b) will-off
 - c) well-on
 - d) well-off

2. True or False? If someone had their fair share of failures, it means that they had a lot of failures.
 - a) True
 - b) False

3. Which sentence is incorrect?
 - a) By no means should you go there alone.
 - b) I am by no means an expert.
 - c) By no means I wanted to hurt you.
 - d) It's by no means easy.

4. If the dust has settled, it means that _____.
 - a) your house needs to be cleaned
 - b) the situation has gone back to normal
 - c) something unusual has just happened
 - d) the situation got worse

5. If you plan every single detail of an event, you plan it _____.
 - a) by a tee
 - b) from A to T
 - c) down to a tee
 - d) to a tea

Writing and Discussion Questions

1. What is your opinion on Queen Elisabeth? What was something that you learnt from this episode that you didn't know about her before?
2. If you could spend a day of your life being royal, would you enjoy it? What are some of the upsides and downsides of this kind of life?
3. What is something you had your fair share of in your life?
4. Describe a situation when you had to let the dust settle before doing something.
5. Do you usually plan things and follow instructions down to a T?

Quiz Answers

1.d 2.a 3.c 4.b 5.c

Episode credits

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