
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

Love the foods you hate



This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Neil

Hello. This is 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English. I'm Neil.

Becca

And I'm Becca. Neil, are there any foods that you used to really hate in the past but now don't mind?

Neil

Yes, actually. There's a Japanese food called umeboshi which, when I first tried it, I really didn't like. But after a while, I got used to it and actually, now, I really love it. How about you?

Becca

A similar story to me with olives. I used to really hate olives but, as I've grown older, I've also grown to love them.

Neil

Well, in this episode, we'll be learning from food experts about why there are some foods we just hate, and whether it's possible to learn to love them.

Becca

Yes, and as usual, you can find a transcript for this episode, along with all the vocabulary and a worksheet, on our website bbclearningenglish.com.

Neil

OK, the question for you, Becca. What word means to have a fear of new things, such as trying new foods? Is it:

- a) aerophobia,
- b) claustrophobia, or
- c) neophobia?

Becca

Well, Neil, I'll go for c) neophobia, because neo sounds like 'new'.

Neil

That's clever thinking but let's see. Now though, back to food. Some experts have said that we can teach ourselves to like new things. Ruth Alexander asks Dr Dana Small of McGill University where our dislike of certain foods comes from in this BBC World Service programme, The Food Chain.

Ruth Alexander

Are food dislikes learned or genetic, **hard-wired** in some way?

Dr Dana Small

Ah, both! So, there's many reasons why you can dislike a food. For example, you could, **via** genetics, smell coriander or taste coriander differently. Uh so, that's genetic. But there's also a really strong learning component.

Becca

Dana explains that how we taste or smell something can be different depending on our genetics. However, how we taste or smell something can also be learnt.

Neil

Ruth asked if a dislike for certain food is hard-wired, and Dana confirmed that this is sometimes the case. The adjective **hard-wired** describes automatically thinking or behaving in a particular way, for instance, because it's genetic.

Becca

And Dana says that you could taste food differently to others via genetics. The preposition **via** means by the way of or by the use of. For example, I get to work **via** a train.

Neil

So, there are lots of different reasons why we dislike some foods, but can we change that? Let's listen to Dietitian Claire Thornton Wood explaining on the BBC World Service programme, The Food Chain.

Claire Thornton Wood

One of the really good techniques that we might use is something called **masking**, where you dip a food that you don't like into something that you do like. For those parents who really say they like everything, we actually get chocolate-covered insects and we offer those and actually people do eat them and try them. And I

think it's the concept that it's an insect, but usually they find that once they eat it, there isn't anything **inherently** unpleasant about it. It's a little bit like eating just a bit of crunchy chocolate.

Becca

Claire uses **masking**. **Masking** is the act of stopping something from being seen. In Claire's clinic, she masks the disliked foods with something that is liked.

Neil

Yes, and what parents usually find out is that the food they dislike isn't **inherently** bad. The adverb **inherently** describes something that exists in a way which is natural or essential. So, insects aren't **inherently** unpleasant to eat, some of us think they are because the concept of eating them could be strange to us culturally.

Becca

We talked about how people sometimes fear trying new food. Claire talks about where these fears might come from.

Claire Thorton Wood

For instance, just say that you had eaten prawns in the past and you had become unwell from eating them, you know, you had what you call a **dodgy** prawn. There's a good chance that you might actually associate that with eating the prawn and think, oh, I don't want to eat the prawn again because it's going to make me unwell. So, that's a sort of fear-based **avoidance**.

Neil

Claire said that you're likely to have a fear of a food if you've had a bad experience with it. She uses the example of eating a **dodgy** prawn, which would make you unwell. If something is **dodgy**, it's generally bad or has a bad reputation. But when we talk about food, it could mean that it's undercooked, old or has been left out, therefore making you sick.

Becca

In fact, we may avoid dodgy things. To avoid is to keep away from something. So, **avoidance** is the act of keeping away. Now, Neil, that reminds me of the question you asked earlier.

Neil

Ah yes. I asked you what word means to have a fear of new things, and you answered c) neophobia. And, Becca, I'm pleased to say your answer was correct!

Becca

So, my thinking was right! That's great. Now let's have a recap of the language we've learnt in this episode, starting with **hard-wired**, which describes automatically thinking or behaving in a particular way, because of genetics, for example.

Neil

Via is a preposition that means by way of or by use of.

Becca

We had **masking**, that's hiding or stopping something from being seen.

Neil

The adverb **inherently** describes something that exists in a way which is natural or essential.

Becca

We also had **avoidance**, that is the act of keeping away from something.

Neil

And finally, when we talk about food, **dodgy** means something that can make you unwell. Once again, our six minutes are up, but head over to our website, bbclearningenglish.com, for a quiz and worksheet for this episode. See you there soon. But for now, it's goodbye.

Becca

Goodbye!

VOCABULARY

hard-wired

describes automatically thinking or behaving in a particular way

via

by way of or by use of

masking

hiding or stopping something from being seen

inherently

existing in a way which is natural

dodgy

something bad that, when talking about food, can make you unwell

avoidance

the act of keeping away from something