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Neil

Welcome to Authentic Real English, with me, Neil...

Feifei

... and me, Feifei.

Neil

In this episode, we are looking at the expression: 'under your breath'. It means 'say something so quietly that no one else can hear exactly what you're saying'.

Feifei

我们用“under your breath”来描述一个人“低声抱怨，小声嘀咕”。这个表达中的“your”可以用“my、his、her”等物主代词来替换。“Under your breath”可以与动词“talk”搭配使用——“talk under your breath”。我们“talk under our breath”的原因经常是想让别人知道我们对某事感到不满，但又不想让人听清自己到底说了什么。

Neil

Yes, and it can be a quite unpleasant or nasty situation. We could be saying negative things about someone, and we don't want them to hear exactly what we're saying.

Feifei

没错。比如：昨晚我和佳莹一起看了一部很糟糕的电影。我想表现出来自己不太高兴，但又不想让她知道我的确切想法，所以我说“I hate this film” under my breath.

Neil

While we often use it for complaints or negative comments, sometimes we can use it to describe when we talk to ourselves directly.

Feifei

Yes. 我们还可以用“under my breath”来为自己加油打气。比如：昨天，我和 Rob 打了一局乒乓球。比赛前，我小声说了“'I'm going to beat you' under my breath.”

Neil

Exactly! Let's hear some examples before we talk more about this idiom...

Examples

He always says things under his breath about the work and tasks he's given. I'm not sure what his problem is.

Bruce told himself under his breath that he would not come back to the restaurant again. He hated it.

She said something under her breath, but I couldn't quite hear it! She looked angry though.

Feifei

你正在收听的是 BBC 英语教学的“地道英语”节目。以上我们学习了表达“under your breath”的用法。它的意思是“轻声说话，小声嘀咕”，这样做的原因可能是表现自己的不满，也可能是为自己加油打气。

Neil

We often use it with verbs of speech, so, for example 'I said something under my breath'. We sometimes use it with the verb 'mutter', which has a similar meaning: 'speak quietly in a way that's not easy to hear' and is often used to talk about someone complaining.

Feifei

Yes. 'Mutter something under your breath'. 记住，由于“under your breath”是一句习语，要注意使用的场合。

Neil

The next time you hear someone complaining, but you can't understand everything they're saying, you now know an idiom you can use.

Feifei

They are 'speaking under their breath'. Join us again to learn more common English expressions. Thank you, bye.

Neil

Bye.