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Helen: 欢迎收听 BBC 地道英语节目, 我是 Helen, 可是我的搭档 Neil 看起来非常无奈。
Neil, what are you doing to that mobile phone?

Neil: Argh, I can't get it to make a phone call. It does everything else: it takes photos, it connects to the internet, it even irons shirts but it won't make a call!

Helen: Your mobile irons your shirts?

Neil: No, not really, but honestly it does everything apart from the one thing I want it to do – make a phone call. It's a joke!

Helen: A joke? 一个玩笑。 But you're not laughing. It can't be a very funny joke. 可是我看不到你脸上有任何笑容, 这个玩笑肯定不好笑。

Neil: Well if you say something is a joke in English it can also mean that it's not very good or not worthy of respect.

Helen: 当我们说某件事情是一个玩笑时, 实际是想表达这件事处理非常不当。请听以下几个例子。

Examples

The investigation into police corruption was a complete joke. Everyone knows the officers were taking money but they were let off.

The weather forecast was a total joke. It said it would be warm and sunny but it's freezing and raining.

Helen: 就象我们刚才听到的, 有人形容对警察贪污案件的调查就是一个 **joke**. 这并不是说这件事情很好笑, 实际意思是没人在彻底调查, 根本就不起作用。另外天气预报根本就不准, 所以被形容为 **a joke**.

Neil: Notice that you can add words before 'joke' to make the meaning even stronger.

Helen: 我们可以在 **joke** 这个单词的前面加其他的词来加重语气。

Neil: It's a complete joke.

Helen: A complete joke. 简直不可思议的玩笑。

Neil: It's a total joke.

Helen: A total joke. 意思一样, 完全是个玩笑。

Neil: It's an absolute joke.

Helen: 和刚才的几个一样, an absolute joke. Anyway Neil, why don't you just read the instructions for your new mobile phone? Then you'll probably be able to work out how to make a call. 看看用户手册, 我想你就能知道怎么打电话了。

Neil: I looked at the instructions but they're an absolute joke.

Helen: Oh really?

Neil: Well for a start they are in about 17 languages apart from English.

Helen: What a joke!

Neil: Yeah I know.

Helen: 我们今天听到了不少的玩笑, 但是没有什么笑声。

Neil: Argh, what a useless piece of...

Helen: 希望 Neil 能搞清楚怎么用他的手机。

Neil: Argh, this is beyond a joke, it really is...

Helen: 我们下期《地道英语》节目再会。

Neil: Argh, mobiles...