BBC Learning English Authentic Real English 地道英语 Beat around the bush (说话) 拐弯抹角



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(Li and Rob are outdoors)

Rob: Ah, I love the outdoors! And this is the perfect spot for us to start our

camping adventure, Li.

Li: Oh... yes... nature, Rob. You said this camping trip was an invitation I

couldn't refuse. Well, I really couldn't as you were so insistent...

Rob: Well, we can put the tent over there, next to that bush...

Li: It would be a good place if it wasn't so close to an ant nest...

Rob: ...and we can light a fire near that rock...

Li: ...the wind might put out the fire...

Rob: It's just a breeze.

Li: But it's bringing in the clouds. It's going to rain...

Rob: Li, nothing seems to please you, does it? Are you trying to tell me

something?

Li: Well, the thing is...

Rob: Yes? What's the problem Li?

Li: It's just that the tent is a bit small and... well... you know what I mean...

Rob: Li, I don't know what you mean! Now just come on, just tell me what's

wrong - don't beat around the bush!

Li: Beat around the bush? I'm not even touching the bush.

Rob: I know. In English, when you tell someone not to 'beat around the bush'

you're telling them to stop avoiding saying things directly.

Li: 明白了。在英语里如果有人对你说不要 'beat around the bush' 意思就是不要说话拐

弯抹角。

Rob: Let's hear some examples.

Examples

My boss didn't beat around the bush this morning – he just told me straight: If you want a better salary, go and work somewhere else!

Dinner, cinema... Peter couldn't find the words to tell Kelly he wanted to break up. He spent the whole date beating around the bush. In the end, he broke up with her by text.

Rob: OK, now you know. So Li, stop beating around the bush and tell me what

the problem is.

Li: The problem is: I hate camping!

Rob: Why didn't you say that before?

Li: You were so enthusiastic, I couldn't say "no" to your invitation.

Rob: I'm sorry, Li.

Li: And I'm sorry for beating around the bush. I should have just told you.

(Sound coming from the bush)

Li: And by the look of things we are both going to be sorry if we don't run to the

car and get the hell out of here!

(A roar)

Rob: Oh there is a bear just behind the bush!

Li: A bear?! Let's run, Rob! Bye.

Rob: And it sounds like a really big bear! Let's go! Bye.

Li: Bye.