

Summary

Rob's experienced a shock to the system – does that mean he's been hurt? Maybe it has something to do with him returning to work after a holiday. But whatever injury Rob has suffered, Feifei is on hand with some unsympathetic words! Learn more about the phrase 'a shock to the system' in this programme.

Transcript

Feifei

This is The English We Speak. Hello, I'm Feifei...

Rob

And hello! I'm Rob.

Feifei

Hey, Rob. How was your holiday?

Rob

Absolutely fantastic - a whole week sitting around, relaxing, doing nothing. Perfect!

Feifei

It sounds great, so why are you looking so grumpy today?

Rob

Well, it's my first day back at work and it's been a shock to the system.

Feifei

A shock?! Did you get a shock in the office?

Rob

Well, no. Not something dangerous, like an electric shock. I mean experiencing 'a sudden and unpleasant change from what you have been used to'. For me, it's a change from relaxing and doing nothing on the beach to suddenly being back in the office, sitting at my desk, working hard – with you!

Feifei

That does sound like a shock!

Rob

Well, here are some other people who've experienced a shock to the system...

Examples

After such a long and hot summer, this cold weather has come as a shock to the system.

I hope they can fix my car quickly. Walking to work has been a bit of a shock to the system.

My daughter has found starting secondary school a real shock to the system. She gets so much homework!

Feifei

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. We've discovered that 'a shock to the system' means experiencing 'a sudden and unpleasant change'. It's what Rob's experienced coming back to work today. So, I guess your holiday is already a distant memory Rob.

Rob

Yes, it is.

Feifei

All that relaxing and doing nothing, hey? But I'm still confused.

Rob

Why's that?

Feifei

'A shock to the system' is 'a sudden change' – but you did the same thing on holiday as you do in the office. There's no change!

Rob

Very funny. But, hold on. If that's what you think, I might as well wear these.

Feifei

Oh no! Swimming shorts and a hat! Please, go and cover up!

Rob

OK. See ya!

Feifei

Bye-bye!