Summary

'Big data' is a hot term these days, but do you know what it means? Neil thinks he does, and he thinks it can help him start a successful company. Feifei has other ideas. Join us to learn a phrase that's very 'big' right now!

Transcript

Feifei
Neil, what are you doing? That's the biggest spreadsheet I've ever seen!

Neil
Hi, Feifei. Yes, just you wait. I'm developing a product that will revolutionise English teaching!

Feifei
Great. So why are you looking at screens of numbers?

Neil
Not numbers, data. Big data! This is what I need. And that is the expression we're talking about in The English We Speak.

Feifei
How do you plan to use this data?

Neil
I haven't figured it out yet. But that's not important. Everyone's talking about big data.

Feifei
It is a hot topic. But big data is all about analysis. You need to know what to do with all that data.

Neil
Right.

Feifei
What you are looking at is a list of… football scores… from every country… in 1987?!

Neil
Ah, yes. Not useful?

Feifei
Sadly not! Let's listen to this explanation of what big data actually is.

Explanation
We are surrounded by data. Every time we use social media, buy something online, or

even search for information, we are creating data. Because there's so much of it, and because it comes in many forms, we call it big data.

Companies collect and analyse big data to discover hidden trends and patterns.

For example, online retailers use big data to learn what kinds of things customers like, so they can suggest new products to buy.

Feifei
You're listening to The English We Speak from BBC Learning English. Our expression in this programme is 'big data'. So, Neil, how's your research going now?

Neil
Not well. It's hard to know where to start.

Feifei
Well, you'll probably need information on things like spending patterns on language learning apps, key times users log in and how long sessions last, how demand varies by language level, data on first languages, data on which kind of content is most…

Neil
OK. Stop, stop, stop. I'm trying to write all this down. Feifei?

Feifei
Yes?

Neil
Can I hire you as a big data analyst?

Feifei
Sorry, Neil, you're too late. I'm launching a product of my own. It helps predict football scores. In fact, I need a bit more data from… 1987!

Neil
Well, I might just be able to help you out there!

Feifei
Yes, I think you were actually looking at my screen earlier.

Neil
Sorry! You know, I think I'll leave this big data stuff to the experts.

Feifei
Bye.

Neil
Bye.