

## Summary

Neil is wearing a big wig but it turns out it's not necessary to learn the informal English expression. Find out what it really means in The English We Speak.

## Transcript

### Jiaying

Hello and welcome to The English We Speak. I'm Jiaying...

### Neil

... and hello, I'm Neil.

### Jiaying

Err... Neil, why are you wearing a big wig?

### Neil

Don't you like it?

### Jiaying

Well, it's certainly big!

### Neil

Thanks! I'm wearing it because you said we were talking about the word 'bigwig'.

### Jiaying

A big wig... no, not that kind of wig, Neil! I'm talking about an important and powerful person.

### Neil

Oh, silly me!

### Jiaying

Yes, a bigwig is an important person in a position of power.

### Neil

So, Jiaying, don't I look important and powerful in this wig?

### Jiaying

No – you just look silly. Let's hear some examples of 'bigwig'...

## Examples

We've got some bigwigs in the office today, so we're all on best behaviour.

My dad is a bigwig in the company, so he says he'll help me get an internship.

A local bigwig has given her support for building a by-pass around the town.

**Jiaying**

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English, and we're talking about the word 'bigwig' which describes an important and powerful person. So, Neil, do you know any bigwigs?

**Neil**

Err no, unless you think I'm a bigwig when I wear this big wig?

**Jiaying**

It's certainly given you a big head. But no, I'm afraid you are a little wig! But a CEO of a company, an industry giant or the mayor of a town might be considered a bigwig.

**Neil**

Do they wear wigs too?

**Jiaying**

No, Neil! But the word comes from the 1700s when English men of authority wore wigs and those in higher power wore larger wigs.

**Neil**

Oh, right – I'm off then.

**Jiaying**

Where are you going?

**Neil**

To get a bigger wig – maybe I'll be more important, then!

**Jiaying**

Hmm, I don't think so. Bye.