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Neil

Welcome to Authentic Real English, with me, Neil.

Feifei

And me, Feifei.

Neil

We've got an expression which describes that feeling you get when you're not sure what to say or do. It's 'to be at a loss'.

Feifei

To be at a loss. 我们可以从这个表达中的名词“loss”看出它的大致意思。Imagine you don't know where to go or what to say! You are lost.

Neil

Exactly, so in the case of 'at a loss', we are trying to say that we have no idea what to do or say in certain situations – for example, when we're trying to help someone. So, Feifei, I heard you're going to Spain next week from the UK.

Feifei

是的，你能帮我给酒店打电话预订房间吗？

Neil

Well, I can try, but I'd be at a loss. I don't speak Spanish!

Feifei

Great example. 如果酒店的工作人员对你说西班牙语，你可能会“be at a loss（不知说什么才好）”。再举一个例子：Neil 喜欢打电子游戏，但我却不怎么玩，所以每次玩的时候都会感到茫然、困惑：“I'm at a loss when I try to play video games.”

Neil

Well, maybe I should teach you some time! Let's hear some examples.

Examples

Ahmed was at a loss as to what to do for his wife's birthday.

Kevin didn't know how to operate the new computer system. He was at a loss.

I was at a loss as to what to say to him after his girlfriend left him.

Feifei

你正在收听的是 BBC 英语教学的“地道英语”节目。以上，我们学习了表达“be at a loss”的意思和用法。它用来形容“（一个人在某些情况下）不知所措或不知说什么才好”。

Neil

Yes, so 'at a loss' is nearly always used with the verb 'be' – 'I am', 'he is' or 'she is at a loss'. And it's commonly followed by the words 'as to'.

Feifei

你解释得很到位。I'm at a loss to explain it better. So, what are you doing this weekend?

Neil

My wife and I are going to a restaurant near our house on Friday! What about you?

Feifei

I'm not sure. I'm at a loss as to what to do!

Neil

Well, maybe you can join us at the restaurant – and after that, we can teach you how to play our favourite video game, so you won't be at a loss in future!

Feifei

Thank you. Bye.

Neil

Bye.