

# The Bob and Rob Show

Weekly English Lessons from a Yankee and a Brit.



The Bob and Rob Show Study Guide  
Lesson 152: The Letter E.  
August 22, 2008  
bobrob 08-22-08

## SHOW NOTES

Exhilarating, Exciting, Extraordinary, Entertaining, Educational: this show is about the letter E 😊.

## PHRASAL VERBS & IDIOMS

### “to eat away at something”

To gradually damage or perhaps destroy something over a period of time e.g.: *the sea **eats away at the coastline.***

### “to eat away at someone”

To worry over a long period of time about something e.g.: *the worry about her mother's illness **ate away at her for a longtime.***

### “to eat in”

To have a meal at home e.g.: *I don't have much money today- maybe we should **eat in.***

### EXTRA: “to eat out”

This is the opposite of ‘to eat in’, so it means to go to a restaurant of some kind for a meal e.g.: *I don't feel like cooking tonight. Let's **eat out at that new Italian place down the road.***

### IDIOM: 1) “the empty nest”

This refers to parents whose children have finally grown up and left the family home. These parents are now in a position to have more time to themselves. The phrase comes from the literal image of young birds leaving the nest once they are capable of flying e.g.:

*Well honey, now that we have an **empty nest**, we can go on that cruise that we've always been wanting to take.*

**Note:** *the empty nest syndrome* refers to parents who find it difficult to adapt to their new found freedom and lonelier lives, as although they have more time to pursue other hobbies, they very much miss their offspring.

### 2) “an empty stomach”

To usually do something without having eaten anything, so one's stomach is literally empty e.g.:

*It's better not to run a marathon on **an empty stomach.***

### BONUS IDIOM: “an educated guess”

This means a guess that is actually quite accurate because it is based on past experiences of similar situations. As such, it is something of an oxymoron i.e., two seemingly contradicting words e.g.:

*If you can't tell me the exact building costs, could you please give me your best **educated guess.***

## WORD POWER

We read some of the answers to a question about powerful and positive words that was posted on the web: Read on and Enrich your vocabulary 😊

enigmatic,	egotistical
enormous,	evil,
eloquent,	electric,
exciting,	exquisite,
exhilarating,	empathy,
empower,	encourage

Try to remember these cool ‘E’ words and add them to your vocabulary banks so that you can use them at will.

## **BOTH SIDES OF THE POND**

We look at words beginning with 'E' **funnily enough**<sup>1</sup>:

(US) evening classes (UK) night school

(US) eraser (UK) rubber

(US) expiration date (UK) expiry date

(US) elevator (UK) lift

(US) editorial (UK) the leading article

## **QUOTATIONS**

"People only see what they are prepared to see" Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value" Albert Einstein

## **SONG**

"East St. Louis" by Boo Boo Davis. See more at <http://www.podshow.com>

## **SHOW TRANSCRIPT**

**BOB:** Hi, it's the Bob and Rob Show. This is Bob.

**ROB:** And this is Rob. Hey, hey, hey.

**BOB:** Hey, we're back.

**ROB:** We are indeed. How have you been, Bob?

**BOB:** I've been excellent.

**ROB:** It feels like we were here just a week ago. Oh, we were.

**BOB:** You didn't get my **cue**<sup>2</sup>. I've been excellent.

**ROB:** Excellent.

**BOB:** And that starts with the letter E.

**ROB:** Oh, it does, doesn't it.

**BOB:** Which is the topic of our show today, "the letter E."

**ROB:** Wow. So, the letter E is the topic of our show?

**BOB:** Do you have a problem with that? I kind of like the letter E.

**ROB:** Like you say, it's very common.

**BOB:** Well, the letter E is the most common or highest frequency letter in the English language.

**ROB:** Right. That's true, yes.

**BOB:** Without E, we would just say, "nglish."

**ROB:** Right, very true, very true. E is the fifth letter in the Latin alphabet, so it's name in English is spelled e (pronounced i:).

**BOB:** Plural is es or ees.

**ROB:** Maybe we should just give the phonetic - the phonetic alphabet - there is an i:, that's the phonetic alphabet. And plural es or ees (also written e's).

**BOB:** We should also mention that the letter E is the most commonly used letter in Dutch, French, German, and Spanish languages.

**ROB:** Oh really? That is interesting.

**BOB:** See, you **underestimated**<sup>3</sup> the letter E, Rob.

**ROB:** I underestimated you, Bob. Yes, I'm sorry. But E is generally derived from the Greek letter epsilon.

**BOB:** Oh, that little n, that funny looking n. We'll put a picture on the blog.

**ROB:** It looks a bit like the financial Euro.

**BOB:** The **etymology**<sup>4</sup> is what the Semitic (he), which was first probably a representation of someone praying, or a human figure, like, calling and reaching up towards the sky. They think. And that's where the E, the shape of the E evolved from.

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<sup>1</sup> **funnily enough** = this common phrase is used sarcastically. You can also say *strangely enough* with similar sardonic effect, because the thing you are saying is not strange or funny at all :)

<sup>2</sup> **Cue** = in this context, a *cue* means a hint for you to pick up on and talk about. Rob failed to notice that 'excellent' starts with the letter E. Silly Rob ☺

<sup>3</sup> **Underestimated** = when you underestimate something, you believe it or judge it to be weaker and not as important as it actually is in reality e.g.: *don't underestimate that man just because he is small- I know for a fact that he is a black belt in ju-jitsu.*

<sup>4</sup> **Etymology** = the history and origin of the meaning of a word or phrase or in this case, letter.

**ROB:** That's interesting. And it could have been based on a similar Egyptian **hieroglyphic**<sup>5</sup> or hieroglyph that's pronounced and used very definitely.

**BOB:** It's a mysterious letter. It's a **vowel**<sup>6</sup>, as opposed to a consonant.

**ROB:** Consonant, yes. As opposed to a consonant.

**BOB:** We should know how to pronounce that.

**ROB:** But E came in a long and a short variety. Originally, the only difference was in length but later on, the short e represented, like, a very squiggly n.

**BOB:** Visualize that, listeners.

**ROB:** In the phonetic alphabet. But in other languages that use the letter E, capital or lower case, it represents various other phonetic values.

**BOB:** I think we're really confusing our listeners. This is better to actually illustrate, like using a picture, rather than talk about.

**ROB:** Maybe we can illustrate with some of the accents to indicate the contrasts.

**BOB:** I guess, yeah.

**ROB:** So, what about some difficult words to spell ...

**BOB:** That start with E?

**ROB:** Um.

**BOB:** Embarrass ...

**ROB:** Right, yeah. Embarrass. Right.

**BOB:** Not for me. But for a lot of people the double ss on the end. What's another one?

**ROB:** Equipment ...

**BOB:** Some people that don't know how to spell would put a t after p - equipment. There's twenty-two thousand instances on the Web right now of that being misspelled with the t - equipm~~ent~~.

**ROB:** Oh really? That's incredible.

**BOB:** Another one that's kind of tricky is, exhilarate.

**ROB:** Right, because you have the h, after the x there. Exceed.

**BOB:** A lot of times people **screw** that one **up**<sup>7</sup>.

**ROB:** Right, they might put the e after the d.

**BOB:** I might do that. And existence. Maybe an a, instead of the e - existence. That's one I might do as well. Some famous movies that start with the letter E: *ET: The Extraterrestrial*, 1982.

**ROB:** Yes, Stephen Spielberg, right. That was a great movie. *Ed Wood*, which was ...

**BOB:** Johnny Depp.

**ROB:** Made in '94.

**BOB:** *Empire of the Sun*, 1987.

**ROB:** *The English Patient*. That was with Sir Randolph Fiennes - no, not Sir Randolph Fiennes, sorry.

**BOB:** Ralph Fiennes.

**ROB:** Ralph Fiennes. **Randolph Fiennes**<sup>8</sup>, is the explorer. Sorry.

**BOB:** A little different.

**ROB:** That was made in 1996. Ralph Fiennes

**BOB:** And *Escape From New York*, 1981. So, how's that for trivia?

**ROB:** Interesting.

**BOB:** Let's do a little E quiz, based on the letter E.

**ROB:** Okay, cool.

**BOB:** What is this? Begins with the letter E - and we'll tell you the answer at the end of the show. *I'm an artificial language, invented in 1887 by a Polish philologist*.

**ROB:** Wow, could you say that again, Bob?

**BOB:** *I'm an artificial language, invented in 1887 by a Polish **philologist***<sup>9</sup>. And this starts with the letter E. What is it called.

**ROB:** I think I know that.

**BOB:** I do, too. Okay, do the next one.

**ROB:** This one's concerning who, who is this person. I am credited with saying, "Genius is one percent inspiration, and ninety-nine percent perspiration".

**BOB:** And that person's name begins with the letter E.

<sup>5</sup> **Hieroglyphic** = ancient Egyptian symbols that are found on pharaoh's tombs. They are very difficult to decipher, and many scientists study years in order to master them.

<sup>6</sup> **Vowel** = just in case you weren't sure, the 5 English alphabet vowels are *a, e, i, o, u*. However, numerous other vowel sounds are made when these vowels are combined in some way, making English more difficult.

<sup>7</sup> **screw up** = slang phrasal verb that means to get wrong or make a mistake.

<sup>8</sup> **Randolph Fiennes** = Rob's trivia knowledge let him down unfortunately. The amazing explorer he was thinking of was Sir Ranulph Fiennes. See more about him here in this brief bio: <http://books.rediff.com/bookshop/bkproductdisplay.jsp?MAD.-BAD-And-DANGEROUS-TO-KNOW&prfnbr=81496864&multiple=&frompg=>

<sup>9</sup> **Philologist** = a scientist who studies languages, linguistics and historical and comparative linguistics.

**ROB:** Okay, so you're going to tell the answers at the end of the show, right?

**BOB:** Maybe if our listeners are good, if they behave well. Okay, well, let's move on to some phrasal verbs. And we're looking at the letter E today, so I thought we would do "eat something" which begins with E. "Eat something away," or "eat something away at." What is that?

**ROB:** It's interchangeable, where you can "eat away at something."

**BOB:** That's true.

**ROB:** Well, this means "to gradually damage, or, you know, perhaps destroy it over a period of time."

**BOB:** Well, for example, "The sea 'eats away' at the coastline."

**ROB:** Yes, indeed it does. You can "eat away at somebody."

**BOB:** Yeah, and that means "to worry over a long period of time about something."

**ROB:** For example, "The worry about her mother's illness 'ate away at' her for a longtime."

**BOB:** Just some other quick ones here. "Eat in" means to have a meal at home. So, "I'm kind of tired, why don't we 'eat in' tonight."

**SILENT E:** Who can turn a cam into a cane? Who can turn a pan into a pain? It's not too hard to see, it's silent E. Who can turn a cub into a cube? Who can turn a tub into a tube? It's elementary for silent E. He took a pin and turned it into a pine. He took a twin and turned him into twine. Who can turn a cap into a cape? Who can turn a tap into a tape? A little glob becomes a globe instantly. If you just add silent E. He turned a dam, **alakazam**<sup>10</sup>, into a dame. But my friend, Sam, stayed just the same. Who can turn a man into a **mane**<sup>11</sup>? Who can turn a van into a **vane**<sup>12</sup>? A little hug becomes huge instantly. Don't add w, don't add x, and don't add y or z, just add silent E.

**ROB:** Okay, let's do some Idioms.

**BOB:** What's our idiom for today?

**ROB:** Today's idiom is "the empty nest".

**BOB:** And again, that starts with the letter E.

**ROB:** It does, yeah.

**BOB:** Isn't that neat how I've just kind of ...

**ROB:** Very nice indeed.

**BOB:** Put these all into the same theme.

**ROB:** Good scheduling, Bob.

**BOB:** "Empty nest." We will experience this someday, won't we, Rob?

**ROB:** We will, yeah, because this means "when the parents have finally been left alone, after all the kids have grown-up and left."

**BOB:** So the nest is empty.

**ROB:** That's right, it's kind of like a metaphor.

**BOB:** This can be sad though for some ... it won't be sad for me, but it's sad for some parents. Like my mom has been sad since I left for college. I think she's having the "empty nest syndrome."

**ROB:** Yeah, they call it the empty nest syndrome, don't they? It's interesting. It's now a medical phenomenon

**BOB:** Do you think you're going to have that?

**ROB:** I'm really looking to having an empty ...

**BOB:** In other words, no.

**ROB:** No, of course, I'll definitely miss them. You know, one problem I have, is that living in Japan, I'm really not sure how much I'm going to see my kids.

**BOB:** Why?

**ROB:** If they're working in Japan and they're going to be Japanese businessmen, I probably won't see them.

**BOB:** You're not going to let them do that.

**ROB:** I hope not but, you know, it's up to them ultimately.

**BOB:** Send them to Italy.

**ROB:** Yeah, good idea. What about you, Bob, are you **dreading**<sup>13</sup> it, or are you looking forward to it or what?

**BOB:** I don't know. I can't see that far ahead.

**ROB:** Yeah, it's a long way off.

**BOB:** It is, and it isn't.

**ROB:** Don't worry about it.

**BOB:** Next idiom, "empty stomach." That's not too difficult to figure out.

**ROB:** I've got a bit of an empty stomach.

**BOB:** This means "without having eaten anything." So, can you give an example?

**ROB:** Sure. "It's better not to run a marathon on an 'empty stomach.'"

<sup>10</sup> **Alakazam** = a rather unusual 'magic' word that has been borrowed from another language. Other similar words are: *abracadabra*, *open sesame* and *hey presto*.

<sup>11</sup> **Mane** = this refers to the long hair on a horse or a male lion. Note how the addition of the silent E changes the vowel pronunciation on all of these words.

<sup>12</sup> **Vane** = short for a weather vane, which means an instrument that checks and shows which way the wind is blowing.

<sup>13</sup> **Dreading** = if you dread something, it means you really fear it and are not looking forward to it at all.

**BOB:** That's true.  
**ROB:** 'Cause you won't finish it. The bonus idiom this week is "an educated guess."  
**BOB:** Why don't you give an example. And the meaning - the answer, will be in the study guide. But what's an example, Rob?  
**ROB:** For example, "If you can't tell me the exact building costs, could you please give me your best 'educated guess.'"  
**BOB:** Okay, good.  
**ROB:** Nice example.  
**BOB:** Well, let's just slide into *W O R D*  
**ROB:** P O W E R.  
**BOB:** Word Power!  
**ROB:** Word Power!  
**BOB:** This is interesting. I found this question on a what's called Yahoo Answers, which is a place on the Web where you can pose a question, and people will try to answer your question.  
**ROB:** I see.  
**BOB:** It's kind of interesting. Anyway, for some reason, someone posted this question which is ... why don't you read it.  
**ROB:** What are some positive, powerful words that begin with the letter E?  
**BOB:** Now, I'm not kidding, I didn't make this up. Someone for some reason wanted some suggestions. So here are some of the suggestions. Again, what are some of the positive, powerful words that begin with the letter E? And the first one is ...  
**ROB:** "**Enigmatic**<sup>14</sup> ..."  
**BOB:** Now, these are what people answered. Which means "mysterious," I think.  
**ROB:** That's a really good word, actually. Enigmatic. I wish I was enigmatic, but unfortunately, I'm not.  
**BOB:** Yeah, I don't think I am either. I'm too talkative. "Enormous," which can mean "giant."  
**ROB:** "Egotistical," which means "self-centered."  
**BOB:** Again, these are powerful words. "Evil" - Rob.  
**ROB:** "Eloquent" - Rob.  
**BOB:** What does that mean?  
**ROB:** "Eloquent" means "to be fluent," or "to be a good orator, forceful, or provide moving speech."  
**BOB:** Other powerful words. "Electric ..."  
**ROB:** Perhaps we mentioned that on a previous show on electricity, Bob?  
**BOB:** Yes.  
**ROB:** If something's electric, then it's really ...  
**BOB:** "Exciting!"  
**ROB:** "Excellent ..."  
**BOB:** "Exquisite," which means "extraordinarily fine or **admirable**<sup>15</sup>." Like our Podcast.  
**ROB:** "Exhilarating," also like our Podcast ... that means "to be uplifting."  
**BOB:** Yes. "Empathy," which means "to feel someone else's pain."  
**ROB:** "Enrich." If you enrich your life it means "you make it richer." Not necessarily financially but ...  
**BOB:** Spiritually.  
**ROB:** Yeah, in all other ways.  
**BOB:** "Empower," which means "to give power."  
**ROB:** And "to encourage."  
**BOB:** Yes, and I'd like to encourage you, Rob, to move on to Both Sides of the Pond.  
**ROB:** Okay, yeah, let's do that, then.  
**BOB:** Again, the theme is the letter E, and these are some words in the US we use that begin with E. What do you say in the UK? "Evening classes," like at a university or college.  
**ROB:** We would call that "night school."  
**BOB:** An "eraser"  
**ROB:** No, we say, "rubber."  
**BOB:** A rubber. Okay. That might mean "**condom**<sup>16</sup>" in the US, so be careful.  
**ROB:** That's right.  
**BOB:** "Expiration date"  
**ROB:** We say, "expiry date." On the passport - my British UK passport, it says "expiry date." Does it say "expiration date" on your US passport, Bob?  
**BOB:** I don't know. I don't remember. Probably **it'd**<sup>17</sup> say "expiration date," yeah. "Elevator"  
**ROB:** We say, "lift."

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<sup>14</sup> **Enigmatic** = mysterious, puzzling, contradictory and inexplicable.

<sup>15</sup> **Admirable** = commendable; something that should be appreciated.

<sup>16</sup> **Condom** = just so that you don't get confused: The American slang term for condom is *rubber*, and the British slang term for condom is *jonny*.

<sup>17</sup> **it'd** = note the difficult pronunciation of this contraction, which stands for *it would*.

**BOB:** Done a couple of these before, but it never hurts to review. "Editorial," like in a newspaper.

**ROB:** We would call that "the leading article." Interesting, interesting. Very good.

**BOB:** Well, announcements: If you get a chance, please write a review on iTunes.

**ROB:** And please checkout the blog, there's lots of goodies there.

**BOB:** Goody, goody, goody.

**ROB:** What have we got there, Bob? We've got ... there's the store there with all our old shows.

**BOB:** Yes, Bob and Rob's first forty-nine shows ... forty-seven shows.

**ROB:** When we first started out three years ago. And, yeah, there's a great ...

**BOB:** And font - there's a nice font on our Website.

**ROB:** But the member's profiles, they're pretty cool.

**BOB:** Yeah, you can see what some of our members are like. Anyway, our quotes for today are from people with the last name starting with E.

**ROB:** Ah, do you say, "surname"?

**BOB:** Yeah, surname or family name or last name. Let's see here. Ralph Waldo Emerson said, "People only see what they are prepared to see."

**ROB:** *People only see what they are prepared to see.* Oh, that's interesting.

**BOB:** If you're not ready to see something until you're ready.

**ROB:** It means they'll **turn a blind eye to something**<sup>18</sup>, if they don't like it. They try to ignore it maybe.

**BOB:** That's true.

**ROB:** I guess, it can be interpreted in different ways. I've got one here by Albert Einstein.

**BOB:** Have you ever heard of him?

**ROB:** Yeah, I have, actually. Great scientist. And he says, "Try not to become a man of success, but rather try to become a man of value."

**BOB:** Listen to that, Rob.

**ROB:** Very wise words.

**BOB:** Our song is called "East St. Louis" ... starts with the letter E.

**ROB:** All right. Cool.

**BOB:** Who's it by?

**ROB:** It's by Boo Boo Davis.

**BOB:** Good ole blues song.

**ROB:** Oh, is it? And where did we get the song from, Bob?

**BOB:** We got it from ...

**ROB:** We got it from the excellent, exquisite site ...

**BOB:** Yes. Podshow - music.podshow.com, so if you want to learn more about Boo Boo, go and check it out.

**ROB:** That's true.

**BOB:** Well, this pretty easy Podcast.

**ROB:** Easy, **easy riding**<sup>19</sup> ...

**BOB:** Should we just ease our way out of here?

**ROB:** Well, before we ease out way out of here, Bob, we've got to give some answers to those tricky questions ... you posed.

**BOB:** I almost forgot!

**ROB:** What are those questions again? Let's go over the E quiz.

**BOB:** That's right. I knew there was a reason that I had you on this show, Rob.

**ROB:** Thanks, Bob.

**BOB:** *I'm an artificial language invented in 1887 by a Polish philologist.* And the answer is, Esperanto.

**ROB:** Right. And I believe that it lasted sometime but then it eventually died out, right?

**BOB:** Yeah, they just haven't been able to make it popular.

**ROB:** Yeah, they couldn't revive it. It was an artificial language.

**BOB:** Yes.

**ROB:** An attempt at creating an artificial language.

**BOB:** That was based more on logic, and didn't have - borrowed from different languages, but didn't have all of the exceptions, and was more rule based.

**ROB:** So, can you speak Esperanto?

**BOB:** No.

**ROB:** Neither can I. The second question referred to who was the person that said: I am credited with the saying, "Genius is one percent inspiration, and ninety-nine percent perspiration." And the person who said that, I believe was the same person we quoted ...

**BOB:** Clint Eastwood?

**ROB:** Was it? Albert Einstein?

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<sup>18</sup> **turn a blind eye to something** = an idiomatic expression meaning to ignore something.

<sup>19</sup> **easy riding** = a play on the phrase *easy going*, which means relaxed or laid back. Also it plays on the movie entitled *Easy Rider* which means someone who takes things as they come. This cult road movie classic starred Peter Fonda, Jack Nicholson and Dennis Hopper. See more here: <http://www.imdb.com/title/tt0064276/>

**BOB:** No!

**ROB:** Oh really? I got it wrong!

**BOB:** **Thomas Edison**<sup>20</sup>.

**ROB:** Ooh, really? Okay, I'm sorry.

**BOB:** You jackass.

**ROB:** Edison, it begins with A. Oh really? Okay, why is he ... what did he invent - electricity?

**BOB:** No, he didn't invent electricity. God did that. Well, I mean, he was one of the people behind the light bulb ... and the phonograph. Record player.

**ROB:** He discovered electricity, then.

**BOB:** Yes, Well, you being a Blinking 12:00, you've probably never heard of him. Okay, let's get out of here.

**ROB:** Let's **ease our way out**<sup>21</sup>.

**BOB:** Let's ease our way out. Okay, this is the end. Good-bye.

**ROB:** Take it easy.

**SONG:** "East St. Louis" By, Boo Boo Davis

**Note:** Some of the lyrics below may not exactly match the song, but they are close nonetheless. The reason being is that this song is an old blues standard number, and as such each singer varies the words. This is another element of artistic license, since the artist does not necessarily have to copy the lyrics word for word of the original number. Enjoy 😊

Well I walked all the way from East St Louis town  
Well I walked all the way from East St Louis town

And I aint got a dollar, I aint got but one thin dime  
And I aint got a dollar, I aint got but one thin dime

And if I get lucky, Ill be riding home in style  
If I get lucky Ill be riding home in style

Or I might sleep tonight down by the riverside  
Gonna lay my head down by the riverside

Let that big Mississippi sing my **lullaby**<sup>22</sup>  
Let that old river water sing my lullaby

## **EXTENSION AND REVIEW STUDY**

1/ Have you ever done anything on an empty stomach? If yes, what was it and how did you feel? If no, what advice would you give to people trying to do something on an empty stomach? When was the last time you made an educated guess? Describe the situation and how accurate your guess actually was.

2/ If you have children or want to have children in the future, do you think you will suffer from the empty nest syndrome? What advice would you offer to people who are afflicted with such a psychological illness? Has anything ever eaten away at you? Describe it and how you overcame it. When was the last time you ate out? Describe what you had and the kind of restaurant it was that you visited.

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<sup>20</sup> **Thomas Edison** = Just in case your as unfamiliar with this genius as Rob is, please find out more about the great man himself (not Rob) here: <http://www.thomasedison.com/>

<sup>21</sup> **ease our way out** = to leave in a quiet and simple manner without any fuss or attracting attention to oneself.

<sup>22</sup> **Lullaby** = this is a song that is usually sung to children in order to make them go to sleep. Lullabies are usually very soothing and relaxing songs.