

BBC Learning English
6 Minute English
17 October 2013

Business English: Asking for a pay rise



NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

- Feifei:** Welcome to another episode of 6 Minute English with me Feifei.
- Neil:** And me Neil.
- Feifei:** We're talking about pay and what people earn today and Neil have you brought a salary fact to get us started?
- Neil:** I have! The United Nations International Labour Organisation or the ILO has been looking at earnings around the world, and they've worked out the average person's monthly salary. So, how much do you think it is?
- Feifei:** How much does the average person earn? What, in dollars?
- Neil:** Yep, US dollars. Per month.
- Feifei:** Hmm... I'd say, hmmm, about \$5,000 a month.
- Neil:** \$5,000 a month, are you sure?
- Feifei:** Yes, am I right?
- Neil:** Well, Feifei you're absolutely wrong, I'm pleased to say. According to the ILO, the average worker earns \$1,480 a month.
- Feifei:** Wow, I was a bit generous there...
- Neil:** Yes, very out of character!
- Feifei:** Hmmm, that is a lot less than I was expecting... there'll be a lot of people asking for pay rises then?
- Neil:** I suppose there will! Are you going to be one of them?
- Feifei:** You know me Neil...
- Neil:** Yes I do. Do you feel a role-play coming on?

Feifei: Do you know what - I think I do!

Neil: Can I be the boss?

Feifei: No, I think it's actually my turn to be the boss.

Neil: Every time, every time... so, you are the boss?

Feifei: I am the boss! I don't remember being the boss. Anyway let's get on with the role-play: I'm the boss and you're asking me for a pay rise. Ready?

Neil: Ready!

Role-play

Neil: *Hi, are you free for a quick chat?*

Feifei: *Sure, What can I do for you?*

Neil: *OK. Well, it's a bit difficult, but I think I should have a pay rise.*

Feifei: *OK and why do you feel like that?*

Neil: *Well, I've taken on a lot more responsibility recently and I really believe that I've grown in the job. My last project was very successful and I just think I should be rewarded.*

Feifei: *OK, well, what kind of rise are you thinking of?*

Neil: *Well, I think that 5% isn't too much to ask.*

Feifei: *5%... Hmm... Well, let me think about it and get back to you.*

Neil: *OK, thank you.*

Feifei: Ooooh, you're very persuasive Neil!

Neil: Haha! It's all in the technique.

Feifei: Let's ask Business Betty to tell us more. Are you there Betty?

Neil / FF: It's Business Betty!

Neil: Ah Betty, wonderful to see you. Looking fantastic as ever, you've been on holiday?

BB: Thank you Neil. Yeah, lovely, Costa Brava, very nice.

Neil: With a destination like that, I am sure you earn a lot more than \$1,480 a month, don't you?

BB: Neil, Neil, Neil, you should really know that in British culture, it's terribly impolite to ask people how much they earn.

Neil: Sorry Betty, yes, you're quite right. I shouldn't ask you that. But can I ask you to tell us how to ask for a pay rise?

BB: You most certainly can Neil. There are a few things to remember when you're asking for a pay rise. First, make sure it's a good time to ask.

Neil: Hi, are you free for a quick chat?

BB: Next, use verbs like 'think', 'feel' and 'believe'. And use adverbs like 'really' for added emphasis.

Neil: I think I should have a pay rise. I really believe that I've grown in the job.

BB: Give reasons why you should get a pay rise:

Neil: I've taken on a lot more responsibility lately. My last project was very successful.

BB: Be clear about what you want:

Neil: Well, I think that 5% isn't too much to ask.

BB: And always, always be polite.

Neil: OK, thank you, please. Thank you, please, please.

BB: So to sum up: if you're asking for a pay rise, make sure it's a good time, use phrases like 'I really think', give your reasons, say what you want and be polite! Anything else I can do for you?

Neil: No Betty. You've done more than enough already, thanks Betty.

BB: Then I'll be on my way. Goodbye!

Neil / FF: Bye!

Neil: Full of good advice our Betty!

Neil: Let's do the role-play again shall we?

Feifei: Shall we?

Role-play

Neil: *Hi, are you free for a quick chat?*

Feifei: *Sure, What can I do for you?*

Neil: *OK. Well, it's a bit difficult, but I think I should have a pay rise.*

Feifei: *OK and why do you feel like that?*

Neil: *Well, I've taken on a lot more responsibility recently and I really believe that I've grown in the job. My last project was very successful and I just think that should be rewarded.*

Feifei: *OK, well, what kind of rise are you thinking of?*

Neil: *Well, I think that 5% isn't too much to ask.*

Feifei: *5%... Hmm... Well I'll think about it and get back to you.*

Neil: *OK, thank you.*

Neil: Only 5%, that's not much to ask, is it? Maybe I should have gone for 10%?

Feifei: Neil, we've finished the role-play.

Neil: 15%? Final offer.

Feifei: It's done. No, I can't give you a pay rise Neil, I am not your boss really. I'll buy you a drink after work instead. Is that OK?

Neil: Champagne?

Feifei: No, a drink - a pint of beer. Right, I think that brings us to the end of today's programme. Neil?

Neil: Yes that's all. Good luck to you at home if you're asking for a pay rise anytime soon and join us again for more 6 Minute English.

Neil / FF: Bye!

Asking for a pay rise: Key phrases

Making sure it's a good time to ask:	Hi, are you free for a quick chat?
Phrases with words like 'think', 'feel', believe' & 'really':	I think I should have a pay rise.
	I really believe that I've grown in the job.
Giving reasons why you should get a pay rise:	I've taken on a lot more responsibility lately.
	My last project was very successful.
Being clear about what you want:	Well, I think that 5% isn't too much to ask.
Being polite:	Please.
	Thank you.