



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

- Rob:** Welcome to 6 Minute English with me, Rob.
- Finn:** And me, Finn. Hello.
- Rob:** In today's programme, we're talking about freedom. It's a big subject and it's something the BBC has been exploring in its Freedom 2014 season.
- Finn:** That's right. There's been a season of programmes about what freedom means to different people.
- Rob:** Well, we're going to try and summarise what freedom really is and look at some related vocabulary. But first a definition – what does freedom mean?
- Finn:** According to the Oxford English Dictionary, freedom is the power or right to act, speak, or think as one wants.
- Rob:** Yes, it's something many people expect to have – we consider it our **right** - but certain people in some of the world do not get to experience the feeling of freedom.
- Finn:** You mean some people are **restricted** and controlled in what they can and can't do.
- Rob:** Some organisations try to rank countries – or give them a score – based on how free its people are. It's calculated according to certain factors - and my question for you today Finn is, according to the World Freedom Index 2013 by the Canadian Fraser Institute, the people of which country came out as number one, in terms of having the most freedom? Was it:
- a) the USA
 - b) Sweden
 - c) New Zealand
- Finn:** I'm going to say c) New Zealand.
- Rob:** We'll see if you're right later on. So let's talk more about freedom – a word that means many things to many people. We sometimes hear about political freedom – where people are able to vote in elections to choose who runs their country – and where people are able to challenge what their leaders do. We often refer to this system as a **democracy**.

- Finn:** Many people would say that any system of democracy should automatically include the right to **free speech** – that's the right to say what you want about anything you want. We also hear about freedom for women – when they have the same rights as men. This is one form of equality. We also hear about **equality** for people of different colour, religion or sexual orientation. People usually don't feel free or equal if they are treated differently because of something like their race, colour, gender or disability. One example of this is the system of **apartheid**, which passed laws to restrict the freedom and rights of black people in South Africa.
- Rob:** Many of those laws are no longer in existence – but freedom is still an issue around the world today. The BBC Freedom 2014 season looked at examples of modern-day slavery in the Thai fishing industry. There is **forced labour**, where people are made to work in terrible conditions for little or no money.
- Finn:** There's also secrecy and **surveillance** – when you're being watched by the government; these can also be seen as ways of controlling someone's freedom. And some say that blocking the public's access to certain information limits freedom.
- Rob:** Yes, the American computer expert Edward Snowden famously disclosed thousands of **confidential** – or secret – documents held by America's National Security Agency so people could see what information was being kept about them.
- Finn:** But possibly the most personal example of having your freedom restricted is when you are held unfairly against your will – in prison or as a hostage, which is what happened to Norman Kember, a British man who was taken hostage in Iraq in 2005.
- Rob:** He says the only thing that kept him free was his mind. He would picture something good in his head. So, although as a hostage his body wasn't free, he could still feel free by thinking about his garden - the flowers and trees and the sound of birdsong. Simple pleasures.
- Finn:** Freedom really came for him when he was eventually rescued during a military operation on 23 March 2006, and the first thing he did when he returned to England was... walk in his garden. It must have been a great feeling.
- Rob:** In different situations, people around the world have fought to win their freedom in many different ways. They have held protests and marches, and **campaigned** for a change in laws and attitudes – changing the way people think.
- Finn:** And when people living under a **regime** want to make a change for the better they sometimes take to the streets to chant, shout and sing. Lots of songs have been written about freedom. But if you can't sing, there's another, newer way to make your voice heard: people use social media to spread their message and hopefully get support for their **cause**. It's what

happened in a number of uprisings in the Middle East, such as the Arab Spring.

Rob: Let's get back to the question I asked you earlier about which country came first in the World Freedom Index 2013, according to the Canadian Fraser Institute?

Finn: I said c) New Zealand. Was I right?

Rob: Yes, well done, the answer is New Zealand. The freedom index was based on a number of measures such as freedom of speech, religion, economic choice and women's rights. You can find more detail about the BBC Freedom Season on the BBC website. We'll be back with more 6 Minute English very soon. Please join us then.

Both: Bye.

Vocabulary and definitions

right	something that you are morally or legally allowed to do or have
restricted	limited by rules or laws
democracy	a system of government in which people vote in elections to choose the people who will govern them
free speech	the right to say anything you want about anything
equality	everyone having exactly the same rights and opportunities regardless of colour, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age etc.
apartheid	the political system that existed in the past in South Africa, in which only white people had political rights and power
forced labour	being made to do hard physical work
surveillance	the careful watching of a person or place, often secretly and usually done by people in authority, such as the police
confidential	secret; only for certain people to see
campaigned	tried to achieve political or social change by persuading people in authority to do something
regime	a method of government that controls the country in a strict and unfair way
civil rights	the basic rights that all people in a society should have whatever their race, sex, religion etc.
cause	idea, aim, belief or way of thinking that a group of people share and try to persuade others to support

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