



About the Author

Hilary P. is a professional psychotherapist and has practised in the United Kingdom for over 15 years. Hilary has a keen interest in language learning, with a classical language educational background. Hilary's particular interests & experience is in psychology, education & learning, especially online learning and language acquisition.

Support

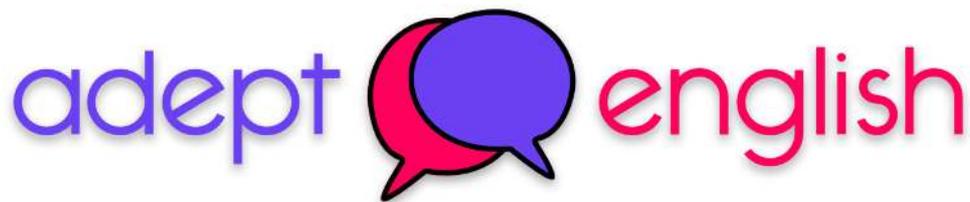
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Transcript: Learn English Article 100

Why people in the UK do not worry about snow

Welcome

Hi there, I'm Hilary and this is the weekly podcast from Adept English. This podcast goes out on a Monday and we've recently started to make a short podcast which is going out on a Thursday. And just in response to some of the questions we've been receiving about Adept English courses - which course is easier, or which is the harder course? I would say that if you find the podcasts quite difficult, then start with the 'Most Common 500 Words Course'. But if you find the podcasts aren't too challenging, then 'Activate Your Listening' might be a better course for you. And in response to your other questions - yes, we are definitely planning more courses for you!



<https://adeptenglish.com/adept-english-courses/>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Most_common_words_in_English

So this week in the UK, there's been snow. Not a huge amount – but it's been topped up a couple of times with new snowfall over a few days. And what has also been noticeable – the temperature has been much lower than usual. So on my school run last week for example, I noticed it was -6C, which is really quite unusual for us. Snow is finally thawing today. 'To thaw' means to melt, and it's the word we use particularly for snow and ice outside.

There Are So Many People In The UK It's Easy To Gridlock

I also noticed on my school run last week, that the journey to my daughter's school, which normally takes about 15 minutes, took nearly an hour. Snow here in the UK basically means 'gridlock', queues of cars. 'Gridlock' is the terms we use for when it feels like every road in an area is blocked and you can't go anywhere. So gridlock on the school run – not what you want. Then the last two days of last week – no school run, because there was no school. So despite us having just a few inches of snow – probably no more than 10cm in many places – schools shut, trains stop running, people stayed home from work. In fact, last week a train which was meant to travel from Waterloo Station in London to Weymouth on the south coast got stuck and passengers were on board the train for 15 hours, because of freezing temperatures. And in the North East of the UK near Darlington, a baby was born in a car, stuck in the snow at the side of the motorway. Ouch – hard to imagine what that mother must have gone through!

Why Would We Change The Way We Manage Snow It's A Small Problem Which Happens Every 2/3 Years?

So then people start to ask the old question – why is the UK so bad at dealing with snow? And why is it that the countries which are very much colder and have snow all winter seem to manage so much better than we do? Well, I think the answer is that for those countries, there's no choice. If they handled snow like the UK does, their economies would suffer, their children wouldn't go to school for months on end, everything would stop working and it would be a



disaster! In countries like Norway and Sweden and Canada, there is snow on the ground for several months of the year. You can't allow that to mean several months of problems. In the UK though, significant snowfall doesn't happen that often. In the south, the children get so excited when snow comes because it's not very often that they see it. You do get more snow in the north of the UK. Where my sister lives on the West Pennine Moors, it's high up and it's fairly certain you're going to get some snow in the winter, but there are years when you don't.

So the UK is bad at dealing with snow, because we don't get it often enough. And because we don't get it often, it's not worth spending lots of money on measures, on things which help in the snow. It's simply not worth it.

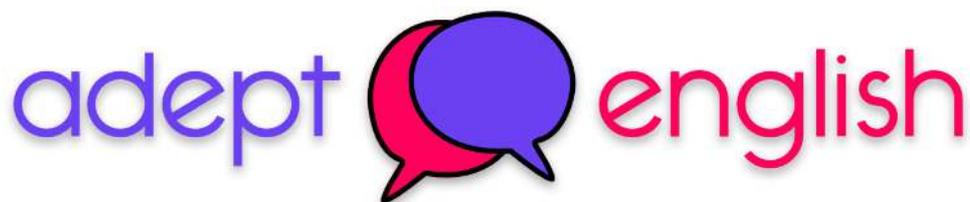
You Would Expect A Country Covered In Snow For Months To Be Good At Managing Those Conditions

So what are the measures, what are the things that people in really cold countries do, which enable them to cope so well with snow?

As far as cars and motorways are concerned, they're better prepared. It makes sense to have a four wheel drive car, especially if you live somewhere where the snow is down on the ground for many months. Also, in some of the colder countries, they change to snow-tyres for the colder months. Tyres are the rubber things on your car wheels - and snow tyres just means that they're more 'grippy', they have more tread. In Finland, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania and lots of other places, you are legally required, you must have snow-tyres on your car for certain months in the winter.

In places like Sweden, there's much more money spent by local government and councils on keeping the roads clear. Sand or gravel is used on the roads or they're cleared with snow ploughs. And people clear the pavements in towns, in front of shops and offices. It's worth spending the money on it there and it's part of the culture.

Most houses in cold countries are designed for snow. In the UK, we might have double glazing - so two pieces of glass in our windows - in Canada and similar places, it's three pieces of glass - so triple glazing. The heating systems are also much more powerful than ours. If you look at the design of the roofs on



the houses, (rooves, roofs? 'Roof' is the singular) they're designed for snow. People in cold countries have clothes which are much better suited to the cold weather, so that the children just get used to playing outside all year round, even in low temperatures. In Norway, they even have heated pavements in some cities and in the airports, special machines for de-icing the planes.

It All Comes Down To What Tax Payers Think The Government Should Spend Money On

And I'm told that sometimes those people in cold countries make jokes about the way that a tiny amount of snow causes the UK so many problems. But just bear in mind, it's an economic choice, it's a decision made because of money. Snow doesn't happen often enough for it to be worth spending the money on. The snow we had last week? Well, it will be completely gone by Monday – and we might not get it again for a couple of years. In general, if we get bad weather in the UK in the winter, it's more much likely to be cloudy, wet and windy. And we're pretty good at managing cloudy, wet and windy!

Goodbye

Anyway, enough for now. Have a lovely day. Speak to you again soon. Goodbye!

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