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| Welcome to EnglishClass101.com’s English in Three Minutes. The fastest, easiest, and most fun way to learn English. | |
| Hey everyone, I’m Alisha! | |
| In this series, we’re going to learn some easy ways to ask and answer common questions in English. It’s really useful, and it only takes three minutes! | |
| In this lesson, you’re going to learn how to talk about current affairs in a casual and natural way by asking: “Did you hear about...?” | |
| Current affairs sounds like a scary, formal topic to talk about, but actually it forms the basis of many casual conversations in English. Talking about current affairs is a great way to have an interesting conversation without getting too personal with someone you may have just met, and is also a great way to learn more about the country you’re in if it’s not your native country. | |
| So say you were watching TV in English last night and you saw an interesting or controversial news item that you want to talk about. You can’t just suddenly start talking about it with no introduction, because that would sound really odd and maybe confuse the person you’re talking to. | |
| So how would you bring a topic like this up naturally? | |
| All you do is use the phrase: |  |
| “Did you hear about...?” | |
| And then you add the news item to the end of this. For example, if there was an earthquake in Asia, you could say: | |
| “Did you hear about the earthquake in Asia?” | |
| To make it sound even more natural, you can add when specifically this event took place. | |
| “Did you hear about the earthquake in Asia last night?” | |
| In answering this question, you have a number of options. | |
| If you know of the event the person is talking about, you can tell them, and give some detail about where or how you heard about it. | |
| “Yeah, I saw it on TV.” | |
| Or: |  |
| “Yeah, I heard it on the radio.” | |
| Or: |  |
| “Yeah, I heard about it from a friend.” | |
| But if you don’t know what the other person is talking about, just saying “No” can sound rather blunt and as if you’re not very interested in what they’re saying. So instead you can show your interest and invite them to tell you about it by saying: | |
| “No, what happened?” | |
| And then this will normally prompt the other person to begin giving you details about the event in question, leading to a longer conversation. Of course, it’s even better if, when listening, you can make some comments using appropriate adjectives. The construction “How [adjective]” is useful when doing this. For example if the other person is telling you about a very sad or disastrous event, an appropriate comment would be: | |
| “How terrible.” | |
| Or: |  |
| “How awful.” | |
| Or: |  |
| “How sad.” | |
| On the flip side, if it’s a happy event, like a lost child being found, what native speakers often say are comments like: | |
| “That’s great!” | |
| Or: |  |
| “That’s a relief!” | |
| Or: |  |
| “That’s amazing!” | |
| Be creative with your English adjectives! | |
| Now it’s time for Alisha’s Advice! | |
| Twenty years ago most people got their news from television and newspapers, or “traditional journalism”, but recently more and more Americans get their news online via social media, which is the general term for services such as Facebook and Twitter. A survey found that as of 2012, over 50% of people surveyed had learned about a breaking news story via social media rather than from traditional sources, and that as of 2012 online news revenue - the money that online news services make - has surpassed print newspaper revenue. | |
| Have you ever been to Beijing? How about Madrid? In the next English in Three Minutes lesson we’ll be talking about past travel experiences. See you next time! | |