

BBC Learning English

6 Minute English

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Are you a winner?



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

- Rob:** Hello I'm Rob. Welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm joined today by Neil. Hello Neil.
- Neil:** Hello Rob.
- Rob:** Now Neil, I have a question for you – do you think you are a winner?
- Neil:** You mean someone who has a lot of success in everything?
- Rob:** Well, not exactly – I'm just talking about competitions – do you have a lot of success or **luck** in winning them?
- Neil:** Competitions? No, not at all. I don't think I've ever won a competition.
- Rob:** Ah, bad luck. That means you're not a '**comper**'. That's an informal name for someone who takes part in – or enters – competitions on an almost semi-professional basis. They spend a lot of time trying to win something.
- Neil:** You mean winning **prizes** – or free gifts.
- Rob:** I do. And Neil, you could win a prize if you can correctly answer today's question. So, are you ready?
- Neil:** I'm ready.
- Rob:** Well, a **lottery** is one kind of competition where the prize is money. The biggest cash prizes can be won in the USA – but do you know what the biggest ever cash prize to be paid in America is? Is it:
- a) \$590 million
 - b) \$890 million
 - c) \$1 billion
- Neil:** Well, things tend to be big in America, so I'm going to go for c) \$1 billion dollars.
- Rob:** I'd like to win that. We'll find out if you are right or wrong later on. So let's talk more about 'compers' – people who regularly take part in competitions. We could say they are **hooked on** – meaning addicted to – taking part.
- Neil:** Yes, **the lure** – or attractiveness – of winning big prizes means these people just can't stop answering quiz questions, writing **slogans** and captions or solving puzzles.

Rob: Some people go to great lengths – or put a lot of effort into winning something – even if it's just a box of chocolates or a coffee mug. It's just the excitement of winning.

Neil: But sometimes there are big prizes to win – a new car, a speedboat or a holiday of a lifetime. The only problem is that these prizes are either not easy to win or there are millions of people trying to win them.

Rob: I've certainly never won anything as fantastic as that – but one man who has had plenty of good luck is Martin Dove, who is a retired lecturer and an expert 'comper'.

Neil: He certainly is. He's won a yacht, a racehorse and lots of smaller prizes too. Let's hear from him now. Listen out for the names he says people have called him...

Martin Dove, a 'comper':

I've been a comper for 40 years. It's like admitting some addiction isn't it really! Some people have called me the Master of Comping, the King of Comping, the Guru of Comping, but it's just a word, it's just a phrase, it's just I was fairly high-profile.

Rob: So, he says he was fairly **high-profile** – that means he was often seen in public, mentioned in newspapers, or appeared on television. And because he was high-profile he got called a few nicknames...

Neil: ...names like the **master** of comping – so someone who is very good or skilled at it. And the king of comping – not an actual royal king but someone is the best at doing something. And the **guru** of comping – that's someone who other people respect and go to for advice about comping.

Rob: Well, he knows his stuff and he still checks out competitions on cereal boxes and crisp packets for the next big win. He's even written books on the subject and offered advice to other compers.

Neil: But comping has changed, Rob. There are lots of competitions to enter on the internet now. Every webpage you look at seems to tempt us with a fantastic prize to be won.

Rob: That's true. But Martin Dove doesn't think that is necessarily a good thing. Can you hear why?

Martin Dove, a 'comper':

The thing is now competitions are far easier to enter than they ever were. In the old days I could spend a fortnight crafting a slogan and really working hard and really being proud of it. Now all you have to do is 'click, click, click, click, click' and because it only takes 30 seconds to do, 20 minutes you can knock out 40 competitions. And you can get a million entries now, so it's a million to one.

Neil: So, competitions online are easier to enter – you just have to click. Martin said he could enter about 40 competitions in just 20 minutes!

Rob: But because it's so easy, more people enter and so **the odds** – or chances of winning are less. Sometimes, a **one in a million** chance of winning – a very

rare or unlikely chance. I wonder what your chances are of getting today's question right Neil?

Neil: One in three maybe?

Rob: Maybe! Well, earlier I asked you what is the biggest ever cash prize to be paid out in a lottery in the USA? Is it:

- a) \$590 million
- b) \$890 million
- c) \$1 billion

Neil: I said it was c) \$1 billion

Rob: And you are wrong. It's actually only \$590 million; that was won by an 84-year-old woman in Florida last year. Neil, what's the biggest prize you've ever won?

Neil: I think I once, about 10 years ago, won £10 on the British National Lottery.

Rob: Wow, that's a big win! Well, for getting today's question wrong you get the consolation prize of reminding us of some of the words that we've heard today.

Neil: OK, we heard:

luck
comper
prizes
lottery
hooked on
the lure
slogans
high-profile
master
guru
the odds
one in a million

Rob: OK. Thanks Neil – you really are a winner. Well, we hope you've enjoyed today's programme. Please join us again soon for 6 Minute English from BBC Learning English.

Both: Bye!

Vocabulary and definitions

luck	success you have by chance not by using skill
comper	a slang term for someone who regularly and enthusiastically enters competitions
prizes	rewards you get for winning something like a competition
lottery	a game where people buy a lottery ticket hoping that their numbers are chosen by chance in the draw so that they win a money prize
hooked on	(here) enjoying doing something and doing it as much as you can
the lure	the attraction (of doing something)
slogans	short, easy to remember phrases used in advertising
high-profile	often seen in public and in the media
master	(here) a man who is very good or skilled at something
guru	someone respected and who people speak to for advice about something (here it is winning competitions)
the odds	the chances of something happening
one in a million	an extremely unlikely chance (of something happening)

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