

Daily Routines of a Police Detective

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

369 lines

Study task: Listen again and notice the expressions you studied.

Hello, friends.

Welcome back to Your English Toolbox.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

Today feels a little special.

It really does.

Because an old friend is coming back.

Do you remember Tom?

About one year ago, we spoke to him about his daily routine.

Back then, he was a police officer in a busy city.

He woke up at five in the morning.

He checked his uniform, his radio and his equipment.

Then he went to the station for the morning briefing.

And he taught us some very useful expressions.

Hit the ground running.

Get your marching orders.

And stay sharp.

Well, Tom still needs to stay sharp.

But his job has changed.

Quite a lot, actually.

Tom, welcome back.

Thank you, Martin.

Thank you, Julia.

It is really good to be here again.



We are so happy to speak to you.

And we have some exciting news to share.

Yes.

Since our last conversation, I have been promoted.

I am now a police detective.

Congratulations!

That is fantastic, Tom.

Thank you.

I am proud of it.

And excited.

But I am also very new to the job.

So you are officially a detective.

But still learning how to be one.

Exactly.

I am a rookie detective.

Rookie means new and inexperienced.

But ready to learn.

Very ready to learn.

Every day reminds me how much I still do not know.

Let us begin with your routine.

Do you still get up at five in the morning?

Sometimes.

But my schedule is less predictable now.

When I was on patrol, my day had a clearer structure.

I attended the briefing.

I received my patrol assignment.

Then I went out onto the streets.

And now?

Now, the first thing I meet in the morning is usually a case file.

Not a very talkative colleague.



No.

But it always has a lot to say.

That sounds like a detective already.

My morning usually begins with updates.

I check messages.

I read reports from the previous shift.

I look for new information connected to my cases.

Are you working on just one case at a time?

I wish.

Usually, several cases need attention.

So I have to decide what is urgent.

What can wait.

And what needs a follow-up.

To follow up on something means to take the next necessary action.

For example, you speak to a witness on Monday.

Then you follow up with another question on Tuesday.

That is right.

Detective work contains a lot of follow-up.

One conversation creates three new questions.

One answer may lead to another person.

And one small detail may change the direction of the case.

What happens after you read the updates?

We normally have a meeting.

We discuss priorities and share information.

Then I make a plan for the day.

And does the day follow that plan?

Almost never.

Some things have not changed, then.

Definitely not.

Police work is still unpredictable.



Imagine that a new case reaches your desk.

How do you begin?

First, I ask a very simple question.

What do we actually know?

Actually know.

Not what we think we know.

Exactly.

At the beginning, information can be messy.

There are facts.

There are assumptions.

And there may be rumours.

So your first task is to separate them.

Yes.

I read the initial reports carefully.

I check what evidence is available.

And I start building a timeline.

A timeline puts events in chronological order.

And time matters.

Who was where?

What happened first?

What happened next?

Which details can we confirm?

It sounds like putting together a puzzle.

It is.

We often say that we are trying to piece things together.

To piece something together.

To connect separate pieces of information until you understand the whole situation.

But sometimes half of the pieces are missing.

And perhaps one piece belongs to a different puzzle.

That happens too.



Do you form a theory at that point?

We may develop a working theory.

But we have to be careful.

A working theory is temporary.

It helps us decide what to examine next.

It is not a conclusion.

So the theory must follow the evidence.

Always.

You cannot force the evidence to fit your favourite idea.

That requires an open mind.

Yes.

Keeping an open mind is one of the most important parts of the job.

Especially for a new detective.

Why especially for a new detective?

Because you want to prove yourself.

You want to find the answer quickly.

And that can make you fall in love with your first theory.

Fall in love with a theory.

That is a dangerous relationship.

Very dangerous.

Evidence is allowed to break your heart.

What is the hardest part of being a rookie detective?

Uncertainty.

As a patrol officer, I often had to make quick decisions.

There was a situation in front of me.

I had to respond.

As a detective, the answer may not appear today.

Or tomorrow.

Sometimes you follow a lead and discover that it goes nowhere.

A lead is information that may help an investigation.



And if it goes nowhere, it does not produce anything useful.

Correct.

But you still have to check it properly.

You cannot ignore it simply because it looks unimportant.

That must demand a lot of patience.

More than I expected.

And a lot of paperwork.

Ah, yes.

The famous detective films never show six hours of paperwork.

They should.

It would be a very realistic film.

Not necessarily a successful one.

Probably not.

But documenting everything is essential.

You need a clear record of what you did.

What you found.

And why you made each decision.

Do experienced detectives help you?

Constantly.

One of my biggest lessons has been learning to ask for help.

Experience notices things that a textbook cannot teach.

That brings us to something very interesting.

The detective's sixth sense.

Is it real?

Can you walk into a room and immediately know that something is wrong?

Sometimes something feels off.

But I would not call it magic.

And it is not proof.

What does it mean when something feels off?

It means that something does not seem quite right.



Perhaps one detail does not match the others.

Perhaps a person's account changes in a small way.

Or perhaps the timing does not make sense.

So that feeling creates a question.

Exactly.

It does not create an answer.

An instinct may tell you where to look.

But you still need evidence.

Trust your instincts.

But back them up with evidence.

That is a good way to put it.

What about technology?

How much has modern technology changed an investigation?

It has changed almost every part of it.

We may work with security-camera footage.

Body-camera recordings can provide important context.

Digital tools help us organise information.

And specialist teams can examine digital evidence obtained through the correct legal procedures.

Does technology solve cases faster?

It can help.

It can reveal connections and patterns.

It can help us compare times, places and events.

But technology does not understand everything automatically.

Because data still needs context.

Exactly.

A camera shows one angle.

A database contains the information entered into it.

A digital record may show what happened on a device.

But a person still has to ask what that information means.

So modern detective work needs both technology and human judgement.



Yes.

Technology may help you find a clue.

Human beings help you understand it.

And understanding people must be a major part of your work.

It is probably the biggest part.

Can a detective really read people?

We try to observe carefully.

But we must avoid simple stereotypes.

For example, nervousness does not mean guilt.

A person may be nervous because the situation is frightening.

They may be tired.

They may have experienced something traumatic.

Or they may simply feel uncomfortable around the police.

Then what do you observe?

I listen for changes.

Does the person's pace change when we reach a particular subject?

Do they suddenly become less specific?

Does one part of the story seem difficult to explain?

But none of those things proves dishonesty.

No.

They simply tell me that I may need to ask another question.

Julia is very good at reading people.

I knew you were going to say that.

See?

That is impressive.

I can also read the room.

And the room is telling me to continue.

To read the room means to understand the mood and reactions of the people around you.

That is useful for detectives.

And for meetings, classrooms, interviews and family dinners.



Especially family dinners.

Let us talk about interviews.

How do you help someone feel comfortable enough to speak openly?

First, I try to reduce the pressure in the room.

I introduce myself.

I explain why we are speaking.

And I use a calm, respectful tone.

So you do not begin with the most difficult question.

Usually not.

I may begin with simple information.

Something the person can answer easily.

That gives us time to establish a natural rhythm.

You are trying to put the person at ease.

Exactly.

To put someone at ease means to help them feel calmer and more comfortable.

What kind of questions work best?

Open questions are very useful.

Instead of asking, "Did you leave at nine?"

I might say, "Tell me what happened after dinner."

The first question suggests a particular answer.

The second gives the person space.

Yes.

Another useful question is, "What happened next?"

It is simple.

But it allows the person to tell the story in their own way.

And what do you do while they answer?

Listen.

That sounds obvious.

It sounds obvious.

But people often listen only long enough to prepare their next question.



That is true outside police work too.

Real listening means noticing the words.

The order of events.

The details that appear naturally.

And the points that may need clarification later.

Do you interrupt when something sounds important?

Not always.

Interrupting too early can break the person's train of thought.

Sometimes I make a note and return to that detail later.

And what about silence?

Does silence make people uncomfortable?

Sometimes.

But silence can also give someone time to think.

We often rush to fill every quiet moment.

A calm pause says, "Take your time.

I am listening."

That sounds less like an interrogation.

That is important.

The goal is reliable information.

Pressure can damage memory and communication.

Patience often produces a clearer account.

What if a person says, "I do not remember"?

Then that may be the honest answer.

We should not force someone to invent a detail.

I can ask about the context.

Where were you?

Who else was present?

What do you remember immediately before that moment?

But "I do not remember" must remain an acceptable answer.

Can you tell us about a typical case without discussing anything confidential?



I can give you a fictional example.

Imagine that I begin the day with a promising lead.

A witness believes an event happened at eight in the evening.

That time appears to fit our working theory.

So everything looks clear.

At first.

Then another conversation reveals a problem.

The witness was looking at a clock that had stopped.

That is a small detail.

But it changes the timeline.

Next, a digital record helps us establish a more accurate time.

Technology gives us the data.

But the conversation explains why the original account was wrong.

The witness was not lying.

No.

The witness was mistaken.

Those are very different things.

And does that solve the fictional case?

Not immediately.

It simply places one piece of the puzzle in the correct position.

That is much less dramatic than television.

Real progress is often quiet.

You correct a time.

You confirm a detail.

You eliminate one possibility.

And slowly, the picture becomes clearer.

What has changed most in you since becoming a detective?

I am learning to slow down.

As a patrol officer, quick reactions were often necessary.

That experience is still valuable.



But now I also need to pause.

To listen longer.

To challenge my first interpretation.

And to ask one more question.

That connects beautifully with slow English.

Do not rush to understand everything immediately.

Listen carefully.

Notice the details.

And keep an open mind.

Maybe learning English and detective work have more in common than I realised.

One year ago, you told us to stay sharp.

Today, you have given us four more useful tools.

Follow up on a lead.

Piece things together.

Put someone at ease.

And keep an open mind.

Those are useful in an investigation.

But they are also useful in ordinary life.

Ask better questions.

Listen without rushing.

And do not decide what someone means before they finish speaking.

That is excellent advice.

Tom, congratulations again on your promotion.

We are genuinely happy for you.

Thank you both.

It has been wonderful to come back.

Will you visit us again when you are no longer a rookie detective?

Absolutely.

But that may take a while.

We are patient people.



We make a Slow English podcast.

Good point.

Friends, you can continue working with this episode at yourenglishtoolbox.com.

You will find the interactive transcript, translations, vocabulary resources, Cinema Mode and the seven-speed listening player.

Use the slower settings to notice details.

Then listen again at a slightly faster speed and see how much clearer the conversation feels.

The direct link is waiting for you in the episode description.

Thank you for listening.

Take care of yourselves.

Keep listening.

Keep asking good questions.

And keep an open mind.

We will speak to you again very soon.

Goodbye.

Goodbye, everyone.

