

A Stroke of Luck: 4 Idioms About Chance

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

51 lines

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

Julia, did you see that?

My first bowling ball, and every pin fell over!

That was impressive, Martin.

Have you discovered a hidden talent, or is it beginner's luck?

I was about to order a professional bowling shirt.

Perhaps wait for the second ball.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox.

I am Martin, here with Julia, and today we have four idioms about luck.

They continue lesson fourteen of our free Idiom Toolbox course.

First, let me tell you how we got here.

The bowling alley was fully booked, but another group cancelled just as I called.

What a stroke of luck!

A stroke of luck is an unexpected piece of good fortune.

Something helpful happens, without being part of your careful plan.

Finding those last two places was a stroke of luck.

You can have a stroke of luck, or say that something was a stroke of luck.

It describes a fortunate event, not somebody's whole personality.

And my amazing first ball brings us to beginner's luck.

That means unexpected success when you try something for the first time.

You won your first game, perhaps because chance helped you.

But calling it beginner's luck could sound as if you are dismissing my skill.

Exactly, so tone matters.



You can use it playfully about yourself: maybe it was just beginner's luck.

I will remember that if my next ball goes into the gutter.

Our third idiom describes a more difficult situation: down on your luck.

It means going through a period of bad fortune, often with money or work.

For example, my neighbour lost some work and has been down on his luck lately.

That does not mean he is lazy or a bad person.

Use the phrase with care and sympathy, not as an insult.

It describes a period somebody is experiencing.

Our final expression is the luck of the draw.

That means an outcome depends on chance, rather than a choice you control.

At our bowling evening, teams were chosen by pulling names from a bag.

I got the most experienced teammate, purely through the luck of the draw.

The phrase does not have to describe a literal draw.

But the situation must involve chance, not just a result you dislike.

Let us check the differences.

A sold-out event suddenly has a spare ticket when you arrive.

What a stroke of...?

Luck.

You win your very first game, and joke that chance helped you.

Beginner's luck.

Someone has had a difficult few months and cannot find steady work.

They have been down on their luck.

Finally, your seat is assigned randomly, and you get a wonderful view.

That is the luck of the draw.

Which expression fits something that has happened to you?

Practise all four with lesson fourteen and the episode resources on our website.

The link is in the description.

Now, watch my second bowling ball.

Perhaps keep that professional shirt in the shopping basket for now!

