

Viral English: Doomscrolling — One More Bad Headline

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

46 lines

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

Julia, your toast has been waiting for quite a while.

I was only going to check one headline.

Then there was another worrying story, and another, and somehow twenty minutes disappeared.

Welcome to Viral English, from Your English Toolbox.

I am Martin, here with Julia and some very patient toast.

Our expression today is doomscrolling.

It means repeatedly scrolling through bad or worrying news online, often for longer than you intended.

So it is not simply reading the news?

No, and it is not every long session on your phone either.

The negative content and the repeated scrolling are important parts of the meaning.

If I spend twenty minutes watching cheerful cooking videos, doomscrolling is not the best description.

Exactly.

The word became widely discussed during the pandemic, but that does not prove it was invented then.

The American Dialect Society chose it as its digital word of the year for twenty twenty.

And a University of California article used it again in April twenty twenty-five.

Those are dated examples of real use, not evidence that the term is new this week.

It combines doom, suggesting something terrible, with scrolling through a screen.

In everyday conversation, it can be a slightly humorous way to describe your own habit.

I was doomscrolling instead of eating breakfast.

But it can also describe a serious concern, so do not use it to mock somebody who is upset.

Our second expression is your feed.

Your feed is the stream of posts or updates an app shows you.



I keep seeing worrying headlines in my feed.

Here, feed is a noun, not the verb meaning to give someone food.

Although your toast is still hoping for some attention.

Our third expression is get sucked into.

It means become deeply involved in something, sometimes without meaning to.

I got sucked into reading the comments and missed my bus.

After into, use a noun or an ing form, such as reading.

That expression is not always negative.

You can get sucked into a fascinating story too.

Now, a challenge with two situations.

First, I check a train update, learn what I need, and close the app.

Second, I keep moving through alarming headlines long after I have the information I wanted.

Which situation fits doomscrolling better?

The second, because the repeated negative-news scrolling is the key.

Now imagine a deliberately provocative post trying to attract angry replies.

Is that automatically the same thing as doomscrolling?

No, that describes the post's possible intention, not the reader's scrolling habit.

Last week's rage bait lesson helps with that distinction.

Complete this sentence about an ordinary situation: I got sucked into...

We are practising language, not diagnosing anybody's mental health.

Find a neutral explanation and examples for all three expressions on our website.

The episode link is in the description.

Now, shall we return to breakfast?

Yes, before the toast becomes another bad headline!

