TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 209

Run: One Word, Three Lives

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

76 lines

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

Martin, I ran this morning, the coffee machine is running, and my sister runs a café.

Three sentences, one word, and three different ideas.

Welcome to One Word, Three Lives, from Your English Toolbox.

Today our word is run.

We will hear it in three everyday situations.

Listen first and see if you can notice the difference.

I run in the park.

The washing machine is running.

My sister runs a small café.

What changes in each sentence?

The first meaning is moving quickly on your feet.

When you run, both feet briefly leave the ground as you move.

You can run in a race, run in the park, or run to catch a bus.

I ran to the station because I was late.

Notice ran in that sentence.

Run is the present form, and ran is the past form.

Yesterday I ran, but today I run.

You can also say, I went for a run, meaning I did some running.

In our second life, nothing is moving on its feet.

The washing machine is running.

Here, running means the machine is operating or working.

If the machine is running, it is switched on and doing its job.

Your computer can be running, and an engine can be running too.

You might hear, please do not leave the engine running.

That means do not leave it operating.

It does not mean the engine has legs.

And be careful with a natural question.

Is the washing machine running?

Yes, it is still washing the clothes.

Now for the third life.

My sister runs a small café.

Here, runs means manages or is responsible for the café.

She makes decisions, organises the work, and helps the business operate.

You can run a business, a shop, or a project.

For example, they run a family restaurant.

Or, he runs a project for local schools.

Running a café does not mean running around the café all day.

Although some café owners probably do that too.

Let us put the three lives side by side.

A person can run to move quickly.

A machine can run when it is operating.

And a person can run a business when they manage it.

The words around run help you find the meaning.

Someone who runs a café is responsible for making it work.

That person might own the café, but the verb run does not tell us that by itself.

Maya owns the café, but her brother runs it.

He manages the daily work, even though Maya is the owner.

Now compare a machine and a person in one short story.

Sam runs to the kitchen because the washing machine is still running.

Sam moves quickly on foot, while the machine is operating.

The same word describes two different actions in that sentence.

And if Sam runs a laundry business, we meet our third meaning too.

Sam manages the business, but the business does not have legs.

These three meanings can help you understand many everyday conversations.

Imagine another conversation in a small family shop.

Who runs this shop?

My aunt runs it during the week, and I help her on Saturdays.

Does that mean your aunt owns the shop?

Not necessarily, because runs only tells us that she manages it.

Now suppose the lights go out and a customer asks about the printer.

Is the printer still running?

No, it has stopped because there is no electricity.

Here again, run means operate.

These short situations show why the words around a verb are such useful clues.

Now listen to three new examples.

First, the printer is running.

Is it exercising, operating, or managing a business?

It is operating.

Next, she runs a bookshop.

She manages the bookshop.

Finally, they ran to the bus stop.

They moved quickly on their feet.

On our website, you can revisit the examples and practise choosing the meaning from context.

Find the episode link in the description.

Thank you for learning with Your English Toolbox.

See you next time.