TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 215

The Money Conversation: How to Ask for a Pay Rise in English

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

129 lines

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

It is early morning, and an email is still unsent.

My name is Amina, and I have written this email five times.

I have deleted it five times, too.

I want to ask about my pay.

So why can't you press send, Amina?

I can explain my work in English.

But I do not know how this request will sound to my manager.

That is the English problem we will solve today.

Welcome to Your English Toolbox, the podcast that trains your English while you live your real life.

I am Martin.

And I am Julia.

Today begins The Money Conversation.

We will follow Amina, a fictional employee, from an unfinished email to a meeting and a clear next step.

You will hear phrases you can adapt to your own situation.

Every workplace has its own process, and no phrase can guarantee a pay rise.

Amina works for a small design company in Manchester.

Six months ago, another designer left.

Her responsibilities grew, but nobody discussed whether her pay should change.

She has examples she can use to explain the change.

That is more useful than trying to sound fearless.

What does she need to know before she sends the email?

She checks the company's pay review policy.

At this fictional company, her manager can begin a review, but someone else makes the final decision.

So the first meeting is a chance to explain her work and learn the process.

Amina has three notes beside her laptop.

They cover her new projects, the designer she helped train and a client deadline her team met.

She can describe her part without claiming credit for the whole team.

She does not put all of that into her first email.

Why not?

The first email asks for time to talk.

The meeting is where she can explain the details.

Before we hear the message, is it wrong to say, I want more money?

No, wanting to be paid fairly is not shameful.

But that sentence alone does not show what changed in her role or what discussion she wants.

Amina closes her long draft and writes a shorter one.

Hi, could we set aside some time this week to discuss my responsibilities and pay?

I have taken on two client projects and helped train our new designer.

I would value a chance to talk it through.

Then she presses send.

Set aside means reserve time for a particular purpose.

Take on means accept new work or responsibility.

Her message names the topic, gives one reason and asks for a meeting.

Her manager offers a meeting on Thursday.

Now Amina has to speak, not just write.

On Thursday, Amina sits down with her manager.

She plans to explain briefly, then listen.

Let us listen to their fictional meeting.

Amina speaks for herself, and Martin reads her manager's lines.

Thanks for coming, Amina.

What would you like to discuss?

Over the past six months, I have taken on two client projects and trained our new designer.

Could my pay be reviewed in light of those responsibilities?

I can see that your role has changed.

We are not making pay changes this month.

I understand.

When would be a sensible time to revisit this conversation?

Our next review is in January.

Please send me a short list of your new responsibilities and two examples of recent work.

I can do that.

What criteria will be used in the review?

I will send you the review criteria and confirm who will make the decision.

Then we can agree what information you should prepare.

Thank you.

That was a fictional meeting, and the answer was not a pay rise.

I know which examples to send before January.

Let us look at the sentence that made the request clear.

Could my pay be reviewed in light of those responsibilities?

In light of means taking new information into account.

Amina connects her request to work she has actually done.

After asking, she lets the manager answer instead of filling the silence with apologies.

She could also say, I would like to discuss a pay increase because my responsibilities have changed.

That version is more direct and still polite.

The word reviewed matters here.

A pay review is a process for considering pay.

A pay rise or pay increase is a possible result, not the same thing as the review.

The manager's first answer was, we are not making pay changes this month.

That answer could end the conversation if Amina had no follow-up question.

Instead, she asked when they could revisit the subject.

Revisit means return to an issue later.

January gives her a date to remember.

Then she asked about criteria.

Criteria are the standards used to make a decision.

Now she can prepare examples that relate to those standards when the criteria arrive.

What if the manager had given no date?

Amina could ask, when would be a sensible time to follow up?

And if she did not know who made the decision?

She could ask, who handles pay reviews here?

One asks about timing, and the other asks about the person or process.

Some listeners may work somewhere with no written policy.

Then the useful first question may be, how are pay decisions made here?

Others may have to use a form or speak to a different person.

A manager may say no and offer no clear date.

An English phrase cannot make an unfair or unclear process fair.

If asking could affect your job or a contract right is involved, seek advice that fits your own circumstances.

Let us return to what Amina can do now.

After the meeting, she opens a new email.

Thank you for meeting with me today.

As we discussed, I will send two examples of my recent work.

I will also send a short list of my new responsibilities.

I understand that the next review is in January.

Could you please send me the review criteria and confirm who will make the decision?

That message records the steps Amina should take next, so she can check that she understood them correctly.

She sends her examples the next day.

What began as an unsent email has become a conversation with a date and a task.

One more language detail before we practise.

In British English, people often say a pay rise.

In American English, a pay raise is common.

Pay increase is widely understood in both.

Listen to three sentences from Amina's journey.

Repeat each one during the pause.

Could we set aside some time to discuss my responsibilities and pay?

That sentence asks for a meeting.

Could my pay be reviewed in light of those responsibilities?

That sentence connects the request to a specific change.

What criteria will be used in the review?

That sentence asks how a decision will be made.

Now choose the sentence you would need first.

Change the details so that they are true for your own work.

For example, you might say that your role now includes training new colleagues.

Then ask to discuss whether your pay reflects that change.

If you are not ready to send a message, write the first sentence for yourself.

You can still practise speaking it aloud.

I still feel nervous, but now I know my next step.

The complete transcript and vocabulary guide are on the episode page.

You can also listen again at a speed that suits you.

The direct link is at the start of the description.

Next time in The Money Conversation, we will practise what to say when someone asks for your salary expectations before you know their range.

Thank you for spending this time with us.

See you next Sunday.