TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 233

Charge: One Word, Three Lives

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

92 lines

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

You are travelling, and one small word keeps appearing: charge.

At the airport, at the hotel, and with your travel group, it means three different things.

Can you tell them apart?

Welcome to One Word, Three Lives.

I'm Martin.

And I'm Julia.

Today's word is charge, and we will follow it through one trip.

Scene one: the airport.

Martin, my phone is almost dead.

Can I charge it here?

Yes, there is a charging point near the gate.

Don't forget the charger.

Thanks.

I need my phone for the map and my tickets.

Is it charging now?

Yes, the battery is at ten percent, and the number is going up.

That is our first life of charge.

To charge a phone means to put electricity into its battery.

We charge phones, laptops, and batteries.

For example, "It takes about an hour to charge."

And we can say, "My phone is charged," or "It is fully charged."

Scene two: the hotel.

For this short scene, I will pretend to be the receptionist.

Excuse me, how much do you charge for a room?

We charge ninety euros a night, and we also charge five euros for breakfast.

And do you charge for parking?

No, parking is free.

And is the Wi-Fi included in the price?

Yes, it is free of charge.

That is our second life of charge.

To charge money means to ask someone to pay.

The pattern is: a business charges a person an amount for something.

For example, "The hotel charged me ten euros for the late checkout."

We can also use charge as a noun.

"There is a small charge for the bags."

Free of charge means there is no cost.

Notice the people.

The business charges, and the customer pays.

Scene three: the tour group.

Now we are both travellers again.

Excuse me, who is in charge of the group tickets?

I am.

I'm in charge of the tickets, and Julia is in charge of the charger.

That's right, and I'm also in charge of the map.

Excuse me, who is in charge here?

The guide is in charge today, and we are responsible for arriving on time.

That is our third life of charge.

In charge of means responsible for something.

Notice the grammar.

We say, "be in charge of," and then a noun or an -ing verb.

For example, "She is in charge of the schedule," or "He is in charge of buying the tickets."

We can also say, "She is in charge of the team."

Here, charge does not mean electricity, and it does not mean money.

It is part of a fixed expression about responsibility.

We can also ask a simple question: "Who is in charge?"

So, let's compare the three lives.

With a phone, charge means to put electricity into a battery.

With a hotel, charge means to ask for money.

With in charge of, it means responsible for something.

Here is a useful clue.

For money, you often see an amount, or the word for.

For a battery, you see a device.

For responsibility, listen for in charge, sometimes followed by of.

Charge a customer often has a person and an amount.

Use in charge of before the person, task, or thing you manage.

You can also say in charge on its own when everyone knows the responsibility.

Time for a challenge.

Listen to each sentence, and decide: is it battery, money, or responsibility?

Number one: "The hotel charged me ten euros for parking."

Money.

The hotel asked for payment.

Number two: "Who is in charge of the keys?"

Responsibility.

We want to know who manages the keys.

Number three: "My battery is empty, so I need to charge it."

Battery.

We put electricity into the phone.

Number four, a tricky one: "I'm in charge of charging all the phones."

Responsibility and battery together.

In charge of is the responsibility, and charging the phones is the battery meaning.

Number five: "The café charges two euros for the bag."

Money.

There is an amount, and there is a payment.

Excellent.

One word, three lives, and now you can tell them apart.

You can now use the context to hear which meaning is intended.

When you hear charge on a trip, ask yourself a question: what is being charged, who is paying, or who is responsible?

You can download a PDF of this episode on our website, yourenglishtoolbox.com.

Keep it, so you can review the three meanings with examples.

The link is in the description.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.