TRANSCRIPT · EPISODE 245

Fun or Funny? The Difference That Changes Your Meaning | Precision English

English learning resource · EN

Full episode script · English

90 lines

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

After a party, you tell a friend, "The evening was very funny."

Your friend looks confused and asks, "Did something strange happen?"

What went wrong?

Welcome to Precision English.

I'm Julia.

And I'm Martin.

Today's question is: fun or funny?

These two words look similar, but they have different jobs.

Let's make the difference clear.

First, fun.

Fun is about enjoyment: something is enjoyable, and you feel pleasure.

For example, "The party was fun."

We often use have fun.

For example, "We had fun at the beach."

We can also use fun as an adjective in a casual way.

For example, "It was a fun evening."

Second, funny.

Funny has two common meanings.

The first meaning is amusing: it makes you laugh.

For example, "The film was funny."

The second meaning is strange: surprising, or difficult to explain.

For example, "That's funny, my keys were here a minute ago."

Or, "There is a funny smell in the kitchen."

So, let's go back to the first sentence.

"The evening was very funny" means the evening made you laugh, or the evening was strange.

If you wanted to say that the evening was enjoyable, you say, "The evening was fun."

Here is a simple way to remember it.

Fun is the feeling of a good time.

Funny is what makes you laugh, or what feels strange.

Now let's compare them in pairs.

"The game was fun" means you enjoyed playing it.

"The game was funny" means it made you laugh, perhaps because of something silly.

"The teacher is fun" means the lessons are enjoyable.

"The teacher is funny" means she makes people laugh.

And with a joke, we use funny.

"That joke is funny."

For a joke that makes people laugh, funny is usually the natural choice.

Fun is also useful in other patterns.

We say, "Let's have some fun," and "I cook for fun."

But be careful with make fun of.

To make fun of someone means to laugh at them in an unkind way, so it is very different from have fun.

Good point.

Notice something else.

You can have fun without anything being funny.

A quiet walk with friends can be fun, and nobody needs to tell a joke.

And something can be funny without being fun.

A funny joke can make you laugh during a boring wait, even if the wait itself is not fun.

There are other words that help us be precise.

Enjoyable means pleasant to do or to experience.

For example, "The trip was very enjoyable."

Amusing means entertaining or funny, often in a light way.

For example, "He told an amusing story about his first job."

So if fun is too casual, enjoyable works well in a more formal message.

And if funny is not clear, amusing can help.

But be careful with the strange meaning of funny.

"I have a funny feeling" means a strange feeling, not a happy feeling.

In this case, the listener will look at the situation, and the tone, to understand.

Time for a challenge.

Listen to each sentence, and choose fun or funny.

Number one: "The picnic was really ..."

You enjoyed it a lot.

The answer is fun.

The picnic was enjoyable.

Number two: "She told a very ... story, and everybody laughed."

The answer is funny.

The story made people laugh.

Number three: "That's ..., the door was open this morning, and now it is closed."

The answer is funny.

Here, it means strange.

Number four: "Learning English with friends can be a lot of ..."

The answer is fun.

Here, fun is a noun, and it means enjoyment.

Number five: "I want to say the party was enjoyable.

I will say, 'The party was ...'"

The answer is fun, or enjoyable.

Both are correct.

Number six: "My brother is very ..., and he makes everyone laugh at dinner."

The answer is funny.

He makes people laugh.

Number seven: "We played games all afternoon, and we had a lot of ..."

The answer is fun.

Have fun means enjoy a good time.

Great work.

Now you can tell your friends, "The evening was fun," and they will understand.

Remember: fun is about enjoying a good time, and funny is about laughing, or about something strange.

You can listen to this episode again at different speeds on yourenglishtoolbox.com.

That helps you notice the small differences between fun and funny.

The link is in the description.

Thanks for listening.

See you next time.