VOCABULARY · EPISODE 256

Viral English: Soft Launch — What Are They Revealing?

English learning resource · EN

Key words & expressions · English

8 learning entries

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

1

soft launch

DEF

in business, a limited early release of a product or service to a small audience first

on social media, informal: a subtle hint about a new relationship, without announcing it

In business, soft launch is a normal term: a company tests something with a small audience and can watch how people react before a wider release. On social media the informal meaning is a small hint, such as a photo of two coffees or a hand. A soft launch does not prove a relationship: it is a hint, a hint can be read in many ways, and the same photo may simply be a nice photo. So we use careful language (it might be, maybe, it's hard to say) and we do not decide for other people.

The restaurant had a soft launch last week, with only twenty guests.

The photo of two coffees might be a soft launch, but it is hard to say.

2

hard launch

DEF

on social media, informal: a clear, public announcement of a relationship

In this episode, hard launch is the opposite of soft launch: a photo with both people and a message that says it directly. It is informal and belongs to social media, so it fits chat and casual talk more than formal writing. Where a soft launch leaves room for guessing, a hard launch does not. Compare reveal, which is a general word for showing something that was hidden and works in many contexts.

Her hard launch was a photo of both of them, with a clear message.

A hard launch is direct, so nobody has to guess.

3

reveal

DEF

to show something that was hidden

(noun) the moment when something hidden is shown

Reveal is a standard, neutral verb and works in personal, work and news contexts: reveal the news, reveal a new logo. A reveal is a clear moment of showing, so it is different from a soft launch, which is only a hint. Reveal also has no link to relationships by itself.

She revealed her new job in a short post.

The team revealed the new logo at Monday's meeting.

4

hint

DEF

a small, indirect sign or piece of information about something
(verb) to suggest something indirectly

A hint is indirect: it points to something without saying it. Common phrases are drop a hint and take the hint. In this episode a hint is not a fact: the same hint can be read in many ways, so we stay careful.

He gave us a hint, but he did not tell us the answer.

A shadow in a photo can be a hint, but it is not proof.

5

release

DEF

(noun) the act of making a product or service available to the public
(verb) to make something available to the public

Release works as a noun and a verb: a bigger release, to release an app. Its common contrast in the script is a small early release versus a wider release. It is standard business English, neutral in tone.

The company will release the app next month.

After the small test, the wider release went well.

6

audience

DEF

a group of people who watch, listen to or use something

Audience is a collective noun: a small audience, a large audience. It can take a singular or plural verb in British English, but the singular is the safer choice for learners. In the script, a small audience means a small first group of people.

The film had a small audience on the first night.

We want to reach a wider audience with our podcast.

7

announcement

DEF

a public statement that tells people something

Announcement is the noun of announce. We say make an announcement. In the script, a hard launch is a clear, public announcement of a relationship, while a soft launch announces nothing: 'the photo suggests something, but it does not announce anything'.

The school made an announcement about the new schedule.

Her announcement surprised everyone at the meeting.

8

privacy

DEF

the right to keep your personal life and information to yourself

Privacy is uncountable: we say some privacy, not a privacy. Common phrases are respect someone's privacy and invasion of privacy. In the script, we respect the person's privacy by not guessing about their relationship.

Please respect my privacy and do not read my messages.

Each person decides how much privacy they want online.