
BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

Authentic Real English 地道英语

Hot potato 棘手的问题 “烫手山芋”



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Neil

Hello and welcome to Authentic Real English. I'm Neil.

Helen

大家好, 欢迎收听 BBC 英语教学的《地道英语》。我是 Helen。

Neil

Oh what's the matter, Helen? You look really tired.

Helen

Is it that bad?

Neil:

You've got very dark shadows under your eyes.

Helen

是吗? 我的黑眼圈你都看到了。唉呀, 有人想交给我一份工作, 可是我是真的做不了。

Neil

What is it?

Helen

就是做学校家长协会的财务总监, 但是你是知道, 我看到数字就头大! I am hopeless with numbers.

Neil

Sounds like it could turn into a hot potato for you.

Helen

现在都什么时候了, 你还让我吃热土豆。我可吃不下, 急都急死了。

Neil

I'm not talking about food. I am talking about this job. I can see it's going to be a problem for you.

Helen

I'm thinking the same.

Neil

You need to think about it very carefully before it becomes a hot potato. When something becomes a 'hot potato', it becomes a problem and difficult to handle.

Helen

I see. 你说的 hot potato 是中文中常说的“烫手山芋”，也就是非常棘手的问题。的确这个形容非常贴切。如果我做了财务总监，就像是手中拿着一块烫手的山芋，会把事情搞得一团糟。

Neil

Exactly, you've got it. A hot potato is a phrase we use to refer to difficult or tricky situations, or even people. Here are a few examples:

Examples

The shortage of housing supply is fast becoming a hot potato for the council.

The pay rise issue is a hot potato for management; I don't know how they are going to sort this one out between the staff, the union and the shareholders.

Neil

Helen, my word of advice is...

Helen

Please, I'm listening.

Neil

Tell the school you can't do it. Drop it before it becomes a real hot potato for you.

Helen

You are right. That's what I will do. Thanks

Neil

You're welcome.