BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Say less

This is not a word-for-word transcript.

Feifei
Hello and welcome to The English We Speak, where we explain expressions used by fluent English speakers so that you can use them, too! I'm Feifei, and I'm joined by Georgie. How are you?

Georgie
I'm very well, thank you Feifei. How are you?

Feifei
I'm very well too, thank you. Now, it's time to introduce a new expression to our listeners. I think let's teach a modern phrase this time, Georgie. Have you got any of those?

Georgie
Say less, Feifei.

Feifei
What? Are you telling me to stop speaking?

Georgie
No! I mean I understand. I'm with you! Let's teach a modern expression.

Feifei
Is 'say less' a modern expression?

Georgie
It is. 'Say less' was popularised on social media and is used in informal, everyday speech. You can use 'say less' when you understand someone fully and don't need further explanation, or when they've suggested a great plan and you don't need further convincing.

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Feifei
OK, but it sounds quite friendly, so I guess it's used to show enthusiastic agreement, rather than hinting that someone should stop speaking.

Georgie
Exactly. Shall we hear some more examples?

Feifei
Say less, Georgie.

Examples
My boss asked me if I was ready to go on a break after a 15-hour shift. I said, 'Say less! Get me out of here.'

My friend said the dress code for their party was all black, and I said, 'Say less! I don't have anything colourful in my wardrobe.'

You're asking me if I want an ice cream on this boiling hot day? Say less!

Feifei
So, 'say less' is the more modern version of the expression 'say no more'. Both expressions mean that no further explanation or convincing is required.

Georgie
That's right. And there are some other, similar expressions. If a good plan has been suggested, of course you could say 'say less', but you could also say 'I'm in' or 'I'm sold' if you've been persuaded. Shall we grab coffee after this, Feifei?

Feifei
I'm sold on that idea, Georgie. OK, it's time to recap. Use 'say less' when you want to enthusiastically agree with someone after they've suggested something.

Georgie
Thank you for joining us. Goodbye!

Feifei
Bye bye!

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