

Transcript

INTRODUCTION

00:00 **Rhys:** If you're a fan of *The Simpsons*, then you probably already know that it has a knack for predicting the future.

Back in 1994, they predicted the UK horse meat scandal. Then, in 1995, they thought of smart watches before you could even buy one. In 1998, they joked that Disney would buy Fox, the company that owns *The Simpsons*. And in 2000, they even imagined that Donald Trump would become the president of the United States.

So, in today's episode of The English with Rhys Podcast, I actually have a special guest. It's my best friend, Ben.

Ben: Hi, Rhys!

Rhys: Now, I know you're a huge fan of *The Simpsons*. Have I got that right?

Ben: I am, yeah. Yeah, I love it.

Rhys: Great, all right. He's very enthusiastic today.

01:00 So, Ben's going to help me to teach you how to predict the future... in English because Ben and I are both native English speakers. So, we'll be using everyday

conversational English to talk about the many predictions that *The Simpsons* has made.

And as you listen, you'll notice the real grammar and the real vocabulary that people use to make predictions, and to talk about predictions that other people have made.

We'll dive deeper into the vocab and the grammar a little bit later on. Then, once you've understood everything, we'll make a couple of our own predictions and we'll even read some of your predictions.

As always, you can get even more out of this episode by going to The Podcast Course on englishwithrhys.com. There, you'll get extra activities to help you learn, practice, and remember the language points in this lesson. You'll learn

02:00 vocabulary to help you understand the episode better, you'll improve your listening skills with comprehension questions, and you'll practice the grammar we'll be using today. And the best part is it is free to my Serious and Dedicated Students. Link in the description.

MAIN PART

Rhys: So, Ben, do you remember the first episode of *The Simpsons* that you watched?

Ben: I do, yeah, and I think the first episode I ever saw was probably one of the ones from right at the beginning of the run, and it was on repeat so this was maybe the early 2000s, late 90s, and the episode I saw was from the early 90s. So, maybe *The Simpsons Roasting on an Open Fire*, or the one where they get their dog, Santa's Little Helper.

Rhys: So, were you allowed to watch *The Simpsons*? Because it's not really for kids, but it's not too bad for kids, I think.

03:00 **Ben:** I guess that's the funny thing about *The Simpsons*, isn't it? It's not a kid's programme, it's not for kids, but it's a family programme. I guess adults and kids enjoy it. So, I was always allowed to watch it when I was growing up.

Rhys: Okay. So, for me, my first memory of *The Simpsons* was coming downstairs kind of late at night, but it might have been 8pm or something, and my dad was watching it. I'd never seen this TV show before, but the first image I saw was Groundskeeper Willie. You know, he's like the big muscly Scottish guy in the show.

Ben: Yeah, yeah.

Rhys: And he's got no shirt on, and he's covered in oil, and he's crawling through some vents. So, I looked at my dad and I was like, "Can we watch this?". He was like, "Yeah, sit down". So, that's the first episode we watched. Do you know the episode I'm talking about?

04:00 **Ben:** I do, I do. So, yeah, it's a real iconic image, isn't it, from the show? That bit where he's sliding through the vents in the school going after- going after Bart's dog, I think.

Rhys: Oh, maybe there's another episode where he crawls through vents. Maybe it happened more than once because the one I was thinking of, it's from 1998, it's called *Lard of the Dance*, and in that episode, Homer and Bart find out that they can sell used cooking oil.

So, at the start of the episode, they're, like, going in the kitchen, getting the oil that's been used to cook bacon or something, and then they go to sell that. They don't make much money, like a few cents, so they realise they need to make their business bigger. So, then they start stealing oil from the school and from Krusty Burger, which is like the McDonald's of *The Simpsons* world.

Ben: Yeah, I do remember the episode. Yeah, you're right, there must be there must be a few.

05:00 **Rhys:** That's weird. Wow, I don't know why they felt the need to have this oiled Scottish guy twice but okay. Oh, fair enough.

So, what's interesting about that episode is that that had a prediction in it itself actually.

So, in 2012, about fourteen years later, in the US for some reason that I haven't researched, the price of used cooking oil went way up, and so many people

started to steal it, including two thieves who were caught stealing grease from a McDonald's.

News anchor: It might be the most bizarre crime ever.

Man: The hose is in the container.

News anchor: Thieves stealing, of all things, used cooking oil.

Restaurant owner: I would have never have thought that there were people out there stealing grease from restaurants.

News anchor: Authorities say organised crime rings have made millions pumping used cooking oil out of special grease bins like these, located behind most restaurants.

06:00 **Homer:** Wow, look at that load of grease.

News anchor: The crime was even spoofed in a *Simpsons* episode.

Homer: Hey! Hey! You're taking our grease!

Thug: It's our grease now.

Rhys: When you think about *The Simpsons* predicting the future, what is the first thing that comes to your mind?

Ben: I think it has to be the Donald Trump episode that you mentioned earlier, where they predict Donald Trump becoming president, sixteen years before he became president.

Lisa: As you know we've inherited quite a budget crunch from President Trump. How bad is it Secretary Van Houten?

Milhouse: We're broke.

Lisa: The country is broke?!

Ben: It was so, it was so out there. It was such an odd concept when they made that prediction.

Rhys: Yeah.

Ben: It wasn't somebody who was already interested in politics or had shown interest in politics, it was just some famous guy.

Rhys: That was the joke, that they were choosing someone who would never be president.

Ben: Exactly, and yet, you know, it happened.

07:00 **Rhys:** So, they make- they make these predictions. They're not supposed to be predictions, but these things come true. So, let's take a look at some of the other predictions that *The Simpsons* has made.

So, there was this one episode of *The Simpsons*, season five, it's called *Springfield*. They're watching some kind of magic show on the stage, and they've got two people and a white tiger, and they're modelled on Siegfried and Roy who are two famous Las Vegas magicians.

And in this episode, the white tiger turns around and he mauls the two magicians. In other words, he jumps on them and, you know, starts scratching them and things like that.

It's kind of a horrible prediction, to be honest, because this happened years later.

Ben: Yeah, a horrible thing to happen but also another correct prediction.

08:00 So, one of the other big *Simpsons* predictions that came true, was back in season five so, I guess the mid-90s, *The Simpsons* predicted that an average person would get to go into space.

It's the episode where Homer, a normal guy, gets chosen by NASA, the American space agency, to be taken up into space on a real-life spaceship.

And back in 2013, there was a contest in the UK and a normal guy, Oliver Knight he was called, won. He was just an average an average guy, just like Homer all those years ago.

Rhys: Now when Homer went to space, he had an accident because he opened up a bag of potato chips or crisps, and I don't know how but, I know he smashed open a glass tank full of ants, and it was a bit of a disaster. So, did Oliver Knight do this?

09:00 **Ben:** I think that NASA learned their lesson and didn't take any potato chips or crisps, or ants.

Rhys: They learned their lesson, did they?

Ben: I think they watched the episode and they thought, "Hey, if we're if we're taking a normal guy up there, we're not bringing potato chips, crisps, or ants with us.

Rhys: Okay. Oh, I wanted to talk about the three-eyed fish. So, in the early 90s in season two, they found a mutant fish in the lake next to the nuclear power plant. So, the radiation from the power plant made the fish mutate, I suppose, and this fish had three eyes.

Ben: Sure, yeah, there is, like, quite an iconic *Simpsons* image, isn't it? The three-eyed fish...

Rhys: Yeah, absolutely.

Ben: ...jumping out of the lake.

Rhys: Yeah, and so in real life, this actually came true. So, *The Simpsons* said
10:00 there would be a three-eyed fish, and we only had to wait until 2011 when a
three-eyed wolf fish was caught in Argentina.

Ben: Do they know why it has three eyes?

Rhys: Oh, good question.

Ben: Hopefully not, um-

Rhys: Oh wow, no it is! I'm just reading the story now. "...the three-eyed wolf
fish in a reservoir that feeds near a nuclear power plant".

Ben: That's crazy. That's a great- that's quite a scary prediction.

Rhys: Yeah, it is actually. So, it's a reservoir, so the water is all cut off which is
nice but aren't reservoirs for drinking water?

Ben: Yeah, yeah reservoirs are for drinking water so that's not great.

Rhys: That's not great if you're Argentinian. Definitely.

Ben: Yeah.

Rhys: Have you got a lighter one for us there, Ben?

Ben: So, one thing about *The Simpsons* which I think is something which is really well known about the characters, is that Homer is really greedy. He really loves eating.

11:00

Well, back in season four, *The Simpsons* aired an episode called *New Kid on the Block* and, in it, Homer goes to a seafood restaurant which is all-you-can-eat. But he gets kicked out because he eats too much. So, he sues the restaurant because it's false advertising. 'All you can eat' should mean 'eat all you can'.

Years, later in 2012 and 2017...

Rhys: Oh, twice?!

Ben: ...this really happened.

So, two people went to an all-you-can-eat restaurant, paid the fee, ate all they could, or not quite all they could, because they were kicked out because they'd eaten too much, and they took the restaurants to court and said, "This is false advertising. It's not all-you-can-eat".

Rhys: What a story. I really love that episode.

12:00 **Lionel:** Mrs Simpson, what did you and your husband do after you were ejected from the restaurant?

Marge: We pretty much went straight home.

Lionel: Mrs Simpson, you're under oath.

Marge: We drove around until 3am looking for another all-you-can-eat fish restaurant.

Lionel: And when you couldn't find one?

Marge: We went fishing.

Lionel: Do these sound like the actions of a man who had "all he could eat"?

Jury: No. No. No. That could have been me!

Rhys: It's probably one of my favourite *Simpsons* clips from all time.

Ben: I love the jury; I love the jury in it.

Rhys: "That could have been me!".

All right, so we're going to be back in a moment and we're going to talk about the grammar and the vocabulary of predictions.

AD BREAK

13:50 **Rhys:** So, let's talk about sentence structures. To make a prediction about the future, we need 'will' + an infinitive.

14:00 Sounds a bit scary, but an infinitive is just a basic verb. It's in the present and there's nothing on the end like '-ing' or '-ed'. So, 'eat' is an infinitive, but 'eating' or 'ate' are not infinitives. Okay, so 'will' + a simple verb.

So, here's a prediction of mine. "I will fly to the UK soon". Okay so, I + 'will' + the infinitive is 'fly'. That's just a basic verb. "I will fly to the UK soon". Ben, do you have another example?

Ben: "On Monday, I will drive to work".

Rhys: Oh, very good, okay. Now, let's say we want to make a negative prediction. We just need to add 'not'; "I will not". Most people don't say 'will not', they say 'won't'; "I won't".

Ben: So, "I won't go to that party later".

15:00 **Rhys:** Perfect, okay. What party?

Ben: I don't know, I'm not going.

Rhys: Oh, okay. So, sometimes we want to ask a question. So, how do we do that? Well, it's actually quite simple. We take a positive sentence and we just flip two words around, we swap them.

So, an example a positive sentence. "You will eat spaghetti". Okay, it's just a sentence. Let's take 'you' and 'will' and swap them around. "Will you eat spaghetti?". Simple as that, right?

So, you've got 'will' + the subject which is like 'you', 'I', 'the dog', and then the infinitive, 'eat'.

But maybe we don't want to hear 'yes' or 'no', maybe we want a big answer with information in it. So, we don't ask "Will you eat?", we say, "What will you eat?", or "When will you eat?".

Ben: Or, "Where will you eat?".

16:00 **Rhys:** Or, "Where will you eat?", yeah, exactly. Then, you can't say 'yes' or 'no', you have to say, "At Luigi's Pizzeria" or wherever it might be. So, let's try that.

Ben and I are gonna ask each other some simple questions about the future. So, Ben, where will you live in five years?

Ben: So, at the minute I live in Manchester in the UK, and in five years' time I'll probably still be living in Manchester in the UK. So, Rhys a question for you. What will you wear to your wedding?

Rhys: Oh, that's a good question. I think many people would expect me to wear my white polo or white t-shirt, but I'll actually wear a white shirt.

Ben: I look forward to it.

Rhys: All right, and when will you go to bed tonight?

Ben: It's the weekend when we're when we're recording this, so probably 11, maybe even midnight. Crazy.

Rhys: Wow, okay. Some good examples there.

17:00 So, now. When we were talking about *The Simpsons* predictions, you might have noticed that we didn't say 'will' very much, and that's because those predictions were made in the past. So, we have to use the past form of 'will', which is 'would', and the negative 'wouldn't'.

Okay, so, for example, I said that I would fly to the UK soon. And Ben said...

Ben: I can't remember!

Rhys: Oh, I wasn't listening.

And Ben said that he would go to bed at 11 or 12 o'clock tonight. And notice that I'm saying, "Ben said that...". And that's usually how we start this sentence structure. "Ben said that he would blah, blah, blah".

Ben: Yeah, and you, Rhys, you said that you would wear a white shirt to your wedding.

Rhys: Okay, so let's make these sentences a little better. Okay, we've been
18:00 using this word 'said' a lot, and it's okay to use. Most natives just say 'said' most of the time, but sometimes we want to be more specific with our words to make sure that the listener understands exactly what we mean when we speak.

So, we're going to teach you five words you can use instead of 'said', and the first one we have is 'claim', okay? Which means to say something is true, even if you can't prove it, okay?

So, before we started recording, Ben claimed that he would become a millionaire one day, but I didn't think it was true. He said it was true but he can't prove it. He just claimed it. Right, Ben?

Ben: It could happen. And Rhys, when we first came on the call, you claimed you could unicycle but I've never seen you unicycle.

19:00 **Rhys:** Yeah, well I claimed that because I've been riding bicycles, so half a bicycle should be half as difficult.

Okay, so we also have the word, 'predict', and that's what we've been doing all of this time. It's just saying that something will happen in the future. "I think this will happen". So, I predict that everyone will be using electric cars in 50 years. Can you predict something, Ben?

Ben: Sure, so, I predict that in the next 10 years, we'll all get VR headsets.

Rhys: Next, we have 'declare'. 'Declare' means to say something clearly and publicly. So, you want a lot of people to understand what you have to say.

Now Ben, when you got married, you had to declare some things too, right?

Ben: Sure, so when I got married, I declared my love for my wife in front of everyone at the wedding.

20:00 **Rhys:** Right, so it's publicly, you're in front of all the guests and I suppose you're speaking clearly, you want everyone to know that you love this person.

Ben: Yeah, absolutely.

Rhys: Great, then we have 'argue'. To argue something means to give your opinion or your idea about something, and give your reasons for it.

So, I argue that we will be able to speak to dolphins in the future. I think this because dolphins already talk to each other about many things, so we just need to listen to understand them.

It's just an example of 'argue'.

Ben: Sure, so, Rhys argued that humans would be able to speak to dolphins in the future.

Rhys: There we go, perfect. We have one last word for you guys, and that is 'deny', and that means to say something isn't true. Okay, so we're being negative now.

21:00 "The man denied that he would steal from a baby", okay? I don't know if he will steal from the baby, maybe he will, maybe he won't. But he said he won't. He is denying it.

Ben: I deny that I burnt dinner this evening.

Rhys: Oh, there we go, okay. So, those are our five words. Those words again are 'to claim', 'to predict', 'to declare', 'to argue', and 'to deny'.

IN CONCLUSION

Rhys: So, I also asked you guys, the listeners, for some of your predictions. So, the first question I asked you was "Will robots do all our jobs in the future?".

ealutybi said that the robot should do the routine jobs, not the high skilled ones.

Additionally using robots will create totally new jobs.

22:00 That's quite interesting because, when we think about technology, we think, "Okay, the jobs are going away", but that's actually never happened. They said it with the car, "They're going to replace horses, and there's lots of jobs related to horses". But, when the car got big, you had drive-throughs, you had petrol stations and things like that.

Ben: I think the other point raised there as well, is that not the robot shouldn't do the high-skilled jobs is, again, maybe a good point. I mean, do we want the robots to be doing all the high-skilled jobs and the humans to be doing all the low-skilled jobs?

Rhys: Yeah, actually a lot of the comments, they were saying about certain kinds of jobs that they don't want robots to take.

duythai.2006 here, says perhaps robots will take all the jobs, but jobs like teachers and doctors will be left to humans.

Ben: Maybe, in those jobs, robots will help. At the minute, robots help the
23:00 doctors. They use computers and the internet, various tools, to help them do their job.

Rhys: Another question I asked was, "Will people be able to travel back in time one day?".

So, I got a lot of people saying 'no', I got some people saying 'of course', and then, falienangel333333 said "No way. If we had a chance, we would affect all order we created".

Okay, so in other words, I think when we go back in time, if we change one little thing, that will affect the time now.

Ben: We'd see people from the future now turn up, or we'd see people in historic photos and videos from the future, and we don't.

Rhys: Yeah, I kind of agree on one side. So, actually, this is what aniaskrzypek said on Instagram. She said, "If we could travel back in time. we would already know".

24:00 Over on Meta, I asked, "Will humans be able to live forever in the future?", and inglesbrasuca said, "Forever is too much. But I think we're gonna pass 1000 years old".

Ben: Wow, that's a long time, isn't it?

Rhys: I think some scientists are saying that now, though, that the first person to live to 1000 has already been born. Some scientists are saying that.

Ben: Wow, so that's- that's, that's a long time to live.

Rhys: And over on YouTube, I asked, "What will the world be like in 50 years?", and dev3403 said, "Technology will be more advanced, I hope".

Ben: I definitely think the technology will be hugely different in 50 years' time, and probably even 10 years' time from now. Yeah, I think a lot of people's values are very similar to how they were 50 years ago. People obviously still care about their family and their friends like they did 50 years ago, or a hundred years ago, or a thousand years ago.

25:00 So, I guess, although technology changes and attitudes change, a lot of basic things that make us human may be the same and maybe always have been and maybe always will be.

Rhys: If you would like to get more out of this episode to level up your vocabulary and to practice the grammar from today, you can do it in The Podcast Course. There's a link in the description.

And lastly before I go, I'd love to give a big shout out to Carlos Gonzalez. Thank you so much for your support.

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