

“ Road Podcast ”
Another string to
your bow



BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

The English We Speak

Another string to your bow

The logo for BBC Learning English, featuring the letters 'BBC' in a white box above the words 'LEARNING ENGLISH' in white text on a dark teal background.

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Jiaying

Hello, I'm Jiaying, and this is The English We Speak...

Neil

...and hello. I'm Neil.

Jiaying

What's that awful sound?

Neil

Are you referring to my violin playing? This is my new hobby – learning to play a new instrument.

Jiaying

But it sounds like you're murdering a cat! Is there a cat in the studio?

Neil

I get the message, Jiaying! I'm just trying to learn another skill, in case I lose my current job. I could make some money as a musician.

Jiaying

So, you are adding another string to your bow?

Neil

Am I? Is that what I need to improve my violin playing?!

Jiaying

No, Neil! When we talk about having ‘another string to your bow’ we mean having an additional skill that can be used if the first one doesn’t work out. So, think of another string as another skill – so how many strings do you have, Neil?

Neil

Hmm, let me count while we hear some other examples of the phrase ‘another string to your bow’...

Examples

Bookkeeping is another string to my bow – I've learnt it in case I lose my job at the bank.

It looks like I'll never be a singer, but luckily, I have another string to my bow – dancing!

Gemma is so talented – she has so many strings to her bow.

Jiaying

This is The English We Speak from BBC Learning English and we're talking about the phrase 'another string to your bow' which describes having an additional skill to use if the first skill doesn't work out. We can also say 'to have more than one string

to your bow' to mean having lost of skills.
Neil's *additional* skill is playing the violin –
but sorry, Neil, you need more practice!

Neil

Maybe I do, Jiaying – I think I might try a
different skill – one that still needs a bow.

Jiaying

Neil, you don't need a bow to use this
phrase - it's just metaphorical.

Neil

I know – but if learn this new skill, I can be
like Robin Hood – it's archery.

Jiaying

Bows and arrows?!

Neil

Mind you head!

Jiaying

Watch out – that just missed me! I think you need one *fewer* string to your bow now – it's too dangerous.

Neil

No, this is great. Let's have another go!

Jiaying

I'm off. Bye.

Neil

Bye.

Road Podcast

don't stop learning even when you are on the road
to join us, click on the link.