

Feel Good English

# The Verb Make to Talk about \$\$ – “What Teachers Make” Ted Tuesdays



The transcript to episode #57

# How Much Do you Make?

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Hello there! Kevin here with another episode of the Feel Good English Podcast, coming to you with a new episode, a new song. Sorry I disappeared for a few days last week. I was having a little bit of technical issues, making some changes behind the scenes here at Feel Good English. We are back in action. I will be continuing to bring you at least two episodes a week to help you become more fluent in English and more fluent in life.

Today I have a Ted Tuesday lesson. I'm going to talk about a poem that a guy names Taylor Mali made, called "What Teachers Make." This video is all about his refusal to be disrespected as a teacher and is an awesome poem. I'm going to talk about some of the vocabulary and expressions from this short video to help you understand it better. I would recommend you go watch the original video with the poem in it. I will post a link on my website [feelgoodenglish.com](http://feelgoodenglish.com). I will also post a link to the full transcript of the poem so you can read along with him, Taylor Mali, when he is speaking.

Also, if you want transcripts to the Feel Good English Podcast you can get them by becoming a Feel Good member. Go to [feelgoodenglish.com/member](http://feelgoodenglish.com/member) and learn how you can become a Feel Good member, get transcripts to all episodes so you can become a bad ass, fluent English speaker. Without further delay, let's get into the short, inspiring, useful lesson from [ted.com](http://ted.com).

Speaker 2: This poem is called, "What Teachers Make," or, "Objection Overruled," or, "If Things Don't Work Out, You Can Always Go To Law School."

Kevin: Here we go guys. "Objection overruled," that's what you hear in a courtroom. If somebody tries to object, if somebody tries to stop the conversation or say something is not valid, they'll say, "I object!" Then the judge in the courtroom says, "overruled," meaning he cancels that out. Maybe you've seen that in some movies or television shows. The name of this poem, somebody is going to object being a teacher and he is going to overrule that, he's going to negate or refuse to be objected to. Does that make sense?

He also says "if things don't work out, you can always become a lawyer." Work out, phrase over, if things don't go correctly, if things don't work out correctly, if things don't happen the way they should, or if you're not successful at something, got it? He's making a joke. He's saying, "Oh, well, if things don't work out in other areas of your life, you can always go to law school," meaning he's making it seem very easy to go to law school because he's talking to a lawyer in this poem.

Speaker 2: He says the problem with teachers is, what's a kid going to learn from someone who decided that his best option in life was to become a teacher. He reminds the other dinner guests that it's true what they say about teachers. Those who can, do, and those who can't, teach.

Kevin: "Those who can, do, those who can't, teach." I've heard this many times growing up in the US. I don't know if you have an expression like this in your country, but because teachers are often looked down on, they're kind of discriminated against or they're seen as a person with a very normal or not important job. People joke. They say if you can, meaning if you can do another job, if you can be a lawyer, a doctor, an engineer, a software programmer, you can and you do. If you can't do any of those, then your last option is to teach. Basically, either you have a great job, but if you fail at those, then you become a teacher. Pretty ridiculous, right? You will hear this. This is an expression that you hear.

Speaker 2: I decide to bite my tongue instead of his.

Kevin: "Bite his tongue," that's great too. "To bite his tongue," this is an expression, "to bite your tongue." We can literally bite our tongue, that

hurts, ow, we bit down on our tongue but also use it when we say that we don't say something that we shouldn't say. We get angry, we get upset, but we bite our tongue and we decide to stay silent, to stay quiet. He's a teacher. If somebody says "those who can, do, those who can't, teach," he decides to bite his tongue and not say anything back and to remain silent.

Speaker 2: Resist the urge to remind the other dinner guests that it's also true what they say about lawyers, because we're eating after all and this is supposed to be polite conversation.

Kevin: He needs to "resist the urge." Urge, U-R-G-E is temptation. Resist the temptation. He's basically resisting the temptation to talk back or to argue and fight with this rude, obnoxious lawyer because after all, they are eating dinner. It's a dinner party. "After all," means in the end. It's important not to argue because after all, they are having dinner. That's the truth of the matter. They're having dinner. It's a dinner party, not the place to argue. He has to resist the urge, resist the temptation.

Speaker 2: I mean you're a teacher, Taylor, come on, be honest, what do you make? I wish he hadn't done that, asked me to be honest, because you see I have this little policy in my classroom about honesty and ass kicking, which is if you ask for it, then I have to let you have it. You want to know what I make?

Kevin: Then he goes into what he makes. What does he make? He's playing with the word make, like I said, if you talk about make as in "hey, what do you make? How much do you make?" When we hear it as a native speaker, if we're talking about work, if we're talking about our jobs, we say, "I make this much money." Obviously, you could also say, "I make cars. I make this. I make that." I think this is a situation where you will know from the context what they're talking about. If you're talking about a job and the person doesn't really seem to care what you make at your job, the actual things that you do at work, and he says, "oh, yeah, what do you make," or often, "how much do you make," that's a little more clear. From the context, if you feel like he's asking you about your salary and you want to tell him, then you can, or you can go into a big long poem like this guy and get deeper with it.

Speaker 2: I make kids work harder than they ever thought they could. I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor and I can make an A- feel like a slap in the face. How dare you waste my time with anything less than your very best.

Kevin: "I can make a C+ feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor. I can make an A- feel like a slap in the face." A C+, talking about grades, this is the American system, a C+ is an average grade but he can make it feel like a Congressional Medal of Honor which is a very, very high, prestigious award in the military. If somebody has had a lot of problems, a lot of struggle in school, has struggled a lot, getting a C+ might be very rewarding for him. It might be a great thing. He can make that student feel great. However, another student who has much higher potential, who got an A- which is a very good grade, maybe the teacher thinks he can do even better. He says that's a slap in the face, it's a punishment, it should feel bad because he knows he's capable, the student is capable, of getting a better grade than an A-. Treating each student uniquely is what he's talking about here.

"How dare you waste my time with anything less than your very best." How dare you! This is when somebody does something and you really, really don't like they did or you really, really don't like what they say, you say, "how dare you do that," "how dare you say that," meaning you cannot believe they did this or said this. Him as a teacher, if he thinks a student can do better, he's going to really push them to do better and say, "how dare you only get an A- on this test when I know you can get an A+."

Speaker 2: I make parents tremble in fear when I call home at around dinner time. "Hi, this is Mr. Mali, hope I haven't called at a bad time. I just wanted to talk to you about something that your son said today in class."

Kevin: "I make parents tremble in fear when I call home." To tremble is to shake, to shake in fear. When the teacher calls, the parents are "uh oh, what did I do," or more likely, "what did my child do," "what have I not been doing that I should be doing to make my child do better at school," so they're scared that the teacher might have something negative to say.

Speaker 2: To the biggest bully in the grade, he said, "Leave that kid alone. I still cry sometimes, don't you?" That was the noblest act of courage that I have ever seen.

Kevin: Then he talks about a bully and how his kid got in the way of the bully and "that was the noblest act of courage" he had ever seen. To be noble is when you have very, very high values, high morals, something you do, something of very high quality. It was a very noble act. It was the noblest act of courage he had ever seen.

Speaker 2: I make parent see their children for who they are and who they can be. You want to know what I make? I make kids wonder. I make them question. I make them criticize. I make them apologize and mean it. I make them write, write, write. Then I make them read. I make them spell. Definitely beautiful, definitely beautiful, define nightly BE-A-UTIFUL, until they will never misspell either one of those words again. I make them show all their work in math class and then hide it on their final drafts in English.

Kevin: Now he uses the word "make." He makes them question, where you force them to question, he forces them to criticize, he forces them to apologize, he forces them to write, he forces them to read, he forces them to spell. To make somebody do something is also to force them to do something. You can see this verb is a lot of different uses here, to make. I'm going to make him do that tomorrow. I make a lot of money at my job as a lawyer. Teachers don't make that much money.

Speaker 2: I make them realize that if you've got this, then you follow this, and if somebody ever tries to judge you based on what you make, you give them this here. Let me break it down for you so you know what I say is true.

Kevin: He's going to "break it down." We just heard this phrasal verb to break down, to simplify, to put it in simple words, to break something down, to analyze, to simplify-

Speaker 2: Teachers make a goddamned difference. Now what about you?

Kevin: What do "teachers make?" They make a "goddamn difference."  
"Goddamn" is a pretty strong word, emphasizes. They make a goddamn difference. Great poem from a guy who's obviously passionate about teaching. Teaching is not an easy profession. Either you know that or you've seen that, I'm sure. Often, in many cultures, teachers aren't respected very much, they're not paid very well, they don't make much money. They have to deal with a lot of pressure from directors of the school, from the parents. They have to deal with annoying, disrespectful students, but they make a difference.

This episode goes out to the teachers out there around the world. Whatever you teach, even if you teach informally or even if you're teaching your children to be a noble adult, trying to raise them to become noble adults, this episode is for you. Making a difference can be of much more value sometimes than just making a lot of money.

That is the lesson for today. I hope you enjoyed it. I hope you learned some new things. Also, really, really enjoyed this poem. You should go watch the video and read the transcript to the poem itself. Go to my website [feelgoodenglish.com/make](http://feelgoodenglish.com/make) to find more info on the content that I used for this episode. You can also get a transcript to my episode here, so you can read every little word that I said to make a difference in your English. Go to [feelgoodenglish.com](http://feelgoodenglish.com), learn how to become a member, so that will do it.

Before we go, of course I have to leave you with a joke. What do you call a teacher without students? Happy. Until next time, treat your teachers well.

See you in the next lesson.

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