BBC LEARNING ENGLISH

6 Minute English

How do you like your tea?

NB: This is not a word-for-word transcript

Alice
Hello and welcome to 6 Minute English. I'm Alice…

Neil
And I'm Neil… Um… Alice. What's this?

Alice
It's a cup of tea, Neil. Would you like some?

Neil
Oh, I can't drink that! You didn't let the tea brew for long enough. And you forgot to add sugar.

□泡
□吹
□調味

Alice
Well, make it yourself next time! And when you **brew** a cup of tea, by the way, you add boiling water to tea leaves or a teabag and allow the flavour to develop.

Neil
I'm sorry, Alice. I didn't mean to be rude about your tea. But I do like it very strong and sweet.

Alice
Tea is the subject of today's show. And Neil, I think you'd like the way they serve tea in India. They drink *chai* – a strong black tea served with lots of milk, sugar and spices.

Neil
Mmm… that does sound good. I quite fancy a cup of *chai* now.

Alice
Did you know that it was the British who introduced tea to India?

Neil
No, I didn't, Alice. This is very interesting… I'm proud of our habit of having tea all the time and teabags are great! A marvellous little invention!

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Alice
Yes, I agree. Well, that's my question for you today. Where was the teabag invented? Was it in …
a) China
b) the US
Or c) Britain

Neil
Hmm. I buy a lot of teabags but I don't know their history. So I'm going to guess c) Britain.

Alice
Well, we'll find out if you chose the right answer later on. Let's listen now to Professor Markman Ellis talking about the Chinese tea plant. He's a historian at Queen Mary, University of London.

INSERT
Professor Markman Ellis, historian, Queen Mary, University of London
Tea is a shrub that grows naturally in the mountainous areas of China and several thousand years ago, no one knows how exactly, there… I mean… there are stories… it became clear that if you consumed the leaves of this plant especially the younger leaves, then it had an interesting effect on you. And that effect could be thought of as medicinal or it could be thought of as just kind of sanative – making you feel a bit better than you used to feel.

□灌木
□飲品
□花園

□衛生的 □有療效的 □痛苦的

Alice
Professor Markman Ellis tells us that people in Ancient China **consumed** – or ate – leaves from the tea plant and it had an interesting effect on them.

□儲存 □攝取 □恢復

Neil
Professor Ellis says tea has a **sanative** effect – making you feel better – so I might try munching a few leaves later on.

Alice
Alright then. Apparently the Chinese started drinking tea because of its **medicinal** – or healing – qualities. And they've been drinking tea for thousands of years! Well we British may love a good cup of tea – but we haven't been brewing it for nearly so long as the Chinese.

□藥效的
□藥妝的
□聽力的

Neil
But remember that tea actually grows in China, Alice. We don't grow it in Britain.

Alice
Good point, Neil. Which brings me back to what we were talking about earlier. In the 19th century the British started to grow tea in India in order to compete with Chinese tea

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production. When tea first arrived in Britain in the 17th century it was incredibly expensive and only the elite could afford to drink it.

□奸商
□政客
□菁英

Neil
Elite means a small group of people in society who have money and power. Well, the opposite is true today – everyone drinks tea! And cheap teabags make really strong tea – just the way I like it!

Alice
[noise of disgust] Oh, it's not for me! I like tea with a delicate flavour – Lapsang Suchong is my favourite with its evocative fragrance.

Neil
Not teabags, then?

Alice
No, Neil. Lapsang is different from other types of tea because the leaves are smoke-dried over pinewood fires giving the tea its distinctive smoky flavour.

Neil
You sound like a TV advert – I can just see the misty mountains and fields of tea… Can you tell us what **evocative** means?

□富想像力的 □令人回味的 □幻覺的

Alice
It means making you imagine something pleasant. And for some people tea drinking is a spiritual experience. Let's listen to BBC reporter Mike Williams learning about the Asian custom of the tea ceremony.

INSERT
Mike Williams and his Chinese host
CH: Please enjoy a mouthful of green tea.
MW: Thank you... That was a bit less than a mouthful. It's a very very small amount, isn't it?
CH: It's about 20ml. It's the way to appreciate tea in very small quantities so you can concentrate and cultivate your mindfulness in drinking the tea.
MW: Mindfulness? What do you mean by mindfulness?
CH: Tea ceremony has some of its origin in Buddhism. The Japanese tea ceremony for example has a lot of Zen Buddhism influence. Mindfulness is the concentration and focus on the now – forget about the past, forget about the future, and enjoy this specific moment. And that's what I call mindfulness.

Neil
So they don't use mugs in the tea ceremony. It's 20 millilitres or a mouthful of green tea.

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□ 小氣的
□ 少量的
□ 節儉的

Alice
That's right. Drinking just a **mouthful** – or a small amount – helps you concentrate and cultivate mindfulness. As the speaker explains, **mindfulness** means living in the moment and forgetting about the past and future.

□ 專注當下 □ 失憶
□ 介意

Neil
Well, forgive me for thinking about the past – but how about the answer to today's quiz question?

Alice
OK then. I asked: Where was the teabag invented? Was it in… a) China, b) the US or c) Britain.

Neil
And I said c) Britain. And I must be right.

Alice
Well, I'm afraid you're wrong, Neil! It was b) the US. Teabags first appeared commercially in the first decade of the 20th century and were successfully marketed by Thomas Sullivan, a tea merchant from New York, who shipped his teabags around the world.

Neil
Really? Teabags are older than I thought! Now, can you tell us the words we heard today?

Alice
They are:
brew
consumed
sanative
medicinal
elite
evocative
mouthful
mindfulness

Neil
Well, that's the end of today's 6 Minute English. You can go and put the kettle on now for a nice brew. Please join us again soon!

Both
Bye.

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