



Video 2 – Real World English: quite

If someone tells you they are 'quite pleased' with a report, how pleased are they? Completely pleased, or just moderately? Deciding what exactly *quite* means can be ... quite tricky.

When *quite* comes before an adjective, check whether the adjective is gradable. To do this, ask yourself if you would put the word *very* before it.

If you wouldn't, it's not gradable. This means *quite* is probably emphasising it.

For example, imagine you ask someone if a job can be done by tomorrow, and they tell you it's *quite impossible*.

Impossible is not gradable – you wouldn't say 'very impossible'. So you would not argue with this person: by saying "quite impossible" they are emphasising the fact that the job you asked them to do really is impossible.

Or if someone tells you you're *quite wrong*, they aren't telling you how much you are wrong.

They are saying you're *completely wrong*. This use of *quite*, where it means 'very' or 'completely', is more common British English.

With gradable adjectives, it's different. Let's look again at *quite pleased*. There are different degrees of being pleased, so *quite* here can go either way.

In British English, *quite pleased* usually means 'fairly pleased'.

Quite softens the adjective after it. But in American English, *quite pleased* is more likely to mean 'really pleased' – *quite* intensifies or strengthens the adjective.

When *quite* comes before a verb, it emphasises it, too. If I say, *I quite understand*, it means I 'fully understand'. Here, *quite* tells us that some state or process is complete.

Sometimes it's hard to know which *quite* is which. In these cases, tone or context can help you work it out.

I hope that's quite clear. In our next video, we'll be going on holiday ... or is that *vacation*?

See you then!