



PODCAST TRANSCRIPT

Episode 43:

What Does Queen Elizabeth Do?

Duration: 16:21

How to use this transcript:

1. Print this transcript:

We try to reduce our paper consumption, but we really recommend that you print out this document.

2. Write on it and take notes:

Circle, highlight and note anything that you want. We have even provided space for you to do so!

3. Listen first **without** the transcript:

Don't worry about understanding every single word. Just focus on training your ears to the sound of English.

4. Listen again **with** the transcript:

Listen a second time with the transcript, pausing whenever you want to

00:00	<p>Hello there, dear listeners! Welcome to episode 43 of <i>The Déclic Anglais Podcast</i>. You have found THE podcast for francophone learners of English. The aim or objective of this podcast is to serve as a steppingstone (<i>un tremplin</i>) a steppingstone, to help intermediate learners develop their listening comprehension skills.</p> <p>I hope you are all fine and having a good week so far. My name is Tom, I'm your teacher here from Déclic Anglais. If you would like to read a transcript (<i>une transcription</i>), you can find a link to the PDF in the description for each episode. Or go to www.declicananglais.com/podcast, to download the free transcript.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
01:11	<p>If you follow the news, you might have heard little whispers about a big party that is coming up this year in June 2022. What is this party? No, it's my or anyone's birthday. No, it's the Queen's Platinum Jubilee!</p> <p><i>Un quoi? De quoi tu parles, Tom?</i></p> <p>This year, the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth (that is the community of countries that were once part of the British Empire) will be celebrating the 70th year of Queen Elizabeth's reign. Yes, Queen Elizabeth II has been queen since 1952, 70 years ago!</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>

02:06	<p>In fact, just last week on 6th February 2022, marked 70 years since the Queen's ascension to the throne. This wasn't her coronation, no. The Queen was crowned in June, that's why the Platinum Jubilee celebrations will take place later. On 6th February 1952, King George VI, the Queen's father, died. On this day, the young Princess Elizabeth ascended to the throne, effectively becoming queen. I suppose you could say that her coronation in June 1953 was the official celebration of her becoming queen.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
02:57	<p><i>Attends, Tom. Tu dis qu'Elizabeth est devenue reine en 1952, mais qu'elle a été couronnée en 1953 ?</i></p> <p>That's right! It's a common practice in the Royal Family to wait a certain period after one monarch dies, before celebrating the coronation of another. They do it as a sign of respect. So Queen Elizabeth II became queen in 1952, but wasn't coronated until June the following year.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
03:34	<p>So a question I get asked a lot by students and French friends is: "What does the Queen do?" (<i>A quoi elle sert ?</i>) Why do we have a monarch? And does she have any <i>real power</i>?</p> <p>Well, I'm not an authority on the Royal Family or the intricate workings of the British government, but I'll do my best to explain it to you. And I'll just give you the facts. Sometimes it's easy to get into debates about the Royal Family. But we will be looking at it from a factual standpoint.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>

04:21 So, I agree that it must seem strange from the standpoint of French people living in a republic, to see a country like Great Britain that generally likes having a monarchy. First things first, it should be said that the United Kingdom (*le Royaume-Uni*) is a constitutional monarchy. This is the same for all modern European monarchies, like Belgium, the Netherlands, Luxembourg, Denmark, Norway and Sweden. This means that the power of the monarch is curtailed or limited, they have very limited authority in their countries. Compare this to an absolute monarchy like in medieval times, where the king or queen exercised absolute power. The monarch's word was law!

(Ecrivez vos notes ici).

05:23 Well, for over 300 years now, the British monarchy has been constitutional. The monarch has no political or executive role. The parliament in Westminster, elected by the British people, governs the country in place of the monarch. Queen Elizabeth can't just do whatever she wants. Let's imagine that Her Majesty doesn't like someone. Well, she can't just throw that person in prison and then flush the key down the toilet. Oh no, in today's Britain, everyone is protected by the same rights and laws. Sorry, Your Majesty!

(Ecrivez vos notes ici).

06:11	<p>The Queen's position today is therefore more of a ceremonial one. She does indeed hold a lot of positions in society, she is the head of many, many institutions. However, these positions are ceremonial. For example, Her Majesty the Queen is the Head of State (<i>chef d'Etat</i>). But this doesn't make her the head of the government, that position lies with the Prime Minister (who is elected by the British people). Queen Elizabeth is the Commander in Chief of the British armed forces: the army, navy and air force. But again, this is ceremonial. The Queen has never directed soldiers on a battlefield, that's not her job.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
07:10	<p>In terms of legislation, she is still required to put her seal (<i>son sceau</i>), on a law before it comes into effect. We call this royal assent. The parliament creates a piece of legislation, votes on it, approves it. Then it goes for royal assent, where the Queen gives it the "green light" (<i>le feu vert</i>), so to speak. When Her Majesty has given it royal assent, it becomes a real law. However, this is only a formality, it's not an essential part of the law-making process in the United Kingdom.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>

08:01 Now, can the Queen refuse to sign a document? Can she refuse to put her seal (*son sceau*) on a piece of legislation? Yes, absolutely! Although the last time a British monarch refused to give their royal assent was in 1707 – so a *long* time ago. Let's imagine that today, Queen Elizabeth receives a document that she refuses to sign. Or even worse, let's imagine that she misplaces, she *loses* the document... (Perhaps one of her corgis, her little dogs ate it! Oops!)

So, Her Majesty doesn't sign the document. Well, after six months the law will *still* come into effect. The Queen can refuse to sign the legislation, she can feed it to her dogs, it doesn't matter. As long as the law has been voted on by parliament, that's the only thing that matters. So once again, you can see how royal assent really is a formality, not an essential part of the British law-making process.

(Ecrivez vos notes ici).

09:27 Ok, so Her Majesty the Queen does not have any executive power, no political role. Does that mean that her role is just to look pretty, wear nice hats and wave from a balcony?

Well, the Queen has a less formal role as "Head of Nation". So, this isn't quite the same as "Head of State" (*chef d'état*). No, as "Head of Nation", Queen Elizabeth acts as a focus for British national identity, and national pride. She serves to unify the country. The Queen serves to give the British nation a sense of stability and continuity with our long heritage.

(Ecrivez vos notes ici).

10:22	<p>A further role of the Queen and Royal Family is to officially recognise success and excellence. The role of the Queen is to bestow on someone (<i>décerner à quelqu'un</i>) to bestow on someone the highest honours in the country. For example, someone who works hard in their domain, and therefore makes great contributions to society may receive honours from the Queen herself. This could be anyone from scientists, civil servants, businesspeople, or even ordinary folk like you and me. For example, the actress Judy Dench received a knighthood (<i>un titre de chevalier</i>) for her services to the arts. Sir Ian Fleming, the scientist who discovered penicillin, received a knighthood in 1944 for his contributions to medicine.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
11:27	<p><i>Ok, très intéressant tout ça, Tom. Mais si ses seuls rôles sont cérémoniels, vaut-il vraiment la peine d'avoir un monarque ? Il n'y a pas un moyen moins coûteux de faire toutes ces choses ?</i></p> <p>Well, like I said earlier, I'm just giving you the facts here. This episode is neither pro-monarchy nor anti-monarchy. But the cost of the monarchy is a common question I hear from French people.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>

11:57	<p>So, does the monarchy cost the British public a lot of money? If when you look at the cost of maintaining the buildings like castles and palaces, the costs in travel and security, plus all the money for ceremonies and official events, the monarchy costs a lot of money. It varies year by year, but we are talking something like 150 million Euros per annum (it depends on the source you consult). However, if you divide the annual cost between all British taxpayers, then each individual British taxpayer pays approximately 2-4 Euros each year. That's like one or two cups of coffee per person, per year.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
12:56	<p>However, when you look at how much money or revenue the Royal Family generates for the British economy, it's really an astounding amount. One source estimates that the Royal Family generated 67 billion Pounds for the British economy in 2017. 67 billion Pounds! That small investment of 2-4 Euros doesn't sound so bad, when you hear that they generate so much income for the country.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
13:37	<p>What should also be kept in mind is that much of the Queen's assets like palaces are not actually her private property. These places don't belong directly to the Queen. In fact, they belong to the Crown Estate. And the money generated by the Crown Estate goes directly to the Treasury (<i>le ministère des Finances</i>), it does not go directly into the Queen's bank account. It ultimately goes into pocket of the Treasury, that is, the British government.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>

14:24	<p>So, there you have it dear listeners. A very brief, little introduction to the Queen and her roles within British society. Whatever anyone thinks of the British Royal family, I don't think they are going anywhere soon. I think they are here to stay for the time being (<i>pour le moment</i>) for the time being.</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
14:51	<p>By the way, did you know that Queen Elizabeth can speak French? Apparently, she speaks very good French, indeed. Well, I can't promise that I can make you speak English like the Queen, but I can certainly help you speak better English than a Spanish cow!</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>
15:11	<p>If you would like to boost your English this year, why not sign up for <i>The Déclis Anglais Club!</i> <i>The Déclis Anglais Club</i> is our online learning platform. Every month we create online lessons with interactive exercises that will help you boost every area of your English skills: reading and listening comprehension, writing and even speaking. Yes, even your speaking skills! Our <i>Boost</i> level subscription will let you take part in our live, conversation classes where you can practice your speaking with other motivated learners of English. What are you waiting for? Sign up today!</p> <p>Alright then, dear listeners. On that note, I will wish you all a nice day, have a great week. And I look forward to seeing you at our next episode. Bye for now!</p> <p><i>(Ecrivez vos notes ici).</i></p>

How did it go?

Take a moment to revisit the notes that you took.

List here 3 words or expressions (minimum) that you would like to remember from this podcast. We recommend that you consult a free, online dictionary like www.wordreference.com to ensure that you have the correct definition and context.

WORDS/EXPRESSIONS THAT I WANT TO REMEMBER:

1.

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