

SHOW THAT THEY'RE LISTENING

Do you feel like you lack words when expressing surprise in English? Well, here is a list of 18 commonly used phrases and expressions to help you do that.

You don't say!

- *"Our cat ate a lizard." "You don't say! Is she all right?"*

Get out (of here)

- *"Have you heard that a woman in Australia gave birth to six?" "Get out! It's a lot of babies, isn't it?"*

You are joking/you must be joking

- *"It may be hard to believe, but I am 45 years old." "You must be joking! You look at least ten years younger!"*

For real

- *"Julia stopped smoking!" "For real?"*

How extraordinary!

- *"My parents have never had a fight for over 30 years of marriage." "How extraordinary!"*

Imagine

- *"Can you believe that Mark and I are related? His grandpa and my grandpa were cousins." "Imagine. How come you didn't know it?"*

I can't believe my eyes/ears

- *I haven't seen you for so long. I can't believe my eyes how much you've changed.*
- *Have I just heard that I won the lottery? I can't believe my ears.*

It takes all sorts (to make a world)

Use the phrase to say that you are surprised by someone's behavior.

- *"Brian wants to go skydiving." "Doesn't he have anything better to do? **It takes all sorts to make a world!**"*

What is the world coming to

Use the phrase to express surprise about something you disapprove.

- *Can you believe that they let a drug dealer get away with a minor punishment? **What is the world coming to?***

No way

Use the phrase to express surprise and disbelief.

- *"We are champions of the world in basketball." **No way!**"*

Really?

- *"Sandra's got a scholarship for Cambridge." **Really?** I didn't know she applied for it."*

It's a small world

Use the phrase to show surprise when you meet someone unexpectedly.

- *Hello Jack. **It's a small world!** We meet so far away from home.*

As large as life

Use the phrase to say that you are very surprised to see someone or something.

- *I was sure that he moved abroad, but when I opened the door, there he was, **as large as life.***

I never dreamed

Use the phrase to say that you are very surprised.

- *I **never dreamed** of seeing you again. It is a big surprise.*

It's news to me

Use it to say that you didn't know about something, especially if it annoys you.

- *Price of electricity is going up? **It's news to me.***

There is a first time for everything

Use it to say that something is surprising and strange.

- *I didn't know that hot water turns into ice faster than cold. **There is a first time for everything.***

Live and learn

Use it to show your surprise about something you've just seen or heard.

- *An octopus has three hearts! Well, I guess you **live and learn.***

What do you know

- "Your ex-wife is getting married?" "Really? **What do you know.**"

Referencia:

Redaction from My Lingua Academy. (2025) Expressing Surprise in English. My Lingua Academy.

Recovered from: <https://myenglishteacher.co.uk/2022/07/06/expressing-surprise-in-english/>