

BBC Learning English
Authentic Real English 地道英语
A leopard can't change its spots
江山易改，本性难移



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Jennifer: Hello, I'm Jennifer and this is Authentic Real English. I'm with Feifei, and we're here at the zoo!

Feifei: 大家好! 今天伦敦天气特别好, 阳光灿烂, Jen 和我来到了动物园。We've already seen the elephants and penguins – I love the penguins, they're so funny.

Jennifer: We're moving on now to my favourites – the big cats!

Feifei: 诶, 我看动物园的简介上说, 他们有狮子、老虎、美洲狮还有豹子呢。

Jennifer: Fantastic – I love leopards. They're so beautiful and they also feature in one of my favourite phrases in English.

Feifei: Let me guess, it's "a leopard can't change its spots"?

Jennifer: Absolutely, Feifei. The phrase "a leopard can't change its spots" is used to describe a person's character, particularly if they have some bad habits.

Feifei: 就像一只豹子无法改变它身上的豹纹一样, 一个人很难改变他的性格。那么这个短语的意思就是积习难改, 就是我们常说的"江山易改, 本性难移"。

Jennifer: Let's hear some examples of how you might use this phrase.

Examples

"John promised me that he would stay out of trouble at school, but don't believe him. A leopard can't change its spots."

"Katie used to have a reputation for gossiping and spreading rumours. I've heard she's changed now, but I don't trust her: a leopard can't change its spots."

Feifei: Great phrase. Let's see if we can find a real life leopard then!

Jennifer: Well, the big cat area is over there, according to this map. Oh look! I can see lions... Ah... They have little baby ones too! But where are the leopards?

Feifei: Er, Jen...

Jennifer: They must be here somewhere, a big spotty cat like that can't be too hard to find.

Feifei: (whispering) Jen 我觉得你应该...

Jennifer: Hurry, they must be this way. I want to see a leopard right now! A leopard can't change its spots and I can't change the fact that it's my favourite animal in the whole wide world!

Feifei: 我说你应该转过身回头看一下!

(huge growl and roar)

Jennifer: (terrified) Oh. Hello Mr Leopard. You're a lot bigger in real life...

Feifei: (whispering) Join us again for another edition of Authentic Real English from BBC UK China... Bye!

(roar)

Jennifer: Here kitty, kitty, kitty. Nice kitty...

(roar)