

Funding the Future

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Keir Starmer is demanding that migrants to the UK be fluent in English, but there is no evidence that he is. Shouldn't he, too, have to pass a test in English competence?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D422oRoP3HI?si=C5yLxRIQNsDtqU9u>

This is the audio version:

https://www.podbean.com/player-v2/?i=crh27-18a9afd-pb&from=pb6admin&share=1&download=1&rtl=0&fonts=Arial&skin=f6f6f6&font-color=&logo_link=episode_page&btn-skin=c73a3a

This is the transcript:

Keir Starmer has suggested that migrants to the UK should have to pass enhanced English language tests. Well, I have a very simple and very straightforward proposition to put to Keir Starmer and, that is, he should pass an English language test.

I'm utterly bored by UK politicians, and he is a perfect example of the breed, failing to speak in joined-up English.

They talk utter gibberish.

They don't answer questions.

They can't use joined-up sentences.

There is no purpose to what they have to say.

To use a common phrase, it feels like word salad.

And, as a consequence, none of us have any idea whatsoever what politicians really mean.

They use cliches all the time. One of those that I hate most of all is "I don't answer hypothetical questions".

They use this in response to a question from a journalist, which is about something that might take place in the future, and say they can't possibly answer that.

The whole of politics is about what might happen in the future.

Everything in politics is about choosing between alternative hypotheses, which underpin the policy decisions that politicians have to make about what they might do in the future. And yet, all the time we're told that politicians can't answer hypothetical questions. That is utter and complete nonsense. It's not just a lie. It's deliberate misinformation, which in many ways is, as far as I'm concerned, worse.

One of the other phrases they keep on using is, "you would not expect me to answer that". Well, yes, actually, we would. That's why the journalist put the question to you. They asked you a question because they wanted an answer to it, because people in this country do want to know the answer to the question which the journalist has presented.

But the politician then says, "You wouldn't possibly expect me to answer that". I'm sorry, but that is unacceptable.

If people who come to this country are expected to be able to provide nuanced answers to nuanced questions, then at the least, I think we should expect is that our politicians should be able to do the same.

And we should also expect them to get over the use of three-word phrases.

There are hordes of these that I hate. Keir Starmer's latest favourite is, "I get it".

What is it that you get, Keir Starmer?.

You don't explain what 'getting it' means, and, actually, I'm left totally confused by your claim because all you are really saying is that you're going to do something: we don't know what, we don't know when, we don't know why. You just 'get it', and I don't think you do, because if you did, you wouldn't use that phrase.

Just as you wouldn't use the phrase "taking back control". Not only wouldn't you use it because others have done so for particularly unsavoury purposes, but you wouldn't use

it because that's not what you are going to do because you're Prime Minister. You already have control, or as much control as anybody's ever going to get over a subject. So, to claim that you are going to take back control does, in the context in which you use the phrase, make absolutely no sense at all.

Just the same as saying that you're going to smash gangs makes no sense because, as a matter of fact, crime will always be with us. So to claim that you are going smash gangs, whether that be to do with drugs, whether that be to do with migration, whether that be to do with anything else, is completely stupid, because you guarantee to set yourself up to fail. Why do you want to use language in a way that guarantees that you will fail? I don't know.

And yet we see this, time and again.

We hear the claim that a government is going to deliver growth.

What growth?.

Growth in what? Why?

Not all growth is good, Keir Starmer. Let me explain one sort that isn't. The cancerous growth of cells in the human body is decidedly detrimental to well-being. So your naive suggestion that all you are about is creating growth is just plain stupid, is the only word I can come up with, because without qualification, it means nothing.

Growth in the size of the economy, so that we're destroying the planet? Why would you want to do that?

Growth in the size of the economy so that you increase inequality? Is that good?

Growth in the size of the economy so that you will, as a consequence, suppress the wages of the people who are working in this country, whilst inflating profits? Is that what you want?

Without the qualification of the term growth, even in the economic context, that claim that you are aiming to deliver growth is completely meaningless.

So, please, can we have some sense?

Actually, speak in plain English.

Use sentences that are unambiguous as to their meaning.

And, honestly answer questions, while setting out precisely what you are going to do.

That is the least that you owe to us as people in this country.

That is what we expect of you.

And unless you can do that, you are going to reveal something to us about which we have very good reason to worry. Not only should you be able to do all these things to persuade us to put you into power, but if you can't do these things when you are in power, why should we believe that you are able to direct those who work for you?

The number of people in government in the UK is tiny. Around 120 ministers run the whole of the UK government, and that includes all the very low-level ones as well. The number of people in the civil service runs to something like half a million. If you, as a politician, cannot tell those civil servants precisely what you want them to do, when, how, and why, there is no chance that they will deliver.

If you can't tell us what that is, how can we believe that you are able to do that? You are failing the most basic English language test.

You are failing the test of competence that we would expect of any reasonable manager in this country.

You are failing on the test of the ability to communicate.

Drop the cliches.

Drop the ambiguities.

Drop the avoiding the question.

Drop all this stupid nonsense about "you wouldn't expect me to answer that".

Just tell us what you're doing, why you're doing it, when you're doing it, what the benefit will be, and how we will realise that that benefit has arisen for us and then we might believe you, but right now we've got no reason to do so.

And until you can do these things, stop demanding that others pass ridiculous tests in the English language, which you are clearly unable to have any hope of passing.