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Feifei

Hello Rob. You look so busy, 这都是些什么呀? What are all these papers?

Rob

Oh, Feifei, I have to get a permit to build an extension to my house. It's a very small bit of building work but I have to fill in all these forms.

Feifei

What is this one for?

Rob

This one here is for my local council. I need to apply for planning permission. And then they want lots of supporting documents to make sure it fits in with building regulations.

Feifei

It sounds exhausting. Rob 想把他们家的房子扩建一下，不过申请手续非常繁琐，得填写无数表格。

Rob

I hate red tape. If I could cut through this red tape it would be brilliant!

Feifei

So your problem is red tape? 你需要剪断红色胶带纸? 太容易了! Say no more, Rob! The solution is in my bag! ... Ah, here they are!

Rob

A pair of scissors and blue tape?

Feifei

Yes. 你不是说要 cut through the red tape 吗? 我给你了剪刀，你一剪就行了! If you don't like red tape, use blue. I love the colour blue!

Rob

Thank you, Feifei. You're a good friend. But in English we call the rules and processes required to get official permits - which usually seem to be pointless - 'red tape'.

Feifei

Ah, bureaucracy! 原来在英语里，很多官方的规定、条款和繁琐的做事程序被称为 red tape “红带文件”，也就是我们说的“官僚作风”。下面我们来听几个例句。

Examples

Small firms won't be subject to new regulations under a government plan to cut red tape and boost the economy.

Andrea almost gave up studying abroad. The amount of red tape to get a visa was unbelievable!

Feifei

I think most people hate bureaucracy, Rob.

Rob

I'm not surprised. Some people say this expression might come from the 16th century, when bundles of documents were held together with red tape. I hate all these forms.

Feifei

据说，早在 16 世纪时的英国，所有官方的文件会用红色布带系成一扎一扎的，从而也就出现了 red tape 这个比喻。Well, it's the 21st century now and we still have red tape. Good luck with your red tape, Rob. I'm off to paint the town red!

Rob

Oh Feifei, no more idioms with red for me today please.

Both

Bye.