

# یادگیری انگلیسی با پادکست

## وبسایت زبان ویدیو

موضوع پادکست: سرگذشت عجیب مادام توسو

Hello hello hello, and welcome to English Learning for Curious ] 00:00:05[ Minds by Leonardo English, the show where you can listen to fascinating stories, and learn weird and wonderful things about the world at the same .time as improving your English

[00:00:21] I'm Alastair Budge and today we are going to be talking about Madame Tussauds.

[00:00:28] Now, this was a request from one of our members, a lovely lady called Isabel, and I had to **confess** that when she asked me to make this, I wasn't sure that there was all that much to say.

[00:00:43] But it **turns out** that Madame Tussauds has a fascinating **back story**, that takes us to the French Revolution, to the **guillotine**, before arriving in London.

[00:00:54] It is quite a **ride**, so I hope you enjoy this episode.

[00:01:01] Before we get right into it though, I just wanted to remind those of you listening to this episode on Spotify, Apple Podcasts, iVoox, or whatever podcast app you might be listening to it on, that you can get all of the bonus episodes, subtitles, transcripts, and key vocabulary, over on the website, which is [leonardoenglish.com](http://leonardoenglish.com).

[00:01:24] If you are looking for a more interesting way to improve your English, then I'd definitely recommend checking that out - you can also find out how to become a member of Leonardo English, which means you don't

only get access to all the bonus materials, but it also means you can do stuff like request episodes.

[00:01:45] And as this one shows, we do actually make them.

[00:01:50] Ok then, let's get started.

[00:01:53] Madame Tussauds, in case you have never heard of it, is a famous **waxworks** museum - a museum with sculptures of famous people.

[00:02:04] It is now a global **brand** with museums across Europe, North America, Asia, and Australia.

[00:02:13] And the story of how it started is pretty interesting.

[00:02:19] I should add that the story of the Madame Tussaud, the woman behind the museum is only really known through her own **memoirs**, her own accounts. A lot of it can't really be verified elsewhere.

[00:02:35] And some of it is a little **far fetched**, a little bit difficult to believe

[00:02:42] Just in case you don't know what I mean by **waxworking**, it is the process of creating a sculpture, which is then **coated**, covered, in wax and painted.

[00:02:56] The final result, if you are trying to reproduce someone's **features** and you are a good artist, is that you have a sculpture that looks exactly like, or at least it should look exactly like, its **subject** - the same height, same hairstyle, the same everything.

[00:03:17] It's as if that person were right there with you.

[00:03:22] So the story of Madame Tussauds, the most famous **waxworks** in the world, starts in Strasbourg, France, in 1761, with the birth of Marie

Grosholtz. Six years after Marie was born, her mother moved to Bern, Switzerland, to be the **housekeeper** of an **anatomist** and **waxmaker**, a man called Phillippe Curtius.

[00:03:53] The young Marie was very interested in the work of her mother's boss, and she showed an early talent for **sculpture**.

[00:04:04] Curtius was only too happy to have an **eager** student, and he taught her everything about **waxworking**.

[00:04:13] But the **prospects** for someone involved with **waxworks** weren't all that great in Bern, and so Curtius decided to go to Paris to **seek his fortune**, as was quite common back then.

[00:04:28] He left his young **apprentice**, Marie, and her mother in Bern. And they joined him a year later.

[00:04:36] After Curtius **switched** from doing **waxworks** of people's **anatomy**, of body parts, to doing **waxworks** of actual people, he started seeing a lot more interest.

[00:04:49] Curtius's work was soon noticed by Paris **high society** and his **waxworks drew** huge crowds, they attracted a lot of people.

[00:05:02] This was before the invention of the camera, but after the **boom** in newspaper circulation. These **waxworks** must have been fascinating - a way to see people in real life, the people who you had perhaps read about in the news.

[00:05:19] It was almost as if you were right there **in the flesh** with them.

[00:05:28] But it wasn't just Curtius that was becoming famous.

[00:05:32] His young **apprentice**, Marie, was getting noticed as well.

[00:05:38] So much so that around 1780, when she was not even 20 years old, she was invited to join the Royal Court at Versailles to teach art to King Louis XVI's sister.

[00:05:53] She started to **get a name for herself**, and reportedly created perfect **waxworks** of some of the most famous people in 18th century Paris - Voltaire, and even Benjamin Franklin, who was the American ambassador to France at the time.

[00:06:14] However, this was just before the French revolution, a dangerous time to be friendly with the French **monarchy**.

[00:06:23] You had to be very careful who you were seen to be **socialising** with, otherwise you could find your head separated from the rest of your body.

[00:06:34] As it was clear what direction public opinion was heading in, her boss and **mentor**, Curtius, realised that he needed to adapt to **the times**.

[00:06:48] It would no longer be acceptable to make **celebratory waxworks** of people who might be considered politically sensitive, and he needed to make some changes to stay alive.

[00:07:02] So, in what seems like quite a clever move, he changed the business to creating **waxworks** of recently **executed** people, politicians and **aristocrats** who had their heads cut off at the **guillotine**.

[00:07:18] People could now come to his museum and **marvel** at the **waxworks** of others who had recently been killed.

[00:07:28] They could stand right there in front of the heads of famous people who had been **executed** at the **guillotine** just weeks before.

[00:07:38] But the danger still hadn't lifted for Marie Grosholtz, and according to her **memoirs**, she almost met the same **fate** as Louis XVI and Marie Antoinette, of having her head separated from her body.

[00:07:56] Remember, she had spent several years socialising at Versailles, and so it was difficult for her to suddenly claim she was pro-revolution and anti-**monarchy**.

[00:08:11] In the '**reign** of terror' which went on from 1793-1794, she was arrested, along with Josephine de Beauharnais, the future wife of Napoleon.

[00:08:25] The revolutionaries were looking to **execute** anyone who they thought had **sympathies** towards the monarchy.

[00:08:34] And Marie looked like she was heading for the **guillotine**.

[00:08:39] They even went so far as to shave her head, preparing her for the cold **steel** of the **guillotine**.

[00:08:48] However, she made a deal at the last minute.

[00:08:54] She agreed to make death **masks** of everyone who was executed, **masks** to preserve the features of these people, so that **waxworks** could be created, and their images displayed for the people to see.

[00:09:11] Curtius, her boss, had been making models, but Marie was to make death **masks** - real **waxworks** of the dead people, using their real heads.

[00:09:24] The revolutionaries agreed, and Marie's life was **spared**.

[00:09:29] She was safe, finally, although this sounds like a pretty **gruesome** task - waiting for a head to arrive, then preparing a death mask for it.

[00:09:43] Shortly after this, her boss and **mentor**, Curtius, died.

[00:09:50] He left everything to Marie, who was only in her early thirties.

[00:09:56] She then married a man called Francois Tussaud, changed her name to Marie Tussaud, and had two sons.

[00:10:05] But her husband was, **by all accounts**, a bit hopeless, and it wasn't a happy marriage.

[00:10:13] A relationship that did have a big impact on Marie though, and one that changed the course of her **destiny**, was a relationship with a German **illusionist** called Paul Philidor.

[00:10:20] He was a magician, and he created amazing shows which used lights and projections to make it seem like there were ghosts and spirits.

[00:10:40] He persuaded Marie to do a show together in London, which they did, in 1802.

[00:10:48] But according to her records, Tussaud didn't do very well out of it, she didn't make much money, and **broke ties** with Philidor, the magician.

[00:11:00] But she couldn't go back to France - the Napoleonic War had started in 1803, and there was no way to return.

[00:11:08] Instead she travelled around the UK with her **waxwork** collection for almost 30 years.

[00:11:17] The British public loved it.

[00:11:20] Her show combined a lot of things that immediately attracted the attention of the British people.

[00:11:28] Firstly, there was this French revolution that had been going on in our nearest neighbour in Europe.

[00:11:36] Members of the royal family and several **prominent** politicians had lost their heads.

[00:11:42] Tussaud's exhibition offered a way to see these unfortunate people, **up close and personal**, by someone who had literally created their death masks, according to her at least.

[00:11:56] Secondly, there were very few public **executions** in the UK by that time, and so Tussaud's show offered the public a way to see some of the blood and **gore** that they couldn't see in real life.

[00:12:13] There was nothing else like it, and the show was met with crowds and paying customers everywhere she went.

[00:12:21] So almost from **the outset**, almost from right at the start, it was a very **profitable** business.

[00:12:30] But after almost 30 years on the road around the UK, she settled on a location in London, where customers could come and see these **waxworks**.

[00:12:43] Her sons came over from Paris and joined the family business, so it became Madame Tussaud & Sons.

[00:12:52] Her sons proved to be **worthy** additions to the business, carving arms and legs to go with their mothers **eerily** realistic faces.

[00:13:05] After **outgrowing** its original location, the museum moved to its current location in Baker Street, in central London.

[00:13:15] If you have ever been there, you will know that there are queues that go around the block almost every single day.

[00:13:23] The rest is, as they say, history.

[00:13:28] The museum attracts around 2.5 million people every year, and is said to have welcomed over 500 million visitors since it opened.

[00:13:41] There is evidently something quite **timeless** about **waxworks** - whether that's seeing the **likeness** of a French revolutionary back in 1810, or it's in 2020 and going to take a selfie with a **waxwork** of David Beckham or The Queen.

[00:14:02] Madame Tussauds has **tapped into** something **inherently** human it would seem, and I'm sure they're **banking on** 500 million more people visiting it before people get bored.

[00:14:17] If you go there today, you won't immediately notice any sign of the original Tussaud, Marie.

[00:14:25] The museum was bought by a huge entertainment group for Â£1 billion back in 2007, and it is now a **well-oiled**, commercial enterprise.

[00:14:39] Some of the original, Madame Tussaud **waxworks** are still there, but the most important thing that she left behind, and the thing that no one can ever take away, is this fantastic story.

[00:14:54] Yes, the story comes from her own **memoirs**, and there is a little bit of debate about how much is actually true, and how much is slightly **elaborated**, but if there's anyone who knew how thin the line is between reality and fantasy, between life and death, it is Madame Tussaud.

[00:15:19] Ok then, that is it for today's episode on Madame Tussauds.



[00:15:24] It is a pretty good story, and it is always amazing to see that there is such an interesting history to something that a lot of people, including myself until a few days ago, thought was just a normal museum.

[00:15:43] As a final reminder, if you are looking for the transcript, subtitles, key vocabulary, bonus episodes, and a load of other **goodies**, then I'd recommend checking out our website, which is [leonardoenglish.com](http://leonardoenglish.com).

[00:15:58] It is full of loads of interesting resources about how to learn English in a more interesting way, especially if you don't live in an English-speaking country, so that is well worth checking out if you haven't done so already.

[00:16:14] And if you are listening to this on your favourite podcast app, and you want to do something very nice, then you can always hit subscribe, or perhaps even leave a review - I read every single one, and they all make my day.

[00:16:28] You've been listening to English Learning for Curious Minds by Leonardo English

[00:16:34] I'm Alastair Budge, you stay safe, and I'll catch you in the next episode.

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