

HOW TO LEARN ENGLISH

THE
ULTIMATE GUIDE TO LEARNING
ENGLISH
AS A SECOND LANGUAGE



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How to Learn English

The ultimate guide to learning
English as a second language

Introduction

This book has been designed to help students learn English faster, more efficiently and to help build the essential habits required to become an outstanding Student. Teachers always give students homework and activities but what are the techniques that help students to become excellent? To learn English faster, have more confidence, better communication skills and ultimately become bilingual?

Firstly to become an outstanding student we need 2 things:

A proactive attitude – This is more important than anything! If you don't work at improving your English it is more difficult to learn, slower and your results suffer!! By having a very proactive attitude you will be amazed at how quickly you learn and turn the information into knowledge.

Production, production, production – The 2nd most important element to learning quickly and effectively is to produce as much as possible. The more English you produce, the more you are learning, communicating and practicing.

Secondly English has 2 parts that we need to focus on:

Learning the language (This includes the grammar, common expressions, vocabulary, sentence structure etc.).

Communication. The 4 skills we need to develop are: Reading, writing, listening and speaking.

By following the lessons in this book you will improve your English quickly, get better results and ultimately learn English more effectively!!

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How to become an outstanding student

Attitude

The most important element we need to become a fantastic student is to change our attitude. Not just to study more but to change the way we think about learning English.

First we need to change our awareness of how to learn English.

The golden rule for learning English is: **You have to take responsibility for your own learning.** You can't wait for your teacher to push you or just to follow their class. You need to actively try to engage in the class, find solutions to your language problems and become highly proactive.

Generally we have 2 types of students:

1. Those that wait for the teacher to ask them questions, don't initiate conversation or produce English unless they are asked.
2. Those who always ask questions when they don't understand, actively try to give examples and produce more than is asked of them.

By actively trying to become student number 2, you will learn a lot more, quicker, have better practice/production and especially learn more efficiently.

So how do we change from student 1 - to student 2?

A lot of students don't have much confidence when they are trying to learn English (especially in front of a whole classroom and teacher), to change

this students need to:

A. Understand that being correct and incorrect are both good things =

It is more important to build confidence and the right attitude than to be perfect.

B. Focus on producing as much as possible and less on being correct.

It is important to try and be correct but when we focus on producing English as well as being correct, we get more practice and better results quicker.

<p>A really good tip for building confidence is to try and give many examples and especially to ask lots of questions.</p>

Production, production, production

When we focus on producing a lot, we are accomplishing 2 things:

A. To turn the new language we learn into knowledge that we remember.

B. To practice our communication skills.

There is one general rule when it comes to learning a new language: **If you don't use the new language you will forget it.** By focusing on producing more, we are reinforcing the information that we learn. Also it is vital to turn that new knowledge into language that we use in normal conversations. By producing and practising more, we are actively training our brains to become bilingual.

Secondly, to become bilingual we need to develop excellent communication skills. The only way we can communicate English effectively is by actively practicing and producing more English.

How to learn the English Language

Ask Questions

One of the most important elements of becoming an outstanding student and learning English more effectively is by asking a lot of questions. Every time that you have class you should be asking questions. If you don't understand something, ask the teacher or another student. Make sure you ask the question in English and if you still don't understand write down or circle the sentence/vocabulary and come back to it later.

Also when you ask a lot of questions, you are being proactive and thus taking control of your learning. Asking questions also helps you to practice your communication skills such as pronunciation, rhythm, listening, speaking and reading (on the white board/in a text).

Some examples of good questions to ask are:

I don't understand, can you explain it again please?
Is this sentence/vocabulary formal or informal?
Can I use a different sentence/expression to say the same thing?
Can I say
Is this sentence common or uncommon?
Why do we use this sentence?
Can we use this sentence in past, present and future?
Can you use this sentence in a real example, please?

Listen for the most common words/expressions

This is the most effective method to learn English fast!

Every time we have a conversation in English, we hear new words and expressions. It is very difficult to understand when you have a lot of new English to listen to.

So the best method to learn English the fastest is:

A. Listen for the words/expressions that are repeated the most frequently.

B. Write them down and then ask a teacher or a friend what they mean (or check a dictionary).

C. Try to use them as often as possible.

When you follow this process, it will greatly increase your ability to have conversations and these words/expressions are the most commonly used in English.

Also this is a highly effective method to help your listening skills and more importantly to understand the context of the conversation. It is really helpful to learn the common questions that we are asked but don't understand.

Create word lists/Expression lists

A very good method of learning the most necessary vocabulary/expressions is to create word lists or expression lists and put them up in different rooms in your house.

For example:

When you need to learn the vocabulary in the kitchen, write out a list of all of objects you have, translate them into English, make a big clear list and put it up in your kitchen.

After you have your lists up, do your homework in different rooms and use those objects/expressions in examples. Write a dialogue for your teacher to check and include those things in your English classes if possible.

This will help you learn a large amount of information very quickly. Also you will focus your English around real sentences, vocabulary and conversations that are used in everyday conversations.

Focus on real situations

When you are in class, it is always good to try and use English that we use in real situations. When we actively focus on real situations, we are learning and practicing the most commonly used English. This will greatly help you in normal conversation and especially help you to identify a lot more English vocabulary, phrases and expressions.

So what is the easiest method to focus on real English?

- 1. Write down a list of the most common situations that you encounter.**
- 2. Write out some questions or expressions that you say in those situations (and have the English translation as well).**
- 3. When you are in class, studying or doing homework, consult your list and try to make real examples, dialogues, stories etc.**

Some common situations that you can use are:

In the supermarket

On the bus

Going to a restaurant

Watching the football with friends

At a party

Introducing yourself to someone else

Talking about your country or city

Talking about food/drink

Research things you don't understand

When you are in class, it isn't always possible to understand the topic and how to use the English that you learn (especially in a big class). You need to be proactive and research the problem after your class. You can ask your teacher (or another teacher) or other students etc.

However one of the best methods is to look on the internet or in textbooks.

If you have access to the internet it is one of the best sources of information. There are a lot of resources online that will really help you so when you find them, write them down or print them out and put them into your study notes etc.

This topic sounds obvious but most people learning English don't actively follow up their classes and research more about the topics that they are learning.

The whole point is that you need to make this a routine and you will develop your understanding of English much faster and more extensively.
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Learning English communication

The four abilities

Generally it is easier to study the language of English than to study English communication. This is because we can study the language individually without needing to practice with other people. However there are methods that we can use to improve our English Communication on an individual basis.

There is one simple rule to remember when learning English: To become bilingual you must communicate in both languages.

So the question is how can we best study and practice English communication?

1. Try to communicate in English with other students or your friends.

This can be difficult at first but it is very important to build good habits. You don't have to always communicate in English but you should try to include English into your conversations (the more comfortable you become in English, the more you should include it).

2. Immerse yourself in English.

You should start to read books or magazines in English, listen to the radio in English, watch TV or movies in English etc. This will be slow at first but even just a small amount will help. This actively helps you to become more comfortable in English as your understanding and listening skills improve.

3. Relax when you are tired.

This is absolutely vital when learning English. When your brain gets tired, relax. Take a break or switch back to your native language. If your brain

gets too tired, you will stop absorbing information and will be wasting your energy.

The point is, to become an outstanding English student/ English communicator, you need to have an outstanding attitude towards learning.

Basically you need to push, focus and practice as much English as possible. At the same time you need to stop and relax when it feels like too much (when you feel tired and can't think). Also it is really important that you enjoy the learning process so take a break when you need it and come back to it when you can.

This is especially important for immigrants living in another country. One of the biggest problems when moving to a new country (especially one that doesn't speak your native language) is getting very mentally tired because you always have to translate and don't get an opportunity to relax.

Reading

Some really good reading activities/tips that you can do are:

Watch TV/Movies with English subtitles

When you watch movies with English subtitles, your brain is translating and looking for patterns. It really helps you to identify common words/expressions and also to associate them with specific situations.

A good suggestion is to start by watching TV/movies in your native language with English subtitles (this helps you to associate words in your language with the corresponding words in English).

When you are at a more advanced level of English you should then start watching TV/movies in English with English subtitles (this will help you to learn new words, improve your listening skills and also pronunciation).

Try to find material that is your level of English.

One of the most common mistakes students make is to choose the wrong level of text. You should try to find books/magazines/articles etc. that are your level of English. Find something that you will enjoy reading that is a good level for you. Ideally it shouldn't be easy, it should be challenging but also something where you can follow the context of the material.

Reading is a fantastic solo activity – It exposes you to new vocabulary/expressions, helps your brain to think more in English and build a greater association/link with your native language.

Read different types of material

Reading books or magazines is excellent however it is also important to have variety in your learning. Make sure you read different types of material such as newspaper articles, fiction/non-fiction books, Magazines, song lyrics, short stories etc.

Also try to read material that discusses different topics. For example don't just read about fashion or football – try to include other subjects like biographies, fitness magazines, politics, history, computers, video games etc. This will greatly help your knowledge, your ability to have different conversations and a greater vocabulary.

Writing

Writing is vital for developing good sentence structure and especially in the modern world where a lot of communication is online or messaging on cell phones. Here are a couple of good activities that you can use to improve your English:

Read/write for your teacher and get them to check your work

Write different types of texts for your teachers/friends/other students. Then get them to check if you are correct and if they like your writing. Also write different types of text such as short stories, dialogues, opinion pieces, descriptions etc. This will help you to improve your English quickly and is a very good habit to develop. You don't need to write a lot (don't forget your friends/teacher don't want to spend all day reading your text), about 50 – 100 words is enough. You should try to write as often as possible but don't annoy your friends or teacher with material every single day.

Write messages and emails to you friends in English

Another really beneficial activity is to write messages and emails in English. This will help you a lot with the most common forms of communication. It is also really good when you have a dictionary on your phone/computer. Using both together will really speed up your English learning and make it part of your everyday life. It is important to communicate in your native language and in English if you want to be bilingual. So this is a fantastic way to start communicating in both languages without having to study a lot or if you don't have a lot of time.

Keep a diary or journal in English

This can be a really effective tool to improve your English. When you write a diary/journal, you are mostly writing descriptions of something that happened or your opinion. These are 2 very common things that we communicate in conversation so it really helps to practice this type of English. Also it is a good method to measure your level of English over time. When you start it will be more difficult and shorter amounts of information. However over time the length and level of your writing will improve a lot. An English diary is a great thing to look back on when your English is at a high level.

Listening

For a lot of students this is the most difficult skill to improve. This is because we have no control over how fast, soft, strong or clearly someone else speaks. Every student also finds English very fast when they first hear it.

Two very good listening activities are:

Listening to songs

Song activities:

1. Listen to a song, verse or chorus and write down all of the words that you hear. Then check the lyrics to discover if you are correct.
2. Try to count how many times you hear a specific word or phrase in a song.

Listen to the radio

Try to listen to the radio for 15 – 20 minutes each day if possible. It is really important to get your brain moving and hearing more English. Even if you don't understand the radio program, it is a very good activity.

When you listen to the radio you don't necessarily have to be focusing on the English. Even just having it in the background will automatically help you to identify new words and words that you hear often (Because our brains try to recognise patterns, you will keep hearing some familiar words

as you listen and this will help you to understand the context of the program).

As has been discussed in the word lists/expression lists section of this book, it is important to identify and study the words or expressions that you hear most often. When you listen to the radio, have a pen and paper nearby so you can write down the things you don't understand but hear continuously.

Speaking

When speaking to other people, it is always good to remember 2 things:

Try to speak with someone who has a better level of English than you.

This will generally help you improve your pronunciation and especially they can give you correction if you are incorrect. Always try to speak with an advanced student, English teacher or native speaker if possible.

Try to add variety to your conversations. As students we tend to repeat ourselves a lot and limit our ability to express ourselves. If you don't try to use different language in English your learning will be slower and you will not progress as well as you can. Basically you need to use different descriptions and expressions in your conversations so they become part of your English and expand your options.

The true difference between a native speaker and an English student is their ability to express themselves in different ways (so practice and use as many expressions as possible).

Sometimes it is difficult to find people to speak too. It is very difficult to become a good English speaker if you don't have the support network to help you practice. However one excellent activity to help your pronunciation and confidence if you are alone is:

Read aloud in English. Even if you are reading to yourself, you are practicing your pronunciation and developing the muscles in your mouth to make English sounds. If your pronunciation is incorrect, don't worry

because it is better to try and become comfortable speaking English than to not try at all. You will still be improving your speaking even if you aren't sure about the pronunciation.

Conclusion

The book is designed to help you change how you think about English and to give you the blueprint of exactly how you can become an outstanding student (and maximise your results). By following the lessons and information in this book, you will accelerate your learning drastically and become an excellent student. It is vital that you take responsibility and control of your own learning.

Also research other activities and methods related to learning English. This book is an excellent guide however you should also be developing your own ideas and methods to help you become bilingual. **Remember the most important element to learning English is to have a proactive attitude.**

Finally becoming bilingual and learning English is a challenge, something to be accomplished and proud of. You need to push and work hard to learn but you should always enjoy yourself as well. It is important to remember that learning English should always be fun.

Acknowledgements

Thank you to you the reader. Learning English as with all languages is difficult, but the fact you have bought this book is very inspiring. By trying to learn English you are trying to improve your life and this will have a great and positive effect on other people around you.

Your initiative and willingness to learn is very motivating to keep helping other people.

Finally, if you enjoyed this book, please take the time to share your thoughts and review it on Amazon. It would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you very much for your inspiration

Lucas Burns