

10 RULES FOR ACHIEVING ENGLISH FLUENCY



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Recently, I celebrated a big anniversary for me: 10 years ago I taught my first ever English student. I started teaching before I studied for my BA TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) degree at university. Since then I have taught in many countries and, most importantly, have helped hundreds of students become fluent in English.

Over the last 10 years, I have been able to find out the rules that the most successful English learners use to become fluent. In this report, I am going to share these powerful rules with you so that you can take your English to the highest level.

Since I have been helping people like you for 10 years now, I decided to use the number '10' in my ebook: 10 Rules for Achieving English Fluency.

So without further ado, here are my 10 rules:

Rule 1: Use Synonym Swaps - The Strength of Simplicity

I'm sure you know what synonyms are. If you don't, a synonym is simply a word that has the same or nearly the same meaning as another word. For example, 'funny' is a synonym of 'humorous'. This rule is all about using synonyms to expand our vocabulary and make us sound much more fluent.

We all use some words too often in English. Even native speakers do it. This can make you sound like you are repeating yourself.

For example, I often hear students repeating the same words again and again, like this: "that painting is beautiful", "your daughter is beautiful", "London is a very beautiful city", "you have very beautiful eyes" etc.

Often, students get so familiar with some words that they fail to expand their vocabulary. I tried and tried to think of a solution to this problem, when it suddenly hit me: simply use a synonym!

Here is how you put this rule into action: use a thesaurus to find a synonym for a word you use too much. Then, simply swap the word for an interesting synonym.

Let's try it on the sentences above: "that painting is magnificent", "your daughter is gorgeous", "London is a truly stunning city", "you have amazingly charming eyes".

Can you see how powerful this is?!

This rule does many things for your English: it will get you thinking about which words you use too often and need to change; it will expand your vocabulary without having to learn new definitions; and it will make you sound much more fluent and interesting.

You can implement this rule right away:

- Think of a word you use too often and in what situations you use it.
- Write down a few sentences that you might say using the word (like I did above with 'beautiful').
- Find a suitable synonym and rewrite the sentences with the new word.
- Review these sentences every day for a few minutes, reading them aloud.
- Keep this word in mind and use it instead of the old one in your speaking and writing.

You might have to try hard to remind yourself about using the new word for a while, but once you use it two or three times, it will feel natural and will become part of your new vocabulary.

Start with changing one or two words a week and then increasing it as you get comfortable with this rule.

Rule 2: Listen, Listen, Listen! - Why Listening is King

I can't stress this rule enough. You need to listen to English as much as possible, whether it's music, movies, podcasts, speeches, debates or audiobooks, don't stop listening!

All the most successful students I have taught had an MP3 player that they took with them everywhere. On the MP3 player, they had a library of English audio that they always listened to, again and again.

They listened on the bus, in the car, while walking, while jogging, in the gym, while washing the dishes, while travelling on a train. You get the idea!

Listening is basically how we learn any language. How do babies learn their native language? For the first year of their lives, all they do is listen. They become familiar with the sound patterns, the intonation, the phrases and the vocabulary of their language. As they listen more and more, they become fluent and natural in the language.

Of course, as adults, we can speed up this process a lot.

Follow this rule today: search for some interesting audio that interests you. There are so many free resources on the internet to choose from. If you're not sure where to start, I suggest searching for free audiobooks. Transfer the files onto your MP3 player and make sure you bring it with you wherever you go.

MP3 players are perhaps the most powerful tool for learning English.

Rule 3: Read for Pleasure - The Power of Enjoyment

For many students of English, the only reading they do is for studying English. However, I suggest doing another type of reading: read for pleasure.

Reading for pleasure simply means choosing a text that interests you and reading it without getting stressed about the grammar, vocabulary etc.

When you are relaxed, your brain is able to take in much more and you will learn without even trying. All my students who reach an extremely high level of English read books, magazines, blogs and newspapers.

Even if you feel you can't read a newspaper or magazine because there are lots of unknown words, there are books and blogs out there that are suitable for all levels of English.

So, why not start today? Search for a blog in a topic that you are interested in. There are millions of blogs on just about every subject you can think of.

Rule 4: Use Movies/Dramas - Studying These Excellent Resources

Who doesn't like movies or dramas? They are one of the best resources for learning English if you know how to use them for studying.

I understood the power of this idea from a student I once taught. She used the movies to reach a very high level in English. She downloaded the movie scripts from the internet, printed them out, and used them to study English.

She read the script little by little, learning vocabulary and phrases along the way. She would watch and listen to the movie many times, and each time she watched and listened, her English improved a bit more.

By the end of this, she learned huge amounts of vocabulary, phrases, pronunciation, intonation and grammar. All this while enjoying the movie!

The reason this technique is so powerful is because it allows you to learn everything in context, in a real, interesting situation. You also listen to real, natural English, the way natives really speak.

After I learned about this technique, I made all my other students use it too. The results were amazing! Their English improved rapidly and they quickly sounded really natural with their use of vocabulary, phrases and pronunciation.

You can keep watching one movie until you understand all of the vocabulary and phrases, or you can change movies often. The important thing is to make sure you learn something from each movie and come away from it a better English speaker.

You don't have to watch the whole movie in one go. You can watch the sections that you studied in the script, 10 or 20 minutes at a time. This way you can manage your time effectively and don't have to sit down for hours each time.

Once you get through the whole movie, go back to the beginning and study more deeply. Repeat this and you will see amazing results in your English ability.

Rule 5: Be Consistent - Consistency is Key

Getting consistent exposure to English, day after day, is what really gets you to English fluency. But you must make the effort to be consistent.

And remember, exposure to English doesn't just mean studying boring grammar books or memorizing vocabulary lists; it can mean listening to MP3s, watching movies and reading for pleasure.

My definition of consistent exposure means reading or listening to English every day for one hour. If you can do more, that's great! But one hour a day doesn't seem such a long time and is easy for everyone to do.

I have had many students who owned businesses, had families and other big responsibilities who simply didn't have much time. However, they could all find an hour every day, and once they started this consistent exposure, their English improved fast.

Start from today, at least one hour a day (more is fine too!).

Rule 6: Stay Motivated – What are The Benefits of Studying English?

It's important to stay motivated when learning English. We all have times when we feel it is difficult to find the time to study. How can we stay motivated and really WANT to learn English?

The answer to this is to look at the benefits of learning English. Why are you learning English? There must be a reason (or many).

If you are studying for just one reason, think of other benefits that will come from learning English. For example, if you are studying to get a better job, what other benefits come with that better job? More money? A nice car? A bigger house? More travelling? Eating out more?

Look at the bigger picture. This will excite you and keep you wanting to improve in your English and it even makes the studying more enjoyable!

Try this today to keep really motivated to study English:

- Write the heading ‘What Benefits will I Receive When I Become Fluent in English?’
- Write down or type all these benefits. Remember to look at the bigger picture. If you are studying English to go to a good university, what benefits come with that?
- Use pictures under your sentences to get you really excited and motivated to study. For example, if English can bring you more money, include a picture of a big pile of money (use Google images to find pictures).
- Quickly read these benefits every morning so that you have a real hunger to learn English.

The reason this works is because in life, we always do things that will bring us benefits. When studying English, it’s easy to forget the benefits it will bring, so this rule reminds you of those to keep you inspired.

This is something that I recommend all my students to do and they all feel that English is not something boring, but that it is an exciting challenge that can bring them all these great benefits. Can you see the amazing feeling that brings?

Try it today. Get thinking about all the benefits that will come your way and get writing!

Rule 7: Learn Idioms - Why Learn These Unusual Expressions?

This is an area that is very often left out by English learners, but it is so important. Idioms are so common in everyday English that native speakers sometimes don't even realize they are using them. If you want to understand native speakers' natural way of speaking, learning idioms is essential. They are often very fun and interesting too!

Here are some common examples of idioms that are used in everyday English:

That science exam was a piece of cake ! = easy

John is really stressed. He bit off more than he could chew . = he took on too much work

There are probably thousands of idioms used in English, but learning them all is not necessary. There are probably a few hundred that are used often and less than a hundred that are very common. Learning these very common ones is a great start.

And remember, not all native speakers use all these common idioms, but they will understand them when someone else says them. This is the key: knowing what these idioms mean.

Even if you don't use them in your speaking right away, it doesn't matter. At least now when someone else uses the idiom, you know exactly what he or she is talking about. If you are eventually able to use them, even better!

So, start learning idioms today. There is a free video series over at SirEnglish.com dedicated to the most common idioms in English.

Rule 8: Take Advantage of Free Resources - An English Learners Paradise

Today, English learners have so many free resources, it's amazing to think about. Just on the internet, you can find thousands of articles and worksheets that can help you improve. Plus, there videos, audio files, forums, translation tools, dictionaries etc.

English learners don't have to sit in a classroom or go to the U.S.A, the U.K., Canada or Australia to learn English. They can go on the internet and find powerful tools and resources for improving quickly.

Personally, I've taught hundreds of students to reach a high level of English fluency, and my free video lessons at www.SirEnglish.com can help you to become fluent in English. If you want to reach a high level of fluency in English, simply go through these lessons and you cannot fail to improve.

Rule 9: Learn the Grammar Rule then Listen to it - Making Grammar 'Stick'

This is something that I make all my students do and it works so well that I'm surprised not many English students follow this.

The key to learning grammar is not to sit down for hours reading the rule and writing it again and again, trying to remember it. This technique might work, but many people find it boring and ineffective.

Here is what you should do to learn grammar and make it stick:

- Read the grammar rule briefly, getting a rough idea of how it works. Don't try to understand the rule 100% at first.
- After, make a recording of some sentences which contain the grammar rule. You can easily find example sentences in grammar books or on the internet. You can record the sentences yourself or kindly ask a native speaker to record them for you.
- Next, listen to the example sentence recordings MANY times. What you are doing here is isolating the grammar structure for intense study.
- Occasionally, go back to the written rule and read it again to understand more deeply. Once it has become clearer, return to the listening.
- You can then move onto the next grammar rule and repeat the technique.

Now, once you hear and see these grammar rules, you will instantly recognize them, and you will understand what has been said and the meaning.

With my rule, instead of studying the structure and waiting to hear it in natural speech a few times, you can focus on the structure and listen to it 50, 60 or 100+ times! This is extremely powerful for making grammar natural without studying it for hours and hours every day.

Don't forget, you can listen on the go like I mentioned in rule number 2. Listen to these structures on the bus, when exercising, when driving etc.

This technique will ingrain the grammar structure in your brain. After a short time, you will be using the grammar structure in your speaking freely.

Rule 10: Increase Your Word Power - Vocabulary

Expanding

So, now we are on one of the most important rules of all: how to expand your vocabulary by learning new words. We already looked at how to expand your vocabulary using synonyms, but what about learning new meanings?

Looking up words in a dictionary as you read them takes time and the word is rarely remembered the first time. The key to remembering vocabulary is to see and hear the word again and again in context. We can speed up this process using my vocabulary expanding technique:

- Choose 5 new words that you would like to learn (you can try more words but 5 is a good place to start).
- Write down a simple definition of each word. Shorter definitions are easier to remember. Use a learner's dictionary to find short definitions.
- Write 5 sentences using the new words (one new word in each sentence). Try to make the sentences meaningful to you. Don't just make anything up, make it a true sentence (whenever possible). This makes it more relevant to you and easier to remember.
- Each day for 10 minutes, review the new words, the definitions and your sentences. And (this is very important) read each word, definition and sentence aloud. This will train your voice and brain to become familiar with the word, and allow you to start using it in real conversations.

After a few days, you will have consistently reviewed the new vocabulary and should start being more comfortable with some of the words. As soon as you feel comfortable with a word, replace it with a new word, definition and sentence, and continue the process.

Put all the old words on a master list. From time to time, you can go through this master list to refresh your knowledge of these words.

You should always have 5 words in your list that will be reviewed every day.

This repetition of seeing and saying aloud the words, the definitions and meaningful sentences is what allows you to remember the word.

To make this learning even more powerful, record the words, definitions and sentences, and listen to them as well.

So, there you have Sir English's 10 Rules for Achieving English Fluency.

If you start using just a few of these rules you will notice great results. However, use all 10 and the effect is incredible!

So, head over to www.SirEnglish.com and start your journey to becoming fluent in English. Remember, I am here to help you reach your goals. Good luck!

Anthony Kelleher.

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