

THE ENGLISH



FLUENCY FORMULA

Fluent English in 15 Minutes a Day



The English Fluency Formula

Fluent English in 15 Minutes a Day

Revised edition of Learn to be Fluent in 15 Minutes a Day

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About Go Natural English

[Go Natural English](#) started in 2011 as a YouTube channel to help English learners to speak with confidence and fluency.

At that time Gabby, the creator, was teaching English in a pharmaceutical company in Japan. Her students were smart and successful people, but very busy and needed to improve their English skills fast.

She developed the Go Natural English way of learning to help them. It is based on years of teaching English as a second language, years of experience learning other languages, her advanced studies earning a Master's Degree in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, and a passion for helping language learners advance in a fast and fun way.

The name "Go Natural" comes from the idea of going back to the way we naturally learn languages.

Natural learning is fun and easy. The goal of Natural English is to communicate and connect with others, expressing ourselves in a fluent and native-like way. To "go natural" means to learn the patterns that naturally occur in language and to leave behind painful "artificial" memorization of grammar rules and long lists of individual words. It means to learn the way we naturally learn — in the "wild jungle" of the real world, with the advantage of knowing the key strategies to learn faster and better.

The Go Natural English method has been developed over years of successfully applying the method of language learners in real life. This is the revised second edition, edited to give you the best English learning experience!

Important:

If you are reading this text without the audio version, come to <http://gonaturalelenglish.com/ebook> to get it! Reading and listening will help you improve your English skills 50% more when you do both together.

Introduction

The old school, traditional way of learning English is frustrating and ineffective. Simply listening to lectures and memorizing words and verb conjugations is not the best way to master English fluency!

In this book, you'll learn a new method that works and is even enjoyable.

Traditional language learning has not been the best or quickest way to learn a language. The number one reason for this is the focus on memorization and not the application of the language.

The best way to learn English is to apply it, speak it, and be around it as much as you can. As soon as you learn a new phrase, use it immediately. Don't be shy to say it out loud. If you want to be able to use English confidently, anytime, anywhere, we must start with the right method.

The Go Natural English method is best for learners who are self-motivated and willing to do the work to apply the method in everyday life. It is best for the intermediate learner who has some understanding of English already.

Step one is to understand the method. Step two is to apply it!

This book is not for someone who wants to become fluent in English overnight. Although it is true that with 15 minutes a day of focused effort you can improve your fluency, we don't mean just one day. Improvements come with consistent effort over time. In fact, we encourage you to look at English fluency as a lifelong journey and not just a destination.

Please understand that there is no magic pill for fluency. You must follow the steps in this book and do the exercises in order to see improvement. However, it should be fun, enjoyable and 15 minutes should go by quickly! Be patient with yourself. Allow yourself to take your time to "digest" all the information in this book, instead of "binge" reading. If you go too fast, you may feel "sick" of English and give up. We want to sustain your

English over a long time, and that means making this book a part of your day for a while -- 15 minutes a day, every day, for at least a few months.

Did you know that it takes at least 30 days to form a new habit? To build your daily English practice into a habit, read a little of this book every morning if you're a morning person or every night before you sleep if you're more of a night person.

This book is not for beginners. It does not teach basic topics such as the alphabet, numbers or simple vocabulary. It does not explain grammar and vocabulary the same way as a traditional textbook. In fact, it takes traditional grammar and vocabulary lessons and shows you where they go wrong. This book fills in the gaps in your English knowledge that are keeping you from experiencing fluency.

Maybe you have learned English in the traditional way, perhaps in high school or university. You will benefit from a new way of learning—The Go Natural English way.

Please understand that not everyone is ready for the GNE method of learning English because it requires changing your mindset and habits and taking action. It is not like other methods of English learning. The method and this book are different from others because they begin with the secrets of mindset, rely on your true love and enjoyment of using English as a useful tool in your life, and show you how to be a powerful, independent learner—so no one can stop you from being truly fluent and confident in English!

Also, you have to understand that the old way of learning and people associated with it may doubt the way you are learning now. They may not support you. They don't want you to change the way you are learning because that means they might have been wrong. It's hard work, but you must be confident in your decision to learn and improve in a new way that works. In a short time, others will be asking you how you did it and how they can do it too!

Students who have taken Go Natural English programs often say things like, "I learned more in one day than I did in 12 years of regular English class."

They also say, "Now I finally understand why mindset is so important for language learning."

This book is for you if you are an intermediate to advanced English learner hoping to increase your fluency. If you are ready to go beyond traditional textbook English... if you

are ready to understand the secrets to fluent English... if you are ready to enjoy English and make it part of your life... then this book is for you!

Are you ready to get fluent? Let's get started!

How to Use this Book

DO

- Read a little each day.
- Review and repeat the exercises more than once.
- Keep a positive “can-do” mindset. Stay focused on what you can do and how far you’ve come already!
- Focus on what you can do to improve your skills little by little.
- Learn one new thing each day.
- Think of ways to enjoy English and connect with other English speakers.
- Use both the text and audio. Listen to the audio version alone. Listen while you read. Repeat what you hear on the audio version, pausing as you go or using the shadowing technique (repeat as soon as you hear the words).

If you don’t have the audio version, you can find it at

<http://gonaturalenglish.com/ebook>

DON'T

- DON'T give up if you don't see immediate improvement. It takes time to change the way you learn and to realize that you are improving.
- DON'T stop reading if this book seems too difficult. But DO put it down if you need a break, try reading something else for a few days, then come back to it.
- DON'T compare yourself to others; just try to improve on your own skills little by little.
- DON'T focus on what you *can't* do. You go to where you are focused. So, if you focus on what you cannot do, you will not improve.
- DON'T try to do everything alone. English is about connecting and communicating with others.

Quick Start

How do you guarantee success at English fluency? Well, there are no guarantees in life, but there are techniques designed to help improve your conversational skills and move you closer to your goal of English fluency.

Here are seven quick steps to start on your journey to fluency.

1. Include an additional word or phrase every day into your conversations. This will build your vocabulary and conversational skills.
2. Learn to think in English. If you can think in English, your conversational skills will speed up.
3. Be consistent and make English a part of your everyday routine. When you make it a habit, it's easier to improve quickly.
4. Create relationships with native English speakers. Find common interests and use every opportunity to connect using English language as a tool.
5. Focus on that which you find interesting and fun. Do something that you enjoy in English each day. When you enjoy English you will find it easier to improve your skills.
6. Use your ears. Listen carefully to the sounds and stress patterns in English as if it were music. Compare it to what you read and see the difference!
7. Copy phrases and speaking patterns of native speakers. Did your teacher tell you not to copy others'? Forget that! Copying is essential to developing fluency!

Practice these tips for speaking better English and you will be excited with the results on your way to English fluency. This Go Natural English book will be your constant companion on this journey!

Mindset

In high school, did you ever feel embarrassed, nervous or anxious in English class? Did you always look at the clock, wishing class was over already? Now it doesn't have to be that way. Let's change how we interact with English to be successful and enjoyable.

Let's make a comparison to something you may enjoy. Do you enjoy playing games? Learning English can be like an enjoyable game, too. Imagine each new phrase you learn as points that will help you win the game. Each time you practice English on your own or with friends is a training session. And each conversation that you participate in is a game. Each time you speak, it's like trying to make a goal. Sometimes you make a mistake, but at least you tried! And sometimes, you make a goal!

It's funny that a lot of English learners want to be able to participate in long conversations with natives immediately without making mistakes. That's like going straight to the Olympics without any training. To master the "sport" of "playing" English, it is essential to train and make a lot of mistakes first. That's the only way to know what really works.

Do you think that it would work to just read about soccer and then win the World Cup without playing any actual games?

Would you like just reading music notes written on paper, but never hearing or playing the notes out loud?

Would you like to try to swim without getting wet?

These are all comparable to trying to speak fluent English without practicing and without ever making a mistake. It is impossible.

It's time to get used to practicing, playing a lot of games, making a lot of mistakes, making a lot of sounds and music, and getting wet!

Here is something to consider before learning any more English: What is fluency? Is becoming fluent like winning the World Cup of English? It really doesn't have to be so difficult or exclusive. In fact, fluency is *what you say it is*.

What is fluency to *you*?

Does fluency mean that you can order coffee?

Does fluency mean that you can ask people questions and make small talk?

Does fluency mean that you can debate politics with native speakers?

Clearly these situations are at different levels of fluency. You can be fluent in each situation. What you need to do is think about what you want to be able to do in English. Start with the most simple situations and work your way up to more challenging situations. Remember that learning English is about progress, not perfection.

While there is no special trick to becoming fluent, there is a secret to fluency that few language learners understand. If you are feeling like something is missing, then ask yourself this question:

Have you prepared your mind for learning English?

Most English learners buy classes, books and other study tools. They spend time studying vocabulary and grammar. They really want to be fluent in English. If all these things are equal for two different people, why does one learn faster than the other?

The answer is that people approach learning with different *mindsets*. Although many people skip this important step, you need to prepare the way you think in order to have success learning English.

The way you approach learning English makes a huge difference in your fluency results. Here are three ways to prepare your mind for learning English.

First, begin with a *positive mindset*. Pretty simple, right? When you think positively, you don't concentrate on your failures or shortcomings. You see your mistakes as growth opportunities. Therefore, making mistakes becomes necessary and even exciting. Even

when you make mistakes you are learning, and maybe even will have some funny stories to tell later.

Understand and believe you have the ability to become fluent. If you can speak your native language, then you can learn any language. Also, as an adult you have an advantage—you understand things about grammar, language and communication that children don't know yet.

Don't focus on what you don't know. Instead, focus on the positive. Think about how much you already do know and how you can use it in many different ways. Imagine the possibilities for using the English you know now, today. After all, it's the everyday habit of using English that will make you fluent in time.

Second, think of English *as part of your life and your identity*, not simply a school subject or a class you go to once or twice a week. True fluency comes from accepting English as a way of life. Integrate English into every part of your life—the music you listen to, the news you watch, the books and websites you read, the way you communicate with people. Don't learn English just to learn English. Learn English to use it as a tool to enjoy life, to get information and knowledge, to pursue your hobbies and to make new connections and friends.

Third, *enjoy the journey* instead of always focusing on the destination. Stop asking, "How long will it take to be fluent?" Start enjoying using English on a daily basis to explore things you are interested in. Take 5 minutes to learn something new each day. After some time, you'll be surprised at how much you have learned.

Begin with a positive mindset. Make English part of your daily life. Enjoy every moment on the road to fluency. Remember: you control your mind, and you're free to change it!

Habits

Stop studying English.

Yes, you read that correctly — stop studying and start integrating English into your everyday habits and routines.

One key difference between the Go Natural English method and other English teaching styles is the focus on making English a natural part of your everyday life.

Think about how you brush your teeth every day. This is how you should approach English. A little care each day will make a big difference. Don't put too much pressure on yourself to be perfect. Just as you don't need to be a dentist to brush your teeth every day, you don't need to be a linguist to speak fluent, conversational English.

Add English into your own everyday routine. It will help you to form a fluency habit that, much like brushing your teeth, will become a non-negotiable part of your day.

Feel free to start with one or two suggestions and work your way up to doing all five!

Rise and Shine!

It is important to begin each day with the right mindset because it will help your brain to receive information and you'll start forming new pathways.

Don't accept common myths like "it is very difficult for adults to become fluent in English," or "mistakes are bad and should be avoided," or "some people are naturally talented at languages, but I am not."

These are myths. Let them go. Try reading these positive ideas aloud instead. You'll be amazed at your fast improvement!

Habit 1: As soon as you wake up, read these phrases aloud to train your brain for learning with a positive mindset:

- I improve every day.
- I learn every day.
- I have good intentions and should therefore always be confident in my words and my actions.
- I will not compare myself to anyone except the person I was yesterday.
- Today is a great day to make mistakes!

Get Ready!

Habit 2: Listen to music in English while you get ready. Put it on while you shower and get dressed.

By listening to music in English, you will benefit in three ways. First, you are immersing yourself in the sounds of English, which you need in order to become familiar with new sounds and words. Second, if you listen carefully, you can improve your listening skills and vocabulary. Third, you can discover new music you like and even learn about some pop culture.

Bonus: Sing along for added fun and to improve your pronunciation and vocabulary!

To find suggestions for your playlist, try these sites:

- The Billboard top 100
- Spotify
- YouTube

Eat Your Breakfast!

They say breakfast is the most important meal of the day, so don't skip it! You will not want to skip it now, especially if you use the time to eat and improve your English.

Habit 3: Listen to, watch or read in English while you eat breakfast. By watching programs in English, you will benefit in many ways: listening comprehension, vocabulary, phrases, and even grammar. Consuming media in English will immerse you

in the language and culture. No matter where you live, you need to expose yourself to lots of English.

You probably already check the news in the morning, and why not do that in English?

Try these sites for news by level:

- Advanced English speakers – [BBC](#)
- Intermediate English speakers – [VOA](#)
- High beginner English speakers – [Breaking News English](#)

If you'd rather watch direct English-learning tips, you can always watch [Go Natural English on YouTube!](#)

Drive on, Learn on!

Do you drive, take a train or bus, or walk to work in the morning? Make use of the time you spend going to work (or anywhere) and you guessed it; listen to something in English! Again, you could listen to the news; music or this is a great opportunity to explore another form of media in English. Try downloading free podcasts. Put on your earphones and enjoy. There are two types of podcasts you should download: English-learning podcasts and authentic English podcasts.

Habit 4: This one has two parts. First, download free English-learning podcasts – like the Go Natural English podcast on [iTunes for IOS](#) and [Stitcher](#) for Android – that will directly improve your English skills. Each episode will give you clear and practical English learning tips. With unconventional strategies and native-speaker phrases, this is not your typical English class!

Second, find authentic English podcasts (for native speakers of English) on topics that you enjoy. Do not search for “English” and do not search in your native language. Search for categories or keywords of topics you enjoy in English. Keep in mind that these podcasts are meant for native speakers. Don't worry if you don't understand everything in the podcasts – that's normal. Just try to understand the main idea.

It's a good idea to listen to a variety of materials. Listen to materials at a variety of levels of difficulty and listen to materials on different topics by different speakers. Listen to

materials of different lengths, 1 minute to begin with or 1 hour to challenge yourself. Finally, look for materials about diverse topics. Start with topics that are familiar to you, then push yourself to explore new topics that are outside your familiarity zone. That is a great way to build your vocabulary and listening comprehension. This way, you will be able to talk about a variety of topics.

Bonus: Try translating the everyday objects you see on your commute into the words you know in English. Double Bonus: if you have a commute that involves public transport and you are around other English speakers, try speaking with them!

Have a plan!

Habit 5: You usually make a plan for your day, right? Well this habit is going to take that a step further! Make the effort to think about what you will do each day, in English! You'll benefit even more if you write a to-do list for the day in English as well.

Do this task as you would in your native language. Use as many words in English as you can without looking them up in the dictionary.

It's OK if you don't know how to express everything you want to. Try to write it in another way in English using simple words you already know. The important thing is that you are using English as a tool for success in your daily activities. Make a note of any words or ideas you don't know and look them up later. Stay organized and keep your to-do list at your fingertips no matter where you go using your smartphone or a small pocket-sized notepad.

Make these five suggestions part of your morning routine. Remember to pair them with those 7 tips I told you about before. You will feel the power of putting your English improvement first in your day. It's a great feeling to know you did something for yourself before you go to work or school, before the other demands of the day catch up with you. If you can add some of these suggestions to your morning routine, you'll see your English will improve quickly.

Think in English

One of the best ways to improve your fluency is to think in English. Most non-native English speakers are still translating from their own native language into English in their heads. This can lead to unclear conversations because, as you've probably seen for yourself, not all words or phrases translate exactly from one language to another. But, if you can train your brain to start *thinking in English*, you just might find that conversations become a little bit easier. So, in order to get you started on the path to not just speaking and reading in English, but also thinking in English, I've created some tips that might help:

- **Start small** – this is as simple as using the words that you know. And it's as easy as thinking “I want an apple for breakfast” or “Should I go to the store today?”
- **Start slow** — Take your time and speak slowly to yourself in your thoughts. You could begin with just one short sentence and repeat it over and over for a few minutes.
- **Memorize a short meditation** — Remember those positive thoughts we talked about in the “mindset” chapter? Repeat those to yourself in your mind several times for a few minutes, meditating on the meaning as you say them to yourself.
- **Learn a song** — Song lyrics are easy to remember because the tune and rhythm helps the words “stick.” Think or sing a favorite song to yourself! Is there a real-life situation where you might use the words in the song?
- **Use an English-to-English dictionary** — when you want to find the meaning of word, never use a bilingual dictionary if you can help it. You'll be able to think in English faster if you start learning new words *in English with English definitions and examples*.
- **Be Imperfect** – it's totally fine to make mistakes, I mean; you're in your own head so who's going to know?
- **Identify objects** - Start making note of what's around you; on your desk, the parts of your car or bike, in your kitchen. Start labeling those things in English, in your head.

- **Plan** - Plan for the future, plan a trip, plan your day. But do it in English.
- **Make up stories** - This one is my favorite! Start with a short story that you might tell a child and see how complicated you can make it only using the English words you know!
- **Make up conversations** - Is there a conversation you would like to have? Maybe a situation you are anticipating? Imagine a conversation in your mind based on what you would say the next time you have the chance to speak English.
- **Visualize** — Your mind is a powerful visualization machine! Think of words or phrases and images to go along with them. You could identify objects in your mind, or imagine the phrase spelled out in your mind like text in a book.
- **Note what you don't know and find the answers!** – Whenever you are unsure, write yourself a note with your questions about grammar or vocabulary. Then, find out the answers. You can do this by asking help from your friends who speak the language, ask your teacher or search online.
- **Make nonsense** — It's ok if your thoughts don't make sense in English. Even in our native language sometimes our thoughts don't make sense, right? The important thing is to think using English words. So, try making a weird and wacky nonsensical poem, or just let your mind wander freely in English! The crazier, the better! Go wild!
- **Try free writing** — Free writing is when you let your thoughts go wild on paper. Using paper and pencil, or your laptop, just write *anything* that comes to mind in English. Time yourself. Start with 10 minutes and add more minutes each time you do this exercise. Don't stop until the time is up! This is a good way to push yourself to stay in English and produce more thoughts without stopping.

Common Mistakes to Avoid

Why does it seem like some English learners are gifted? Why do some English learners reach fluency and confidence faster than others? Why does it feel so difficult to be really fluent in English?

If you are doubting your ability to learn English fluently, see if you may be making some of these common mistakes and learn to avoid them.

- Don't rely on your teacher or a textbook. You must be an independent learner!
- Don't focus on what you *can't* do; focus on what you can and want to do!
- Don't focus on how long it will take until you reach fluency; enjoy the journey!
- Don't give up if you don't know the answer immediately; take your time and ask lots of questions!
- Don't try to be perfect; try to make progress, to communicate and to make connections with people!
- Don't make English your main goal; make English a tool to reach your life goals!
- Don't make excuses like "I don't have time." Just 15 minutes a day can improve your English fluency!

Everyone who can speak one language can learn a second one. It is your human ability and it is almost impossible *not* to speak a second language when you learn with the right method.

We believe in you. Now you need to believe in you, too!

Listening

English learners create a lot of problems for themselves when they try to equate the spelling of a word with the way it sounds in conversation. Put simply, English spelling does not always clearly inform us of the way a word sounds. For example, the English “o-u-g-h” spelling has many different pronunciations. One reason for the multitude of pronunciations is that many English words are borrowed from other languages. Sometimes, the words aren’t spoken exactly as they are spelled.

Here’s an interesting example. If English letters always made the same sounds, then the word “ghoti” would sound like the word “fish.” That is because in the word “cough” the letters “gh” make an “f” sound. In the word “women,” the “o” makes an “i” sound and in “motion” the “ti” makes a “sh” sound. Welcome to English!

Learning English the traditional way makes listening to real native conversations even harder. When you learn through memorizing individual words, and reading text books, you should not be surprised that listening to natives sounds very different than what you’ve studied.

English has many words which contain silent letters such as the words should, would, and could, or the words “lamb,” “knife, and “castle.”

English also contains homonyms. Words like “err”, “air”, and “heir” are all spelled completely differently, have completely different meanings, and yet are all pronounced the same.

This doesn’t even take regional accents into account either. The way we say words can change depending on where and how we learned English. Standard English, the way reporters speak, is the rule – but many native speakers do not talk like that.

How do you improve your listening skills? You need to start with an open mind, immerse yourself in the sounds of English, and use the Go Natural English method to help you remember all the sounds as you hear them in conversation.

The best way to think about this, particularly for mastering speaking fluency, is to remember how the words sound to you, instead of how they are spelled in English. It's especially important to get those sounds from listening to how they are pronounced by native speakers. You can listen and copy what you hear. Say the word or phrase immediately after you hear it. This helps not only your own understanding of spoken English, but it will also help you to sound more like a native speaker yourself if you can mimic those same sounds.

As you continue to improve your English language proficiency, your vocabulary will also increase and you will begin to understand more and more of what you hear. The key here is immersion. Immerse yourself into the English language as much as possible and you will see great progress. Try to speak English as much as you can. Seek out native speakers and start conversations using words and phrases that you are learning. Read books to increase your vocabulary and grammar skills, and watch different TV shows and movies to fine-tune your listening skills. Yes, even those movies that are fun to watch can help you learn!

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Watch a TV show you enjoy and shadow what the characters say.

To shadow means to repeat what you hear immediately, as soon as you can. Do this for a few minutes, then repeat and review. This exercise will be easier with subtitles, but be careful because you should repeat what you hear not simply read out loud. The difference is that when you repeat what you hear, you will say phrases like the native "speaker. If you read subtitles out loud, you may read them using rules from your native language. This does not help your accent improve.

Don't worry if you can't catch every word. Just try to repeat as much as possible! You can do this with music too.

Now that's all well and good, but what if you're struggling with your listening practice when it comes to learning English? Well then, this next lesson is for you!

In real life when you're listening to and speaking with natives, if there is a word or phrase you don't understand or are unfamiliar with, use the context of the words and phrases that you DO understand around that new word to help you figure out what the new word means. Also, consider the setting; people talking, and what it is they are most likely talking about.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Read or watch a short news story in English. Are there words you are unfamiliar with? Try guessing the meanings through the context of the story. Later, you can check the

meanings to confirm if your guess is correct or not. Don't skip the step of guessing through context! It really helps you to remember new words and how to use them.

Pronunciation

At first, you may find it difficult to speak like a native. There are some specific sounds that give English learners a challenge no matter where you are from. Let's take a quick look at six of the most challenging points for everyone and how to improve your pronunciation.

Remember that when you see a letter of the alphabet in an English word, it may make sounds that are very different from the sounds the letter makes in your native language! That is why you must listen with your ears, not your eyes. Be careful not to read or speak in English using pronunciation rules from your first language. Again, it's very important to remember just as with listening; *spoken* English sounds very different from *written* English. This next section will help you to identify some of the more confusing sounds in the English language and hopefully, how to master their pronunciation in certain words.

Sounds

R

The letter "r" and the sounds it makes are special in English. "R" alone is formed with your tongue in the middle of your mouth—not touching anywhere.

When you add a vowel and an "r" together, you usually get an r-colored vowel. This means that most words with any vowel + r will have an "er" sound.

For example:

Nurse = "nerse"

First = "ferst"

World = "werld"

Of course there are some exceptions such as "north" which makes an "OR" sound and "start" which takes the long a as in "AR", the word "art" is the same.

TH

When you form the “th” sound, you need to stick your tongue out through your teeth a little bit. This may feel strange, but believe me, it’s important. There are two ways to say “th”. It may need your voice, like “then”, “there”, or “that”. Or, it may not need your voice, such as “thesis”, “theater”, or “father”.

If’s you can make the “th” sound correctly, everyone will think you’re a native!

Consonants Together

Consonants are all letters except A-E-I-O-U and Y. In English consonants love to stay together. This can be difficult to know how to pronounce. The most common mistake is to add extra vowel sounds. Don’t do that. You need to say each sound without adding any extra vowel sounds. Practice saying the following sounds separately. Next say them together slowly. Finally, say them together quickly. Repeat until you feel comfortable.

For example:

Worked = “wer-k-t”

Months = “mon-th-s”

Stars = “s-t-ar-z”

Stretch = “s-t-re-t-ch”

Squirrels = “s-k-wer-l-z”

Flapped T

In American English we love to “flap” our “t” sound when it comes between vowel sounds. What that means is that sometimes “t” sounds like “d.”

For example:

Waiter = “waider”

Pretty = “predy”

City = “cidy”

Butter = “budder”

Water = “wader”

Vowel sounds - short and long

One feature of English that is important to work on is the difference between short and long vowels. Each vowel — a, e, i, o, u and sometimes y — has a short and a long pronunciation. This is especially important to note because if you exchange a short vowel for a long vowel - or vice versa - you can completely change the word. Luckily for

us, the context of the sentence should be enough for people to understand what you really mean to say. Even so, if you want to master fluency, you need to master vowels in English.

For example:

App (short) vs. ape (long)

Set (short) vs. seat (long)

Fin (short) vs. fine (long)

Hop (short) vs. hope (long)

Cut (short) vs. cute (long)

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Try saying these words with challenging sounds. Record yourself. Listen to your pronunciation. Get a native speaker to give you feedback. Re-do it if needed.

World, Girl, Hurt, First, Nurse

Start, Stretch, First

Month, Threat, Father

Butter, Water, Better

Know, Now

Sheep, Ship

Bad, Bed

Peach, Pitch

Word-level Stress

The secret to native pronunciation is not in a specific letter, it is a sound: schwa. It has a weak sound, like when you get hit in the stomach—“uh.”

Be careful not to make each sound in an English word the same strength. In fact, you should not pronounce every sound exactly as you might think it should sound. English words have strong and weak parts, known as *syllables*. Most weak syllables get the “schwa” sound. This is true no matter what the vowel of the word’s weak part is.

This is really important for any long word with more than one syllable. There are exceptions to the rule, but let’s keep it simple and look at some examples that are always true.

For example:

Apartment = “uh-PART-muhnt”

Massachusetts = “Muhs-uh-CHU-suhhtts”

Excellent = “EX-suh-luhnt”

Of course, you still need to remember those short and long vowels when pronouncing the words above. Syllables just help you to remember where the emphasis goes in each word.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Say these words with the correct schwa sound. Use an online audio dictionary to check how they should sound. Record yourself and compare to the official dictionary audio or check with a native speaker.

Garage

Pleasant

Dozen

History

Mountain

Curious

Famous

President

Vocabulary

Have you ever tried to pick up a new skill and find yourself getting frustrated because you didn't get it as quickly as you thought you should? Well, that can be a common occurrence in language learning as well because there is so much to take in.

Learning English is a new skill, and it requires the same effort as learning any other skill. Don't get nervous, or anxious, and certainly don't give up. Just relax, and learn new words or phrases while continuing to use the ones that you already use in your conversations. Everything around you can be turned into a vocabulary lesson. For example, read license plates out loud while you commute to work. Name things you see around you.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Make a list of everything you see around you. If you don't know the word in English, look it up! Time yourself for 15 minutes and write down everything — objects, textures, actions, etc.

Stop memorizing lists of vocabulary as individual words.

Vocabulary is best learned by applying word pairs or in phrases.

You probably want to put words together into sentences, right? It is essential to learn and practice with more than one word at a time.

Using words in pairs makes it easier to create sentences and express full thoughts. Many words love to be together just like best friends. Words like “salt and pepper,” “bread and butter,” “dollars and cents,” and “high flying” are just a few examples of collocations. It's worth exploring collocations to discover what words go together naturally.

Using words in pairs also affects our listening and pronunciation. Note that sometimes when we use two words together, the word sounds change. And sometimes the sounds are deleted.

For example:

Knife fight = “naifait”

The word “knife” ends in an “f” sound and the word “fight” begins in an “f” sound, which makes it sound almost as though the two words have been combined.

Diamond necklace = “diamonnecklace”

The “d” at the end of “diamond” is not a strong sound. It gets lost between the “n” sounds. Though, you will hear some native speakers separate these two words distinctly.

Want to = “wanna”

In everyday conversations, most people will completely drop both the “t” sound at the end of “want” and the preposition “to” sounds like “uh.”

Going to = “gonna”

The “ing” sound disappears and again the preposition “to” is dropped completely so that it sounds like a schwa “uh.”

Sometimes sounds combine to make new ones.

For example:

Would you = “Wud-ja”

Could you = “Cud-ja”

Should you = “Shud-ja”

What are you = “Wat-cha”

Is he = “Izi”

These are just a few examples to explain why it seems that native speakers talk quickly or are difficult to understand. Natives change and omit sounds, causing you to feel natives are speaking faster than they really are. Knowing how words and sounds act together is a very important part of becoming a great English speaker.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Copy & Paste

Listen to anything short in English (a song, a YouTube video, the news, etc) and select a phrase or two that you could use in a future conversation. Repeat them in your mind, out loud, write them down, create your own imaginary conversations with them and paste them into your own real conversations!

Remember Vocabulary

Is it difficult to remember new words?

Stop memorizing vocabulary only through repetition!

Use these three steps to rapidly increase your memory for new English words and phrases.

1. Make a pathway

Build a bridge between the receptors in your brain. Imagine having two cliffs that are separate and you want to build a bridge to bring the two cliffs together. This is not easy because you have old thinking patterns but you need to keep working hard to create the pathway.

How should you create the neural pathways? Think about your learning style.

How do you learn best? Do you learn by listening? Then spend your time listening! Do you learn through physical movement? Do more of that while you are learning English.

2. Make connections

Connect what you learn in English with something else that you already know. You could connect a new vocabulary word with an old one. Connect a new vocabulary word with a sound, image, number — anything that you can think of that makes sense to *you*.

Another way to do this is to create a mnemonic (new-mAHn-ick) device. A mnemonic device is a tool that you can use to remember words, such as an acronym.

For example, when teaching English I like to use the word “CRU”. Now “CRU” is an acronym that means “Connect, Repeat, Use”. Everyone creates their own mnemonic devices in their own way. It might take more time initially, but you’ll save yourself a lot of time in the end.

3. Use what you are learning

Don’t just listen or read. You need to write, speak, and use the language.

You need to analyze what you are learning. Don’t focus on English just to use English. Think about how English can help you in your day-to-day life.

Use English to learn about something else going on in your life.

For speaking and understanding English fluently and naturally, building vocabulary is more important than learning all of the proper grammar rules.

Many English learners feel a big distance between their high school English class and the way native speakers converse in the present day. Textbook English can seem old-fashioned and stiff—not how you want people to see you! You are a modern, smart and fun person—so you want people to understand that from the way you speak!

Here are some suggestions:

- Watch current TV series (advanced difficulty)
- Participate in or just observe online chats on social media (intermediate difficulty)
- Chose a singer, movie star or someone famous to model some phrases (intermediate difficulty—see the next Fluent in 15 Minutes exercise)

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Create your English “Alter Ego”

Find a pop star, movie star, or other famous person who you admire. It is best to choose a person who is currently famous, around your same age and gender.

Watch clips of this person speaking on YouTube, or listen to their songs. Try to notice some phrases that they commonly use and copy them for your own conversations. Try to notice how they use gestures, or other ways of communication; like their flow and rate of speaking, and copy it. When it is time to speak English, imagine you are this famous English-speaking person! It is a real confidence boost!

Phrasal Verbs

It's time to get down to the business of learning about phrasal verbs using the word "get." If you really want to get your message across, you need to become familiar with naturally spoken English. As you will see in this English tip, native speakers tend to use phrasal verbs with "get" more than they use the formal verbs.

You get out of your English learning effort what you put into it.

You don't want to just get by in your studies, you want to excel and become the best English language speaker you can be.

If you can begin to use phrasal verbs with "get" you will find that you will be understood, and maybe even commended on your command of the English language.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Can you match the phrasal verbs with "get" with the more formal way of saying the same thing?

To have the opportunity To get into

To arrive To get by

To exit To get in(to)

To wake To get up

To be accepted To get out

To do just enough To get in(to)

To complete To get to

To become interested To get through

There are hundreds and hundreds of phrasal verbs in English. This is simply a suggestion to begin with the verb "get" — one of the most commonly used verbs to create many different phrasal verbs.

Grammar

English, just like any other language, has a lot of rules. And as is often the case, these rules are difficult, confusing and one of the hardest parts to master when learning a new language. Let's look at some of the more common problems English language learners face, how to overcome them and sometimes even when to break the rules altogether.

Most Common Verb Tenses Used by Native English Speakers

As if English language pronunciation and spelling aren't challenging enough, you should eventually learn to use the proper tenses in order to say exactly what you mean. The good news is you can go a long way by focusing on only the most common verb tenses.

The simple past and simple present are probably the two most common verb tenses. For example, if something occurred in the past, you might say something like, "I ate all my vegetables" or "I wrote a long letter to my grandmother." If you are in the act of performing an action, you might say, "I study English on a daily basis."

Remember, mastering fluency doesn't require learning each and every single grammar rule in the English language. All you need is to master the basics, and that will help you to get "the most bang for your buck" as we say in American English, meaning to benefit the most with the least effort. By prioritizing and spending your time wisely, learning just a few of the more simple rules used in everyday speech, you'll be conversing fluently with native English speakers in no time!

There are six main grammar tenses that every English language learner should know to understand about 80% of all native-level conversations. So let's take a look at what those are:

Simple Present: "I am, I work, I study."

Simple present continuous: "I am working, I am studying."

Present perfect continuous: "I have been studying."

Present perfect: "I have studied"

Simple Past: "I studied, I worked."

Future: "I will" or "I am going to" plus a verb

In normal conversation, most people use the simple tenses.

Conversational English by its very nature tends to be less formal and restrictive than the written language. For everyday conversational purposes, don't worry about the other tenses for now.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Practice each of the tenses quickly by writing and saying one short sentence for each of the following:

- Describe who you are (simple present)
- Talk about a project you are currently working on (present continuous)
- Talk about something you have been doing on and off for the last few years (present perfect continuous)
- Talk about your experience, where you have traveled (present perfect)
- Share something that you did yesterday (simple past)
- Share your plans for next weekend (future)

Future Tense

I will...be going to

Now, let's take a closer look at the *future tense* with "going to" plus a verb. This phrase is often used to speak of the future but with a link to the present. For instance, you might say, "I think it's going to rain because it is cloudy."

"Going to" is also often used to talk about plans that you have already made.

If you would like to volunteer your help, use "will." An example of this would be, "Those suitcases look heavy. I'll carry them for you."

Also, "will" is often used to talk about plans that are far off into the future, like dreams. For example, "Someday, I will be a millionaire."

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Yes or no?

1. "I will help you with your homework," means to volunteer to help.
2. "I am going to help you with your homework," means a plan you already thought about to help.
3. "Maybe I will go to Paris," is a definite plan that you've already made.
4. "I am going to Paris," means a dream, not a definite plan.

Two Principles for Fast Fluency

Like all languages English has many grammar rules and infinite ways of making sentences. For this reason, many English learners can become frustrated and lose motivation because they cannot learn *everything* quickly. Keep it simple and learn *enough* quickly. To do that, there are two principles that you should know that will help you on your English-language learning journey.

Principle 1: Minimum Viable Grammar

How much grammar do you really need?

For a difficult English test, you should know all of the rules. For everyday conversation, you will use the six most common tenses 80% of the time.

If you still have trouble with some of those six tenses and really just want to communicate, you can make yourself understood with the creative use of one, two or three tenses—the simple past, simple present, and future.

For example, if you say, "I go to the store *yesterday*," it is not correct but people will understand what you mean. If you can help it, don't use bad grammar. However, it's better to say this than nothing at all! You have to start somewhere.

Minimum viable grammar is an idea borrowed from business training that means you should use what you already know (the minimum) to communicate with people today (make it work even if it's very simple).

Don't wait until you have the perfect sentence ready in your head to express yourself or that day may never come!

Think about the minimum viable grammar you would need for the situations you are likely to have. Do not learn grammar just to know the grammar, just in case you might someday need it. Think backward from the situation or context you want to experience, and prepare the grammar you will need for the specific event.

Principle 2: The 80/20 Principle

The 80/20 principle is also an idea borrowed from business and productivity experts. It will help you to focus your time and energy on what really matters. So what does it mean? Essentially it boils down to the idea that 20% of your effort will yield 80% of your results.

What does this mean for you while learning English? Well to put it another way, it means that most of your time should be spent learning the 20% of English that is actually used 80% of the time. In other words, focus on the words that people use to communicate on a daily basis (not challenging academic words, unless you need them for a test or advanced reading assignment). By spending your time wisely, learning those everyday words, you'll be able to build a stronger foundation for speaking, reading and listening to English on the same day-to-day level as native speakers, without putting in hours and hours of time memorizing difficult vocabulary.

What to do if you make a mistake

Imagine that you're having a great English conversation but you stop – your face starts turning red and your palms are sweating because you realize you just made a mistake, and you feel embarrassed, and oh my gosh, what do you do if you realize you've made a grammar mistake in English in the middle of a conversation?

This isn't the same as writing a paper, or even chatting online. You can't just stop, delete the line and start over. Or can you?

How do you bounce back from a mistake *in the middle of a conversation*?

It really all depends on whether or not your mistake affects the overall meaning of what you originally meant to say. So, if you realize that your grammar mistake means that the other person didn't understand you, or might come to the wrong conclusion from what you said, well you *could* say: "Oh, I'm sorry, I made a mistake. What I meant to say was ..." But honestly, you don't even need to apologize.

You don't even need to say you made a mistake.

You could just keep talking and say, “What I meant to say was blah, blah, blah.”

Or – if the mistake you made was kind of superficial, meaning it doesn’t affect the meaning and everyone still understands everything that you meant to say – there’s no miscommunication, it’s okay to let it go.

Yep, It’s totally OK.

Just let it go.

Don’t even worry about it.

Everybody makes mistakes, even native speakers. All the time!

So, if it doesn’t affect the understanding or your communication, just move on.

Trust me, this will help your fluency overall because you won’t be stopping the conversation – saying, “ooh, oh, I meant, ooh, uh,” and people will enjoy talking with you more because if the mistake was little, chances are, the other person might not even notice! So just take a deep breath and keep talking.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Learn a little; use it a lot! Select a verb tense, for example the present perfect, and write as many sentences and questions as you can in 15 minutes. Use a stopwatch to time yourself.

For example:

“I have traveled to Italy...” “Where have you traveled?” etc.

You can repeat this exercise for each verb tense. As you write, don’t worry about mistakes. You can check those with a native speaker later. Just let yourself write freely.

Shoulda, Woulda, Coulda!

So now that we’ve gone over the six main grammar tenses, let’s go over “shoulda, woulda, coulda”, or the conditional perfect tenses of “should have been”, “would have been”, “could have been”. These are terms that can seem confusing to new English learners but you can learn to use them properly in your English conversations and your writings.

For example, you might say something like, “I would have been there for your birthday party, but I was sick in bed with the flu.” This shows that you intended to be there but something came up that prevented you from going.

“I could have graduated college next month, but I had to drop out of school for a semester.” So, you were on track to graduate but circumstances beyond your control prevented that from actually happening.

And finally, “I should have paid more attention to my English teacher, but I fell asleep in class.” This shows that you wished you had learned more, but were too sleepy to focus.

So what is the difference between these three forms of the conditional perfect tense?

Here is a quick summary:

“Should have been” is a way to state your opinion.

You think events should have happened one way, while they actually happened a different way.

“Would have been” is talking about the logic of events – if one thing didn’t happen, another thing would have happened.

“Could have been” is talking about potential or possibility.

Which is to say one thing might have happened one way, had the conditions been just right.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

“Are you confused or in doubt about any grammar point so far? Are you feeling lost as an independent learner without a teacher to tell you the right way? Luckily, nowadays we have tools like search engines that we can actually use to show us the right way. Get online on your computer or smartphone and search for a word or structure that you’re not 100% sure about. Use Google.com, type in the structure (for example, “If I were you, I would...,” and see all the results for examples.

Culture

Language can not be separated from culture. Language is a reflection of the history and people that it came from. In order to understand and use English fluently, it's important to understand a few important cultural points.

First, you may notice that English feels faster or slower than your native language. One reason for this could be what's called "wait time." The silence between the end of one speaker and the beginning of another is called wait time. In some conversations you'll notice ample time between speakers. In other more animated conversations, you may notice zero wait time and people may even be talking on top of each other, interrupting, to join the conversation. Observe and apply appropriate wait time for your conversations in English based on the situation and the people.

Next, there are some taboo topics in English. Unless you are familiar with a person, we tend to avoid discussing gender, race, religion, politics, economic class, money, age and relationship status. Avoid making jokes, confronting, debating or asking direct questions too soon about these topics.

Small Talk

Small talk is considered an art! Many native speakers have trouble mastering it. However, you can be great at small talk without having perfect English!

Mastering small talk requires being a good listener, asking easy questions to answer, and making connections with your conversation partner. Common topics include weather, work, family, future plans, local special events, the immediate environment and hobbies.

Try making a list of 10 questions you could ask anyone in small talk, for example, “What do you do for work? And what do you like to do when you’re not working?”

Does the thought of speaking English to strangers make you nervous? Don’t worry about speaking perfectly. Think more about how you can connect with a new person instead. Two of my favorite ways to start a conversation with anyone are:

Ask a question. Get some simple information, like directions, the time, or a schedule.

Give a compliment. Tell someone they look great, or their pet is cute, or they have a nice shirt... whatever makes sense in the situation!

Fluent in 15 Minutes

“Conversation Starters”

Here’s an idea, start a conversation with someone today, in English! In this exercise, I’ve provided you with a few non-standard ways to start conversations:

- Read or listen to a bit of news for the day, then bring it up as a topic for discussion
- Have you seen a funny or interesting article? A list of “Top 10 ways to start a conversation” perhaps? Ask someone about that!
- Try describing something from your hometown to another English speaker, in English!

Of course there are many different ways to start a conversation, here are a few of the more “traditional” options:

Ask for directions

Ask about a person's career/hobbies

Then there's the old standby: Ask about the weather

Today, can you start a conversation with someone in English using one of these? Your conversation can be in person or online, or even in your own head!

Of course there are many different ways to start a conversation, here are a few of the more "traditional" options:

- Ask for directions
- Make a statement about the weather
- Just say hello!

Today, can you start a conversation with someone in English using one of these? Your conversation can be in person or online, or even in your own head!

Try giving yourself a daily English challenge like speaking to a stranger!

Deep Conversation

Many people, native and non-native English speakers alike, get stuck in superficial conversation. What about when you want to bring the conversation to a deeper level? How do you do that?

You need a toolkit to work on your English skills. In your toolkit, you keep topics that you are ready to talk about. You keep questions you can ask anyone. You keep examples and stories from your experience. You keep phrases and idioms that you like to use. Prepare your toolkit before you have an English conversation by imagining the kinds of things you would like to be able to say.

Here are several more specific strategies for developing a longer, more enjoyable conversation with a partner.

1. Ask authentic questions to ask about your partner's experience and opinions or to clarify what your partner is saying.
2. Make connections to your partner's ideas. This is called threading. Like when you sew fabric together, you thread two similar ideas together into one.
3. Challenge your partner's ideas in an exploratory sense. Ask probing questions like "What do you mean? Tell me more. Why do you think that?" Use a kind, inquisitive tone. Avoid an overly aggressive tone or your partner may think you are picking a fight!
4. Extend the conversation by inviting others in. If there are other people nearby who might like to join, you could ask them a question to draw them into your conversation.

Fluent in 15 Minutes

Without preparation, record yourself speaking, and just speak, don't worry about whether or not you're making mistakes and don't try to use a canned/rehearsed speech. Just start talking and try speaking for 15 minutes, or stop when you feel like you're done. Then have an English speaking friend/native listen to your recording and offer suggestions for any mistakes you might have made. Take note and try again.

Conclusion

After years of study, learning other languages and teaching English, the Go Natural English Team took some time to think about what *really* works. We took notes from professional linguists. We reflected on our own language learning experience. We also interviewed our own students.

And after a while we realized that in order to learn a language fluently there are actually a few things you DON'T need. It's not necessary to have a classroom, a teacher, or a textbook.

That's right! If you want to learn English fluently and naturally, the most important things to have are the 3 M's: motivation, mindset, and the right method.

Here are a few last ways to improve your English faster:

1. Think and Plan:

Think and plan what you will say in English so you do not feel surprised in the moment you need it. What do you want to be able to understand and say and to whom? Imagine the people and situations in which you would like to use English.

2. Surround Yourself with English Input

Listen to and read English that is practical to the way you want and need to use it, like in Step 1. For example, do you want to be able to debate and share your opinion in English? Then watch debates, or even the movie called *The Great Debaters* in English!

3. Be Curious

Notice new words that you see more than once. Instead of ignoring them, write them down and find out the meaning. Remember to do this after listening, after conversations, and after reading—not during.

4. Repeat

Repeat new words out loud and with emotion immediately! If it is not possible to repeat them out loud immediately, repeat them in your head. Repeat new words often and use flashcards or a notebook to remind you.

5. Connect

You can connect new words with a related word, idea, or thing that you already know, even in your own language. For example, Gabby always remembers that “o-waiso” means “the check” in Japanese because it sounds like “eye sore,” something painful to look at.

6. Use:

Try using new words as soon, and as often, as you can. When you use words, you get feedback from people you are talking with. Did they understand? If you can't talk with an English speaker right away, then try writing a message on social media, an email, or simply in your journal.

7. Review

Repeat all the steps to grow your vocabulary and fluency in English. Remember that it is necessary to review, repeat and consistently use English every day for improvement.

Put these points to use! Take action with English today.

- Find locals who do speak English.
- Meet people who shared the interest with you to get a deeper connection and not just to learn English.
- Go online and find a language exchange partner.
- Invest in taking lessons online.
- Practice with yourself by speaking out loud to yourself and record it. That way you can assess your weaknesses and improve them.
- Sing English songs. Learn an English song, know the lyrics and tune and sing it to yourself or to others.

By using these steps, you will be able to develop your English skills whether you're in an English-speaking country or not!

Final Thoughts

Do you remember when you learned how to ride a bike? I bet you fell down a lot at first.

Learning a new language, like any skill, takes time, effort, a lot of practice and yes, even a few falls along the way. However, it's important to learn that when you set out to learn a new skill, your mastery isn't determined by whether or not you are perfect right from the start. Your mastery is determined by the time and dedicated effort you put into learning that skill every day. The key is to pick yourself up from each fall and get back on the bike, or continue to speak English in this case.

With that in mind, here's how to use mistakes to your advantage to improve your English:

- i. Be aware of your mistakes – If you know you're making mistakes, find out exactly what you're doing wrong and how to fix it.
- ii. Find out the correct way – Once you know what your mistakes are, it's important to know the proper way instead right? Don't be afraid to ask someone to help you if you make a mistake.
- iii. Practice and use the correct way – After you've noted and corrected your mistakes, it's important to remember those answers in the future so that you don't make the same mistakes again, now you're free to make new ones!

Use mistakes to improve your English and you'll learn faster than ever before.

Now that you're done with this book, congratulations! This is the beginning of an even more wonderful life-long journey with English fluency.

The Go Natural English Team is excited to be part of your journey. We hope that you'll come connect with us and use your improved English skills to start a conversation today.

Facebook Messenger – <http://m.me/gonaturalenglish>

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Twitter – <http://twitter.com/gonaturaleng>

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