

**I Know English,
But I Can't
Speak!**

written by
Kevin Peterson



**The Self Study Guide to Improve
Your English Speaking Skills**

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Printed in the United States of America

First Printing, 2018

Introduction

Have you studied English but still have a problem speaking?

Don't feel bad, you are not the only person. Many students will learn English for years but will still have speaking problems. When speaking, good grammar can be useless if your speaking is not clear and understood by the listener. It is time for you to try something different if your current method is not working.

What if you had the details to improve your speaking quickly?

If you want to improve your English speaking, memorizing grammar lessons or attending English classes is not enough. Therefore, to improve your English speaking requires speaking skills and practice.

This book is written as a self-study guide for improving English speaking skills.

This book gives you details and exercises for success. However, you must follow the book and do the activities, because reading the book will NOT be enough. You must practice using the knowledge learned in this book if you want success. I cannot guarantee results by reading the book, but I can guarantee results if you practice using the methods in this book.



Chapter 1

Why Speaking is a Problem

1.1 You Are Not Alone

There are currently an estimated 2 billion English learners in the world. In many countries, English as a second language is now required in school. After years of studying English, students still have difficulty speaking English.

Research shows the problems are the same for ESL (English as a second language) students from all countries. Students will take grammar courses for years, but they still feel uncomfortable when speaking.

- 1.

1.2 Why Can't You Speak English?

“In the typical school lessons on English, teachers explained the grammatical rules, students did the exercises set out in the textbooks, and classroom interactions were largely one-way. Oral communication skills such as speaking and listening were almost totally ignored. Students rarely had the chance to use English in conversation in the classroom, and were under no pressure to become competent in this.” (International Education Journal, 2005)

Speaking is the one language skill that requires interaction with other people. An individual can learn and practice English grammar, writing,

reading, and listening without help from other people. However, speaking is more difficult as a self-study lesson and practice is required. Verbal communication becomes a problem without practice.

Much time is spent on learning grammar and other English skills. You also need to spend time on oral speaking skills. The main objective of ESL teaching should be effective communication, not perfect grammar.

Successful oral communication requires speaking practice.

“The teachers think that teaching grammar and vocabulary items are enough to help students in speaking.—We teach the vocabulary, grammar, but they don’t study at home. It seems that teachers are unaware that studying vocabulary items and grammar rules by students is not enough for improving students’ speaking skill. Actually, teachers are not aware enough that focusing on teaching the form does not necessarily result in using it, and that’s why students need to be engaged in communication—in order to improve their speaking skill.” (International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature, 2014)

While there is little doubt about teachers' awareness of the importance of speaking skills, there is even less doubt about students' need for more speaking improvement. Most students agree speaking is a priority and their biggest problem.

Despite common knowledge about the importance of teaching speaking skills, in English courses speaking skills receive the least attention. The reason is

not lack of desire, but knowing how to teach these skills successfully. The problem is that teachers have very little training and resources for teaching effective speaking skills. The question, then, is not whether to teach speaking skills, but how to teach speaking skills.

You can learn English from a book, but can you use the knowledge in the real world?

Many students will learn English but will still have problems when using their knowledge. Speaking skills involve not just memorizing rules or knowing information, it is also a physical skill requiring action.

English is not like history or math. Just learning and memorizing the knowledge is not enough. For example, in math, once you remember $2+2=4$, then you can easily use this knowledge.

Learning the English grammar rules is not enough, and it is impossible to memorize every English conversation. Situations will be different and making unique conversations will be required. Also, body movement is required for pronunciation, and this physical action is necessary for verbal communication.

Learning English is a skill and requires practice. You can read a book about basketball or study the correct way to shoot the ball, but you will not be successful until you practice. English is also a skill that requires practice.

Important: You should continue studying grammar while using these methods.



1.3 Can you improve your speaking skills?

Research shows we learn more from real situations (95%) than lectures (5%). Learning from real situations is easier, faster, and more effective. Notice the best 4 methods are: use in real situations, teaching, practice, and discussions.

Research says

KNOWLEDGE RETENTION	TEACHING METHOD
5%	Lecture (see / hear)
10%	Reading
20%	Audio / Video Aids
30%	Demonstration
50%	Discussion
75%	Practice
90%	Teaching Others
95%	Use in Real Situations

Speaking skills should be taught using natural exercises and practice of real communicative situations. Students should practice English skills that will be useful to them in their real lives.

How to practice and improve your English speaking skills?

Improve your speaking

- Don't rush. It's better to speak slowly and clearly.
- Use full sentences, not just words or phrases.
- If you do not understand, ASK.
- Use the Speaking Rules in this book.
- Do not worry about a native-English accent.
- Practice, Practice, Practice

Improve your vocabulary

- Read books in English
- Use the internet in English
- Use movies, television, internet, music, etc. and LISTEN.
- As you learn new vocabulary, USE THE WORDS.
- Keep using and repeating the words in sentences

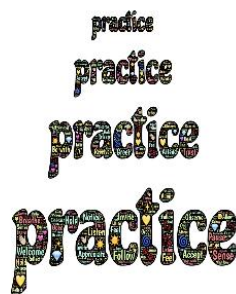
Practice your speaking

- Practice in the real world outside of a classroom
- Use English to learn about something you enjoy
- Play games
- Practice in groups

- Find people to practice your English conversations
- Listen to English as often as possible
- Use movies, television, internet, music, etc. and LISTEN
- Relax and have fun

Improve your pronunciation

- LISTEN to native speakers pronounce words and phrases
- Learn the phonetic alphabet (find it in most dictionaries)
- Learn the stress of new words
- Practice intonation
- Practice the sounds you find difficult
- Practice speaking loud and clear



For additional resources and updated information:

www.webactiveenglish.com

www.speakenglishgroup.com

www.speakenglishbusiness.com

Speak with Confidence

Chapter 2

Let's Focus on English Speaking!

2.1 Why do you want to improve your English?

I always ask this question and in return, I get a “This is a stupid question” facial expression. However, people learn English for different reasons. You are one of 1.2 billion people in the world learning English.

First, think about your problem and get a clear understanding. Your objective for learning English is important. The following will help you focus on your situation and finding the best solution for your needs.

Why is it important to you?

Some of the more common reasons are:

Study Abroad

English Test Preparation

Working Abroad

Global Company Employment

Career Advancement

Living Abroad

Travel



Learning English for Global Business

Effective communication is key to business success. The rapid growth of global business increases the need for globalized English communication. Most people planning to work in global business know this demand and understand learning English will probably be required.

Reading and writing is a good start, but English speaking and listening skills will also be necessary. If you plan to work in global business, you should have the ability to effectively communicate using all English skills.

Australian Journal of Teacher Education 2012 :

“An overwhelming majority of English language–related courses deal primarily with areas such as English literature, theories of language and language learning, and grammatical and phonological systems of the English language, with an emphasis on increasing the knowledge and awareness about the systems of the language rather than the ability to use this knowledge in real communication.” (Australian Journal, 2012)



Learning English for Studying Abroad

It is now common for university students to study at native English International Universities. Anyone planning on studying abroad should focus on their communication skills.

However, research studies show these ESL university students have communication problems. Though they studied English in their home country, communicating in class and understanding the university teachers were common problems. Their English speaking and listening skills needed much improvement.

International Education Journal, 2005 :

“In summary, the interviews provided five findings:

- Students’ prior English language learning experience has an impact on how well they can cope with the academic requirement of the Australian University.*
- The data indicated students did not have sufficient exposure to English language conversation either in the classroom or outside of class prior to coming to Australia.*
- Classroom practice was not only largely didactic (one-way) rather than conversational in form but was largely confined to the teaching of grammatical rules.*
- This classroom practice appeared to have shaped some learner’s beliefs that grammar was the most important part of English language learning.*
- It appeared that this belief had then become manifested in their communication behavior, so that they were not able to communicate effectively, socially and academically, and the learning of conversational skills was retarded.”*

“In the move from a country of origin to a country of education, it is common for the primary English language learning goal to shift from grammar and vocabulary to effective communication. This shift is very typical of the experience of many of the 85

percent of international students studying in Australia who come from Asian nations.” - (International Education Journal, 2005)

Learning English for Test Preparation

Many ESL tests are available for study abroad, global business, specific industries, and academics. In the future, you may find the need to study for one. The tests can have different structures, formats, and English content. The content should include equal emphasis on all the English skills. However, that is not always the situation. Research studies show that often tests do not emphasize speaking skills and teachers only focus on the content needed for the tests. You may have good test results, but English could still be a serious problem in your future.

International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL 2014) :

“Ambu & Saidi investigated some issues in teaching English speaking in a foreign language classroom and revealed that the huge number of students in the classroom, the insufficiency of the English teaching periods, and the syllabus that does not satisfy the learners’ communicative needs are the main reasons for learners’ speaking difficulties. Additionally, because speaking is not tested, it is less emphasized by both teachers and students. This is consistent with Al-Lawati’s findings in her study where students reported giving special attention to writing, reading, and listening tasks that are similar to exam items, and both teachers and students reported that they gave the least attention to

speaking tasks in the textbooks because speaking is completely excluded from exams.”



Learning English for Living Abroad

When living abroad, all language skills become an important part of your life. Being in a different culture can be shocking, but knowing the language can help in difficult situations.

Good communication is necessary for everyday living. To be comfortable, you should have good knowledge of all the language skills. This can save you lots of time, money, and headaches.

After moving abroad, people often realize that their English classes in school taught them grammar, but they have problems with communication and using their English skills. According to research studies, students should be better prepared for using their English skills.

International Education Journal, 2005 :

“The students provided many comments that bear on the relationship between their prior English language learning experiences in the home nation, their present difficulties with English-language communication while in Australia, and the relationship between their beliefs about learning English and their actual English language experiences. At school, there was a common focus on English grammar, rather than on

communicative competence. In the prior English learning of students from all the countries, the main focus of the teaching was on English grammar and other aspects of standard usage. Essentially, learning English was seen as learning a scholarly skill for the purposes of reading and writing, not as learning a living language of use.” (International Education Journal, 2005)

IMPORTANT FACT: You must continue to think about your reasons for learning English. If you want to improve your English, you must be motivated to practice and learn.



2.2 Get Motivated with the English Learning Game

Do you like to play games or sports?

Do you like to win?

Did you have fun learning to play?

The purpose of learning a language is to communicate. Good communication should be your goal, and it should be very exciting when you are successful. Doing grammar exercises can be boring, but focus on your goal of communication.

We are motivated to learn how to succeed in playing sports and games. When we play a game, we focus our attention on the game's

objectives. The more we play, we increase our skills and the game becomes easier. As we improve, the excitement grows.



Think about learning English as a game. The game's objective is to be fluent in English. Like all games, it requires different tasks and skills to increase the performance.

Have fun and feel good about learning English. Think of it as a game that requires practice and motivation. Athletes will tell you it takes practice and motivation to be great at playing sports.

Focus on improving your English game. The more you practice, the better your performance. Increasing your skills will make the game more fun. You will soon see positive results. The excitement will grow as you get closer to being great at the English game.

As you improve your skills, you will see positive results. The English game becomes more exciting as you become a great player.

IMPORTANT: Relax and have fun learning English. It is easier to be motivated when having fun when doing something.



Game Strategies, Hints, and Tips

1. Focus on every individual skill and the best way to improve it.

Most sports or games involve different skills to win. When using these skills together, this determines the overall success. Learning English is the same. You need to focus on reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Study your weak skills and improve in these areas.

2. Expect to make mistakes playing the sport. Laugh at mistakes and continue having fun. Native speakers make mistakes. Learn from your mistakes and continue to improve your skills. Practice, practice, practice.

3. Develop a game plan and a strategy. Like in any game or sport, you must have a strategy to be successful. Develop a plan and strategy for your English game. How can you improve your English skills?

4. If you want to improve your English speaking, you must practice. This is the only way to achieve your goal. If you do not practice, you will not improve. Learning a sport, video game, or board game needs practice. The English language is the same and practice is also needed.

5. Watch, learn, and practice with better players. We learn and get motivated by playing better opponents. We can learn new skills from them. Use the better players as a guide to your overall goal. We prefer to speak our native language to friends, however, your friends may also need to practice their English speaking. English is more difficult than in your native language, but you need to practice. When possible, speak with native speakers, however other ESL speakers are also good for practice.

6. Be proud and celebrate your game's improvement. Enjoy the smaller victories while improving toward your goal. Fluency in English is normally the student's goal. Some steps for improvement may be boring and some steps may be exciting. Your goal should require all steps since every step is an improvement towards your goal.

7. Be confident that you will "WIN". Winners are confident. Be confident that you will reach your English goal. If you're confident, your brain will continue to work towards your goal.

8. Continue to Practice! Even professional athletes must continue to practice. Have fun and continue to practice your English. Find creative ways and methods to make your practice more exciting.

9. Fight the FRUSTRATION! You will get frustrated sometimes. It is natural to want to immediately be fluent. You must remember that your native language required years of study. If you want to be excellent at playing a game, you must be motivated to practice and fight the frustration of learning.

10. Accept the Challenge. If games were easy for everybody, then the excitement would not exist. Accept the challenge of the English game and feel the excitement.

“I’ve missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I’ve lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I’ve been trusted to take the game-winning shot and missed. I’ve failed over and over and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.”

– **Michael Jordan**

ACTIVITY: Think about ... Why do you want to improve your English? What are your goals and objectives for the English Learning Game? What areas are you weak and need more practice? Get motivated to learn English!

“41% of the students thought that motivation to speak could influence their speaking performance. 80% of the teachers viewed motivation to speak as an important factor.”- (Asian Journal of Educational Research)

2.3 Differences between Writing and Speaking

Both speaking and writing are important in any language. Knowing the differences between these skills are important for improvement.

Do you always speak your native language by following all the rules with perfect grammar,

pronunciation, etc.?

Though language scholars would like to hear “Yes”, the reality is we often speak more informal than we write. Using lots of idioms, slang, poor grammar, and informal English can result in many broken language rules. Listening to native speakers is normally much more difficult than reading.

The communication methods of speaking and writing are different.

“Teaching Strategies Data collected through observation showed that teachers focus on teaching grammar points and vocabulary items rather than speaking. Even when there is an opportunity to involve students in speaking, teachers just miss it and move on to doing other tasks like reading and writing. Teachers attributed this to the shortage of time and their willingness to finish the lesson steps that do not include speaking as they claimed. In fact, the interview had shown another reason besides the time worries, and it is the lack of speaking teaching strategies.” - (International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature, June 2014)

Natural Experience vs Formal Education – Speaking comes naturally and writing comes from formal education. We learn to talk naturally as a child without any formal education, and start learning our native language by listening and repeating. This is the natural method by which people learn a language. Grammar is not learned until after we begin school. For thousands of years, people have learned to speak without a formal education. Writing requires an

education often in school to learn the structure of words, punctuation, and the rules of grammar.

Informal vs Formal - Most people speak much more than they write. For communication, speaking is more relaxed, faster, and often informal. When writing, the grammar rules, vocabulary, and sentence structure are organized more formally. There are situations for both, informal speaking and formal writing, and both are an important part of communication.

Pronunciation vs Spelling- The sound of words is essential when speaking and the spelling of words is essential when writing. When speaking, the audience is listening, and the sounds and pronunciation of words are an important part of the communication. However, when writing, the audience is not listening. Instead, they are reading and must understand by reading the words. Spelling is critical. When speaking, communication is heard. When writing, communication is seen.

Natural and Unedited vs Organized and Planned- Speaking is often natural, unedited, and without planning. Writing allows time for careful planning and organized thoughts. The additional time to prepare can be beneficial..

Poor Grammar vs Proper Grammar- Think about a conversation with a friend, and If it was written exactly the same as it was spoken. Usually, people do not speak with perfect grammar. Slang, idioms,

and informal phrases are used. When writing, proper grammar is expected, and informal English isn't normally accepted.



Intonation Stress vs Punctuation Stress- Using intonation and word stress are enormous benefits of speaking. The volume, rhythm, tempo, and tone are effective verbal tools when speaking. When writing, stress is shown through punctuation and grammar. It is more difficult and sometimes confusing to show stress when writing. With informal writing (SMS, text messages, chats, and some emails) emoticons and slang abbreviations have become popular. However, this is not recommended in formal writing.

Instant Feedback vs Delayed Feedback- Speaking is instant “live” communication. Writing is recorded. When speaking, you can immediately explain any confusion. However most of the time, writing is not instant communication. It will often be read at an unknown time in the future and without immediate feedback. It is common when writing, to add more information for possible questions. The timing of the feedback can affect the communication.

Immediate Comprehension vs Future Study- When we speak, it is intended to be immediately heard and understood. When we write, it

is intended to be read and understood in the future. The reader can study and analyze written information, unlike spoken information.

Body Language vs No Body Language- According to communication theories, body language is 55% of oral communication and is most important.. The body, gestures, and facial expressions communicate emotions, words, meanings, and nonverbal communication. Body language is an outstanding benefit when speaking in person.

Living a Short Life vs Living a Long Life – Spoken words last only a few seconds. The words can be repeated but exact communication will not be the same. If you ask someone to repeat something, their tone, body language, words or other elements will be different. Spoken words have a short life, however, written words can live for many years.

IMPORTANT: Spoken and written English do have differences, and each is effective for various situations. Sometimes when used together as in a presentation, both can be extremely effective. It is essential to remember that speaking English and writing English are both necessary for communication.

ACTIVITY: Speak to a friend in your native language. Listen for the grammar, vocabulary, and informal phrases. How often does your friend use perfect grammar? How often does your friend speak informally?



ACTIVITY: Record your voice. You must record 3-5 minutes of your current English speaking. Relax and just speak English for 3-5 minutes. This is very important and it will be helpful to you. **SAVE IT!**

You can speak about any topic. A suggestion is to speak about why you are wanting to learn English and your plans for the future. The objective is to record your current speaking skills:

- **Choose any topic.**
- **Do not write down what you will say.**
- **Be honest. This is required to see your improvement.**
- **The goal is to record your current speaking level.**
- **Recording should be 3-5 minutes.**
- **Video is not necessary.**
- **This recording can be private.**
- **Record your voice on your cell phone or computer.**
- **Do it *now!* Later, you will understand why.**
- **Do not delete this recording! Save it!**



Chapter 3

Kevin's Speaking Rules

3.1 Focus on Communication

Do not be afraid to make mistakes. The goal of learning a language is communication. Think about young children learning to communicate. First, we are taught body language, then listening, and then speaking. Before we learn grammar in school, we learn to speak and communicate. Think about the ways we start communicating with body language, listening, and speaking. An average child is not concerned about grammar. We start learning to communicate by listening and speaking. We listen and repeat our native language.

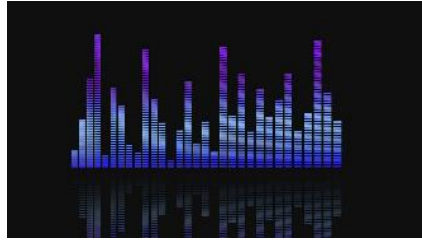
Learn to speak clearly. It is not the grammar that makes it difficult to understand someone. It can be the accent, pronunciation, intonation, or volume. This lesson will focus on your speaking. When speaking clearly, you will be easier to understand even if you make grammar mistakes. People will not understand perfect grammar when English is not clearly spoken. Good oral communication requires excellent speaking skills.

Focus on good communication. Your English may not be perfect, but the goal is to communicate.

Have fun learning English!

“Would you like me to give you a formula for success? It's quite simple, really. Double your rate of failure.” - Thomas J Watson founder

of IBM



3.2 Turn Up the Volume (Speak LOUD !!!)

Surprisingly, the difference in being understood and misunderstood is often the volume. I solve many ESL speaking problems by simply getting ESL students to speak loud. When people are nervous or afraid, they often speak with a very soft low voice, and it is common for all ESL levels from beginner to advanced.

Many times, people cannot understand because they cannot hear. It is not because of English mistakes or bad grammar. If no one can hear you, no one will understand you. Speak up!

Speaking loudly also helps with pronunciation. English students are often taught to “exercise the tongue and mouth muscles for clear pronunciation”. This is good. However, if you speak loud your tongue, jaw, and mouth muscles exercise automatically. When you speak softly with little mouth, tongue, and jaw movement your pronunciation will not be clear, and others may have problems understanding you. Often times, speaking louder will help pronunciation with more mouth movement.

When people speak loud, it can show confidence. Show people that you are confident in your communication.

ACTIVITY: In Chapter 2, you made a recording. Do not delete the recording! Make a second recording of your voice for 15-30 seconds. This time speak in different volumes. Start speaking low then get louder. Listen to the recording. You will notice your speaking gets easier to understand as you speak louder.



3.3 K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short and Simple)

Keep It Short and Simple. This allows you to focus on communicating your thoughts. By keeping the grammar simple, makes it easier to communicate.

Simple sentences will allow you to think more about your thoughts and less on the grammar, while difficult sentences result in more grammar mistakes and confused thoughts.

When speaking, it is common for native speakers to use basic grammar, because short sentences allow for time to quickly pause and think about your next thought. By doing this, your English will be

more natural with fewer problems and mistakes in the middle of sentences. Start by using short and simple sentences, and your sentences will naturally become longer as you practice.

Short and simple sentences also help listeners to understand you. Even if you have good grammar, your accent and pronunciation can make it difficult to understand you. Listeners can focus more on the conversation topic and less on trying to understand your English. If you have conversations with a clear understanding, you will have good communication. Good communication is the objective.

Sometimes people say, “Speaking with short and simple sentences will make me sound stupid.”. No, it will not. You will make fewer mistakes, and you will sound more natural. If you watch English movies and television, you will notice native speakers using short and simple sentences in conversations. Accents, idioms, slang, and phrasal verbs can cause problems for non-native speakers, but the sentences are often short and simple.

When you K.I.S.S. (Keep It Short and Simple), it is best for you and the listener. Your English is easier and the listener can better understand. You and the listener can focus more on the conversation topic and less on language problems. Effective communication is the objective.

ACTIVITY: Find an English conversation in a movie or television show (no news or documentaries). Listen to the English. It is OK if you do not understand all the vocabulary

words. The objective is to notice the short and simple English in a conversation.



3.4 Relax ... Focus on Communication

Relax and have fun learning English. Being motivated is easier when we have fun and enjoy the activity. Our memory loves exciting events which make remembering easier. Our confidence then grows.

Confidence allows the speaker to be more relaxed and effective in communicating with other people. This is so essential in learning and improving language skills. If the speaker is nervous and afraid of making mistakes, the result can be poor communication.

“62% of the students said that confidence affected their speaking performance. 70% of the teachers thought that confidence to perform well affected their students’ speaking performance.” (Asian Journal of Educational Research, 2015)

Students often say, “I cannot speak, because I’m afraid I will make mistakes”. Thus, students become shy and afraid to speak because of the fear of making a mistake. The focus of learning English should be on effective communication, not perfect grammar.



How many years have you practiced speaking your native language?

Do you always speak perfect grammar in your native language?

After many years of practicing our native language, native English speakers do not always speak perfect grammar. Sometimes, it is a mistake; sometimes, it is intentional.

However, many students are taught that grammar is the most important part of learning English and perfect grammar is necessary for communication. They feel if their grammar is not perfect, then they will not be understood.

Grammar is an important part of learning English, but fear of grammar mistakes should not stop you from speaking. It is important, and it is the way our sentences are structured.

However, as children, we start learning our native language by listening and speaking before learning the grammar rules. Children are speaking with sentences for 3 or 4 years before taking grammar in

school. By listening, then speaking and repeating, we learn our native language.

Many adult native speakers still do not know the grammar rules, but after hearing the correct grammar, it is then repeated. Learning grammar rules are important but should not be the top priority for speaking.

Focus on effective communication. You are going to make grammar mistakes. Accept the mistakes as a learning experience.



Some English scholars say that if students do not think about grammar, they will make more mistakes and their English will become worse. However, people make more mistakes when they are nervous. Students are nervous because they are expected to speak perfect English grammar.

I always hear, "I know English (grammar), but I can't speak." Students must relax and practice, or their English will not improve. In teaching all grammar levels, I never had any student's speaking become worse. When students are relaxed and not thinking about grammar, they

make mistakes, but their English improves from learning from their mistakes.

Learn from your mistakes and keep improving your English. Effective Communication is the main goal. RELAX and focus on the conversation, not on the grammar. More speaking practice equals more grammar practice. Practice, practice, practice.



3.5 Express Yourself –Show Emotion & Emphasis

Intonation is a complicated subject with several types of intonation used in the English language. In this section, we will only focus on 2 primary ways to use tone to show your emotions and emphasis (stress).

Importance of Intonation

In English class, intonation is often a problem when a student's speaking is limited to book exercises. Speaking with little or no changes in tone is called monotone.

Grammar exercises can sometimes be annoying for the students and the teachers but are necessary for learning English. However, this lack of excitement can result in monotone speaking. When the teacher and

book audio files are speaking monotone, the students will copy this tone. Listening to a monotone voice is boring. Students find it difficult to understand and stay focused.

If you speak all words in a neutral tone (monotone), it can be difficult for someone to listen and understand your English. If you want people to enjoy a conversation with you, you need to show your emotion when speaking English.

IMPORTANT: Showing your emotion by using tone will improve your communication skills.

Communication Theory

Quit thinking only about grammar and focus on communicating. Emotions can be expressed through words, tone, and body language.

Communication has been researched for many years. The most common theory is known as the Mehrabian's communication rule. Mehrabian's theory is popular and quoted in many studies, and is known as the 7 / 38 / 55 rule.

The 7 / 38 / 55 Rule (Mehrabian, 1967)

This rule says face-to-face communication has 3 elements:

Words Spoken, Tone, and Body Language

When different emotions are being communicated between the elements:

- **Body language is 55% effective (most trusting).**
- **Tone is 38% effective (over 5 times more trusting than words spoken).**
- **Words spoken are only 7% effective (least trusting).**

Body language is most trusting, and tone is 5 times more effective than the words spoken.

ACTIVITY: What emotions do these photos communicate?



Speaking with Emotion



When speaking, you should use tone to communicate your emotions. The tone can communicate a different meaning and be more effective than the words spoken.

In today's world of computer and internet technology, communication methods using email, text, SMS, and chat are now common. In the beginning, these methods had communication problems.

The communication did not show feelings, emotions, or tone, and readers often misunderstood. Are they serious or joking? Are they happy or sad? Are they surprised or angry? Soon, acronyms (lol, lmao, omg, jk) and emoticons (emotional faces) were added to help solve this communication problem.

When speaking our native language, using tone to show our emotion is natural for us. For effective communication, it is important to relax and show your natural feelings. Our tone and body language normally is a natural reaction, and that is why we trust it more than the words. If you focus your thoughts on grammar, your natural reaction will show the truth.

ACTIVITY:

Example: Say "Hello" on Valentine's Day to your date

Answer: "Hello" (a romantic and happy tone)

Practice saying "Hello":

- A. To the cashier at the supermarket (neutral tone)
- B. On a Monday morning to a co-worker (tired unhappy)
- C. After being away from your family for 3 months (excited)

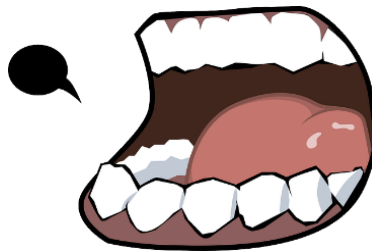
D. After someone was 3 hours late to meet you (angry)

Practice saying, “Why did you do that?”:

- A. After a child puts your cell phone in a bowl of water
- B. After your best friend puts a funny photo of you online
- C. After a friend gives you an expensive present
- D. After your friend broke their leg trying to help you

Practice saying, “Where have you been?”:

- A. To a friend you have not seen in 3 years
- B. To a co-worker away from work for 2 weeks
- C. To an employee that is 2 hours late for work
- D. To a child that is very wet and dirty



Speaking with Emphasis and Stress

You may not speak perfect English, but what is most important is effective communication. Did they understand you? If you stress important words and phrases, the listener will have a better understanding and you will have an effective conversation.

It is now common to communicate through text messages, SMS, or chat. We sometimes will shorten our message by typing only the important words, and the receiver can often understand the message. If you receive the message “late bus delay bringing pizza”, you understand “I will be late because the bus was delayed. I am bringing

pizza.” When speaking, if the important words have stress the listener will be easier to understand. However, if you speak all words in one tone (monotone) it can be more difficult.

These are 2 simple methods to use for stress.

1. Say your important words louder, slower, and clearer.

When you say your important words with extra stress, it gets the attention of your listener. You are telling them the important words by using a louder and slower tone. Be clear by making sure they hear your important words or phrases. You want effective communication.

Example:

I will **(BUY)** coffee from the store today. (Say “BUY” loud and slow)

(I) will buy coffee from the store today. **(Stress is on the subject)**

I will buy **(COFFEE)** from the store today. **(Stress is on what to buy)**

I will buy coffee from the **(STORE)** today. **(Stress is on where)**

I will buy **(COFFEE)** from the store **(TODAY)**.**(Stress is on when)**

2. Pause before or after important words or phrases.

A pause (2 - 3 seconds) before prepares the listener. This pause is saying “Get ready because something important is following”. If the pause is after an important word or phrase this gives the listener a few seconds to think about these important words before you continue speaking.

Example:

I am **(SICK)** [pause], but I will go to [pause] **(WORK)** [pause] tomorrow.

I am sick, but I will **(GO)** [pause] to work [pause] **(TOMORROW)**.
I am **(SICK)** [pause], **(BUT)** [pause] I will go to work tomorrow.

IMPORTANT:

- **Both effective methods can be used.**
- **Different situations will require different stress.**
- **Multiple words can be important in a sentence.**

ACTIVITY: Record yourself saying the following sentences. Say each sentence several times using different stress. Record yourself and stress different words, then listen.

1. You need this program completed by the end of the month.
2. This project will take me all week to complete.
3. Maria told me I must get this finished before lunch.
4. I was correct because there was no mistake.
5. The dog jumped on the table and ate my dinner.

Listen to your recording. The emphasis should be clear when you speak. If not, try again and use more emphasis when speaking.

IMPORTANT FACT: When we speak our native language, we do not speak monotone. So, don't do it when speaking English. It is important to relax and use a natural tone. If you stress and clearly speak important words, the listener will have a better understanding. You may not speak perfect

English, but what is most important is effective communication.

For additional resources and updated information:

www.webactiveenglish.com

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Chapter 4

Speaking Skills

4.1 Vocabulary

Good news, you can improve your vocabulary without help from other people. Vocabulary is a key part of your English game. Find an easy and fun way to improve your vocabulary, because learning vocabulary is an ongoing process. If you study and learn the unknown words when reading, writing, speaking, and listening, your vocabulary will grow.

Use Flashcards - The objective is to memorize and match the English word with the translated word in your native language. One side of the paper has the English word, and the other side has the word in your native language. You can practice by looking at the English word and then try to remember the word in your native language. You can quickly check your answer by looking at the other side. Flashcards are typical in early English classes, but this method can also be used with more advanced words.

My Translator Method – I call it the “translator method.” When I travel, I often need a translator. I started to notice that their English would improve as they translated conversations. The ability to translate can be difficult, but it is very useful for improving English skills. Translators must listen to one language and think quickly about

translating to another language. When you are listening or speaking your native language, think about the English translation. Can you translate your conversations? Study the English words and phrases that are difficult in your conversations. This is a good method for learning common vocabulary in normal conversations. When the time comes to speak, you will be ready.

Read in English. When you read, you should learn new words and improve your vocabulary. Research shows that people who read more have higher vocabulary levels than those who read less. This is also true for native English speakers. Practice your English by reading books, e-books, online news, articles, or other sources. While reading in English, if you do not understand a word or phrase, you can search online or in a dictionary. It is effective for improving your vocabulary and English skills.

Watch movies, television, and videos in English. It can be very difficult to watch these in English without subtitles. You can start by watching with English subtitles to help with the translation, but you need to learn the words and phrases that you do not understand. It becomes easier with practice.

Play Word Games. Many word games are available. The internet has many resources for computers and phone apps. Also, many board games are available such as Scrabble, Scattegories, Catchphrase, Taboo, Apples to Apples, etc. Playing games can be an effective and fun way to improve your vocabulary.

Online Vocabulary Lists – Many English vocabulary lists can be found online. You can search for lists of the most common English words or specific topics for your hobbies, interests, or work.

IMPORTANT FACT: You have an opportunity to improve your vocabulary every time you use English. You can choose writing, reading, speaking, or listening. Many activities can be used for improving vocabulary. Choose activities you enjoy. As you learn new words, you must practice using them or you will forget!



4.2 Pronunciation

Pronunciation is the making of different sounds when speaking English. To be clearly understood, good pronunciation is required for verbal communication. When speaking, good grammar and other language skills can be irrelevant and useless with poor pronunciation. Most students say improving pronunciation is a priority and they need additional help.

The problem is teaching pronunciation is very difficult and requires a physical action by the students. Pronunciation involves not just memorizing rules or knowing information, it is also a physical skill

requiring action—like playing a sport or musical instrument. Students need to be motivated to practice their pronunciation.

English pronunciation has many exceptions to the rules. Some languages have one letter for every sound. Unfortunately, English is not one of these languages. For example, the 5 English vowels have over 20 sounds. English pronunciation has rules, but exceptions are common.

Pronunciation Rules

When learning a new word, it is good to study the spelling as you read the word. You can see the rules and the syllables for learning the correct pronunciation. Then, you can practice speaking the words.

English has many exceptions. The rules help but be prepared for exceptions.

Voiced / Unvoiced - A voiced sound is a strong sound when the throat will vibrate (B, V, G). An unvoiced sound is a soft, quick sound using air in the mouth with no throat vibration (P, T, F). Check a phonetic chart for the complete list.

		monophthongs				diphthongs		Phonemic Chart	
VOWELS	i:	ɪ	ʊ	u:	ɪə	eɪ	voiced unvoiced		
	sheep	ship	good	shoot	here	wait			
	e	ə	ɜ:	ɔ:	ʊə	ɔɪ			
	bed	teacher	bird	door	tourist	boy	show		
	æ	ʌ	ɑ:	ɒ	eə	aɪ	aʊ		
	cat	up	far	on	hair	my	cow		
CONSONANTS	p	b	t	d	tʃ	dʒ	k	g	
	pea	boat	tea	dog	cheese	June	car	go	
	f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ	
	fly	video	think	this	see	zoo	shall	television	
	m	n	ŋ	h	l	r	w	j	
	man	now	sing	hat	love	red	wet	yes	

WORD STRESS

Rule #1 (Always true) – One syllable words have no stress.

Rule #2 (Always true) – Multiple syllable words always have a stressed syllable.

Rule #3 (Always true) – There are many exceptions to the following rules.

English words with 2 syllables

Rule #4 – 2 syllable NOUNS normally have a first syllable stress.
CHI-na, WA-ter, TA-ble

Rule #5 – 2 syllable ADJECTIVES normally have a first syllable stress.

HAP-py, HELP-ful, NA-tive

Rule #6 - 2 syllable VERBS normally have a second syllable stress.
de-CIDE, be-GIN, re-VIEW

English words with more than 2 syllables

Rule #7 - Penultimate (means 'second from the end') syllable is normally stressed for words ending in -ic, -tion, -sion (communi-CA-tion, reali-ST-ic, dis-CUS-sion).

Rule #8 - Ante-penultimate (means 'third from the end') syllable is normally stressed for words ending in -cy, -ty, -gy, -phy, -al, -ate (de-MO-cracy, person-AL-ity, bi-OL-ogy, com-MU-nicate).

Compound Words

Rule #9 – Compound nouns normally have the stress on the first word
(NOTE-book, AIR-port, CLASS-room).

Rule #10 - Compound verbs and adjectives normally have the stress on the second word
(under-STAND, up-GRADE, easy-GOING).

SYLLABLES

Rule #1. The number of syllables in a word - Each syllable has ONLY ONE vowel sound. Find the vowels and do not count the silent (e) vowel or the second vowel in a diphthong. Diphthongs (ai, ay, oi, ea, ew, ei, ie, oy, ou, ow, au, aw, oo) join together to make one new

vowel sound. Example: The word “cause” has 3 vowels but only 1 vowel sound. The “au” is a diphthong with 1 sound and the “e” is silent.

One syllable words: cat, dog, toy, down, choose, sound, cause

Two syllable words: aw-ful, be-cause, cow-boy, o-pen, out-side

Three syllable words: re-mem-ber, un-hap-py, an-i-mal, qua-li-ty

Rule #2. Divide syllables between two middle consonants when VCCV (Vowel-Consonant-Consonant-Vowel). Exception: Consonant digraphs (th, sh, ph, ch, wh) join together to make one new sound so the consonant digraphs are NOT divided (Let-ter, hap-py, dir-ty, bas-ket-ball, to-ge-ther, wa-she-r).

Rule #3. Divide syllables before the consonant when VCV (Vowel-Consonant-Vowel). (O-pen, be-low, ti-ger, a-way).

Rule #4. Divide before the consonant before an "-le" syllable. When you have a word with the "-le", divide before the consonant before the "-le" (a-ble, trou-ble, lit-tle, cy-cle).

Rule #5. Divide compound words. (bed-room, side-walk, fire-man).

Rule #6. Divide the prefixes, suffixes, and roots. (prefixes: un-happy, pre-view, re-order) (suffixes: work-er, help-less, care-ful, play-ing).

ACTIVITY:

How many syllables are in the following words?

1. Restroom
2. Cool
3. Forgettable
4. Prepare
5. Pronunciation

1. (2) 2. (1) 3. (4) 4. (2) 5. (5)

Words ending with “-ed”

Rule #1. Verbs ending with an unvoiced sound (except [t]). If the verb ends in an unvoiced sound (p, k, ch, f, th [θ], s, sh, h), the past tense “-ed” ending will be pronounced as an unvoiced (t) sound.

In these examples, the “-ed” sounds like a (t):

1. She mopped the floor.
2. They walked to the store.

Rule #2. Verbs ending with a voiced sound (except [d]). If the verb ends in a voiced sound (b, j [dʒ], g, v, z, th[ð], s [ʒ], m, n, ng[ŋ], l, r, y[j], w), the past tense “-ed” ending will be pronounced as a voiced (d) sound.

In these examples, the “-ed” sounds like a (d):

1. He begged her to stay.
2. The officials judged the results.

Rule #3. Verbs ending with a (t) or (d) sound. If the verb ends in a (t) or (d) sound, the past tense “-ed” ending will be pronounced as a [əd] or [ɪd] sound.

1. We visited the new restaurant.
2. We ended the dinner with chocolate.

ACTIVITY: Practice saying the following words:

washed (t), rained (d), pretended (ed), reached (t),
tested (ed), passed (t), entered (d), assisted (ed)

CONSONANT RULES

Rule #1. The letter “Y”: “Y” is pronounced as (ai) or (i:).

One syllable words: “Y” is pronounced as (ai).

[cry, fly, try, my, why]

Two syllable words: “Y” is pronounced as (i:).

[happy, funny, city, candy]

Practice: Why my happy baby will try to cry. I fly to the happy city to buy funny candy.

Rule #2. The letter “C”: “C” is pronounced as (s) or (k).

When an “A”, “U”, or “O” follows the “C”, it is pronounced as (k). [car, cold, cute]

When an “E”, “I” or “Y” follow the “C”, it is pronounced as (s). [city, center, cycle]

With the word circus, the first “c” sounds like an “s” and the second “c” sounds like a “k”.

Practice: The circus can come to the city center to calm certain cute children.

Rule #3. The letter "G":

"G" followed by "e, i or y" normally has the soft "j" sound. [gym, general, giant]

"G" followed by "a, o, u" normally has the "g" sound. [go, game, gum]

Practice: Go get George the good geography game.

Rule #4. Consonant blends: A consonant blend is two or more consonants that come together but each sound is heard.

Common initial blends (at the beginning of words):

S blends: sp, sw, st, sc, sm, sk, sl – spell, stop, small

L blends: bl, pl, cl, gl, fl – blue, plural, class

R blends: br, cr, dr, fr, gr, pr, tr – break, cry, drop

Practice: Slowly stop smelling the sweet steak. Glad to play the black flute in class. Try green products from cruel brother.

Common final blends (at the end of words):

S blends: sk, st - (last, task)

L blends: ld, lf, lk, lp – (could, wolf, walk, help)

N blends: nd, nk, nt, – (and, bank, want)

Other blends: ft, mp, pt, rt – (camp, soft, part, accept)

Practice: The best is the last task. Could you help the wolf walk? The bank will want a pound. The champ will accept the soft part.

Rule #5. Consonant digraphs: (th, sh, ph, ch, wh, ng) Consonant digraphs come together to make one new sound (with, shall, phone,

which, sing).

Practice: Chosen cherries should shine. The cheap phone should ring.

VOWEL RULES

Rule #1. “W” followed by a short “A” sounds like a short “O”.

(wall, wash, watch)

“W” followed by a short “O” sounds like a short “U”. (won, work, word)

Rule #2. A vowel followed by a consonant at the end of a syllable has a short sound. CVC (consonant – vowel – consonant)

[sit, cat, dog, drop]

Rule #3. A vowel followed by two consonants at the end of a syllable has a short sound. CVCC (consonant – vowel - consonant – consonant)

[bill, call, doll, west]

Rule #4. A silent “E” at the end of a syllable, then the vowel before the “E” is long. CVCe (consonant – vowel – consonant - “e”)

[white, bite, name, more]

Rule #5. Two vowels are next to each other in a syllable, the second vowel is silent, and the first vowel is a long vowel. CVVC (consonant – vowel – vowel - consonant)

[meat, meet, train, coal, air, coat]

Remember: “When two vowels go walking, the first one does the talking.” Exception: Diphthongs join to make a new sound

(ai, ay, oi, ea, ew, ei, ie, oy, ou, ow, au, aw, ue, ui, oo).

Rule #6. A syllable ends with the only vowel, it is long. (me, no, be-lieve, o-pen)

Rule #7. When an "I" is before a "GH", the "I" is long in one-syllable words. (right, light, high)

Rule #8. When a "Y" ends a one-syllable word, the "Y" is long. (my, fly, try)

Rule #9. When a "Y" ends a multi-syllable word with the stress on the "Y", the "Y" has a long "I" sound. (verify, modify, reply)

Rule #10. When a "Y" ends a multi-syllable word with the stress NOT on the "Y", the "Y" has a long "E" sound. (baby, funny, ugly, very)

Rule #11. When an "EI" is followed by a silent "GH", the "EI" has a long "A" sound. (weigh, eight)



Vowel Pronunciation Practice

This exercise is for practicing the different vowel sounds. Record yourself and check your pronunciation with native speakers or online resources. The objective is to say a phone number but replace the matching word for each number. Try and do this exercise as fast as possible with clear pronunciation and without any mistakes.

ACTIVITY: Vowel Pronunciation

- Study the words in the table. Check your pronunciation.
- Write down a phone number. (Example: 5789635412)
- Say the phone number but use the matching words.
- Repeat this exercise and try to speak faster.
- Use another phone number and repeat the exercise.

Example: Using phone number, 5789635412, you would say, “flute (5) -foot (7) -fault (8)- fest (9) -fate (6)-fist (3) -flute (5) -front (4)-feet (1) -flight (2)”

0	1	2	3	4
fact	feet	flight	fist	front
5	6	7	8	9
flute	fate	foot	fault	fest

ACTIVITY: Consonant Pronunciation

Oral communication involves physical skills. Like learning a sport, practicing the physical skills is needed. Knowledge of the English language is not enough, and success requires pronunciation practice.

Tongue twisters are a great way to practice pronunciation.

Record yourself and check your pronunciation with native speakers or online resources. The objective is to say the tongue twister with clear pronunciation as fast as possible without any mistakes.

The sounds of 'P' and 'B'

P – Lips start together and blow out air soft but fast (unvoiced).

B – Lips start together and blow out air strong with throat vibration (voiced).

- Big black bear sat on a big black rug.
- Black back bat.
- *Barber baby bubbles and a bumblebee.*
- *Betty Botter bought some butter.but she said the butter's bitter.If I put it in my batter, it will make my batter bitter.But a bit of better butter will make my batter better.So 'twas better Betty Botter bought a bit of better butter.*

The sounds of 'R', 'L'

R – Pucker lips like a kiss with tongue at the back of the mouth (NOT touching top of the mouth) (voiced).

L – Tongue touches the top of the mouth (voiced).

- *Truly rural*
- *Rolling red wagons*
- Willie's really weary
- Larry lost his luck looking for a lost ladder.

The sounds of 'M', 'N'

The 'M' and 'N' sounds we blow air through our nose, not our mouth. If you hold your nose, you cannot make these sounds.

M- Close lips, breathe through the nose with voiced sound.

N- Tongue touches the top of the mouth. The tongue should not move. Breathe through the nose with voiced sound.

- Nine nice night nurses nursing nicely.
- Mary Mac's mother's making Mary Mac marry me. My mother's making me marry Mary Mac. Will I always be so merry when Mary's taking care of me?
- Nott was shot. If the shot Shott shot shot Nott, Nott was shot. But if the shot Shott shot shot Shott, then Shott was shot, not Nott. However, the shot Shott shot shot not Shott — But Nott.

The sound of 'TH'

TH – Tongue between the teeth and blow air.

- I thought I thought of thinking of thanking you.
- He threw three free throws.

- The thirty thousand thumbs thumbed on the thirty thousand drums.

The sounds of 'V', 'F', 'W'

V – Loosely bite lower lip (voiced).

F – Tightly bite lower lip but with fast air (unvoiced).

W- Pucker lips like a kiss then relax (voiced).

- Fuzzy Wuzzy was a bear. Fuzzy Wuzzy had no hair. Fuzzy Wuzzy wasn't fuzzy.
- Four furious friends fought for the phone.

The sounds of 'CH', 'SH', 'J'

J – Lips like a kiss with downward jaw movement (voiced).

CH- Same as 'J' but unvoiced.

SH – Same as 'CH' but no jaw movement.

- I wish to wash my Irish wristwatch.
- Chosen cherries should shine.
- John joined Jill on the jumbo jet journey to Japan.

EXTRA TONGUE TWISTERS

How much wood would a woodchuck chuck if a woodchuck could chuck wood? He would chuck, he would, as much as he could, and chuck as much wood as a woodchuck would if a woodchuck could chuck wood.

The thirty-three thieves thought that they thrilled the throne throughout Thursday.

I thought a thought. But the thought I thought wasn't the thought I thought I thought.

Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers. A peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked. If Peter Piper picked a peck of pickled peppers, where's the peck of pickled peppers Peter Piper picked?

While we were walking, we were watching window washers wash Washington's windows with warm washing water.

I saw Susie sitting in a shoeshine shop. Susie works in a shoeshine shop. Where she shines she sits, and where she sits she shines

When a doctor doctors a doctor, does the doctor doing the doctoring doctor as the doctor being doctored wants to be doctored or does the doctor doing the doctoring doctor as he wants to doctor?

I have a date at a quarter to eight; I'll see you at the gate, so don't be late.

If a dog chews shoes, whose shoes does he choose?

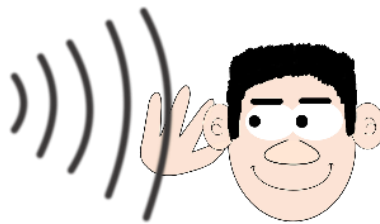
Nine nice night nurses nursing nicely.

Stupid superstition. (x3)

We surely shall see the sunshine soon.

Fred fed Ted bread, and Ted fed Fred bread.

A skunk sat on a stump and thunk the stump stunk, but the stump thunk the skunk stunk.



4.3 Learn to Listen

“To listen well is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well, and is as essential to all true conversation.” – Proverb

ACTIVITY: Think about...

- How do you know if someone is not listening to you?
- How does it make you feel?
- What is the difference between listening and hearing?

Listening is how we start learning our native language before grammar, reading, writing or speaking. It is natural for us to learn from listening. However, research shows English speaking and listening skills are the biggest problems for most ESL students. Listening is necessary for effective communication. Excellent listening

skills will help your English pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking skills.

“75% of the students said that listening ability affected their speaking performance. 80% of the teachers thought that listening ability had influences on students’ speaking performance.” (*Asian Journal of Educational Research, 2015*)

Focus on Listening

You can hear sounds and noise but not be listening. Listening requires a focus on attention and understanding. While the other person is speaking, some people start to focus on their response. Listen to what they are saying before thinking of a response. You may have questions or want to verify (repeat) the key points. Focus on listening.

A Good Listener will ...

- Focus on understanding the speaker
- Improve their pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, & speaking skills
- Understand the speaker’s tone, stress, and emotions
- Be a better communicator

Benefits of a Good Listener

- Increase Their Knowledge
- Effective Communication
- Builds Better Relationships
- Understand New Ideas and Opportunities

Listening to Important Information

English speakers will often speak with intonation and stress important words or phrases. If you focus on listening to the important words and phrases, it will be easier to understand. When you are speaking, you should use good intonation and word stress so your listeners will better understand you. This is necessary to keep listeners focused.

If writing notes are necessary, do not try and write down every word. Only write down the important words and phrases. After the speaker is finished, you can go back and write the details. While listening, do not focus on writing, because you could miss important information. Do not let writing notes distract you from listening. Listening requires an immediate interpretation and understanding. If you focus and listen, you will have a better understanding and you can later write better notes.

It is important to listen because you cannot go back and replay the speaker. Speaking is often spontaneous. You can ask them to repeat everything, but it will not be the same. When repeating, the speaker will often respond with a summary or change the vocabulary, tone, grammar, stress, or content. Having to repeat thoughts can be frustrating. It is important to focus and listen for effective communication.

IMPORTANT: Good listening skills require practice. You can practice listening by yourself without an English partner.

ACTIVITY: For listening practice, listen to audio and video sources: stories, movies, television, news. There are many sources available online.

- Find something in English to practice your listening. It should be 5-10 minutes (MAXIMUM 10 minutes).
- Choose a topic that interests you.
- Listen to it in English. (Beginners can first use subtitles, but then do a second time WITHOUT subtitles.)
- As you listen, WRITE DOWN vocabulary you do not understand.
- Learn the definitions of the new vocabulary.
- Listen to it again WITHOUT SUBTITLES.
- Keep repeating these steps until you can speak and understand everything.

This will improve all your English skills. Listening to English repeated multiple times is an excellent way to learn English. This is effective and works.

For additional resources and updated information:

www.webactiveenglish.com

www.speakenglishgroup.com

www.speakenglishbusiness.com



Chapter 5

Let's Have A Conversation

For most ESL learners, learning English to become smarter is not enough. Most ESL learners plan to use their English skills to communicate. Conversation is the most common type of communication and speaking skills are the key to a good conversation. You need to learn to use your speaking skills for useful conversations.

Australian Journal of Teacher Education, 2012) :

“An overwhelming majority of English language–related courses deal primarily with areas such as English literature, theories of language and language learning, and grammatical and phonological systems of the English language, with an emphasis on increasing the knowledge and awareness about the systems of the language rather than the ability to use this knowledge in real communication.” (Australian Journal, 2012)

Learn the art of conversation and meet new people. Most people will not attack you for trying to talk to them. If they do, then I suggest you run fast and find someone else.

Many native speakers in foreign countries will be polite and speak to you. Do not wait for them to talk to you, because many times they do

not know your English ability. Learning conversational skills will improve your oral English, but you can also use these skills to meet new people for practicing your English.

5.1 How to Start a Conversation in English

Starting a conversation can be difficult in a native language and becomes more difficult when speaking a second language. This is necessary sometimes in your work, school, and social life. Learn common English phrases and get ideas to start conversations.

Learning to say “Hello” or “How are you?” is a good start for beginners. However, learning the next level is necessary for advanced conversations.

You may choose to continue saying “Hello” or “How are you?”, but you need to be prepared to respond to other greetings.



Tips on Starting a Conversation

Talk about the location or event.

Talk about previous conversations.

Introduce yourself.

Give a compliment.

Say the person's name.
Use body language.
Be friendly.
Ask interesting questions.

When starting a conversation, it is important to know the common phrases and when to use these phrases.

Common English Phrases for Starting a Conversation

Greeting (informal):

What's up?
How's it going?
How's everything?
How's life?

Greeting (formal):

How are you?
How do you do?
How are you doing?
Nice (Good) to see you.

Greeting with a friend (haven't seen in a long time):

Hi Paula! How have you been?
Long time no see!
What have you been up to lately?
How's your family?

What have you been doing?
Are you still working at ABC Company?
It's been a while.

Ask about recent activities to start a conversation:

What's up?
How's your day going?
What's happening?
What's new?
Have you got any plans for the weekend?
How was your weekend?

Tell about recent activities to start a conversation:

Guess what?
You won't believe it
Do you know what?

Talk about previous conversations:

Do you remember our last conversation?
Could you tell me more information about _____?
That reminds me about our last conversation.

Start a conversation using a compliment:

I really like your
You have a great....
Your _____ is beautiful.

Talk about the location or event:

What did you think of the (movie, seminar, workshop, etc.)?

That was excellent, and I enjoyed it. How about you?

Start a conversation with a new person you just met:

Nice to meet you!

Pleased to meet you; I'm...

How are you? I'm...

Start a conversation by introducing someone:

Please meet...

I would like you to meet...

I would like to introduce you to...

(Michael), this is (Mary). (Mary), this is (Michael).

Have you met...?

Ask for help:

Excuse me, could you tell me?

What do you think of?

Would you mind?

Offer help:

Can I help you?

Would you like?

Do you need ...?

ACTIVITY: Find a conversation in a movie or television show (3-5 minutes). Focus on greetings or the start of

conversations. Practice listening to the native speaker. Think about what your responses would be in the conversations.



5.2 How to Continue a Conversation in English

Can you keep a conversation going in English?

Starting a conversation in English is excellent, but you also need to learn how to keep a conversation going! You have started a conversation, but now you must continue it.

Tips on Continuing a Conversation:

Find and discuss a mutual interest. It will be a more comfortable and enjoyable conversation if you find a topic that is interesting for you and the other person. Think about things you have in common. You will have more to talk about in the conversation.

Ask open-ended questions starting with Who, What, When, Where, and Why. This will give you more details and information. With more information, you can choose topics for a good conversation. Try to avoid questions with yes / no answers. If you want the other person to speak, ask questions that have more than 1-

word answers. Listen to their answers. As they speak, you can continue asking them more open-ended questions.

What is wrong with this conversation?

“Did you have a good weekend?”

“Yes, I did. And you?”

“Yes.”

Unfortunately, the conversation stops because the answers to the questions were “yes” or “no”. This is OK if you want a quick conversation. What can you do to improve the conversation and make it more exciting?



Think about these questions:

- A) Did you have a good weekend?
- B) What did you do on the weekend?
- C) How was your weekend?
- D) Where did you go last weekend?

Answers to A) and C) will probably be 1 word or short answers.

Answers to B) and D) will have more details and information.

You get more detailed answers by asking open-ended questions.

- Where did you go this weekend?

- What kind of things did you see?
- When did you go to the park?
- Why did you do those activities on the weekend?
- Who did you go with?

Start a discussion. Sometimes, you may want to start a discussion to continue a conversation. These are common phrases to begin a discussion.

- To begin with, ...
- We need to discuss . . .
- It looks like . . .
- Let's start by ...
- The important thing is . . .
- Let's look at . . .
- It appears that . . .

Ask for clarification. If you do not understand or need additional information, you may want to ask a question to clarify.

- Could you clarify that?
- Could you be more specific?
- What else (more) can you tell me?
- Could you give me an example?
- What is your point?
- What are the details?
- What do you mean by....?
- Is there more to it?

Give details; then follow up questions. With more details, this gives you more opportunities to continue the conversation.

- What information can you tell me about this camera?
- What are some more details about that television?
- What can you tell me about Paris?
- Why (what) do you think?
- What's your opinion?
- What do you suggest?
- What are your ideas?
- Why do you have those thoughts?
- Why would you do that?

Relax and do not talk about stressful topics. No one likes stress. If the topic is stressful with bad emotions, the conversation will probably end. Talk about relaxing and fun topics. You want the other people to enjoy your conversation. If they enjoy it, they will want a longer conversation and more in the future.

Examples of Good Topics	Examples of Bad Topics
Hobbies	Religion
Sports	Politics
Food	Death
Travel	Bad News
Entertainment	Negative Work Topics

IMPORTANT: Practice, practice, practice! Be confident and enjoy English conversations.

ACTIVITY: Find a conversation in a movie or television show (3-5 minutes). You want a conversation so no news or documentaries. Focus on the conversation details. Practice listening to native speakers in conversations. How do they keep a conversation going?

5.3 How to End a Conversation in English

Now, you know how to start and continue a conversation. But, what about when you must end the conversation. You enjoyed the conversation, and now you must end it.

How do you politely say, “I enjoyed speaking with you, but I must end the conversation.”? If you just say ‘goodbye’, people may think you ended it because of anger or dislike.

Tips for Ending a Conversation in English

SMILE. Smile at the end of a conversation. This shows that you enjoyed having the conversation. A smile can be very effective in communication.

Summarize any important details. When we hear (or read) a summary of the details, we know the end is coming. It works as a good reminder for important information and prepares for the conclusion. Remind the listener of important information..

Speaker A: “I’ll call ABC Company and we will talk tomorrow.”

Speaker B: “Sounds like a plan! I will do the paperwork. ”

Speaker A: “Nice talking to you.”

Speaker B: “Thanks, you too.”

Use transitional words (well, anyway, hey, oh, okay). Transitional words are a signal for a change. These transitional words are normally recognized as a sign for the end of the conversation.

Speaker A: “Anyway, it was nice talking to you, but I’ve gotta run.”

Speaker B: “OK, have a good one!”

Speaker A: “You too!”

Give a reason for ending the conversation. If you suddenly say “goodbye”, this could communicate that you are unhappy and did not enjoy the conversation. Giving a reason communicates a positive response and explains the reason for ending the conversation. It shows respect.

Speaker A: “Hey, I have to go to my English class.”

Speaker B: “Oh, have fun!”

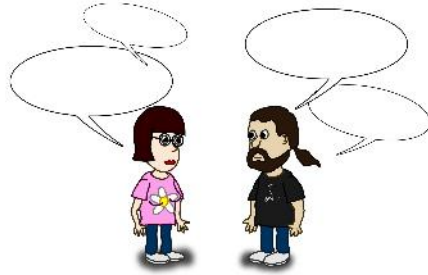
Speaker A: “Thanks! See you later.”

Speaker A: “Anyway, I should get back to work.”

Speaker B: “Yeah, me too.”

Speaker A: “Take care.”

Speaker B: “You too.”



Give a positive comment then a friendly goodbye. Saying a friendly 'goodbye' is good but it does not communicate your feelings about the conversation. Be clear that you enjoyed the conversation.

Speaker A: "You are awesome. Thanks for the information."

Speaker B: "All right. Take care!"

Speaker A: "Talk to you later."

Plan for the next conversation (meeting/communication). When the conversation topic changes to the details of the next meeting, this is normally a sign. You can start talking and asking about the future meeting when you are ready to end the conversation.

Speaker A: "How would you like to meet next Saturday?"

Speaker B: "I would like that. Where is a good place for you?"

Speaker A: "The cafe would be nice."

Speaker B: "Great!"

Common ways to say “goodbye”

FORMAL or INFORMAL	INFORMAL ONLY
Bye / Bye-bye	Take it easy
See you soon!	Catch ya later
Good to see (meet) you.	Check ya later
See you later	Later!
Take care	I'm gone
Have a good one!	I'm outta here
Have a nice day!	Peace
So long	I'm off

IMPORTANT FACT: The end of a conversation is the last impression people have of you. Make it a positive experience.

5.4 Telephone / Online VoIP Conversations

With the rapid growth of international business, global telephone conversations are very common. With today's technology, we can use phones, computers and the internet to have conversations with people around the world. However, speaking on the phone has disadvantages with many communication problems.

What are the problems of speaking on the phone ...

- difficult communication (no body language)
- bad phone connection
- people speaking too fast

- people are rude and unfriendly
- pronunciation is not clear/difficult to understand
- important information gets confusing

10 Tips for Speaking on the Phone

Speak Loud. You should have learned in Chapter 3.2 (Turn Up the Volume) of the importance to speak loud. Phone volume is often less than in person. Also, pronunciation is more clear because of the mouth's movement. It is very important to speak loud and clear.

K.I.S.S (Keep It Short and Simple). Chapter 3.3 explains the importance of keeping it short and simple when speaking. On the phone, there are more communication problems, so K.I.S.S. becomes more important. K.I.S.S. makes it easier for you and the people listening

Relax and focus on communicating. If you show little interest in communicating, then they will also show little interest. Show that the conversation is important to you.

Use Intonation (tone). Speaking on the phone is not as personable as speaking face-to-face. There is no body language. All emotion must be shown through the tone of the voice. Without tone, it is very boring to listen to someone on the phone. Listening will be difficult for them.

Listen. Listen to what they are saying before thinking of a response. You may have questions or want to verify (repeat) the key points. You must be a good listener.

Speak Clearly. Speaking on the telephone can be challenging because you cannot see the person or their body language (50-55% of communication). When one person is speaking in a second language, pronunciation, and accents add more challenges because of less clarity of the phone lines. Speaking on the phone is never as clear as speaking in person, even for native speakers.

Make sure you understand the other speaker. It is common for native speakers to ask each other to repeat and confirm information. Speaking on the phone is often a confusing and unclear method of communication. Learn the polite and appropriate phrases for when you do not understand or hear the person. Don't be afraid to ask the person to slow down.

Learn Telephone Manners. Speaking in person often is more personable and casual than speaking on the phone. In business phone conversations, it is important to speak more formal with business manners. Example, many ESL speakers make the mistake of being too direct on the telephone, and it is possible that the person will think that you are rude. Learn the polite business phrases.

Speak Slower. When the other person is speaking too fast, DO NOT SPEAK FASTER. Often ESL people think if the native

speaker is speaking fast than they should also speak fast. It is natural for people to speak faster on the phone and most people do not realize it. Be aware of this. Speaking on the phone is not as personable, and there are sometimes many distractions. When the other person is speaking fast, speak slower and be more personable. Many times, they will start speaking slower at your pace without realizing it. Control the pace of the conversation.

Focus on the Conversation. Many times when having a business phone conversation, one or both people are distracted by other tasks and activities. They are multi-tasking. Do not multi-task when in a business phone conversation. Speaking on the telephone is challenging. FOCUS on the CONVERSATION.

Important Fact: Though speaking on the phone can be very ineffective, it is often necessary for communication. The important information must be clearly understood. English has many letters and sounds that are similar and can easily get confused when speaking on the phone.

It is common to spell essential words to avoid confusion. However, even spelling a word can still cause trouble. For example, saying the letters “P” and “B” can sound similar.

Military soldiers recognized this problem many years ago when speaking on a phone or a radio. It is very important for them to have accurate information, so they designed a phonetic alphabet (Alpha,

Bravo, Charlie, Sierra, Zulu, Romeo, etc.). Instead of saying “A, B, C”, they say “Alpha, Bravo, Charlie” to avoid confusion.

It is not necessary to learn the military phonetic alphabet, but you should be prepared to use this method. For example, when spelling you can say: “A as in apple, B as in boy, C as in cat ...” Think of basic words for each letter such as fruit, animals, and common names. To avoid confusion, use this method to spell important information.

ACTIVITY: Practice spelling your name and address.

Example: For Rick Smith you could say:

“Rick ... R as in Robert, I as in ice cream, C as in cat, K as in kangaroo”

“Smith ...S as in snake, M as in Maria, I as in ice cream, T as in today, H as in Hippo”



For additional resources and updated information:

www.speakenglishgroup.com

www.webactiveenglish.com

www.speakenglishbusiness.com



Chapter 6

Got A Problem ... Stay Calm

6.1 Problems with Understanding

Sometimes when speaking, there will be communication problems. The problems can be because of accents, speaking too fast, bad grammar, poor vocabulary, and understanding difficult topics. These communication problems can also exist between native speakers. It happens sometimes. Do not panic and get frustrated. When this happens, you need to know the polite way to respond

When You Do Understand:

- I understand.
- I see.
- I hear you.
- I get it. / I got it.
- Gotcha.

When You Do Not Understand:

- I don't get it.
- I don't understand.
- I don't see what you mean.
- Sorry, I didn't hear what you said.
- I beg your pardon, but I don't quite understand.
- I don't see what you are saying.
- I don't follow you.

- I'm not following you.
- What do you mean?

Ask to Repeat Again:

- Could you say that again?
- Sorry, could you repeat that?
- I didn't catch that.
- Could you speak up?

Check Their Understanding:

- Do you understand?
- Know what I mean?
- Do you know what I'm saying?
- Are you following me?
- Are you with me so far?
- Any questions?
- Got it?

Check the Information

- Would/Could you spell that?
- Can I read that back to you?
- Are you saying...?
- From what I hear....

Ask to Clarify

- Do you mean...?
- What do you mean by...?
- Could you clarify that, please?
- Could you explain what you mean by...?
- Could you give me an example?
- Could you be more specific, please?

IMPORTANT: Never be afraid to ask questions.



6.2 Difficult Situations

Unfortunately, conversations are not always positive and friendly. If there is a misunderstanding, stay calm and try to politely find a solution. Sometimes, the cause of the problem is bad communication.

Polite Interruptions

It is rude to interrupt people when they are speaking. However, with an emotional topic, it sometimes cannot be avoided. The following are some polite ways if you need to interrupt.

- Excuse me, ...
- Wait just a minute.
- Uhm, well I ...
- (Cough) ...
- If I could add something ...
- Can I just say ...

Polite Disagreement

Everyone has their own opinions and thoughts. In an argument or debate, you can disagree and still be polite.

- Yes, but ...
- I know, but ...
- Yes, that may be true, but ...
- I see what you mean, but ...
- Yes, but on the other hand ...

Speaking about a Sensitive Topic

When you need to discuss something important and want a private conversation, there is a polite way to request it.

- Can I talk to you for a minute?
- Can I ask you something?
- Do you mind if I ask you something?
- I need to talk to you for a minute.
- I must tell you something.
- There's something I need to tell you.
- There's something I think you should know.

- We need to talk.

Clarifying Details

In some situations, the other person may understand the conversation but may need more details from you. This happens in conversations between native speakers. It is not because of your English if someone asks you for more details. Politely, give them more details.

- Let me explain that...
- Let me explain that in more detail...
- Let me put it in another way...
- Sorry, let me explain...
- In other words...
- To say this differently...
- To put it differently...

Speaking about a Negative Subject

It is not polite to suddenly say something negative. It is good to prepare them for bad news.

- I don't mean to be rude, but . . .
- I hate to tell you this, but . . .
- I don't know how to tell you this, but . . .
- You might not like what I have to say, but . . .
- I wish I didn't have to tell you this, but . . .
- This may be unpleasant, but . . .
- This may seem blunt, but . . .

Asking for More Details

In some situations, you may understand the conversation, but you may need more details. If you need more details to understand something, you politely ask them. Do not be shy.

- Would you give me some more details?
- More details, please?
- Can you be more specific?
- Could you explain that in more detail?
- I don't quite see what you're getting at.

IMPORTANT FACT: Communication problems exist. The problem is not always the language. There can be many reasons for misunderstandings. so do not think it is always your English skills. Sometimes, it is just bad communication. The solution is to stay calm and try to politely find a solution.

ACTIVITY: Think about the following situations and how to respond.

- At a restaurant, the people nearby are drunk and crazy.
- Your friend's child broke your computer.
- Your new car broke down one week after buying it.
- You crashed your father's car.
- You forgot your mother's birthday.

Chapter 7

Practice - Learning English Can Be Fun

7.1 Practice!

The key to good English speaking is practice. You will not be a good English speaker until you practice your speaking. I understand it is difficult to find ways to practice your speaking. The purpose of this chapter is to give you ideas.

Speaking practice can be fun and effective. You have worked hard to learn English. You can practice and improve with fun activities. Find fun activities to practice your English. Many activities involve communication. Find one that is fun and also practice your English at the same time.

“I’m afraid I will make mistakes.” We all make mistakes. You will make mistakes, but that is part of learning. Your speaking skills will improve with practice.

Speaking and listening are usually the problem skills for most learners. Remember, these skills work together in oral communication. If you practice your listening skills, your speaking skills should also improve. Practice all your English skills.

Most English learners know the best way to practice speaking is with a native speaker. Unless you are in an native speaking country, this can

be difficult. However, this should be no excuse. There are other effective methods to practice.



Speaking success requires more than studying English books and lessons. You must practice your skills. Relax and have fun speaking English.

How to practice and improve your English?

How to improve your speaking?

- Use the Kevin's Speaking Rules from Chapter 3.
- Don't rush. It's better to speak slowly and clearly.
- If you do not understand, ASK.
- Do not worry about an accent. Focus on speaking clearly.
- Practice, Practice, Practice.

How to improve your vocabulary?

- Read books in English.
- Use the internet in English.
- Use movies, television, internet, music, etc. and LISTEN
- As you learn new vocabulary, USE THE WORDS.

How to practice your speaking?

- Play games
- Practice in groups
- Interact with people to practice your English
- Listen to spoken English as often as possible
- Use movies, television, internet, music, etc.



7.2 Watch Movies, Television, and Videos

You will improve your English-speaking skills by watching television or movies. By listening to native speakers, you will repeat what you hear. Before we start school, we learn to speak as a child by listening then repeating what we hear in our native language. This is natural and effective for learning a language.

Why practice by watching television or movies?

1. You will learn new vocabulary words and phrases.
2. You will learn grammar structure by listening.
3. You will learn informal English normal conversations.
4. You will practice listening to native speakers.
5. It helps your speaking when you repeat what you hear.
6. You will learn to understand different English accents.

7. You will learn to understand fast English speakers.
8. You will improve your intonation
9. You will improve your pronunciation
10. It is a great way to practice by yourself.
11. It is more fun than reading English grammar books.

Listening to native speakers will improve your English. Native speakers in movies and television speak real English in normal conversations. Watching movies and television in English is excellent for developing your speaking and listening skills, but it also helps your vocabulary and grammar.

Also, it is much more fun to watch movies and television in English (the original language) because some phrases and words are difficult to translate. Because of the slang, idioms, phrasal verbs and informal English, translations do not always have the actual meaning.

When you watch with subtitles, I call it reading the book. You may think you can listen and read at the same time, but the speaking is too fast. You will spend almost all your time reading. This is good for understanding the story, but it will not help your speaking and listening skills. You must focus your attention on listening to the native English speakers.

Watching movies, television and videos will improve your English. It is very effective but only if you watch them in English without subtitles. This is very difficult and often advanced speakers have problems. The native speaker will sometimes speak fast and have an accent. The use of slang, idioms, phrasal verbs and informal English can also be a

problem to understand. It can be difficult at first, but the more you do it; the easier it will become. Practice this activity.

IMPORTANT: This will improve your accent, speaking, listening, vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar. Listening to English multiple times is an excellent way to learn English. This is a very effective exercise. The more you do this, the easier it gets. You will soon be watching the first time without any subtitles.

ACTIVITY: Watch Movies, Television, or Videos

1. Choose a movie, television show, or video

- Choose something to watch in short 5-10 minute parts.

(Maximum 20 minutes)

- Choose one that you have seen and understand so you can focus on listening to the English.
- Find one you enjoy and will watch several times.
- Choose something on your level.

2. First, watch it with English subtitles.

- For beginners, native language subtitles are acceptable for the first time, but you must watch it again a second time with English subtitles.
- It is important to understand the story before going to the next step.

- As you watch, write down any words you do not understand.
- Stop every 2-5 minutes and find the definitions of these words.

3. Watch it again without subtitles.

- After watching with subtitles and learning the unknown words in step #2, you should now understand 60-100%.
- Focus on listening to the English.
- Watch it again until you understand 70-100% of the spoken English.

7.3 Games and Activities

Games can be fun English practice. Students are so relaxed and having fun that they do not realize their English is improving. **YOU CAN HAVE FUN LEARNING ENGLISH!** When playing games, the players are motivated to focus on the game by using their English skills. Playing games is effective for improving English skills.

Many games can be found online for you to practice your English. You can easily find ESL learning games for all English levels. Any games that require you to use your English skills will be good practice and will improve your skills.

Board games can be purchased, and you can choose from thousands. You can find these games online or at toy stores. Prices for board games usually are reasonable and can provide hours of fun English practice. Sometimes, people will take board game ideas and make their own games.

Do-It-Yourself (DIY) games are a good way to make your own custom games if board games are not available. You can be creative and design your own game.

Some websites offer interactive games with other people. Games that require speaking are the best. Find friends and groups to play games, have fun, and practice your English.

Game Ideas to Improve English

Individual Games

TV Quick Reply Game (DIY) - Watch a television show or a movie with good conversations (no news or documentary videos). When an actor asks a question to another actor in the show, pause it. Then, respond with your answer in English. This is a fun exercise to practice answering questions from native speakers in real conversations. You can also do this game by finishing the actor's sentences. You may not know what the actor will say, but it is fun to try and predict. This can be effective when you do not have native speakers for practice.

The Tour Guide / Translator Game (DIY) - When I travel, I often need a translator. I notice that their English improves as they translate conversations. The ability to translate can be difficult, but it is very useful for improving English skills. Translators must listen to one language and think quickly about the translation. Walk around your city and act like you are a tour guide. Can you translate your tour? As you

think of translation problems, write these down. Then, find and study the correct translation. If you live in a city with many tourists, volunteer to help as a translator at a museum or tourist attraction. This practice can be very effective in improving your English.

The Alphabet Game (DIY)– Bring a piece of paper with you as you walk outside. The goal is to find something that begins with each letter in the alphabet. You can also play the game as an all-day activity. During the day, try to find something that starts with each letter. Advanced players can have a more difficult challenge by requiring the items to be in the order of the alphabet. (First, find an item beginning with ‘A’, then find the next item beginning with ‘B’, etc.) This game is great for vocabulary.

The Tourist Game (DIY)– Go online (in English) and research attractions around your city. Read about these tourist attractions in English. Then, visit these attractions. Can you understand all the information about these attractions in English? Are the online English translations correct?

Story Cubes (board game) – This award-winning game has become very popular with ESL students. There are many ways to play the game and there is no limit on the number of players (1 player or more). Simply roll the cubes and let the pictures spark your imagination! Players must tell a story using the pictures on the cubes. This game is one of the best for speaking practice. You can play as an individual or in a group.



Group Games

Taboo (board game) - The game is a common award-winning game by Hasbro Corporation. The game is common for native speakers and has become popular for ESL students. Taboo is a word guessing game. The objective of the game is for a player to have their team guess the word on the player's card without using the word or five additional words listed on the card. The game is lots of fun and is a great way to practice English-speaking skills. The game is normally played with groups or teams. I strongly recommend this game to groups of more than 6 people.

Picture Taboo (board game) – This is the Taboo game with pictures used instead of words. The player must describe a picture instead of a word. Like Taboo, the game is full of excitement and fun. The game is normally played with groups or teams. I strongly recommend this game to groups of more than 6 people.

Catch Phrase (board game)- A game that is similar to Taboo. A player gets a word or phrase then gives verbal clues to help your team guess it. The game is normally played with groups or teams. I strongly recommend this game to groups of more than 6 people.

Balderdash (board game) - Classic bluffing game. The categories contain real but unbelievable content about people, words, initials, movies, and other crazy trivia. Players must write the definition. Players then must choose which definition is correct. The objective is

to get players to choose your definition, even if it is not correct. The game is fun for groups of 4 or more people.

Loaded Questions (board game)- The Loaded Questions Board Game ensures unlimited fun. This board game has many exciting questions about different topics. Players must guess the answers of the other players. This game is good for having conversations about different topics.

Scrabble (board game) – This is another popular game in the USA and great for ESL students. The objective is to put letters together, build words, add up your points and win! This game is excellent practice for improving vocabulary.

Apples to Apples (board game) - This award-winning card and party game is another popular game with my students. There are many ways to play this exciting game. Players must match adjectives with nouns and convince the judge that their match is the best. This game is very effective for learning vocabulary and for speaking practice.

Story Cubes (board game) - This award-winning game has become very popular with ESL students. There are many ways to play the game and there is no limit on the number of players (1 player or more). Simply roll the cubes and let the pictures spark your imagination! Players must tell a story using the pictures on the cubes. This game is one of the best for speaking practice. You can play as an individual or in a group.

Jeopardy TV Show Game (board game) - The trivia game with a twist. Jeopardy is one of the top game shows in the USA. You get the

answers and have to come up with the questions. The game will test your knowledge and skills.

Would You Rather ... (board game)- The game of crazy choices is a good description. This game always starts good discussions about many crazy situations. A player must choose between 2 crazy situations and the other players must choose which the player picked. This game is a good choice to get family and friends playing, talking, and laughing.

Scattegories (board game)- This game is another popular award-winning game which helps improve vocabulary. In the game, each player fills out a category list with answers that begin with the same letter. Score points if no other player matches your answers. This game is one of the best for vocabulary.

What is Yours Like? (board game)- This game is always a favorite with my ESL students. Everyone except for the one player who has their turn will see a word on a card. The one player will ask 3-5 people, "What is yours like?". Each person will respond by describing their (word on the card). The one player must guess the word. This fun game involves lots of speaking about different topics.

Trivia (board game / DIY) - Trivia is a common game seen on television shows and even in some bars. You can find many trivia games and ideas about making your own trivia game. Simply have English trivia game night with a group of friends.

Charades (board game / DIY)- This game is similar to Pictionary but you must act using body language instead of drawing. Charades is a

classic fun game full of excitement.

Dictionary (board game / DIY) - Pictionary is a guessing word game played with teams. Players try to identify specific words from their teammates' drawings. The team chooses one person to do the drawing, this position rotates with each word. The pictures cannot contain any numbers or letters. The teammates try to guess the word the drawing is intended to represent. This game is very popular and requires lots of talking. Speaking skills will improve.

Online Games

There are thousands of games to play online. Find games and activities that you enjoy but that use your English skills. There are some suggested websites listed but there are lots more good ones that you can search online.

<https://www.speakenglishgroup.com/> This is one of my websites which has many games and activities. I try to update it with new games and activities.

<https://www.webactiveenglish.com/> This is one of my websites which has updated lessons and information.

<http://www.merriam-webster.com/word-games> This website is the official website for Merriam-Webster Dictionary. They offer lots of games to improve your vocabulary.

<https://americanenglish.state.gov/resources/activate-board-games> This website is from the US Department of State – American

English Education. It provides English learning games to download.

IMPORTANT: Games will improve your English! Games provide the opportunity to use speaking abilities in natural situations. It is very effective, and you can have fun while practicing your English.

7.4 Other Practice Ideas

Surf in English. Instead of surfing the internet in your native language, surf online in English. There are lots of ways to practice online. There are 1.2 billion people currently learning English in the world. Most of them have internet and also need to practice. Also, you can find many online native speakers to practice your English speaking. There are many online opportunities for practice.

Talk to your friends. You probably have friends that know English and also want to practice. Practice having normal conversations with your friends. Spend a day speaking only English with a friend. It may be a challenge, but it can also be exciting and fun.

Join or start an English-Speaking Club. There are many people, like yourself, who want to practice speaking English. Start a group or club. Plan events and activities for the group and require English only. I have seen this to be very effective and fun.

Let's Practice!

Practice, practice, practice is the key to speaking English.

Chapter 8

Common Phrasal Verbs

Phrasal verbs include a verb and an adverb or a preposition. If you do not recognize these phrases, it can be a problem, because phrasal verbs are very common with native English speakers. Sometimes, translation devices are not correct when translating phrasal verbs.

account for: give a reason / be responsible for I hope you can account for the money spent.

add up: make sense / be logical The work was not ready, and her story did not add up.

agree with: have same opinion I agree with you about the new movie.

ask around: to ask the same question to many people / survey a group of people I will ask around the office about the new coffee in the breakroom.

back off: retreat / leave The thief backed off when he saw the security.

back someone up: To support The captain will back up his teammates if they make a mistake.

be in debt: to owe somebody money My friend was in debt with the national bank

be in touch with somebody: to be in contact. Even after finishing school, he stays in touch with his classmates.

break in / into: enter by force The robber broke into the bank.

break out: to escape / to spread Ten inmates broke out of prison in the southern town.

break something down: to divide and subdivide They broke the students down into groups of four.

bring up: raise a child / promote / mention something She is angry so I would not bring it up

brush up on: to improve or review something not used often It has been 3 years since speaking English, so I need to brush up on it.

burn out: stop working / tired of working He will burn out if he does not take a vacation.

call around: to phone different places / people I have not seen him today but I will call around.

call it a day: to stop doing work I am tired so I will call it a day.

call someone back: to return a phone call Please call me back when you get this message.

call someone up: to phone someone The boss wants you to call up the client.

call something off: to abandon or cancel They have decided to call off the wedding.

calm down: relax after being angry Calm down and everything will be okay.

catch up: to get to the level as someone else I took a vacation and now I need to catch up.

check up on somebody: to check somebody's results My boss always checks up on me

cheer sb up: to help somebody be happier I cheered my friend up by singing karaoke

chip in: to contribute / help Can you chip in for some pizza?

clear up: to explain or solve. I'll wait till everything clears up and then make my decision.

come across: find unexpectedly While reading this book I came across new information.

come forward: to take action and respond to help She will come forward and help her friend.

come up with: make an idea or plan You need to come up with a solution to the problem.

count on someone /something: to rely on a person or thing Can I count on you to complete this tonight?

cut back: To use or consume less of something / reduce We need to cut back on driving since the price is high.

cut down on: reduce the size She decided to cut down on eating chocolate.

cut into: To interrupt in between something or someone He asked if he could cut in on the dance.

deal with somebody/something: to make a contract, or to solve things I had to deal with my colleague's mess

do something over: to do an action again I was told to do my work over since it was unacceptable.

Eat out: to eat outside of home, usually in a restaurant I eat out almost every night.

fall through: to be unsuccessful The contract fell through

find out: to search /discover How do I find out where he lives?

fit in: feel comfortable He fits in his hometown.

fix up: to repair We will fix up the house before moving in.

focus on: concentrate on He will focus on his studies this semester.

get away: escape / leave The student got away with cheating on the test.

get together: to meet Do you want to get together this Saturday?

get up: to stand/get out of bed I get up at 9 am.

give back: to return something. You need to give back all the money that was stolen.

give up: to stop / to accept defeat Don't give up just because you made a mistake.

go along with: to agree / to travel with He decided to go along with his wife to the store.

go over: to check or review Go over the document for any mistakes.

grow up: to become / act like an adult Quit playing around and grow up!

hand out: to distribute A test will be handed out after the class.

hang out spend time and relax with friends My friends and I like to hang out on Friday evenings.

hold back: to prevent an action or hide an emotion Do not hold back and wait for it to happen.

hold on: to wait Please hold on until she arrives.

keep away: avoid Keep away from the wild bears.

let down: to disappoint / to lengthen You promised to come to my party, do not let me down.

look after: to take care of I need you to look after my dog while I'm away.

look out: be careful Look out for cars when crossing the street.

pick out: to choose I need to pick out an outfit for my interview.

put off: postpone The meeting was put off until the afternoon.

put sb down: to criticize someone to make them look more stupid Her interest is putting everyone down to make her feel better

put up: tolerate / build / accommodate She ended the relationship because she could not put up with his bad habits.

run away: escape The child was angry and wanted to run away from home.

run into to meet unexpectedly or by accident I ran into a friend the other day.

run out of use all of something I do not like running out of toilet paper.

sit back relax / not concentrate I want to sit back and watch a movie.

sleep through to not concentrate. At the beginning of the exam, I slept through the explanation and then had some difficulties.

take part in participate / be involved in: I took part in a basketball tournament.

take up begin doing She wants to take up tennis.

think over to consider It is good to think over big decisions.

use up to finish all She always uses up all the hot water.

work out to exercise / find a solution My boss said to work out the situation immediately.

Chapter 9

Common Idioms

Idioms are common phrases that have a different meaning. If you take each word and translate it, you will have a confusing and unusual translation. For ESL speakers, idioms can be difficult and unpredictable. Unfortunately, native speakers will often use them. You do not need to use idioms, but it is important to know the popular ones. So, when you hear them, you will know the actual meaning. Thousands of idioms exist in the English language. This is a list of some common idioms to study.

A PIECE OF CAKE Something which is very easy. Passing the exam was a piece of cake.

ALL EARS To be all ears is to be very interested and listen carefully. The students were all ears when the teacher reviewed the test.

BLOW YOUR MIND / MIND BLOWING Something that is extraordinary or unbelievable. The treasures in the palace were mind-blowing.

BREAK THE ICE Start a conversation; Do something new. He finally broke the ice and spoke to the new girl.

DIME A DOZEN This phrase is used for something that is very easy to buy with a low value. You can find sodas a dime a dozen at the market.

EASY MONEY When money can easily be obtained. That project was simple and was easy money.

GET ON YOUR NERVES The phrase is used for something that annoys or irritates. They keep asking questions and it gets on my

nerves.

GO BROKE This phrase is used when someone loses or spends all their money. He spent his money last night and now he's broke until payday.

GOLDEN OPPORTUNITY A golden opportunity is an opportunity that is rare and valuable. The job offer was a golden opportunity.

HAVE SECOND THOUGHTS Think about changing a decision Roger had second thoughts about leaving work early.

HIT THE NAIL ON THE HEAD Be exact or accurate He hit the nail on the head with his best idea and it worked.

KID AROUND/ JUST KIDDING saying something as a joke/not serious I like to kid around about football.

LOOK SOMEONE IN THE EYE Make eye contact to show you are honest Look me in the eye so I know the truth.

MAKE WAVES To cause problems Calm down and do not make waves.

NO SWEAT Refers to a task that is easy to do/ will take little effort. I'll get the job done, no sweat.

SLIP OF THE TONGUE Used when someone says sth accidentally. I'm sorry I told her. It was a slip of tongue.

TAKING IT EASY Relaxing Let's not do any work and take it easy.

TURN OVER A NEW LEAF Changing for the better He turned over a new leaf to become an honest man.

SUCCESS
→ go get it →

Chapter 10

Colloquial Phrases / Collocations

Like in most cultures, native speakers often use informal vocabulary when speaking normal conversations. Learning the common informal phrases such as phrasal verbs and idioms makes it easier. Many students do not realize this until they get to a high level. Listening to normal English conversations in the real world can be a problem even for advanced level students.

Colloquial phrases are extremely common in native conversations, and the vocabulary usually is more informal than when we write.

There are thousands of phrasal verbs and idioms, and new ones are added each day. It is not necessary to know all of them, but you should continually learn collocations. You are not required to use collocations. However, you will often hear native speakers use them, so you should know the meaning if you do listen to them used.

It is impossible to list all colloquial phrases and collocations in this book. The book only lists some of the common ones. For additional phrasal verbs and idioms, you can visit our websites.

For additional resources and updated information:

www.webactiveenglish.com

www.speakenglishgroup.com

www.speakenglishbusiness.com



Chapter 11

SUMMARY

I wrote this book because of the problems ESL learners have with speaking. A big reason is that of the focus on teaching grammar not speaking. In a typical English class, the books focus on an organized process of teaching grammar rules and English structure. However, the process to teach speaking skills is more difficult and is often ignored.

I was motivated to help my students to find a solution to their speaking problems. I listened to their problems and tested possible solutions. The results were very effective in solving their problems.

Some people think my primary objective is to have fun playing games and activities. That is not true. My main purpose is always to improve speaking skills, but I also try to make it an exciting and fun experience.

You **MUST** do the exercises, activities, and practice. You may think some of the lessons and activities are not important, but **ALL** of the lessons and exercises are important for improving your speaking skills! Each lesson and exercise was added for a good reason. Keep practicing the activities, and your speaking skills will improve.

I hope you enjoyed it and have success in improving your English.

For additional resources and updated information:

www.webactiveenglish.com

www.speakenglishgroup.com

www.speakenglishbusiness.com

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About the Author

Kevin Peterson has years of experience as a coach, consultant, and American businessman. His passion for traveling around the world helping people fulfill their goals provides him happiness and success.

With today's technology, global communication is rapidly growing and can assist many people in achieving their goals. While traveling around the world, he discovered many English speaking problems and the desperate need to find solutions. Learning English grammar is common, but using English to communicate is challenging for many people. After years of focusing on speaking problems, Kevin found fast and effective solutions. His creative methods have been successful and provided answers for thousands of people around the world.

Kevin is determined to help more people with their global communication and English speaking problems by making his methods available in books and online.

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